

**ROUND UP THE USUALS AND A FEW OTHERS:  
GLIMPSES INTO THE KNOWLEDGE, ROLE, AND USE  
OF CHURCH FATHERS IN RUS' AND RUSSIAN  
MONASTICISM, LATE 11TH TO EARLY 16TH CENTURIES**

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This essay originated at the time that ASEC was in its early stages and in response to a request that I write something about the church Fathers in medieval Rus'. I already knew finding the patrology concerning just the original Greek and Syriac texts is nothing short of a researcher's black hole. Given all the complexities involved in the manuscript traditions associated with such superstar names as Basil of Caesarea, Ephrem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, and Macarius of wherever (no kidding), to name a few<sup>1</sup> and all of

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\*The author would like to thank the staffs of the Hilandar Research Library at The Ohio State University and, of course, the monks of Hilandar Monastery for encouraging the microfilming of the Hilandar Slavic manuscripts by Ohio State. I thank the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection; and Georgetown University's Woodstock Theological Library as well as its Lauinger Library Reference Room for their kind help. Georgetown University's Office of the Provost and Center for Eurasian, East European and Russian Studies provided summer research support. Thanks also to Jennifer Spock and Donald Ostrowski for their wise suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> An excellent example of this is Pleased, *Macarian Legacy*. For the specific problem of Pseudo-Macarius/Pseudo-Pseudo-Macarius as it relates to this essay, see *NSAW*, 78–79.

*Tapestry of Russian Christianity: Studies in History and Culture*. Nickolas Lupinin, Donald Ostrowski and Jennifer B. Spock, eds. Columbus, Ohio: Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures and the Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies, The Ohio State University, 2016, 71–118.

their pseudo-accretions, I durst not attempt anything approaching the superb, comprehensive work of Francis J. Thompson.<sup>2</sup> I reckoned instead to assay to provide the interested reader a sense of, first, which of these devotionally, ethically, and intellectually authoritative ecclesiastics, not just writers, were known in Rus' in the Kievan period, plus how they then appeared to monks and writers. And second, I hoped to show how these and other church Fathers figured in the writings of Muscovy's leading monastic theoreticians around 1500 when Russians, as we can now call them, were not only, as recipients and spiritual consumers, experiencing these Fathers, but also, in a few select cases utilizing and manipulating them, as in the original writings of Nil Sorskii and Iosif Volotskii, the authors of Russia's earliest treatises. I am well aware of the shortcomings of my own treatment of patristic sources: not only in Iosif's monastic corpus, for which I never had the chance to consult a full body of Slavic manuscripts and translations, but also for Nil's writings, where I so succeeded.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as I am only in the initial stages of my work with Iosif's *Prosvetitel'* (*Enlightener*) sources, what I say here will not in any way approach what I hope to provide when the third of my Iosif-Nil-Iosif translations cum studies appears. Finally, the number of questions one can ask of these Rus' and Russian monastic texts is legion. So I warn the reader and apologize ahead of time for the shortcomings, but at the same time hope that this examination of their relationship to many of the church Fathers bolsters my general contention that Nil and Iosif represented allied wings of the same general movement, not rivals or opponents.

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It is the year 1070, and 6,578 years since the Creation according to Orthodox Christian calculations. Let us imagine ourselves observing a small monastery in Kiev (a major political center and trading city at the time), perhaps a cloister founded by the late Rus' *kagan* ("chieftain") and grand prince, Iaroslav Vladimirovich (r. 1019–1054), for the express purpose of training native clerics for his still chiefly pagan realm. With, let us say, eight Rus' students between the ages of nine and 19, and staffed by a Rus' priest, a

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<sup>2</sup> Thompson, "Made in Russia," "A Guide to Translations"; and "Corpus of Translations."

<sup>3</sup> *MRIV*, 61–70; and *NSAW*, 68–80.

Rus' deacon, as well as a Bulgarian monk-teacher, the monastery functions chiefly as a school, secondarily as a scriptorium. The students attend all the daily monastic services and thereby learn the chants as well as reading, and they hear the saints' lives as they dine under supervision at the monks' table. During their spiritual training, the dexterous will acquire orthography.<sup>4</sup>

What notion of church Fathers do these future Rus' priests, monks, and book-copyists have? The very word *father* is widely used, applied to all authoritative clergy, living and dead. "Our saintly fathers" (*prepodobnye ottsy nashi*), however, refers to the dead, the perfect ones, who showed Christian Orthodox how to live, defend the faith, and die, as lay people or as monastics, and are somewhat fused together as they are presented. Such is the nature of sacred literature.

The perfect ones derived their authority within the church from a variety of sources and activities. A large number of them—including women—were martyrs to the faith. Some, starting in the second century, composed authoritative church literature. Others left an authoritative recorded oral tradition, as in the *paterica* (collected sayings or lives) of the desert Fathers. Still others did both. A few of them, whom we number today among the *doctors* or teaching Fathers, stand out for the liturgies associated with their names (Basil the Great of Caesarea, ca. 330–ca. 379, John Chrysostom [Golden-Mouth], 345–407, and Pope Gregory I "the Great," ca. 540–604),<sup>5</sup> for their monastic regulations (Basil again and Theodore the Studite, d. 829), for their regularly preached sermons (Chrysostom), for the iconographic depictions of them (here Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus, ca. 329–ca. 389, joins Basil and Chrysostom as one of the especially revered "Three Bishops"), or for churches and monasteries erected in their honor (e.g. Cyril of Alexandria, 376–444).

Consider the people or events found most often singled out for a given day in the calendric sections of the 14 extant Gospels

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<sup>4</sup> For the question of whether Rus' *literati* (or Bulgarians and others in Rus') effected translations in Rus', see Thomson, "Guide to Slavonic Translations," 27–36. See also Thomson, "Made in Russia," 295–354; Alekseev, "K istorii russkoi perevodicheskoi shkoly XII v.," 154–198; and Alekseev, "Kto-chto o perevodakh v drevnei Rusi," 278–296.

<sup>5</sup> Basil and Chrysostom have liturgies attributed to them; by tradition, if not authenticated scholarship, Gregory created or crystallized the Orthodox Lenten Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified, as well as, for the West, the almost universally employed Gregorian Chant.

from before the Mongol invasion, or in other such Gospels, *Apostols* (Acts and Epistles together), and service books through the 14th century (about 175 more). In culling through these texts we discover over 155 single, double, or group listings of martyrs, followed by 46 New Testament and expanded Apostolic entries, a number which grows to 53 if we include such supraterritorial phenomena as the Synaxes<sup>6</sup> of the Theotokos, of John the Forerunner (Baptist), and of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. We also note 18 miraculous events, such as the multiple discoveries of the head of John the Forerunner, and about 25 wonder-working bishops, maybe a third of them from Constantinople. Some of these bishops overlapped with the approximately 15 non-writing “confessors,” half of whom struggled against Iconoclasm, the last great Eastern heresy before the conversion of the Balkan Slavs. Among the other holy people celebrated in the calendar are perhaps 15 non-writing ascetics, such as: the charitable physicians Cosmos and Damian (d. 283); the two Syrian stylites named Symeon (ca. 361–459, 521–596) along with the first stylite’s disciple Daniel (ca. 409–ca. 493); the desert Fathers Paul the Simple, a disciple of Anthony the Great (d. ca. 350), Onouphrius (300s), Poimen (d. ca. 450), and Moses the African of Scete (fl. ca. 400);<sup>7</sup> Anthony’s thaumaturgic disciple Hilarion (291–371); the versatile hermits Euthymius the Great (376–473), John Kalybites (400s), and Patapius (seventh century); and three female monastics: the multiple foundress Melania of Rome (d. 439),<sup>8</sup> the famed but patrician and perhaps legendary “repentant harlot” and solitary Mary of Egypt (ca. 344–421),<sup>9</sup> and the pseudo-eunuch/monk Ephrosynia of Alexandria (400s).<sup>10</sup>

So it was in a continuous annual series, alongside the above-named sacred people and events, that our aspiring Rus’ clerics heard in solemnity the names of the authoritative patristic writers and prelates. From among the earliest Fathers they knew of the

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<sup>6</sup> *Synaxis* (*sobor* in Church Slavic, and having the same root as *synagogue*) = religious gathering.

<sup>7</sup> Allegedly, this immensely strong ex-slave, who could swim the crocodile-infested Nile pulling four rams, once led a band of 75 robbers, and later founded a cloister, appropriately for the legend, with 75 monks.

<sup>8</sup> It could also be her mother, St. Melania the Elder (d. 431), who founded one monastery in Palestine.

<sup>9</sup> Stevenson, “Holy Sinner,” 19–40; Kouli, “Life of Mary of Egypt,” 65–95.

<sup>10</sup> Having run away after her marriage, she disguised herself as a eunuch and entered a male monastery to avoid discovery.

first-century Dionysius the Areopagite,<sup>11</sup> Clement of Rome (d. ca. 160),<sup>12</sup> and Justin Martyr (ca. 100–ca. 163/167); from the generation of Emperor Constantine I (r. 308–337) and the First Ecumenical Council (325) came Methodius of Olympus or Patara (d. 311)<sup>13</sup> and Pope Silvester I of Rome (d. 334). The readings and calendar introduced, from the Arian controversy-dominated fourth century, Athanasius the Great of Alexandria (ca. 298–373) and Ephrem of Syria (c. 303–373), as well as the renowned Cappadocian Fathers Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, (ca. 331–ca. 396) with their less noted colleague Amphilochus of Iconium (d. 400). From this period also came Cyril of Jerusalem (315–386), John Chrysostom, and the Latin Father Ambrose of Milan (340–397).

From later generations Rus' clerics heard more names. Among those fighting Nestorianism and Monophysitism were Cyril of Alexandria and Pope Leo I (the Great, d. 461); and from the primarily monastic Fathers, they celebrated Pachomius (ca. 292–346), Anthony the Great, Macarius of Egypt (300s), Theodosius the Great (d. 529), Sabas of Jerusalem (ca. 440–531), and John Climacus (fl. seventh century). Defenders of Orthodoxy from the first three Byzantine centuries include Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (d. 638), the monastic mystic Maximus the Confessor (580–662), the hymnographer Andrew of Crete (d. early 700s), the cenobitic reformer Theodore the Studite, as well as one of his successors, the hymnographer Clement the Studite (d. ca. 868), and another sacral composer, Joseph (d. 883). The central Latin cenobitic monastic Father, Benedict of Nursia (d. 547), and the influential philosopher-theologian-hymnographer-apologist John of Damascus (c. 675–750) are less prominent among the listed names. The favorite Latin Father in the East, Pope Gregory the Great,<sup>14</sup> received even less attention and the two greatest writers among the leading Latin *doctors*, Jerome (ca. 340–420) and Augustine of

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<sup>11</sup> The works attributed to Dionysius probably stem from the 400s.

<sup>12</sup> Most writings attributed to Clement (by tradition, the fourth pope) are spurious.

<sup>13</sup> The influential *Revelation* attributed to Methodius, however, stems from the seventh century.

<sup>14</sup> Pope of Rome, 590–604. To the Greeks he was *ho Gregorios ho Dialogos* (the Dialogist), from the four *Dialogues* he composed—the second being the *Life* of St. Benedict of Nursia—and the Slavs called him either Grigorii *Besedovnik* (the Converser) or, via an inventive pun, Grigorii *Dvoeslov* (Double Sermon).

Hippo (354–430), none at all—a circumstance that is somewhat surprising in light of the evidence of some Western influence on Orthodox Slavic calendars, especially the earliest.<sup>15</sup>

In so classifying the church Fathers, are we going down an erroneous path? Our medieval churchmen, while recognizing certain leading monastic authorities, would have considered any separation of church Fathers into categories of monastic and non-monastic artificial and unacceptable, and with reason. Starting in the 300s, many church Fathers renowned primarily as bishops—for example, Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and Sophronius of Jerusalem, heavily influenced by their own experiences as, or with, monks, patronized monasticism and composed monastic writings.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the seminal, philosophically grounded theology of Gregory of Nazianzus was essential for formulating the understanding of how man approaches God through prayer, and also the very notion of *theosis* (deification), which influenced the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, as well as the late medieval spokesman for hesychasm or the practice of stillness (*hesychia*), Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) and modern Russian religious philosophy.<sup>17</sup>

To return to the main theme beyond the celebratory side of these names, the perspective on the church Fathers of future Rus' *literati* broadened somewhat as a result of the books introduced by Bulgarian teachers. These included two miscellany or *florilegia* and a *Hexameron*, that is, sermons on the first six days of Creation, to serve as an introduction to nature and the world as then understood according to Orthodox Christian doctrines. The miscellanies,

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<sup>15</sup> O. V. Loseva claims that the Slavic calendars adopted at least 38 celebrations, and maybe up to another 26, from Latin calendars. In addition, The *Ostromir Evangel* of 1056/7 and *Arkhangelsk Evangel* of 1092 have three celebratory dates consistent with Western calendars, not the Eastern. The *Mstislav Evangel* (ca. 1100) has two dates consistent with the West, and five other calendars, dated 1200s, ca. 1300, 1309–1312, mid-1300s, and early 15th century, have one each: Loseva, *Russkie mesiatsseslovy*, 72–75, 122–126, 164, 165, 236, 245, 254, 256, 337, 355.

<sup>16</sup> Though never a monk, Athanasius of Alexandria closely associated himself with the ascetics of the Egyptian desert during his several periods of exile.

<sup>17</sup> See under *θέωσις* in Lampe, *Patristic Greek Dictionary*, 649–650; also Maximus Confessor, *Capita de charitate centuria*, 2.27–30, in PG, 90: cols. 922C–993B; *Philokalia*, 2:69–70; and Gregory Palamas, *Topics of Natural and Theological Science*,.

copies of which come down to us from 1073 and 1076, contain a variety of patristic excerpts, although even our hypothetical Bulgarian teacher could not have identified all of them. The *Hexameron*, at that time a recent Bulgarian compilation, was based chiefly on two previous works amplified by a bit of sanitized Aristotle.<sup>18</sup> Taken together, these three books contained a representative group of Fathers to whom the compositions were attributed, including ten of those prominent in the church calendars, but another 14 not so. From among the earliest Fathers are Justin Martyr (103–165) [in Russian *Iustin Filosof*], the founding Trinitarian, Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 130–ca. 200),<sup>19</sup> and Hippolytus of Rome (d. ca. 230). From among the desert Fathers, the three works included the semi-legendary Moses of Scete, and from the generation of Emperor Constantine I and the First Ecumenical Council, the prolific church historian and exegete, Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–ca. 340). We find from the fourth century with all of its controversy, the anti-Arian Athanasius of Alexandria, Severianus of Gabala (ca. 310–405),<sup>20</sup> and Epiphanius of Cyprus (or Salamis, ca. 315–402), as well as the three leading Cappadocians (Basil and the two Gregorysts), and John Chrysostom. Of the Latin Fathers, the two florilegia and the *Hexameron* utilized Augustine of Hippo, and from among the writing monastics, they inserted two disciples of Chrysostom: Nilus of (Ancyra and Sinai) (ca. 370–430), and Isidore of Pelusium (d. 440). Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ca. 386–post 457), Patriarch Gennadius I of Constantinople (418–471), and Hesychius of Jerusalem (d. ca. 433) represented the generations fighting Nestorianism and Monophysitism, and from the first two Byzantine centuries, properly speaking, Maximus the Confessor, Anastasius of Sinai, (pre-640–post-700), and John of Damascus appeared—the last two having lived under Islamic rulers. Accuracy of attribution, however, was sometimes honored in the

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<sup>18</sup> For descriptions of the 1073 *Sbornik (Miscellany)* and *Hexameron* of Ioann the Bulgarian Exarch, see Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie slavianskikh rukopisei*, 2.1.2:1–29, No. 54, and 2.2.2: 365–405, No. 161. For a discussion and translation of the 1076 *Sbornik*, see *Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus'*, xii–xl, 3–11.

<sup>19</sup> According to one tradition, a disciple of a disciple of a man who claimed to have known John the Evangelist, Irenaeus was partially responsible for elevating the Gospel of John, with its clear affirmation both of Christ's divinity as the incarnate Word and of the Trinity, to a par with the Synoptic Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

<sup>20</sup> Severianus and Basil composed the two *hexamera*, which were Ioann the Exarch's chief sources.

breach; for example, one citation attributed to John Chrysostom in the 1076 *Sbornik (Miscellany)* originated from John Climacus, and another, of unknown origin, was credited in the manuscripts to Maximus the Confessor as well as to Chrysostom.<sup>21</sup>

This list hardly does justice to the number of church Fathers whose works our Kiev bookmen would have read as their careers developed. While they could have known most of these Fathers through the excerpts of the 1073 miscellany, itself a redaction of the *Questions and Answers* of Anastasius of Sinai,<sup>22</sup> they also would have had access to a number of what then passed for single-authored books, albeit representing later collections of some of these authors' genuine and spurious works.

The survival of full compositions, of course, depended upon the labors and hence tastes of co-workers, disciples, and later writers, who chose to serve as literary executors. Judging from not only the extant codices, but also the language of the translations of later manuscripts, specialists have grounds to believe that the Rus' by the late 1000s or soon thereafter, had access to books by, attributed to, or compiled from the writings of, about a dozen Fathers, as well as saints' lives and the recent works of several Bulgarians. The available works of church Fathers included: collected sermons of Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem, in addition to Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom,<sup>23</sup> a general theological treatise attributed to Caesarius (d. 368), brother of Gregory of Nazianzus, and an abbreviated *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* by John of Damascus;<sup>24</sup> and finally six moral-ascetic compilations: some version of the ancient *Patericon* of the desert Fathers,<sup>25</sup> the *Paranesis* (Exhortation) of Ephrem of Syria,<sup>26</sup> an *Asketikon* of homilies and regulations of

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<sup>21</sup> *Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus'*, 6, 106.

<sup>22</sup> PG 89: cols. 311–823.

<sup>23</sup> Fomina, "Drevneishie spiski sbornika Zlatostrui," 34–53.

<sup>24</sup> The first full translation of his philosophical chapters came in the 14th c.: Sukhanova, "O pervonachal'noi redaktsii," 324–336.

<sup>25</sup> Van Wijk, "Podrobnyi obzor," 38–83; Van Wijk, "La traduction slave de l' *Ἀνδρῶν ἁγίων βιβλος*," Veder, "Le Skitskij Paterik," 51–72; *Old Church Slavonic Translation of Ἀνδρῶν ἁγίων βιβλος*, and *Drevnerusskie pateriki*.

<sup>26</sup> Ogren, *Paranesis Efrema Sirina*, argues that all of the Slavic translations harken back to one made under the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon (r. 893–927) from a Greek text anterior to that published in the 1700s.



Basil of Caesarea,<sup>27</sup> the *Ladder (Lestvitsa)* of John Climacus of Sinai,<sup>28</sup> the *Pandects* of Antiochus Monachus of St. Sabas (early seventh century), and the *Little Catechisms* (Brief Sermons) of Theodore the Studite.<sup>29</sup>

The preceding list provides a clue to the restricted content of the original legacy of literature essentially about monasticism from the pre-Mongol period of Rus': the *Life of Feodosii*,<sup>30</sup> the *Paterik Pecherskii (Lives of the Fathers of the Cave Monastery)*,<sup>31</sup> perhaps the brief sermons modeled on Theodore Studite and attributed to Feodosii,<sup>32</sup> Kirill of Turov's "Discourse" on the symbolic meaning of the monk's attire,<sup>33</sup> and a couple of other saints' lives.<sup>34</sup> Outside of Climacus's *Ladder*, none of the available treatises on monasticism expounded on its spiritual-mystical aspects; rather, they focused on the ethical, devotional, and ascetic, some of it extreme almost beyond belief.

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Let us fast-forward to 1516. For the overall flavor of the patristic environment of the time, we might slog through the detailed description of the *Great Menology* produced over the 1530s–1550s.<sup>35</sup> But for the purposes of this essay, we should place ourselves, say, in the Ferapontov Monastery in Beloozero, in the heart of Russia's northern forest wilderness, where a book-oriented novice would have access to some of pre-modern Russia's most creative spiritual

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<sup>27</sup> Thomson, "Prolegomena," 65–84.

<sup>28</sup> On the translations, see Saenko, "K istorii slavianskogo perevoda teksta Lestvisty," a great guide to understanding this work is Johnsén, *Reading John Climacus*.

<sup>29</sup> Tvorogov, "Drevnerusskie chet'i sborniki XII–XIV vekov," 20–41.

<sup>30</sup> Hollingsworth, *Hagiography of Kievan Rus'*, lviii–lxviii, 33–95, the chief literary models and sources being the "Life" of Anthony by Athanasius of Alexandria and the "Life" of Sabbas by Cyril of Scythopolis (active, 550s).

<sup>31</sup> Heppell, *Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*.

<sup>32</sup> SKKDR, 1:457–459.

<sup>33</sup> Franklin, "On the Monastic Order," 82–96.

<sup>34</sup> I am skeptical that the "Life" of Avraamii of Smolensk as we know it stems from the pre-Mongol period. Other possibilities are the written lives of the Hungarian immigrant princely equerry and founder of the Novotorzhok Boris-and-Gleb Monastery, Efrem (d. 1053), and the princess/founder-abbess, Evfrosiniia of Polotsk (d. ca. 1173), plus the lost "Life" of Feodosii's mentor Antonii: SKKDR, 1:135–136, 146–150.

<sup>35</sup> Iosif, *Podrobnoe oglavlenie Velikikh chet'ikh minei*.

developments, artistic and literary,<sup>36</sup> as he progressed in his own reading, copying, and internalizing the monastic Fathers. Affecting him from among the crucial key factors for East Slavic monasticism since the Kievan period, would have been the translation and dissemination of five types of patristic literature: the ever-expanding and reworked hagiographic texts with a few Russian lives added to the mix; the regulatory and liturgical instructions, such as the Sabaite, or Jerusalem, Typikon as well as older and newer hymns;<sup>37</sup> the encyclopedic works, represented by the *Pandects* and *Taktikon* of Nikon of the Black Mountain;<sup>38</sup> dogmatic and apologetic treatises against Jews and “Latins” (Roman Catholics) as well as Arians and the like;<sup>39</sup> and ascetic-contemplative writings, including several new authorities.<sup>40</sup> Among the last-named figured Symeon the New Theologian (949–1032)<sup>41</sup> and his disciple Nicetas Stethatos (ca. 1000–1080); two personally obscure 12th-century writers, Peter Damaskenos<sup>42</sup> and Philipp Monotropos, (Solitarius), author of *Dioptra* (*Zertsalo* = Looking Glass);<sup>43</sup> and the 13th-century Nicephorus Monachus, or whoever it was, who authored the initial, brief Orthodox treatise of breath-control pray-

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<sup>36</sup> Danilova, *Freski Ferapontogo monastyria*.

<sup>37</sup> Taft, “Mount Athos”; and Prokhorov, “K istorii liturgicheskoi poezii.”

<sup>38</sup> On Nikon, see Doens, “Nicon de la Montagne Noire,” 131–140.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. John Meyendorff claimed that translations of the classical treatises on “pure theology” were rare items: *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 125; but, in fact, the translation of spiritual literature was also rather limited: for example, by no means were all of Maximus/Pseudo-Maximus the Confessor’s or Peter Damaskenos’s works accessible in a Slavic version.

<sup>40</sup> Diuchev, “Tsentry vizantiisko-slavianskogo obshcheniia,” 107–129; and Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 119–144. For a nearly complete list of translations of the patristic literature, see Thomson, “The Corpus of Translations,” 179–214. One item missing is the disputation of Gregentius the Himyarite and Rabbi Herbario: see below, page 104.

<sup>41</sup> For a dated description of a Slavic Symeon/Pseudo-Symeon, see Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie slavianskikh rukopisei* 1.2.1:434–444, No. 164.

<sup>42</sup> Gouillard, “Un auteur spirituel byzantine.” The favorite sources of the 12th-century mystic Peter Damaskenos were Basil, Chrysostom, Climacus, the desert Fathers as a group, Gregory of Nazianzus, Isaac, John of Damascus, and Maximus, followed by Anthony, (Pseudo-)Dionyseus, Dorotheus, Evagrius, (Pseudo-)Macarius, and Nilus of Sinai, who, as a group, provide a balance among the original ascetics, the classical and philosophically informed theologians, and the hesychasts. For Damaskenos’s writings, see *Philokalia* 3: 70–281.

<sup>43</sup> Prokhorov, “*Dioptra*.” 7.

er,<sup>44</sup> as well as the two Gregorysts to be discussed below. Simultaneously with these new writings, the eastern Rus' experienced the development and spread of revived hesychastic impulses, of partially or nearly fully cenobitic cloisters active in the growing productive, commercial, and commemorative-service economy, and perhaps, if Robert Romanchuk is correct, of a new critical and heuristic attitude toward texts and reading among a few daring minds.<sup>45</sup>

Nowadays, for overall orientation regarding the purely spiritual side of these three developments, we often turn to the brilliant and versatile exponent and defender of Orthodoxy as well as stillness, Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), but the most authoritative later medieval church Father for the Orthodox Slavic monk in his cell was the master practitioner, teacher, and hymnographer, Gregory the Sinaite (1265–1346).<sup>46</sup> One of his disciples, perhaps Romil of Vidin (Ravanica), composed or redacted the new “Scete Typikon,”<sup>47</sup> which Russians started to use around 1400, not only for

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<sup>44</sup> Hausherr, “La méthode d’oraison hesychaste, 150–208.

<sup>45</sup> For an introduction to this complex problem of hermeneutics, see Romanchuk, *Byzantine Hermeneutics*.

<sup>46</sup> A review of the Slavic manuscripts (here all miscellanies) of the Hilandar Monastery (a Serbian cloister on Mt. Athos), which are referenced here by the manuscript numbers used at the HRL, shows that Gregory the Sinaite is found in 17 of them, divided between spiritual writings and hymns. Works of Gregory Palamas appear only in seven: two contain anti-Catholic works (HM.SMS.469 and 474), and the remainder, sermons in honor of the Cross (HM.SMS.649), the Theotokos (HM.SMS.487 and 489), Clement (HM.SMS.441), and Demetreus (HM.SMS.440 and 487); Matejic and Thomas, *Catalog*, 1: 537–538, 559, 562; 2: 573–574. Similarly, the Iosif-Volokolamsk Monastery inventories of 1545, 1573, and 1591 contained the “Life” of Gregory the Sinaite and a book of Gregory Palamas against the Latins. The works attributed to Gregory the Sinaite preserved in Russia’s State Historical Museum (GIM) collection of Iosifov manuscripts divide into hymns or instructions for repenting in five books of prayers (three of them Psalters), his “Life” in one codex, and some spiritual writings in four codices: KT-V, 31, 33, 71–73, and the descriptions of GIM, Eparkhial’nyi Fond (hereafter, Eparkh.), Nos. 149, 156, 167, 277, 306, 345, 348, 351, 358, 368.

<sup>47</sup> Ivanova and Matejic, “An Unknown Work of St. Romil,” 4: 3–15; and HRL, HM.SMS.640 (photocopy of microfilm generously supplied by HRL). The manuscript, from the 1370s to the 1380s, is defective, but ff. 2–9v (with folia missing between ff. 7v and 8) contain virtually the same text as in one of the earliest Russian copies, that is Kir.-Bel. XII ff. 258–266, 269–270v; see also Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia*, 158–164. Romil was the author of

small establishments, but also as personal cell rules in large cenobia.<sup>48</sup> It stands in need of a major study,<sup>49</sup> as does Gregory the Sinaite's overall legacy in the world of Slavia Orthodoxa.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, the nature and transmission of the Slavic versions of most major patristic figures require fresh investigations, though some serious new efforts have appeared.<sup>51</sup> In one example—the Slavic text of Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022)—the redactor created a practically-oriented, lead discourse, “O ezhe kako podobaet inokom prebyvati” (On How it is Proper for Monks to Live), from a later chapter of the original compilation and the instructions on repentance in an earlier section.<sup>52</sup> Symeon's

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this earliest of the Slavic copies (no Greek original has turned up), Balkan or Rus/Russian, in a manuscript which also contains a selection of Gregory the Sinaite's works, but from a different hand. E. V. Beliakova believes that the “Scete Typikon” originated with one of Gregory's Slavic disciples: Beliakova, “Slavianskaia redaktsiia Skitskogo ustava,” 3; see also Romanenko, *Nil Sorskii i traditsii russkogo monashestva*, 43.

<sup>48</sup> See Beliakova, “Ustav pustyni Nila Sorskogo,” 96–106; and Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia*, 351–352. The huge Egyptian monastic complex of Sketis (Scete) was the namesake for the term used to describe small communities of monks living separately, but joining periodically for communal services.

<sup>49</sup> See Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia* 352; Romanenko, *Nil Sorskii*, 43; Beliakova's articles noted in the two previous footnotes represent an excellent start on the study of the “Scete Typikon.”

<sup>50</sup> The Slavic tradition found in HRL, HM.SMS.640 (which also contains the “Scete Typikon”) and, a little differently, in the Moscow Holy Synodal Collection (hereafter Sinod.), No.172: Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie Slavianskikh rukopisei*, 2.2:465–469, are close but not identical to what is printed in PG 150: cols. 1240–1346 and translated in the English version of the 18th-century Greek *Philokalia*: 4:207–286. These latter do not contain the hymns and instruction concerning penitence, ascribed to Gregory. See Hausherr, “L'origine de la théorie orientale.” The miscellany HRL, HM.SMS.456 from the 1390s contains a similar, but not identical collection of Gregory's works. See also Tachaios, “Gregory Sinaites's Legacy”; and *NSAW*, 72–73.

<sup>51</sup> Among others, Granstrem, “Ioann Zlatoust” (1974), 186–193; Granstrem, “Ioann Zlatoust” (1980), 344–375; and Fedotova, “K voprosu o slavianskom perevode,” 498–511.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. RNB, Solovki Collection, Fond 717, No. 271/793, ff. 1–23v (microfilm obtained for me in the late 1970s by Wayne Lord) and Symeon the New Theologian, *Catéchèses*, (a French translation of the Greek text) or *Discourses*, Discourses 5, 26. The latter is an English translation of the *Catéchèses*.

hymns, furthermore, are mixed in with the discourses in this Slavic version of *Simeon Novyi Bogoslov*.<sup>53</sup>

Slavs at Mt. Athos and in Russia also compiled their own anthologies of the major spiritual guides. One Hilandar codex from the 1390s contains the works of “Nilus of Sinai” (Evagrius of Pontus),<sup>54</sup> Maximus the Confessor, Philotheus of Sinai (post-700?),<sup>55</sup> Symeon the New Theologian, and Gregory the Sinaite. Another Hilandar codex from ca. 1400 has four of these (“Nilus,” Maximus, Symeon, and Gregory), as well as Pseudo-Macarius of Egypt, Peter Damaskenos, Diadochus of Photice (400s), Ephrem of Syria, Isaac the Syrian (seventh century), Nicetas Stethatos, and the Latin developer of Evagrius’s original formulation of the “eight (pernicious) urges” (thoughts, *logismo*), John Cassian (ca. 360–ca. 435).<sup>56</sup> Likewise, an anthology compiled by the Iosif-Volokolamsk treasurer and external agent Tikhon Zvorykin in the very early 16th century contains ascetic works of Climacus, Abba Dorotheus (ca. 500–560/580), Basil, Barsonophius of Gaza (d. ca. 545), Peter Damaskenos Ephrem, Antiochus, (Pseudo-)Macarius, Diodochus, (Pseudo-)Nilus, Philotheus of Sinai, Nicetas Stethatos, Hesychius,<sup>57</sup> Maximus the Confessor, and others.<sup>58</sup> The core of these lists is identical to Gregory the Sinaite’s recommendations.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie Slavianskikh rukopisei* 2.1, 2, No. 164; see also, *NSAW*, 74–75. (An initial error regarding this text in *MRIV*, where “O ezhe kako podobaet” is treated simply as Pseudo-Symeon, was corrected in the revised edition.)

<sup>54</sup> See Hausherr, “L’origine de la théorie orientale,” 164–175. From an April 2011 Dumbarton Oaks symposium on Evagrius and his legacy we can expect a superb new collective volume in the near future.

<sup>55</sup> The dates, even the precise centuries, of all three Sinai ascetics, John Climacus, Hesychius, and Philotheus are uncertain: The editors of the English *Philokalia* believe that Hesychius followed Climacus and preceded Philotheus: 1:161, 3:14.

<sup>56</sup> HRL, HM.SMS.456 and 468 (both miscellanies): Matejic and Thomas, *Catalog*, 1: 548, 558.

<sup>57</sup> That is Hesychius of the Batos Monastery on Mt. Sinai (post-650?), whose spiritual *Centuries* are attributed by tradition to Hesychius of Jerusalem.

<sup>58</sup> KT<sub>s</sub>-V, 358–360 (GIM, Eparkh., No. 344); see Goldfrank, “Nil Sorskii’s Following,” 215–216.

<sup>59</sup> “Read deeply always about stillness (*hesychia*) and prayer, such as in *The Ladder* or in Isaac, that of Maximus, that of the New Theologian, that of his disciple Stethatos, that of Hesychius, that of Philotheus, and those

Gelien Prokhorov has shown that the greatest amount of Russian copying of the major works of the above authors, according to the extant Troitse-Sergiev Monastery collection, occurred around 1380–1425, with a lesser peak coming around 1480–1515, and a third soon after the Time of Troubles (1620s–1630s): information consistent with what we know, adjusting, of course, for the foundation dates, of the Kirillov (1397) and Iosifov (1479) Monasteries.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the hesychastic revival typified by Gregory the Sinaite’s Balkan activities, more than any organic development out of the Kievan period, set the stage for the spiritual side of Russia’s next era of monastic creativity, grounded in patristics.

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Two clusters of events during Troitse-Sergiev’s second peak of interest in ascetic cell literature set off a flurry of parallel and mutually reinforcing Russian monastic reforms, which claimed grounding in patristic traditions and certainly would have affected our hypothetical Ferapontov novice. At some time in the 1470s or soon thereafter, Nil Maikov returned from Mt. Athos to Kirillov Monastery and established his own skete or hermitage by the Sora River (1470s–1480s—and hence, “Nil Sorskii”) as the focal point for teaching the stillness à la Gregory the Sinaite. In 1477 Iosif Sanin succeeded his late mentor as abbot at Pafnutii-Borovsk. However, facing certain difficulties with the Moscow authorities, he paid a semi-incognito<sup>61</sup> visit to Kirillov and a few other cloisters before returning to Pafnutiev and then moving to his native Volokolamsk to start his own cenobium in 1479 (from which he gets the sobriquet “of Volokolamsk” or “Volotskii”). Each claimed full grounding in the monastic Fathers. Parallel to this, the development of dissident thinking by so-called then “Jewish-reasoning Novgorod heretics,” which is not at all the subject of this essay, placed the authority of church Fathers, along with reason and rhetoric, at the center of the defense of tradition.

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of such others”: *De quietudine et duobis orationis modis capita quindecim* 14, PG 150: col. 1324D; cf. Maloney, *Russian Hesychasm*, 108.

<sup>60</sup> Prokhorov, “Keleinaia isikhastaskaia literatura,” 317–324; and Fedotova, “K voprosu o slavianskom perevode,” 501, 504.

<sup>61</sup> Intelligent, vigorous, charismatic, and possessed of one of the best singing voices in the land, Iosif was hardly better at concealing his identity in 1478 than Peter the Great was in 1698.

Were the two monastic reform impulses connected? Two circumstances indicate that they were. It cannot be an accident that Nil Sorskii's "On Mental Activity" (*O myslenom delanii*—his treatise or so-called *Ustav*), Iosif's initial, brief rule ("Discourses from the Divine Writings of Abba Iosif to His Disciples on the Cenobitic Life"), his initial brief redaction *Prosvetitel'* (originally termed his "Discourses and Introduction against the Godless Heretics"), and even Iosif's first expansion toward his extended rule (*Dukhovnaia gramota* [Spiritual Writ = Last Will and Testament]) all contain 11 *slova* (*slovesa*) or "discourses" (singular—*slovo*). And it cannot be an accident that the earliest extant copies of both Nil's and Iosif's major works are from the combined hands of Nil Sorskii and his shared disciple with Iosif, the latter's future council elder, Nil Polev.<sup>62</sup>

Nil Sorskii's pedagogical and psychological mission was both easier and harder than Iosif's. It was simpler, since both the skete as a mode of life and Nil's goal of teaching and spreading stillness (*hesychia*, *bezmolvie*) were solidly anchored in received traditions. He mastered this legacy and was a superb writer. Yet this work was more difficult, because the life Nil preached and taught was extraordinarily demanding and outside the mainstream of monastic activity of the late 14th and early 15th centuries. It was one thing for a cloister's literate contingent or a solitary to include some reading of spiritual literature and experimenting up to one's capacity in hesychastic devotions, in addition to following the normal ascetic rigors of the cell rule. It was another to devote one's training and adult life to such "prayer of the heart." To be a genuine follower of Nil, one had to study the monastic Fathers, and go through a long period of discipleship that emphasized practice in obedience, humility, labor, and abstinence, and aim for self-purification from all tempting urges and thoughts. Theoretically, due to the actions of Satan and his army of demons, even the most accomplished monks had to be vigilant and ready for combat. Once a monk achieved an appropriate level of discipline, there followed the requirement of rigorously exercising one's body and mind in directed, pure prayer.

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<sup>62</sup> Kloss, "Nil Sorskii i Nil Polev," 150–167; Prokhorov, "Poslaniia Nila Sorskogo," 125–143; Prokhorov, "Avtografy Nila Sorskogo," 37–54; Prokhorov, "Nil Sorskii," 2.1: 133–141. N. A. Kazakova, however, suggested earlier that a fragmentary copy of Nil's *Ustav* by his Kirillov disciple Gurii Tushin is the oldest copy: Kazakova, "Knigopisnaia deiatel'nost'," 175, 179–180. In general on Nil and Iosif as allies, see Goldfrank, "Re-centering Nil Sorsky."

Iosif's tasks were of a different order. The problem for him, in relationship to the church Fathers, was monastic worldly success in his abbey's first 25 or 30 years such as no countryman before him had enjoyed, except perhaps, Feodosii of the Kievan Cave Monastery (11th century) at the dawn of Rus' monasticism. No one else had collected such dedicated talent so quickly as Iosif. No one else had so rapidly expanded the economic base of a cloister as did this rationalizer and systematizer of commemorative services. No one else had so earnestly patronized the best iconographer of his day or built up a fine library so quickly and so well. No one else had been able to influence church policies or to sprinkle the church leadership with allies and disciples as he did.<sup>63</sup> Certainly, models existed of flourishing cenobia, past and present, in theory or in practice, such as Stoudion in Constantinople, the Laura at Mt. Athos, and Troitse-Sergiev and Kirillo-Belozersk Monasteries at home. But to collect a brotherhood from all walks of life, teach, preach, legislate for it, and meanwhile orchestrate a canonically questionable inquisition, while growing rich and powerful, and be able to package the entirety consistently within the patristic ascetic traditions—this required a special turn of mind bordering on pure chutzpah in the eyes of some contemporaries who perceived in his actions a hypocritical hijacking of the hierarchy.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Zimin, *Krupnaia feodal'naja votchina*, 37–100; Steindorff, *Memoria in Altrussland*, 164–196, passim.

<sup>64</sup> “And you, Sir, have humiliated not only commoners, but your lord prince, and boyars, and state secretaries, and have removed an archbishop from his throne .... And you, Sir, have established your own law and have laid your displeasure on everybody .... And from whom, Sir, have you studied the art of war? ... Why, Sir, do you call yourself a poor man [*nishch*]? Have you not dressed yourself in sheepskin only in form, while internally being full of ravishing and injustice? Are you so poor, Sir, that not only laymen, but also princes are seduced by your riches? ... And why do you think and say to yourself, ‘Such a great abbey—how can it be provisioned, if people do not give?’ ... And you, Sir, by your ty-pikon, would kill and burn all sinners.” So wrote one of Iosif's critics at the end of Iosif's life or soon afterwards, *PIV*, 345, 348, 352, 354, 358 [all translations of Iosif and Nil in the text and in the notes by DG]. The questions of Iosif's documented intrigues and what underlay his determined fanaticism against dissidence also lie beyond the purview of this essay.



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We shall commence with Nil because of his more constrained interests and because if either one was in any way the teacher of the other, Nil likely played that role. Of course, for our imagined Ferapontov novice, both Nil and Iosif would have seemed larger than life, given their mastery and application of the monastic Fathers.

Specialists accustomed to thinking “non-Iosif” when they imagine Nil Sorskii, emphasize his undeniable closeness to the spiritual Fathers of the Christian East.<sup>65</sup> But this is only part of the story. If we examine Nil’s book-copying, which included liturgical hymns, we find him to be in the mainstream within the church,<sup>66</sup> and this explains how our Ferapontov monk would have encountered Nil. His collection of 24 edited lives from the first millennium monastic saints points in all possible ascetic directions: recluses and stylites, laura-archs and cenobiarchs, tyrant-bashers and first-rate intellects.<sup>67</sup> All of these miracle workers came from fine families, were educated, practiced strict asceticism, and routed evil. Accordingly, they all also combated heresy or Satan, often as wonder-working faith healers. Stillness was secondary, especially compared to what it might have been. For example, Nil bypassed Gregory Palamas’s hesychasticizing revision of the original “Life” of Peter of Athos (earlier ninth century) by Nicholas the Monk, which has a standard, tropic minimum of *hesychia* as part of one’s life experience, even though Palamas’s version discusses the nature of prayer.<sup>68</sup> Nicholas’s original decried acquisitiveness in a fashion that appears to foreshadow Nil’s original writings.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> For example, Lillienfeld, *Nil Sorskij*.

<sup>66</sup> Kloss, “Nil Sorskii i Nil Polev”; and Prokhorov, “Avtografy Nila Sorskogo.”

<sup>67</sup> For a brief descriptive analysis, see *NSAW*, 24–30.

<sup>68</sup> *Sobornik Nila Sorskogo*, 1:227–268; Lake, *Early Days of Monasticism*, 18–39; Gregorius, Archbishop of Thessalonika, *Oratio in admirabilem et angelicæ parem vitam sancti ac divini patris nostri Petri qui in Sancto Monte Atho anchoretam egit*, PG 150: cols. 996–1050; and Papacherysiathanou, “La vie ancienne de Saint Pierre l’Athonite,” 19–23.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Lake, *Early Days of Monasticism*, 35, 39; *Sobornik Nila Sorskogo*, 257, 267; and *NSAW*, 186–187, 215. An intriguing question is whether Nil was the first to translate Nicholas’s genitive plural *kai agrōn kai ktēmātōn* (“both fields and property/possessions”) as *i sel i stiazhanii* (“both villages/fields and property/possessions”), a problem created by the ambiguity of the Russian *selo*, which could translate *agrōs* (“field”), as well as words

Nil's hagiography, it turns out, while honored by Iosifov monks, did not find favor with the Iosifite-leaning hierarch Makarii, who, as archbishop of Novgorod 1526–1542 and metropolitan of Moscow 1542–1563), commissioned and expanded the *Great Menology*. Tamara Lönngren suggests that Nil's offense may have been his tampering with the older texts, even if he did not sacrifice content when he streamlined to improve the form—something she shows to have been the case in comparing versions of the “Life” of Symeon the Stylite of the Wondrous Mountain (521–596).<sup>70</sup> Here, we should note, Nil was doing what he also did with sources in his original monastic writings, and Iosif sometimes tampered with texts as well.<sup>71</sup>

A fine example of Nil's textual manipulation is his *Predanie* (*Tradition*), a brief rule for his small community, wherein he altered the quite disjointed introduction to the *Taktikon* of Nikon of the Black Mountain (ca. 1025–1088), including the confession of faith, and created some excellent prose as he recast it as a transition to a discussion of the skete life as superior to the cenobium.<sup>72</sup> Nil seems to have composed the *Predanie* to complement the “Scete Typikon” and its instructions for devotions in the cell and the weekly group service. How much Nil and his disciples joined these two works is impossible to say, but a version of the “Scete Typikon” accompanies some copies of the *Predanie* and “On Mental Activity”—those associated with his full or shared disciples Gurii Tushin, Nil Polev, and Dionisii Zvenigorodskii. An amended and redacted copy from Nil Sorskii's pen commences Nil Polev's copy of the Sorskii codex.<sup>73</sup> The titles themselves appear com-

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indicating village, manor, or settlement: Sreznevskii, *Materialy* 1: 326–329. Nil certainly did not wish his hermitage to own any plough land, as his *Predanie* forbids outdoor labor in fields: *NSAW*, 118.

<sup>70</sup> Lönngren, “Nil Sorskii i ego ‘Sobornik.’” My own comparison of Nil's version of Symeon's “Life” to the published English translation of one of the standard Greek versions does not indicate that Nil represented this column-dweller as a hesychast in any fashion.

<sup>71</sup> Maybe the best example for Iosif is his homily constructed out of Chrysostom's strictures on praying in church: *AfED*, 341–356; *Prosvetitel'*, 7:204–218; and *MRIV*, “The Brief Rule,” “Discourse I<sup>B</sup>,” pp. 18–25, 125–129; “The Extended Rule,” “Discourse I,” pp. 13–21, 172–176, the last named with Chrysostom's texts precisely identified as Iosif uses them.

<sup>72</sup> See Goldfrank, “Nil Sorskii and Nikon,” 370–397.

<sup>73</sup> Eparkh. 349 (Nil Polev's) and Eparkh. 351 (Dionisii's): *KTs-V*, 364–366. Also RNB, OR, Kir.-Bel. No. 25 from the mid-16th century, which would

plementary, one being “*Predanie ustavom prebyvaiushchim inokom skitskago zhitii*” (The Tradition for the Typikon for Monks Who Live the Scete Life),<sup>74</sup> the other, in one early version, *O zhitel'stve sviatykh otets', sie predanie startsa Nila pustinnika uchenikom svoim* (On the Life of the Holy Fathers: This is the Tradition [i.e., Instruction] of the Elder Nil the Hermit to His Disciples).<sup>75</sup> Like the “Scete Typikon,” the convoys of Nil’s *Predanie* and “On Mental Activity” await a thorough new study.<sup>76</sup>

Nil’s skill as a writer shines forth in “On Mental Activity,” where he selects or combines the voice of his favorite spiritual Fathers and lets them speak for themselves, while he employs their words to depict a problem or make a recommendation in his own way.<sup>77</sup> His presentation and adaptation in “Slovo 2” of Gregory the Sinaite’s strictures on steadfastness illustrate this streamlining, recombining, and conscious choice of alternative words—something that has eluded other translators, who, in my opinion, have not sufficiently utilized Nil’s patristic base here:

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seem to stem from Gurii’s influence over Nil’s legacy in Kirilov, and which Borovkova-Maikova considered to contain the purest text for her 1912 publication: *NSPU*, 124–135. Cf. Beliakova, “Ustav pustyni Nila Sorskogo,” 106. The special addition to the *Predanie* in Nil Sorskii’s hand concerns necessary items for a church and self-administration of sacraments when no priest is present, the latter with a discussion attributed to Basil of Caesarea: GIM, Eparkh. 349, ff. 15–16v (HRL microfilm).

<sup>74</sup> Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia*, 158: alternative translation for *predanie*: instruction: see below, note 154 and the text to it.

<sup>75</sup> *NSPU*, 1; but possibly the earliest copy has the shorter title: *O zhitel'stve ot sviatykh pisani*: Prokhorov, *Nil Sorskii*, 82.

<sup>76</sup> *The Testament (Zavet)* of Nil’s disciple/travel companion to Athos, Innokentii Okhliabinin (d. 1491), indicates his use of some earlier versions of Nil’s *Predanie* and “On Mental Activity.” Published from 16th-century Kirillo-Belozersk collection manuscripts (See Prokhorov, *Nil Sorskii*, 319), the text shows that it was originally written down in a codex containing Nil’s *Predanie* or *Pisanie* (Writing) before the *Zavet* and his *slovesi* (discourses) afterward—both of which works Innokentii considered authoritative for his community. The *Zavet*, however, also contains stipulations found in Nil’s *Predanie*, as if appended to the an earlier recension of it: Cf. Innokentii’s “*A iunykh i bezbradnykh inokov ... pian'stvennago zhe pitiia otnud' ne podobaet derzhati nam*,” *ibid.*, 320, and Nil’s “*V pian'stvo zhe piti otnud' ne podobaet nam ... i s'khraniti vsiachesky gladkykh zhenovidnykh' lits*”: Arkhangel'skii, *Nil Sorskii i Vassian Patrikeev, Prilozhenie III*, 14–16; *NSPU*, 9; Prokhorov, *Nil Sorskii*, 90; and *NSAW* (with a translation of the *Zavet*), 122–123, 273–276.

<sup>77</sup> For more on this subject, see Goldfrank, “Literary Nil,” and *NSAW*, 83–86.

And therefore it is proper to endure in prayer, turning away as much as possible from all thoughts, and not rise to chant too early. *In endurance, he says, may your sitting be, as it is said, "enduring in prayer,"<sup>78</sup> and do not rise quickly due to painful debility or intellectual cries of the mind.<sup>79</sup> And he cites the word of the Prophet: "ill-afflicted like those in pain and about to give birth,"<sup>80</sup> and what St. Ephrem said: "Suffer pains of pains painfully, and thereby bypass the pains of vain pains."<sup>81</sup> And he directs to bow with shoulders and head in pain and endure oft times with desire, summoning the Lord Jesus for help, bending downward and gathering the mind within the heart, if indeed it is open,<sup>82</sup> he says. And he cites the word of the Lord himself: "Violent," he said, "is the kingdom of heaven, and the violent ravage it."<sup>83</sup> Violence,<sup>84</sup> the Lord showed to be zeal and pain over these,<sup>85</sup> he says.*

Gregory's two texts present perfectly logical expositions, using the imagery of Mt 11:12 and the monastic interpretation of its "violence,"<sup>87</sup> which Nil compacted and essentialized without

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<sup>78</sup> Acts 1:14 (referring to Mary and the disciples at Jesus's tomb).

<sup>79</sup> Nil omits Gregory's "and perpetual strife."

<sup>80</sup> Mt 4:9 the italic text to here from *Quomodo oportet sedere hesychastam ad orationem nec cito assurgere* (hereafter *Quomodo oportet*), PG 150: col. 1329A.

<sup>81</sup> The segment is from *De quietudine et duobis modis orationis* (hereafter *De quietudine*) 14, PG 150: cols. 1328BC; the alleged, so far unidentified, citation from Ephrem (in Greek—and I wonder if from the original Syriac as well) is a *pleonastic polypteron* (a heaping of words of the same root), here on the *pon-* root, carried over into Slavic with the *bol-* root, *pain* here being used archaically as a verb as well as noun: *boli bolezn boleznenno, iako mimo techenii suetnykh boleznei bolezni*.

<sup>82</sup> This segment is from *Quomodo oportet*, PG 150: col. 1329A.

<sup>83</sup> Matt. 11:12.

<sup>84</sup> This segment is from *De quietudine*, PG 150: col. 1328A.

<sup>85</sup> This segment is from *Quomodo oportet*, PG 150: col. 1329A.

<sup>86</sup> "Says" is adapted from *De quietudine*, PG 150: col. 1328A. The passage in its entirety is found in *NSPU*, 24, and Prokhorov, *Nil Sorskii*, 112–15, with a modern Russian translation. Gregory's words appear in italics. The translation remains faithful to the order of Nil's borrowing from *Quomodo oportet* and *De quietudine*. See also, *NSAW*, 141–142.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Climacus *Ladder* 1.8 and *Scholia*, 12, PG 88: col. 636B, col. 648B. John Chrysostom gave a more general spiritual interpretation, which neither excludes nor requires an ascetic interpretation: accordingly, Jesus meant: "take by force the faith that is in me": *In Mattheum homilia* 37, PG 57: cols; 422–425. For some of the difficulties modern biblical scholars

losing meaning. To employ a metaphor from the gaming table, it is almost as if Nil rearranged some of the best cards in the deck to produce another strong hand, using one of Gregory's texts to clarify another.<sup>88</sup> The very structure of Nil's "On Mental Activity" shows him balancing systematic logic and discursive art in presenting his subject. On the one hand, he abstracted the system embedded in previous treatises that were somewhat disjointed in structure—something one can observe in the greatest of the (so appearing) single-authored patristic sources available to him, such as Ephrem's *Parenesis*, Climacus's *Ladder* and Isaac the Syrian. This observation is no criticism of these Fathers from an outsider, since for the devout, virtually any passage from these works can place the practitioner somewhere on his or her own path of divine ascent.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, perhaps as Nil understood the rhetorical strategies of his sources, by his very structure he seems to have been in dialogue with himself. His "Introduction" commences with the spiritual goal of acquiring inner purity and then knowledge of God, and next moves to the nature of the struggle against pernicious urges ("Slovo 1"), only to return to a mini-treatise on the goal ("Slovo 2"), back to the struggle ("Slovo 3" to "Slovo 6"), with a sectioned mini-treatise on the eight standard urges (*pomysl'*)<sup>90</sup> in "Slovo 5," which informed readers would recognize as the middle ground between the longer such treatment in the Slavic John Cassian (unnamed by Nil) and much briefer one attributed to "Nilus of Sinai."<sup>91</sup> Next comes a transition to the positive concerning remembrance of death ("Slovo 7"), then the means of advancing toward the goal via tearfulness, watchfulness, and impassibility ("Slovo 8" to "Slovo 10"), and finally a return to basics, with a warning on proper timing ("Slovo 11").

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face with this verse and the related Lk 16:16, see *Anchor Bible*, Matthew, 137–139.

<sup>88</sup> Arkhangel'skii notes that when Nil cited a translation, he often felt the need to explain meaning: *Nil Sorskii i Vassian Patrikeev*, 181n44.

<sup>89</sup> "Forsake not Isaac. Every day one page of Abba Isaac. No more. Isaac is the mirror. There you will behold yourself...One page of Isaac a day. In the morning or at night, whenever. Suffice it that you read a page": attributed to Elder Ieronymos "the Clairvoyant" of Aegina, on the dedication page of *Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*.

<sup>90</sup> I explain my preference *urge over thought* for *pomysl'* = *logismos* in *NSAW*, 88.

<sup>91</sup> See *NSAW*, 70–71, 162–188. Sans recourse to my earlier work, Elena Romanenko confirmed the problem of locating the source of all of Nil's borrowings from John Cassian: "Sviatootecheskie istochniki... Nila, 54–58.

Nil was certainly careful in selecting his sources to suit his purposes.<sup>92</sup> The explicit centrality of Gregory the Sinaite in “Slovo 2” on hesychastic prayer leaves no doubt that Nil is renovating Gregory’s mission. Thus the utilization of Gregory as a key source on the hesychast’s ultimate vision is logical. John Climacus’s crystallization of the theory of the progression of a spiritual battle in the *Ladder* served as Nil’s basic source for this phenomenon, but he employed the correctives found in Climacus’s successors.<sup>93</sup> Nil’s literary trick here was to rearrange Climacus’s written structure as if a mathematician were recasting a matrix to amplify a formula by converting a predicate into a subject heading.<sup>94</sup> Climacus was also crucial for Nil’s treatment of the fight against lust: the battle that Climacus himself used in developing his general theory of spiritual combat. He was, moreover, central for Nil’s handling of compunction/mourning/repentance under the heading “Tears,”<sup>95</sup> and of the question of detachment, as well as for Nil’s discussion of timing—thus qualifying Climacus as Nil’s single most used Father. Perhaps the device of commencing with the most recent master-hesychast, Gregory the Sinaite, and ending with the most authoritative and popular classical ascetic-mystic, John Climacus, was Nil’s means of foregrounding Gregory’s spiritual agenda for Russian monks and their individual spiritual sojourns.

Specialists in stillness have seen compunction/mourning/repentance as a *sine qua non*, the penultimate prerequisite for the hesychast’s successful mental praxis or “prayer of the heart.”<sup>96</sup> Nil apparently fully agreed, and accordingly relied on Isaac the Syrian,

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<sup>92</sup> On this, see Arkhangel’skii, *Nil Sorskii i Vassian Patrikeev*, 139–184, as well as *NSAW*, 68–80 and the footnotes to the translations. For such identifications of Nil’s sources, von Lilienfeld (*Nil Sorskij*) did some excellent spade work with Greek texts, which were augmented by Grolimund, *Neilou Sorsku*, and even more so by this author’s use of the Slavic HRL microfilms, manuscripts located in Russia, or publications (*NSAW*). For why one ought avoid purported “translations” of Nil, other than these three or Prokhorov’s (*Nil Sorskii*), see *NSAW*, xi, 105–109.

<sup>93</sup> See the citations in Lilienfeld, *Nil Sorskij*, 208, and the fuller analysis of this problem in Maloney, *Russian Hesychasm*, 181–182.

<sup>94</sup> See Goldfrank, “Nil Sorskii and Nikon,” 397–400.

<sup>95</sup> Modern analysts of Orthodox spirituality pull these notions together under the rubric of *penthos*, whose core meaning, following Climacus, is *mourning*, but it must be *gladdening* (*charapoios*), not debilitating: Hausherr, *Penthos*, 7; Cf. *Ladder* 7.1, PG 88: col. 801CD.

<sup>96</sup> Hausherr, *Penthos*.

seen now by some as the most brilliant and sublime of the theorists,<sup>97</sup> and Symeon the New Theologian, Middle Byzantium's poet of mysticism, to complement Climacus on tears and Gregory the Sinaite on the ultimate vision.

Nil's choice of church Fathers for brief commentary on the battle against pernicious thoughts, such as Gregory the Sinaite against pride, Isaac the Syrian against sadness, or Dorotheus of Gaza against anger, appear arbitrary. But the same cannot be said of Nil's reliance on Basil of Caesarea for fighting gluttony, for here "On Mental Activity" introduces some practical directives, and to underscore the common principles of abstinence for both cenobites and skete elders made perfect sense. Of course, simply to teach basic principles Nil did not need to use all of these patristic authors, much less others. But he cited more—not only a further set of other monastic and semi-monastic Fathers, including alleged "hesychast" desert Fathers such as Anthony and Daniel of Scete, but also Ephrem, Barsonophius, Pope Gregory of Rome, Philotheus of Sinai, Theodore the Studite, Peter Damaskenos, Diodochus of Photice, (Pseudo-)Macarius, Maximus the Confessor, and Nicetas Stethatos. Nil even cited generalists and hymnographers, such as Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople, Andrew of Crete, and John of Damascus. This collectivity certainly promoted the notion of Nil's focus as mainstream monasticism, just as we shall argue for Iosif, leaving our Ferapontov novice with complementary guides for his life in the cloister.

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Iosif's broader sweep allows us to expand our grasp of how late medieval Russia appropriated the church Fathers. In the sources, Iosif first appears around 1476–1477 as a "disciple" summoned to expound on problems relating to the Trinity and the Old Testament. His initial principle was fidelity to the credo of his baptismal vows, the foundation of all Christian life, and, by extension, of

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<sup>97</sup> "If...the writings of Abba Isaac the Syrian alone survived, they would suffice to one from beginning to end concerning the life of stillness and prayer. They are the Alpha and Omega of the life of watchfulness and interior prayer, and alone suffice to guide one from his first steps to perfection," attributed to Joseph the Hesychast of Mt. Athos on the dedication page of *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*.

monasticism.<sup>98</sup> As the campaign against accused dissidence developed Iosif produced apologetics, influenced in form and a good deal of content by what he would have considered the word and example of the Fathers, and radiating a monastic hue. Aided, it seems, by co-workers and disciples, he would later combine a semi-historical introduction (*skazanie*, meaning “disquisition,” “explanation,” or “account”), 11 discourses (ten called *slovo*, the seventh also an extended *skazanie*), and some combination of epistles and discourses into several redactions of his extended *Prosvetitel’* called, among other things in the sixteenth century, *Book Against the Novgorod Heretics*. This became Iosif’s most popular work by far, and was the only comprehensive, dogmatic-practical, theological compilation authored in pre-modern Russia to be widely read.<sup>99</sup> As for his dependence upon church Fathers, the very notion of a “*slovo* against the recently arising heresy” seems modeled on Cosmas the Presbyter’s diatribe against the Bulgarian Bogomils (ca. 950–1000).<sup>100</sup> The cluster of three *slova*

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<sup>98</sup> *PIV*, 139. Pliguzov, “O khronologii poslanii,” 1046–1047, concurs with Lur’e’s dating, but A. I. Alekseev has of late challenged it: *Sochineniia Iosifa*, 235–242.

<sup>99</sup> For our purposes here, to consider *Prosvetitel’* as a continuously utilized work in the making, with its parts and various combinations of them developing from the late 1480s to beyond Iosif’s death for several decades, makes the most sense. A. P. Pliguzov has challenged, unconvincingly, in my opinion, Lur’e’s basic conclusions concerning the earliest recensions of the “Brief” and “Extended” versions: *AfED*, 438–466; Lur’e, *Ideologicheskaiia bor’ba*, 95–127; Lur’e, “Kogda byla napisana ‘Kniga na novgorodskikh eretikov?’,” 78–88; Pliguzov, “Kniga,” 90–139; and Pliguzov, “O khronologii poslanii,” 1043–1061. However much others may have collaborated or even composed some individual parts, both redactions of *Prosvetitel’* were issued in Iosif’s name and, according to Lur’e’s analysis of the texts and paper, prepared in his lifetime. Recently, A. I. Alekseev has claimed, in opposition to Lur’e, that the whole slew of Iosif’s epistles, which Lur’e and others thought underlay *Prosvetitel’*, were derivative and composed later: *Sochineniia Iosifa*, 204–320, 345. I make a preliminary discussion of this issue in Goldfrank, “New on the Piety of Yore” and a more detailed one in Goldfrank, “Anatomy.” For a fresh reversion to an older view of an early date for the first recension, see Miyano, “K voprosu.”

<sup>100</sup> *AfED*, 466, 475. Cosmas’s diatribe was also one of the works that Gennadii wished the Orthodox to have, “because the heretics possess them all,” and he characterized it as “*Slovo Kozmy prozvitera na novoiavl’shuiusia eres’ na Bogomiliu*” (Discourse of Cosmas the Presbyter against the Newly Arising Heresy, against Bogomil): *AfED*, 320. The term “newly arising” (or “newly appearing” or “recent”) occurs in the introducto-



in defense of icons hearkens back to John of Damascus, the chief patristic source for two of these discourses.<sup>101</sup> Grouping together four *slova* in defense of Orthodox trinitarianism and against Judaism recalls the four-part dispute of Bishop Gregentius the Himyarite (early 500s) against Rabbi Herbario, translated on commission into Russian at Mt. Athos in 1423,<sup>102</sup> and other such packets of four as Athanasius of Alexandria's discourses against the Arians.<sup>103</sup> Among other writers translated from Greek in later Middle Ages and used by Iosif for theology (if not much) are Pseudo-Dionysius with commentaries by Maximus the Confessor<sup>104</sup> and Philipp Monotropos.

In his "Introduction," Iosif claimed to imitate both Antiochus Monachus and Nikon of the Black Mountain in responding to danger with a multi-discourse work intended to buttress Orthodoxy.<sup>105</sup> Iosif saw his fight against dissidence first and foremost as a monastic and quasi-monastic endeavor: "The monastic order, those in monasteries and those in hermitages, and also many noble and Christ-loving laymen girded their hearts, their souls

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ry *Skazanie* and "Slovo 1" of Iosif's *Prosvetitel'*. On Cosmas, see Thomson, "Cosmas of Bulgaria," 262–269. Gennadii himself may be responsible for the word *slovo*, since the title in the manuscripts starts with *Beseda* (Conversation: alternative translation: Discourse); Begunov, *Kozma Presviter*, 297.

<sup>101</sup> John of Damascus, *Orationes apoligetice contra eos qui sacri imagines abjiciunt*, PG 94: cols. 1227–1420; *On the Divine Images*; AfED, 323–390 (*Prosvetitel'*, *Slova* 6–7, 5).

<sup>102</sup> VMCh, vol. 12 (Dec. 19), cols. 1107–1431; PG 86: cols. 682–784, especially 765B; Berger, *Life and Works of Saint Gregentios*, 450–803 (original Greek and English translation); *Prosvetitel'*, 1–4: 55–169, and especially 4:139; and Golubinskii, *Istoriia Russkoi tserkvi*, 2.2:268.

<sup>103</sup> Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie*, II.1.2:32–41; and Sinod., No. 111/20. Cf. PG 26: cols. 12–525; and *Discours contre les Ariens*.

<sup>104</sup> Gorskii and Nevostruev, *Opisanie*, II.1.2.1, Sinod., No. 107; Prokhorov, "Poslanie Titu-lerararkhu," 15, claiming Metropolitan Kiprian (r. in eastern Rus', 1381–1382, 1390–1408) as transmitter.

<sup>105</sup> AfED, 474 (*Prosvetitel'*, *Skazanie*, 47). Later, in "Slovo 15," Iosif likens his enumeration of the foulest of the alleged heretical deeds to the works of the bishops Cyril of Jerusalem, Methodius of Patara, and John of Nicea (active ca. 900) against, respectively, the Manicheans, Origenists, and Armenians: *Prosvetitel'*, 15:521. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catacheses* 6.30–36, PG 33: cols. 584C–609A; Methodius Episcopus et Martyris, *Ex Libro de resurrectione excerpta* and *Ex Libro de creatis excerpta*, PG 18: cols. 266–344; Joannes Niceanis Archiepiscopus, *De nativitate Domini*, PG 96: cols. 1433–1449.

having many afflictions and complete sorrow....” Iosif then generalized the ascetic literature’s sense of permanent struggle against Satan and his troop of demons: “Now not the Persians, nor the Turks, but the Devil himself with his army has mobilized against the Church of Christ.”<sup>106</sup> His epistolary appeals to action evoked the ancient martyrs and the heroic models of hagiography and sacred history:

In truth...you will obtain the heavenly kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ with the first confessors and bishops, Germanus, Nicephorus, and Methodius.<sup>107</sup> ... If we do not die now for truth and piety, then we shall soon die for nothing. ... Remember ... the God-bearing fathers and teachers, patriarchs, confessors, who struggled bloodily over piety. Look and see their glory and fineness now. They rested in peace, their tombs give off incense, their relics bloom, like a fragrant flower, the Lord reigns in them, and their souls are in the hands of the Lord.<sup>108</sup>

Affirming in *Prosvetitel’*, “Slovo 4” the continuing salvific effects of saints and relics—“and they still save”<sup>109</sup>—Iosif gave an essentially monasticizing commentary to a claim, attributed to Chrysostom, that Christ’s victory over Satan provided the right path for salvation, which entailed:

not only suffering of torments and the ascetic life, but also being afflicted over sins, pounding of the forehead, beating of the breast, bending of the knees, raising up of the hands, suffering of the heart, and lamentation of the heart over sins, that is, sighs from the depth of the heart, mournful lamentation, teardrops, a conscience with suffering that cries and vocal fruit confessing the name of the Lord Jesus, and lips saying after David, “I have transgressed unto my Lord and done evil before Him.”<sup>110</sup>

Not surprisingly, Iosif’s defense of monasticism and monastic garb in the four-part “Slovo 11” of *Prosvetitel’* draws heavily on sacred history, hagiography, and patristics, in this case going back to (Pseudo-) Clement and (Pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite.

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<sup>106</sup> AfED, 474 (*Prosvetitel’*, *Skazanie*, 45, 47).

<sup>107</sup> All three were patriarchs of Constantinople (715–730, 806–815, 842–846 respectively), and all three resisted iconoclasm and the emperors who supported it: *LER* 1: 418–420, 434–435, 447, 450–451.

<sup>108</sup> AfED, 425; and *PIV*, 161–162.

<sup>109</sup> *Prosvetitel’*, 4:159.

<sup>110</sup> *Prosvetitel’*, 4:161–162; cf. Ps 50:5/51:4.

From among about 70 named authorities and examples reaching back to the Old Testament, Iosif notes that such greatly revered bishops as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Nicholas of Myra had all been monks,<sup>111</sup> and that the liturgies of Basil, Chrysostom, and Gregory the Great<sup>112</sup> affirm all the church traditions, including monasticism.<sup>113</sup> Here Iosif ties these authoritative saints and others, such as Ephrem of Syria, to the early monastic Fathers, Anthony and Pachomius, and to 11 named and three unnamed early holy women from the days of the apostles through the fourth century—almost all martyrs resisting marriage, or in one case a return to harlotry—and clearly impressive to Iosif's thoroughly ascetic mind.<sup>114</sup>

In fact, one could argue that defense of the legitimacy and sanctity of monasticism lay at the core of Iosif's defense of Orthodoxy, as he specifically had to affirm the truth of the eschatological statements and hence the overall authority of one of the great monastic Fathers, Ephrem of Syria: "For as Saint Ephrem wrote, so our holy and saintly and God-bearing Fathers all wrote in agreement and like unto the prophetic, evangelic, and apostolic pronouncements."<sup>115</sup>

In Iosif's more developed *Prosvetitel'* version of this motif, the defense of Orthodoxy became more pointed in relation to the attacks on Ephrem:

Those heretics, who so speak, wish to introduce an evil opinion into mankind, so that people start to consider the writings of our saintly and God-bearing Father Ephrem false, and on this account demonstrate all the writings of our holy Fathers to be false.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Prosvetitel'*, 11:444–445.

<sup>112</sup> What precisely Iosif might have known of the liturgies ascribed to Gregory would be worth tracking down. See above, note 12.

<sup>113</sup> *Prosvetitel'*, 11:420–421.

<sup>114</sup> From the time of the apostles, Migdonia, Sophia, Eleutheria and three unidentified royal wives; under Trajan, Eudokia; at the time of Decius's persecutions, Epistimia, Anastasia, and another Sophia; under Galienus, Eugenia; under Diocletian, Febronia, and the fourth-century non-martyr Eupraxia, as well the obscure nun Theodora.

<sup>115</sup> *AfED*, 409.

<sup>116</sup> *Prosvetitel'*, 10:384.

The church canons, the secular Late Roman and Byzantine legislation contained in the ecclesiastical law books, and sacred history serve as Iosif's essential authorities in his advocacy and justification of heretics' repression and permanent vigilance—a virtual inquisition by the faithful—against the worst of such culprits. Nevertheless, monastic Fathers also play a modest role in the argumentation and a major one in the self-justification of Iosif and his party. So does John Chrysostom overall, whom Iosif also uses extensively in his rule. Iosif also cites, or, rather, misrepresents Climacus as an authority on receiving back heretics into the church,<sup>117</sup> and even confuses him with Chrysostom as the author of a “Commentary” on the Evangel of John.<sup>118</sup> Basil and Gregory of Nyssa then appear as authorities on permanent repentance for sincere exapostates,<sup>119</sup> which leads to Iosif's chief argument in favor of life imprisonment for them—namely, the examples of voluntary, life-long, penitent murderers and fornicators found in the *paterica*.<sup>120</sup> As usual, Iosif may be somewhat stretching here for in one of his examples, the cave hermit Martin of Mt. Massico in Campania, the ostensible issue was to avoid women altogether, not to repent.<sup>121</sup>

It turns out that not theology per se, where Iosif relied chiefly upon Scripture and logic, but defense of the institution of monasticism and vigorous suppression of heresy constitute Iosif's two most prominent uses of authorities in *Prosvetitel'*. For the latter, the sheer example of monks who fought the historic heresies stands out as the chief place of the monastic Fathers in Iosif's inquisitorial program. Against those who would leave it solely to the secular authorities to handle dissidence, Iosif pulls out the stops with one of his characteristic, “gotcha,” syllogistic (technically, enthymematic) rhetorical questions:<sup>122</sup> “If it is not proper for monks to condemn a heretic or an apostate, then why did the great Anthony condemn

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<sup>117</sup> *AfED*, 506 (*Prosvetitel'*, 15:51f): Climacus admitted that he could not explain why the church canons appeared more lenient toward heretics than fornicators; see *St. John Climacus: Ladder*, 15:48; and PG 88: col. 889B.

<sup>118</sup> *Prosvetitel'*, 15:513.

<sup>119</sup> *AfED*, 506 (*Prosvetitel'*, 15:514–515).

<sup>120</sup> *Prosvetitel'*, 16:536–538.

<sup>121</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 3.16, PL 77: cols. 253A–266C. English translation in *Saint Gregory the Great. Dialogues*, 141–145.

<sup>122</sup> On Iosif's expert, if untrained, use of formal logic, see Goldfrank, “Adversus Haereticos Novgorodensos.”

them?”<sup>123</sup> Following upon the example of Anthony come Paphnutius the Confessor at the First Ecumenical Council, Macarius, Ephrem, Isaac of Dalmatia, Euthymius the Great (376/7–473), Auxentius (ca. 420–470), Daniel the Stylite, Sabbas of Jerusalem, Theodosius the Great, Peter the Monk (later seventh century) and some opponents of iconoclasm: “Theodosia the Martyr (d. 717?),<sup>124</sup> Ioannicius, Arsacius, Isacius, Theophanes the Confessor (760–817),<sup>125</sup> and many others who left monasteries and hermitages and went to the city to condemn and anathematize heretics.”<sup>126</sup> Their ultimate goal, like Iosif’s, was to change state policy. Accordingly, seen through a monastic prism and in the light of the patristic background, Iosif’s famous (or infamous?) powerful strictures about the tsar’s majesty and power, adapted from the sixth-century Agapetus and placed in “Slovo 16” of *Prosvetitel’*, appear far more restrictive than enabling of the sovereign’s authority.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, convinced of his grounding in sacred traditions and enhancing his pastoral responsibilities,<sup>128</sup> Iosif applied his authoritative monastic

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<sup>123</sup> *AfED*, 496 (*Prosvetitel’* 13: 498); compare Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita et conversatio S.P.N. Antonii*, PG 26: col. 912AB. In calling Metropolitan Zosima (r. 1490–1494) the “new Arius” and the “forerunner of the Antichrist,” Iosif may have culled from Anthony’s characterization of Arius according to Athanasius: *AfED*, 425, 428, 473.

<sup>124</sup> Iosif underscores Theodosia’s sanctity in the fight against iconoclasm, as “odes, lauds, canons, and troparions” are chanted in her honor on 29 May, and her relics proved especially miraculous and healing: *AfED*, 497 (*Prosvetitel’* 3: 501). Her celebration was enhanced by having a date identical to the feast day of the martyr Theodosia of Tyre (d. ca. 303). For her brief life in a Synaxarion see Costas, “Life of St. Theodosia of Constantinople,” 1–8.

<sup>125</sup> *AfED*, 497–498 (*Prosvetitel’*, 13: 498–501, and note *n*). The *Prosvetitel’* version adds Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, as monks, to the original list, found in the earliest and separate *Slovo* version (and so published in *AfED*) of Ioannicius and Arsakius, disciples of Theodore the Studite, as well as the latter, while Theophanes the Confessor joined others in using demonstrative vigils and prayers to pressure the Byzantine court in favor of icons: *LER*, 1:450–451.

<sup>126</sup> *AfED*, 497 (*Prosvetitel’*, 13:501).

<sup>127</sup> The issues involved in the analysis of Iosif’s political statements are discussed in Szeftel, “Joseph Volotsky’s Political Ideas,” 19–29; see also Goldfrank, “Deep Origins of Tsar’-Muchitel’.”

<sup>128</sup> The lead sentence of Iosif’s instruction to his successor, which is “Slovo 11” of his extended rule, is taken from John Climacus’s *Liber ad pastorem*: *MRIV*, “The Extended Rule,” “Discourse XI,” no. 1, 242; and PG 88: col. 1196D. However, of his own accord Iosif adds the apostolic

notions quite freely in dealing with the world. He included such basic principles as the above-cited statement that all Divine Writings are in essential agreement and the church's body of laws—among them, selected Late Roman and Byzantine secular legislation—qualifies as Divine Writings.<sup>129</sup> This meant that anyone standing in his way obtained a polemical double blow of canon-legal threats and moral preaching with eschatological consequences.<sup>130</sup> Thus, a prince who complained of a bondsman whom Iosif had tonsured receives a lesson from the “Canons of the Holy Fathers” on giving one's adolescent slaves the alternatives of tonsure or marriage, another from Climacus on tonsure as a “second baptism,” and then an alleged warning from Patriarch Nicephorus the Confessor of Constantinople: “If anyone puts aside the angelic monastic garb and begins to live in the world, it is proper to anathematize him as a heretic and apostate.”<sup>131</sup>

In an analogous case, where Iosif is summoning three abbots and an archpriest to help locate a runaway monk, he uses a different version of this warning and those of other church canons, and then works of Basil and Nikon to emphasize the solemnity and irrevocability of the monastic vow. He then ends with strictures taken from Climacus and Dorotheus, which link together the Devil and demons, vainglory and pride, the loss of discernment and “intellective light,” and separation from God.<sup>132</sup>

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succession of “pastors and teachers,” who “have received from the Lord Jesus Christ the authority to bind and loose.”

<sup>129</sup> *AfED*, 491 (*Prosvetitel'* 13:485).

<sup>130</sup> Nil Sorskii's politically minded, self-styled disciple Vassian Patrikeev was hardly different: “if monks do not keep their vows, Holy Scripture threatens them with torments and condemns them to the eternal fire, and calls them apostates, and renders an anathema”: Kazakova, *Vassian Patrikeev*, 224. Threats of eternal punishment, since they were part and parcel of received monastic traditions, were not entirely foreign to Nil Sorskii either: “we should resist evil thoughts with whatever strength we have. This results in a crown or punishment: crowns for the victors, torments for the sinners who have not repented in this life.” *NSPU*, 21. Cf. Climacus, *Ladder* 15.74; PG 88: col. 897A. Nil's above-cited statement is followed by a related citation from Peter Damaskenos: cf., “Treasury of Divine Knowledge,” *Philokalia* 3:84. The formula, “Struggle—worthy of either crowns or torments,” is found also in the pseudo-Basilian *Penances* copied by Kiril of Beloozero: Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia*, 39.

<sup>131</sup> *PIV*, 152.

<sup>132</sup> *PIV*, 145–148; cf. Climacus, *Ladder* 26.8; PG 88: col. 1013D; Dorotheus of Gaza, *Doctrina* 12.7, PG 88: cols. 1760A–1761B; and Wheeler, *Dorotheus*

Iosif's extended monastic rule, which in its final form may have been the work of his disciples,<sup>133</sup> exhibits a great deal of breadth for a work of this genre. It combines a testament, aphorisms, sermon fragments, complete homilies, typikon bits, systematic regulations, a ceremonial protocol, hagiography, autobiography, polemics, and a non-sacramental penitential. Basil of Caesarea and the *paterica* tradition of stories and apophthegms<sup>134</sup> lead as Iosif's chief authorities, with the two Johns (Chrysostom and Climacus) following, and Nikon of the Black Mountain as the greatest single source of citations. Looming in the background stand a variety of older rules and teachings: the *Precepts* of Pachomius, some of these perhaps filtered through John of Pantellaria (eighth century);<sup>135</sup> the *Parenesis* of Ephrem; the legacies of Theodore the Studite and Athanasius of Athos (d. 1000); the disciplinary aspects of Symeon the New Theologian; and even Byzantine ecclesiastical and civil legislation. These were augmented by later Athonite and other Byzantine traditions and practices, including the Evergetian and related reforms;<sup>136</sup> the *Jerusalem Typikon*; and the individual cell rules, which monks might follow. Select hagiography including that of John of Damascus, some of it excerpted in Nikon and some, perhaps, in full in Nil Sorskii's new collection, played a role. And so did some Russian authorities, such as the traditions of Kirillof Beloozero (d. 1427), the living example of his cloister, and recent native hagiography—at least the *Pecherskii Patericon* (redacted early 15th century), the Life of Sergii of Radonezh (d. 1392) by Epifanii Premudryi (d. post-1418) as revised in

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of Gaza, 190. Dorotheus's full statement suggests also the possibility of falling into heresy.

<sup>133</sup> *MRIV*, 51–52; and Pliguzov, "O khronologii poslanii," 1058.

<sup>134</sup> This includes Gregory/Pseudo-Gregory the Great and his "Life" of Benedict, comprising Book 2 of his four *Dialogues*.

<sup>135</sup> John of Pantellaria: "*Typikon*. Old Russian translation: Mansvetov, *Tserkovnyi ustav*, 441–445. This typikon was found in the early Slavic nomocanons (Golubinskii, *Istoriia Russkoi tserkvi*, 1.1: 652–653), but not all of the Pachomian precepts with analogies in Iosif's rule are found in John's *typikon*. So the question of influence here remains open.

<sup>136</sup> The reform legacy probably did not come via the slight modification by Sava of Hilandar (1169–1237) of the original Evergetian Rule (1054–1070, revised 1098–1118). Timothy of Evergetis and most of his Byzantine derivatives demanded equality of food in their cenobia, but Sava did not, although he did retain other such Evergetian strictures as co-governance and periodic reading of the rule. See Goldfrank, "Hilandarski Tipik"; and *MRIV*, 67–68.

one of its redactions by Pakhomii the Serb (active pre-1438–post-1484),<sup>137</sup> and Pakhomii’s Life of Kirill of Beloozero—or their oral equivalents—and other Russian oral monastic lore.<sup>138</sup> Yet, with all these authoritative sources at his command, the biting *patericon* story cum aphorism stands out as Iosif’s favorite way to make a point: “Once a demon came to the brothers in the cenobium, saw a boy in the cenobium, and said: ‘I do not need to be here, for he will be much more troublesome here than I.’”<sup>139</sup>

Before moving on to some comparisons with Nil, we ought to note a final aspect of Iosif’s writings that linked his apologetics and his monastic corpus, which was his sense of repentance and the role of commemorations. These figured heavily in the terrestrial monastic economy of his day. His “Slovo 4” of *Prosvetitel’*, commences as a defense of the Orthodox notion of the “Divine Economy,” starting with the Harrowing of Hell and the release of the imprisoned souls of the righteous Jews,<sup>140</sup> and ending with the problem of repentance and salvation. Utilizing both a monastic Father, pseudo-Macarius, and the great bishops, Iosif promotes the efficacy of sincere repentance, offerings, and prayers, including prayers for the dead.<sup>141</sup> The utility and need for commemorations also occupies a special place in the extended rule, where he refers to a separate “Account ... of the *Synodicon*,”<sup>142</sup> recently published in full with the patristic citations and commentary that

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<sup>137</sup> Kloss, *Izbrannye trudy*, 337–338, 359.

<sup>138</sup> For more information and references regarding Iosif’s sources, see *MRIV*, 61–70.

<sup>139</sup> *MRIV*, “The Brief Rule,” “Discourse X<sup>B</sup>,” no. 6, p. 156; “The Extended Rule,” “Discourse IX,” no. 2, p. 221.

<sup>140</sup> *Prosvetitel’* 4:139, 161–162. For the alleged “heresy of the Novgorod Heretics combated in “Slovo 4,” Iosif took and abstracted from Gregentius’s rabbinical opponent Herbario the notion that a Jewish-thinking heretic would consider it “improper” for God to take the form of a lowly man, suffer crucifixion, descend to Hell, and trick Satan in order to free deserving souls: Berger, *Life and Works of Saint Gregentios*, 762–769.

<sup>141</sup> *Prosvetitel’*, 4:160–169. The citation of Macarius (or perhaps Pseudo-Macarius) resurfaces in a different form in the defense of monasticism to demonstrate that failure to achieve wonder-working powers in one’s lifetime is no proof that thaumaturgy will not be granted in the afterlife to one who almost obtained it in this world: *Prosvetitel’* 11:434–435.

<sup>142</sup> *MRIV*, “Extended Rule,” “Discourse XIII,” (Tradition 1 [XIII/1]) no. 1, p. 271; no. 22, p. 277; see also *MRIV*, 309–311 (trans.): cf. Kazakova, *Vassian Patrikeev*, 354–356.



follow.<sup>143</sup> Again the authorities were Iosif's vintage combination of hagiography,<sup>144</sup> writings by leading Fathers—in this case Ephrem, Gregory of Nyssa, and Chrysostom—and *paterica* lessons, including some by Gregory/pseudo-Gregory the Great, whose legacy played an essential role in the related “birth of Purgatory” in the Latin West.<sup>145</sup>

To conclude the discussion of Iosif, his general grounding in a wide scope of church Fathers, as well as his trenchant style and relevance for both monastic clergy and for hierarchs of monastic origin of his epoch, secured his popularity. And his sweep might well have overwhelmed our hypothetical Ferapontov novice.<sup>146</sup>

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We could comment a great deal on Iosif's and Nil's proximity to and divergence from patristic traditions, but these are well-worn trails, all leading to the observation that Iosif, as a practical head of a multi-tasking cenobium, had to compromise the ideals of spiritual Fathers in ways Nil avoided. Nonetheless, the solid theoretical grounding in monastic Fathers and the willingness to promote their authority on the part of *both* of Muscovy's stellar theorists cannot be doubted. Nil simply followed the masters in recommending that one find a sound mentor or rely on the Fathers' writings, or if possible, do both.<sup>147</sup> Iosif's final message in his extended rule was that all must “proceed with the witness of the Divine Writings.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Shablovoi, *Sinodik*, 127–156.

<sup>144</sup> Here Iosif employed the “Life” of Paisius the Great (fifth century), another of those edited and copied by Nil Sorskii.

<sup>145</sup> Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, 88–95.

<sup>146</sup> But in this regard, we must not forget that the theological writings attributed to Maksim “the Greek” (in Russia, as of 1518, d. ca. 1555), whose Renaissance Italian education gave him greater knowledge and insights into the literary, philosophical, and theological context of the great *doctors* of the Eastern Church than any Russian of his time enjoyed, starting with the 17th century proved to be even more popular than *Prosvetitel'*. See Olmsted, “Modeling Maksim Grek's Collection Types,” 106–133. By my estimation, the works credited to Maksim survive in maybe three times as many codices as those of Iosif (or Nil).

<sup>147</sup> *NSPU*, 13–15; Prokhorov, *Nil Sorskii*, 100–103; *NSAW*, 129–130; cf. *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian* 23:117.

<sup>148</sup> *MRIV*, “The Extended Rule,” “Discourse XIV,” nos. 37–38, p. 307.

As I mentioned in an earlier article,<sup>149</sup> moreover, Nil's selection of 24 saints for his *Sobornik* either set the stage for, or lay within a continuum of some of the subsequent discourse.

When Nil's most politically minded, self-styled disciple, the active "Non-Possessor" Vassian Patrikeev (forcibly tonsured in 1499, d. after 1531),<sup>150</sup> compiled his list of first-millennium monastic Fathers who allegedly did not possess villages (or was this simply fields?),<sup>151</sup> he named ten saints, nine of whose written lives Nil had included in his *Sobornik*: Anthony, Pachomius, Hilarion, Euthymius, Sabbas, Theodosius, Symeon the Stylite of the Wondrous Mountain, Theodore the Studite, and Athanasius of Athos. The sole outlier relative to the *Sobornik* was the likely misidentified "Apollonius the Great."<sup>152</sup> Earlier, Iosif's extended rule drew upon eight of the nine whom Vassian took from Nil. Iosif omitted Hilarion, but added Arsenius the Great and John of Damascus. Iosif's defense of monasticism and the habit, going through only the first century of historic monasticism, drew upon four of Nil's seven from that period: Anthony again and Pachomius, Hilarion, and Chariton. Similarly, among the historical examples of monks who left their cloister to combat heresy stood six of the ten whom Nil so flagged in the *Sobornik*: Anthony, Euthymius, Sabbas, Theodosius, Isaac of Dalmatia, and Ioannicius the Great, as well as three more from just Nil's "On Mental Activity": Ephrem, Daniel the Stylite, and Maximus the Confessor. Only three such activists lay outside of Nil's extant written corpus: Auxentius, Peter

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<sup>149</sup> Goldfrank, "Recentering Nil Sorskii," 374–375: the text above expands on the exposition in the cited article.

<sup>150</sup> Innokentii Okliabinin is Nil's only known genuine disciple; the advice-seeking addressees of epistles, Gurii Tushin and German Podol'nyi, as well as Vassian, do not thereby qualify as genuine full-scale disciples, and none are so identified in contemporary sources. See *NSAW*, 37–44, 58–60.

<sup>151</sup> What practical policies Vassian was seeking with his attacks on monastic villages is something of a mystery. Andrei Pliguzov argues, with precise references to Vassian's presentation and commentary on canon law, that he aimed to strengthen the bishops by having them (that is, their officials) administer monastic property. How this could have been realized in practice, at a time when the large, self-contained monasteries, with their own inner structures and connections to the outside world, were expanding their economic activities, is difficult to imagine. See Pliguzov, *Polemika*, 172. Cf. Ostrowski, "Church Polemics," 363.

<sup>152</sup> Kazakova, *Vassian Patrikeev*, 224–225. The only Apollonius whom I can locate is a certain Apollonius of Ephesus from the time of the apostolic Fathers: PG 5: cols. 1381–1385.

the Monk, and Theodosia of Constantinople.<sup>153</sup> Hence Nil and Iosif operated in the same patristic world, and our diligent Fera-pontov ascetic reader would see them in this way.

However, maybe one paradoxical aspect of Nil's and Iosif's writings might have puzzled this young monk. Nil, in his hagiographic redacting and his pedagogical citing and adapting, kept to established Greek, Syrian, Egyptian, and pre-Schism Latin Fathers, while Iosif composed a polemical-didactic "Response to the Censorious and Brief Account of the Holy Fathers of the Land of Rus'" as "Slovo 10" of his extended rule. Iosif's ostensible opponents did not dispute the sanctity of Rus' traditions. Rather, if anything, these adversaries were less flexible than he, as they allegedly said: "In earlier times our holy Fathers instituted in writing the cenobitic teachings and traditions (*predanie*);<sup>154</sup> now it is not proper to do so, but only to teach by word."<sup>155</sup>

They were correct concerning the Rus' past, since the only previous cenobitic rule was that of Evfrosin of Pskov (d. 1479)<sup>156</sup> and he was not yet a recognized saint. Indeed, not one word of Iosif's "Brief Account" mentions a Rus' written cenobitic rule. So perhaps they were attempting to divide Nil from Iosif, as the former's *Predanie* was not cenobitic.<sup>157</sup> Whoever the opponents may have been here, Iosif's rejoinder relied on Greek Fathers on two levels. The title "Response to the Censorious" and the characterization of the opponent as "overweening, very boastful," and "censorious" is taken from an apologia towards the end of Philipp's *Dioptra*, where he insists that everything he has written is from "the Divine Writings,"<sup>158</sup> as if Iosif was associating himself with that revered author. Secondly, to justify writing, he correctly cites two

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<sup>153</sup> *AFED*, 497–498 (*Prosvetit'el'*, 13: 498–501). Iosif could learn from available histories that *Auksentii mnikh* (the monk) and *Petr mnikh* took part respectively in the Third and Sixth Ecumenical Councils: *LER*, 1:338, 413. Iosif's mentioning of Arsacius and Isicius together with Ioannicius may have come from a source related to "The Life of St. Theodora the Empress" (Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora, 375), rather than "The Life of St. Ioannikios" (Sullivan, "Life of Saint Ioannikios").

<sup>154</sup> Again: alternative translation for *predanie*: instruction, see above, note 74 and the text to it.

<sup>155</sup> *MRIV*, "The Extended Rule," "Discourse X," no. 2, p. 225.

<sup>156</sup> *DRIU*, 38–56; German transl, von Lilienfeld, *Nil Sorskij*, 295–313.

<sup>157</sup> I missed this distinction in my analysis of Iosif's relations with the Trans-Volgans in my introduction to his rule: *MRIV*, 108 (1st ed., 50).

<sup>158</sup> Prokhorov, "Dioptra," 119 (14th c. Rus' text), 314 (modern Russian translation), 503 (Greek original).

authorities, Climacus and Nikon of the Black Mountain, and stretches a third, Chrysostom, by adding “and writings.”<sup>159</sup> In this manner, Iosif trumps his opponents by using earlier Greek Fathers to justify his own divergence from what may have been a Rus’ practice, but in no way constituted canonic precedent.

Indeed Iosifov honored Nil, and Kirillov honored Iosifov. For it was for Iosif’s monastery that their common student Nil Polev wrote in his 1508 codex:

... of Father Nil, who at the Sora Hermitage on the White Lake [Beloozero] courageously struggled against the Devil in our time, that of the last generation, physically and mentally. ... and departed to his beloved Christ. And for us, he left, as a deposit or a loan, his divinely inspired and soul-profiting writings.<sup>160</sup>

According to the 1591 Iosifov library inventory, the monastery possessed four or five complete copies of Nil’s major work,<sup>161</sup> and we know of at least two more and a total of 18 or 19 cloister figures owning or copying his works.<sup>162</sup> By contrast, if that inventory mentions eleven copies of his extended rule, and at least five, if not nine, of *Prosvetitel’*,<sup>163</sup> Kirillov’s 1601 inventory listed only two or three of Nil’s major works, yet likewise three of *Prosvetitel’*.<sup>164</sup>

Nil claimed to be writing for cenobites as well as skete dwellers. In the oldest extant manuscript penned, according to tradition, by Iosif—a full 345 pages stemming from his pre-abbatial days—we find him starting with Anthony and four other desert Fathers before crafting the 60 percent of the book devoted to selections from the hesychastic authorities, among them Ephrem (allegedly,

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<sup>159</sup> Iosif also adduces a fourth, Symeon the New Theologian, whose genuine and pseudo-Slavic legacy, I have yet fully to check for Iosif’s citation; for all four and the sources for three of them, see *MRIV*, “The Extended Rule,” “Discourse X,” nos. 2–4, pp. 225–226; no. 8, p. 226–227.

<sup>160</sup> Eparkh. 349:195. Borovkova-Maikova noted that this inscription “is often met”: *NSPU, Prilozhenie*, xiv.

<sup>161</sup> KT<sub>s</sub>-V, 80, 81, 83, 96

<sup>162</sup> See Goldfrank, “Nil Sorskii’s Following,” esp. 215, 221.

<sup>163</sup> KT<sub>s</sub>-V, 56, 77

<sup>164</sup> Dmitrieva, *Opis’... Kirillo-Belozerskogo*, 130, 132–133, 139 (for the third, the issue is whether the manuscript starting with the “Scete Typikon, as did the Nil Sorskii-Nil Polev codex, also contained Nil Sorskii’s work. The author of this article admits his surprise in discovering not only that Iosifov was even more book-oriented than Kirillov, but also that Iosif was seemingly as popular as Nil within Kirillov.

“On Stillness”), Isaac, Climacus, Symeon, and Peter Damascenos.<sup>165</sup> So, staying within the walls of Ferapontov for his entire life (except when on mission), our hypothetical monk, using both Iosif and Nil as spiritual guides, could have said, adapting from Jerome’s famous dream, “I am a cenobite, a hesychast, and prepared to be a martyr for the faith.”<sup>166</sup> And until a new mentality influenced by Western education regarding thought and education gained ascendancy in Russia, as would occur in the 17th century, the notions concerning the church Fathers and the authority of their writings, which we encounter in both Nil and Iosif, as well as the panorama exhibited by Makarii’s *Menology* and the ever-present pre-Baroque iconography and liturgies, would continue to dominate the Russian church.

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<sup>165</sup> KTs-V, 369–370; Eparkh. 357. This manuscript also includes other excerpts from the Fathers, an anonymous homily on “mental prayer and attention,” Gregory the Monk (“On Life and on Heresy”), patristic excerpts on Creation, Hippolytus/Pseudo-Hippolytus on the end of the world, a canon (ode) to John the Forerunner, a rule for psalmody, a shorter version of the cell rule for illiterates from the “Scete Typikon,” and one of the same pieces of healing advice determining when to administer bleeding on the basis of the lunar cycle, day of the month, or season, that is found in the codex of Kirill of Beloozero, containing his version of the “Scete Typikon.” See Prokhorov, *Entsiklopediia*, 125–126. This was probably one of the reported 14 books that Iosif and six comrades took with them from Pafnutiev in 1479, when they set out for Volokolamsk: *MRIV*, 27, 55, and was later highly valued and not to be lent out to cells, much less beyond the cloister—the interlibrary loan system of those days.

<sup>166</sup> Downgrading his immense contribution to Latin and Western Christianity, the extraordinarily gifted Jerome reported an unfortunate dream in which a judge condemned him with the words, *Ciceronianus es, non Christianus* (“Thou art a Ciceronian, not a Christian”), and then ordered him beaten. Fortunately for themselves, so far as we know, neither Nil nor Iosif ever felt the need to berate himself for “wordsmithing,” since each put it to the service of enlightenment and salvation of others within Russia’s sacred traditions, as Orthodox theologians, writers, and teachers were expected to do.

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DAVID M. GOLDFRANK

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