The Adoption of the Swedish Rite in Eighteenth-Century Russia – Acculturation, Power Politics and Mysticism

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THE liberalization of the study of the history of Freemasonry in Russia and Eastern Europe in the ex-Eastern Bloc countries since the early 1990s has allowed for the increasing accessibility and publication of important archival evidence on the rise, spread and fortunes of Freemasonry in Russia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is all the more significant as the introduction of Freemasonry into Russia and the vicissitudes of its development until its formal ban in 1822 belong to areas of study which have evolved under the influence of religious, ideological and nationalist agendas which still continue to exercise a distorting impact on the historical and current Russian cultural and political discourses on Russian Freemasonry. For several decades after its introduction Freemasonry played a major role in Russian cultural and intellectual life which was largely unparalleled in any other contemporaneous European country.[1] New reassessments of the history and various facets of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russian Freemasonry can also now draw on and benefit from the ongoing progress, findings and inter-disciplinary projects on the study of contemporaneous Freemasonry in Central and Western Europe and North America.

[1] Isabel de Madariaga, 'Freemasonry in Eighteenth-Century Russian Society', in eadem, *Politics and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Collected Essays*, London and New York, 1998, pp. 150–67, especially p. 150.

The development of early Freemasonry in Russia[2] was originally conditioned by the activity of foreign Freemasons and lodges: English, Scottish, German and eventually French and Swedish. These lodges were formed by the various foreign colonies of diplomats, merchants and so on and thus were created by and for foreigners. Russian membership of these early lodges seems to have been largely confined to representatives of the Russian nobility (particularly aristocrats pursuing a military career).[3] Conditions during the reigns of Elizabeth (1741–61) and Peter III (1761–62) allowed for the further spread of Freemasonry and subsequently Russian Masonic systems and lodges expanded and multiplied significantly during the reign of Catherine II (1762–96).

The early prevalence of English Freemasonry found its expression in the appointment by the Grand Lodge of England of Ivan Perfil'evich Elagin (1725–93) – a poet, head of the Imperial Theatre administration and for a time Catherine II's personal secretary – as Grand Master of the Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia. During the heyday of its influence the alliance of lodges presided over by Elagin, (the so-called First Elagin Union) comprised fourteen lodges and attracted a number of major figures from the Russian political and cultural elite, active in the upper ranks of the army, the navy, the state administration and the

[2] For an up-to-date discussion of the legends and actual evidence of Masonic presence and influence at the court of Peter the Great, see Robert Collis, 'Freemasonry and the Occult at the Court of Peter the Great', *Aries*, 1, 2006, 6, pp. 1–26; Robert Collis, *The Petrine Instauration: Religion, Esotericism and Science at the Court of Peter the Great, 1689–1725*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 32–35; see also Ernest Zitser, 'A Mason–Tsar?: Freemasonry and Fraternalism at the Court of Peter the Great', in Andreas Önnerfors and Robert Collis (eds), *Freemasonry and Fraternalism in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, Sheffield, 2009, pp. 7–33.

[3] The earlier collection of biographical data on eighteenth-century Russian Freemasons in Tatiana Bakounine, *Le repertoire biographique des franc-maçons russes* (*XVIII et XIX siècle)*, Paris, 1967, has been now superseded by Andrei Serkov's major work (updated on the basis of much new archival material), the detailed biographical dictionary, *Rossiiskoe masonstvo 1731–2000: Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Moscow, 2001.

imperial court, including members of Russia's most influential noble families and some Orthodox clergymen.

Operating in accordance with English Craft Masonry, the First Elagin Union coexisted, interacted and on occasions found itself in rivalry with other Masonic systems which had been introducing the newly-created and fashionable Masonic higher degrees rites from Western and Central Europe. The Rite of the Strict Observance was imported into Russia not long after its introduction in Germany by Baron von Hund. With its rich ceremonial and its core legend comprising Templarist and chivalric themes, the Rite of the Strict Observance understandably proved very appealing to various representatives of the Russian aristocratic and military elite who found the whole rite more attractive than the traditional three craft degrees system. The 'clerical' modification of the Rite of the Strict Observance in the system of the so-called 'Clerici Ordinis Templariorum' (or 'Clercs de la Stricte Observance') of Johann August Starck – who spent some time in St Petersburg in the 1760s – also made some inroads in Russia during this period but did not succeed in making a lasting impression on Russian Freemasonry.[4] Finally, in the mid–1760s there emerged a specific Russian higher grades system, the so-called Melissino Rite which comprised seven grades and was created by General Petr Ivanovich Melissino (1724–92),[5] who was a very active figure in Russian Freemasonry and in the successive alliances of lodges under Elagin. But it was the introduction of the so-called Weak or Relaxed Observance (also known as the Swedish–

[4] On Johann August Starck and his role in Russian Freemasonry, see Boris Telepneff, 'J. A. Starck and his Rite of Spiritual Freemasonry', *Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge*, 41, 1929, pp. 238–86, *passim*.

[5] On General Melissino and the background of the Melission Rite, see Robert Collis, 'Illuminism in the Age of Minerva: Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino (1726–1797) and High-Degree Freemasonry in Catherine the Great's Russia', *COLLeGIUM: Studies Across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 16, 2014, pp. 128–68.

Berlin) system of Count Zinnendorf (which integrated higher degrees rituals from the Swedish Rite) and was brought into Russia in the early 1770s by Baron Johann G. L. von Reichel (1729–91) which posed the greatest challenge to Elagin's alliance of lodges.

As in Central and Western European Freemasonry, the introduction of higher grades systems in Russia had already led to a growing polemic between the supporters of the traditional craft degrees system and the adherents of the higher degrees concerning the recognition and definition of 'true' and 'false' or 'spurious' Freemasonry. Following Elagin's initial opposition to the Zinnendorf system (which rapidly grew in popularity and membership) a compromise between the Elagin and Reichel alliance of lodges in 1776 entailed the formation of a single union under the Grand Mastership of Elagin but also the adoption of the Zinnendorf Rite in all lodges under the new, reformed, Grand Provincial Lodge. The upper stratum of the hierarchy of the new Elagin–Reichel union included a number of influential Russian political and military figures and its Deputy Grand Master was a no less powerful figure than Count Nikita Panin (1718–93) who as a foreign minister masterminded Russian foreign policy during the early years of Catherine II's reign (including the well-known 'Northern System' of political alliances in northern Europe), while acting also as a tutor for Catherine's son, Grand Duke Paul.[6] Widely seen as a protector of the Grand Duke's interests, Count Nikita Panin had devised ambitious projects to reform the Russian state which, despite her initial interest, Catherine eventually refused to endorse; hence his aspirations to receive monarchical approval and implementation of his programme were re-focused on Grand Duke Paul.

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[6] On the figures of Nikita Panin, his brother Petr Panin, and the political and noble factions associated with their political and social designs, see David L. Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia: The Panin Party*, New Haven, CT, 1975; Aleksandr Gavriushkin, *Graf Nikita Panin. Iz istorii russkoi diplomatii XVIII veka*, Moscow, 1989.

Despite its ambitions to overcome the internal schisms and divisions among the Russian Masons, the Elagin–Reichel alliance inherited much of the tensions and discords that had plagued Russian Freemasonry before the compromise of 1776. The higher degrees rituals which Zinnendorf had borrowed from the Swedish Rite appeared in his system in an incomplete fashion and in effect did not include much material on the rituals of initiation into the Chapter degrees above the seventh degree. Unsurprisingly some Russian lodges and individual Freemasons were bound to seek a direct contact with Swedish Freemasonry and an unmediated access to the highest degrees of the Swedish Rite.

Soon after the establishment of the Elagin–Reichel union, the young Prince Aleksandr Kurakin (1752–1818), nephew of Count Nikita Panin and childhood friend of Grand Duke Paul, went on an official diplomatic mission to Sweden, accompanied by Prince Gavriil Gagarin (1745–1805). The mission also had a distinct Masonic agenda,[7] as he had been entrusted by the leadership of the newly-expanded version of Russia's Grand Provincial Lodge to make a direct approach to the Grand Lodge of Sweden, asking for his personal initiation into the higher degrees of the Swedish Rite and their introduction into Russian Freemasonry. Initiated a few years earlier into the craft by Count Nikita Panin, he was additionally initiated in Stockholm into the Swedish Rite higher degrees (which the Grand Lodge of Sweden deemed were accessible to him). There are indications that he was also given a charter to open a Chapter in St Petersburg intended to preside over Swedish Rite Freemasonry in Russia.

Reportedly, Duke Karl of Södermanland, brother of the Swedish King Gustavas III and future King Charles XIII, who in 1774 had become Grand Master of both Swedish Rite systems, the Grand Lodge and the Illuminated Chapter, personally conducted Prince Kurakin's initiation into the higher degrees of the Swedish Rite.

[7] On the interlinkage between the political and Masonic agendas of Prince Kurakin's mission, see Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia*, pp. 256–59.

The subsequent course of events surrounding the introduction of the Swedish Rite in Russia and its chronology is unclear. Apparently Gustavas III's entourage was expected to bring all the necessary documents needed to open the Swedish Rite Chapter in St Petersburg during his visit to Russia in the summer of 1777.[8] At the same time the negotiations between Elagin's Grand Provincial Lodge and the Swedish Grand Lodge encountered a series of delays and difficulties in circumstances which are unclear.[9] For a variety of reasons Elagin eventually declined the offer to head the reformed Russian Grand Provincial Lodge which was expected to practise the Swedish Rite system under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Sweden.[10]

The Grand Lodge of Sweden and the Russian Freemasons and networks engaged in the establishment of the Swedish Rite in Russia decided to proceed without the participation of Elagin and the lodges and Freemasons who followed his lead. In February 1778, the Phoenix Chapter (Capitulum Petropolitan, Phoenix), headed by Prince Gagarin as a Prefect (Praefectus

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[8] On these expectations, see, for example, the material presented in P. P. Pekarskii, *Dopolneniia k istorii masonstva v Rossii XVIII stoletiia,* St Petersburg, 1869, pp. 61 ff.

[9] The evidence of the introduction of the Swedish Rite in Russia upon Prince Kurakin's return to St Petersburg in the spring of 1777 is uneven and sometimes contradictory; cf. the somewhat differing reconstructions of its development and chronology in Aleksandr Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo. XVIII i pervaia chetvert' XIX v*., Petrograd, 1916, pp. 140–46; G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*, Petrograd, 1917, pp. 72–82; Tira Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul Feniksa, Vysshee tainoe masonskoe pravlenie v Rossii (1778–1822 gg.*), Petrograd, 1916; reprint Moscow, 2000, pp. 5–25.

[10] For assessments of Elagin's motives to decline the offer to head a Russian Grand Provincial Lodge adhering to the Swedish Rite system, cf. Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo,* pp. 141–43; Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo,* pp. 73–75; Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone. Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, DeKalb, IL, 1999, p. 214 n.138 (who on the basis of his study of Kurakin's correspondence with Stockholm, kept in Moscow, Tsentr khraneniia istoriko-dokumental'nykh kollektsii, f. 1412, op. 1, d. 5300, 1.12) concludes that Elagin's main motive was his increasing concern with the true magnitude of Kurakin's ambitions.

Magnus), officially opened in St Petersburg, and in May 1779 Gagarin obtained a patent as a Provincial Grand Master from Duke Karl of Södermanland.[11] The formal inauguration of Russia's new Provincial Grand Lodge, practising the Swedish Rite (called also the Russian National Lodge) in May 1779[12] was followed by the formation of another supreme body, the Directorate (or Council) accomplished in the summer of 1780. The Directorate was supposed to coordinate and control the work of the Swedish-system lodges in Russia, act as a judge in disagreements between the lodges, deal with and discipline potential misdeeds in them and act as an important link with the Swedish Rite Illuminated Chapter in Stockholm. Indeed it was envisaged that one of the representatives of the Swedish Chapter would have a permanent place and vote in the Directorate. The creation of the Directorate was legitimized by a French-language *Instruction* forwarded to the Russian National Lodge by Duke Karl of Södermanland.[13]

The newly-established Russian National Lodge (also known as the Gagarin union) enjoyed a rapid growth and rise to prominence in Russian Freemasonry. Apart from the newly-formed Swedish-system lodges, older lodges also joined the Gagarin union which further gained both individual Freemasons and whole lodges from the Elagin–Reichel alliance. In May 1780 Duke Karl formally legitimized fourteen Russian lodges practising the Swedish Rite in the Gagarin union[14] whose centre of gravity lay in St Petersburg, with four lodges in Moscow and another four in provincial Russian cities.

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[11] The text of the patent (based on an eighteenth-century German manuscript) is published in Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul Feniksa,* pp. 107–10.

[12] The text of the General Laws of the Russian National Lodge, dating from 5 January 1780 (based on an eighteenth-century German manuscript) is published in ibid., pp. 102–07.

[13] *Instruction pour le Directoire établi á St.Pétersbourg donnée à Stockholm le 9 mai 1780*, kept in Moscow, Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka, f. 147, op. 1, ed. khr. 338, no. 374; published in Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo,* pp. 441–54.

The expanded Russian Grand National Lodge was soon to encounter serious obstacles caused by both internal and external factors. Duke Karl's declaration in 1780 stated explicitly that Russia constituted a ninth Masonic province directly subordinate to him as a head (Vicarius Salomonis) of the Swedish Rite system. The declaration was seen by some Russian Freemasons, especially in Moscow, as taking too far the Grand National Lodge dependence on and subordination to the Stockholm Grand Lodge. This perceived subordination led not only to debates and disagreements within the Russian Swedish Rite lodges but also eventually to moves to free the Gagarin union from Swedish control.

Furthermore, along with Elagin's opposition to the Swedish Rite higher degrees, the issue of access to these degrees remained a source of tension and disputes among the Swedish-system Russian lodges. The lodges of the Gagarin union received the higher grades rituals up to and including the Swedish Rite seventh degree from the Grand Lodge in Stockholm but the latter chose to keep the grades above it inaccessible to the Russian lodges. This continuing lack of admittance into the highest chapter degrees of the Swedish Rite led to the re-orientation of some prominent Freemasons from the Gagarin union to other higher degree systems such as the Masonic Rosicrucian Rite of *Der Orden des Gold- und Rosenkreutzes* which since the 1750s had been gaining influence in the German-speaking areas of Europe.

However, what proved truly dangerous for the establishment and existence of Swedish-system Freemasonry in Russia were its high-level links with Sweden which, to an extent encouraged by Catherine herself, came to be viewed in Russian court circles as secret and uncontrollable channels of communication for potential anti-Russian conspiracies and subversion. Significantly, the Grand Lodge of Sweden adhered to strict and explicit requirements for an old and proven noble lineage as a necessary prerequisite for candidates wishing to join the Swedish Rite. Due to this prerequisite, and the Swedish Rite's evident

[14] The formal document with which Duke Karl officially legitimized the fourteen Russian lodges operating the Swedish Rite is published in Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul Feniksa,* pp. 110–12.

fashion in Russian society in that period, prominent members of Russia's old and influential houses became a large presence in the Phoenix Chapter and the upper hierarchy of the Grand National Lodge. The entry of so many members of the Russian aristocracy (many of whom played a major political role in the Empire) into a Masonic system formally controlled by and subordinate to an elitist Masonic body in Stockholm, predictably was viewed with alarm and consternation by Catherine. Both Kurakin and Gagarin were not only childhood friends of Grand Duke Paul but had continued to exercise influence at his court as his closest and favourite associates. The leadership of the Gagarin union included other major aristocratic representatives of Paul's 'party'. In a period of intermittent tensions between Russia and Sweden, when also the various strains between the Empress and the heir to the throne were becoming more and more evident (including the issue of foreign policy orientation), Catherine could hardly tolerate the possibility of Swedish influence reaching Paul through Kurakin, Gagarin and their networks.

As the early successes of Swedish-system Freemasonry in Russia were becoming more and more visible and the Gagarin union was expanding through taking over lodges and forming new ones, Catherine and the imperial administration tried to halt this process with swift and well-targeted measures. As early as 1779 the chief of the St Petersburg police, Prince Petr Lopukhin, twice investigated the St Petersburg lodges of the Gagarin union, focusing his inspection on their links and correspondence with their Swedish counterparts and with Duke Karl in particular. Soon after Lopukhin's investigations, Catherine is reported to have ordered the closure of the Swedish-system lodges, while Lopukhin advised the St Petersburg lodges of the Gagarin alliance to discontinue their work.[15] The Empress and her officials then took

[15] On the circumstances surrounding Lopukhin's investigations and Catherine's first measures against Swedish-system Freemasonry, cf. Mikhail Longinov, *Novikov i moskovskie martinisty*, Moscow, 1867;

measures to limit the influence of the major figures who were close to Paul and were also involved in the establishment of the Swedish Rite in Russia. In 1780 the head of the Swedish-system Grand National Lodge, Prince Gagarin, was compelled to move to a new government post in Moscow and thus moved away from St Petersburg, then the nerve centre of the Swedish Rite in Russia. In the autumn of the same year Count Nikita Panin retired to his provincial estate and Paul was only allowed to visit his old tutor shortly before his death in 1783. In 1782 Prince Kurakin was also removed from the big political stage – he had to leave St Petersburg and return to his Saratov provincial estate.

In 1780, moreover, Catherine articulated her growing antipathy towards Freemasonry in the publication in French, German and Russian of her first anti-Masonic writing, the anonymous pamphlet, *The Secret of the Anti-Absurd Society, Discovered by Someone Who Isn't a Member*, followed by her three anti-Masonic plays, *The Deceiver*, *The Deceived* and *The Siberian Shaman*, published and staged anonymously in St Petersburg and Moscow in 1785–87.[16] In addition to her literary onslaught on Freemasonry her police regulations in April 1782 (*Ustav blagochiniia*) contained a clause prescribing measures against illegitimate brotherhoods and societies which could be used against Russian Masonic lodges to order their closure and prohibition.

The beginning of Catherine's campaign against Swedish-system Freemasonry was accompanied by a change of direction in Russia's foreign policy – away from its existing links with Prussia (favoured by diplomats like Count Nikita Panin and indeed by Grand Duke

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reprint St Petersburg, 2000, pp. 128–29, Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 149–51; Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 82–83, 299–301; Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul Feniksa*, pp. 24–25.

[16] Published and edited in *Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II*, ed. by Aleksandr Nikolaevich Pypin, St Petersburg, vol. 1, 1901. On the anti-Masonic nature and satires in the plays, cf. Aleksandr V. Semeka, 'Russkie rozenkreitsery i sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II', *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 39, 1902, 2, pp. 343–401; Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 262–82; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 145–51.

Paul), towards closer links with Austria. Consequently, when in 1782 Paul and his second wife, Mariia Fedorovna, accompanied by Prince Kurakin, embarked on their extended Western European tour, passing through Paris, Vienna and much of the Italian peninsula, and conscious of the Prussophile affinities of her son, Catherine excluded Prussia and Berlin as destinations on the trip. Nevertheless, reports and rumours started to circulate that the Grand Duke took part in the work of Masons or was actually initiated in a Masonic lodge during his stay in Vienna, complementing earlier rumours that he had been initiated into the craft during his earlier trip to Germany in 1776 or that the Swedish king Gustavas III initiated him into the Swedish Rite during his visit to St Petersburg in 1777.[17] The chronology and extent of Prince Kurakin's involvement in the rumoured Masonic episode in Vienna with Paul remain unclear[18] but if it happened it certainly contributed to Catherine's later decision to remove him from St Petersburg and isolate him on his provincial estate.

Kurakin may have been marginalized on his estate but Gagarin's dispatch to Moscow did not halt the work of Swedish-system Freemasonry in Russia and apparently led to a certain duality in its structure. With the work of the Grand National Lodge and the Phoenix Chapter in St Petersburg being severely curtailed or even ostensibly discontinued, Gagarin ventured to set up another Swedish-system Provincial Lodge and Chapter in Moscow. The mechanisms of

[17] On the intriguing but scanty and controversial nature of the evidence of the links between Paul and Russian Freemasonry (including some iconographic data), cf. Evgenii Shumigorskii, 'Imperator Pavel I i masonstvo', in Sergei Petrovich Mel'gunov and Nikolai Pavlovich Sidorov, *Masonstvo v ego proshlom i nastoiashchem*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1914–15, 2, pp. 135–52; Tira Ottovna Sokolovskaia, 'Dva portreta Imperatora Pavla I s masonskami emblemami', *Russkaia starina*, 1908, 10, pp. 81–95; Ernst Friedrichs, *Geschichte der einstigen Maurerei in Russland nach dem Quellmaterial der Grossen Landesloge zu Berlin*, Berlin, 1904, pp. 91–97; Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, p. 300 (according to Vernadskii the European trip of Paul as a whole had a Masonic agenda); Roderick I. McGrew, *Paul I of Russia, 1754–1801*, New York, 1992, pp. 194–95; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, p. 175.

[18] For an assessment that Prince Kurakin indeed served as the intermediary through whom Paul was introduced into Freemasonry see Pekarskii, *Dopolneniia*, p. 163.

secrecy inherent in the hierarchy and structures of communication within Swedish-system Freemasonry (as well as in other related systems) and the work of its chapters clearly were helping its Russian version to sustain its continuity in the new adverse circumstances. However, the conditions for the activity and survival of Swedish-system Freemasonry in Russia were steadily deteriorating. Gagarin tried to create more Swedish-system lodges in Moscow and his new Provincial Lodge there was refashioned into the Sphinx Lodge which became the focal point of the Swedish Rite in Moscow. In this period the Pelican of Charity Lodge in St Petersburg may have assumed some of the functions of the old Phoenix Chapter, including the maintenance of the connections with the Grand Lodge and the Grand Chapter in Stockholm. The other Swedish-system lodges in St Petersburg and elsewhere had to limit greatly the extent and visibility of their work. The increasing prominence of Moscow as the new centre of the Swedish Rite in Russia to a certain extent stemmed from the increasing pressures on its hitherto dominant institutions in St Petersburg. But it was also indicative of the growing influence of a diverse Masonic movement in Moscow which in the next few years overshadowed its counterpart in St Petersburg.

Towards the end of 1780 or early in 1781 the Moscow Masonic arena witnessed the foundation of a new elitist, self-proclaimed ‘secret’ and ‘scientific’ lodge, named Harmony. The lodge founders declared that they aim to distance themselves from the disagreements and controversies among the various Masonic systems. Instead they intended to focus on the study of the core Masonic doctrines underlying the diverse Masonic rites and on the quest for the higher degrees of true Freemasonry. These founders included very influential figures on the Moscow Masonic scene such as Prince Nikita Trubetskoi, whose lodge Osiris was otherwise involved in the Swedish Rite, hence it made overtures to Prince Gagarin’s Sphinx Lodge. This newly founded lodge reflected the growing calls in the Moscow Masonic movement for a general reorientation of Russian Freemasonry and for its release from what was perceived by

many as an extreme dependence on Sweden. Among the founders were two enthusiastic supporters of this trend who became a dominant force in Russian Freemasonry in the 1780s – the prominent writer, publisher and educationalist Nikolai Novikov (1744–1816) and Johann-Georg Schwarz (1751–84), lecturer and later professor at Moscow University.

The Harmony Lodge was supposed also to act as a kind of a neutral forum where the leading Masonic figures in Moscow could meet and exchange ideas regardless of the Masonic systems to which they belonged. The lodge was certainly instrumental in the Russian Masonic moves intended to reduce direct Swedish influence and (what was seen as) interference in Russian Masonic affairs which took place in 1781 and 1782. Although Russian Freemasonry comprised various systems following Duke Karl's proclamation of 1780, declaring that Russia represented the ninth Masonic province subordinate to him, the general perception in Europe at that time was that Russian Freemasonry was on the whole controlled by the Grand Lodge of Sweden.

In view of the forthcoming Masonic convention at Wiesbaden in 1782, in the previous year the Harmony Lodge empowered Schwarz to leave for Germany and present an appeal to Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick and Grand Master of the Rite of the Strict Observance, pleading for the recognition of Russia as an independent Masonic province. The written appeal deplored the current state of Russian Freemasonry, which it depicted as being inordinately dominated by the high nobility and beset by excessive focus on 'Templarism' and formal ritualism.[19] The appeal also explicitly stated that the links between Russian Freemasonry and a Swedish prince of the blood had aroused Catherine II's concern and indignation Thus the Moscow Freemasons were essentially declaring to the Masonic world that Russian Freemasonry could face political problems because of its close links with the

[19] The text of the appeal is published in S. V. Eshevskii, *Sochineniia po russkoi istorii*, Moscow, 1900, pp. 214–15.

Swedish court and the only way to secure its safety was to disassociate itself from the Swedish *liaison dangereux*.

Duke Ferdinand's reaction to the appeal was positive[20] and he represented Russia at the Wiesbaden convention, which, amid the growing controversies with the Grand Lodge of Sweden over its decisions, granted Russia the status of an independent (the eighth) Masonic province.[21] Leaving the post of the Provincial Grand Master of this newly-established eighth province vacant, early in 1783 the leading Moscow Freemasons began to set up the hierarchy of its Chapter and Directorate in Moscow and its dependent bodies in St Petersburg and the provinces. As the reorganization of the Russian Masonic movement was gathering pace, Gagarin, with his Moscow Sphinx Lodge and most of the lodges dependent on it, began to gravitate closer to, or actually entered the alliance of, the new eighth Masonic province institutions, although some of these lodges continued to maintain close links with Stockholm.

In addition to his contact with Duke Ferdinand during his journeys in Germany Schwarz established close links with some of the leading figures behind the Masonic Rosicrucian Rite of *Der Orden des Gold- und Rosenkreuzes*, concentrated initially around the Berlin Three Globes Lodge. Schwarz was initiated into the German Masonic Rosicrucian Rite and in 1782–83 acted as an energetic intermediary between its Berlin leadership and the elite Moscow Masonic circles around Novikov and Prince Trubetskoi. Relations between the Three Globes Lodge and the Rite of the Strict Observance were complex and in the autumn of 1783 the Berlin lodge declared that it was breaking away from the 'Brunswick' system and alliances established under Duke Ferdinand at the Wiesbaden convention. It notified Schwarz and his Moscow associates that it was sanctioning the creation of a Masonic Rosicrucian offshoot of

[20] For an outline of the decisions of Duke Ferdinand, see ibid., pp. 209–10.

[21] On the proceedings and decisions of the Masonic convention at Wiesbaden, see, for example, Ludwig Hammermayer, *Der Wilhelmsbader Freimaurer–Konventvon 1782*, Heidelberg, 1980.

its order in Russia which was formed by the end of 1783. In another shift in the external alliances of Russian Freemasonry, the leading Masonic figures in Moscow distanced themselves from Duke Ferdinand's Brunswick system and established a Masonic Rosicrucian union of four mother-lodges, which significantly included Gagarin's Sphinx Lodge. The realignment of forces in Russian Freemasonry was completed few months later when this union was reorganized into a new Provincial Lodge in Moscow, with its Chapter, dominated by some of the major figures in Moscow Freemasonry.

In 1784 the growing Russian Masonic Rosicrucian order imported the so-called Theoretical Degree from the Berlin mother-organization and its Russian version was effectively elaborated as another institution with its own separate organization and Directorate. With the introduction of the Theoretical Degree, with its additional secret governing body, the levels of secrecy in the hierarchy and the system of interrelations between the various grades in the Russian Masonic Rosicrucian order reached magnitudes surpassing those hitherto achieved by the Russian version of the Swedish Rite.

However, as in the case of Swedish-system Freemasonry, it was the external alliance of the Masonic Rosicrucian movement in Russia, on this occasion Prussian, which fuelled the suspicions of the Empress and the authorities and proved detrimental for its existence. As Catherine was moving away from previous pro-Prussian policies and alliances, the 1780s saw the intensification of Catherine's suspicions of Freemasonry and potential activation of Paul's Prussian affinities and contacts through any channels, including Masonic networks and lodges. In 1782 rumours and expectations that the post of a Provincial Grand Master of Russia as an eighth Masonic province (within the Prussian-dominated ‘Brunswick’ system of Duke Ferdinand) was kept vacant to be assumed eventually by Paul did little to endear Freemasonry or the heir to the throne to Catherine. Furthermore, the activities of *Der Orden des Gold- und Rosenkreuzes* in Germany had a characteristic political dimension which was far from

negligible, as in the 1780s its membership became socially and politically influential and maintained its political influence in the Prussian court and internal affairs until the death of the Prussian King Frederick William II (reigned 1786–97).

Concurrently, Catherine's imperial administration's suppression of the lodges and the leading figures of the Russian Masonic Rosicrucian order proceeded in successive stages. The first stage of the campaign against the order took place in 1784–87 when Catherine ordered inquiries into their Masonic and Masonic-related public spheres of activities such as the nature of the books published by Novikov and his circle with the Moscow University Press and the Typographical Company. These inquiries were reportedly followed by explicit or indirect orders to disband Masonic Rosicrucian lodges. Sensing the approaching 'thundercloud' of anti-Masonic repressions, in 1784 Elagin announced that his alliance of lodges was halting its work (although at least some lodges continued their meetings). To counteract the unfolding anti-Masonic campaigns the Russian Masonic Rosicrucian order resorted to the strategy of internal secrecy which it had cultivated in its organizational hierarchy.

The need for secrecy was further highlighted in 1786 and 1787 when the German leaders of *Der Orden des Gold- und Rosenkreuzes* urged their Russian brethren to limit and curb all external and public aspects of their work in view of the growing Illuminati crisis of 1785–86 and its potential to compromise Freemasonry. The Illuminati crisis generated successive waves of rumours and insinuations generally associating the Illuminati with Freemasonry and implicating both in large-scale political subversion throughout Europe. Regardless of the multiplying measures against Masonic and Masonic-related activity in Moscow, two years after the self-imposed closure of his lodges Elagin evidently felt confident enough (or was assured) that the repressive actions were and would be directed primarily against the Masonic

Rosicrucian circles and initiated the resumption of the work of his alliance (usually labelled the Second Elagin Union).

At the same time, in the late 1780s, when the Elagin alliance was enjoying its 'Indian summer', the Swedish-system lodges still functioning in St Petersburg and Kronstadt,[22] were starting to face a new difficult period in the build-up of political tensions between Russia and Sweden which led to the Russian–Swedish war in 1788–90 and its major Baltic naval battles. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Swedish fleet was under the command of Duke Karl, while Russian vessels in the Baltic were under the command of Admiral Samuel Greig, who had been for a time a Master of the Swedish-system Neptune Lodge in Kronstadt and also of a naval lodge on the ship *Rostislav*. Greig died in the autumn of 1788 and when the Swedish-system lodges tried to institute a commemorative lodge in his name in too public a manner they faced orders to cease their activities and close down.[23]

The public image of Freemasonry in Russia and in Europe in general had already been gravely affected by the increasingly and popularly-accepted notion of an association between Freemasons and Jacobins which gained massive currency as the French Revolution of 1789 and its reverberations shook the foundations of the European old order. The accusations implicating Freemasonry in anti-monarchical and anti-clerical plots had received a fresh impetus from the Illuminati panic in the mid–1780s. Amid more anticipations of growing instability, revolutions and paranoid fears of large-scale plots and secret societies, courts already hostile to Freemasonry like the Russian one did not need any further incentive to take

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[22] On the activities of these Swedish-system lodges, see, for example, Carl Lissner's testimony, 'K istorii masonstva v Rossii', ed. and trans. N. S. Ivanina, part 1, *Russkaia Starina*, 35, 1882, 9, pp. 533–60 (p. 543); Tira Sokolovskaia, 'O masonstve v prezhnem russkom flote', *More*, 8, 1908, pp. 216–53 (p. 223).

[23] The Swedish-system Pelican of Charity lodge in St Petersburg, however, had by then ostensibly rejoined the Elagin alliance, an act which seems to have secured its survival for some time, as it remained active in the early 1790s – see, for example, Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, p. 361 n.232.

action against the existing Masonic lodges. Rumours were multiplying alleging that the Freemasons and the Illuminati were responsible for the dramatic murder of the Swedish King Gustavas III in Stockholm in March 1792 or were conspiring to poison the Russian monarch. In 1790 Catherine authorized Prince A. Prozorovskii, the Moscow governor-general, to commence the closure of the Moscow Masonic lodges and in 1792 the campaign against the Moscow Masonic Rosicrucian movement moved into its last stage.

Prozorovskii ordered the arrest of Novikov who was subsequently sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. The accusations justifying the heavy sentence strongly emphasized the alleged 'covert' links between the Moscow Freemasons and Prussia, referring both to the Duke of Brunswick and the leading figures from *Der Orden des Gold- und Rosenkreuzes*, who were at the same time high officials in the Prussian state apparatus. Significantly, the Moscow Freemasons stood accused of trying to lure Grand Duke Paul into the 'Masonic sect'. They were further arraigned of publishing illicit forbidden books and performing rituals impermissible in the context of Orthodoxy and contrary to its letter and spirit.

In 1793 Elagin predictably felt compelled to announce the closure of the lodges of his second union, blaming this decision on the violent French Jacobins who had compromised Freemasonry by 'impersonating' Freemasons and thus provoked the consternation of the Russian court and the Empress.[24] Masonic systems that developed varied levels of secrecy in their hierarchy and organization, such as the Russian versions of the Swedish Rite and the Masonic Rosicrucian order, could secure better continuity and the capacity to reorganize in view of the changing adverse circumstances. Some of the Masonic Rosicrucian lodges managed to continue their 'theoretical' and literary activities.[25] Among the earlier Swedish-

[24] See Carl Lissner's testimony published in Ivanina, ed., 'K istorii masonstva', p. 544.

[25] On the continuation of some activities of certain lodges belonging to the Moscow Masonic Rosicrucian movement after the prohibition of 1792 see Andrei Serkov *Istoriia russkogo masonstva XIX v.*, St Petersburg, 2000, pp. 44–53.

system lodges it was the Pelican of Charity that apparently managed to continue its activity and links with Sweden, maintaining some of the functions of the old Phoenix Chapter and thus remained best suited for a potential open revival.[26]

Such hopes for a Masonic renaissance were revived in November 1796 when Catherine died amid rumours that she was planning to remove Paul from the line of succession. Now his long wait for the Russian throne was over, Paul began his reign with extensive reforms, some of which altered and reversed Catherine's policies. But such hopes for a Masonic revival proved in vain, although on the orders of Tsar Paul Novikov was pardoned and number of exiled high-profile Freemasons were promoted in the new imperial administration. Among others, Kurakin was to be awarded with the post of a vice-chancellor, while Gagarin's governmental responsibilities were further increased. Nevertheless Paul envisaged himself as a defender of Europe's old monarchical and aristocratic order threatened by revolutionary Jacobinism in a dramatic period when the widespread rumours and allegations about the links of Jacobinism with Freemasonry had already compromised to a varying degree the Masonic movement in a number of European courts and states. Like Gustavas III before him, Paul aspired to be the leading royal figure in the establishment and direction of a league of European princes against French Jacobinism. Furthermore, for his planned reform of Russian nobility he intended now to use not the Masonic chivalric rites, as some of the high-ranking noble Freemasons in his entourage might have planned and wished, but the actual structures and chivalric traditions of the Order of the Knights of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (the Knights of Malta) some of whom found refuge in Russia after Napoleon's takeover of Malta in 1798. With Paul's subsequent controversial election as the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, his preoccupation with the order and his plans to use it as a major weapon in his battle against the forces of subversion and revolutionary ideas in Europe became even

[26] On the continuation of the activities of the Pelican of Charity Lodge in the circumstances of the prohibition of Freemasonry after 1792, see Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul Feniksa,* pp. 26–29.

more pronounced. Conversely, he did not display at that stage any visible affinity for Freemasonry and the prohibitions against the movement were not revoked but persisted.[27]

Russian Freemasonry had to wait for a few more years and better conditions to be capable of staging its gradual recovery and the establishment of a new Swedish-system Grand Directorial Lodge in the early years of the reign of Paul's successor, Tsar Alexander I. The cumulative and growing evidence of the adoption of the Swedish Rite in eighteenth-century Russia nevertheless demonstrates its central importance for the study and understanding of the Masonic networks and influence at the successive eighteenth-century Russian courts, aristocratic and military establishments, the interconnections with the Russian Orthodox Church and Freemasonry's contribution to prominent novel trends in contemporaneous Russian thought, culture and literature. Such a study will undoubtedly further challenge former interpretations that early Russian Freemasonry was dominated by the rationalistic and deistic currents of the Enlightenment, related to the contemporary popularity of Voltaireanism, free-thinking, the ideas of natural law, and so on,[28] with the mystical trends starting to gain prominence only with the introduction of the higher degree rites in the 1780s

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[27] For documents related to the attempts of Russian Freemasons to circumvent the prohibitions of Freemasonry by proposing to Paul the formation of a new order of the 'Inner Knights' to serve as a disguise for Masonic activities, see Tira Sokolovskaia, 'Novye dannye dlia istorii russkogo masonstva po rukopisiam Tverskoi ucheni arkhivnoi komissii', Tver', 1912, reproduced eadem, *Materialy po istorii russkogo masonstva XVIII–XIX vv.*, Moscow, 2000, 132–41 (pp. 137–39). On Paul's designs concerning the Knights of Malta, see the assessments in Norman E. Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797–1807* , Chicago, IL, 1970, pp. 32–39, 43–51; Roderick I. McGrew, 'Paul I and the Knights of Malta', in Hugh Ragsdale (ed.), *Paul I: A Reassessment of His Life and Reign*, Pittsburgh, PA, 1979, pp. 44–76; Roderick I. McGrew, *Paul I of Russia, 1754–1801*, New York, 1992, pp. 244–82.

[28] See, for example, Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 140–56; cf. P. Florovskii, 'Puti russkogo bogosloviia', partial reprint in V. I. Novikov (ed.), *Masonstvo i russkaia kultura*, Moscow, 1998, pp. 50–64.

and the early 1790s. Early Russian Freemasonry certainly can no longer be sweepingly categorized as the outcome of a simple import of craft Freemasonry, accompanied by the spread of Enlightenment ideas and Voltaireanism. The rise and early evolution of Russian Freemasonry was conditioned by important internal developments in eighteenth-century Russian society such as the gradual development of civil society, the Russian public and private sphere, the proliferation of clubs and societies, the expansion of Russian printing and publishing in the second half of the century, and so on.[29] The aspiration to emulate Western European manners and codes of behaviour which developed in the Russian public, were coupled in some Russian Masonic circles, both noble and non-noble, with a growing concern with the notions of moral self-improvement, human dignity, social service and action. Indeed due to the social and moral dimensions of its activities Russian Freemasonry could be seen as providing a kind of a counterpart to the imperial Table of Ranks in these spheres.[30] Furthermore, the study of the manner in which the Western European Freemasons 'lived' the various ideas of the Enlightenment within the confines of their lodges (including, importantly the principles of constitutional and representative forms of governance),[31] has been also successfully applied to Russian Freemasonry.[32]

Given the aristocratic pedigree requirements of the Russian Swedish-system lodges and the types of governance operating there, it will be certainly worthwhile to explore in the same comparative manner the aristocratic Russian Swedish-system lodges and their Western

[29] See, for example, Douglas Smith, 'Freemasonry and the Public in Eighteenth-Century Russia', in Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (eds), *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, Bloomington and Indianopolis, IN, 1998, pp. 281–304; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, especially chapters 1 and 2.

[30] See the observations of Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility*, New York, 1966, p. 161; cf. Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 111–12.

[31] Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, New York, 1991.

[32] Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, chapters 1 and 2.

European counterparts and determine now they relate to the 'practice' of the ideals of the Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment.[33] Such exploration will make it possible to test the validity (in the case of Russia) of one of the presumptions in the study of the inter-relations between eighteenth-century European Freemasonry and the Enlightenment which approaches the craft lodges as proponents of Enlightenment ideologies, while recognizing higher degrees rites as frequently linked with Counter-Enlightenment tendencies and trends.

The model of governance of the Swedish-system Gagarin union, with its elaborate hierarchy, organizational structure and internal order, seemed well-organized and more solid than the looser organization of the First Elagin Union and the Elagin–Reichel alliance. Hence it rapidly could become another unifying body for Russian Freemasonry and also attracted Freemasons who were concerned about the insufficient standardization in the existing rites and grades. The intellectual work in the Russian Swedish-system lodges was also certainly more intense than that in the Elagin's alliances and included orations and discussions on moral, philanthropic and philosophical issues.[34]

Within Russian internal Masonic polemic, the Swedish Rite is periodically criticized for being too closely entwined with politics and linked to a foreign court which thus could compromise Russian Freemasonry. Given the hegemony of the upper stratum of the Russian Swedish-system Freemasonry through so many high-ranking representatives of the Grand Duke's court and 'party', such charges or perceptions seemed inevitable. The related important question of whether the structure of the Swedish Rite and the Phoenix Chapter in Russia were also related to designs to bring Russian and Swedish nobles closer through Masonic channels in the complex Northern European political situation created by Panin's

[33] For a summary of approaches to this problem see Yuri Stoyanov, 'Endorsement and Condemnation of Political Radicalism and Reform in 18th-Century Russian Freemasonry', *Lumières*, 7, 2008, pp. 225–45 (especially pp. 235–38).

[34] On the intellectual work in the Swedish-system Russian lodges, see, for example, Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 85–86.

'Northern System' remains another largely unexplored area.[35] Research is needed to establish whether the Panin brothers intended to make the Masonic movement in Russia 'a rallying point for disaffected groups opposed to the government'[36] or if the Swedish-system Russian lodges 'represented a social extension of the Panin party'.[37] Similarly, the extent to and the manner in which the reformist political agenda of the Panin brothers may have been interrelated socio-politically with Freemasonry (and the Swedish-system Russian Masonic networks in particular) remain an intriguing but difficult territory.[38] The focus of the Panin brothers on Paul as the future monarchical enforcer of their political vision, their manoeuvres between Enlightened absolutism and constitutionalism and the Masonic dimension of their activity need to be explored in the wider context of the changing perceptions of eighteenth-century Russian royal ideology and the political developments in Sweden under Gustavas III's rule before and after 1772.

The formation and expanding influence of the Swedish alliance of the Gagarin union and the Prussian-controlled Russian Masonic Rosicrucian order certainly exacerbated the tensions between native and foreign in Russian culture and society. This process occurred at a sensitive time when the emulation and import of Western ideas and manners were coupled in some sectors of Russian society with intense suspicion and even hostility towards organizations which could be perceived as functioning in alliance with or under the supervision of foreign bodies.[39] The declared universalism of the Masonic movement uneasily encountered emerging

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[35] Sokolovskaia attributes such designs to King Gustavas III, in her *Kapitul Feniksa,* p. 10.

[36] Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia,* p. 4.

[37] Ibid., p. 257.

[38] On the patronage system, family and political networks and designs associated with the Panin 'party', see ibid., pp. 111 ff., 255–62; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 24–27; Stoyanov, 'Endorsement and Condemnation', pp. 241–42.

[39] On these tensions between foreign (especially German) and Russian cultural and intellectual modes

re-conceptualizations of the notions of Russia's distinct nature and destiny advanced in some circles of Russian society vis-à-vis the ideological challenges of the Enlightenment. At the same time, Russian Freemasonry, especially its high-degree systems, also strove to develop mechanisms intended to acculturate foreign imports such as the Swedish Rite and to 'domesticate' Masonic universalism and elements of Masonic ideology.

Early Russian Freemasonry undoubtedly contributed to the processes of secularization and the spread of humanism in Russian culture. In the last decades of the eighteenth century some influential Russian Masonic circles, however, came to formulate and elaborate specific Russian versions of Christian mysticism which blended Masonic traditions and imagery with concepts and attitudes inherited from Orthodox Christianity.[40] The Swedish Rite played its role in this process, and the type and ritualization of Christian material present in the grades made available to its Russian offshoot apparently proved particularly attractive to those Russian Freemasons who had intense Christian convictions but were not entirely content with the current state of the Church and the formalism of its ritual. At least for some Freemasons the Swedish Rite thus could provide a near-substitute for Church ritual. Indeed some of the traditional objections raised against Swedish-system Freemasonry in Russia since the days of the Elagin–Reichel union were focused on the perceived 'church-like' character of its ceremonies, viewed by their critics as too ostentatious. This enabled the Swedish Rite to contribute to the formation of a specific and somewhat eclectic Christian religiosity which

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and the manner in which they were projected onto Russian Freemasonry see Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 137–38. On the general dichotomy between foreign and native culture in eighteenth-century Russia, see Simon Dixon, *The Modernization of Russia 1670–1825*, Cambridge and New York, 1999, pp. 160–70.

[40] See, for example, the analysis in Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia. The Masonic Circle of N. I. Novikov*, Dordrecht, 2005, especially pp. 115–83, 239–43; Stoyanov, 'Endorsement and Condemnation', pp. 244–45.

developed in Masonic circles and outside the spiritual monopoly and control of the Church[41] (sometimes described in Russian anti-Masonic discourse as leaning towards Protestantism).

These conceptualizations of Russian Masonic Christian religiosity and mysticism occurred in the context of other earlier or contemporaneous developments in the sphere of Russian Christianity such as the earlier Church moves towards religious reforms to 're-Christianize' Russia (with their emphasis on the ideals of moral perfection and spiritual enlightenment)[42] and the eighteenth-century revival of asceticism and mysticism in the Russian monastic tradition. Another notion which played an important role in the Swedish Rite, that of the 'spiritual knight', was also further developed in the Christian mysticism of Russian Masonic Rosicrucian circles; ritual re-enactments of the Last Supper in the Russian version of the Swedish Rite evidently overlapped extensively with this strand of mysticism.[43] Such re-Christianizing and Counter-Enlightenment currents in late eighteenth-century Russian Freemasonry could seek even deeper rapprochement with Orthodoxy and notions of

[41] For a discussion of these trends in Russian Masonic Christian mysticism as forms of a kind of 'non-Church' religiosity, see, for example, Nikolai Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie: opyt filosofskoi avtobiografii N. A. Berdiaeva*, Paris, 1949; reprint ed. by A. V. Vadimov, Moscow, 1991, p. 28; V. I. Novikov, 'Masonstvo i russkaia kultura', in Novikov (ed.), *Masonstvo*, pp. 5–50 (p. 7); V. V. Zen'kovskii, 'Istoriia russkoi filosofii', partial reprint in Novikov, *Masonstvo,* pp. 64–69 (pp. 67–68); S. M. Nekrasov, 'Zakliuchenie', in Longinov, *Novikov*, pp. 623–56 (pp. 637–39). Masonic Christian mysticism thrived in the Russian Masonic Rosicrucian movement whose preoccupation with Christian mysticism is evident from the abundance of translations of early and medieval Eastern and Western Christian mystical writings published by Novikov and his circle.

[42] On these developments, see, for example, Gregory Freeze, 'The Re-Christianizing of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion 1750–1850', *Studia Slavica Finlandesia,* 7, 1990, pp. 101–36; Gregory Freeze, 'Institutionalizing Piety: The Church and Popular Religion', in Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (eds), *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, Bloomington and Indianopolis, IN, 1998, pp. 210–49.

[43] For such ritual reenactments of the Last Supper in the Russian version of the Swedish Rite, see Sokolovskaia, *Kapitul feniksa*, pp. 91–92.

Russianness, including attempts to establish a secret, irregular lodge open to Russian Orthodox nobles,[44] evidently designed to establish purely Russian secret lodges, detached from the European Masonic movement and open only to Russian Orthodox members.[45]

In Russian Masonic utopian discourses, moreover, Christian mystical notions could co-exist with elements drawn from the Panin party's vision of post-Catherinean monarchy with its anticipations of the ultimate advent of the 'true' Tsar Paul, whose rule was expected to bear some of the features of theocracy.[46] Russian Masonic mystical and utopian trends came under the strong impact of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin's *De Erreurs et de la Vérité*, whether via its original French version (1775) or its Russian translation in 1785, generating utopian speculations about a 'perfect' Masonic monarchical state under the dual guidance of a 'Holy King' and a secret order.

Finally, in contrast to the rationalistic and deistic beliefs shared by many Russian Freemasons (usually belonging to craft Freemasonry), other Russian Masonic circles (mostly associated with the Masonic Rosicrucian and Swedish Rite networks) developed a deep interest in the hidden mystical knowledge (supposedly residing in higher degrees systems) and in the then fashionable quest for the 'wisdom of the ancients'. The conceptual systems elaborated in these circles integrated Kabbalistic, Christian Kabbalistic, alchemical and Hermetic traditions, well represented, for example, in the works published by Novikov and his circle.[47]

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[44] Description of the archival evidence in Sokolovskaia, 'Novye dannye', pp. 133–35.

[45] Discussion of the relevant archival data and quotations from primary source material in Nekrasov, 'Zakliuchenie', pp. 650–51.

[46] On these forms of Masonic political and political utopian discourse see Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 236–65; Serkov, *Istoriia russkogo masonstva*, pp. 110–11; Konstantin Burmistrov and Maria Endel, 'The Place of Kabbalah in the Doctrine of Russian Freemasons', *Aries*, new series, 4, 2004, 1, pp. 27–69 (pp. 8–9).

Further research in Russian Masonic manuscript collections (and the archival collections of the Grand Lodge of Sweden in Stockholm), which lately have been receiving greater critical attention, will certainly reveal many more aspects and dimensions of the multifaceted impact of the Swedish Rite on elements of Russian religious, mystical, political (and utopian-political thought) from the era of the Enlightenment as well as their later transmutations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[47] On the provenance and re-interpretations of Kabbalistic and Christian Kabbalistic traditions in the teachings of mystically-inclined Russian Masonic circles, see Konstantin Burmistrov and Maria Endel, 'Kabbalah in Russian Masonry: Some Preliminary Observations', *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, 4, 1999, pp. 9–59; Burmistrov and Endel, 'The Place of Kabbalah', pp. 27–68.