

## INTRODUCTION

### At Every Time and In Every Place The Mother of God in Modern Russian Culture

VERA SHEVZOV AND AMY SINGLETON ADAMS

O Birthgiver of God . . . reigning helper, strengthen this land that you have blessed against its enemies; as you once saved Constantinople from the incursion of heathens, so now save Russia from the onslaught of adversaries, from civil strife . . . the land of Russia glorifies you, a helper of people.

(Service in honor of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God)<sup>1</sup>

In times of nationwide misfortune  
Your image, raised over Rus,  
Through the darkness of the centuries showed us the way  
And in prison—a secret exit.  
The horrific history of Russia  
All passed before your face.

(From Maximilian Voloshin, “The Vladimir Mother of God”)

THROUGHOUT RUSSIA’S LONG HISTORY, ONE woman stands out among all others. Her life is legendary and her image is easily recognized. She was born neither Russian nor Orthodox, but many of the country’s villages, towns, and cities—such as Kazan, Tikhvin, and Vladimir—historically have claimed her as their own, and she has been described as the “heart” of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>2</sup> In the minds of the faithful, her almost militant love for them is unwavering. Her inspiration in the realm of Russian spiritual, cultural, and political life is widely acknowledged; she is also

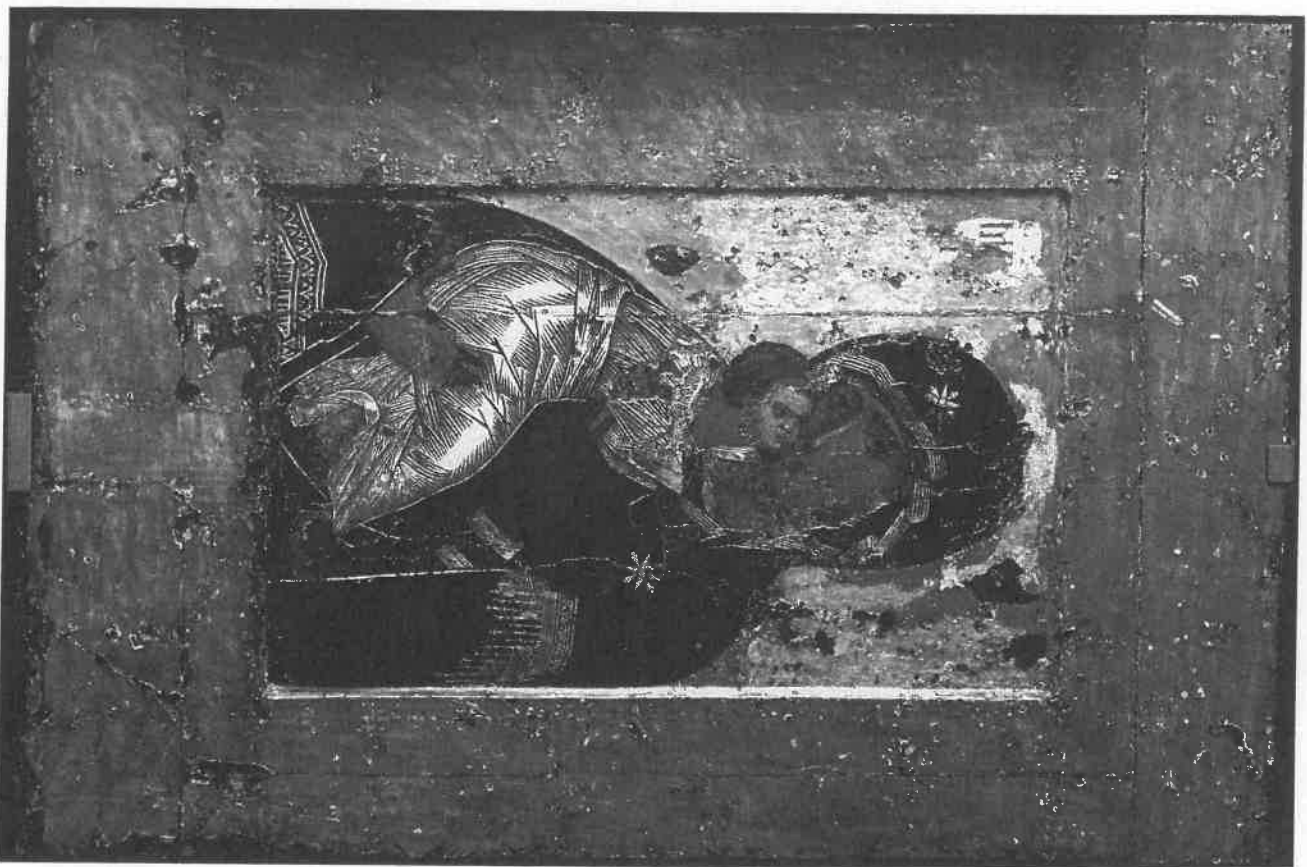


FIGURE 0.1 Vladimir icon of the Mother of God, 15th century, tempera on wood, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Photo courtesy of Stanislav Koslovskii.

revered as an untiring advocate for the downtrodden, the marginalized, and the voiceless. Although first and foremost an intercessor and protectress, she is known by many names in Russia—most often the Birthgiver of God (*Bogoroditsa*), the Mother of God (*Bogomater*)<sup>3</sup> and, with less frequency, the Virgin Mary (*Deva Mariia*).<sup>3</sup>

Mary's undeniable popularity in Russia stems from a perceived identity and from stories of miracles similar to those that gained her fame in the Christian West, resulting in comparable legacies in the worlds of art, religion, and politics. Scholarship on the Marian phenomenon in the Christian West has burgeoned in the past several decades, in particular with regard to her cultural, social, and political influence in the modern and contemporary world.<sup>4</sup> Her continued influence in modern Eastern Orthodox Christian cultures, however, has drawn significantly less attention, especially with respect to Russia.<sup>5</sup> Most major comprehensive scholarly English-language studies of Mary in recent decades have barely acknowledged her influence in Russia's medieval religious and civic culture, let alone her place in Russia's modern and post-Soviet contexts.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, scholars of modern and contemporary Russia—especially art historians, historians, sociologists, and literary scholars—have for the most part devoted only sporadic attention to Mary in the context of their broader studies.<sup>7</sup> Even scholars in Russia who have made enormous strides in reviving the academic study of Orthodoxy after seventy years of Soviet rule have only relatively recently turned their attention to the highly influential figure of the Mother of God.<sup>8</sup>

This volume introduces readers to the cultural life of Mary from the seventeenth century to the post-Soviet era through an array of disciplinary lenses and, as historian Henry Adams expressed it, “track[s] [her] energy” in a country where her influence is both essential and often overlooked.<sup>9</sup> Informed by the Christian East and West since the tenth century, Russia's perception of Mary has been shaped as much (if not more) by believers' relationship with her as by any prescriptive teachings. Within the context of who she was and the perceived role she played and continues to play in Russian Orthodox conceptions of history, Mary in Russia might best be approached as a relational notion.<sup>10</sup> As Robert Orsi has observed, the image of Mary above all engages those who turn to her.<sup>11</sup> Her lasting cultural and historical impact rests largely on response—of her devotees (and detractors) to her as well as her's to them, as they imagined it. Accordingly, Mary in Russia became inseparable from the stories and visual images associated with believers' reported encounters with her and from the more enigmatic realm of sensibilities and emotions that often generated, and were generated by, such experiences. As much a symbol of national identity as Mexico's Virgin of Guadalupe or Poland's Lady

of Czestochowa, Russia's Mary facilitates a wide range of relationships among individuals and groups within Russian society.<sup>12</sup>

The essays in this volume examine a broad spectrum of engagements among a wide array of people—pilgrims, poets, and painters; clergy and laity; women and men; politicians and political activists—and the woman they knew as the *Bogoroditsa*. Our authors trace Mary's irrepressible pull and inexhaustible promise, which even the most avid atheists and secularists who sought to cast away old ways in light of modernity and revolution often found too great to ignore. Although written nearly a century ago, Soviet ethnographer Nikolai Matorin's observation that “the gravity of the Marian cult . . . in Orthodoxy is still so great that it must be taken into account even in the most prominent proletarian centers” is no less relevant today.<sup>13</sup> It might even be argued that the strength of Mary's image pushed a once obscure group of female Russian activists—whom we now know as Pussy Riot—onto the world stage.

Taking place from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries, many of the engagements with Mary that these essays examine might be regarded from a contemporary point of view as little more than ethnographic curiosities, if not obstacles to Russia's modernization. Yet again as Robert Orsi has argued, labels such as “premodern,” “modern,” and “postmodern” do little to help us understand and appreciate peoples' sensibilities concerning the sacred and the profound influence these sensibilities exert on behavior.<sup>14</sup> From this perspective, the volume documents the relentless tenacity and pervasiveness of a subculture whose making in any given period cannot be easily traced to those of any particular social, political, or economic standing, educational level, gender, or age. As the following essays illustrate, the figure of Mary often defies such conventional boundaries and demands demarcations of her own.

#### RUSSIA'S MARY: BETWEEN CHRISTIAN EAST AND WEST

Although nourished by emotions and sentiments that inspired her devotees elsewhere in the world—hope, despair, desire, fear, and gratitude—Russia's Orthodox Marian culture has enjoyed its own characteristic traits. Mary's humanity and motherhood, for example, tended to be emphasized in Russia more than her virginity, which was reflected in the fact that Mary was widely referred to as “Mother” or “Birthgiver” rather than “Virgin” or the later Renaissance term “Our Lady” (*Madonna*, *Gospozha*).<sup>15</sup> As Russian philologist and literary theorist Sergei Averintsev notes, Russia's Orthodox Mary remained untouched by the culture of courtly love and chivalry with which her image became so intimately intertwined in the medieval West.<sup>16</sup> Instead, as the essays

in this volume illustrate, as mother, Russia's Mary is primarily a protectress and intercessor, to whom people appeal especially during times of crisis.

Moreover, devotion to Mary in Russia has historically focused on dreams and icons rather than the apparitions reported more commonly in the West, which may partially explain why her "appearances" in Russia have often eluded Western scholars.<sup>17</sup> While in this volume Stella Rock describes believers speaking of Mary as having walked in Russia as she had through Western European lands, Russia's Marian devotees have generally experienced and imagined her presence primarily by means of icons. Through her icons, as authors in this volume agree, Russia's believers related to Mary as if to a living person. Not surprisingly, her icons often graced private homes in numbers far greater than those of Christ or other saints.<sup>18</sup> Over time, consequently, Marian icons have played a key role in actualizing the special relationship Mary was perceived to have established with believers. As one Orthodox priest explained in 1908, miracle-working icons were regarded as both a sign of Mary's desire to relate to the faithful and a means through which to communicate her "presence," a presence whose influence often spread beyond the boundaries of institutionalized Orthodoxy.<sup>19</sup>

Russia's Marian heritage stems from a two-fold source that by the nineteenth century was as European as it was Byzantine. Beginning in the ninth century, missionaries, monastics, and clergy from Byzantium and the south-Slavic regions of Bulgaria and Serbia introduced the Orthodox veneration of Mary to Rus'. Stories about her life as well as her physical appearance were gradually introduced to the newly converted territory through a variety of genres, including scriptural and apocryphal texts, homilies, liturgical commemorations, and iconography. By the end of the Kievan era in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Rus' was well aware of Mary as both the mother of Jesus, so faintly sketched in the gospel texts, and the doctrinally laden "bearer" or "birthgiver" of God (*Theotokos*, *Bogoroditsa*) promulgated in fourth- and fifth-century Christological controversies. Yet she was also known through engaging legends about her life, death, and even afterlife, including the enduringly popular *Visitation to the Torments by the Mother of God* (Khozhenie Bogoroditsy po mukam).<sup>20</sup> Even what would become one of Russia's most cherished Marian feasts, the Protection of the Most Holy Birthgiver of God (Pokrov Presviatoi Bogoroditsy), established as early as the twelfth century, was based on the tenth-century Byzantine story of the fool-for-Christ Andrew's vision of Mary in the Church of Blachernae in Constantinople.<sup>21</sup>

The unsystematic flow of texts and images into Rus' helps to explain the character that Marian devotion in Russia acquired over time. The introduction of Christianity's literary heritage to Rus' defied neat categories of "canonical"

and "uncanonical," "history" and "legend." Ancient manuscripts reveal that monastic compilers of sacred texts often made little qualitative distinction between biblical texts and homilies, apocryphal stories (including excerpts from the *Protovangelium of James*), and lives of saints. As a result, New Testament references to Mary and the details of her life as depicted in the *Protovangelium* and in later apocryphal accounts, visions, and well-known homilies often blended together under the canopy of "sacred writings."<sup>22</sup>

Liturgical celebrations and iconographic depictions of non-scripturally based events in Mary's life—including her birth, entry into the Temple, and death—were well established in Eastern and Western Christian communities before the Christianization of Rus'. Such visual and textual sources encouraged a creative impulse to imagine Mary's life and death in ways that not only shaped the nature of Russia's Marian culture, but continued to inform Russia's social and cultural ideals well into modern and even post-Soviet times. Scenes from the apocryphal life of Mary, for instance, adorned the private prayer room of Peter the Great's sister, the regent Sofia Alekseevna (1682–1689), and bolstered notions of female sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Mary's primary role as intercessor (*zastupnitsa*), which accounts for her persistent appeal, found its validation in apocryphal stories rather than in scripture. According to the ancient apocryphal account of her death that entered the Eastern Orthodox tradition through liturgy and iconography, Mary encourages believers to seek her out: "At every time and in every place where there is a memorial of my name, sanctify that place and glorify those who glorify you through my name, accepting every offering and every supplication and prayer."<sup>24</sup> With her intercessory role so sanctioned, Mary's name and image remained firmly embedded in the storytelling that gave shape to Russia's Marian culture, especially from the Muscovite period through contemporary times.

In addition to this profusion of apocryphal stories and other texts, Rus' inherited Byzantine Marian iconographic types—the Blachernitissa, Eleousa, Hodegetria, and Nikopoiis—which generated a highly diverse and ever-expanding array of indigenous Marian iconographic prototypes. In the early twentieth century, the well-known art historian Nikolodim Kondakov noted that while images of Christ had become more or less fixed in Eastern Christian iconography, those of Mary—especially in Russia—continued to multiply.<sup>25</sup> Storytelling traditions associated with these specially revered Marian icons experienced parallel development. Scattered throughout Rus's ancient chronicles, lives of saints, narratives of military victories, and the founding of monasteries, many of these stories included accounts of Mary's intercession and healing power. Beginning in the twelfth century, these icon-related stories began to be told in their own genre—the icon narrative, or *skazanie*.<sup>26</sup>

Although frequently based on existing oral histories, the *skazaniia* are difficult to classify as a genre. Against the background of both historical and hagiographic sensibilities that are not well conveyed by the terms “tale” or “legend” often used to translate this term, the written accounts of an icon’s *life*—often a tangle of lore and fact—became one of the most characteristic and persistent features of Russia’s Marian culture.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the essays in this volume are informed by Russia’s Marian icon stories, which concern Mary’s perceived activities in the lives of individuals, local communities, or the country as whole. This was a fluid, open-ended genre, with a single icon often possessing several versions of a *life* that continued to evolve through time as new “events” or occurrences associated with it were attributed to Mary’s intercession. The *life* of Russia’s perhaps most widely recognizable Marian icon—the Vladimir icon—is a case in point. The earliest known icon-related *skazanie* in Rus’, a twelfth-century record of miracles associated with this image, frames Mary in universal terms, describing how her icon radiates protective light over Rus’ and all nations.<sup>28</sup> As Wil van den Bercken has argued, following their Christianization, the Rus’ imagined themselves as “accepted among the Christian nations” and incorporated into God’s salvific plan.<sup>29</sup> Early accounts of Mary’s presence in Rus’ echoed this universalism, depicting her as a “wall, protectress [*pokrov*], and haven for all Christians,” among whom the relatively newly converted Rus’ were now a part.<sup>30</sup>

Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii (1110–1174) of Vladimir and Suzdal reportedly attempted to draw parallels between his rule and that of the imperial court in Constantinople, and to view the Vladimir icon as Rus’ counterpart to Byzantium’s honored Hodegetria icon of the Mother of God.<sup>31</sup> But the earliest account of the Vladimir icon contains no hint of such political ambitions; it details no military victories or state-related miracles. Even Bogoliubskii, as the protagonist of the account, makes only a limited appearance and his authority is not in Mary’s purview. Instead, Mary’s intercessory power via her icon is confirmed by more commonplace miracles, such as healings that affect women as often as men. Such healings involve the combination of prayer and the consumption of water in which the icon had been immersed, a practice that Christine Worobec’s essay confirms continued in modern Russia.<sup>32</sup>

By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, after the fall of Byzantium (1453) and the dissolution of the Golden Horde (1480), monastic scribes retold the story of the Vladimir icon in order to emphasize the induction of Muscovy (and Russia) into Mary’s favored lands.<sup>33</sup> As Muscovy’s new “master symbol,” the Vladimir icon inspired a more detailed story, which appeared in

the historical narrative *Book of Degrees of the Royal Genealogy* (Stepennaia kniiga tsarskogo rodosloviiia).<sup>34</sup> This updated version of the icon’s *skazanie* follows major geopolitical shifts in Russia’s history; it traces the icon’s origins to the evangelist Luke and tracks its movement from Palestine to Constantinople, Kiev, Vladimir, and finally to Moscow.<sup>35</sup> The focus of the icon’s narrative shifts from common people to the interests of princes and metropolitans. Stories of earlier military victories are incorporated and describe the defeat of the Volga Bulgars (1165), the Mongol ruler Batu Kahn (1207–1255) in 1238 and, in 1395, the Turkic-Mongolian conqueror Tamerlane (1336–1405), who was purportedly frightened by a vision of Mary as a woman clothed in a purple robe, radiating light, and surrounded by regiments that “served her like a queen.” In this account, Mary’s supplicants gaze at her icon “with their hearts,” addressing her image as if it were alive. Similar to the biblical theme of the Israelites repeatedly reminding God of their covenant, so here the people of the city of Vladimir remind Mary of her self-appointed role as intercessor, her blessing of chosen icons, and her choice “to live” in the “newly enlightened land of Rus’,” thereby acknowledging her full agency in their future fate.<sup>36</sup> By the late seventeenth century, the well-known artist-ikonographer Simon Ushakov (1626–1686) visually enshrined the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God as the palladium of Russia in his well-known work *The Tree of the Muscovite State* (*Drevo gosudarstva Moskovskogo*), a sign of Moscow’s own covenant with Mary.<sup>37</sup>

Not all of Russia’s medieval and early modern Marian icon stories concerned nation-building, however. Marian icons were often linked to the founding of monastic communities and the construction of churches, credited with relief from illness, drought, and epidemics, and provided the basis for morality tales. The late fifteenth-century account of the Koloch icon of the Mother of God, for instance, focuses on Luke, a common man who was “blessed” by finding a miracle-working image of the Mother of God. Because of his discovery, Luke is treated as a “prophet” and “apostle” and, as he travels with the icon from the village of Koloch to Mozhaisk, Moscow, and other towns, he is received with respect and given alms. Celebrated by bishops, princes, and “all the people,” Luke succumbs to the temptation of fame and fortune and turns to a life of excess. Despite such recklessness, even the local ruling prince of Mozhaisk, Andrei Dmitrievich, deters to Luke because the Mother of God has supposedly favored him with her icon. A close brush with death results in Luke’s change of heart, however, leading to his tonsure and the founding of a monastic community at the site where he had originally found the icon.<sup>38</sup> Such stories of miracles, faith, and morality became the mainstay of Russia’s Marian devotional culture into modern and contemporary times.

Finally, speculating on the ancient roots of Russia's Marian culture, modern scholars from Russia and the West have sought the existence of pre-Christian cults of goddess figures in Rus' that may have influenced the reception and assimilation of the figure of Mary. Although the culture of ancient Rus' lacks a defined pantheon as in the Greco-Roman goddess figures such as Cybele, Demeter, Isis, Rhea, and Tyche—in whom scholars have seen precursors to Mary in late antiquity—both prerevolutionary Russian and contemporary Western scholars have sought pre-Christian sacred figures that may have served as indigenous prototypes for Russia's "Mary."<sup>39</sup> Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian ethnographers and folklorists who pursued this line of inquiry generally assumed, as had the ethnographer Sergei Maksimov (1831–1901), that even when "Christ's teaching seemingly permeated to the [peasant] bone," it remained but a thin veneer.<sup>40</sup> While this approach has faced resistance from historians and philologists, many of Russia's ethnographers and folklorists continued to seek Mary's cultural roots in the divine feminine principle of "Mother Damp Earth" (*mat' syra zemlia*)—personified, according to some scholars, as an earth goddess—or with the Slavic goddesses of fertility, such as Lada, Mokosh, or perhaps even Simargl.<sup>41</sup> This contested view, which became intertwined with the equally problematic notion of "dual-faith" (*dyvoverie*), proved expedient during Soviet times as a means of minimizing Orthodoxy's historical influence in Russia's past and of undercutting its future potential in the promised new socialist order.<sup>42</sup> The Soviet ethnographer Nikolai Matovin (1898–1936), for instance, cast the study of Marian devotion in Russia as a form of cultural paleontology that led inevitably to pre-Christian beliefs.<sup>43</sup> In more recent times, this line of inquiry among Western scholars of Russia has dovetailed well with the feminist search for ancient matriarchal cultures and the feminist attempts to construct neo-pagan goddess cults.<sup>44</sup>

Since the seventeenth century, which marks the starting point of this volume, three major cultural revolutions have influenced the framing and reframing of Russia's Mary: the Westernization and modernization of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent exodus of Russian émigrés to the West, and the fall of communism. These political and cultural shifts played a formidable role in shaping cultural self-perception and, as modernity and secularism offered viable alternatives, in creating new roles for Mary. Through trade routes in the north and strong cultural ties with the southwestern territories that constitute today's Ukraine and Belarus, Russia encountered Western aesthetic sensibilities and Western forms of Christian devotion. The result was a visual and narrative reorientation with regard to Mary that drew on European influences as much as earlier Byzantine ones, in many ways marking Russia's increasingly complex cultural

relationship with Europe.<sup>45</sup> If prior to the sixteenth century Russia's church and state elite eyed primarily Constantinople and its Marian legacy as sources for inspiration and identity-formation, now Europe and "the West" served that function as both a cultural kin that Russia often sought to emulate and a civilizational Other whose influences Russia sought to regulate or resist. The result was a modern Marian culture fraught with ambiguity and deep paradoxes. At the same time, negotiations between its Byzantine and Western aesthetic forms also produced numerous brilliant examples of fusion between "the essence of an alien culture" and Russia's native one, as Sarah Pratt's essay on Alexander Pushkin's Mary so vividly demonstrates.

Visually, Russia's turn to the West in the seventeenth century marks the beginning of Mary's makeover in iconographic depictions. Emperor Peter the Great's short-lived efforts to regulate Orthodox iconographic production and the subsequent role of the Imperial Academy of Arts (founded in 1757) in setting the standards of "good" iconography resulted in a varied palette of iconographic styles. Mary might be depicted as lighter European (the "Italian" or "Frankish" style) or in the darker-toned, traditional "Greek" style, typical of rural Old Believer iconographic workshops. Simon Ushakov promoted the *fiiazhi* style of iconography, which combined traditional Byzantine and Western forms and styles. Using examples from the turn of the twentieth century, Wendy Salmon notes how this creative integration of "icon" and "art" continued throughout the imperial period, producing new, revitalized sacred styles among artist-iconographers of the Silver Age (1890s to the early 1920s) such as Viktor Vasnetsov (1848–1926), Mikhail Nesterov (1862–1942), and Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin (1878–1939). Roy Robson traces the same impulse in the work of the traditionally trained Old Believer iconographer Pimen Sofronov, who, as an iconographer in emigration, creatively integrated features of Roman Catholic iconography without compromising the iconicity of Orthodox Marian works.

A church council in 1551 maintained that the work of fifteenth-century master Andrei Rublev should be the iconographic standard in Russia. But the fact that in the late nineteenth century Western reproductions of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were readily found in Russia's rural, predominantly peasant, iconographic workshops indicates that Mary enjoyed a wide array of "looks" in prerevolutionary Russian churches and homes. It might indeed be argued that by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Raphael's Sistine Madonna was more influential than any of Rublev's icons in Russia's conception of Mary.<sup>46</sup> No enforced Orthodox iconographic canon existed that could certify her appearance, despite guidelines offered by iconographer manuals (*podlinniki*) and periodic synodal directives. Indeed, Roy Robson's essay

on Sofronov demonstrates that the unexpected flexibility of these guidelines may have been a function of the wide-ranging influences on the iconographer, especially as the icon painter emigrated westward.

Lighter, Europeanized images of Mary, along with scenes from her life that had at one time typified the Christian West (such as her coronation) now found homes in Russia's sacred spaces (see fig. 0.2). The growing demand for affordable icons in Russia eventually led to new methods of mass production. To save cost and time, Mary was only partially depicted (usually only her face and hands) and covered with a metal or foil plate setting or depicted on paper prints. While the iconicity of prints was a contested issue among church officials as early as the seventeenth century, for many believers print icons of Mary were the most affordable. Some clergy, laity, and eventually icon experts may have periodically questioned the iconicity of images painted in the "Italian taste" and those printed on paper, but believers for the most part prayed indiscriminately before a wide variety of images of a woman they saw as Mary.

Elena Boeck shows how, despite the changes in iconography that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought to Russia's Mary, many Orthodox clergy and laity continued to rely on her icons and miracles for historical orientation, as had their counterparts in Rus' centuries earlier. Drawing on an early modern Western propensity to collect and display "the marvelous" and a Counter-Reformation focus on Marian devotion, Orthodox churchmen reaffirmed their belief in Russia's place among the nations.<sup>47</sup> Visual and literary compendia of Marian icons and their stories often made no confessional distinction between Western and Eastern Christian accounts of encounters with Mary, again illustrating how porous the cultural boundaries were between Russia and its Western European neighbors. Like their predecessors in ancient Rus', many modern Orthodox churchmen emphasized Mary's favor toward Russia not so much in terms of exceptionalism as in universal terms that presented Russia as no less favored than her European counterparts.

By the nineteenth century, the veneration of Russia's Marian miracle-working icons had grown to proportions unknown in other Eastern Orthodox countries, spurred, in part, by their sheer number. The mass production of inexpensive icons and an Orthodox ritual culture that liturgically honored specially revered icons led to a veritable cottage industry in the cataloging and celebration of their stories.<sup>48</sup> By 1893, some four hundred and fifty specially revered icons of the Mother of God, which included more than seventy distinct visual types, traveled Russia's remote back roads, visiting urban and remote localities. Usually requested by local communities that prepared annually for such a visit, the most well-known of these icons spent only a fraction of any given year "at home" in monasteries and urban cathedrals.<sup>49</sup> Keeping in

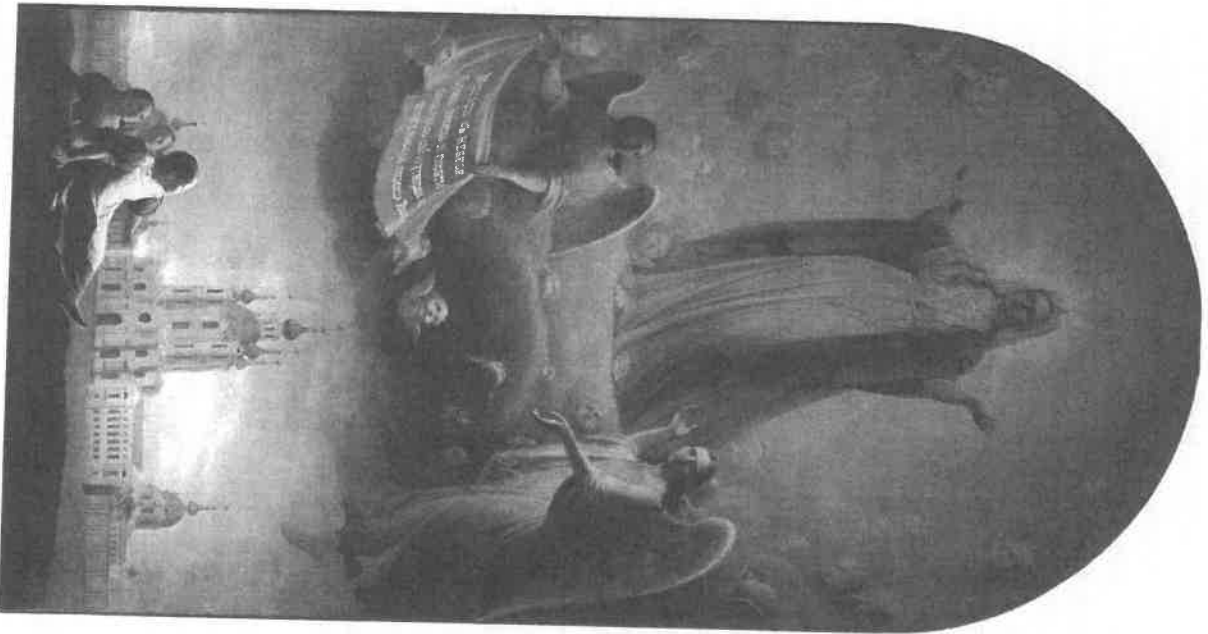


FIGURE 0.2 Aleksei Venetianov (1780–1847), *The Intercession of the Mother of God for the Students of the Smolny Institute (1832–1835)*, painted for a side altar in the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ the Savior (Smolny Cathedral) in St. Petersburg, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. The script at the left side of the icon is a verse from Psalm 80—"Look down from heaven, O God, and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted"—the motto of the Society for the Education of Noble Maidens.

mind that the Orthodox Church at the time only nationally celebrated some twenty-eight icons of the Mother of God, such visitations (*posehcheniia*) testified to a broader, laity-driven Marian subculture within Orthodoxy. Using sources still largely unexplored by scholars, William Wagner traces the rituals and liturgical culture that facilitated the sense of bonding and belonging that these visitations cultivated. Illustrating how such rituals often reinforced existing hierarchical structures, Wagner's essay also suggests that those visitations inherently deflected the gravity of authority from the very same official ecclesiastical and state governance structures, encouraging instead shared, collective encounters with Mary. The fact that by the nineteenth century the subjects of stories associated with newly revered Marian icons were no longer predominantly Russia's social or ecclesiastical elite also confirms the populist underpinning of modern Russia's Marian subculture. Indeed, as Amy Singleton Adams argues, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even artists and activists who, like Maxim Gorky, actively cultivated alternatives to Orthodox spirituality, recognized and attempted to redirect the energy inherent in this subculture in their own efforts to "transform and transfigure faith" in the new revolutionary context.

Ironically, the very engagement with the West that had promoted the cataloging and celebration of Mary's miracles also led to the rise of a philosophical disposition in Russia that challenged Mary's identity as an active agent in peoples' lives. Starting with church and civil legislation crafted during the reign of Peter the Great, institutional thinking about miracles was based on the ill-defined project of freeing Orthodoxy from all that was "superfluous and not essential to salvation."<sup>50</sup> Influenced by Counter-Reformation efforts to tackle ecclesiastical corruption, and strengthened by both Enlightenment-era rationalism and Orthodox clerical distrust of lay devotional sensibilities, this legislation subjected spontaneous veneration of Marian icons to a new level of bureaucratic scrutiny and censure. At a time when doubt became increasingly understood as progressive and the miracle as a disdained "phantom of this age," believers were often left defending a way of seeing that modernity had discarded as obsolete.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, Russia's complex engagement with the West ushered in a world of art—painting, literature, music, dance, and theater—that flourished far beyond the ecclesiastically defined semantic frame of Orthodoxy. Especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Russia's professional academy-trained artists produced Marian images that were sometimes difficult to distinguish from that of their Western counterparts. These artists' works often became known abroad. Aleksei Egorov (1776–1851), professor of art history at the Academy of Art, for instance, won accolades as a

"Russian Raphael" for his religious works.<sup>52</sup> While no less spiritual or at times even "religious" in its inspiration—and indeed, the work of many of these academically trained artists adorned the walls of Russia's urban cathedrals—Russia's secular artistic world established a context in which artists, poets, and writers could draw on Mary's Eastern and Western Christian legacies and move beyond them, engaging her anew.

In their creative engagement of both the "Western" and the "native" in Marian aesthetics, Russia's artists and authors nevertheless often distinguish the West's Madonna from Russia's *Bogoroditsa*. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the work of Mikhail Lermontov, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Anna Akhmatova, for example, cast the Russian Mother of God as protectress, bestower of mercy and succor in death, and the kenotic female sufferer. At the same time, paragons of the Italian Renaissance, such as the Sistine Madonna and the Madonna da Setignano, in the work of Dostoevsky and Alexander Blok tended to represent the ideals of aesthetic beauty or the poet's creative processes.<sup>53</sup> As Sarah Pratt observes, even the whimsical, sometimes bawdy verse about the European Madonna by Alexander Pushkin—the "cultural conduit" from Europe to Russia and "translator" par excellence of European culture into native Russian sensibilities—remained a "Western model made quintessentially Russian, keeping the Orthodox *Bogoroditsa* at bay."

In their search for distinctly Russian forms that either shed or engaged European influences in new ways, many writers, artists, and poets of the Silver Age turned to the ancient icon as a source of inspiration. The populist underpinnings of Russia's realist and avant-garde art, the Silver Age's attraction to iconographic language—its color, form, and perspective—and the revolution-ary fervor that sought to harness the energy of "the people" all helped to secure a place for Mary in Russia's burgeoning secular culture. While mostly working outside the boundaries of the institutional church, the work of Russia's Silver Age writers, poets, artists, and philosophers nevertheless often proceeded from an insider's knowledge of lived Orthodoxy and the craft of iconography. During a period of intense religious reflection at the outset of the twentieth century, for example, the poet Alexander Blok—who, according to his mother, "locked himself in a church to pray"—even considered writing a dissertation on miracle-working icons of the Mother of God.<sup>54</sup> The deep religious and spiritual foundation of the Silver Age, which coincided with what historians of Russian thought have since termed the "Russian Religious Renaissance," often found its inspiration in the work of philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev.<sup>55</sup> As Natalia Ermolaeva reminds us in her essay, Solov'ev's religious engagement with modernity and the often mystical undertones of his writings (especially

those dedicated to Divine Sophia) deeply influenced Silver Age writers, poets, and artists working beyond the enclaves of the institutional church, as well as academically trained Orthodox thinkers.

The explosion of creativity that marked Russia's Silver Age was accompanied by an almost breathless search for ways to express the social, cultural, and spiritual renewal that the highly charged revolutionary atmosphere promised. Painters such as Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin drew on iconic forms and on the image of Mary to tap the energy often generated by her familiar image in order to serve their broader cultural or social agendas, like highlighting the plight of the poor. Reminding us of Petrov-Vodkin's training in iconographic workshops, Wendy Salmon presents his painting *1918 in Petrograd (The Petrograd Madonna)* as an "icon-painting" that simultaneously reflected an "evangelical desire" to speak to an audience "hungry for spiritual as well as physical food" and represented "the most complete visual manifestation" of the twentieth-century Russian philosophy of "aesthetic Christianity."

In addition to Vladimir Solov'ev's Divine Sophia, other female forms, like poet Alexander Blok's Beautiful Lady (*Prekrasnaiia dama*), represented Symbolist ideas about spiritual unity, Sophiology, and Godmanhood. For many artists and thinkers, however, the image of the *Bogoroditsa* continued to act as a defining, symbolic text. The impetus to find non-transcendent but still spiritual means of expressing the meaning and values of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary world was often expressed in the idea of the "living icon." For poet Marina Tsvetaeva, whom Alexandra Smith describes as a "spiritual truth-seeker" in more a theosophical sense, Moscow itself becomes a "living" icon of what seems to be four dimensions, a space "imbued by divine truth" and protected by the Mother of God. Maxim Gorky's "living" literary icon, as Amy Singleton Adams shows, display both the writer's search for a collective human spirituality and his struggle to inject into Lenin's revolutionary project certain humane values—love, compassion, tenderness—that might engender cultural renewal.

Gorky's novel *Mother* was heralded as the first work of Soviet Socialist Realism; although successive editions gradually scrubbed religious imagery from it, the first iteration was dominated by the figure of the eponymous mother-cum-Madonna.<sup>56</sup> However, if some Silver Age and early Soviet artists and writers recognized the spiritual fervor that Mary's image traditionally commanded and attempted to harness it for their own purposes, for others, the iconic woman seemed to have little to offer a society with a new vision. Instead, she appeared as an obstacle to the rapid modernization this vision presupposed. In his story, "The Homeland of Electricity" ("Rodina

elektrichestva"), for instance, the proletarian writer Andrei Platonov (1899–1951) presents Orthodox's Mary as a symbol of a faith misplaced and worn by centuries of now meaningless habits of religious ritual that cannot evoke any hope. Represented as a solitary young woman whose premature wrinkles and dull, unresponsive eyes betray first-hand knowledge of the hardship and bitterness of everyday life, Platonov's Mary (and the institution that had produced her) had little to offer believers. Her purposeless gaze held no spark of faith, such eyes, observed Platonov, "tired quickly."<sup>57</sup>

Such a Mary had no place in an atheistic society driven by the project to create the New Soviet Person (*novyi chelovek*). In the broader context of Soviet culture, therefore, Mary met a variety of fates. Artists and writers such as Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin and Maxim Gorky attempted to free Mary from ecclesiastical trappings and transform her image into that of a new proletarian mother, while others were convinced that such a "freeing" was ultimately impossible. Countless Western-style or folk icons of Mary from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, along with other imperial-age artifacts, were viewed as worthless clutter and destroyed. State officials confiscated Mary's more ancient images from churches and monasteries, which the art world had deemed most valuable, and either safely preserved them in museums as cultural artifacts or sold them abroad for much needed state revenue. With thousands of churches and monasteries destroyed or closed, the narratives that had once so informed Russia's Marian culture lost their vitality and were largely forgotten. Only the clandestine efforts of believers—often without the participation of clergy—kept Russia's Marian storytelling culture alive.

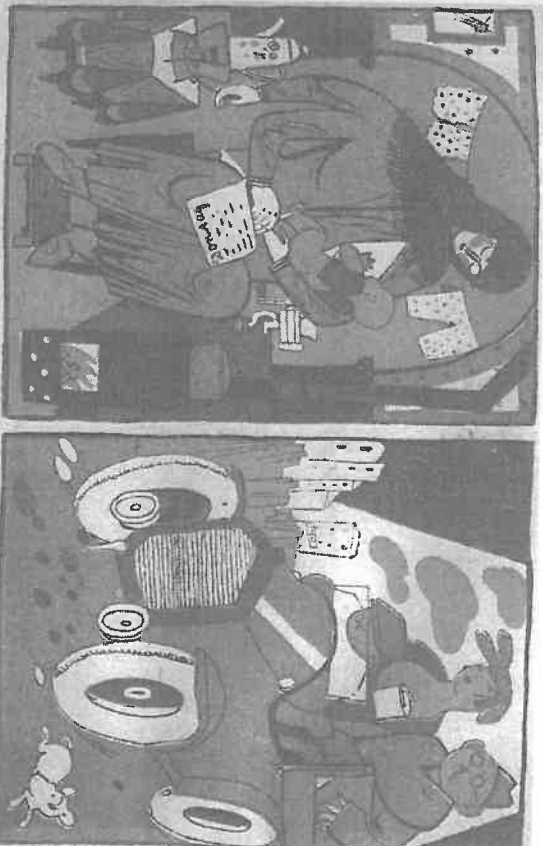
Nevertheless, in their communist-building efforts, anti-religious propagandists strategically appropriated familiar Marian iconic forms that recast and frequently degraded their traditional uses while fulfilling their own social and political purposes. While the female figure may have been rare in nascent Soviet political art, even during these years Mary's image proved useful for anti-Orthodox propaganda.<sup>58</sup> For instance, linking Mary (and thus Orthodoxy) with counterrevolutionary forces during Russia's Civil War (1917–1922), communist satirist Viktor Deni based his 1919 lithograph *The Village Birthgiver of God* (*Selianskaia Bogoroditsa*; see fig. 0.3) on the easily recognizable form of the Hodegetria icon of the Mother of God. In this image, the well-known anti-Bolshevik Socialist Revolutionary Viktor Chernov (1873–1952) is cast as Mary, White Army leader Admiral Alexander Kolchak (1874–1920) as the Christ child, and White Army generals Anton Denikin (1872–1947) and Nikolai Yudenich (1862–1933) as angels.

By the mid-1920s and 1930s, the face of Mary in Soviet visual, especially antireligious, propaganda became more prominent. A 1927 sketch from the





Figure 0.3 Viktor Demt. *The Village Birthgiver of God* (Selianskaia Bogoroditsa), 1919. The image is signed "Iconographer Demt." The scroll held by Alexander Kolchak, who is pictured in the place of the Christ child, reads: "Shoot every tenth worker and peasant" Archive, Poster Collection, Hoover Institute, Stanford University.



Ca. 1927-1928.

Ca. 1927-1928.



Ca. 1927-1928.

Ca. 1927-1928.

Figure 0.4 Iurii Ganfa, *The New Saints*. Clockwise from top left, the "Holy three-handed Mother", the "Holy female ascetic (at work)", the "Miracle-working accountant", and the "Holy god-pleaser". *Smekhachi* [The Jokester], no. 8 (1927).

satirical journal *Smekhach* (The Jokester), for instance, utilized the Three-Handed (Troeruchitsa) image of the Mother of God to laud the working mother among the “new saints” of Soviet society. In this image, a veiled woman resembling the *Bogoroditsa* breastfeeds a child while doing housework and preparing a lecture; her multitasking is miraculously aided by a third hand (see fig. 0.4).<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, Vsevolod Pudovkin’s 1926 film based on Gorky’s novel *Mother* (Mat’, 1906) drew on familiar images to promote the sufferings and joys of Soviet collective motherhood.<sup>60</sup> With a certain irony, Valentin Rasputin’s 1974 novel *Live and Remember* (Zhivi i pomi) seems to close out the era of Soviet Socialist Realism with both the overturning of its archetype of the heroic war veteran and a return to a Marian heroine who embodies the values of compassion, mercy, and self-sacrifice.<sup>61</sup>

Because the new Soviet state associated her with the tsarist regime and “enemies of the people,” Orthodoxy’s Mary remained mostly hidden from public view. In the post-Stalin decades, some of Russia’s dissidents focused on this Mary as part of Russia’s “forbidden past,” as they searched for cultural meaning in Soviet society.<sup>62</sup> Virtually each of the fourteen volumes of dissident Zoia Krakhmalnikova’s journal *Nadezhda* (Hope; published between 1976 and 1983) began with a chapter dedicated to Mary—an excerpt from her apocryphal life, a well-known homily, or a prayer in honor of one of her icons. Similarly, as Elizabeth Skomp’s essay recounts, dissident Tatiana Goricheva reclaimed Mary as a countercultural feminine symbol in her discovery of liberation in Orthodox Christianity in the 1970s. Doing so, she marked the emergence of two parallel forms of feminism in Russia—secular and religious—that have characterized the feminist movement in the West as well. In the same figure that the Soviet state deemed a symbol of institutional and political oppression, Goricheva found not only a personal spiritual “home,” but also a source of inspiration that, in Skomp’s estimation, could liberate contemporary Soviet women from their “passivity, silence, and slavish dependency on home and family.”

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, émigrés fleeing Russia carried the image of Mary with them. Like Roman Catholic Italian immigrants a half century earlier and Cuban and Haitian exiles a half century later, Russia’s Orthodox exiles living on virtually every continent turned to Mary as a way of making sense of their fate.<sup>63</sup> An akathist composed in Paris in the 1930s likened her to “the abode of homeless wanderers” (*Svetlaila obitel’ strannikov bezdomnykh*) as Mary’s role as protectress took on new meaning.<sup>64</sup> Sought for her maternal mercy, for guidance and light in “the darkness of sorrowful days” of banishment in a foreign land, the image of Mary helped not only to

maintain collective identity among scattered immigrants, but also to forge a “diasporic nationalism” that persists to this day.<sup>65</sup> According to this hymn, she was “the mother of the Russian people” (*Mat’ rođa russkogo*) and thus acted as a beacon of hope and help. Carried by émigrés to such cities as Chicago and New York, well-known miracle-working icons of Mary like the Tikhvin and Kursk-Root icons of the Mother of God helped to sacralize immigrant experiences and emotions, which included longing for the homeland, the traumas of displacement, and the hope for eventual return.<sup>66</sup>

The *Bogoroditsa*’s role in the negotiation of Russian identity abroad varied as widely as it had in Russia. European Catholic communities, especially in Spain and Italy, had their own “moving Madonnas” that processed through streets. But for some, like émigré poet Alla Golovina, Russia’s itinerant Mary remained tenaciously distinct from Europe’s museum-bound Madonna. Golovina could not reconcile her childhood memory of a Mary who, through visitations, seemed to seek out her devotees as often as they did her, with a Mary whose terms of engagement were primarily aesthetic. Speaking of Russia’s Mary, she wrote:

Your sister—the Sistine Madonna  
Is not carried to villages, like you.  
She is sought in galleries, in a catalog  
A conventional number for tranquil eyes.  
But you, along country roads,  
Sought us out in meadowed hinterlands.<sup>67</sup>

For others, such as Old Believer iconographer Pimen Sofronov, the distinctions between icon and art—*Bogoroditsa* and Madonna—were not so categorical with regard to lived experience. Without reservation, he incorporated features from traditional Roman Catholic depictions of Mary into his highly acclaimed Orthodox frescoes and icons. As Roy Robson shows, Sofronov was, ironically, dubbed “the Madonna Painter” by his Western colleagues. At the same time, he understood the value of the Mary of museums and the role they played in keeping her image alive in a modern and postmodern age. Indeed, it might be argued that, despite its intentions, the “museumification” of Mary in Soviet Russia re-sacralized her image in a new setting, allowing for those born and living in an atheistic society to engage with her icon in unpredictable ways.<sup>68</sup>

The 1988 millennial celebration of the Christianization of Rus’ and the collapse of the Soviet Union three years later marked a resurgence of Orthodox Christianity both at the grassroots and the institutional levels, launching

the Church into the public sphere with unexpected speed. Initially viewed by many believers as a providential act, this turn in history inspired hopes among believers of a new, "resurrected Rus," which would "emerge from the ashes, from a sin-filled abyss, and shine in truth and love to the world."<sup>69</sup> But the rapid and turbulent transition in the state's ideology, economy, and geographical makeup of Russia engendered a new crisis of national identity. Initially, the crisis lent Orthodoxy and its symbols—first and foremost the *Bogoroditsa*—relevance, lure, and power. But what Orthodox clergy might have conceived as a missionizing effort soon morphed in the eyes of many citizens into a clericalization of society that drew resistance, and more recently, aversion. As the essays by Stella Rock and Vera Shevzov illustrate, in their struggles to formulate and express their competing views of Russia's past and future, Russia's citizens—including statesmen and church leaders, social and political activists, and artists, as well as common believers—have often sought, in the words of sociologist Alek Epshtein, to "mobilize Mary."<sup>70</sup>

#### FRAMING MARY

*Framing Mary* is a title with several meanings. On one level, it suggests that the Mother of God has been somehow "set up," taking the blame for an outcome not of her own creation. In this sense, for instance, leading Western feminist scholars often indict traditional institutional images of Mary for their perpetuation of women's subservience to God and men. "For the first time in the history of mankind," Simone de Beauvoir writes in a well-known passage in *A Second Sex*, "a mother kneels before her son and acknowledges, of her own free will, her inferiority. The supreme victory of masculinity is consummated in Mariolatry: it signifies the rehabilitation of woman through the completeness of her defeat."<sup>71</sup> Building on de Beauvoir's work, Mary Daly sharpens the critique of Roman Catholic Mariology in particular as the worship of a domesticated goddess and the acceptance of motherhood as a confining loss of self-hood.<sup>72</sup> For Marina Warner, Mary becomes an unreachable goal for women, all of whom inevitably fall short of her perceived perfect purity.<sup>73</sup> In the case of Russia, Joanna Hubbs sees similar processes at work in the tenth-century conversion of Rus'. At that time, in her estimation, Christianity reoriented the cultural priorities of Rus' from family to state, and from goddess figures to a male God, which resulted in the subjugation of women.<sup>74</sup>

Frames indeed can be restrictive. They can limit the roles of women solely to birth-givers and mothers; they can deny them agency and exclude them from public spheres.<sup>75</sup> More broadly, frames are often politically motivated

and enforced in order to buttress regimes and institutional authorities, ecclesiastical and secular alike. And yet, as this volume shows, Mary has been and remains a complex image in modern Russia that transcends hegemonic discourse and enters into the fray of politics, art, and philosophy. Indeed, while the view that, historically, the image of Mary reinforced male-dominated social structures and cultural motifs in some traditional Christian cultures may be true, it is not the only truth. In fact, the power of Mary resides in the paradoxes of her perceived identities—the uniqueness of a virgin mother yet, especially in the Russian cultural context, a model of all humanity. In her discussion of Western Marian cultural discourse, French feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva can only approximate the paradoxical power of Mary's image. "What is *it*," Kristeva asks, "which in this maternal figure . . . allowed her to become both an object with whom women wished to identify and an object that those responsible for maintaining the social and symbolic order felt it necessary to manipulate?"<sup>76</sup> Although addressed primarily to the Catholic West, Kristeva's work reminds us that Mary's complex role in Russian culture can also negotiate core tensions inherent in her image.

Thus we come to the second understanding of "framing." In Russia, Mary is most frequently depicted in or with reference to her icons. Unlike a painting, the icon does not require a conventional frame to designate the boundaries of represented reality or to convey its semiotic significance. Instead, as Boris Uspensky argues, the icon's unique composition creates a natural border between the sometimes contradictory internal and external points of view.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the "frame" of an icon is also established as a matter of interpretation, a fluid category that can be simultaneously prescribed and freely formulated.

Broadly speaking, the religious, aesthetic, and social contexts in which an icon "lives" create an interpretive framework that, like any other paradigm, can shift. Interpretations of the Mother of God as an icon and symbol often indicate the boundary between an Orthodox understanding of her image and a secular appropriation and transformation of that image that may be no less "sacred." "Framing" Mary, then, refers also to the narrative frame, whether written or spoken.<sup>78</sup> Often these narratives involve dreams, visions, and miracles that focus our attention on issues of authority and alternative power structures. Such narrative frames can guide contemporary views on such complex issues as national identity, the role of women, or the cultural meaning of motherhood. Giving shape to an ever-changing cultural landscape, these narrative frames again demonstrate the power of Mary as a defining symbolic "text" in modern and contemporary Russia. One of the main struggles of working with the image of the Mother of God in any genre is maintaining an awareness of reductionist readings. While the various understandings of her "frame" help

us better understand the wide range of meanings and functions of the image of the Mother of God, it is important to appreciate that no single interpretive frame can contain her.

In many instances, as these essays repeatedly testify, Mary herself functions as a framing device that defines and structures discourse on Russian identity, women and gender roles, and the roles of art and religion in society. Although theories of framing developed and took shape primarily in the fields of social psychology and media studies, they provide a useful context in which to discuss and understand potent cultural symbols.<sup>79</sup> Social framing is a system of communication (and in that way overlaps with semiotics and reception theory); it affects how people respond to the ways in which information is shaped and delivered.<sup>80</sup> Like the “relational” experience of Mary, this process is essentially subjective, since any kind of framing includes and excludes, thus creating or conveying only certain perspectives.<sup>81</sup> While it may seem manipulative (news reporting and political rhetoric are frequent subjects of framing studies), the selection of certain frames and cultural symbols as “salient” or “primary” becomes an act of cultural self-definition.<sup>82</sup> Inasmuch as culture can be conceived as a way to explain and locate oneself in a universe of phenomena, framing can be regarded as a way of generating cultural meaning. As frames, the Mother of God and her icon, as well as their associated narratives and their reworking in literature, art, and contemporary Russian media, become a vital source of cultural discourse.

The chapters in this study trace the means by which Mary has framed and has been framed in modern Russian culture with respect to two broad issues: space and place; and women and motherhood. As historian of religion in America Thomas Tweed has argued, among their various functions, religions and their symbols orient people by providing cognitive maps, “socially constructed spatial codes,” and a sense of belonging that can be personally healing or socially transformative.<sup>83</sup> Mary in Russia provided such orientation individually and collectively, locally and nationally. As Alexandra Smith and Stella Rock’s essays illustrate, Mary’s perceived presence demarcated particular urban and rural spaces into iconic realms—transcendent “no places,” “not-made-by-human-hands”—drawing in those in search of renewal and strength and ultimately Mary’s coveted protection. Largely because of Mary’s perceived relationship with her icons, Mary’s presence was mobile; carried in processions, her image could overcome separations that often came with geographic distance.

Images of Mary and believers’ stories about their encounters with her framed what Elena Boeck has termed “geographies of the sacred.” In turn, these personal and local encounters were often collectively reframed by

linking them to other more well-known, yet often geographically distant, Marian images. As William Wagner describes in his essay, the abbess of the Convent of the Exaltation of the Cross, Dorofeia, helped to consolidate her convent’s standing and her personal authority in the early nineteenth century by promoting the veneration of a local image of the Iveron icon of the Mother of God, whose prototype was associated with the highly revered, male Iveron monastic community on Mount Athos. Similarly, in post-Soviet times, the eighteenth-century Akhtyrka icon of the Mother of God (the subject of Christine Worobec’s essay) has become a source for visually legitimizing the specially revered post-Soviet icon of the Mother of God named Holy Cross. As Vera Shevzov’s essay shows, this depiction is based on an apparition of Mary during the 1995 siege of a hospital by terrorists in the town of Budymnovsk, located seventy miles north of Russia’s border with Chechnya.

In the eighteenth century, as Elena Boeck’s essay notes, Russian churchmen and believers began reframing Russia’s Marian images within a more universal context that included Western European images of Mary. In so doing, they affirmed—for those who may have doubted or had not considered it—the place of Russia in sacred history. Such transnational Marian links were a characteristic feature of Russia’s modern Marian culture. Eventually, they helped to promote a sense of collective identity among Russia’s émigrés following the Bolshevik Revolution, allowing them to imagine a Russia outside of Russia.

At the same time, as her *omphorion* or protective veil suggests, Mary’s image could signify borders and boundaries as much as centers. In her essay, Christine Worobec shows how, despite its Western “look,” the Akhtyrka icon was embraced as a protectress in Ukrainian border regions against the invasions of Catholic Poland. As Vera Shevzov argues in her essay, post-Soviet Marian mappings of Russia have offered a symbolic means to demarcate Russia from her Western and Eastern neighbors and to promote a sense of national solidarity despite ethnic, religious, and social diversity in the face of perceived “Others.” Here, Mary’s ancient theological and more modern folkloric associations with land and soil assume geopolitical connotations, dovetailing with patriotic and nationalist sentiments conjured by the notion of motherland.<sup>84</sup> The most notable example of such Marian framing was the 2005 institution of a new national holiday—the Day of National Unity (Den’ narodnogo edinstva; 4 November)—chosen in large part because of its correlation with the celebration of the feast of the Kazan icon of the Mother of God on the same date. As Vera Shevzov’s essay illustrates, by strategically aligning Russia’s celebration of national unity with an image of Mary, church and state officials simultaneously distanced Russia from its Soviet past (the holiday replaced the 7 November anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution

as Russia's national holiday) and mythically reformed its ties with a prerevolutionary past, thus fueling the culture wars that have defined post-Soviet Russia.

As Shevzov's essay argues, clergy and laity have routinely inserted Mary into the cultural market place—the contemporary domain of “the people”—in an effort to rehabilitate Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church in a society that was not only highly secularized after seventy years of Soviet rule but also “amnesiac.”<sup>85</sup> Doing so, they contributed to the commodification of Mary as an identity marker for all of Russia's citizens. As a result, the Moscow Patriarchate abdicated any perceived exclusive “rights” to Mary as a sacred symbol, and, like Petrov-Vodkin a century before, in effect freed her from dogmatically and institutionally defined frames. Pussy Riot's choice to frame their social and political protest of “Punk Prayer” in Marian terms, for example, confirmed that, in post-Soviet Russia's culture wars, Mary often confounds the secular/religious divide, belonging to no one and everyone.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to the Marian framing of place and space, the essays in this volume also examine her role in shaping Russian cultural discourse about women and motherhood. While Orthodoxy has historically emphasized Mary's motherhood and her pivotal role as a mother in securing the salvation of humankind, it has also traditionally emphasized Mary as a model for all of humanity.<sup>87</sup> Yet despite this feature of Orthodox thought, many of Russia's churchmen, as well as modern, more liberal religious philosophical thinkers, including Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev, could not escape the cultural and religious mores—especially those related to understandings of sex and sin—in their consideration of Mary. Consequently, as Natalia Ermolaev's essay shows, despite their creative associations between Mary and the figure of Divine Sophia, and despite the Russian religious philosophical striving to reconcile dichotomies in their search for wholeness (*tsel'nost'*) or total-unity (*vseedinstvo*), Mary in these metaphysical constructs often remained disconnected from the realities of most women's (and men's) daily lives. By correlating Mary's Sophianic qualities with those of the ideals of virginity, many of Russia's religious thinkers, including Pavel Florenskii, conceived of Mary foremost in ascetic terms—as a “kind that is predisposed to the virginity of the soul.”<sup>88</sup> In this sense, Mary was not “alone of all her sex,” but a type of person—male or female—who, as Florenskii argued, from the womb possesses “a special organization of the soul.”<sup>89</sup>

At the same time, such views represent only one among several currents of thought in Russia's Marian culture concerning women and gender roles. As essays by Amy Singleton Adams, Alexandra Smith, and Wendy Salmon illustrate, Silver Age artists were inspired by alternate understandings of Mary

that contributed to and reflected the empowering features of Russia's cult of motherhood, which was not associated exclusively with family. Artist Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, for instance, associated motherhood in general—and Mary's motherhood in particular—with a “cosmic electric spark” that could help ignite a spiritual revolution in Russia, while Maxim Gorky, according to Adams, turned to Mary as the central metaphor in his God-building philosophy. Echoing the yearning of her lover, poet Sophia Parnok (1885–1933), for an “alternative” and “feminine” church, poet Marina Tsvetleva's encounters with the sacred image of Mary, Smith writes, “might be seen as an embodiment of the Solov'evian model of active involvement in the salvation of the world” through the contemplation of her icon-poems. As Vera Shevzov's essay reminds us, the Silver Age thirst for “living” icons found resonance with some contemporary Russian women almost a century later in Pussy Riot's call for the *Bogoroditsa* to become a feminist.

Essays in this volume challenge Soviet ethnographer Nikolai Matorin's observation in 1931 that devotion to the Mother of God distracted women from the kind of social activism that gave women a voice and a place in the social sphere.<sup>90</sup> The two abbesses who are the subject of William Wagner's essay (Doroifeia [Martyrova, d. 1830] and Taisiia [Solopova, d. 1915]) consolidated their authority among their female monastics and in the wider community in large part because of their special devotion to Mary. Both women used their authority to establish and engage in education, health, and welfare programs, which further increased the prominence and power of the convents. Inspired by Mary, these women used a different model of Mary's motherhood than their male counterparts, who often emphasized her modesty, meekness, and obedience.

Similarly, Ermolaev argues, as a mother, émigré activist and theologian Mother Maria Skobtsova drew on Mary's motherhood as a model of radical love necessary for the genuine mending of a fragmented world. Elizabeth Skomp shows how, in response to social and political realities that differed from that of their Western feminist counterparts, some of Russia's most active feminists in the 1970s and 1980s turned to the image of Mary in their struggle against the “equality among genderless slaves” that the Soviet state propagated as equality between the sexes.<sup>91</sup> They imagined Mary “descending into the hell of Russian life” and traveling through Russia in the guise of a simple Russian woman. Indeed, similar to Leila Ahmed's observations regarding ways of knowing in Islamic cultures, these essays imply that women's understandings of Mary often differed from that of (especially clerical) men and proved no less culturally and politically formative.<sup>92</sup> Goriacheva's pull toward Mary's motherhood remains fundamentally distinct from ideals of motherhood that, as the essay by Vera Shevzov relates, have characterized often male and clerically

driven public discourse about women on family values, reproductive rights, and family planning in post-Soviet society.<sup>93</sup>

Twenty-five years after the fall of communism and a millennium after her introduction into Rus', Mary is back in the news. She has entered the public sphere with people from various sides of the post-Soviet cultural and political fronts that invoke her image to support their various causes. Church and state officials have staked their wagers on her traditional image as a legitimizing "protector of statehood" only to stir nationalist sentiments and fuel political opposition.<sup>94</sup> In 2015, for example, a fringe group of Russian nationalists composed a prayer modeled on Nikolai Gogol's 1846 poetic pean to the *Bogoroditsa*, "A Prayer (To You, O Mother Most Holy)" (Molitva [K Tebe, o Mater' Presviataia]) in honor of Vladimir Putin's sixtieth birthday. In place of Mary, however, the wildly pro-Putin activist group calling itself the National Committee +60 (Natsionalnyi komitet +60) appeals to *Putin* as the "protector of the unfortunate" to "free [the supplicants] spirit from evil and harm."<sup>95</sup> Putin's critics have also drawn on the image of Mary to market a different message. In 2012, in the wake of the Pussy Riot affair, the embattled artist Artem Loskutov painted an image of the icon of the Mother of God named the Sign (Znamenie) wearing a bal-clava in a show of support for the imprisoned women, for which he was accused of fomenting religious divisions.<sup>96</sup> That same year, designer Katia Dobriakova, inspired by the well-known ancient Iveron icon of the Mother of God, created a tee shirt that featured the then anti-Putin social and political commentator Ksenia Sobchak as Mary to mark the launch of Sobchak's women's magazine, *Style, News, Commentary*.<sup>97</sup> Not surprisingly, both sides of the civil conflict in Ukraine have also claimed Mary as their vanguard, with her image firmly entrenched on the barricades of Maidan and fastened to riot shields.

The essays in this volume show how these wide-ranging appropriations of the image of Mary are all part of a rich and complex heritage that has imagined her as a lovely maiden, an enticing beauty, a personal manifestation of divine femininity and wisdom, a reprimanding disciplinarian, a revolutionary, a warrior, and a political activist. Simon Coleman has aptly noted that, as a symbol, Mary is "able to sustain a range of referents within the same form."<sup>98</sup> Thus, she endures as Russia's most cherished cultural resource, and will remain valued for reasons both of faith and beyond faith for a long time to come.

## NOTES

1. Please consult the glossary at the end of this volume for more detailed information concerning stories related to the various Mother of God icons to which this volume refers. The title of the introduction refers to words from an ancient apocryphal story that describes Mary's death. See

1. K. Elliott, ed., "The Discourse of St. John the Divine Concerning the Falling Asleep of the Holy Mother of God," in *The Apocryphal New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 706–7. The first quotation comes from a liturgical service, composed in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, in honor of the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God (*Sretenie chudotvornyia ikony Presvayia Bogoroditsa, iazhe naritsaetsia "Vladimirskaia"*), celebrated annually on 3 June (21 May O.S.). *Mnueia. Ma. Chast' vtoraiia* (Moscow: Moscow Patriarchate, 1987), 320.

2. Sergei Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), 133.

3. For an overview of the history of the well-known titles of Mary ("Birthgiver of God" or "God Bearer" (*Theotokos, Bogoroditsa*) and "Mother of God" (*Mater Theou, Bogomater'*), see Ioli Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became *Mater Theou*," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 44 (1990): 165–72.

4. Scholarship on Mary in the West has grown significantly since Marina Warner's now classic study *Alone of All of Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976). Examples of recent social and cultural studies of the modern Marian phenomenon include: Chris Maunder, *Our Lady of the Nations: Apparitions of Mary in Twentieth-Century Catholic Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Lisa M. Biel, *Our Lady of the Rock: Vision and Pilgrimage in the Mojave Desert* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Jalana D. Schmidt, *Cachita's Streets: The Virgin of Charity, Race, and Revolution in Cuba* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Joseph P. Laycock, *The Seer of Bayside: Veronica Luken and the Struggle to Define Catholicism* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Alma López, *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011); Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Anna-Karina Hemkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrin Notermans, *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Apollito Paolo, *The Internet and the Madonna: Religious Visionary Experience on the Web*, trans. Antony Shugar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Thomas A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

5. For examples of recent scholarship on Mary in late antiquity and Byzantium, see Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016); Leslie Brubaker and Mary B. Cunningham, eds., *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); Chris Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Burns and Oates, 2008); Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Maria Vassilaki, *Images of God in Byzantium: Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). For studies of the Mother of God in modern Eastern Christian cultures, see Jill Dubisch, *In a Different Place: Pilgrimage, Gender, and Politics at a Greek Island Shrine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

6. As examples, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Sarah Jane Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

7. Examples of more focused studies on the Marian phenomenon in modern and contemporary Russia include Vera Shevzov, "Mary and Women in Late Imperial Russian Orthodoxy" in *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, ed. Wendy Rositsyn and Alessandra Tosi (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012), 63–90; Elena Boeck, "Claiming and Acclaiming Peter I: Ukrainian Contributions to the Visual Commemorations of Petrine Victories" in *Poltava 1709: The Battle and the Myth*, ed. Serhii Plukh, *Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies* 31 (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 2012): 271–308; Elena Boeck, "Strength in Numbers or Unity

in Diversity? Compilations of Miracle-Working Virgin Icons," in *Alter Icons: The Russian Icon and Modernity*, ed. Jefferson J. A. Gatrall and Douglas Greenfield (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 27–49; Vera Shevzov, "Scripting the Gaze: Liturgy, Homilies and the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Late Imperial Russia," in *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia*, ed. Mark D. Steinberg and Heather J. Coleman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 61–92; "Between Popular and Official: Akafisy Hymns and Marian Icons in Late Imperial Russia," in *Letters from Heaven: Popular Religion in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Andriy Zayarnuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 251–77; Eugene Clay, "The Church of the Transfiguring Mother of God and its Role in Russian Nationalist Discourse, 1984–1999," *Novo Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 3, no. 2 (April 2000): 320–49; Julie de Sherbinin, *Chekhov and Russian Religious Culture: The Poetics of the Marian Paradigm* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997); Sergei S. Averintsev, "The Image of the Virgin Mary in Russian Piety," *Gregorianum* 75, no. 4 (1994): 611–22; Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

8. Most publications regarding Mary the Mother of God in post-Soviet Russia remain quasi-confessional and limited in academic rigor. Of notable exception is the attention that has been given to the critical examination of aspects of Russia's Marian culture by art historians, anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, and scholars of feminism. As examples, see M. B. Plukhanova, "Kripe-ny Sveta": *Russkie Odigitriti v liturgicheskoi poezii i v istorii* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii Dom, 2016); V. G. Chentsova, *Ikona Iverskoi Bogomateri: Ocherki istorii otnosheniĭ Grecheskoi tserkvi s Rossiĭei v seredine XVII v. po dokumentam RGADA* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010); D. I. Lebedev, *Istoriia sobornykh khramov Feodorovskogo i Uspenskogo v gorode Kostrome: V svyazi s povestiu i povest'iu s Rossiĭei v seredine XVII v. po dokumentam RGADA* (Moscow: Kostroma: Kostromskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 2010); I. V. Samsonova, *Ikonnogoficheskaia traditsiia izobrazhenia Akafista Bogomateri v russkoi kul'ture XV–XVIII vekov* (Shuia: Shuiskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 2010); V. M. Kirilina, *Skazanie o Tikhvinskoi ikone Bogomateri "Odigitritia": Literaturnaiia istoriia pamiatnika do XVII veka, ego sodrazhatel'naiia spetsifika v svyazi s kul'turnoi epokhei* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2007); Olga Lipovskaya, "The Mythology of Womanhood in Contemporary Soviet Culture," in *Women in Russia: A New Era in Russian Feminism*, ed. Anastasia Posaidskaya-Vanderbeck et al. (New York: Verso, 1994), 123–34.

9. Henry Adams, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (London: Constable, 1936), 17.

10. For a discussion of rationality and sacred presence in history, see Robert A. Orsi, "Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity," in Hermkens, Jansen, and Notermans, eds., *Moved by Mary*, 215–25.

11. Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 62.

12. On Mary's function as "master symbol" within societies, see Eric R. Wolf, "Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 6 (1956): 1065–78; and "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol," *The Journal of American Folklore* 71, no. 279 (January–March 1958): 34–39; Cathelijne de Bussser and Anna Niedzwiedz, "Mary in Poland: A Polish Master Symbol" in Hermkens, Jansen, and Notermans, eds., *Moved by Mary*, 87–100.

13. Nikolai Maiorin, *Zhenskoe bozhestvo v pravoslavnom kul'te: Plamitsa-bogoroditsa* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1931), 8–10.

14. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 51.

15. Dubisch, *In a Different Place*, 236; Hubbs, *Mother Russia*, 100, 102; Judith Kornblatt, *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 52. When Russia's well-known poets wrote about the "Madonna," they usually did so in reference to a Western work of art. See, for instance, E. A. Boriatynskii, "Madonna," A. N. Markov, "Maddonna," and K. D. Bal'mont, "Spashchana Madonna." For emphasis on Mary's motherhood in Russian culture rather than on her virginity, see examples of more recent studies: Adele Barker, *The Mother Syndrome in the Russian Folk Imagination* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1986), 48; O. G. Isupova, "The Social Meaning of Motherhood in Russia Today," *Russian Social Science Review* 43, no. 5 (September–October 2002): 23–43.

16. Sergei Averintsev, "Gorizont semi: O nekotorykh konstantakh traditsionnogo russkogo soznaniia," *Novi mir*, no. 2 (2000): 171.

17. See, for instance, E. Ann Matter, "Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the Late Twentieth Century: Apocalyptic, Representation, Politics," *Religion* 31, no. 2 (2001): 125–53. Also see the map of Marian sightings in the 2015 feature article, "The World's Most Powerful Woman," by Maureen Orth in *National Geographic*, December 2015, 40–41.

18. Daniel H. Kaiser, "Icons and Private Devotion among Eighteenth-Century Moscow Townsfolk," *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (2011): 128–29. The observation that the image of Mary was more dominant than even that of Jesus in Russian Orthodoxy has been repeatedly noted. For example, see D. Samarin, "Bogoroditsa v russkom narodnom pravoslavii," *Russkaiia mys' 3–4* (1918): 1–3; Nikolai Berdiaev, *Dusha Rossii* (1915; repr., Leningrad: Skaz, 1990), 10.

19. V. V. Doronkin, *O Tikhvinskoi chudotvornoi ikone Bozhiei Materi, nakhodiasheisia v Rerensburgskoi Petropavlovskoi pustyni, Riuzanskoi eparkhii* (Kasimov, 1911), 1.

20. A good example of the lasting cultural impact of such stories can be seen in Dostoevsky's allusion to the well-known Byzantine apocryphal tale of "The Wanderings of the Mother of God through Hell" in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. Pyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004), 229. For the Byzantine Apocrypha of the *Theotokos*, composed between the ninth and eleventh centuries, see Jane Bann, *Tales from Another Byzantium: Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For this text's introduction into ancient Rus' with the title *Khozhenie Bogoroditsy po mukam*, see V. V. Mil'kov, *Drevnerusskie apokryfy* (St. Petersburg: Izd-vo Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1999), 21–24. For a history of the apocryphal story of Mary's death, see Shoemaker, *The Ancient Traditions*. For a discussion of the ancient genre of Mary's life in modern Russian culture, see Shevzov, "Mary and Women."

21. The origins of this Marian feast are murky and, though they involve supposed events in tenth-century Constantinople, the feast was indigenous to Orthodoxy in Russia. For a detailed history of this feast, see Mariia Plukhanova, *Suzhety i smoly Moskovskogo tsarstva* (St. Petersburg: Akropol, 1995), 23–62.

22. For a historical overview of this transmission process, see Mil'kov, *Drevnerusskie apokryfy*, 18–45.

23. A German painter participated in the decoration of this prayer room. Isolde Thyret, "The Queen of Heaven and the Pious Maiden Ruler: Mariological Imagery in the Iconographic Program of Sofia Alekseevna's Prayer Room," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28, nos. 1–4 (2006): 629; 633–34.

24. Elliott, "The Discourse of St. John the Divine." For the history of the Dormition narrative, see Shoemaker, *The Ancient Traditions*.

25. N. P. Kondakov, *Ikonnografiia Bogomateri* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1914), 13.

26. For a detailed study of the *skazanie* with respect to icons of the Mother of God, see Andreas Ebhinghaus, *Die altrussischen Marienikonen-Legenden* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990).

27. A. A. Turilov, "Skazaniia o chudotvornykh ikonakh v kontekste istorii ikh pochitanii na Rusi," in *Relikvii v iskusstve i kul'ture vostochnokhristianskogo mira*, ed. A. M. Lidov (Moscow: Radunisa, 2000), 64–67.

28. V. A. Kuchkin and T. A. Sumnikova, "Drevneishiaia redaktsiia skazaniia ob ikone Vladimirskoi Bogomateri," in *Chudotvornia ikona v Vizantii i drevnei Rusi*, ed. A. M. Lidov (Moscow: Martis, 1996), 476–509; V. O. Kluchevskii, *Skazanie o chudeskikh Vladimirskoi ikony Bozhiei Materi* (St. Petersburg, 1878); L. A. Shchepankova, "Chudotvornia ikona 'Bogomater' Vladimirskai kak 'Odigitritia' Evangelista Luky," in Lidov, *Chudotvornia ikona*, 252.

29. Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe: East and West in the Religious Ideology of Russia*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 37–38.

30. See, as an example, the mid-fourteenth-century account that describes the battle between the Novergodians and the Suzdalians in the year 1170 and the role of the icon of the Mother of God of the Sign in that battle. "Skazanie o bitve novogorodsev s suzda'tsami" (also known as "Slovo o

znameni svatoi Bogoroditsy v god 6677 (1169))," in *Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi*, ed. D. S. Likhachev et al. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 6: 444–49.

31. G. In. Filippovskii, "Skazanie o pobeде nad volzhskimi Bolgarami 1164" in *Slava knizhnikov i knizhnosti drevnei Rusi XI–pervaiia polovina XIV v.*, ed. D. S. Likhachev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 411–12.

32. "Skazanie o chudesakh Vladimirovskoi ikony Bozhiei Materi," in *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2004), 4:218–25; Kuchkin and Sumnikova, "Drevneishaia redaktsiia," 476–509. Regarding the practice of immersing icons and relics in water, see Shchemnikova, "Chudotvornaiia ikona," 259.

33. For examples of accounts regarding Mary's protection of Rus' cities, including during times of civil strife, see Plinkhanova, *Sluzhby i simvol'y*, 31–44, 48.

34. Gail Lenhoff, "Novgorod's Znamenie Legend in Moscow's *Svepennaiia kniga*," in *Moskovskaia Rus: Spetsifika razvitiia*, ed. Grylla Serak (Budapest: Magyar Raszisztikai Intezet, 2003), 175–82.

35. "Povest' na sretenie chudotvornogo obraza Prechistyiia Vladichitsy nashieia Bogoroditsy i Prinosdevy Marii," in *Pohoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Eduarda Pratsa, 1913), 424–40.

36. "Povest' na sretenie," 435; Shchemnikova, "Chudotvornaiia ikona"; Gail Lenhoff, "Temir Aksak's Dream of the Virgin as Protectress of Muscovy," *Die Welt der Slaven* 49 (2004): 39–64; David B. Miller, "Legends of the Icon of Our Lady of Vladimir: A Study of the Development of Muscovite National Consciousness," *Speculum* 43, no. 4 (October 1968): 657–70.

37. E. M. Semeikova and S. V. Sverdlova, *Simon Ushakov: Drevo gosudarstva Moskovskogo* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennaia Dret'iarskaiia galeriia, 2015).

38. *Pohoe sobranie russkikh letopisei (Patriarskaia ili Nikonovskaia letopis')* (1897; repr. Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 11: 221–23.

39. Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Philippe Borgaud, *Mother of the Gods: From Cybele to the Virgin Mary*, trans. Lysa Hochroth (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Vasiliki Limberts, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (New York: Routledge, 1994). For scholars who have followed a similar line of inquiry for Russia, see, for example, Hubbs, *Mother Russia*, 99–101, 110–16; Moshe Lewin, "Popular Religion in Twentieth-Century Russia," in *The World of the Russian Peasant: Post-Emanicipation Culture and Society*, ed. Ben Eklof and Stephen P. Frank (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 155–57; Linda J. Vanits, *Russian Folk Belief* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1989).

40. Sergei Maksimov, *Nechistitia, nevedomaiia i kreshtnaia sila* (St. Petersburg: Golike i Vil'borg, 1903), 221.

41. Philologist Aleksei Popov argued, for instance, that upon their conversion to Christianity, the Rus' did not identify the figure of Mary with previous goddess figures or divine feminine symbols, but understood her as a distinct figure in her own right. In his estimation, the illiterate acquired their main understanding of Mary through liturgy, sermons, prayers, lives of saints, and stories associated with Marian icons. Aleksei Popov, *Vihanie tserkovnogo ucheniia i drevnrusskoi dukhovnoi pis'mennosti na nitrosozerskome russkogo naroda i v chastnosti na narodnuiu slovesnost' v drevnii do Petrovskii period* (Kazan: Tip. imp. universiteta, 1883), 152–72. For an example of those who sought the foundations of modern Marian devotion in pre-Christian beliefs, see Aleksandr Alanašev, *Poeticheskie vozzereniia slavian na prirodu*, 3 vols. (Moscow: K. Soldatenkov, 1855–1869). Some scholars, however, have maintained that "Mother Damp Earth" was associated more with the goddess Plamitisa. I. K. Kondrovskii, "Ostatki kul'ta bogini-materi v nastoiashchee vremia," *Izvestiia Tavricheskogo obshchestva istorii, arkhologii i etnografii* 11, no. 59 (1928): 77–85.

42. For a study of the notion of "dual faith" or "dual belief" in Russia, see Stella Rock, *Popular Religion in Russia: "Double Belief" and the Making of an Academic Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

43. Matorin, *Zhenskoe bozhestvo*.

44. As examples, see Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1973); Sarahawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1989); Cynthia Eller, *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*:

*The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995); Carol P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997).

45. James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

46. On the Sistine Madonna as a key symbol of Dostoevsky's religious-aesthetic philosophy of art, for example, see Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 40–70; and Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 463–64.

47. A well-known example of this trend is the Ukrainian churchman Ioanniki Galitskiit's *Neho novoe s novymi zvezdami soborovanie, t.e. Prehligoslovennaia Deva Mariia s chudami Svoimi*, first published in Polish (Lvov: Tip. Mikhaila Slezki, 1665). The work was translated into Russian in 1677. N. F. Suminov, *Golovni istorii izhno-russkikh apokrificheskikh skazanii i pesni* (Kiev: Tip. A. Davidenko, 1888), 3–4. Also see I. I. Ogienko, *Legendarno-apokrificheskii element v "Nebie Novom" Ioannikiia Galitskogo, izhno-russkogo propovednika VII-go veka* (Kiev: Tip. T. G. Meinandera, 1913); Gary Marker, "Narrating Mary's Miracles and the Politics of Location in Late 17th-Century East Slavic Orthodoxy," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 695–727. Greek churchmen penned similar compendia, but as a genre, compendia of miracle stories associated with Marian icons became much more popular in Russia. V. V. Lepakhin, *Skazaniia o chudotvornykh ikonakh v drevnrusskoi slovesnosti* (Moscow: Palomnik, 2012), 163–94. For an analysis of the Marian compendia phenomenon in Russia, see Boeck, "Strength in Numbers," and Marker, "Narrating Mary's Miracles."

48. Sergii (Spasskii), *Russkaia literatura ob ikonakh Presviatyiia Bogoroditsy v XIX v.* (St. Petersburg, 1900).

49. The akathist in honor of Mary, "The Bright Abode of Homeless Wanderers" ("Akaftist Presviatoi Bogoroditse, Svetloi Obiteli strannikov bezdomnykh") was reportedly written by the priest Georgii Spasskii in the 1930s. *Akaftist Presviatsei Bogoroditse, Svetloi Obiteli strannikov bezdomnykh* (New York: Zarubezhnaia Rus', 1971).

50. Alexander V. Müller, ed. and trans., *The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 15. Also see P. V. Znamenski, "Zakonodatel'stvo Petra Velikogo otноситel'no istorii very i blagochestnaia tserkovnogo," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik*, no. 12 (December 1864): 290–340. For more recent discussions, see Paul Bushkovitch, "Popular Religion in the Time of Peter the Great," in *Letters from Heaven: Popular Religion in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Andriy Zayarnyuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 146–64; Simon Dixon "Superstition in Imperial Russia," *Past and Present* 199, Supplement 3 (2008): 209, 218; Eve Levin, "False Miracles and Unattested Dead Bodies: Investigations into Popular Cults in Early Modern Russia," in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, ed. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 260.

51. E. I. Lovagin, "Sobytiia voskreseniia Iisusa Khrista," *Khristianskoe chenie*, no. 4 (1869): 559.

52. Egorov, Aleksei Egorovich, "Artyclopedia.ru," [http://artyclopedia.ru/legorov\\_aleksei\\_egorovich.htm](http://artyclopedia.ru/legorov_aleksei_egorovich.htm).

53. See, for instance, Mikhail Lermontov's "Prayer" ("Molitva"), Anna Akhmatova's "July 1914" ("Iul' 1914") and *Requiem* (Rekviev), and Blok's *Italian Poems* (Italianskie stikhi). The image of the Mother of God in Dostoevsky's work is ubiquitous, most notably in "The Landlady" ("Khozolaka," 1847), "A Gentle Creature" ("Krotkaia," 1876), "The Peasant Marey" ("Muzhik Marey," 1876), *Demons/Idiot* (Idiot, 1868–1869). For the role of the Madonna in Blok's work, see Jennifer Presto, *Beyond the Flesh: Alexander Blok, Zinaida Gippius, and the Symbolist Sublimation of Sex* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 70–105. S. L. Konstantinova considers Blok's treatment of the Virgin Mary in "Bogorodichnye motivy v 'Italiianskikh stikhakh' A. Bloka," in *Aleksandr Blok i mitovaiia kul'tura*, ed. Iaroslava Muidrogo, 2000), 62–68.

54. Sergei Solov'ev, "Vospominaniia ob Aleksandre Bloke," in *Pis'ma Aleksandra Bloka* (Leningrad: Kolos, 1925), 12.



55. Kornblatt, *Divine Sophia*, 51–55. Also see the classic work of Nicolas Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963).
56. A history of Gorky's reworking of *Mother* to weaken the role of religious imagery in the novel can be found in S. V. Kastorskiĭ, *Povesť M. Gor'kogo "Mat'": Ee obščestvenno-političeskoe i literaturnoe značenie* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe učebno-pedagogičeskoe izd-vo, 1954), 60–69; 70–104. By the 1980s, *Mother* was widely accepted by Soviet critics as a work of pure Socialist Realism. See D. M. Sepaniuk, "Ob otnošenii M. Gor'kogo k antireligioznoi teme v literature," *Voprosy russkoj literatury* 2, no. 24 (1974): 26–32, and Andrei Sinarskiĭ, "Roman M. Gor'kogo *Mat'*—kak ranni obrazets sotsialističeskogo realizma," *Chiters du Monde russe et soviétique* 29, no. 1 (1988): 33–40.
57. Andrei Platonov, "Rodina električesva," in *Sobranie sočinenii* (Moscow: Sovetskaja Rossiia, 1984), 1:63.
58. Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 66. See also Elizabeth Watters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917–32," in *Russian Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 225–42.
59. *Smekhach* (The Jokester), no. 8, 1927.
60. Lynne Attwood, "Rodina-Mat' and the Soviet Cinema," in *Gender Restructuring in Russian Studies*, eds. Marianne Liljeström, Eila Mäntymäenari, Atria Rosenholm (Tampere, Finland: University of Tampere, 1993), 17.
61. On the Marian imagery in Rasputin's novel, see Gerald E. Mikkelson, "Religious Symbolism in Valentin Rasputin's *Live and Remember*," in *Studies in Honor of Xenia Gasiorovska*, ed. Lauren G. Leighton (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1983), 172–87.
62. Although the Madonna figures in Liudmila Petrushevskaja's work of the Stagnation and Perestroika eras are highly problematized, they clearly raise the issue of cultural restoration. On that topic, see Helena Goscio, "Inscribing the Female Body in Women's Fiction: Cross-Gendered Passion à la Holbein," in *Gender Restructuring in Russian Studies*, 73–86; and Amy Singleton Adams, "The Blood of Children: Petrushevskaja's 'Our Crowd' and the Russian Easter Tale," *Slavic and East European Journal* 56, no. 4 (2012): 612–28.
63. Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*; Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, eds., *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 234–38.
64. *Akafist Presviatit Bogoroditse*.
65. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 5.
66. For discussion of the role of religion in the formation of diasporic identities, see Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*, 91–98.
67. A. S. Golovina, "Nerukotvornaiia," in *Bogoroditsa v russkoi poezii, XVII–XX vv.*, ed. B. N. Romanov (Moscow: Novyi kluch, 2010), 299–300.
68. For a discussion of sacred objects and museums, see Ronald L. Grimes, "Sacred Objects in Museum Spaces," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 21, no. 4 (1992): 419–30; Crispin Paine, ed., *Godly Things: Museums, Objects and Religion* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).
69. Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Alexei II, Speech at the first meeting of the World Russian People's Council, Stenogramma 1-ogo Vsesimnogo Russkogo Narodnogo Sobora, 26 May 1993, accessed 29 December 2016, <http://www.vrns.ru/documents/54/1283/>.
70. Alek Epshtein, "Mobilizovannaiia Bogoroditsa: Pank-moleben gruppy 'Pussy Riot' v khrame Khrista Spasitelia," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 83 (2012), accessed 29 December 2016, <http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/2285>.
71. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Random House, 2012), 180.
72. For Daly, the subordination of humans to God is something negative, especially when this state of affairs is expressed in a feminine symbol such as Mary. See Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The*

- Metaphysics of Radical Feminism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1978), 84–85. A more recent study on Catholic Poland, however, suggests that certain sectors of contemporary Polish society associate qualities such as responsibility, strength, and independence with the symbol of Mary, thus challenging traditional representations that deprive her of agency and free will. See Agnieszka Koscińska, "Obraz polskiej materii Bogoroditsa: nowe ispol'zovanie simvoliki materинства," *Gosudarstvo, religia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom*, no. 3 (2016): 95–115.
73. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 161.
74. Hubbs, *Mother Russia*, 87–90.
75. On the idea of "framing" as an expression of women's social and political isolation and exclusion in art and narrative, see Shirley Neilsen Blum, "The Open Window: A Renaissance View," in *The Window in Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. Suzanne Delahany (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, 1986), 13; and Nehama Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 14, 17–18.
76. Julia Kristeva, "Sabbat Mater," *Poetics Today* 6, nos. 1–2 (1985): 147–48.
77. Boris Uspensky, *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon* (Lisse, Belgium: Peter de Ridder Press, 1976), 39–41.
78. For an extensive consideration of the effect, dynamics, and relationships among visual elements of framing, see Theo van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics* (London: Routledge, 2004).
79. On the ways that cultural objects function as frames, see Michael Schudson's "How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols," *Theory and Society* 18, no. 2 (1989): 153–80.
80. See especially Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52–53.
81. On the subjectivity of framing, see Truus Ensink, "Transformational Frames: Interpretive Consequences of Frame Shifts and Frame Embeddings," in *Framing and Perspectivising in Discourse*, ed. Truus Ensink and Christoph Sauer (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing, 2003); Entman, "Framing," 53–55.
82. This kind of cultural communication among social groupings is key to the understanding of framing as Erving Goffman describes it in his foundational work on the subject, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), Stephen D. Reese et al. discuss the social function of framing, its relationship with culture, and the production of meaning.
83. Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 74–75.
84. A. N. Parshin, "Bogoroditsa—mat' syra zemlia . . . 'o trekh letsiiah v Moskovskoi dukhovnoi akademii," in *Filosofia, bogoslovie i nauka kak opyt' iszhivogo znaniia*, ed. O. M. Sed'vikh (Moscow: Maks Press, 2012), 295–309.
85. On history and amnesia in post-Soviet society, see Alexander Agadjanian, "Exploring Russian Religiosity as a Source of Morality Today," in *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia*, ed. Jarrett Zigon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 19. Also see historian Andrei Zubov's comments in "Tserkov' mozhnet sodeistvovat' stanovleniiu grazhdanskogo obščestva," *Mir religii*, 1 February 2002, <http://www.religio.ru/arch/01feb2002/news/3073.html>.
86. See comment by Pussy Riot member Katra Sammutsevich in her closing statement during her trial, "Closing Courtroom Statement by Katra," in *Pussy Riot! A Punk Prayer for Freedom* (New York: The Reminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013), 89.
87. See the observation by sociologist O. G. Isupova in "The Social Meaning of Motherhood," 26–27.
88. Pavel Florenskii, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 258.
89. Florenskii, *The Pillar*, 258.
90. Matorn, *Zhenskoe bozhestvo*, 8.

91. Alla Mifrofanova, "Teningradski feminism 70-x 80s" *Livejournal* (blog), accessed 29 December 2016, <http://philologist.livejournal.com/1446235.html>.

92. Leila Ahmed, "A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey" in *Women's Studies in Religion: A Multicultural Reader*, ed. Kate Bagley and Kathleen McIntosh (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007), 35–47.

93. As examples, see Irina Aristarkhova, "Trans-lating Gender into the Russian (Con)Text" in *The Making of European Women's Studies*, ed. Rosi Braidotti, Esther Yonk, Sonja van Wichelen (Utrecht: Athena, 2000), 2–74; Arja Rosenholm and Irina Savkina, "We must all give birth: That's an order: The Russian Mass Media Commenting on V. V. Putin's Address" in *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values*, ed. Arja Rosenholm, Kaarle Nordenstreng, and Elena Trubina (New York: Routledge, 2010), 93.

94. "Putin posetil Uspenski sobor v Astane," *RIA Novosti*, 15 October 2015, accessed 29 December 2016, <http://ria.ru/religion/20151015/1302343837.html>.

95. For a copy of the "prayer" to mark Putin's sixtieth birthday which received wide coverage in the press, see "Patriarka Kirilla prosiat utverdit' Molitvu Putinu," *Rossiiskoe informatsionnoe agentstvo*, 8 December 2015, accessed 29 December 2016, <http://ira.ru/news/105223161>; "Patriarka Kirilla prosiat utverdit' Molitvu Putinu," *Radio Ekho Moskvy*, 9 December 2015, accessed 29 December 2016, <http://echo.msk.ru/news/1673778-echo.html>. For the text on which this "prayer" was based, see N. V. Gogol', *Sobornie sochinenii v deviaty tomakh* (Moscow: Russkaja kniga, 1994), 6:547.

96. Kharym Omarova, "Khudozhnik oshtatovan za ikony s uchastitsami gruppy Pussy Riot," *Novye izvestiia*, no. 99, 9 June 2012, 3.

97. "Ksenia Sobchak primerila na sebja obraz Bogoroditsy" *Izvestiia*, 13 September 2012, accessed 29 December 2016, <http://izvestia.ru/news/535147>; "Ksenia Sobchak predstavila v obraze Bogoroditsy na glannymykh futbolnykh," *Spletnik*, 14 September 2012, accessed 29 December 2016, [http://www.spletnik.ru/blogs/pro\\_zvezd/61347\\_kseniya-sobchak-predstala-v-obraze-bogoroditsy-na-glannymykh-futbolnykh](http://www.spletnik.ru/blogs/pro_zvezd/61347_kseniya-sobchak-predstala-v-obraze-bogoroditsy-na-glannymykh-futbolnykh).

98. Simon Coleman, "Mary: Images and Objects" in Boss, *Mary*, 400.

# I

## More Numerous Than the Stars in Heaven An Early Eighteenth-Century Multimedia Compendium

of Mariology

ELENA N. BOECK<sup>1</sup>

AN ENORMOUS, HANDWRITTEN VOLUME PRESERVES a rich trove of narratives devoted to geographies of the sacred. This illustrated compendium of Mariology testifies to the tremendous cultural ferment of seventeenth-century Russia. Although in most historical narratives this period is consistently overshadowed by the intellectual output generated in the age of Peter the Great, it is important to recall that Russia's intellectual dialogue with distant knowledge, print culture, and encyclopedic scholarship began well before his reign. Orthodox intellectuals from Ukraine and Belarus served as a conduit for connecting literate Russians to Counter-Reformation discourses about the sacred. Well before the intense cultural exchanges that were carried out forcefully, often forcibly, by Peter, Russian intellectuals confronted and contested Western narratives that accorded little recognition to Russia in either the divine plan or the republic of letters.

By copying, arranging, and illustrating narratives about the miraculous appearances of the Mother of God, an unknown patron commissioned the most extensive premodern compilation of Mariology in Russia.<sup>2</sup> The remarkable volume, which heretofore has escaped scholarly notice, is kept in the Moscow State University library (Ms. Slav. 302/Ms. 10536-7-71; \*1). The handwritten, mammoth compilation of nearly nine hundred folios is dedicated to the icons and miracles of the Mother of God. Diverse texts of