

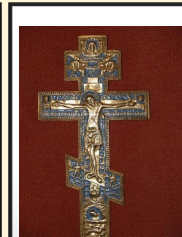
## RASKOL & THE LIFE OF ARCHPRIEST AVVAKUM

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### RASKOL (SCHISM): Background

- Russian Orthodox Church split in two: the official church and the Old Believers movement
- The schism was triggered by **Patriarch Nikon's** reforms of 1653
- Nikon's goal was to establish uniformity between Russian and Greek church practices

	OLD PRACTICE	NEW PRACTICE
Spelling of Jesus	Ісусъ [Isus]	Іисусъ [Iisus]
Creed	рожденна, а не сотворенна; И в Духа Святаго, Господа истиннаго и Животворящаго	рожденна, не сотворенна; И в Духа Святаго, Господа Животворящаго
Sign of the Cross	Two fingers, index finger straight, middle finger slightly bent	Three fingers: two fingers joined with thumb, held at point
Number of Proskoria in the Liturgy and Artoclasia	Seven	Five
Direction of procession	Clockwise	Counterclockwise
Alleluia	Аллилуїа, аллилуїа, слава Тебѣ, Боже	Аллилуїа, аллилуїа, аллилуїа, слава Тебѣ, Боже



Способы перстосложения слава -  
принятый в ходе церковных реформ;  
старый - принятый у старообрядцев



Portrait of Patriarch Nikon  
D. Vukhters (?), 1660-1665



Patriarch Nikon revising service-books  
Aleksii Kivshenko

### THE OLD BELIEVERS MOVEMENT

- In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, many Old Believers migrated to peripheral areas (Far North, southern Ukraine, Moldavia)
- **Bespopovtsy vs popovtsy:**
  - *Bespopovtsy* (traditional ascetics; preached the imminent end of the world; renounced priests and all sacraments [except baptism])
  - *Popovtsy* (moderate opposition; continued religious life as it was prior to Nikon's reforms)



Avvakum's Exile to Siberia  
S. D. Miloradovich, 1898



## TERMINOLOGY/OTHER IMPORTANT NAMES

- Zealots of Piety (*revniteli blagochestii/bogoliubtsy*)
- Ivan Neronov
- Tsar's Words (*slovo i delo gosudarevo*) "And there in that church great afflictions found me out; five times in a year and a half **the Tsar's Words** were called out against me [...]"
- Afanasii Pashkov
- Monk Epifanii Solovetskii

## THE LIFE OF ARCHPRIEST AVVAKUM BY HIMSELF

1. Does *The Life of Archpriest Avvakum by Himself* adhere to the established traditions of hagiography? How does it comply with/deviate from the genre? Do you agree with A. Vasilenko and A. Robinson who regard the *Zhitie* as an *ispoved'-propoved'*? Does Avvakum strike you as a "stereotypical saint"? What is the purpose of him calling attention to his "wicked" side?
2. How does Avvakum treat time and space in his *Zhitie*?
3. In the *Book of Interpretations and Morals*, Avvakum turns to tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich: "Ty ved', Mikhailovich, rusak, a ne grek. Govori svoim prirodnym iazykom: ne unichizhai ego i v tserkvi, i v domy, i v poslovitsakh." Give examples of Avvakum's *prirodnyi iazyk*. In what way does the style resemble Ivan Groznyi's letter to Kurbskii?
4. How would you describe Avvakum's relationship with the tsar (as portrayed in the *Zhitie*)?
5. Likhachev writes: "Byt i srednevekovaiia simbolika slity v proizvedeniakh Avvakuma nerazdel'no. Bibleiskaia istoriia perevoditsia im v chisto bytovoi plan, snizhaetsia do togo konkretnogo "videniia." Do we see the fusion of byt and biblical symbols in the *Zhitie*?

## AVVAKUM PETROV



### ORIGINS/UPBRINGING/SERVICE TO GOD

- Born in Grigorovo (Nizhnii Novgorod region)
- "My father was given to strong drink, but my mother was given to fasting and prayer [...]"
- "Now one day I saw a dead ox [...] and from that day it became my custom to pray every night."
- "[...] at the age of twenty I was ordained a deacon [...] When I had been a priest eight years, I was raised to the rank of archpriest by Orthodox bishops [...]"

## MIRACULOUS DEEDS/SUFFERINGS

- "So they brought me these two women that were possessed; and I, as the custom is, myself fasted and would not let them eat, and I prayed and anointed them with oil and tried every remedy I knew. And the good wives returned to health and to their right minds [...]"
- "And he ordered them to beat me again on the ribs; and then they stopped; and I was trembling all over, and I fell. And he ordered them to drag me off to the raft that carried the money bags: they put fetters on my hands and feet and flung me onto the deck. [...] When they were beating me it did not hurt because of the prayers I was saying [...]"

### REVERENCE OF SAINTS/UNLEARNEDNESS/ CLAIMING TO BE A SINNER

- “[...] and if they are about to drown me, then deliver me from their hands, as thou didst Stephen of Perm.”
- “And I answered them for Christ thus: “O you teachers of Christendom, Rome fell away long ago and lies prostrate [...]”
- “I am a man that is a sinner.”
- “[...] I am untaught in rhetoric and in dialectic and in philosophy, but the mind of Christ is our guide within us, as the Apostle saith, *though I be rude in speech yet not in knowledge.*”

Hunt, Priscilla. “Avvakum’s Fifth Petition to the Tsar and the Ritual Process.” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2002, pp. 483–510.

- What is the significance of holy foolery in the Old Believers’ oppositional culture?
- How does Avvakum’s *Zhitie* convey the idea of him being “a specialist in the sacred, i.e. in the rituals and symbols of *communitas*”? What is the relationship between the two social models: “*communitas*” and “structure”?
- How did Avvakum make use of the imagery of the “grotesque body” as a language for “*communitas*” in his “Fifth Petition” to tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich? Do we see any similar tendencies in his *Zhitie*? Or examples of the carnivalesque?

Weickhardt, George. “Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Russia.” *Russian history*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1994, pp. 316–37.

- What is the role of Avvakum’s autobiography in the political culture of 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia? How would you compare Avvakum’s “personal ideology” to that of his contemporaries (Kotoshikhin, Krizhanich, Polotskii)?
- Do you agree with George Weickhardt who argues that “[...] although he criticized, defied, and disobeyed the state, Avvakum had no philosophy of revolution”?
- How do you think Soviet-Marxist interpretations of Avvakum’s *Zhitie* may differ from those of the pre/post-Soviet era?



The Burning of Avvakum  
Petr Miasoedov, 1897