

THE UNION OF FLORENCE AND PUSHKIN'S DRAMATIC
REPRESENTATION OF TSAR DMITRY¹

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Key words: Pushkin, Eastern Church/ Northern Church, Union of Florence, Dmitri, inclusive messianic vision.

Summary: My thesis is that, in his drama Boris Godunov, Pushkin did not work solely on the Time of Troubles, but having chosen events that happened around 1600 he opened up the older issues that shaped them. Namely this concerns the polarization that occurred after the Council of Florence (1439). Although this council confirmed cultural plurality and recognized both Latin and Byzantine ritual practices and wordings of the Creed as valid, it was rejected during the reign of Muscovite Grand Duke Basil II, the Blind.

Dmitry, a pretender to the throne of Muscovy, appearing almost 160 years later, wished to replace the seclusionist image of Russia as the last bastion of Christendom by his messianic vision of unifying Christendom and liberating Constantinople. When he appears for the first time as Dmitry in Pushkin's drama, he sounds very determined, immediately introducing the historical option he is standing for. Let us listen to him:

*Father, I see no difficulties at all.
I am acquainted with my people's nature;
their faith is not expressed in zealotry,
the example of their tsar is sacred to them.
And tolerance, need I say, is even-handed.
In less than two years' time, I vouch to you,
all my people, all the **Eastern** Church,
will be obedient to the throne of Peter.*

This fragment of the drama remains unchanged in the printed version except for the word **Eastern** being replaced by the word **Northern**. In my opinion, the reason of modification was Pushkin's effort to be as historically accurate as possible. We should also acknowledge Pushkin's evolution as a historian between 1825 and 1831. Such precision implies that in 1831 he had a deeper consciousness of the different

¹ This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency, No. APVV-0619-10.

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histories of the Greek and Slavic parts of Byzantine Christendom. The southern part of the Orthodox world – the Greeks – had already accepted the Union of Florence some 150 years before the appearance of Dmitry. Therefore, according to the Pretender, only the northern part of the church – the Slavs – still had to do so. Moreover, by introducing an unusual adjective instead of the traditional opposition of Eastern–Western, Pushkin might have included both Poles and Russians in the term **Northern Church**, thus underlying that unity cannot be achieved by uniformization.

However, a closer religionist approach to that question has been neglected until now. The ecclesiastic problem has usually been simplified to a struggle of a Latin/Byzantine or Polish/Russian conflict, omitting other aspects of the problem. In Pushkin's understanding, Dmitry the Pretender is clearly a representative of a third (Uniat) tendency.

Grigory Otrepiev, alias Dmitry (1605-6) came from the Chudov Monastery (Miracle Monastery) to produce a miracle. For him and his supporters the “resurrection” of the assassinated infant Tsarevich is only a pre-requisite for another resurrection. Dmitry's position is not purely defensive if we consider his plan to liberate the city of Constantinople. He has the intention to do so as he is animated by the idea of the Union of Florence, persisting in his native Galicia and among Hungarian Uniats – remote both from Moscow and Rome.

The tragic conflict might have also resulted from the misunderstanding around 1600 between the Poles engaged in the local Brest-Litovsk Union (under Roman jurisdiction) and Dmitry, who was still a partisan of Florence (all Byzantine-rite Christians under the jurisdiction of Constantinople). Therefore, Dmitry clearly stands for a more pluralistic cultural concept of Christendom.

Ключовé слова: Пушкін, Вýchоднаá цркев, Севернаá цркев, Флорентскаá úния, Димитриј, секлузιονистичкú, инклузивна месјанистичкаá вúзја.

Абстрактнé: Цielом tejto štúdie je ukázať, že v дрáме Boris Godunov, Пушкін nespracúval len udalosti, ktoré sa stali okolo roku 1600, ale dotkol sa aj problematiky starších dejín, ktorá ich ovplyvnila: konkrétne polarizácie, ktorá nastala po Флорентском concile (1439). Hoci tento concil potvrdil kultúrnu pluralitu, uznal platnosť oboch obradov i oboch znení kréda, за панования московскéго вел'кокнезја Vasilia II. Темнéго бол odmietnutú.

O 160 rokov sa o revíziu odmietavéго postoja pokúsil Димитриј Самозванец, ktorý chcel nahradiť секлузιονистичкú obraz Ruska ako poslednej башы правеј виery месјанистичкою вúзјоу зједноtenia крест'анства a ослободеня Коnстантинополу.

Кед' са в Пушкинovej дрáме Димитриј објави по првú раз, пóсоби пресведчене a одходлане – okamžite увáдза нáзоровú пóзúциу, которú репрезентује:

Нет, мой отец, не будет затрудненья;

Я знаю дух народа моего;

В нем набожность не знает иступленья:

Ему священ пример царя его.

Всегда, к тому ж, терпимость равнодушна.

*Ручаюсь я, что прежде двух годов
Весь мой народ, вся **Восточная** церковь
Признают власть наместника Петра.*

Tento fragment drámy zostal v cenzurovanej tlačenej verzii bezo zmien, avšak slovo **Вýchоднá** (*Восточная*) bolo nahradené adjektívom **Севернá**. Podľa mňa sa tak stalo z vôle autora – príčinou bolo Puškinovo úsilie o maximálnu presnosť. Puškin medzi rokmi, deliacimi obe verzie (1825 a 1831), nesporne prešiel aj určitou evolúciou ako historik.

Upravenie z roku 1831 naznačuje prehĺbenie jeho poznania odlišných dejín gréckej a slovanskej časti byzantského obradového univerza. Južná časť pravoslávneho kresťanstva (Gréci) Florentskú úniu prijala už 160 rokov pred objavením sa Dimitrija na scéne dejín. Preto táto úloha zostáva už len Severnej časti kresťanstva – Slovanom.

Použitie v týchto súvislostiach neobvyklého prídavného mena namiesto tradičnej dvojice Východné – Západné, naznačuje, že Puškin do termínu **Северная церковь** mohol zahrnúť nielen Rusov, no i Poliakov, ktorým takýmto spôsobom odkázal, že jednotu nemožno dosiahnuť uniformizáciou.

Dosiaľ sa problematika rusko-poľského konfliktu v čase smuty videla zjednodušene ako latinsko-byzantský kultúrny zápas. Avšak u Puškina je Dimitrij, práve tak ako v dejinách, predstaviteľom tretej – uniatskej – orientácie.

Grigorij Otrepiev, alias Dimitrij (1605-6) prichádza z miesta opozície voči Borisovi Godunovovi a jeho suite – z Čudovho monastiera, teda z Kláštora zázraku v moskovskom Kremli. Prichádza, aby „urobil zázrak“, ako sám hovorí v Puškinovej dráme. Vzkriesenie zavraždeného cároviča je pre neho a jeho stúpcov len podmienkou iného „vzkriesenia“. Oduševnený ideou Florentskej únie, pretrvávajúcej v jeho rodnej Galícii a medzi uhorskými uniatmi – vzdialenými od Moskvy i od Ríma – chce oslobodiť Konštantínopol. Neuskutoční to, lebo krátko po nástupe na trón je zavraždený.

Tragický konflikt okolo roku 1606 mohol pochádzať aj z neporozumenia medzi Poliakmi, ktorí prijali lokálnu Brest-Litovskú úniu (čím sa ocitli v jurisdikcii Ríma) and Dimitrijom, ktorý bol ešte stále stúpencom snemu vo Florencii (všetci kresťania byzantského obradu patria do jurisdikcie Konštantínopolu). V tomto kontexte Dimitrij zjavne zastával pluralistickejší koncept kresťanstva. Puškin jeho pozíciu v dejinách chápal, a – ako svedčí dramatická postava Dimitrija, ktorú vytvoril, zmýšľal o ňom so sympatiou.

I

In that year Pushkin was seriously ill. Illness is like a little death – providing important stimuli to reflect on one's past and future. Encouraged by Karamzin's ninth volume describing the excesses of autocracy, and thus departing from the main thesis of his History of the Russian Empire, Pushkin felt challenged to go even further and started to work on his drama. He finished it on 7 November 1825. Five weeks later the Decembrist

Rebellion took place³ and influenced the public reception of the poet's vision of history.

However, Pushkin's love story with Kleio had never stopped. O Kleio, muse of history – not silent even *inter armas!* You do not behave like a moody mistress, but resemble rather a faithful friend waiting for a poet on the spot where they separated!

Pushkin's relationship to Kleio was very deep, or, putting it more scientifically, I agree with the statement by Chester Dunning that the poet was an excellent historian: *Most studies of Boris Godunov have paid little, if any, attention to Pushkin's intense interest in the history of his country. They have fallen short in their interpretations of that history and the angry young poet's sophisticated use of historical sources other than Karamzin's History. Those oversights are regrettable because Pushkin was actually an historian of considerable ability. Indeed, in 1831, Tsar Nicholas I appointed him Russia's official historian laureate (istoriograf) – the second one ever, following Karamzin. It is important to remember that at that time history and literature were not regarded as separate disciplines.*⁴

My thesis is that Pushkin did not work solely on the Time of Troubles, but having chosen events that happened around 1600 he opened up the older issues that shaped them. Namely this concerns the polarization that occurred after the Council of Florence (1439), council that was rejected during the reign of Muscovite Grand Duke Basil II, the Blind.

Let us recall this 15th century event: on 6 July 1439 the Eastern and Western church hierarchy proclaimed the Union of Florence. This was a unique event in the history of Christendom since for the first time there is no question of suppressing heresy. The Council of Florence confirmed cultural plurality and brought mutual agreement with the teaching of the other: both Latin and Byzantine ritual practices and wordings of the Creed were recognized as valid.

Spreading the union took some time as the participants of the council had to reach their sees. On 1 October 1440 Izidor, the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, solemnly read the decree of the union in Kiev. It was accepted with great joy. On Palm Sunday in 1441 he read it in Moscow.

³ "Pushkin would have agreed wholeheartedly with Peter Viazemsky's perceptive comment that the Decembrists had rebelled against the views contained in Karamzin's History." In: Dunning, Chester: The Exiled Poet-Historian. In: The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 57.

⁴ Dunning, Chester: The Exiled Poet-Historian. In: The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 52.

There were no immediate difficulties but a few days later the decree of the union was rejected and the metropolitan was imprisoned; his see remained empty for 8 years until Basil the Blind named Jona the Metropolitan of Russia in 1448.

Of course, at that time there was an awareness of the Ottoman threat which had also urged the signing of the Union of Florence, and thus Constantinople did not go into conflict with Muscovy. Furthermore, due to the polarization of the Greek clergy, the union was solemnly proclaimed only on 12 December 1452. A few months later on 7 April 1453 Byzantium was conquered by the Turks.

Due to the Byzantine mission, the Union of Florence did not represent an absolute novelty among the Slavs. Cyril and Methodius came from Constantinople but defended their teaching in Rome, and papal support helped them to face the Latinizing Franks. Being part of a ritual diaspora, the 15th-century Western Slavs welcomed the union for its practical implications: a situation was in a way similar to the Greek islands.

The Council of Florence had many supporters among bishops, theologians and artists. But it had much fewer knights; more exactly, once the participants of the council and the first wave of its supporters had died in battle at Varna and Kosovo Pole, and while defending the walls of Constantinople, only the Order of Rhodes and Malta in the Mediterranean tried to hold up a flag of resistance.

In the Balkans the personality of Skanderbeg has historically suffered several appropriations that were sometimes rather strange.⁵ Let us recall that Georgios Kastrioti (1405-68), the son of a Macedonian mother, had been a prominent follower of the Council of Florence. This means that he must have realized that the Christian belief and culture of both the Byzantine and Latin side was basically the same, and thus he rightly identified Ottoman expansion as the major threat of his time. He did not represent nationalist interests, but was universal instead. This is why his followers were of different ethnicities (Slavs, Vlachs, Greeks and Albanians) and why he was in alliance with different popes.

At these times when the big European nations were absorbed in their own particular problems and self-interests, among the nations adhering to Latin ritual only the Hungarians (Slovakia being the upper part of the Kingdom of Hungary) had genuine and far-sighted worries. This might be partly explained by a feeling of danger but also by the fact that on the

⁵ His equestrian statue situated in the Muslim part of Skopje might serve as a good example. The book *Mojot Skanderbeg (My Skanderbeg)* by Dragi Mihajlovski tries to put things right. For information on this book I am indebted to my Macedonian colleague Zvonko Taneski.

Hungarian side the Magyars had been Christianized rather late and were therefore quite innocent in the conflict between Eastern and Western Christendom, whereas the Slavs still felt deeply grateful in their consciousness for the Byzantine mission that had brought them the Gospel.⁶

Balkan and Hungarian efforts sometimes joined together and Skanderbeg campaigned against the Ottomans alongside János Hunyadi. As models of resistance these heroes are rightly remembered in dramatic literature (neo-Latin school drama) and folklore.

II

Another such hero came only 150 years later. His name was Dmitry, a pretender to the throne of Muscovy and later on one of the most popular characters of world drama. In this study we shall concentrate solely on Pushkin's Boris Godunov,⁷ where Dmitry represents a specific historical option: he wished to replace the seclusionist image of Russia as the last bastion of Christian orthodoxy with an inclusive one – he had a messianic vision of unifying Christendom and liberating Constantinople.

Focusing on Dmitry's visionary dimension, the poet shaped this character through folkloric means: the birth of the hero out of sleep (in this context this means that after awakening from his nightmare, Grishka decides to take on the role of the dead infant in order to avenge regicide), crossing the border, the bride's severe conditions, the kingdom and marriage, grieving for his poor dying horse, and falling asleep in the forest where *Providence watches over him* (*Хранит его, конечно, провиденье*) as Pushkin says through the character of his ancestor.⁸ However, the folkloric aspect does not imply a metahistorical approach. By entering such structures Pushkin brings the Pretender to the proximity of the people (*narod*). This was a wise solution as most of Khrushchov's lines were – as we know – cut in the printed version because of their direct testimony of popular support for the Pretender.

⁶ It is important to mention that 15th-century Poland differed from the Kingdom of Hungary and had not always been on the side of Florence. After all, at that time missions were still sent to Lithuania to fight paganism.

⁷ We shall quote solely from the 1825 version, unless specially mentioning the printed (1831) version.

⁸ In this context there is Pushkin's associated critical comment on Guizot: "*The human mind is not a prophet, but a conjecturer ... it cannot foresee chance – that powerful and instantaneous instrument of Providence.*" In: Emerson, Caryl: Tragedy, Comedy, Carnival, and History on the Stage. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 183.

*Pushkin's own sympathetic and historically accurate portrayal of the Pretender Dmitry was consciously intended to shock his audience. But it was not intended just for effect. Pushkin's research had led him to a serious (and dangerous) conclusion about Dmitry and the rebellions that brought him to power.*⁹

The Maiden's Field scene shows a staged campaign, *people manipulated, acting by chance and without access to the larger picture.*¹⁰ Dmitry was the one ready to give them access to that larger picture: he did so in his letters, which were mentioned in Godunov's speech addressed to the patriarch:

<i>Вы знаете, что наглый самозванец</i>	<i>An insolent pretender, as you know,</i>
<i>Коварные промчал повсюду слухи;</i>	<i>has sown the seeds of doubt and discontent</i>
<i>Повсюду им разосланные письма Посеяли тревогу и сомненье;</i>	<i>by sending open letters everywhere Restlessness is rife on public squares</i>
<i>На площадях мятежный бродит шепот,</i>	<i>and minds are in a ferment... we must cool</i>
<i>Умы кипят... их нужно остудить;</i>	<i>them.</i> ¹¹

Pushkin is not pre-occupied with the genetic legitimacy of the Pretender; thus the truth of his vision would not be overthrown by some partial historical discovery. He investigates the very realm of socio-historical forces. And his focus is not only *narod*, but also the aristocracy and clergymen.

Here there is space for a question: Why did the tsar and the church immediately identify the Pretender as Grishka Otrepiev? It seems that there

⁹ Dunning, Chester: *The Exiled Poet-Historian*. In: *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 68.

¹⁰ Emerson, Caryl: *The Ebb and Flow of Influence*. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 205.

¹¹ Antony Wood: *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev*. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 393.

were rumors of heresy prior to his becoming a monk.¹² What kind of heresy? *According to Karamzin and confirmed by later historians, monks from the Chudov Monastery were implicated in the plot to unseat Boris.*¹³

Was regicide the cause of this plot, or was it Godunov's activity in church matters?

Certainly, the spiritual elite of Chudov Monastery (the Miracles Monastery) represented some inner opposition. It is known that Grigory Otrepiev's grandfather, Elizary Zamiatin, was a monk there and very probably served Pushkin as a model for the character of Pimen. Pushkin opens the problem of regicide in *Pimen's Cell* and *Monastery Wall* – a scene that had to be dropped in the printed version. Through Pimen he exposes the problem of truth and justice, thus representing spiritual opposition; through the evil monk he presents a direct challenge to the struggle for power.

*Что, когда бы наш царевич из могилы вдруг воскрес...*¹⁴

*How would it be if our Tsarevich suddenly rose from the grave...*¹⁴ Grishka's fantasy would have remained innocent without that old monk¹⁵ urging him to incarnate it. In the play no one on the Polish side compares with the dark character without a name residing in Kremlin, and thus the Pretender could not be reduced to being an agent of foreign propaganda. This was the reason for cutting the scene and eliminating the character from the play.

However, along with the rumors of the Pretender, the scenes featuring Grishka (from the beginning in the monastery to the scene on the Lithuanian border) are just expositions for his entrance when he appears for the first

¹² Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 469.

¹³ Emerson, Caryl: *The Ebb and Flow of Influence*. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 205.

¹⁴ Antony Wood: *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev*. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 286.

¹⁵ *"It is our thesis, further, that taken as a whole, the portions that Pushkin chose to omit are rather scandalous – politically, aesthetically, and in terms of a specifically Russian philosophy of history."* Emerson, Caryl: *The Ebb and Flow of Influence*. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p.195. I agree with Emerson's systematic approach to the censorship of the play, but I think that fortunately Pushkin's printed version – with special regard to the integrity of his historical vision – was not totally distorted by it, and its existence opens a comparative space between the two versions pointing to the good part of sensitive issues.

time as Dmitry. He sounds very determined and specific, immediately introducing the historical option he is standing for. Let us listen to him:

*Нет, мой отец, не будет
затруднения;
Я знаю дух народа моего;*

*В нем набожность не знает
исступленья:
Ему священ пример царя его.*

*Всегда, к тому ж, терпимость
равнодушна.*

*Ручаюсь я, что прежде двух
годов¹⁶
Весь мой народ, вся
Восточная¹⁷ церковь
Признают власть наместника
Петра.*

Father, I see no difficulties at all.

*I am acquainted with my people's
nature;
their faith is not expressed in
zealotry,
the example of their tsar is sacred to
them.*

*And tolerance, need I say, is even-
handed.*

*In less than two years' time, I vouch
to you,
all my people, all the **Eastern**
Church,
will be obedient to the throne of
Peter.*

This fragment of the drama remains unchanged in the printed version except for the word **Eastern** being replaced by the word **Northern**.¹⁸ Dunning comments on this: *For unknown reasons, Pushkin's reference to the Eastern Church was changed to the Northern Church in the 1831 edition of Boris Godunov.*¹⁹

¹⁶ Here we can admire Pushkin's construction of Dmitry's speech that fully corresponds to historical data. Dmitry ruled for just one year, therefore he could not keep his promise. At the same time, Pushkin also suggests that the historical option represented by Dmitry was not a utopia.

¹⁷ It is curious that the comparative edition of both of Pushkin's versions mentions the Eastern Church (Восточная церковь) in 1825 and 1831. See ПУШКИН, Александр С. : Борис Годунов. Санкт-Петербург: в типографии департамента народного просвещения. 1831. р. 66. In: Фомичев, Сергей – Виротайнен, Мария : Комментарии. ПУШКИН: Борис Годунов. Москва: Новое издательство. 2008. ISBN 978-5-98379-107-7.

¹⁸ ПУШКИН, Александр С. : Борис Годунов. Полное собрание сочинений в 10 томах. Том V. Издательство академии наук. Москва. 1958. стр. 269.

¹⁹ Dunning, Chester (with Caryl Emerson, Sergei Fomichev, Lidiia Lotman and Antony Wood): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy.* Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 482.

In my opinion, the reason was Pushkin's effort to be as historically accurate as possible. We should also acknowledge Pushkin's evolution as a historian between 1825 and 1831. Such precision implies that in 1831 he had a deeper consciousness of the different histories of the Greek and Slavic parts of Byzantine Christendom. The southern part of the Orthodox world – the Greeks – had already accepted the Union of Florence some 150 years before the appearance of Dmitry. Therefore, according to the Pretender, only the northern part of the church – the Slavs – still had to do so.²⁰

Moreover, by introducing an unusual adjective instead of the traditional opposition of Eastern–Western, Pushkin might have included both Poles and Russians in the term **Severnaja cerkov**, thus underlying that unity cannot be achieved by uniformization.²¹

A truly creative mind is able to win the battle with the controllers of freedom. Doing it with a single word is a mark of genius. This is the reason why neither the uncensored version of Boris Godunov from 1825 nor “the censored one” from 1831 can simply be labeled as a backward step made by Pushkin.

III

And as for arguments, there are more.

Fomichev interprets the Pretender's words about the successor of Peter instead of the pope as ironic. But why can we not suppose that he is speaking seriously? To my disappointment, in the newest academic edition from 2008 an old source (Чистяков, 1847) is quoted without any problematization: *The Pretender's speech changes according to his partner. Speaking with Pater Czernikowski, he does not speak of the Orthodox Church but simply of the eastern one, he does not call the Bishop of Rome the Pope or the Holy Father, but Peter's successor: at the final amen he evokes his ritual habit.*²²

Caryl Emerson's interpretation seems more plausible. She speaks about *Pushkin's much-admired light-hearted 'adventurer': the perfect listener who finds it easy to satisfy others because he needs so little for himself.*²³

²⁰ Correspondingly, Dmitry addresses his army of Slavs “*syny Slavjan*” (sons of Slavs) as one entity.

²¹ Rome mostly disapproved of the excesses of the Poles (like re-baptizing Byzantines) as being in an immoderate spirit alien to the Council of Florence.

²² Фомичев, Сергей – Виротайнен, Мария : Комментарии. In: ПУШКИН, Александр С. : Борис Годунов. Москва: Новое издательство, 2008. p. 280. ISBN 978-5-98379-107-7.

²³ Emerson, Caryl: The Ebb and Flow of Influence. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies, 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 214.

If the Pretender is speaking seriously, with the use of the adjective “Northern” he specifies the remaining separated territory of the Byzantine world in his call for Christian union. On the other hand, with regard to the Bishop of Rome, Dmitry admits only the indisputable – the pope’s historical succession to the Apostolic See of Peter, but none of his special titles acquired through contact with medieval secular power. These are the typical standpoints of the Council of Florence’s supporters: agreement with the union but a reserved attitude²⁴ to Roman primacy and a kind of third and truly conciliar way.

All the contradictions in the Pretender’s character, such as his gossip-founded secret conversion to Catholicism yet his firm adherence to the Byzantine rite during his reign (much to the disappointment of the Latin clergy), disappear if we understand Dmitry as a Uniat, thus safeguarding the integrity of his thought and character.

But let us have a closer look at Pater’s response to Dmitry, whose first words pronounced on stage (*Net, moj otec...*) suggest some previous conversation:

<p>Pater <i>Вспомоществуй тебе святой Игнатий, Когда придут иные времена. А между тем небесной благодати Таи в душе, царевич, семена. Притворствоваться пред оглашенным светом Нам иногда духовный долг велит; Твои слова, деянья судят люди, Намеренья единый видит бог. С а м о з в а н е ц Амен.²⁵ Кто там?</i></p>	<p>Pater <i>The holy Saint Ignatius grant you succor in times to come. Meanwhile, conceal, Tsarevich, the seeds of heaven’s bliss within your soul. Spiritual duty may at times bid us dissemble to the uninitiated; your fellow men assess your words and deeds but God alone perceives your true intent.</i></p> <p>Pretender <i>Amen. Who’s there?</i></p>
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²⁴ The Bishop of Rome was considered *primus inter pares* (first among equals) and not supreme.

²⁵ Antony Wood: *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev*. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin’s Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 344.

Pater's blessing had been interpreted²⁶ as if referring to Ignatius of Antioch, arguing from the standpoint of 1605 that Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) was canonized only in 1622. But here we have to consider that the Pater himself is a Jesuit and that the saints in their monastic orders are often venerated before the process of canonization is completed. This is why we can accept Pushkin's deliberate anachronism in this matter – poetic license does not contradict real history and it is very efficient. Imploring this Western saint followed by very pragmatic advice leads the Pretender to the response of "Amen."²⁷

At this point we could talk about irony. The Pretender is pushed to go further than he is willing, but he chooses not to go into conflict: he rather stops the invasion of the other by the use of irony. However, the irony lasts just for a while and could be realized only in relation to sincerity. As the alienation effect necessarily depends on illusion, a dramatic character cannot be composed solely from irony.

Of course, there are elements of laughter and irony in the play – like the one based on the homophony between different languages. But even here it serves to distinguish between the position of the tsar and the foreigners: *Quoi? Quoi? – Kwa kwa! All very well for a foreign crow like you to go croaking at the Russian Tsarevich. But we're Orthodox, we are.*²⁸ Changing a foreign crow (from the first version) for a foreign frog (in the second version)²⁹ on the basis of the similarity between the sounds produced by both animals bears witness to the poet's playfulness: it is clear that in this particular place Pushkin even amazed himself within the revision.

Now, let me draw the attention of those who understand the Pretender's relationship to the Jesuit Czernikowski as fully submissive, to Dmitry's speech after meeting Maryna. Here, the very parallelism of the verbs used in the following verses is of significance and points to an aspect of certain adversity:

*Нет – „легче мне сражаться с ... easier to fight with Godunov,
Годуновым*

²⁶ In the same source as quoted in footnote 19.

²⁷ The typography of *Pater* and *Amen* is rendered in the Latin script in both the printed version (1831) and the reconstruction of the 1825 manuscript.

²⁸ Antony Wood: *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev*. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 407.

²⁹ „*Quoi? quoi? -Kwa! kwa! тебе любо, лягушка заморская, квакать на русского царевича; а мы ведь православные...*

Или хитрить с придворным Or tussle with a Jesuit at court...³⁰
езуитом...“

The usual interpretation of the drama based on the difference between the 1825 and 1831 versions gives us a choice between didaskalia (*Народ безмолвствует* – *the people are speechless*) and the people’s loud cry: „*да здравствует царь Димитрий Иванович!*“ – *Long live Tsar Dmitry Ivanovich!*

Fomichev comments, *Could Pushkin have treated such a scene seriously? Of course not.*³¹ But why not? Caryl Emerson is very critical of such a lack of care about history and argues that the genres inevitably shape the events they describe; she looks for traces of 17th-century school drama³² in Pushkin’s play. From the poet’s admiration of medieval mystery and from the choice of an archaic frame for his comedy, she leads our attention to the flashback ending³³ followed by the concluding sentence: *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. AMEN.*

Even if that frame is made out of playfulness, we do not think the poet’s use of doxology is ironic. After the evocation of the “true calamity” such a fullstop is rather the sign of accepting events as they happened and the poet’s belief in Providence. Faithful to history, Pushkin never directly confronts the antagonist heroes of his play, Boris and Dmitry, as we would expect from the title of the drama; he instead weighs their positions, employing a radical symmetry of situations to express the archetypal dilemma of Russian society.

Boris Godunov’s fate is tragic; the Pretender is a romantic hero who tries to change the course of history according to his own vision, while under the reign of the opportunist Tsar Vasily Shuisky history turns into a bloody farce. The absence of any positive program is the cause of Shuisky being unable to put Dmitry’s ghost to rest. *Pushkin tolerated no collapse*

³⁰ Antony Wood: *Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev*. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin’s Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 385.

³¹ Emerson, Caryl: *Tragedy, Comedy, Carnival, and History on the Stage*. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin’s Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 166.

³² Emerson, Caryl: *The Ebb and Flow of Influence*. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin’s Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 200.

³³ “[The] *end of the comedy, in which the leading person is Tsar Boris Godunov*” is reminiscent of the dropped initial title: “*Comedy about the True Calamity that Befell the State of Muscovy, about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev, Written by God’s Servant Alexander Son of Sergei Puchkin in the year 7333, on the site of the Ancient Town of Voronich.*”

into *historical nihilism*.³⁴ The main reason why Pushkin did not continue his trilogy³⁵ was his unwillingness to let Dmitry die. He rather lets him sleep alongside the idea he represents.

Grishka Otrepiev's complaint about wandering from monastery to monastery expressed the situation of his Romanov contemporaries and other Russian aristocratic families exiled by Godunov. It is possible, as argued by several historians, that the Romanovs and Nagois bore responsibility for the appearance of Tsarevich Dmitry in Poland-Lithuania. Godunov's rival was Feodor Romanov, the future Patriarch and father of Mikhail, the founder of the dynasty in 1613. But although the Romanovs and Dmitry met during Godunov's reign, they had different agendas. The historical narrative approved by the Romanovs took a careful distance from Dmitry proving that Pretender's role in history had not been purely instrumental.

*Pushkin was a very good historian who understood the biases of propaganda-influenced sources concerning Dmitry*³⁶ and "had to be cautious when writing publicly on a historical figure proscribed by the Church, State and Romanov dynasty."³⁷

However, a closer religionist approach to that question has been neglected until now. The ecclesiastic problem has usually been simplified to a struggle of a Latin/Byzantine or Polish/Russian conflict, omitting other aspects of the problem. In Pushkin the historian's understanding, Dmitry the Pretender is clearly a representative of a third (Uniat) tendency.

The reign of Ivan the Terrible, responsible for a number of crimes including killing Metropolitan Philip II (1568), was followed by the reign of Boris Godunov, who by founding the patriarchate (1589) ended the process started by Basil the Blind's rejection of the Union of Florence and made Muscovy *de jure* independent in church matters. In order to balance the increasing Muscovite centralism, Jeremy, the Patriarch of Constantinople on his way from Moscow, where he assisted in establishing the patriarchate, anointed Mikhail Rogoza for the metropolitan see of Kiev and Gallich.

³⁴ Emerson, Caryl: Tragedy, Comedy, Carnival, and History on Stage. In: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 179.

³⁵ The second play in Pushkin's planned trilogy was to be titled *Dmitrii Samozvanets*; the third play was to be titled *Tsar Vasily Ivanovich Shuisky*.

³⁶ Dunning, Chester: The Problem of Boris Godunov. In: The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 39.

³⁷ Emerson, Caryl and Dunning, Chester: Reconsidering History. In: The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 10.

A few years afterwards there followed local unions as a self-protective response to the establishment of the patriarchate of Muscovy. Michail Rogoža along with Constantinople and the papal legates participated in the first of these: the Brest-Litovsk Union (1595). Compared to Florence, the novelty of Brest was the transition of the Uniats from the jurisdiction of Constantinople to that of Rome, which inevitably strengthened the problematic cultural influence of Latin over Byzantine Christendom.

In this situation of subordinated church hierarchy the only hope was an imperial revision of Russia's attitude to the Union of Florence. But where could one find a well-educated monarch-theologian?

At this moment there appears Grigory Otrepiev, alias Dmitry (1605-6). He came from the Chudov Monastery (Miracle Monastery) to produce a miracle. In Pushkin's play he says:

*Под клобуком, свой замысел I hatched a bold design beneath the
отважный cowl,
Обдумал я, готовил миру чудо – a miracle to put before the world –*³⁸

For him and his supporters the “resurrection” of the assassinated infant Tsarevich is only a pre-requisite for another resurrection. Dmitry's Uniatism is not purely defensive if we consider his plan to liberate the city of Constantinople. He has the intention to do so as he is animated by the idea of the Union of Florence, persisting in his native Galicia and among Hungarian Uniats – remote both from Moscow and Rome – until the Union of Uzhhorod (1646).

Coming back to the unexpected notion of St Ignatius, a recent saint of the Latin church, we realize that it designates a change in Dmitry's time cultural paradigm. While Possevino still brought the Union of Florence to Moscow in 1581,³⁹ the Jesuit contemporaries of Dmitry adhered to the local union signed in Brest.

The tragic conflict might have also resulted from the misunderstanding around 1600 between the Poles engaged in the Brest-Litovsk Union (under Roman jurisdiction) and Dmitry, who was still a partisan of Florence (all Byzantine-rite Christians under the jurisdiction of Constantinople). Therefore, Dmitry clearly stands for a more pluralistic cultural concept of

³⁸ Antony Wood: Comedy about Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrepiev. Translation in: Dunning, Chester (Ed.): The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), p. 377.

³⁹ The Union of Florence had been established on the basis of a symphony of saints that were common to both the Byzantine and Latin side.

Christendom, defending a vision that in his time seemed utopian compared to the pragmatism of his contemporaries.

Alexander Pushkin's ancestor Gavrila Pushkin was also a supporter of Dmitry. For me, there is something mysterious about the face-to-face meeting of Tsar Nicholas I and Alexander Pushkin in Chudov Monastery shortly after his coronation on 8 September 1826. But what is most striking about the *poorly understood uprisings associated with the Pretender Dmitry during the Time of Troubles* is the influence of Pushkin's bitter enemy Faddei Bulgarin⁴⁰ with all his bad intent on shaping the discourse on Pushkin the historiographer.

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⁴⁰ "By citing the most recent politically safe scholarship of the *Time of Troubles*, Bulgarin attempted to make Pushkin's interpretation of Dmitry obsolete. The Pretender's success, according to Bulgarin, was the result of the Polish Catholic plot and not – as Pushkin had suggested – the result of unhappy Russian masses... etc." In: Dunning, Chester: The Tragic Fate of Pushkin's Comedy. In: *The Uncensored Boris Godunov. The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*. Wisconsin: Center for Pushkin Studies. 2006, ISBN 0-299-20764-1 (pbk), pp. 106-107.