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## Catholic Erudition of Metropolitan Arseny Matseyevich in the Context of Russian Theology Modernization in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this article is to investigate the Catholic acculturation features of Arseny Matseyevich, a famous Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The subjects of the study are Arseny Matseyevich's connections with the Catholic theological culture and his views on the Western Church scholarship. In historiography the Matseyevich's conflict with the Russian government is well studied, however his theological views, historical thinking, and peculiar cultural orientation are still remain poorly researched. The authors conclude that, despite the dogmatic differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church, Metropolitan Arseny considered Catholic scholarship (structurally and methodologically) as the highest form of Church knowledge. The Metropolitan's views demonstrate an acute conflict of traditions and innovations, which is generally characteristic of Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Metropolitan's Catholic scholarship indirectly points to the early formation of conservative ideas in Catholic theology – long before the “official” nascence of conservatism in the Western Europe social and political thought. The cultural approach is utilized in our work, making it possible to consider the Arseny's reception of the fruits of Western erudition as a litmus paper that reveals not only the nature and intermediate results of Russian modernization, but also indicates the degree of “modernity” of Western European societies.

**Keywords:** Catholic erudition, Orthodox-Catholic theological relations, the Russian Orthodox Church in the 18-th century, Metropolitan Arseny Matseyevich.

Research area: theory and history of culture, art (cultural studies).

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## Католическая ученость митрополита Арсения Мацеевича в контексте модернизации русского богословия XVIII века

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**Аннотация.** Цель статьи заключается в исследовании особенностей католической аккультурации Арсения Мацеевича, известного иерарха Русской православной церкви XVIII столетия. Предметом изучения выступают связи Мацеевича с католической богословской культурой, а также взгляды митрополита на западную церковную ученость. В историографии конфликт Мацеевича с российским правительством и его церковная деятельность хорошо изучены, однако богословские взгляды митрополита, историческое мышление и культурная ориентация остаются мало исследованными. Сделан вывод о том, что несмотря на догматические разногласия православных с Римско-католической церковью, католическая ученость (структурно и методологически) мыслилась митрополитом Арсением в качестве высшей формы церковного знания. Воззрения иерарха демонстрируют острый конфликт традиций и новаций, характерный для России XVIII века. Латинская ученость митрополита опосредованно указывает на раннее формирование идей консерватизма в католическом богословии – задолго до «официального» рождения консерватизма в общественной и политической мысли Западной Европы. В работе задействован культурологический подход, который дает возможность рассматривать рецепцию Арсением Мацеевичем плодов западной учености как лакмус, выявляющий не только характер и промежуточные итоги российской модернизации, но и индицирующий степень «современности» западноевропейских обществ.

**Ключевые слова:** католическая ученость, православно-католические богословские отношения, Русская православная церковь в XVIII веке, митрополит Арсений Мацеевич.

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### 1. Introduction

Arseny (Alexander Ivanovich Matseyevich), Metropolitan of Rostov, is a well-known opponent of Russian Church estates' secularization carried out by Empress Catherine II. As an advocate for the property rights of the Russian Orthodox Church, he became one of the key figures in the Russian history of the 18-th century. Standing

up for the Church property, Arseny entered into an unequal but uncompromising struggle against the Empress and in 1772 he died of exhaustion in a prison black cell. In 2000, for his devotion, the Council of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church canonized him as a martyr.

The conflict of Arseny Matseyevich with the Russian government is well studied (Mi-

trov, 2016: 8–20; Vdovina, 2019: 535–540; Marasanova, 2020: 52–63). However, the Metropolitan is interesting not only for his Church activities, but also for his theological views, historical thinking, and peculiar cultural orientation, which still remain poorly researched. Mentally, His Eminence was in the middle of the cross between the Christian East and the West, and his ideology reflected the contemporary for him needs of the Orthodox, the Catholics, and the Protestants not only in Russia, but also in Western Europe. It seems that from this point of view Arseny Matseyevich is able to arouse the interest of not only Russian, but also Western scientists who can see unexpected physiognomic features of the European world of the early Modern period in the distorting mirror of Russian history of the 18-th century. The fact is that the most important criterion of the modernization of the Russian Church life in the 18-th century was its conformity to the level of Western theological culture. The study of Arseny Matseyevich views on Western ecclesiastical scholarship undertaken in this article can simultaneously serve both to identify the modernization potential of the Russian Orthodox Church after Peter the Great, and to determine the relevance of Western theology itself to the needs of the early industrial society.

## 2. Theoretical framework

An effective tool for solving the problems of historical interaction between Russia and the West, including their religious and theological ties, is the cultural approach applied in understanding the concept of “modernization” by the French scientist François Bourricaud. According to his concept, modernity should be studied precisely through the relationship of the “non-Western world to the Western”. This relationship is the central problem of modernization theory – a problem, which exists regardless whether specific modernization efforts are being made by certain societies (Bourricaud, 1987: 12–16). In our case, Arseny’s reception of the fruits of Western scholarship, his theological reaction to the disputes between the Catholics and the Protestants, takes on the character of a litmus paper that reveals not only the nature and in-

termediate results of Russian modernization, but also indicates the degree of “modernity” of Western European societies.

## 3. Statement of the problem

The specific problem of this study is related to investigation of the features of Arseny Matseyevich’s Catholic acculturation, which he demonstrated in his theological and political writings. This acculturation is considered as a phenomenon characteristic of conservative circles of the Russian Orthodox Church. The problem solution implies an assessment of the Catholic influence on the Arseny Matseyevich’s theological and historical views, and also the formulation of conclusions about his attitude to Western Christian faiths and theological doctrines.

## 4. Methods

In accordance with the stated cultural-studies paradigm, the research of polemical essays and correspondence of Arseny Matseyevich was carried out by the individualizing method of interpreting historical sources. The method means getting into the individual characteristics of the author’s creativity; it involves immersion in the writings or documents and implies the correlation between the text and the psychology of its author. The paper uses the method of church-historical hermeneutics (the theological method) as interpreted by K. O. Pol’skov (Pol’skov, 2010: 93–99). The method is reduced to the correlation of a cultural and historical phenomenon (the creative inheritance of Metropolitan Arseny) with the norm of religious consciousness formalized within the framework of Orthodoxy, in order to identify its spiritual and soteriological meaning.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Views of Arseny Matseyevich on the Western scholarship

Russian theological science of the 18-th century exploited the ideas of Western European authors, reaping the benefits of both Catholic (mainly controversial) and Protestant (pietistic) theological cultures. Arseny Matseyevich gave a clear preference to the Cath-

olic (“romanistic”, in the words of Archpriest Georgy Florovsky (Florovsky, 2006: 106)) type of Church knowledge. In 1723, the future Metropolitan graduated from the Kiev theological Academy (Mogilianskaia Academy), whose educational programs since the time of Peter Mogila were close to those of the Polish Catholic colleges. The strong traditions of Roman theology in Kiev contributed to the loyal and sometimes enthusiastic attitude of the Academy’s graduates to Catholic scholarship (Andreev, 2011: 536–539). Thus, Arseny Matseyevich had always preserved piety for the Catholic education system. The hierarch demonstrated it, for example, in his essay “Opposition to the Lutheran lampoon, which was called The Hammer that hits the Cornerstone of Faith, for this hammer turned out to be only wax, and like wax from a fire, it melted away from the true word of God”. This work was written by Metropolitan Arseny in the early 1740s in response to the criticism of the “Cornerstone of Faith” by Stephan Yavorsky, undertaken by a Protestant or Protestant sympathizer in the anonymous book “Discourse on the Stone of faith”. Among other things, the opponent of Stephan Yavorsky sought to discredit the Jesuit education that many students of the Kiev Academy usually received in Poland (Stephan Yavorsky is known to be trained by Polish Jesuits). Defending Stephan Yavorsky, Arseny Matseyevich makes it clear that Catholic Church education is primary not only in relation to modern Orthodox education, but also to Protestant education: “You should first look around your home, namely school where you yourself studied, and especially where Your Patriarch Martin Luther studied, and then to scold the teachings of others”<sup>1</sup>.

It is important how Arseny Matseyevich generally interprets education: in his opinion, true theological education is closely connected

with knowledge of foreign literary tradition. Not by chance in his essay “Opposition to the Lutheran lampoon” Metropolitan Arseny often cited Latin proverbs, and wrote about Gregory Talitsky, the famous Moscow schismatic and heretic, that he was “... a simple mad peasant (“muzhik”), the same as all other dissenters, who knew nothing more except for the Russian literacy and their own mad inventions” (Chistovich, 1868: 393). However, the hierarch sympathized with not every foreign education, as can be seen from a number of episodes in his biography. In 1759 a new rector arrived at the Yaroslavl Seminary, which was under the jurisdiction of Arseny Matseyevich. This person was Father Vladimir the Calligrapher (Vasily Kryzhanovsky) from Moscow, one of the most educated people of that time. Actually the Most Holy Governing Synod sent the Calligrapher to the diocese of Metropolitan Arseny for “his correction”, because Father Vladimir compromised himself in Moscow with almost Protestants arguments about icons and the Holy Mother. The Rostov Metropolitan was outraged at this candidate for the post of Seminary rector, not wanting to tolerate preachers like the Calligrapher in his diocese (Grigor’ev, 2008: 107). He found traces of Calvinism and “Jewish” in the views of father Vladimir, but the hierarch was especially angry that the Calligrapher “... showed stubbornness and refused to admit his sin at all” (Popov, 1905: 56). With his Episcopal authority, Metropolitan Arseny tried to remove Vladimir the Calligrapher from administration of the Spasoyaroslavsky monastery (that be Monastery of The Transfiguration Of The Saviour in Yaroslavl), where Father Vladimir was soon transferred by the Archimandrite. But The Most Holy Synod treated the Calligrapher’s “heresy” quite calmly. Members of the Synod demanded that Arseny Matseyevich should provide stronger evidence of the non-Orthodox ideas of Archimandrite Vladimir, rather than his reasoning that God does not please “superstitiously” performed rites. Clearly Arseny Matseyevich, irritated by the Calvinist book culture of his opponent, would have continued to pursue him further if the case of Vladimir the Calligrapher had not stopped due to his sudden death in August 1760.

<sup>1</sup> Russian National Library. Fund 775 (Collection of A.A. Tivov). File 31 (Matseyevich Arseny. *Vozrazheniia na paskvil’ liuteranskii, narechennyi Molotok na knigu Kamen’ very, kotoryi molotok pokazalsia byst’ voskovoi, iako vosk ot litsa ognia, sirech’ ot Slova Bozhiia i samyia istiny, ischeznuvshii* – Opposition to the Lutheran lampoon, which was called The Hammer that hits the Cornerstone of Faith, for this hammer turned out to be only wax, and like wax from a fire, it melted away from the true word of God. 1740-ies). Sheet 4.

Arseny Matseyevich reacted in another way to the appearance of Alexey Ladyzhensky, a man of high Catholic scholarship, in own diocese. Ladyzhensky was a Russian nobleman who, under Peter the Great, left Russia for an educational purpose, but instead of studying navigation and engineering, had been studying for 13 years in Rome at the Jesuit College, and then became a monk of the “Societatis Jesu”. Ladyzhensky served as a priest in Vilnius, but in 1735, during another Russian-Polish war, was arrested by Russian soldiers, taken to Russia and convicted of apostasy. He showed a great courage and perseverance in the Catholic faith, not wanting to return to Orthodoxy, and for it he was severely punished with whips, deprived of the nobility and exiled as a soldier to Siberia. In Tobolsk, the old Siberian capital, in the spring of 1741, Alexey Ladyzhensky met with Arseny Matseyevich, who had just taken the Tobolsk Metropolitan see. There were immediate confidential communications between the Orthodox Metropolitan and the Jesuit prisoner, and this relationship, which lasted for more than a year, was full of mutual respect. As a result of these communications, thanks to the scholarship and tenacity of Arseny, Ladyzhensky made a difficult decision to return to the Orthodox faith (Andreev, 2008: 148–149). Without doubt Metropolitan Arseny was positively impressed by the higher theological (even Jesuit) education that an ordinary garrison soldier had. In March 1742 the His Eminence Arseny wrote to the Most Holy Synod about his constant readiness to instruct Ladyzhensky in the faith and to keep him in his own home, noting: “... Because I have a need for him, Ladyzhensky, and besides, he is a very talented person”<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the hierarch showed more love and attention to the adamant Jesuit Ladyzhensky than to the Orthodox Archimandrite Vladimir the Calligrapher.

Despite the dogmatic differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church, Metropolitan Arseny considered Catholic scholarship (structurally and methodologically) as the highest form of Church knowledge. This

knowledge meant familiarization not only with Catholic writers, but also with their ideological opponents, Protestant authors, whose reading, in turn, could damage the faith of all theologically inexperienced. We think, exactly for this reason Latin scholarship, according to Arseny Matseyevich, should remain the destiny of the chosen ones – those who are destined to be elevated to the highest degree of the priesthood (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchemu Sinodu, 1862: 33). The Metropolitan demonstrates an oligarchic attitude to Church scholarship, believing that only bishops, and not ordinary monks and priests, should be allowed to teach and preach. Ordinary clergy should not even be pushed to get higher (college and university) education. Otherwise, in the Hierarch’s opinion, various heresies will inevitably take root in Russia. As an example, His Eminence by the way cited the “Lutheran and Calvinist chaffs” of Vladimir the Calligrapher, who was a brilliant polymath, but was not able, according to Arseny, to properly manage his knowledge (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchemu Sinodu, 1862: 33). Being an excellent Latin scholar himself, Metropolitan believed that there was no need to spread knowledge of the Latin language, and therefore advocated the replacing of diocesan Latin schools to only Russian-speaking ones. He wrote: “Dioceses need schools for priest children, who are intended for ordination, so that they can read correctly and understand what they are reading. And such schools under bishops should be exclusively Russian-speaking, and not otherwise. Because in our churches during the divine worship any priest reads and sings not in Latin or in other languages, but only in Russian” (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchemu Sinodu, 1862: 32).

According to the logic of Arseny Matseyevich, only reputable educational institutions (“illustrious schools”) had a reason for its existence, and mainly he meant by that Western theological colleges and academies. He did not encourage the creation of new academies: “Really, we need schools and academies, but in the proper order, as it used to be in Greece since ancient times, and now there are in the West,

<sup>2</sup> Russian State Historical Archive. Fund 796 (Chancery of the Most Holy Governing Synod). Inventory 23 (1742 year). File 140. Sheets 1–2.

namely in famous places (...) Academies of theology and philosophy, as well as schools of other sciences, should not be in small towns, in the filth and swamps, but only in the remarkable cities” (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchemu Sinodu, 1862: 32). The oligarchic approach to education corresponds to Metropolitan’s opinion on the Russian Bible, expressed during Synodal discussions during the preparation of the Bible text in 1751: “If we think carefully, we don’t really need the Church Slavonic Bible. Any scholar, if he knows Greek, will read the Greek Bible; and if he knows Latin, he will read the Latin Bible, with which he will correct any Russian text for himself and for the instruction of the religious people. For the common people, the snippets of the Bible that are available in other Church books are enough” (Tsurkan, 2001: 219; Chistovich, 1868: 403).

### **5.2. Western influence on the theological and historical views of Arseny Matseyevich**

At the same time, Arseny Matseyevich never did stop being an Orthodox thinker. His respect for Western scholarship was determined not by its value in itself, but by the benefits it could bring to the Orthodox (for this reason the Metropolitan was defending the temporary conversion of the Orthodox to Uniatism, made for the sake of science and education) (Chistovich, 1868: 388). Arseny Matseyevich’s favorite authors, to whom he usually appealed when presenting his ideas, – were such pillars of the Eastern Church as St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), and St. John Damascene. However, he was well aware of the works of Catholic and Protestant authors, and skillfully used them to defend the Orthodox faith. In his criticism of Protestantism, with which he associated not only Western Europeans but also Russian sectarians, Metropolitan Arseny followed St. Cardinal Robert Bellarminus. The Russian Hierarch quoted extensively from the cardinal’s writings against the Lutherans, naming the source and making it clear that the Jesuit’s works were worthy of respect. Thus, Arseny used Bellarminus’ theses in defense of fasting and the veneration of sacred images, as well as in support of the

doctrine of the Church’s prayer for sinners<sup>3</sup>. He kept went on supporting Bellarminus’ attacks on Erasmus of Rotterdam and other writers who had gained authority among the Protestants.

Historical views of Arseny Matseyevich were largely due to the writings of Caesar Baronius and Ambrosius Marlianus. Condemning the secularization of Church estates (Dissolution of the Monasteries), Metropolitan Arseny, with references to Baronius, drew a parallel between the depredation of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Church’s depression in the Carolingian Empire of the late 9–10 centuries, when the popes were dependent on the aristocratic clans of Italy and France: “As Baronius wrote, after that evil time, namely, after the ruination of France by the noble families, the bishops gathered at the Council of Meld and eagerly asked each other and wanted to know for what sins they had angered God, that he had punished France, and especially the Parisian Land? And they found that the first sin was that the patricians had plundered Lord God’s estates and had given out those lands to their servants” (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchemu Sinodu, 1862: 36; Barsov, 1876: 754).

Metropolitan Arseny was close to Marlianus arguments in “Teatrum politicum” about the prosperity of France under Pepin the Short, about the rise of Germany under Charles the Great, and, conversely, about the spiritual degradation of England as a result of King Henry VIII’s Supremacy, when “England ceased to be an angelic country, but became a diabolical one” (in the original by Marliano: “Unde non amplius Anglia, seu Angelica terra, sed diabolica, ab omnibus ore pleno decantatur” (Marlianus, 1692: 390; compare: 438)). Henry VIII carried out a large-scale secularization of monastic lands, as a result of which market solutions penetrated into English Church life. However, on this occasion, Metropolitan Arseny warned: “We do not have England here and we cannot live and fight our way through with money alone. And all the more so monasteries and Archbishops Houses will not be able to exist in this way, because the peasant will

<sup>3</sup> Russian National Library. Fund 775 (Collection of A.A. Titov). File 31. Sheets 141–142.

be more willing to work for them than to pay money” (Barsov, 1876: 745; Kartashov, 2006: 654). Nevertheless, Arseny Matseyevich found it appropriate to refer to Protestant historians, if they corresponded to his mindset. For example, His Eminence referred to the “Origines Ecclesiasticae, or Antiquities of the Christian Church” by the Anglican Professor Joseph Bingham (more precisely, to the Latin reissue of his book), arguing that “...from the most Apostolic times, only ascetics were elected to the episcopate” (Chistovich, 1868: 398).

In the field of political beliefs Arseny Matseyevich fully shared the idea of high authority and the predominance of Church power; he was enthusiastic about the model of its organization in Catholic countries. At the same time, like Stephan Yavorsky, the Rostov Metropolitan still defended the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate; he was inclined towards the idea of the canonical dependency of the Russian Church on the Eastern patriarchs and did not act as an apologist for the Roman Curia (Popov, 1905: 46; Chistovich, 1868: 392–395). Protesting against the “papal lust for power”, he wrote that “the Russian Church rejects the Pope for no other reason, but more because, in contrast to Jesus Christ, he made himself the head of the whole Church, namely, the Ultimate Judge” (Delo ob Arsenii Matseeviche, byvshem mitropolitom Rostovskom, 1862: 151). So the Metropolitan turned down the opinion about the Pope is a “spiritual monarch”, shared by Catholics – for example, the same Marlianus (Marlianus, 1692: 440). However, following Marlianus, the Metropolitan agreed with the doctrine of ecclesiastical independence in the face of secular authorities. Advocating the book “Cornerstone of Faith” by Stephan Yavorsky, Metropolitan Arseny denounced the fact that Protestants do not have the head of their Church. In “Opposition to the Lutheran lampoon” he wrote to the Protestants: “You even don’t have priests (you have bespopovshchina), but we, Orthodox, ordain pops”<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, from the context of this passage it is clear that the definition of “pop” (priest) in meaning was close to the concept of “Pope” (in accordance with the Greek Πάπας).

Arseny Matseyevich argued for the need for Patriarchy in the Russian Orthodox Church, which before Peter the First was headed by an authoritative leader like Pontific, in contrast to Protestant communities that did not even have ordained priests. His logic is as follows: the Orthodox believers have “pops” (priests), and above this clergy there is a hierarchy with apostolic succession. Metropolitan Arseny reasoned about the same thing in the “Supplemented denunciation of wrong and false responses of the schismatics...” (1744). In this tractate the Hierarch emphasized that the Russian sectarians and some Old Believers (so called Bespopovtsy) “...have the most extreme and useless custom to do without priests (Bespopovshchina), like the present Lutherans, Calvinists, as well as the ancient headless dissenters – Severus of Antioch’s followers” (Dopolnennoe oblichenie nepravykh i lzheslovesnykh otvetov raskol’nicheskikh, 1868: CDXXI).

### 5.3. *Different attitudes to Western Christian doctrines*

Formally, at the theoretical level of consciousness, Metropolitan Arseny considered both Catholicism and Protestantism heretical, although not to the same extent. In the work “Exhortation of the schismatic” (1734), while still only a priestmonk of the Solovetsky monastery, Arseny Matseyevich taught that where heresy arises, the Christian Church is not immediately damaged by it, but only when that heresy takes deep root (“...when the heresy will be established forever in childbirth, like in Rome” (Matseyevich, 1861: 413)). He put all the non-Orthodox believers in one row – all “opponents, heretics, evil-believers, Papists, Lutherans, and others”. In a later essay he wrote: “both the papacy and Lutheranism can be called one Struggling with Christ Assemblage”<sup>5</sup>. However, in the sphere of practical theology, the Russian Hierarch still considered Catholicism much less “heretical” than the Protestant denominations. And in the essay “Opposition to the Lutheran lampoon” he was even ready to defend the Pope from the attacks of Protestants who identified the Pope with the “spiritual an-

<sup>4</sup> Russian National Library. Fund 775 (Collection of A.A. Titov). File 31. Sheet 28.

<sup>5</sup> Russian National Library. Fund 775 (Collection of A.A. Titov). File 31. Sheet 5.

tichrist”, believing that this identification has no grounds: “In the sophisticated reasoning about the spiritual antichrist you, Lutherans, are in agreement in everything with the Old Believers schismatics, and like the Old Believers you have the same interpretation about the antichrist; you are different only in that the Old Believers profess the antichrist who reigns in Moscow, but you, Lutherans, believe that the Pope is the antichrist in Rome” (Chistovich, 1868: 390–391).

Metropolitan Arseny very emotionally criticized the rapprochement of Russian clergy with Protestantism. During the second judicial investigation, already defrocked Matseyevich persisted in the opinion that the Most Holy Governing Synod irresponsibly condones Protestantism: “The Bible was printed faulty, it agrees with the Jews in some places, and the book of Confession is unequivocally copied from the Calvinists” (Delo ob Arsenii Matseeviche, byvshem mitropolite Rostovskom, 1862: 170). His Eminence often allowed himself to offend Protestants: Martin Luther and Jean Calvin are “idlers” to him (Matseyevich, 1861: 333); Catharina von Bora by him pejoratively was named “Katerinka” (Chistovich, 1868: 388); he calls the Vice-Chancellor Heinrich Johann Ostermann, the Russian Lutherans patron, a rascal<sup>6</sup>. In the Metropolitan’s writings we do not find such insults to the figures of the Catholic West.

Metropolitan Arseny’s preference for Catholic scholarship was reinforced by his conviction that the Reformation, which brought a secular spirit to European life, contributed to the secularization of monastic possessions and dissolutions of monasteries. For this reason Arseny Matseyevich represented Protestantism as a great evil. He came to a syllogism, the essence of which is to identify Protestantism and godlessness through their common feature – both justify the Church property’s deprivation. This is evident from the Matseyevich addition to the anathema of heretics, which was commonly spoken on the first Sunday of Great Lent, – the Metropolitan anathematized all those “who

despise the Church’s splendor and prosperity and attempt to ruin or appropriate its richness” (Vypiska iz posledovavshikh v nyneshnem godu sluchivshikhsia novostei, 1862: 17). That is, he cursed everyone who takes away the Church’s estates. He understood the Church estates’ secularization as a violation of Orthodoxy (“...it’s conversion of true faith to non-Orthodox faith”), as a betrayal of Russian national interests, and as an attack on the Russian bishops, launched by the Empress (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchhemu Sinodu, 1862: 26–28). As a result, Metropolitan Arseny predicted “the advent of a schismatic, or Lutheran, or Calvinist, or even atheist state in Russia” (Donoshenie Sviateishemu Pravitel’stvuiushchhemu Sinodu, 1862: 37–38).

## 6. Conclusion

Because of his ideas about Church science and theological scholarship, Metropolitan Arseny Matseyevich was neither an agent of the “Old Russian Patriotic party”, as some historians called him (Barsov, 1876: 726), nor a reformer of the Russian Church life. He was a Hierarch of a new type for Russia – a Church figure with a rationalistic Western thinking, with a pronounced reverence for Catholic education. However, Metropolitan Arseny did not consider it necessary to modernize the Russian Orthodox Church according to Western (even Catholic) models. The Metropolitan’s views demonstrate an acute conflict of traditions and innovations, which is generally characteristic of Russia in the 18th century. Benefiting from the Catholic theological school, which rejected secularism as the principle of an industrial society, Arseny Matseyevich adapted its ideas to the tasks of reviving the Patriarchate in Russia and maintenance of the Russian Church economic power. The West theological influence on Arseny Matseyevich was one of the origins of his religious conservatism. This conservatism should be understood not as a commitment to the Ancient Moscow way of life and its ecclesiastical concepts, but as a socio-political doctrine of a bourgeois society. Recently, historians have suggested that the religious conservatism of Arseny Matseyevich became

<sup>6</sup> Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. Fund 18 (Department of Spiritual Affairs, 1741–1763 years). F. 18. Inventory 1. File 92. Sheet 6.



the basis for the emergence of Russian conservatism as a political doctrine (Polovinkina, 2019: 201–202). Thus, the Latin scholarship of Metropolitan Arseny makes clear the question of Russian conservatism genesis. On

the other hand, this same scholarship points to the early formation of conservative ideas in Catholic theology – long before the “official” nascence of conservatism in the Western Europe social and political thought.

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