



The Christian Church, Spoken Language and Written Word

Confessional Tensions in Ingria Between the Swedish Lutheran and the Russian Orthodox Church during the Seventeenth Century

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ABSTRACT Ingria, a region that came to the Swedish Empire in the seventeenth century, showcases an interesting instance of religious contact between Swedish state Lutheranism, Russian Orthodoxy, and the grassroot Lutheranism of the local German merchants. The contact affected all three religious communities over the course of the century, especially Swedish attempts to integrate the population in the Swedish state church. These attempts initially failed, until Heinrich Stahl became superintendent and decided to conduct missionary work in Russian and combine it with education, a programme his successor Johannes Gezelius continued. While promising, these efforts were continuously impeded by Russian policies and wars.

KEYWORDS Ingria, Sweden, Lutheranism, Russian Orthodoxy, mission, conversion

Introduction

On the eastern edge of the Swedish Empire in the seventeenth century was Ingria, the region around current-day Saint Petersburg. Its indigenous inhabitants—the Finno-Ugric Izhorian and Votian tribes—had been converted to Russian Orthodoxy in the thirteenth century during the Russian conquest, but priests would go on to fight their pagan customs for centuries to come. Before coming to Sweden, the region was subjugated by the Grand Duchy of Moscow in 1478, and the targeted consolidation of Eastern Orthodoxy began in Ingria (Västrik 2007, 49–51). During a time in which Reformation thought proliferated in Europe, the pro-Muscovite archbishop Macarius focused on the mission in Ingria in order to liberate the Izhorians and Votians from the sphere of influence of their pagan teachers—the sorcerers (Kabanen 2016, 52–54). In order to consolidate their power, the central government settled Russophone Eastern Orthodox in the area. After the Treaty of Stolbovo in 1617 that concluded the Ingrian

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war, predominantly Eastern Orthodox Ingria was transferred under the rule of the Lutheran Kingdom of Sweden for nearly a century (Isberg 1973, 9–10).

The acquisition of this region with an extensive Eastern Orthodox population created a complicated situation in Sweden, which identified itself as a champion of Lutheranism. On the one hand, Sweden was a strictly Lutheran state in which other confessions had been outlawed. On the other hand, keeping in mind the political interests of the state, it was necessary to assure the loyalty of the local population and the economic function of the region. The complex confessional situation in Ingria has been a source of interest for a great number of historians. It has been most thoroughly examined by Carl Öhlander (1900) and Alvin Isberg (1973). The most recent in-depth analyses of the Swedish state's efforts to convert Russian Orthodox believers are by Mika Sivonen (2007) and Kari Tarkiainen (2017). The problem has also been discussed in several articles by Kasper Kepsu (2017a, 2017b, 2019). [2]

The prevailing opinion among scholars is that Sweden's far too rigid church policy did not sufficiently consider the religious sentiments of the local population, which was also the reason for their disloyalty. Heinrich Stahl, who was appointed in 1641 to be the first superintendent of Ingria, has been rather unanimously criticised for overstepping his authority and thereby exacerbating the situation (Öhlander 1900, 32; Naber 1995, 70). [3]

Such a critical evaluation of the attitudes of Ingria's Lutheran superintendents towards the local Russian Orthodox population largely rests on the premise that the church policy of the state self-evidently followed the internal and external political goals set by the temporal powers and was subordinated to them. However, it is difficult to argue that this was the case already during the first half of the seventeenth century. In this paper, an attempt is therefore made to comprehend the endeavours to achieve religious uniformity during the period of Swedish rule by Ingria's Lutheran superintendents based on their goals in terms of transcendence instead of immanent political gains. [4]

The paper traces the religious contact between Lutheran Swedes and Orthodox Ingrians with a focus on the theological background to the strategies the Lutherans employed as they approached the local population, trying to integrate it into the mainstream Swedish Lutheran context. How did Swedish Lutheran concepts of transcendence interact with the way the local population viewed religious truths? [5]

The church policy in the Swedish Baltic Sea provinces was focused on the religious education of the indigenous people through catechetical literacy in their native languages (*Eesti kiriku- ja religioonilugu* 2018, 131–33). Since this strategy worked in Estonia and Livonia, it was also attempted in Ingria. Thus, the conversion of the Orthodox believers consisted essentially in their catechisation. This article examines the methods used by the Swedish authorities to achieve this goal and attempts to analyse the reasons for its failure, without going into the details regarding the resistance of the orthodox peasants, since it has already been covered by other scholars (Isberg 1973; Sivonen 2007). Conflicts that arose on the national level of the Lutheran Church in Ingermanland are also briefly examined. [6]

The article is based on a critical analysis of archival sources, thus following the historical-critical method. It focuses only on the superintendency of Ingria and does not include the county of Kexholm, which belonged ecclesiastically to the diocese of Viborg. The Swedish ecclesiastical policy had a similar effect in both ecclesiastical provinces on the local people (see Laitila 2020). Local differences in the implementation of this policy were minor; for example, in 1640 Orthodox clergymen were paid in grain for teaching Luther's catechism only in Kexholm (2020, 41–42; Isberg 1973, 41). However, the Swedish government's church policy in [7]

Ingria is more clearly evident, especially in the case of superintendents who were especially committed to converting Orthodox believers. Russian influence on the local population in Ingria is also more clearly visible, particularly because of its connections with the Russian citizens in Ivangorod.

The Russian Orthodox Church from the Perspective of Swedish Lutheranism

By the time of the Swedish conquest, the concept of Moscow as the third Rome—a transcendental reality—had already become deeply rooted in Russia. The conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 was decisive for this concept, although the Slavic tradition had upheld the idea of the Eastern Church as the sole, true Christian Church already at least from the thirteenth century. Beginning from the coronation of Ivan IV as tsar in 1547, the concept acquired a political dimension—the tsar personally conducted theological debates with representatives of Western Christianity. The overtly disapproving attitude of the despot determined state attitudes towards the Western Church (Benz 1949a, 116–18). [8]

After the Reformation, representatives of the Protestant Church, who considered their principal enemies to be the Catholics, made attempts to find common ground with the Eastern Church. The efforts were foremost directed towards Constantinople and the South Slavs but led to no results (Benz 1949b, 59–93). Interconfessional dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church was ruled out by the latter's profoundly rooted awareness of its Christian mission and its insular nature along with a fear of foreign ideas (Steinwand 1962, 114–16). [9]

In Sweden, which bordered Russia, the Russian Orthodox were regarded as pagans during the Middle Ages, against whom military expeditions were orchestrated in order to Christianise them. Following the Reformation, a deeper interest towards Greek Catholicism developed in Sweden. Johan III even considered it possible to unite the Church of Sweden with the Russian Orthodox Church (Tarkiainen 2017, 228–30). This idea, along with the search for a middle ground between Lutheranism and Catholicism in the Church of Sweden, originated from the king's interest in theology and relied on knowledge attained in that field (Lindhardt 1983, 33–35). By contrast, his heirs Karl IX and Gustav II Adolph took a pragmatic approach towards Russian Orthodoxy, with the political interests of the state in mind. Already in 1606, Karl IX promised religious freedom to those Russians who sought refuge in Swedish territory. After conquering Novgorod in 1612, King Gustav II Adolph pledged to let the Greek Catholics retain their faith, churches, and monasteries (Tarkiainen 2017, 231–32, 234). The political decisions of the government, however lacked theological justification. In order to find an intersection between Lutheranism and Russian Orthodoxy, two Swedish military clerics, Johannes Rudbeckius and Jonas Palma, met with Orthodox priests in Ivangorod¹ in 1614. The Lutheran clerics acknowledged that there was no difference in principal questions of faith and that the Eucharist was an important sacrament in the Russian Church, too. Like in the Lutheran Church, the service was conducted in the vernacular in the Russian Church. What was considered unacceptable was the Russians' limited familiarity with Scripture, their concepts of absolution, exculpation, good works, their cult of saints and icons (Isberg 1973, 20–22). Petrus Petrejus's [10]

1 Ivangorod Fortress was founded in 1492 during the reign of Ivan III, opposite the town of Narva. Ivangorod acquired a town charter in 1617, but it was conjoined with Narva in 1645. Ivangorod's citizens, who were also Russian merchants, were in contact with Russian authorities. The authorship of the letters of complaint from Ingria's Russian Orthodox to the Swedish government lies with them.

Swedish-language masterpiece, the sixth volume of *Regni Muscovitica Sciographica*, published in 1615, gives an overview of the organisation of the Russian Orthodox Church, the feast days of the liturgical calendar, and the primary dogmatic positions (Tarkiainen 1986, 57–78).

The Church of Ingria Under the Rule of the Bishop of Vyborg (1617–1641)²

In 1617, following the signing of the Treaty of Stolbovo, the question of whether the Russian Orthodox should be classified as Christian once again became relevant. In 1620, Johannes Bothvidi defended a thesis at the University of Uppsala entitled “Are Russians Christians?” (*Theses de questione, uturme Muschovitae sint Christiani*). After a thorough analysis, Bothvidi concluded that since Russian Orthodoxy practices the sacraments—Baptism and Eucharist—the Russians are undeniably Christian. However, they live in complete ignorance and follow superstitious customs (Tarkiainen 2017, 237–39). Based on this, the government of Sweden adopted the position that the poor and blind people, who are nevertheless Christian in a transcendental sense and who are in accord with Lutherans in the main questions, must merely be helped to reach the correct understanding of bliss (Holmquist and Plejel 1938, 134). Although Russians were promised religious freedom based on considerations of *realpolitik*, their long-term conversion into Lutheranism was set as a goal. Based on the terms of the peace treaty, the clerics were allowed to move to Russia, and at first the Metropolitan of Novgorod was empowered to ordain new priests. Due to his presumed political influence, clerics were however soon forbidden to visit Novgorod (Isberg 1973, 28–29). Had the conversion program been a success, there would have been no need for new Russian Orthodox clerics. [11]

In ecclesiastical matters, Ingria was integrated into the Bishopric of Vyborg and Bishop Olaus Elimaeus was tasked to combat the misconceptions and blind superstitions of the Russians. According to the instructions given to the bishop in 1622, the Russian Orthodox were required to listen to the preaching of Lutheran clerics, who had been exhorted to be patient and friendly towards the Orthodox. In order to solve the language problem, the bishop needed to find Russophone Finns who would teach the catechism, New Testament, psalms, and the Book of Sirach to Russians (Öhlander 1900, 13). This, however, presumed the translation of these books into Russian. In 1625, Peter Van Selow acquired printing privileges in Stockholm to print texts in Cyrillic, and in 1628 the Catechism was printed there (Tarkiainen 2017, 243). Unfortunately, no progress was made in converting the Russians, neither under Elimaeus nor under the two bishops succeeding him, Nikolaus Magni Carelius and Gabriel Melartopaeus (Öhlander 1900, 13–17). In order to enact the conversion program, a new strategy as well as willing and able people were needed. [12]

The Superintendency of Ingria During the Years 1641–1657

In June 1637, the Privy Council decided to separate Ingria from the Diocese of Vyborg and add Alutaguse and Narva to the new diocese. Narva was to become the residence of Ingria’s superintendent. Heinrich Stahl, the former provost of the Cathedral of Tallinn, who had been [13]

2 The reformation did not interrupt the continuity of Swedish church organisation and the episcopal model of the church government was preserved—in Sweden, the church head retained the title of bishop. Superintendents were, by German example, appointed only to the newly founded dioceses like Göteborg, Livonia, and Ingria.

appointed superintendent of Ingria, assumed this position in the autumn of 1641. The new head of the church faced two great challenges: to build up a Lutheran church organisation in Ingria and to convert the Russian Orthodox to Lutheranism (Isberg 1973, 39). The appointment of Heinrich Stahl as superintendent also marked the inclusion of Ingria's inhabitants in the catechism programme of the kingdom. The purpose of this popular education programme was not merely to inculcate Lutheran doctrine, but also to elevate the educational level of society and the sense of social responsibility. The methodology wherein the teaching of the catechism provided reading proficiency was applied systematically in the entire state, including in the provinces across the Baltic Sea. The instruction was carried out in the vernacular, which presupposed that clerical literature be translated and printed, even for peoples who had heretofore only had oral cultures (Berntson, Nilsson, and Weird 2012, 173–74; Berntson 2017, 255–58). The creation of clerical literature in Estonian gained momentum due to a visitation in 1627 from Johannes Rudbeckius, the bishop of Västerås. Johannes Rudbeckius was one of the founders and ardent implementers of the popular education method that was operating successfully in Sweden (Hall 1919, 115). During the visitation, Heinrich Stahl, who had been promoted to provost of Vironia, likely compiled a manual, presumably inspired by Rudbeckius, in four volumes with parallel texts in Estonian and German as well as an introduction in Estonian. At the time of his appointment as superintendent of Ingria, Stahl, being provost of the Cathedral of Tallinn, was the right-hand man of the Bishop of Estonia, which indicates his administrative capabilities (Lotman 2014, 62–87).

Stahl probably acquired the required background knowledge for his new responsibilities from a treatise published by Johannes Rudbeckius and Jonas Palma in 1640, called *Een kort Berättelse och Undervisning om Vår Christeliga Troo och Gudztienst i Sverige. Ther uthi ock the groffteste Vilfarelser som äre uthi the Ryssars Religion varda kortheligan förlagde och tillbaka dr-effne*.³ The book was intended to give the Swedish clergy a general idea of the nature of Russian Orthodoxy and at the same time to be a handbook for teaching Lutheran doctrine (Tarkiainen 2017, 236). [14]

Heinrich Stahl started in his new role by familiarising himself with the circumstances of the Ingrian church. According to him, the situation of the Lutheran Church was dire: there were few church buildings as well as a lack of church organisation and of competent teachers. No Russian Orthodox had been converted to Lutheranism; quite the contrary, a number of Lutherans had converted to Russian Orthodoxy instead (Isberg 1973, 43). Stahl's opinion of the Russian Orthodox coincided with that of Johannes Botvidi: they are baptised and follow the Nicene Creed, but they know neither the Bible nor the fundamental articles. A similar conclusion was reached following a disputation led by Heinrich Stahl held during the synod of 1642 (Stahl 1643). [15]

Stahl believed that the entire Ingrian Church was therefore in need of reform—both the Lutheran and the Orthodox communities. According to his proposal, the Lutheran Ecclesiastical Consistory of Ingria was founded, together with the office of provost. Moreover, the local pastors had to visit their congregations twice a year and the superintendent should carry out a General Visitation annually. In order to ordain, examine, and educate the clergy, the superintendent organised synods which took place twice a year. However, his principal task was converting the Russian Orthodox population to Lutheranism (Isberg 1973, 43–45). [16]

3 "A short report and instruction on our Christian faith and divine service in Sweden. Therein are briefly explained and dispelled the crudest aberrations that exist in the Russian religion." Translation by the author.

According to Stahl, reforming the Orthodox congregations in Ingria should not take place in a violent manner; the natives should receive instructions and be convinced through the question-and-answer method, using both sermons and printed material to this end. At Stahl's suggestion, a printing press would be established at the consistory in Narva, with the capability to print texts in Swedish, Latin, and Russian. In his opinion, there was also need for a library where the Russian books that were lying around in deserted churches and an abandoned monastery could be gathered (Svenska Riksarkivet = SRA, Livonica II:202, Heinrich Stahl 27.02.1642). [17]

As a convinced follower of the Aristotelian method, Stahl believed that religious truth would become apparent through logical debate based on the Bible and other clerical books. In his opinion, the Russian Orthodox would convert to Lutheranism as a result of the advocacy of religious education. Based on experiences attained from Estonia he acted on two fronts—by communicating with Russian Orthodox and their clerics during visitations and by preparing a special catechism for Ingria. He communicated with the locals with the help of an interpreter because he did not know Russian and did not have the time to learn it. The fact that many Orthodox Finns and Izhorians did not speak Russian either was considered by Stahl to be a factor favourable to conversion (Lotman 2000, 113). [18]

In 1644, Stahl's catechism was printed, written for Ingria in Swedish. It was entitled *Förnufftennes miölk*—the Milk of Reason. The title of the catechism refers to Paul's letter to the Corinthians: "I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it" (1 Cor. 3,2). In this catechism, the questions and answers are written in three different variations so that the catechised would be able to learn the religious principles by progressing from simpler to more complicated versions. Stahl had *Förnufftennes miölk* translated to Russian as well, but it was never printed (Lotman 2014, 135–36). There was no printing press established in Narva during his lifetime and Peter Van Selow's printing press in Stockholm had ceased operating (Tarkiainen 2017, 252). [19]

All of Stahl's activity in converting Russian Orthodox to Lutheranism was based on his conviction of the power of language, especially that of written language. He displayed a sincere interest towards Russian Orthodoxy, but his viewpoint was that of a Lutheran. His inability to understand the worldview of the Russian Orthodox entailed two major conflicts whose aftermath had deleterious effects on the conversion plans. Stahl had noticed books lying about already during his first visitation in the abandoned Jelissei monastery in Kattila parish. The superintendent brought the 35 books—written in Church Slavonic and in a semi-decomposed state—to Narva to inventory them and to add them to the library of the consistory. According to Stahl, the books mostly contained liturgical and hagiographical texts and were well kept, in his opinion. The Orthodox did not consider him to be the saviour of the books; a Lutheran cleric acquiring holy books was unforgivable. They would rather have had them destroyed (Lotman 2014, 125). For them, Scripture was not a text to be read or studied, but a sacred artefact that could not be defiled by a person of another religion. [20]

A similar misunderstanding happened when Stahl wished to conduct a sermon at the church in Ivangorod on October 31, Reformation Day. Most likely, he intended to introduce the catechism of Martin Luther to the people. A riotous mob forced the superintendent to vacate the church and the incident was discussed at the Swedish Privy Council due to complaints by the citizens of Ivangorod. Just as he was unable to perceive the sanctity of Orthodox books, Stahl was also unable to perceive the sanctity of the church space. He wished to enter the sacred room behind the iconostasis out of ignorance, not out of malice. For Lutherans, [21]

transcendental qualities were attributed to the Word of God, items or buildings were not sacred (Lotman 2014, 126–27).

Stahl perceived the Russians' different understanding of holiness as idol worship, from which he hoped to 'liberate' them with the help of correctly transmitted written language. According to him, Russians ought to have mastered the five chapters of the catechism, the morning, evening, and grace prayers. The Russian Orthodox priests ought to have been compelled, under penalty of fines, to teach the Lutheran catechism and read the litany to their congregation every Sunday. The non-Russophone Finno-Ugric Orthodox should also have been compelled to attend the Lutheran church services on prayer days or face fines. In Ivangorod, the government should have hired a Finnish-speaking Russian cleric, who would have been able to translate texts clarifying the Gospel for use in the congregation. In addition to the catechism, the collection of sermons should also have been translated into Russian. To find translators, Finnish and Swedish students should have been sent to Russia to learn the language and Russian boys should have been enrolled into school in Narva where they would have received, among other things, a religious education (SRA, Livonica II:202. Heinrich Stahl 1645(?)). Unfortunately, no Russian boys expressing such interest could be found (Tarkiainen 1972, 515). [22]

Stahl obviously based the design of these measures on his experience in Estonia, which must be judged as successful even in hindsight. The creation of a body of Estonian religious literature gave the Estonians a written language as well as a national and Lutheran identity which was to last even during the two centuries of Russian occupation following the Great Northern War (1700–1721). Why was Stahl's catechetical project not successful in Ingria? [23]

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Estonians' understanding of religion was not more advanced than that of the Ingrian natives. Lutheran ideas reached Estonian towns as early as the second quarter of the sixteenth century, but the indigenous Estonians clung to their ingrained religious customs that mixed Catholic practices with superstition (Eesti kirikuja religioonilugu, 98–99). The main prayers had already been translated into Estonian during the Catholic period (Pöld 1996, 40–45), but it was only through writings in their mother tongue that they gradually came to understand the nature of Christianity. [24]

The situation was different in Ingria, where the magical worldview of the indigenous people was mixed with Russian Orthodox mysticism. Western Christian rationalism was alien to their deeply rooted mystical sense of God. Attempts by the superintendent—who took literary culture for granted—to enter into dialogue with the Russian Orthodox were doomed due to a lack of common ground. [25]

In addition, Stahl has been criticised by historians and his contemporaries alike for his staunch Lutheran unwillingness to make pragmatic concessions to the conversion of Orthodox believers. For example, in 1639 the governor-general of Vyborg and Kexholm County, Per Brahe, promised grain to those Russian clerics who taught the catechism to their congregations (Isberg 1973, 40; Laitila 2020). According to Ingria's governor-general Carl Mörner, the theological aspect of the Russian Orthodox problem should simply have been discarded and the inhabitants should have been linked to the Swedish state by means of economic privileges. Mörner believed that “the more they fast, the more they can pay taxes” and “once they receive money from the Swedish state, they will forget their gods” (SRA, Livonica II: 171. Carl Mörner 02.09.1650, Öhlander 1900, 73–74). As superintendent and a devout orthodox Lutheran, such concessions were not possible for Stahl. The lack of adaptability did not stem from Heinrich Stahl's character, but rather from the theology of orthodox Lutheranism, which [26]

was different, for example, from that of the Jesuits, whose key to success was finding the common ground with the beliefs of the indigenous peoples (Mungello 1989, 14–15). The Eastern Church's cosmological perception of the world and the responsibilities of the individual to the community remained incomprehensible to the Lutherans, who focused on written language and an individual perception of God (Steinwand 1962, 16–17). However, Heinrich Stahl's conversion programme ran into more concrete problems, too. The superintendent's desired printing press was only established in Narva on the eve of the Great Northern War, with the government lacking the pecuniary means for a library and gymnasium as well (Küng 2005b; Lotman 2014, 100, 2119).

Heinrich Stahl succeeded in creating a Lutheran church organisation in Ingria. The congregations were organised in four provostships to be visited twice a year by the provosts. A clerical consistory was established in Narva, and synods took place under the chairmanship of the superintendent (Väänänen 1987, 36–41; Isberg 1973, 50–51). However, whereas Russian Orthodox faithful formed a unitary community in Ingria regardless of their mother tongue, the conflict between the German and Swedish Lutheran congregations took place on the grounds of national identity. The right of patronage over the German congregation in Narva belonged to the city council, who did not recognise the superintendent's right to inspect their church and who refused to adhere to the Swedish church ceremony. The conflict escalated to such a level that Heinrich Stahl was forbidden to enter the church of Narva's German congregation (Isberg 1973, 72–73). In a letter to Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, the superintendent acknowledged that the conflict with the German congregation even had adverse effects on the conversion of the Russian Orthodox (SRA, E-732. Heinrich Stahl to Axel Oxenstierna 23.04.1645). [27]

According to the historian Jaak Naber, Heinrich Stahl's aim was to gain control of the material situation of the German congregation, and in doing so he acted in the economic interests of the state. There existed an economic aspect in this conflict: as representatives of the city's merchant class, the city council could afford to ignore the superintendent's orders because the mercantile development of Narva was extremely important to the Swedish state (Naber 1995, 70–71). However, Stahl was not driven by economic interests, but was dedicated to his theological mission, which was also tied to state loyalty. Protestant faith and loyalty to the Kingdom of Sweden went hand in hand (Montgomery 2002, 71). As representative of the Church of Sweden, Stahl had embraced the aim of implementing a common church ceremony, using the 1614 Swedish Church Manual (Öhlander 1900, 46–48). [28]

Needless to say, there were no dogmatic differences between the German and Swedish Lutheran Churches, but there existed differences in liturgy, feast days, the order surrounding weekly church services, and other non-theological questions due to historical developments. They became important in concrete practice because they related to the identity of the congregations. The superintendent's endeavours to subject the entire church organisation of Ingria to the consistory was, on the one hand, an expression of official church policy during Axel Oxenstierna's reign, but on the other, it was Stahl's personal conviction that secular power must be subservient to clerical power. However, he lacked a mechanism to implement this power because the economic and social position of the Germans allowed them to simply ignore these ambitions (Lotman 2014, 98–99). [29]

The first stage of the Ingrian church reforms ended with the Russo-Swedish war of 1656–1658. The war showed the complete failure of the conversion programme and revealed the political dimension of Russian Orthodoxy. Whereas the identity of Ingria's Lutherans was [30]

based on the local level, rather than on the level of the Swedish state, the Russian Orthodox faithful defined themselves as Russian subjects regardless of their place of residence. During the war, they defected to the enemy, killing Lutherans and raiding their dwellings. Around 7500 Orthodox fled to Russia and 1000 Lutherans were probably deported (Tarkiainen 2017, 254). Most Lutheran clerics fled to either Germany or Sweden due to fear of the Russians. Ingria's first superintendent did not abandon his congregation, dying in Narva in 1657 (Lotman 2014, 134, 144–43). In spite of this war, Ingria remained part of the Swedish domain.

The Church of Ingria From the Russo-Swedish War to the Great Northern War

Russia had never actually forfeited either Ingria or its inhabitants and utilised all available means to reinforce their religious identity. Clerics who secretly crossed the border and residents of Ivangorod who maintained a constant correspondence with the Patriarch kept the inhabitants of Ingria in Moscow's sphere of influence. Russia's interest towards the residents of Ingria was purely political; they were regarded as incomplete Orthodox influenced by Lutheran thought (Lotman 2014, 130–32). While the Russian Orthodox Church saw Catholics as schismatics, Lutherans were deemed heretics (Scheliha 2004, 278). [31]

As part of the church reforms of Patriarch Nikon, initiated in 1652, the Russian Orthodox Church assumed a more publicly hostile position towards members of other religions. Nikon's removal from office in 1666 further increased the dependence of the Church on the Tsar of Russia (Isberg 1973, 81). [32]

The Russian Orthodox of Ingria had also lost most of the clerics during the war, but they did not allow Lutheran pastors to conduct marriages or baptise children. The activities of the Lutheran Church in Ingria were not interrupted; the clerics who had fled during the war had largely returned and new clerics were ordained to fill up the vacant positions. The administration of Orthodox sacraments was delayed until the arrival of a Russian priest who had managed to cross the border. The non-Russophone Ingrians and Votians acted in a similar manner whenever Lutheran church leaders ineffectually tried to convince them to attend Sunday service in Lutheran churches (Öhlander 1900, 120–21). Both Stahl's method of conversion, which was based on Lutheran written texts, and the limited gains attained in this field had been lost. [33]

After the war, Ivangorod's Russian Orthodox obtained the right to freely express their religious customs (SRA Livonica II: 678. Kunglig resolution för Ivangorod 29.11.1664). Plans to convert the other Russian Orthodox of Ingria had not been abandoned, but no progress was made towards this goal during the reigns of the following five superintendents of the Ingrian church. Hopes for success were placed in governmental decrees, interdictions, and orders, but to no avail (Isberg 1973, 79–87). [34]

A shift in the conversion of Russian Orthodox came along with Karl XI of Sweden, who ruled from 1660 but came of age only in 1672. He consistently practiced a policy of a unitary state church and prepared church laws which would give the king the right to decide over religious matters (Montgomery 2002, 140–42). The subjugation of the church to the secular ruler of the state was not a particularity of Sweden but was reflective of late seventeenth century Protestant political theory. A church without a firm, legitimate leader had turned out to be too insecure and vulnerable (Hope 1995, 74–75). In order for Karl XI's church policy to be implemented, the confessionally and linguistically fragmented Ingria needed a [35]

competent church leader with a clear vision. Herbert Ulrich, who was the pastor for the German congregation of Narva, wanted to become the superintendent, but he did not have the favour of governor-general Johann Jakob Taube because he did not speak Finnish. Taube was of the opinion that Ingria's governor-general should be an ethnic Swede who spoke Finnish and who would furthermore be respected by the Swedish and German pastors who were in conflict with one another. These conditions were satisfied by Petrus Bång, a professor of theology at the University of Turku (Åbo) who assumed his new position in the summer of 1679 (Isberg 1973, 87).

Bång was a theologian of a new generation, a thinker of Swedish ecclesiastical history and an ardent patriot. Inspired by the Gothic ideology of the closing decades of the century, he wrote the first systematic history of the Swedish church, going back to the antediluvian era (Lindroth 1989, 298–99). For a convinced Lutheran, Bång's theological views were liberal (Simolin 1912, 66–68, 190). His understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church was broader than that of Ingria's preceding superintendents. Bång highlighted both the intersection of the two confessions and the strengths of each that the other should learn from. In his opinion, the Lutherans were more educated and more conscious of their faith, whereas the Orthodox were more devoted. Unlike the Lutherans, the Russians received the Eucharist once per year, but they prepared for it for a whole week. Their version of Lent could be a model for Lutherans, too. According to his proposal, both the Ingrians and the Russians should attend the sermons at the Lutheran church during the feast days. What should be prevented was the border crossings of Russian clerics as well as the peasants having their children baptised in Russia (Tarkiainen 1986, 247–48; Laitila 2020). In Bång's opinion, conversion to Lutheranism would be justified in the case of the Finnish-speaking Ingrians and Votians (Sivonen 2007, 72). [36]

Bång was critical of the Lutheran Church of Ingria. He outlined his proposals for improving the situation in a thorough memorandum presented to the government 1680. According to this, the use of the Swedish church manual, Swedish liturgy, and the celebration of Swedish feast days ought to be implemented everywhere, both in urban centres and rural areas. Bång separately highlighted the divergent liturgy of Narva's German congregation and their disregard for Swedish feast days and also accused Nyen's city council of usurping the church's right of patronage, arguing that there ought to be no German pastors in rural congregations because not a single German peasant remained in them, while local nobles and officials spoke either Finnish or Swedish. A whole array of the superintendent's proposals was concerned with improving the economic situation of the church, particularly by eliminating the inequality between the incomes of the Swedish and German parishes and the salaries of the pastors (SRA Livonica II: 202. Petrus Bång Gravamina, Simolin 1912, 183–97; Isberg 1973, 88; Laitila 2020). [37]

The attempts to make the Lutheran Church of Ingria more unitary resulted in an acute confrontation between Petrus Bång and the German congregations both in Narva and Nyen. Nyen was founded in 1632 as a town for mercantile purposes in the location of present-day St. Petersburg. In the closing decades of the century, Nyen had evolved into a prosperous mercantile town whose most influential social stratum was composed of German merchants who had settled there (Küng 2005a; Kepsu 2019). The German congregation of the city considered the superintendent's propositions to be unjust and the participation in his general visitation to be degrading (Simolin 1912, 194). In a letter of complaint to the king they accused the superintendent of political ambitions and thereby damaging the mercantile interests of the town (SRA, Livonica II:207. Nyen's city council and magistrate 5.02.1681). Petrus Bång's con- [38]

flict with Nyen's German congregation ended when he was appointed Bishop of Vyborg in 1681 (Väänänen 1987, 167).

Johannes Gezelius the Younger, who had studied in the Netherlands, England, and Germany, was appointed superintendent after Bång. He professed a Pietist theology and took a special interest in the comparative study of languages. For decades he was engaged in the new critical Swedish translation of the Bible, which later came to be called the Karl XII Bible (Lindroth 1989, 105–6; Tarkiainen 2017, 257). A growing interest in history and linguistic studies among Swedish scholars is reflected in Gezelius's activity as superintendent. Like his predecessor, he thought it right to convert the non-Russian speaking Ingrians and Votians to Lutheranism, but he also provided a theological explanation for this. He concluded from his research that the language of the Ingrians and Votians was related to Finnish. In his opinion, Estonian was a corrupted version of Finnish, too. Gezelius inferred from this that the Ingrians and Votians travelled to Ingria either from Estonia or Finland after the last Russo-Swedish war and that they were originally Lutheran. In Ingria they adapted to witchcraft and superstition due to the influence of Russian clerics. This was encouraged by many landowners as well, so that their assimilation would be easier. In addition to their language, the Finnish ancestry of the Ingrians and Votians was also attested by their choice of habitat near bodies of water, their dress, and customs. The Russians held them in disdain and considered them impure, but Russian priests tempted them into their religion for their own interests, although they regarded them as pagans in their hearts. Allegedly, this could also be determined by reading the Russians' own books. This factor also provided justification for the conversion programme: the Finno-Ugric tribes must return to their original religion (Mägiste 1956, 201–7; Sivonen 2007, 94–106).

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According to Karl XI's resolution of 4 May 1683, the Ingrians and Votians were segregated from the Russians based on their religious affiliation in order to bring them into the Lutheran Church of Ingria. Already by the fall of the same year, Johannes Gezelius drafted a detailed manual for pastors so that they could implement the programme. The task of the pastor was to determine who was Votian and Ingrian and to teach them Lutheran doctrine at least once a month. Should the pastor have plans to conduct a lesson on the catechism in a village, he was required to notify the local landowner three weeks in advance so that they could ensure the participation of all the peasants. Ideally, this would take place in the village chapel, in which all the catechised would form a circle, at the centre of which were all the young people. The presence of the lord of the manor or at least an *Amtmann* was also desirable. The catechism lesson was to begin with the singing of a Finnish-language psalm, followed by a brief prayer in Finnish. One learned the chapters of the catechism by memorising questions and answers and additionally practiced reading from the ABC books. At the end of the lesson, a prayer from the Finnish prayer book was read again, as well as the Lord's Prayer and a psalm in Finnish. The main duty of the pastor was the cultivation of love for the word of God. Of course, he had to have impeccable manners and a pleasant comportsment (Öhlander 1900, 126–29, SRA, Livonica II:202. Johannes Gezelius 2.11.1683).

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The teaching of Lutheran doctrine in Finnish to the Russian Orthodox who spoke Finno-Ugric languages solved the problem posed by the dearth of clerical literature in the mother tongue of the conversion subjects, which had significantly impeded the success of Heinrich Stahl's conversion programme. The catechism did exist in the Finnish language during the founding of Ingria's superintendency, but Stahl had attempted to teach Lutheran doctrine in Russian, for which he lacked the instruments. In addition, Lutheran popular education

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had made great progress in Finland by the time Johannes Gezelius the Younger became superintendent of Ingria. The superintendent's father Johannes Gezelius the Older published a catechism for children in 1666 which also contained an alphabet book. He even devised a method for learning to read faster, according to which those who had obtained the skill were meant to help the slower students. Children, being the most capable, were supposed to teach their parents (Laine 2017, 41–45). There is no doubt that the superintendent tried to apply the instructions formulated by his father, as is evidenced even by his order pertaining to young people in the aforementioned instruction. Therefore, there was no further need to translate catechisms and sermons into Russian nor to find a printing press with Cyrillic types. However, it was expected that the local pastor would speak Finnish. The success of Johannes Gezelius's conversion programme would have entailed the Fennicisation of Ingria (Sepp 1934, 87).

Gezelius's zeal in teaching Lutheran doctrine to Ingrians and Votians became evident during a general visitation he undertook during the summer of 1684. In a short time, surprisingly good results had been obtained. The historian Alvin Isberg points to cases where the villagers fled into the woods upon seeing the visitators, simply did not show up, or acted in an antagonising manner (Isberg 1973, 98–99). Nevertheless, the visitation journal does not document a great number of such cases. During the visitation, which lasted from July 25 to August 24, people in more than thirty villages demonstrated benevolent interest, took part in prayer and singing and attempted to repeat back the chapters of the catechism (SRA Livonica II:202. *Diarium Visitationis Ingro-Wadiaca. Anno 1684*, Öhlander 1900, 140–46). The superintendent considered the visitation to be a success, acknowledging that the Ingrians and Votians have an inner conviction that they are not part of the Russian community (Mägiste 1956, 205). [42]

The most cogent piece of evidence supporting the promising perspective of the conversion programme is the reaction of the Russian government to it. Already during a meeting with Swedish delegates in Moscow in the summer of 1684, representatives of the Russian side accused the Swedes of persecuting the Russian Orthodox in Ingria. It was not difficult for the superintendent, who was acquainted with the local conditions, to recognise in this accusation Moscow's desire to keep the citizens of Ingria under their influence. Therefore, he referred to the events of the last war. For his part, Karl XI cautioned the superintendent in a letter against using violence in conversion (Isberg 1973, 100–101). From the same year (1684), a document detailing the process of a conversion from Lutheranism to Russian Orthodoxy was translated into Swedish (Öhlander 1900, 196–98). The practice that had been established earlier in the seventeenth century in the Russian Orthodox Church (Tsvetaev 1890, 352) made such converts recite curses for both the Catholic and Post-Reformation Churches, along with the theologians Johannes Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli. Moreover, they had to curse Martin Luther's written works, particularly his catechism for children and the Lutheran school. Although it is difficult to gauge the reach of this document in Sweden, one can presume that the threats of damnation from the Patriarch also reached the Ingrian peasantry via the Russian clerics, but it is not known whether and to what extent the fear of excommunication affected their wish to convert to Lutheranism. In any case, by the spring of 1685, the superintendent was no longer so optimistic about the success of the conversion programme. Apparently, only a few families had made sufficient progress as to receive the Eucharist in the Lutheran Church (Isberg 1973, 104). [43]

The Russian authorities, who were carefully monitoring the situation in Ingria, nevertheless feared the influence of the Lutheran Church on the population. In a letter sent to the [44]

Swedish king during the fall of 1685, the Russian government accused Sweden of violently converting Orthodox Christians and demanded this to immediately cease while referring to the peace treaty (Isberg 1973, 105). One by one, Gezelius refuted the Russian accusations and argued that although the Russian clerics in Ingria were uneducated, mean, without virtue, and constantly drunk, their activities constituted no basis for them to complain. The Russian clerics had only been required to celebrate all days of prayer and repentance, to recite certain psalms on those days, and to educate themselves in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In addition, no physical work was to be done on Sundays and feast days. It was forbidden to curse the Evangelical religion, to hold the Lutheran Church in contempt, and the Lutheran visitators must be allowed into Russian churches. The priests who had been ordained outside of Ingria had to give a pledge of allegiance to the king of Sweden (Öhlander 1900, 150–54). Ingrians and Votians, although Orthodox, were not subjects of the Russian tsar. The basis of their religious affiliation was wrong because their ancestors had presumably been baptised into the Evangelical religion. Because they had been baptised, they were Christian, but they lacked the slightest understanding of Christian doctrine, partly due to their ignorance of the language and partly due to the carelessness of the Russian clerics (Öhlander 1900, 160; Isberg 1973, 108–9).

In correspondence with the government, Gezelius repeatedly emphasised that he did not undertake the conversion of the Russian Orthodox by his own initiative and that it had proceeded successfully. The data presented to support this claim—that several thousand had apparently mastered the Lord's Prayer and several hundred had mastered the chapters of the catechism, that Lutheran clerics had baptised around 1000 children and married 200 couples—is not considered reliable by historians (Sivonen 2007, 106; Tarkiainen 2017, 260; Isberg 1973, 114–15). But even if the true figures were much smaller, it indicates that the right solution had been to focus on conversions in the Finnish mother tongue. One must agree with Hendrik Sepp in his claim that if Gezelius's programme had gone ahead, at the very least the central and western parts of Ingria would have transitioned to Lutheranism (1934, 86). [45]

The forceful intervention of Russian authorities into the ecclesiastical life of Ingria had two consequences. First, it motivated the opponents to conversion to actively respond. Second, the superintendent lost the favour of both governor-general Göran Sperling and the king himself (Isberg 1973, 109–20). The theological arguments of Gezelius did not outweigh the political considerations of Karl XI. [46]

However, the king did not abandon the attempt to establish church law in the Baltic Sea provinces, including Ingria, which increased tensions with the German congregations. Jaak Naber has called Gezelius a fervent supporter of unitary Swedish church organisation, explicitly hostile to Germans, referring to the superintendent's memorial of 1684. In the memorial, Gezelius relates the implementation of church law in the provinces with patriotism, with love of the Swedish fatherland (Naber 1995, 134–35). This idea was worded even more clearly by Gezelius during his sermon that solemnly introduced the Swedish church law in Narva on 14 February 1688, during which Ingria's nobles, clerics, and citizens swore allegiance to the king. According to Gezelius, no other people on earth lived in such harmony with the Bible and Lutheran confession as the Swedish. No other state had such a God-fearing king who had taken responsibility for the pure and correct teaching in Sweden among its subjects (Isberg 1973, 112). Here, Gezelius was not expressing his personal stances, but rather the viewpoints of theology and constitutional law dominant in Sweden during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. [47]

During this period, monarchy was regarded from the perspective of both theology and constitutional law as the best form of government across Europe. The theoretical justification of the monarch's power derived from natural law doctrine, which was given a rational framework by Samuel von Pufendorf, invited to a professorship in Lund University in 1667. According to his theory, members of society voluntarily forfeited power to the ruler, who had a moral responsibility for the welfare of the state and all its members. During the *Riksdag* of 1682, the estates renounced legislative power as belonging to the king. A political doctrine based on natural law also had a theological justification: the king had acquired his state from God and was responsible only to God. The church law of 1686 saw the almost complete subjugation of the Church of Sweden to the king. The church law legitimised the Church of Sweden as a national orthodox unitary church, based on the Augsburg Confession and Book of Concord. It was precisely religious unity that should eliminate the differences between the motherland and the new provinces (Montgomery 2002, 140–46; Lindroth 1989, 362–66). “Fatherland” and “love of Fatherland” were terms often used in Swedish rhetoric at the end of the century. It is debatable what exactly was meant thereby—whether it was a drive to Swedify the entire state. Were residents of conquered provinces expected to ethnically assimilate or merely to be loyal to the Kingdom (Östlund 2007, 93–99)?

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In the case of Ingria, the second option seems more likely due to the fact that Karl XI's priorities were the interests of the state and that he was prepared to make concessions in religious questions in the name of political considerations and economic benefit (Montgomery 2002, 143). The German congregations who had built their own church thus retained the right of patronage over the church and divine services could be conducted in German (*Kirchengesetz Und Ordnung* 1796, 42). Due to economic considerations, governor-general Sperling recommended granting religious freedom to the Reformed Dutch merchants and the Anglican English merchants in Narva. The king's position was hesitant, but permission was not granted to the Dutch due to Gezelius's opposition. The superintendent took a different stance towards the Anglican Church, whose approach to the Eucharist was, to his knowledge, different from that of the Lutheran Church, but whose church organisation and liturgy were more similar to the practices of the Church of Sweden than those of some German churches. The members of the Anglican Church could therefore take part in divine services held in private houses. Karl XI accepted Gezelius's proposal on the grounds that only the English would participate in the Anglican church services held in private houses and that it would constitute no threat to the Lutheran Church of Ingria (Isberg 1973, 128–30; Küng 2005a).

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The political considerations of the king become apparent in the questions of attitudes towards Old Believers. The Old Believers, who had fled Russia after Nikon's reforms, mostly settled in Sweden's Baltic Sea provinces, foremost in Estonia and Livonia, but partly in Ingria as well. As was his habit, Gezelius formulated his stance towards Old Believers after extensive research. Among the positive aspects, he emphasised their profound piety and the fact that they followed the rite that had already been accepted by Gustav II Adolph in 1617. They also despised drinking vodka, fasted strictly, did not swear nor steal, and were in this sense suitable settlers. However, their ascetic lifestyle created social problems because they were not able to live in the same village with other Russians or even to drink water from the same stream. Their nightly religious gatherings and contempt towards marriage were deplorable since they led to grievous sin. What was downright dangerous was their zeal in converting proselytes, which is why the superintendent did not support their staying in the region. The governor-general in turn considered them harmful to economic affairs on account of their

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strict fasting and opposition to marriage. In the end, the king found that people who had fled from Russia were of no threat to Sweden and that every individual was necessary in the sparsely populated region. Their religious life was no more heretical than that of other Russian Orthodox, and hostility between the two currents would rather foster their conversion to Lutheranism (Isberg 1973, 124–27).

The plan to convert Russian Orthodox had been hindered by Moscow's active intervention, but it was not yet buried. A new approach to the problem was introduced by Nikolas Bergius, appointed as Ingria's superintendent in 1700. Like Gezelius, he delved into the religious and ethnic problems of the region with the curiosity and meticulousness of a scholar. Unlike Gezelius, he learned Russian so that he could study books in the Russian language and debate with Russian clerics. Like Ingria's first superintendent Heinrich Stahl, he too collected Russian books circulating in Ingria and thought it important that the printing press in Narva be able to print books in Russian (Tarkiainen 2017, 263–65). The capacity to print in Cyrillic was never achieved in Narva, but a catechism translated by Bergius with parallel texts in Swedish and Russian was still printed in Johann Köler's printing press there (Küng 2005b). The Russian text had been transcribed into the Latin alphabet (Isberg 1973, 138). Unfortunately, this publication only has significance in cultural history, as attempts to convert Russian Orthodox came to an end with the Russian forces crossing the border at the start of the Great Nordic War later in the year 1700. The most considerable result of the final act of the conversion programme remained Nicolaus Bergius's two-part doctoral dissertation "De statu Ecclesiae et Religionis Moscoviticae" (Tarkiainen 2017, 266).

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Conclusion

During the Swedish reign of Ingria, the biggest problem was perceived to be the affiliation of its indigenous inhabitants with Russian Orthodoxy. This was in conflict with the Lutheran confession imposed in the Kingdom of Sweden and put the loyalty of the Ingrian inhabitants to the Swedish state in question. Actively attempting to persuade Russian Orthodox faithful to convert could have entailed them fleeing to Russia. For the already sparsely inhabited region, this would have meant economic calamity. The long-term nonviolent conversion of Ingria's indigenous inhabitants to Lutheranism was thus the only viable tactic. The attempts to convert Ingria's indigenous inhabitants to Lutheranism over the course of nearly 75 years were not successful. In Robert Scribner's appraisal, that was precisely the amount of time necessary—roughly three generations—for some social cohorts to adapt to the changes brought on by the Reformation (Scribner 2001, 80). In Estonia and most of Livonia, the church and educational programme of the Swedish state worked successfully: both Estonians and the majority of Latvians adopted Lutheranism, and a basis was established which brought a literary culture and a national identity to these peoples. A national identity relying on the written language saved these groups from being Russified in the two hundred years following the Great Northern War and enabled them to achieve independence after the fall of the Russian Empire.

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Why was it unsuccessful in Ingria? Does the reason lie with the wrong decisions and practices made by individual rulers and church actors or were there other reasons at play?

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One can distinguish three longer periods of time in the endeavours of the Swedish state to convert Ingrian's Russian Orthodox into Lutheranism: 1. From the Treaty of Stolbovo to the foundation of the superintendency in Ingria (1617–1641); 2. From the superintendency's foundation to the outbreak of the Russo-Swedish War (1641–1656); 3. From the end of the

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Russo-Swedish War to the beginning of the Great Northern War (1659–1701). Already the dating itself indicates the constant presence of Russia. Although Russia ceded territory to Sweden, it did not cease treating the Russian Orthodox faithful living there as its subjects.

The Swedish theologians recognised the baptisms of the Russian Orthodox Church but deplored its religious customs and liturgy as well as, above all, the limited knowledge of clerics and congregation members of the Bible and religious doctrine. The conversion programme was indeed based on the presumption that knowledge of the transcendent catechismal truths would serve to liberate the people from belief in immanent magical rituals and guide them into the arms of the Lutheran Church. During the period where Ingria belonged to the Diocese of Vyborg, the conversion of Ingria's indigenous inhabitants turned out to be too difficult a task for the bishops due to the size of the Diocese as well as the lack of a definitive methodology. Therefore, Ingria was reorganised into an independent superintendency. The appointment of Heinrich Stahl, who had proven himself to be a successful catechiser in Estonia, as superintendent was a sign that there were plans to convert the Russian Orthodox by consistently teaching them Lutheran catechism. [55]

Based on experiences attained in Estonia, Stahl linked the conversion of the Russian Orthodox with the vernacular written language. Although most of the Votians and Ingrians understood Finnish better than Russian, Stahl attempted to create clerical literature in Russian for this purpose. The catechism he compiled and translated into Russian was nonetheless never printed, and the superintendent's wish to establish a printing press in Narva only became reality in the closing decade of the century. Stahl's zeal in converting the Russian Orthodox to Lutheranism highlighted the downsides of the Swedish conversion programme in the face of Russian influence. [56]

The conversion programme took into account the attitudes of Lutheran theologians towards Russian Orthodoxy but neglected the strongly developed religious identity of the Russian Orthodox faithful in Ingria. In Estonia, where paganism had become intertwined with elements of Catholicism, the indigenous people accepted the Lutheran doctrine based on the written vernacular more easily. Nor was there a dearth of educated and motivated clerics in Estonia, unlike in Ingria, and the government supported the printing of clerical literature in Estonian. In Ingria, Swedish authorities did not find the means to accomplish either. Even more strongly than the linguistic barrier, the message of the Lutheran clerics towards the subjects of conversion was impeded by a divergent perception of the world. The superintendent considered the religious tradition of the local population merely to be blind superstition that could be eliminated with access to transcendental Scriptures. Unlike the Lutheran one, the Russian Orthodox identity in Ingria was not based on the mother tongue, though; many non-Russophone Ingrians considered themselves to be Russians based on religious affiliation. The unity of the Lutheran Church of Ingria, on the other hand, was unravelled specifically by the split linguistic identity, which also did not make the work of conversion any easier. The influence of the Metropolitan of Novgorod and Ivangorod's Russian residents, who consistently undermined the efforts of Lutheran clerics, surfaced acutely during the Russo-Swedish war in 1656-1658. [57]

Since the Ingrian people's loyalty to the government was evidently linked to their confessional beliefs, the continuation of the conversion programme was deemed essential. The need for a new strategy was also clear. The conversion programme of Johannes Gezelius, who was the most active superintendent during the subsequent period, focused only on the Ingrians and Votians who spoke a Finno-Ugric language. Like Ingria's first superintendent, Gezelius's method of catechism teaching was based on the catechism being in the vernacular, but it now [58]

included the teaching of literacy, including more immanent concerns. His activities reflect an interest towards history and linguistic studies that had appeared in Sweden in the seventeenth century as well as the evolution in popular education. The teaching of Lutheran doctrine to the Russian Orthodox was not successful in every parish, but the intensified reaction of its adversaries confirms the validity of the chosen approach. Whereas Moscow acted silently and secretly during the first half of the century, Russian intervention concerning the conversion of the Orthodox in Ingria appeared at the governmental level after the war of 1656–1658.

As with earlier instances, Swedish church policy contradicted the economic and political interests of the state during the latter decades of the century, and it could not be consistently carried out. Ingria functioned as a sort of litmus paper which, through the oppositions of ethnic groups with different religious affiliations, highlighted both the ambitions of Sweden's Lutheranism and the weaknesses in realising them. Politico-economic concessions to German urban congregations and to Narva's Anglican congregation were inevitable. The concessions of Karl XI curtailed the conversion programme, although it continued. However, it lacked tenacity and, although it was politically calculated to appease Russia, it did not accomplish its goal considering the following events.

The conversion of the indigenous inhabitants to Lutheranism failed initially due to a lack of financial resources, competent clerics, and methodical consistency. When a working strategy finally appeared, there was a decisive lack of time. The Lutheran clergy's dialogue with the local Orthodox population was hampered by their diverging worldviews and philosophical bases. All the while, Ingrians had confessional ties to Russia, which kept them in the latter's political sphere of influence for an entire century.

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