



Halle—Stockholm—Tobolsk and Back, Stronger Than Ever: Curt Friedrich von Wreech and his *Wahrhaftige und umständliche Historie von denen schwedischen Gefangenen* (1725/1728)

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ABSTRACT The article examines Curt Friedrich von Wreech's book *Wahrhaftige und umständliche Historie* (1725/28) as a document of a particular situation of religious contact that is inaugurated by military conflict. It analyzes the repercussing dynamics displayed by Pietist ideas being imported to Russian Siberia by Swedish Prisoners of War during the Great Nordic War (1700–1721), and being brought back to Sweden after the release of the prisoners in 1721. Pietism in Siberia consolidated by contact with Orthodox Christians, Muslim Tartars and 'pagan' religious traditions as practiced by the Khanty. Via a long-distance transmission of religious ideas and practices, Pietism in Sweden gained momentum that evoked severe countermeasures by the Orthodox Lutheran church. The case of Carolean Pietism also shows that a predominant religious tradition (in this case the Lutheran Orthodoxy of Sweden's state religion) might provide its heterodox counterpart with formal structures that might subversively be used as means of surviving, consolidation and even spreading.

KEYWORDS Pietism, Lutheran Orthodoxy, Siberia, Swedish Prisoners of War, Curt Friedrich von Wreech, August Hermann Francke, Charles XII, Model Forms, Khanty, Tartars

“I have more friends and patrons among soldiers than among clerics. The latter cannot stand the fact that I do not approve of their actions in all regards”¹ (August Hermann Francke)

Introduction: On Promoters of Religious Contact

There are identifiable factors in the history of religions that promote its dynamics, above all by promoting the emergence of situations of religious contact in which proponents of religious traditions meet. Trade is certainly one of the most eminent motivations, with merchants, manifesting economic interests, serving as its promotors. Still, there are others. Among these, political rulers displaying power over their subjects and forcing them by order into these situations—some of them in the most unlikely geographical locations—, are the most conspicuous. If the political aspect is combined with the military one in far-reaching campaigns, religious encounter is most likely to take place. Here, soldiers are the involuntary vessels, instruments and subjects of situations of religious contact. When it comes to phenomena of contact not only of individuals or small groups, but rather of considerable numbers of people of formerly distant religious traditions, some promoting element of this kind is surely to be found. As such, these forms of contact constitute a significant exception to the idea of a step-by-step spread of religious ideas, showing that on certain occasions, some geographical steps may be left out, allowing for the long-distance transmission of religious traditions that displays a particular kind of dynamics. [1]

Charles XII (1682–1718), Sweden’s heroic but enigmatic and most disputed king, was the main promotor of religious contact that involved Swedes in early modern times. Though himself closely associated with the Lutheran orthodoxy of Sweden’s state religion, he paradoxically proved to be a great sponsor of its main opponent, Pietism (see Liljegren 2000, 204), and, with absolute power, ‘allowed’ (or rather, forced) his subjects to come into contact with Catholics, orthodox Christians, Muslims, and even Shamanic tribes; Charles himself had the opportunity of studying another religious tradition in detail during his five-year exile in the Ottoman Empire. This contribution is mainly concerned with the question why, of all places, Swedish Pietism flourished in an orthodox, Muslim and ‘pagan’ environment in distant Russia Siberia while back in Sweden it had been persecuted by the Swedish Lutheran Church and Sweden’s king alike. Here, interrelated processes of stabilizing and dynamizing religious traditions play a salient role. [2]

Charles XII acted as a promotor involuntarily by failing to win the Great Northern War (1700–1721), and in particular the battle of Poltava (1709), for Sweden, thus causing a large number of Swedish soldiers and civilians from Sweden’s Baltic provinces to become prisoners of war and to be deported to Russian Siberia. About 30 000 civilians and soldiers, among them 2 300 officers, were held captive until 1721/1722. Only about 5 000 of them returned to their homeland, among them significantly more officers than private soldiers. The prisoners were distributed all over the country. A large number—about 800 people—were sent to the administrative and ecclesiastical capital city of Siberia, Tobolsk, where they founded a Swedish church and a school during the decade of their sojourn (see Montgomery 1995, 495).² They [3]

1 “Ich habe mehr Freunde und Gönner unter den Soldaten, als unter den Geistlichen. Diese können nicht vertragen, daß ich ihr Tun nicht in allen Stücken billige” (Motto taken from Klepper 1938, 37). All translations by the author unless indicated otherwise.

2 Pleijel even claims the establishment of a ‘Swedish state’ in Russia: “Während der Jahre der Gefangenschaft wurde nun eine Art schwedisches Staatswesen mitten in Russland und drüben in Sibirien geschaffen, das

did so in a Pietist³ attitude, using concepts and ideas developed by Pietism's main matador of that time, August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), who had famously founded an orphanage and a charity school that grew into an impressive social-educational institution (*Franckesche Stiftungen*),⁴ near the city of Halle.⁵ Ironically, having already forced the bloom of Pietism in Siberia, Charles XII posthumously also became the main promotor of the religious movement he rejected most severely in Sweden itself. For it was the Swedish prisoners of war who, returning from Siberia since 1722, “gave Swedish Pietism its second wind” (Green 2007, 63). But this was only one step taken in order to promote religious diversity in orthodox Lutheran Sweden. Charles himself had not been idle. Furthermore, returning from his exile in Bender, he had brought some Turks, Jews and Armenian Christians (who had claims to the state or single Swedes) to Sweden (see Findeisen 1992, 191).

One of these Soldiers of the Swedish army returning from Siberia is the German officer Curt Friedrich von Wreech, who published an eminent and exhaustive book on his and his comrades' captivity. The first segment of the Baroque title of this book is *Wahrhaftige und umständliche Historie von denen schwedischen Gefangenen in Rußland und Siberien*, which could be translated as “Truthful and Circumstantial History of the Swedish prisoners in Russia and Siberia.” The book and the particular circumstances and significance of its emergence in the religious context of its time are the main subjects of the following lines. Like many of his comrades, Wreech was involuntarily presented with the unique opportunity that was previously undreamt of, i.e., the chance to come into contact with peoples, cultures, and, not at least, religions located thousands of miles away from his homeland. At the same time, his own religious beliefs underwent a profound change, accompanied by intense self-reflection. In contrast to a mere scholarly observer, he, being a prisoner of war, also had to deal practically with the contact situation.⁶

For Wreech personally, his Russian and Siberian experiences provided him with a spiritual rebirth,⁷ leading him to (Hallensian) Pietism that evolved and consolidated during his 13 years of imprisonment in Russia, of which he spent eleven in the Siberian capital, Tobolsk. Wreech describes his experience of conversion as follows:

As Captain Tabbert by Divine Providence has kept among his possessions Johann Arndt's 'Wahres Christentum', Professor Francke's festival sermons as well as his 'Betrachtungen von Gnade und Wahrheit' and 'Christus der Kern der Heiligen Schrift', I at once, with our arrival at Klinow, took Arndt's 'Wahres Christentum' to my quarters and read it all the way through. To my unworthy self this was a very blessed reading. For the merciful and gracious GOD enlightened the eyes of my understanding more and more, so that I recognized my misery more and more

von einer besonderen schwedischen Zentraleitung in Moskau neben den russischen Behörden organisiert und geführt wurde. Wenigstens ebenso bedeutungsvoll wie die rein administrative war dabei die kirchliche Organisation unter den Kriegsgefangenen” (Pleijel 1935, 75).

3 On the concept of Pietism in scholarship see Wallmann (2005, 22–26).

4 On the not at last economic growth of the *Franckesche Stiftungen* in Francke's lifetime and beyond see Raabe (1996, 171–84).

5 On Francke's eschatology of schools as a *seminarium* ('universal seedling nursery') see Mejrup (2016, 429–39).

6 This corresponds to August Hermann Francke's aim to promote 'real improvements,' not at last with his great project of the *Franckeschen Stiftungen* (Obst 2013, 7).

7 This is well in accordance with a *topos* of the experience of Siberia, most famously expressed in the case of Dostoevsky, who considered Siberia as a 'place of moral rebirth' (Dahlmann 2009, 159).

profoundly and was, therefore, driven to many tears and much prayer. In sum, GOD the LORD converted me from darkness to his wonderful light.⁸

Reading the books mentioned here, especially given the circumstances the prisoners are in, is highly likely to promote the results as described by Wreech. Johann Arndt (1555–1621) may be considered the founding father (or, at least, major forefather) of Pietism as a religious movement and displayed a great impact as an author of edifying literature (Kaufmann 1998, 21). His most influential work *Vier Bücher vom Wahren Christentum* (1605–1610) emerged from his sermons and introduced mystical currents into protestant edifying writing. Arndt put great emphasis on repentance, the ‘crucifixion of the old creation’ via suffering. To be reborn in this way means to have changed completely in favor of an all-consuming love for God, which also turns towards one’s neighbor in humility, peacefulness, and gentleness (see Schmidt 1972, 20).⁹ Not at least, August Hermann Francke, having experienced a conversion in 1687, promoted a similar understanding of conversion and thoroughly changed his conduct of life afterwards. [7]

To Wreech, the conversion experience that changed his existence and turned him towards his neighbors was the central event of his life. Little is known about his biography. Wreech probably either hailed from Pomeranian nobility, or from the (Brandenburgian) Neumark. He was supposedly born in 1680; however, in older literature one can also find the life data of his father Joachim Friedrich von Wreech (1650–1724), who was a general in the Prussian Army. In 1707, Curt Friedrich became captain in the (German) Albedyhl’s Dragoon regiment of the Swedish Army (see Wolke 2018, 91). In the same year, he married Johanna Juliane von Kottwitz. They had a son, Curt Joachim, who was born in 1708 and later joined the Latin School at Halle (where, in 1723, he became subject of an exchange of letters between Francke and his father for misconduct). Wreech, along with nearly the entire Dragoon regiment, was taken prisoner by the Russians on February 16, 1709, about four months prior to the decisive battle at Poltava.¹⁰ This made him an involuntary participant of Czar Peter’s triumphal procession in Moscow in December 1709, famously reported by Voltaire in his *History of Charles XII*. Having been ill for five months and suffering maltreatment from his captors (see Wreech 1728, 7–8), Wreech was first imprisoned in Zevsky, then in Klinow, and, finally, from 1711 onwards, in Tobolsk, where he remained for ten years until 1721. [8]

In Klinow, caused by his converting reading experience, he underwent the experience of rebirth that became groundbreaking for his time in Siberia and for the rest of his life. Pietist [9]

8 “Wie nun der Capitain Tabbert durch Göttliche Schickung unter seinen Sachen Johann Arnds wahres Christentum. Herrn Prof. Franckens Fest-Predigten, ingleichen seine Betrachtungen von Gnade und Wahrheit und den Tractat Christus der Kern Heil. Schrift, conserviret hatte; so nahm ich gleich nach unserer Ankunft in Clinoff Joh. Arnds wahres Christentum zu mir in mein Quartier, und las es durch. Dieses war mir Unwürdigen ein sehr gesegnetes Lesen. Denn der erbarmende und überaus gütige GOTT erleuchtete mir die Augen meines Verständnißes ie mehr und mehr, so, daß ich mein Elend immer gründlicher erkannte, und dadurch zu vielem Weinen und Beten getrieben wurde. In Summa GOTT der HERR bekehrte mich von der Finsterniß zu seinem wunderbahren Licht” (1728, 14; in the following, Wreech’s book is quoted in this edition by referring to page numbers in brackets). Wreech here refers to Francke’s works *Betrachtung von Gnade und Wahrheit* (1694) and *Christus Der Kern Heiliger Schrift* (1702).

9 Schmidt also characterizes the difference and possible point of conflict between Arndt and Luther as the modification of the *sola fide*: “Der Glaube trat zurück hinter die Liebe, und wenn Arndt vom Glauben sprach, dann nicht wie Luther so, daß sich der Mensch am zugesprochenen Verheißungswort von der Sündenvergebung festhielt, sondern so, daß er bei sich selbst einkehrte und den Sabbat der Seele feierte” (1972, 22).

10 See Charles’ own report on the incident in his letter to his sister Ulrike Eleonore from March, 31st, 1709 in Carlson (1894, 94).

rebirth emphasized the importance of outward action. At first, Wreech organized conventicle meetings at Tobolsk, where the writings of August Hermann Francke and Johann Arndt's *Wahres Christentum* were commonly read and discussed (Pleijel 1935, 79; Wreech 1728, 122). He also co-founded an educational center: a school in the wake of the *Franckesche Stiftungen* at Halle which seems to have enjoyed some reputation, as even noble Russians sent their children there. The close connection to Francke in Halle was evident from the very beginning of his Siberian enterprise.¹¹ In 1713, Wreech and other officers wrote a letter to Francke thanking him for his spiritual and material support, especially through the provision of religious literature, to the prisoners (Wreech 1728, 33–38; Pleijel 1935, 80). Books were of major importance, as Halle displayed its influence in the Carolean army mainly via books (Laasonen 1998, 16; compare Wreech 1728, 251). Not only for this reason, reading ability was spiritually vital and proper teaching was required.¹² Wreech managed to buy a schoolhouse and to expand the school gradually, reaching a total of 128 pupils and teachers by 1720 (Wreech 1728, 802). When the school was closed in 1721, it still had 73 pupils and 20 educators (Winter 1953, 307). Returning from imprisonment in 1722, Wreech travelled, via Petersburg and Stockholm, back to Germany, where he visited Francke in Halle.¹³ Later, he became the private tutor of Count Johann Erdmann von Promnitz (1719–1785) at Sorau in Lower Lausitz (Wreech 1728, 852).¹⁴ It was during this time that his book was printed, first in 1725 and, finally, in a second revised and enhanced edition, in 1728. In the same year, he once again visited Stockholm. In 1735, he was still in Sorau. In the year 1736, he is reported to have met Count Zinzendorf and to have enrolled at a comparatively high age at the University of Halle to study law (though this might actually have been his son Curt Joachim). Having outlived August Hermann Francke by 30 years, Wreech died on September 22, 1757, approximately 40 years after another great promotor of Pietism, i.e., Charles XII.

The Interrelation of Dynamics and Stability in a Long-distance Situation of Contact

If Pietism is indeed the final attempt to maintain Protestant Christianity as a religion proper (see Bonhoeffer 1966, 258), then the examination of its various ways of promotion and its contacts is a matter of significant interest in Religious Studies.¹⁵ As the case of Wreech and his Tobolsk comrades shows, captivity of war provides the scholar interested in situations of religious contact with yet another significant example of “long-distance-transmission” (Zürcher 1999) of religious ideas—as opposed to gradual diffusion by near-contact expansion.¹⁶ The

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11 On Francke's religious, political and economic interest in Russia and the East see Winter (1953, 51–52).

12 On the reading ability of the Swedish common soldiers in Charles' XII army (about 50 % of a regiment) see Gudmundsson (2014b, 218).

13 See the report of Johann Christian Schmidt in his autobiographical account *Der Reußische Robinson* (written in 1727, first printed in 1781) (Schmidt 2011, 77).

14 In this capacity, he gained some dubious afterlife in German literature: in Leopold Schefer's *Graf Promnitz—Der Letzte des Hauses* (1842), and in Jakob Wassermann's 1921 story *Die Geschichte des Grafen Erdmann Promnitz*. Here, Wreech, failing to educate his pupil properly is described as a *Genießling*, a 'smooth Epicurean,' a 'Herrenhutian showing moral cowardice' who dies of choking by a fish bone he had devoured in the dark of night (Wassermann 2017, 153–72).

15 On the emergence of Pietism and pietist theology in theological controversies within the Lutheran Church see Gierl (2019). Gierl describes this process as a “creation of theological ideas and concepts out of communicational procedures” (2019, 145).

16 On this concept see Neelis (2011, 4–7). Here, Neelis examines and modifies the concept first coined by Eric Zürcher.

transmission was triggered and promoted as a result of decisions of the political authority. For this transmission, the formality of orthodox Lutheran faith and the Pietist economic, social and missionary networks of correspondence in Northern and Eastern Europe serve as catalysts. Therefore, it supplements the concept with additional aspects, i.e., on the one hand, the *repercussion* of religious ideas on their regions of origin. These *repercussions* are developed (or rather, intensified and solidified) through contact situations that occur at a distance. The connections to Siberia became two-directional ‘highways’ for the spread of Pietist ideas and practices. On the other hand, it contributes to the analysis of the *forms* of transmission, in this case Pietism travelling together with its interreligious opponent (orthodox Lutheranism) and using its *formal aspects* as a means of spreading and consolidating. Here, the journey back to its origin is exemplified through the trajectory of Hallensian Pietism alongside the orthodox-Lutheran Swedish army to Siberia, its rise and consolidation there, and its return to Sweden with the reawakened officers and soldiers, thus reimporting Pietist ideas to a strictly Lutheran country with a degree of intensity that exceeds mere gradual progression.

The dynamic interplay of intensifying stabilization and solidification processes in the case of Siberian Pietism and its environment¹⁷ is particularly noteworthy. This is especially true when considering the religious history of Sweden in the following centuries. The repercussion of (Siberian) Pietism to Sweden was highly influential, even extending to matters of state and politics.¹⁸ Its results are manifest in religious legislation. Though Pietism had previously already been subject of banishing edicts under Charles XI and Charles XII, with the return of the prisoners of war to their homeland, post-war Sweden after 1721 could not but promote yet another edict of banishment: the Act of Conventicles (*Konventikelplakatet*) from 1726.¹⁹ This parliamentary act of the Swedish ‘Age of Liberty’²⁰ forbids religious meetings, i.e., Pietist conventicles of any kind outside the Lutheran Church, except for family devotionals in sufficiently ordered (closed) spaces (see Ljungberg 2019, 44). The act imposed fines on participants and exiled organizers. It marked the first high-water point of the Church’s struggle, whose privileges had to be re-negotiated in the light of the new constitution (Ljungberg 2019, 34), against the Pietist movement. It was in effect for no less than 132 years until 1858 (Nordbäck 2004, 362). These gatherings of believers, where they engage in an edifying common reading of the Bible, expressing the idea of an *ecclesiola in ecclesia* as recommended in Philipp Jacob Spener’s *Pia Desideria*,²¹ are considered to be the major threat to the official church, not only

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17 On the complementary interplay of the interrelated emergence of (Protestant) orthodoxy and Pietism see Wallmann (2005, 31). To Wallmann, it can be shown that “die ‘neue’ Frömmigkeit nicht im Gegensatz zu einer ‘toten Orthodoxie’ oder auch als ihr zeitlich folgende Reaktion entstand, sondern gleichzeitig und komplementär zu der sich erst ausbildenden Orthodoxie.” The same point is stressed by Gierl (2019).

18 On the relation of Lutheran orthodoxy and conservative Pietism after 1720 see Nordbäck (2004).

19 On the ‘fateful’ act that ‘dealt the deathblow to conservative and Church-friendly Pietism in Sweden’ see Pleijel (1935, 148).

20 On the political change from the Absolutism of a Great Power to the Age of Liberty of a minor power, the sudden change from a major Power to one of the weakest European states Roberts 2002. On the seemingly paradoxical fact that persecution of spiritual individuality occurred in a (at least more) politically liberal atmosphere see Ljungberg (2019, 47): “It might seem paradoxical that a political constitution that allowed an increasing number of subjects to have their voices heard created more obstacles for a Pietist movement that demanded more power be given to the laity.”

21 According to Werner Bellardi, the conventicles are at the very heart of not only Spener’s pietist reform program: “Man kann mit Recht sagen, daß die collegia pietatis, die weithin als das Schibboleth des Pietismus überhaupt angesehen wurden, das Herzstück des Spenerschen Pietismus darstellen: in ihnen schließt sich der ganze Gehalt seines Reformprogramms zusammen” (Bellardi 1994, 1). Bellardi quotes a contemporary text by Johann Ernst Schubert that answers the question *Quid est Pietista?* correspondingly by stating: *Nihil aliud quam homo, qui opinionem de necessitate et utilitate conventiculorum probat et tuetur* (1994).

in Sweden.²² Not least, the *collegia* or conventicles as an actually realized part of the Pietist reform program provided the layman with the opportunity of claiming their rights derived from the reformatory program as such, namely to learn and to discuss God's Word without clerical mediation: within these gatherings, all participants had equal rights to criticize and to preach (Bellardi 1994, 7).

But even the far-reaching act from 1726 was not considered sufficient by the Lutheran orthodoxy to counter the Pietist peril. Soon after its issue, the Conventicle Act was even surpassed by a Diet of 1734, initiated by the later archbishop of Uppsala, Jacob Benzelius (1683–1747). This Diet prohibited all 'godless doctrines,' and was ultimately trumped by the 'Decree on Religion' from 1735 which allowed the state to take legal action if only the suspicion of heterodoxy was aroused (Nordbäck 2004, 55). As such, the post-war decrees show the continuity of Swedish religious rigorous inner policy. This policy remained unchanged during the period of absolutism (1680–1718) and into the early years of the Age of Liberty (1719–1772).²³ It severed the connection with Halle and inflicted severe damage on a more conservative, pro-Church Pietism (Montgomery 1995, 506–7)—but again, in turn, promoted the rise of a more radical form of Pietism.²⁴ It was manifested in the person of Johann Konrad Dippel (1673–1734),²⁵ who had earlier been arrested for criticizing the anti-pietist politics of Charles XII and who came to Sweden in 1726,²⁶ and in the person of Eric Tolstadius (1693–1759, see Nordbäck 2004, 263–68), the 'Swedish Francke' who also gained prominence in Finland (Laasonen 1995). In the same way moderate Pietism was suppressed, the radical form of Pietism gained ground, so that the years between 1730 and 1740 became the 'decade of radical Pietism in Sweden' (Pleijel 1935, 198).

As such, this case provides us with an interesting example of the relation and the interplay between dynamics and stability in the history of religions, triggered by contact situations. The rise of Carolean Pietism might be compared to the movement of a pendulum. It shows how a religious tradition, starting from humble beginnings, gains momentum via long-distance transmission, solidifies and stabilizes during this process, and displays its newly gained dynamics by coming back to its starting point, forcing its opponent to solidify and to stabilize in an intensified manner.

22 It was throughout the Protestant world that conventicles were deemed suspicious and considered as a severe threat to the official religious order. Francke's own conventicle, the *Collegium Philobiblicum* caused a severe reaction by the officials of Leipzig, the place of his residence in the late 1680ties. In 1690, the conventicles were forbidden after Francke had left the city for Erfurt, and, finally, in 1692, Halle (Glauchau) (see Jung 2005, 15–16).

23 In general, it seems that only words were exchanged, as the church now officially prayed for "our blessed liberty" (compare Roberts 2002, 59).

24 On the differentiation and relation of conservative and radical Pietism see Wallmann (2010).

25 On the significant dependence of Dippel's radical Pietism on the orthodox resistance see Goldschmidt (2001, 182–83): "Obwohl Dippel in seiner radikalpietistischen Theologie zum wohl schärfsten Kritiker der Orthodoxie wurde, ist er selbst von dieser teilweise abhängig. [...] Auch die Art und Weise, wie er seine theologischen Auseinandersetzungen führte, hat ihr Vorbild in der orthodoxen Streitkultur. Wie die Vertreter der Orthodoxie übte Dippel harsche Kritik an fremden theologischen Systemen, die bis zu persönlichen Beleidigungen gesteigert werden konnte. [...] [A]uch nach Dippels Hinwendung zum Pietismus blieb die Orthodoxie für seine theologische Entwicklung wichtig. Sie besaß als Gegenüber und Gegensatz für seine Theologie eine wichtige Rolle, von der er seine Meinung abheben konnte. Sie diente ihm als dunkler Hintergrund, auf dem sich seine Lehre hell abzeichnete. Die orthodoxe Polemik forderte Dippel geradezu heraus, seine Theologie stärker zu profilieren. [...] Für die weitere Radikalisierung seiner Theologie war die orthodoxe Polemik durchaus wichtig, weil sich Dippels Meinungen gleichsam dialogisch entwickelte."

26 Hilding Pleijel intensely describes the arrival of Dippel in Sweden as an event of far-reaching consequences for Swedish Pietism (1935, 181–99).

Lutherans and Pietists in the Swedish Empire

Starting with the ‘Protestant hero’ Gustavus Adolphus, the Swedish kings of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century inherited religious honor and duty as the protectors and promoters of Lutheran faith, as well as the widely acknowledged claim to be the champion of the Protestant course.²⁷ On Carolus’ father, A. F. Upton writes: “The first duty of a king was to uphold true religion, by setting an example of godliness himself and ensuring that his subjects followed it. Charles XI took this very seriously, for after all, the penalties that God might inflict on the kingdom if he did not were dire” (Upton 1998, 216). As a consequence, one of the Swedish Empire’s most salient characteristics, as Michael Roberts put it, “was a monolithic Lutheranism” (1973a, 1) whose apparent immunity to the grievous theological controversies of the time reinforced Sweden’s claim to be the champion of the Protestant world (1973b, 135). It contributed significantly to providing cohesion and stability despite the ethnic and linguistic divides in the Empire, above all between Sweden proper and Finland (Upton 1998, 256). As such, the solidification of the Swedish Church as a Lutheran monolith went hand in hand with the establishment of Absolutism in Sweden under Charles XI since 1680, promoting the exaltation of the king to a ‘God on Earth.’²⁸ At least from the establishment of a new church law in 1686 onward, state authorities and the clergy estate acted as a unified defense-front against perceived threats of established Lutheranism.²⁹ No wonder, then, that the purity of the true faith was a major point of governmental concern.

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Only if challenged by situations of contact, the monolithic solidarity of the Lutheran faith in Sweden could prevail. Accordingly, the Lutheran claim can be observed in interreligious contact, particularly in situations such as the clash of Sámi shamanism and Lutheran mission in the far north of the Empire.³⁰ However, due to Sweden’s geographical position, mostly intrareligious contact within the broader field of Christianity—that is, with Orthodox, Catholic, and heterodox Protestant denominations—prominently shapes Swedish Lutheranism. Michael Roberts characterized it as follows: “Throughout an age of sectarian division and theological strife the Swedish Church remained singularly tranquil, and in the monolithic Lutheran fabric of the state scarcely a hair-crack was to be detected” (Roberts 1973b, 132).³¹

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Pietism was by far the most important of these denominations, gaining ground in Sweden as an opposition to the official church faith. Before Pietism, Sweden had very little experience of religious deviance or pluralism (Ljungberg 2017, 242). It may well be described as part of an all-European and even world-wide revolutionary phenomenon criticizing the hard and dry teaching of the official churches and institutionalized denominations.³² In general, Pietism

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27 On the development of Gustavus Adolphus’ reputation as the champion of Protestantism in historiography see Oredsson (1994).

28 On the establishment of Absolutism in Sweden see Barudio (1976, here: 49). On the “theocratic views of kingship” and Sweden’s theocratic ideology see Olli (2008, 464–65).

29 “The Carolingian kings, the archbishops, the Stockholm consistory, and the cathedral chapters were all strongly opposed to Pietism in this early period and worked in varying degrees to suppress the potential threat that this movement posed to religious uniformity in Sweden” (Green 2007, 65).

30 Beliefs of the Sámi were considered to be blasphemy, leading to executions of the practitioners of Sámi worship (see Olli 2008, 462). See on the Pietist critique of the mission of the ‘Lapps’ (Pleijel 1935, 157–8).

31 Concluding his article, Roberts characterizes the Swedish state religion as follows: “Swedish Lutheranism developed a vigorous inner life, an effective organization, a social authority and a self-assurance in its relations with the state which set it apart from all other Lutheran churches. It did no doubt inhibit or stifle much that might have been fruitful and good. It was narrow, authoritarian and intolerant. But its organization, its practice, its social attitudes, were excellently well adapted to the very special kind of society to which it had to minister” (Roberts 1973b, 173).

32 See—not only for the case of Judaism—Hundert (2006, 176). Also compare Wallmann (2005, 21).

stressed personal piety rather than religious dogmatics (compare Gierl 2019, 139). However, instead of openly challenging orthodoxy, Pietism diffused into Sweden more subtly and more subversively—and that even with the help of the official church. Most significantly, in Sweden, Pietists in general did not identify themselves as such, but rather used to stress their conformity with the official teachings (Ljungberg 2019, 35). “The ideas of German Pietism, which were filtering into Sweden at the end of the century were in part a protest against a formalistic faith, and the Church under Charles XI made no room for such deviations. The ordinary churchgoer, on the other hand, may well have appreciated this formality. He knew that if he followed the rules, he would be left alone. The Swedish Church did not seek to make windows into man’s souls” (Upton 1998, 218). Furthermore, the clergy obviously did not expect too much of its flock and taught a very clear and simple doctrine of authority that was unlikely to cause confusion: established authority is from God, he who sets himself against authority sets himself against God’s decree and voluntarily refuses to live in peace and security” (Upton 1998, 253). “[...] [W]here the king led, the church gladly followed, not doubting that it was the work of God that was going forward in Germany or Poland or Russia” (Roberts 1973b, 136).

However, for many reasons, it was this severely criticized blunt formalism of orthodox Lutheranism that promoted the spread of Pietism. On one hand, Pietism arose as an opponent to demarcate against. On the other hand, it emerged as an individually empty (model) form the individualized and experience-based religiosity of Pietism could *inscribe* itself into—without being bothered as long as it did not become public, for example, via suspicious prayer meetings. Pietist theology, in the persons of Spener and Francke, by means of the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* aimed at using the official church as a Trojan horse (though not by that name and supposedly not with the intention to do damage) for the Pietist conventicles. Moreover, Pietism at first discreetly adapted itself via the persons of its first Swedish protagonists to the structures of the official Church (Jakubowski-Tiessen 2014, 22). [17]

Therefore, the individualist, or rather, group-based approach to religion, its “anarchical tendency to a loose congregationalism,” and its “impatience with the regular routines of parochial piety,” in short, its opposition to a “collective faith suited to a collective village society” (Roberts 1973b, 152) (that was, not at last, the very basis of the Swedish military, see Åberg 1973, 272) made Pietism a dangerous opponent to state and church alike. Consequently, the writings of Johann Arndt, Philipp Jacob Spener, Gottfried Arnold and August Hermann Francke were put on the index by the censors of the official church (Jakubowski-Tiessen 2014, 22). The Pietist pattern of meeting in conventicles apart from Sunday worships, where, based on the Lutheran idea of the priesthood of all believers, psalms were sung, the Bible was read and explained, and prayers were offered, became the “primary source of tension between the authorities and the Pietists, as these meetings took place without the approval and mediation of the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities” (Green 2007, 67).³³ As most Pietists well considered themselves to remain within the official church, but also claimed independence from state supervision, the point of tension to the temporal powers becomes obvious. The Pietist *communio sanctorum* as a conventicle of voluntary nature, according to Spener, is exempted [18]

33 Misleading the simple folk by unapproved religious teaching was even considered as blasphemy: “The attitude of the authorities are revealed in several cases of blasphemy as the persons accused were said to have ‘upset the true believers and misled the simple minded’ (*förargat de rätttroende och vilselett de enfaldiga*). The damage caused by influencing the religious opinions of others was a real threat to the official Lutheran religion” (Olli 2008, 462).

from the *ius in sacra* of the state, and therefore, well beyond the state's competence (Bellardi 1994, 15).

The introduction of Pietism to Sweden, however, was performed with reference to the King's office as the promoter of true Faith. Again, the formal ideas and structures of Sweden's state religion proved to be instrumental. Pietism's main transmitters were civil servants and other government officials, providing the movement with a strong lay character (Green 2007, 64). Some members of the clergy were, nevertheless, involved. One of its prominent figures, the former *Feldsuperintendent* of the Swedish army, Olof Ekman (1639–1713), published a book on the reform of the Swedish Church in 1680. Its title is *Sjönödz-Löffte* "Vow in Distress" (*Seenotgelübde*) (see on this work Nordbäck 2004, 234–47). To some, the book presents the Swedish version of Spener's *Pia desideria*, that is, in turn, a preface to Arndt's works. Ekman's work is devoted to the king, Charles XI, and the queen, Ulrike Eleonora (1653–1693)—although it criticizes the state of the Lutheran Church harshly and furthermore claims that there are no true Christians in Sweden (see Claesson 2011, 165–66; see also Nordbäck 2004, 235). Ekman introduced to Falun an early form of Pietism, albeit without establishing conventicles and still believing in the state as an instrument to improve piety (Claesson 2011, 175).

However, the key figure in the history of Pietism in Sweden was the king himself. Personally, Charles XII—believing to be solely responsible to God and to not be in need of any temporal advice—"read the Bible every day of his life" (Findeisen 1992, 78). His interest in religion is well documented, his personal beliefs, however, are not easy to define. He also "became keenly interested in the linguistic and historical discussions connected with bible-studies after 1715" (Hatton 1968, 13, see also 217).³⁴ Nevertheless, among his first actions as king was one of religious rigidity as it was directed against the Reformed Church of foreign subjects: Dutch subjects were forbidden to visit the private Chapel of the resident of the States General (1968, 85). His personal piety seems to have impressed strangers, who "noted the regularity with which he attended prayers and took part in the hymn-singing morning and night" (1968, 173). From his mother's side, who headed a small pious circle and corresponded with Philipp Jakob Spener (see Pleijel 1935, 24–27), he appears to have been influenced by Pietists ideas (Montgomery 1995, 492).³⁵ In later times, above all after the drawback at Poltava, Charles XII was also described as indifferent to religion or at least more tolerant to religious diversity (Findeisen 1992, 227); due to his involuntary sojourn in the Ottoman Empire; he was even regarded as being influenced by Islamic virtues (abstinence, truthfulness to one's word), but also as sympathizing with the Pietist movement (1968, 85 and 431).

The latter assertion might be subject to some doubt. Even in the midst of his long-term military campaign in Poland, Charles XII found it necessary to make the attitude of the Swedish Empire in matters of faith and heterodox opinions perfectly clear. In the Edict of Lusíc from 1706, the King confirmed earlier edicts of his father concerning the Pietist movement (see Ljungberg 2017, 53). The king was theologically supported by his loyal general superintendent (*Generalsuperintendent*) of Swedish Pomerania, who had previously been a friend of Spener's but had now become a fervent opponent of the Pietist movement, the Lutheran Orthodox theologian Johann Friedrich Mayer (1650–1712), who, by consistently attacking

34 Charles also acted as a devout philologist by promoting the usage and the purity of the Swedish language (see Hatton 1968, 432).

35 Spener's Pietism, however, is characterized by Pleijel as basically posing no threat to the established religion: "Der durch Spener bestimmte Pietismus hatte einen irenischen und weichen Charakter und konnte daher leicht an die praktischen Strömungen des schwedischen Frömmigkeitslebens anknüpfen, ohne dass es auf grösseren Widerstand von Seiten der orthodoxen Kirchenbehörde stiess" (Pleijel 1935, 32).

the Pietists on every occasion (see Gierl 2019, 141), promoted his own orthodox Lutheran university at Greifswald instead of the Pietist stronghold at Halle.³⁶ As a result, Pietism was forbidden in the realm.³⁷ To his great discontent, the king declared that he had heard of the presence of ‘a great number of erring minds’ (*ein grosser Theil Irr-Geister*), who weakened the foundations of the Evangelical teachings in Sweden. The Swedish youth was in danger of traveling to the academic centers of these minds (i.e. the city of Halle, where a number of Swedish students studied with Francke since 1693, Montgomery 1995, 493). It were, in fact, two of these students who began to organize the first conventicles in Karlskrona (Green 2007, 62–63). As a countermeasure, the king ordered to survey and punish the enthusiasts most severely (*auf das schärffste*), i.e., by expulsion if they were foreigners and by loss of office and titles of honor if they were indigenous Swedish subjects. Moreover, to prevent the infiltration of Pietism into Sweden, the king introduced an office of surveillance of the academic youth. Before going to universities outside of Sweden, the students had to pass an exam of belief and were not allowed to study at German universities where the presence of Pietism was suspected (*Daß sich keener des studirens halber auf denen der Pietistereyen wegen in Argwohn gehaltenen und berüchtigsten Teutschen Universitäten aufhalten solle*). Another exam was due when the students returned to Sweden. If they were to fail, there would be no offices or posts in the Swedish empire for them whatsoever (quoted from Lüning 1721, 59–61).

The Soldier’s Faith

As strange as it may seem, the rise and spread of individualist and seemingly introverted Pietism in Sweden was closely related to the military. On second thought, however, it might well be the case that the Pietist maxim of education as indeed practiced by Francke in his *Glauchasche Anstalten*, i.e., its foremost aim to ‘break the pupil’s natural will’ (*Brechung des natürlichen Eigenwillens*) (see Kuhlmann 2013, here 26–32), might somehow resonate with military principles of the Carolean army.³⁸ [22]

By discipline, cohesion, training and in matters of reinforcement, the Swedish army was widely regarded as the best of its time. It was drilled to take the initiative even when outnumbered in most battles and was capable of executing elaborate offensive tactical moves even in difficult situations (Wolke 2018, 34). The Caroleans were particularly praised for their outstanding morale, their obedience to orders,³⁹ and, based on that, for their revolutionary battle tactics (shock tactics) that could only be successfully performed by a highly disciplined, properly trained and motivated troop (see Wolke 2018, 34).⁴⁰ Moreover, the cohesion of the prevailing regiments was built upon mutual trust, as the companies consisted of persons (of- [23]

36 Pleijel characterizes Meyer as a highly talented, but fanatically orthodox Pietist renegade who partly out of personal motives became the sworn enemy of Spener (see 1935, 35).

37 On the edict see Pleijel (1935, 48). He comments: “Dieses, sicherlich von Mayer angeregte, sog. Lusuc Edikt erhielt keine direkte praktische Bedeutung; es zeigt jedoch deutlich, dass der König fest entschlossen war, alle pietistischen Strömungen schon im Keim zu ersticken” (1935, 48)

38 On the religiosity of the Swedish army in times of Sweden’s *stormaktstiden* from Gustav Adolph to Charles XII see David Gudmundsson’s seminal study, see Gudmundsson (2014a).

39 At least in theory, the obedience to orders in the Swedish army relied closely to the supposed or expressed interests of the king, more specifically the ‘King in Council’s interests (see Perlestam 2012, 321–22).

40 See also Gudmundsson (2014a, 45): “Den svenska taktiken krävde e enorm disciplin och tilltro till stridsmetoden. Att som fotsoldat avancera under eld utan att få besvara den måste ha varit enormt påfrestande. Men han visste också att när man väl avlossat sina egna salvor och fick angripa med blanka vapen, var det få motståndare som stod kvar. Det är delvis i ljuset av denna utsatthet vi måste se den religiösa förkunnelsens betydelse—i att bidra till att soldaterna förmåddens gå till strid och avancera mot fienden överhuvudtaget.”

ficers, NCOs and soldiers) who lived in the same region, sharing activities of everyday life, such as going to church together (Wolke 2018, 35).⁴¹ All of these qualitatively distinguishing characteristics of the Swedish army were significantly influenced by religion, specifically in the form of stout Lutheranism, which was deliberately included into the training and the maintenance of the army.

In the army, religion was an institutionalized factor. Even more, the military itself was religiosified to a great degree: “The baptism of fire was important. Before it, a soldier was just a man in a uniform. The warrior was born on the battlefield after his first battle” (Sarkamo 2010, 40). In this religiosified army, the impact of the religious expert was of paramount importance. Luther was considered the belligerent role model for the Evangelical Church (Gudmundsson 2018, 831). Accordingly, as stated by most historians of the Carolean Age, the role of the field-preachers in the Swedish army cannot be overestimated (Åberg 1973, 272).⁴² Regarding his civilian colleagues, the primary duty of the military Lutheran minister was to preach (Gudmundsson 2014b, 215).⁴³ The soldiers were the subjects of constant treatment by the preachers: service and sermons were held in any weather and under any circumstances; and cancelling the sermon due to severe weather condition (such as in the cold Ukrainian winter of 1708/1709) was a matter that was much noteworthy (Findeisen 1992, 116). “Chaplains’ regular duties primarily consisted of holding regimental prayers twice a day and divine services three times a week, that is once on Fridays and twice on Sundays and other holidays” (Gudmundsson 2014b, 214).⁴⁴ Even immediately before the Battle of Poltava, for which time was the decisive factor in the Swedish battle plan, an hour of communal prayer was considered to be indispensable (Findeisen 1992, 123). Moreover, there were constant examinations conducted by the chaplains. Just as back home in Sweden, every soldier wishing to receive Communion had to confess and pass the catechism exam before being allowed to partake in the Eucharist (Gudmundsson 2014b, 214), a practice that required learning and constant repetition, supposedly by reading and learning by heart Luther’s *Small Catechism* and prayer books.⁴⁵

Through preaching and prayer, the soldiers were offered multiple possibilities for identifying themselves: as a confessionally correct Christian, as a national Swedish subject—with Sweden being the New Israel (particularly in times of need, see Gudmundsson 2018, 833)—and as a Christian soldier.⁴⁶ Accordingly, in the Swedish army, the tradition of the godly

41 Wolke also lists the commonly cooked meals and commonly built tents as a main factor of cohesion of the prevailing companies.

42 See also Hatton on the important role of the chaplains in the Swedish army: “Each regiment had its pastor and chaplains who, as well as acting as welfare officers in general and facilitating contact with home and families, helped to build up morale of the soldiers by preaching reliance on God’s almighty providence. The dedication of the Swedish army to the service of God before battles by prayers and singing of the hymns familiar from home and childhood served, if only in the second place, a military as well as a religious purpose” (1968, 165; compare also Gudmundsson 2014b, 213).

43 On the general Pietist critique of the one-sided emphasis of the training of Lutheran clerics on preaching see Wallmann (2005, 72 and 81). Spener considered orthodox preachers as the major threat for the church (2005, 100).

44 Compare also Wolke (2018, 18): “Religious control over officers and soldiers was, of course, also strict. Both Charles XI and Charles XII were of the opinion that all men in uniform should be Christian models. How that should be achieved was stipulated in the military legislation of 1683. Every morning and evening sermons should be held in the camp and everyone was obliged to be present when the trumpets and the drums called. When prayers were read, everyone should fall on his knees.”

45 There was a constant need in the Swedish army for the *Small Catechism* to be reprinted and distributed among the soldiers, preferably in combination with a hymnbook (see Gudmundsson 2014b, 218).

46 Gudmundsson coins the term of an *erbjuden identifikation* (offered identification) provided by the Military chaplains to the soldiers (see 2014a, 29, 221 and 230).

army was supposed to live on (Roberts 1973b, 136). The soldiers were informed about the army's task, which was, not least of all, spiritual—specifically, delivering the Lord's punishment upon his opponents, and marching under the leadership of the new Moses in the search for the promised land, thus fulfilling God's will by conquering lands and killing enemies. However, a tendency toward war-mongering was not evident in the sermons, as the military sermon was less dependent on corresponding biblical texts, above all from the Old Testament, than one might assume. The sermon was directed more at the individual's soul than towards an outward aggressive aim. As David Gudmundsson put it: "Military sermons were not distinguished either by simplicity or complexity, but followed standard homiletical methods. The preacher's aim was not to create murderous soldiers, but to provide consolation. The soldiers should find confidence that their service was a righteous calling. The soldier who died in his vocation could die with a clear conscience" (Gudmundsson 2014b, 216). It is an interesting aspect of the Swedish campaign against Russia, however, that the Russian Orthodox Church was far less considered to be a 'confessional other' than the 'papists.' Rather, the Russians in sermons were presented as pious, but ignorant and superstitious Christians (see Gudmundsson 2014a, 232). Accordingly, in the Russian campaign, the religious struggle was less focused on the manifest outward enemy, but rather on the virtual threat 'within' the Soldier's mind – and, ultimately, with regard to the challenge of Pietism, within the army itself.

In any case, the creation of confident, obliging and disciplined soldiers, ready and willing to face the efforts of long-distant campaigns and the horrors of battle, advancing on the enemy in good order and withholding fire until "the white in the eye" could be seen (as required by Swedish military doctrine, see Wolke 2018, 36), was not at last the result of the chaplain's work. In fact, the accomplishments of the Swedish army, particularly during the initial years of the war, were outstanding, thus proving that the slogan *Gott mit uns* was by no means an empty assertion (see Findeisen 1992, 98–99). It might as well be argued that the chaplains provided the army with the rituals necessary to prepare the soldiers for dying as a result of God's unfathomable will, "setting them into trance with drums, pipes and lofty speeches" (Sarkamo 2014, 66). While common hymn singing held significance, it was not characterized by encouragements to revenge or aggression. Instead, the hymns that soldiers sang were those familiar from their homes and could, thus, "help provide some sense of normality to military life and all its hardships. In the morning and evening hymns and in the common Sunday hymns, soldiers could find a connection to those left at home" (Gudmundsson 2014b, 217).

It should be noted that the armies of that time, due to the emphasis on obedience, discipline and order, were structurally open doors for religious influence, a fact well-recognized by the religious agents. Though he might not have displayed as much influence on the military chaplains of the Swedish army, Pietist patriarch August Hermann Francke clearly recognized the importance of the office as a tool of influence to promote his spiritual aims. It was another army of the time in which his efforts regarding the chaplains proved to be fruitful, i.e., the Prussian army.⁴⁷ During their meeting at Halle in 1713, Francke and the Prussian king Frederick William I, eager to cooperate to their mutual benefit, "negotiated an arrangement for provision of military chaplains to the Prussian army. The king gained a steady supply

47 See Wallmann (2005, 133): "Multiplikatoren des hallischen Pietismus innerhalb Preußens waren vor allem die *Feldprediger*, deren Stellen mit dem Ausbau des preußischen Heeres sprunghaft vermehrt wurden. Feldprediger mußten in Halle studiert haben. Wiederum wurden die besseren Pfarrstellen des Landes nur an ehemalige Feldprediger vergeben. Auf diese Weise floß der Geist des hallischen Pietismus auf dem Umweg über das preußische Heer, dessen Mentalität er mitformte, schließlich in das allgemeine Kirchenwesen ein."

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of reliable, morale-boosting chaplains, whereas the Pietist movement won an eager and often desperately receptive audience among soldiers for its message of salvation and renewal” (Bergen 2004, 9). Thus, via Halle-trained military chaplains, Francke was able to promote his aim to “include the Prussian army in his sphere of influence” (Lehmann 2004, 127), a goal that was, by ultimate intention, surely not restricted to Prussia alone: perhaps Francke had something similar in mind with regard to the Swedish army when he was visiting the Swedish king in his camp at Alttranstädt.

The Carolean army, however, was characterized by yet another indispensable element that considerably contributed to its religious eminence. The idea of the Godly army was additionally confirmed by the exceptional life-conduct of the ‘God on earth,’ i.e., the king himself. Already provided with a transcendent claim for his orders to be obeyed by the Swedish military ideology and jurisdiction,⁴⁸ Charles strengthened his claim through his personal example. In striking opposition to the lavish luxury displayed by his royal colleagues or other generals, even in the midst of a campaign, the king did not claim the privileges of his status, often sleeping on the ground and eating the same food as the common soldiers. It may even be argued that Charles XII, by choosing to share the hardships of the common soldier’s life and at the same time “embodying the ideal of all Carolean warriors” (Sarkamo 2014, 77), gave an inspiring example of a visible condescension that immensely strengthened the self-understanding of the Swedish army as a divine force. The king was, thus, seen as a visible manifestation of both the ideal warrior and providence’s executive. In the course of time and after many miraculous victories the Swedes became convinced of their ruler’s military infallibility and invulnerability (Findeisen 1992, 98). In certain aspects (not including the brutal punishment of civilian opponents) a flawless conduct of life was expected from every single soldier: Charles even insisted on the shooting of a married soldier of his guard who had committed adultery with another soldier’s wife (see Findeisen 1992, 255).⁴⁹

There is some good evidence, then, that the Carolean army gained its ‘*Kampfkraft*’ (fighting strength), its discipline, and its cohesion to a great deal by means of religion. Given that the soldier’s life was inherently imbued with religiosity, it is not surprising that the religious forms prevailed even after defeat in battle and following long-term captivity (Gudmundsson 2014b, 220).⁵⁰ In Protestant devotional writings of later times, the outstanding religiosity even of the defeated Swedish army in its Siberian exile was praised and presented as exemplary.⁵¹ In any case, by education and training, religion was an indispensable need to be fulfilled, and a paramount concern not only of the Siberian POWs.

48 See (2012, 323): “[...] a show of care and respect was in the superior’s eyes never a prerequisite for his men to obey a given order. Rather, the emphasis lay on the divine birthright of the king and how important it was that his subjects show unqualified loyalty and obedience to him and his representatives alike. This is also spelled out in the judgements and verdicts of the military courts.”

49 Compare also Charles’ rigidity in his verdict that an innocent suffering is better than someone guilty escaping punishment (in a letter to Karl Gustav Rehnsköld from June, 1703 in Carlson 1894, 247).

50 Gudmundsson insistently stresses “how closely interlinked the ecclesiastical and military spheres were in 18th-century Sweden” (Gudmundsson 2014b, 220).

51 Glaubrecht (1855, 12–13): “Wir bekommen überhaupt vor jener Zeit und vor dem Sinn und Geist der schwedischen Armee alle Achtung. Denn abgesehen von den einzelnen Verirrungen und Gottlosigkeiten der Gefangenen nehmen wir unter ihnen durchaus einen tiefen religiösen Sinn wahr. Sie sind von ihren Feldpredigern begleitet, die mit ihnen gefangen, ihr Amt mit Treue verwalten, sie haben Empfänglichkeit für geistlichen Zuspruch, erkennen die Schrift als Gottes Wort an und lassen sich durch dieselbe strafen; nicht wenige unter ihnen haben sich auch für den Feldzug mit Bibeln und Erbauungsschriften versehen. Kurz wir bemerken nichts von dem tiefen Abfall von Gott und von seinem Worte, der uns in späteren Zeiten, namentlich unter den Soldaten, begegnet und sich bald als Freigeister«, bald als thierische Rohheit kundgibt, so daß ein frommer Kriegsknecht eine Seltenheit ist.”

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Sweden and Siberia

It was the battle of Poltava that made Pietism a manifest story of success in the Swedish army and the Swedish society, mainly because of the dislocation and separation of thousands of Swedes from their (collective) former lives.⁵² The turn towards Pietism, however, did not come out of the blue. As Pentti Laasonen has pointed out, soldiers (mostly officers), particularly those from Finland and the Baltic Provinces (see also Wallmann 2005, 94–95),⁵³ had already been in contact with Pietist ideas, as the Swedes may have been with regard to clergymen like Ekman and the Swedish students from Halle (Laasonen 1998, 8). In any case, upon becoming captives and being sent to Siberia—and subsequently being denied the privileges Lutherans enjoyed after Czar Peter’s call for foreign expertise and his manifesto of guaranteeing religious freedom of 1702 (Belyakova and Leber 2020, 51–52)—,⁵⁴ the Caroleans emphatically began to turn towards Pietism (in literature one encounters the notion of ‘Awakening of the Caroleans,’ *Karolinererweckung*). The situation of imprisonment provided “exactly the kind of moral climate in which Pietism could flourish” (Roberts 1973b, 153). Todd Green has summarized the effects of this process as follows: “In terms of collective influence, the Swedish prisoners of war returning to their homeland in the early 1720s were arguably the most important transmitters of Pietist ideas in the early eighteenth century” (Green 2007, 65).⁵⁵ [30]

In his book, Wreech describes the involuntary inhabitants of Siberia as subjects of God’s unfathomable will. As prisoners of war, they not only represented the military, but rather the whole of Swedish society, as they came from all regions and all social strata of the realm: [31]

Regarding the prisoners, they did not only consist of those fallen into the enemy’s hand at the battle of Poltava on June 28th, 1709, and those who had to become prisoners a few days after at the river Dnieper (so that the whole Swedish army became the enemy’s prize), but there also were a considerable number of officers and noncommissioned officers as well as private soldiers and burghers to be found in Russia before, who partly were captured in the battles in Livonia, Courland, Polonia and Lithuania and partly during the conquest of strongholds in Livonia or elsewhere; additionally there were those who, after the above-mentioned great battle, followed Blessed King Charles XII to Bender in Wallachia; and, after all that, as His Majesty the Czar conquered the whole Livonia and Finland, the very same was imposed by GOD.⁵⁶ (Wreech 1728, 4) [32]

52 On the Swedish prisoners of war in Russia in general see Åberg (1991).

53 The loss of the Baltic Provinces since 1710 proved to be an additional sponsor for the spread of Pietist ideas: “It was first after the Russian conquest of Estland and Livland in 1710 that the new authorities did not bother so terribly much about whether books printed in the Baltic provinces conformed to the highest standards of Lutheran orthodoxy” (Beyer 2014, 122).

54 On the manifesto see Werth (2014, 35). Most important here was the change of “Russia’s marital laws, by which non-Orthodox Christians became eligible to marry orthodox subjects without conversion.”

55 It should not come as a surprise that the unfortunate leader of the ‘Caroleans’ Death March’ (*Karolinerernas dödsmarsch*) that definitely put an end to the much-praised army of Charles XI and Charles XII, Carl Gustav Armfelt, was a main protagonist of Pietism in Finland later on (see Laasonen 1995, 2: Der Pietismus im achtzehnten Jahrhundert:530, see also 1998, 14–15).

56 “Was demnach die Gefangenen betrifft, so sind es nicht allein diejenigen, so Anno 1709, den 28. Junii bey Pultawa in der Bataille in feindliche Hände verfielen, nebst denen, die einige Tage darauf sich bey dem Niper-Strohm als Kriegs-Gefangene er geben müssen, (daß also fast die ganze damahlige Schwedische Armée dem Feinde Preis wurde); sondern es war schon vorhero eine ziemliche Anzahl an Ober- und Unter-Officieren, auch an gemeinen Soldaten und Bürgers-Leuten in Rußland anzutreffen, welche theils

Although Siberia has quite a reputation as a place of imprisonment and banishment, the first large group sent to Siberia from outside Russia were the Swedish prisoners of war.⁵⁷ As such, they were the arrowhead of a mass flow, i.e., “one of the largest and most long-lasting cases of involuntary migration in world history, only surpassed by the slave trade from Africa to America” (Thorvaldsen 2008, 63). The majority of the private soldiers and petty officers had to endure conditions akin to slavery in labor camps (2008, 50). The conditions for the higher-ranking officers were clearly better as they were not forced to labor and even got a small salary, leaving them with a huge amount of spare time they could use. They were allowed to move freely (Dahlmann 2009, 148), to earn a living by their craftsman’s skills or as doctors and pharmacists. The prisoners were not only of Swedish, but also of Latvian (see Wreech 1728, 540)⁵⁸ and German origin, due to the Empire’s non-Swedish provinces.⁵⁹

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Tobolsk,⁶⁰ the “nerve center” of the Russian conquest of Siberia, where “power and wealth flowed to and from in all directions” (Lincoln 2007, 59)⁶¹, had been the center of research on the Swedish prisoners of war because of the mere number of them and the higher degree of education (officers) that enabled them to document their stay in Siberia through diaries and reports.⁶² Tobolsk was in many regards a major hub of possible religious contact,⁶³ particularly with regard to the presence of Muslims and adherents of Shamanic traditions in the city and its surroundings. Furthermore, Siberia was a place of retreat for the many sects of the Orthodox Church, such as the ‘old believers’ (see Dahlmann 2009, 170).⁶⁴ The presence of the Protestant, that is, the Lutheran (and Pietist) Swedish POWs increased and intensified religious diversity. During that period, Swedish prisoners made up a significant 10 percent of the city’s population, causing some internal tensions among the inhabitants. For example, they were subject of a ‘pogrom-like uproar’ in 1712 (Thorvaldsen 2008, 52).⁶⁵ However, regarding religious diversity, contemporary reports depict Tobolsk, with its considerable Tatar

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bey denen vorhero in Liefland, Churland, Pohlen und Litthauen gehaltenen Bataillen, und auf Partheyen etc. theils aber bey Eroberung einiger in Liefland liegenden Festungen, und sonsten gefangen worden; darzu noch diejenigen kamen, über welche nach obgedachter großen Bataille von denen, die mit dem Hochseel. Schwedischen Könige CARL XII. nach Bender folgten, in der Wallachey, und nachgehends, da Ihro Csaarische Majestät ganz Lieff- und Finnland einnahmen, in diesen Ländern und anderswo ein gleiches von GOtt verhänget wurde.”

57 On the ‘punitive exile’ of Siberia see Forsyth (2000, 43). Also compare Dahlmann (2009, 80).

58 For the Latvians among the prisoners who did not speak Swedish or German, a service was organized as well.

59 Compare the life conditions of the Russian prisoners of war in Sweden as expressed in an order of Charles XII (Ossow July 11, 1709) immediately after the battle of Poltawa: “Inzwischen müssen die russischen Gefangenen in Schweden durchaus streng gehalten und es darf ihnen keine Freiheit gewährt werden, ehe man übersehen kann, ob eine Auswechslung für sie stattfinden wird. Besonders darf den vornehmen Russen, die ich dort befinden, keinerlei Freiheit gewährt werden; Niemand darf sie besuchen, weder ein Schwede, noch wer es sonst sein mag. Es darf ihnen nicht die geringste Correspondance oder Briefwechsel gestattet werden; sie sind vielmehr auf das Strengste abzusperrn, bis man von hier mit dem Feinde wegen ihrer Auswechslung eine bestimmte Abrede treffen kann” (Carlson 1894, 355).

60 On eighteenth-century knowledge on the city in Western Europe, see Steinke (2017).

61 On Tobolsk’s wealth and cosmopolitanism, being able to “lay a fair claim to enlightenment and culture” see also Lincoln (2007, 148–49).

62 An exception and valuable source is the autobiography of the involuntary soldier and officer’s boy Johann Christian Schmidt (1692-?) *Der Reußische Robinson* from 1727.

63 On the concept of a hub in this context see Gleis and Jaspert (2017, 2–3).

64 As Dahlmann stresses, Siberia, however, was rather a common place of retreat but not a melting pot of religious traditions, for both indigenous traditions and sects tried to prevent themselves from merging with others. Compare on the Old Believers Wreech (1728, 909).

65 See Schmidt’s eyewitness account of the event: “Zu einer anderen Zeit kam auch mitten in der Nacht Feuer aus, da dann ein Geschrei durch die ganze Nacht erscholl, die Schweden steckten die Stadt an, um sich durch das Löschen des Feuers Geld zu verdienen, worauf es hieß: schlägt die Hunde tot. Die Russen, welche sich ohnedem hierüber kein Gewissen machen, zumal wenn es nicht ihre Glaubensgenossen sind,

population,⁶⁶ as a comparatively tolerant place. In Bell's report, it reads: "Here, as at other places, these people enjoy the free exercise of their religion, and the privileges of trade" (Bell 1763, 185). In 1741, the traveler, ethnographer and later Russian court historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783) describes the quarters of the Tartar population as containing two mosques.⁶⁷ Additionally, and not to be neglected in the present context, Tobolsk was the center of orthodox mission among the Siberian people, and, ultimately, to China (see Hintzsche and Nikol 1997, 79).

Since the prisoners regarded defeat and captivity as God's punishment for their sins based on their religious education, consolation in form of religious meetings and spiritual elevation was vital for their well-being.⁶⁸ In fact, physical suffering resulting from wounds of battles, captivity and torture by the Russians could be regarded as closely linked to both military and Christian honor and glory.⁶⁹ As a result, the prisoners began to meet privately, asserting their right to gather as private congregations, thus fulfilling the Pietist demand for personal, heartfelt religiosity apart from formal and organized worship (Thorvaldsen 2008, 57). Even for the private soldiers present in Tobolsk, the conduct of the pietist officers is described as a good example and spiritually beneficial.⁷⁰ Siberian Pietism finally emerged in full bloom as the prisoners received books from Halle and started to meet in conventicles (Laasonen 1998, 11). As a consequence, these meetings became a contested issue, facing opposition from the military clergy who feared for their influence. In Siberia, however, the practice of meeting in conventicles was approved by the—here *de facto* powerless—Swedish church officials, provided that it did not interfere with the Sunday services. Being thus confirmed

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brachen zu einigen Schweden in die Häuser ein und ermordeten in einem Augenblick fünf Offiziere, einen Unteroffizier und einen Bedienten" (Schmidt 2011, 63).

66 Forsyth counts about 15 000 Tatars around the old centers of Tyumen, Yalutor and Tobolsk (Forsyth 2000, 120).

67 "Von diesen Privat Wohnungen liegen die Tatarische / und Bucharische Häußer alle beysam[m]en in einer ge = / doppelten Reyhe längst dem Irtisch von der Mündung / des Kurdumka an biß fast an das Snamenskische Klo = / ster. Dabey sind zwey Metscheten zu Verrichtung / des Muhammedanischen Gottes Dienstes. Imgleichen / liegen die Häußer der Jamschtschiken auch beysam[m]en, / und zwar an dem Ende der untern Stadt zu oberst / am Irtisch. Mann nen[n]et daher jene die Tatarische- / und diese die Jamskoi Slobode" (Hintzsche and Nikol 1997, 92). The coexistence of religious traditions, however, did not last for long: "The city of Tobolsk itself had contained a considerable Tatar and Bukhari community until the period of intensive persecution of Islam in the reign of the empress Elizabeth. At that time Metropolitan Silvestr, as well as coercing Tatars to renounce Islam by imprisonment and beatings, had a new church built in close proximity to the Tatar quarter in Tobolsk. As a result, most of the Muslims moved out, so that in the late eighteenth century no Tatars resided in the Russian—and Orthodox Christian—capital of Siberia" (Forsyth 2000, 120).

68 "It is true that many officers when prisoners-of-war in Siberia, where pietism became their main spiritual comfort, interpreted the Swedish failure as God's punishment on them for having been too proud of their own army and too contemptuous of that of the Tsar; and it is worth noting that a chaplain at Charles's headquarters in Turkey referred in a sermon to the defeat at Poltawa as Heaven's retribution for Swedish presumption and covetousness: they had tried to do 'too much' for the Poles and the Cossacks and they had coveted extension of their own frontiers" (Hatton 1968, 239).

69 "Moreover, the sufferings of many of the Caroline officers increased in Russian captivity after defeats in battle. Their pledge to sacrifice themselves and their bodies in the loyal service of their king and fatherland was truly put to the test. Honour was closely linked with suffering. Here we should note the significance of Christianity and the suffering of Christ in the world view of early modern Europeans. Physical suffering was thought to ennoble a person and enhance his honour and glory" (Sarkamo 2010, 38).

70 Schmidt relates on his first encounter with the circle around Wreech: "Kurz darauf wurde der eine Offizier, namens Gotleben, krank, starb auch nach einem sechzehnwöchigen Lager und vermachte mir meistens alle seine Kleider. In dieser Krankheit war ich stets um ihn und abandonierte den Metschank. Es kamen auch viele fromme Offiziere zu ihm, die viel an seiner Seele arbeiteten, unter anderem der Herr Capitain von Wreech, Lieutenant Martini, Lieutenant Matthäi und andere mehr, durch deren Reden, insbesondere des erstern, ich in meinem Sündenschlafe sehr gerühret wurde und je mehr ich hörte, je größere Begierde fand ich bei mir" (Schmidt 2011, 55–56).

by orthodox Lutheran formalism and Pietist state of mind, the Protestant beliefs prevailed among the vast majority of the prisoners: only few Swedes chose the privileges (among them, most prominently, the permission to marry a Russian woman)⁷¹ achieved by joining Russian Orthodoxy (Thorvaldsen 2008, 58). Those who did so were considered among those who had succumbed to the (Egyptian) temptations, a trial through which their newly found faith was tested.⁷² The private soldiers in the country, however, due to their isolation and the slavery they had to endure, mostly converted to Orthodoxy to improve their poor condition. Johann Christian Schmidt describes that condition as follows:

These poor people are found scattered throughout the whole country in the cities, and among the noblemen on the noble estates. Only a small minority of them have remained true to their religion, for they have been kept very cruelly by their masters, working hard during the day, having to sleep in prisons at night, and the Russians pretending that because they were nothing less than Christians, they could not be believed not to run away on occasion.⁷³ (Schmidt 2011, 36–38) [36]

Moreover, August Hermann Francke, when asked for spiritual guidance by the officers at Tobolsk, not only sent money, medicine and books to the prisoners, but also took the chance of exploiting the situation for the sake of his movement. In his letters, he combined the demanding soldier's profession with the spiritually fulfilling service to Christ, thus using the values of a soldier as a means for a Pietist rebirth. In his book, Wreech quotes a letter of Francke's that reads: [37]

He shall bless your words and deeds for those in whose houses you live; yes, He shall employ you as a blessing in all Siberia and the surrounding realms and countries, and He shall use you as good warriors of JESUS CHRIST, as blessed vessels and tools by means of which many shall be committed to Christ.⁷⁴ (Wreech 1728, 96) [38]

By the awakening of warriors for Christ,⁷⁵ focused on winning spiritual battles rather than [39]

71 On the lack of women as a major problem of the Western invaders of Siberia in general that very often resulted in atrocities against the indigenous population, compare Forsyth (2000, 67–68).

72 On these temptations—the worldly pleasures of Egypt that seem to provide some security—see Eberhard's letter to the Swedish officers as quoted in Wreech (1728, 104): “Wenn der Mensch bekehret ist, so ist er zwar der Dienstbarkeit des Satans entronnen, er weiß aber nicht, was für greuliche Versuchungen ihm noch bevorstehen, und wie manchen harten Kampf des Glaubens er noch zu überwinden hat. Bald will es mangeln an innern und äußern Brod, bald an innern und äußern Wasser, bald denckt man, es sey unmöglich, die Feinde zu überwinden, denn sie wären zu groß und starck; bald kommt ein falscher Bileam, und locket einen wieder zur Lust dieser Welt; bald gedenckt man auch selbst wol wieder an die guten Tage; die man gehabt bey den Fleisch-Töpfen Egypti, und bekommt wol wieder Appetit von denselbigen zu essen. Kommt man aber auch so weit, daß alle die Versuchungen mit Josua und Caleb im Glauben überwunden werden; so sind doch hernachmals noch so manche Difficultät, daß ohnerachtet man die Mauern zu Jericho im Glauben über einen Hauffen geblasen hat, so lasset man sich doch wol durch eine kleine Sicherheit durch die Gibeoniten einschläffern, daß sich viele Dinge, auch unterm guten Schein, bey uns einschleichen, die doch nicht mit der Treue in der Gnade des neuen Bundes bestehen können.”

73 “Diese armen Leute findet man durch das ganze Land in den Städten, und bei den Edelleuten auf den Edelhöfen zerstreut. Die wenigsten sind bei ihrer Religion geblieben, denn sie wurden von ihren Herren sehr hart gehalten, indem sie des Tages schwer arbeiten, des Nachts in Gefängnissen schlafen müssen und die Russen vorgaben, weil sie nichts weniger als Christen wären, so könnte man ihnen auch keinen Glauben beimessen, dass sie nicht bei Gelegenheit davon laufen würden.”

74 “Er segne Ihre Worte und Wercke an denenjenigen, in deren Häusern Sie wohnen; Ja Er setze Sie zum Seegen in gantz Siberien und umliegenden Reichen und Ländern, und gebrauche Sie als gute Streiter IESU CHristi, zu gesegneten Gefäßen und Werckzeugen, dadurch viele zu Christo gebracht werden.”

those of the material world, the leaders of a new movement were born: “Becoming a born again Christian imbued the officer’s lives with new meaning. Self-sacrifice, the harsh and brutal years of war were suddenly described as necessary steps on the road of finding Christ” (Sarkamo 2010, 72). As Ville Sarkamo has shown, the Pietist movement’s militaristic rhetoric could be used for a direct continuation of a secular warrior ethics (Sarkamo 2014, 73), that, in turn, had prevailed in the framework of the religiosified godly Lutheran army.⁷⁶ It is thus the *formal elements of religious life* in the military that allowed a connection not only to Pietist ideas but also to the soldiers’ former existence, as hymns, prayers and Luther’s catechism remained persistent elements of the prisoner’s religious life. “Reading prayer books was not a new feature in the captive soldier’s life, but a custom from home, maintained during campaigns and continued in captivity” (Gudmundsson 2014b, 219). Not least, the transformation of soldiers of the king’s army to soldiers of Christ serves as a means to overcome the “credibility gap” that occurred to Christians being in the “Service of two kings,” above all the chaplains in their struggle for legitimacy that either is based on their duty to boost morale for the fighting forces, or on their duty to minister the spiritual needs of the soldiers (Bergen 2004, 3).

With regard to the question of possible types of religious contacts, it is interesting to notice that, in the case of the Swedes in Siberia’s prison camps, one part of contesting religious traditions, Pietism, *de facto* takes advantage of the formal structures of its opponent to emerge and consolidate. “While Lutheranism in these camps helped the soldiers to maintain something of their Swedish identities, it also served as the infrastructure through which Pietism spread,” the soldiers consequently serving “as catalysts for the further spread of Pietism in Sweden in the 1720s” (Green 2007, 65). This development was well in line with Pietist attitude towards the official church as expressed in August Hermann Francke’s teachings. The Pietist “true Church” (*die rechte Kirche*), he argues, is situated *within* the “outward Church” (*äußerliche Kirche*), i.e., invisibly hidden within the visible church (see Peschke 1964, 1:73–74). However, this idea of the true church inhabiting the official church holds two dimensions: on the one hand, Francke does not wish to sever the connection to the official church and its teachings (1964, 1:143), asserting the orthodoxy of his movement, but, on the other hand the official church and its structures might simultaneously be used as a veil or a Trojan horse to secure and promote Pietist ideas within it. Hence, the outward church that Francke criticizes as, with reference to Luther, a ‘true Babylon’ (*rechtes Babel*)⁷⁷ might be re-formed from within. Not only in this regard, Pietism is thus the true heir of Lutheran Reformation and the continuation of Protestant tradition (1964, 1:142). Francke, however, found Luther’s concept of the church insufficient and provided it with a decisive addition. This was the convents of the believers, meeting additionally to the church’s official services to their common mutual spiritual strengthening (1964, 1:74). As such, by remaining within the official church, the Pietist of Tobolsk may be considered (and well considered themselves) as having realized the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, i.e., they succeeded in realizing the community of true believers in brotherly self-control combining both the preservation of the true teaching and a God-blessed life proved by manifest instances of compassion (Bellardi 1994, 9) that even got institutional-

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75 On the Swedish army’s self-perception as Christian soldiers see Gudmundsson (2014a, 218–20).

76 Sarkamo even notes the basic compatibility of the military and the pietist ideals: “However alternative masculine ideal which consisted of piety and Christian love does not restrict the more general predominant homosocial masculinity. Rather it was just a part of it. Asking and praying forgiving was more a submitting ritual to defendant person than sign of brotherhood and love” (Sarkamo 2010, 33).

77 On Spener’s position compare Wallmann (2005, 82).

ized. According to Pietist thinking, these instances achieved by the *ecclesiola* can fertilize the church as a whole.

The School at Tobolsk,⁷⁸ therefore, might be an expression of the fertile combination of official Swedish Lutheranism (allowing the prisoners in the tradition of godly discipline to hold together and to create their own ecclesiastical organization, see Roberts 1973b, 136–37) and its official opposition, Pietism (providing consolation and spiritual welfare for the individual soul by establishing convents of believers). The establishment of the school enabled Pietism to institutionalize⁷⁹ within the structures of the church and demonstrate its efficiency. As such, the school became a part of the Pietists' general eschatological plan: "Francke and his disciples hoped that God would accept the charitable and educational institutions at Halle as the first step toward His Kingdom, and that He would reward their labors in establishing these institutions on the day of the Last Judgment" (Lehmann 2004, 127). Among contemporaries and later scholars, the school at Tobolsk is considered to be a Franckesche Stiftung *en miniature*, including a boarding house for children whose parents were sent to other parts of Siberia. For Francke it is a clear sign of God's ways with the faithful, that an enterprise starts from humble beginnings and develops into a visible blessing (Peschke 1964, 1:(2), 210). As it seems, Wreech, in composing the school laws, applied the pedagogical principles developed by Francke to his Swedish and Russian pupils. This encompassed a demanding set of activities during the long school day, with religion as the central part (dominated by Pietist sentiments and principles). In addition to reading and writing, subjects such as arithmetic, geography, languages (Latin, German, French), drawing, singing and handicraft were also included (see Thorvaldsen 2008, 53). The school comprised two sections: one Swedish and one German for all others. Up to 130 people studied or worked in the school (see Wreech 1728, 711). A separate school building was bought with financial support from Halle in 1715. Because of the school's permanently precarious financial situation due to its reliance on donations, Wreech left Siberia in 1722, heavily indebted. [41]

However, to contemporaries like the Scottish traveler John Bell (1691–1780), who visited the city in 1719, the presence of the Swedes strongly promoted cultural values in Tobolsk and the surrounding area: [42]

I cannot but observe, that the Swedish prisoners, dispersed in most of the towns in this country, contributed not a little to the civilizing the inhabitants of these distant regions; as they were the means of introducing several useful arts, which were almost unknown before their arrival. (Bell 1763, 187) [43]

78 On the history, personnel and organization of the school see Franck (1988). Concerning the history of the school also compare Åberg (1991, 133–41).

79 See on the particular dynamics of Francke's theology of schools or seminaries the summary of Kristian Mejrup: "As we see, *seminarium* is a place of expectation and a place from which purification will spread centrifugally to all estates of society, in and beyond Germany to Europe and the rest of the world. In this regard, the *seminarium* is at once a waiting-room and a highly eruptive site. [...] As a topos the *seminarium* epitomizes an indirect and mysterious relationship between cause and effect: the sower plants the seed, it undergoes a hidden transformation and signs appear of its recurrence as something new. The sower can plant, give water and wait; only God can make things grow. The *seminarium* thus allows collaboration between God and man. Although Francke insists that God's part of the work is the more important part, he is nevertheless the one who knows what God's will is and how to act upon it. [...] As a location, the *seminarium* is both concrete and eschatological. It is *already* but not *yet* fully realized. In this regard the *seminarium* is an in-between-place: a place between a protological coordinate (garden) and an eschatological coordinate (city). Basically, Francke's *seminarium* resembles a global city planted in a local garden, hence the ambition that from Glaucha seeds of the *seminarium* will spread widely all over the world" (2016, 434 and 435).

This is especially true for the Swedish School, not least because, regarding education, Siberia in general remained an underdeveloped periphery of the Russian Empire with only very few schools (Dahlmann 2009, 170). On the school's well intended effects on the pupils, the autobiographical account of Johann Christian Schmidt is most significant: [44]

Each day I have been reawakened again by the Word of God by dear Herr von Wreech, so that I finally came to the conclusion and the intention not to serve the devil anymore, even if I would torture myself to death in doing so.⁸⁰ [45]

The Swedish prisoners of war also built a church that, alongside the school, was mentioned in eighteenth century encyclopedias as a prominent characteristic of Tobolsk (see Steinke 2017, 135). In 1717, even a hospital with 15 beds was organized. In the year 1741, the traveler and historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller reports on the Swedish graveyard.⁸¹ The school seems to have gained some reputation even with Czar Peter himself, who granted it his protection and provided it with funding.⁸² The support for the school may have even led to a remarkable partial alliance of the main antagonists of the war. As a letter from 1718 by General Löwenhaupt, quoted in Wreech's book, suggests, even Charles XII himself was duly informed about the Tobolsk school (see Wreech 1728, 590). [46]

For the Pietist movement, the school became an important hub in the overall Pietist spiritual and economical network.⁸³ The significance and mutually beneficial interrelation of trade networks and the aim to spread religious ideas corresponds to the praxis of Hallensian Pietism. The Pietist leaders had a particular interest in Russia as a space of mission and a stopping-off place to Persia and Asia minor (Belyakova and Leber 2020, 48). August Hermann Francke well recognized the possibility of using Tobolsk as a basis to missionize among the Asian peoples (see Gröschl 2013, 172), but also as a commercial center for his international trading company (Obst 2013, 95 and 123). He also considered his relations to Russia as important, having been in contact with Czar Peter through Russian envoys twice before 1700 (Obst 2013, 42). To strengthen the Pietist grip on the situation, Francke sent his close collaborator, Christoph Eberhard (1675–1750), to Tobolsk as a pastor.⁸⁴ Operating under the alias of *Alethophilo*, [47]

80 "Ich wurde täglich durch das Wort Gottes von dem lieben Herrn von Wreech aufs neue erweckt, dass ich zuletzt den Schluß und Vorsatz faßte, wenn ich mich auch darüber zu Tode martern sollte, dennoch von nun an nicht mehr dem Teufel zu dienen" (Schmidt 2011, 60).

81 "*Panin / bugor* nennet man eine Gegend des hohen Landes / zu Tobolsk, auff der Südl [ichen] Seite des Baches Kur = / dumka allwo die zu Tobolsk in der Gefangen = / schafft gewesene Schweden ihren Begräbniß Platz / gehabt" (Hintzsche and Nikol 1997, 93). See on the Swedish graveyard Wreech (1728, 560).

82 See the letter published in Wreech's book: "Wegen der Siberischen Schule ist eine Rußische Schrifft aufgesetzt, und der V.A hat es Ihro Majestät übergeben, welche sehr wohl ist aufgenommen worden. Ihro Majestät wollen dieselbe in ihren Schutz nehmen, und jährlich etwas gewissen dazu legiren" (1728, 750). See on Peter's Asian Politics and his idea to use Tobolsk as a new center of (orthodox) mission Renner (2018, 92).

83 On the salient importance of this network for the Pietist movement see Gierl (2019, 132): "Pietism in the narrower sense, that is in the sense of a groundbreaking movement and not only in the sense of a religious strand, existed exactly as long as the propagation of Pietism coincided with the employment of the then-leading tools and institutions to process information. Seen from the communicational side, the Pietist movement consisted of international and interconfessional networks of correspondence; journals; the organization of educational institutions; and the foundation of societies, associations, communities, and settlements. These all steadily proclaimed the message to the world: Pietism exists, Pietism is active, Pietism possesses a structure, a membership, and a coherent identity, as well as a certain diversity and plurality."

84 On Eberhard as Francke's trusted intermediary among the Swedes in Tobolsk see Winter (1953, 306).

Eberhard made the situation known to the European public by publishing the first collection of the letters of the Swedish Prisoners in 1718.⁸⁵

With regard to a more general cultural exchange, the presence of the Swedish Pietists in Siberia was no less eminent. The role of the Swedish prisoners of war and the impact of Pietism cannot be overestimated when it comes to the exploration and scientific description of Siberia. Likewise and correspondingly, the influence of the university of Halle and Hallensian Pietism is considerable (see Vermeulen 2015, 99). Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735), a physician from Halle and a pupil of August Hermann Francke, was the first foreign scholar to travel to Siberia under the orders of Peter the Great. Until 1727 Messerschmidt had travelled the whole of Siberia.⁸⁶ When Messerschmidt arrived at Tobolsk in 1719,⁸⁷ he met the resident Swedish soldiers who in part dealt with Siberia and its history, among them most prominently Philipp Johann Tabbert (later von Stra(h)lenberg 1677–1747) (see Thomas 1982, 8–9).⁸⁸ Tabbert accompanied Messerschmidt on part of his journeys. Therefore, in many regards, Tabbert can be considered as a key figure of Swedish presence in Siberia and its lasting spiritual and scientific influence. As we have seen before, Tabbert's Pietist books that he (miraculously, as Wreech suggests) managed to preserve in captivity, were the main catalyst of Wreech's own conversion experience. Moreover, Strahlenberg produced a geographical, ethnographical and linguistical description of Siberia, *Der Nord- und Östliche Theil von Europa und Asien, in so weit solches das gantze Russische Reich mit Sibirien und der grossen Tartarey in sich begriffet* (Stockholm 1730), as well as a pathbreaking map of it (see Dahlmann 2009, 114). It was only by his publications that Messerschmidt's achievements became publicly known (as the Russian Academy of Science had confiscated all his papers and had urged him not to publish anything about his journey). Strahlenberg also contributed the descriptions of religious contact of the Swedes with the non-Christian population of Siberia in the *Wahrhaftige Historie*.

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The *Wahrhaftige Historie* and Religious Contact

The Pietist-Lutheran Encounter in the *Wahrhaftige Historie*

The *Wahrhaftige Historie* at the same time reports on situations of religious contact and is, as such, an expression of an (intra-)religious contact. Wreech first published his book in 1725 anonymously while being a tutor in Sorau. A new edition followed in 1728 when the Conventicle Decree had been in effect for already about two years, and the Pietist movement in Sweden appeared to lose its momentum (Green 2007, 63). Furthermore, at least since Dippel's sojourn in Stockholm in 1727, the Pietist movement seemed to be divided into a conservative and a radical branch⁸⁹ that wished to sever the bonds to the official church. With his book,

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85 *Der Innere und äusere Zustand Derer Schwedischen Gefangenen in Rußland/ Durch Ihre eigene Brieffe/ Darinnen Sie Die auf ihre vormahliche fleischliche Sicherheit erfolgte Bekehrung/ und wunderbare Erhaltung/ Wie auch die Aufrichtung der öffentlichen Schule zu Tobolsky der Hauptstadt in Sibirien/ nebst ausgestandener vielen Wiederwärtigkeit/ und andern Dingen mehr/ freymüthig melden/ Zur Ausbreitung der wunderbahren Wege des Herrn/ und zur allgemeinen Erbauung getreulich ans Licht gestellet Von ALETHOPHILO, Franckfurt und Leipzig, In Verlegung der Neuen Buchhandlung 1718-1721.*

86 On Messerschmidt see Vermeulen (2015, 115–30).

87 On Messerschmidt's stay in Tobolsk see Schmidt (2011, 65–66).

88 Compare also Bell (1763, 191): "Captain Tabar, a Swedish officer, was at this time writing a History of Siberia. He was a gentleman very capable for such a performance; and, of it shall ever be published, it cannot fail of giving great satisfaction to the curious." On Messerschmidt's and Strahlenberg's Siberian expeditions compare Åberg (1991, 166–72).

89 See Pleijel (1935, 187): "Im Anfang scheint sich Dippel mit seiner Kritik zurückgehalten zu haben. Doch war der Unterschied zwischen dem Frömmigkeitstypus Dippels und dem seines Wirtes, des Hallepietisten

Wreech was therefore, in fact, fighting on two fronts, opposing both Lutheran Orthodoxy and radical Pietism. The possibility of being associated with radical Pietism constitutes a possible major drawback in the subversive struggle against the official church that could not be attacked openly.

Hence, for many reasons, the Pietist-Lutheran encounter is a major subject in Wreech's book from the very beginning and responsible for many characteristics of its particular form. As Ekman has done before, Wreech dedicates his book to the Swedish king and his queen, i.e., in his case, to Frederick I and to Ulrike Eleonora (the younger), the sister of Charles XII, thus seeking for royal protection and claiming for loyalty with his Pietist agenda. The dedication is dated on December 8, 1724. In his report, Wreech claims to address the greatest joy of kings, i.e., that their loyal subjects are led back to the path of Christ: [50]

There can be no doubt that those rulers correspond to their incumbent duties most appropriately who not only care for upright God-blessedness for themselves but also eagerly care for their subjects to be directed towards GOD and obedience towards Him and then, in fact, to arrive there; and for the blessed agents, by whom the abovementioned ultimate aim is more and more achieved, to be firmly motivated with necessary assistance and all-gracious protection against their enemies and persecutors.⁹⁰ (Wreech 1728, Dedication) [51]

The promotion and protection of the agents (*Mittels-Personen*) of the faith, who lead the flock back to true beliefs,⁹¹ should indeed be the paramount task of the rulers—even if those agents are not acknowledged as such, or rather, persecuted by the official church or state law, as is the situation with the Pietists, who are the central focus of this book.⁹² It is not by chance, then, that the agents of faith soldiers are most frequently confronted with, the military chaplains, are subjects to critique in Wreech's book (in accordance with Pietist critique on the over-emphasis on preaching), mainly for their hypocrisy and dubious conduct of life (see Wreech 1728, 54–55 and 192). [52]

Wreech's work is remarkable with regard to its content, but also, and importantly, for its *formal composition*. Above all, the second edition from 1728, comprising a very detailed, reader-directing index (titled: *Register über die merckwürdigsten Sachen*, "Index of the Most Remarkable Subjects"), shows a great amount on self-reflectiveness on the ultimate aim of the works and the particular ways of how to achieve them.⁹³ Given the difficult situation of [53]

von Walcker, zu gross, als dass die Eintracht hätte von Dauer sein können . Es trat zwischen beiden ein Bruch ein, der allmählich zu einer gewissen Spaltung des ganzen Stockholmer Pietismus führte. Dippel und seine Anschauung liessen niemanden gleichgültig bleiben. Man *musste* für oder gegen ihn Partei ergreifen."

90 "So ist kein Zweiffel, daß diejenigen Regenten der obliegenden Pflicht am gemäßesten sich bezeugen, welche nicht nur für sich selbst die rechtschaffene Gottseeligkeit sich angelegen seyn lassen, sondern auch eyfrig Sorge tragen, wie Ihre Unterthanen zu GOTT und dessen Gehorsam recht angeführet, wirklich gebracht, und die gesegnete Mittels-Personen, durch welche der obige heilsame Endzweck mehr und mehr erreicht wird, mit nötigem Beystande und allergnädigstem Schutze wider ihre Feinde und Ankläger kräftigt erfreuet werden."

91 On Wreech's own role as an agent of the true faith compare Schmidt (2011, 74): "Es ist mir durch den lieben Herrn Capitain von Wreech damals viel Gutes vom lieben Gott im geistlichen geschenkt worden."

92 Wreech possibly overestimated the protection the king at this point of time in Swedish history could offer to the Pietists. Fredrick and his successors clearly had less power and influence on state and church than the absolutist rulers Charles XI and Charles XII whose ideology of ruling was abolished after Charles' XII death and the Swedish defeat in the Great Nordic War.

93 The index, for example, introduces explanative words for the phenomena described in the book itself that are not identified with that name here.

Pietism in Sweden and elsewhere at that particular time, the book well includes an explicit and implicit guideline of how to read it properly.

With regard to authorship, the text is significant as well, for it is not attributed to a single author. As Arndt's *Wahres Christentum*, the book is mainly a compilation, although not of religious treatises, but rather of writings of layman that by compilation and because of the situation they are written, become religious treatises. Accordingly, the title Wreech claims for himself, as indicated by the book's title (*mitgetheilet und nun bey dieser andern Auflage mit einem Anhang und vollständigerm Register vermehrt von Curt Friedrich von Wreech*), is not that of writer or author. Instead, he portrays himself as a conveyer or bearer of information, tasked with delivering a certain message. In its main part, Wreech's books consists of letters of other Swedish prisoners, that is, in

letters that we wrote to us in the lands of our captivity, in which we lived dispersed in the towns, or to Christian-minded Swedish or German preachers in Moscow or Siberia, partly also to external friends in Germany, Livonia and so on.⁹⁴ (Wreech 1728, Vorrede, 3)

As such, Wreech presents his 900-page report as a collective work; a *Text-Teppich*, i.e., a carpet of texts, as Hermann Goltz has fittingly put it. It represents a long-distance network of a particular interrelated community that shares the same (converting) experience and has as well drawn the same consequences from their Siberian experience, at least with regard to matters of religion and spirituality.⁹⁵ Wreech combines the letters in a chronological order, filling the gaps between them with a short chronologically proceeding narrative, thus unifying his diverse materials to a consistent story. No less than 110 independent sources (Goltz 1998, 21) can be identified in this manifest network of communication in form of a book. Accordingly, by Wreech's intention, the book appears as the product not of an individual, but of a community—as this is all the more likely to convey the inspiration of the Holy Spirit via internal and external communication. Put in Pietist terms, the text is certainly a virtual conventicle, allowing individual believers to share their ideas on theologically relevant issues of their personal experience. Moreover, there is indirect intertextual reference. For example, in his conversion report, Wreech follows the model (form) of August Hermann Francke's 'order of grace' (*Gnadenordnung*) (see Laasonen 1998, 11). This is, of course, not without theological relevance in the encounter with Lutheran orthodoxy. Pietism, as Holger Zaunstöck stressed, is communication (2014, 5). Therefore, it appears that the book itself, in Wreech's disposition of it, by its internal communication on matters of edifying nature, manifests a conventicle, a collection of the pious, of its own.

In this collective and communicative form, the book is a manifest product of intrareligious (agonal) contact because of the author's ever-present need to justify the events described and to demarcate them from possibly suspicious practices. This becomes obvious in the very title

94 "Briefen, welche wir aus dem Lande unserer Gefangenschafft, in welchem wir hin und her in den Städten zerstreuet lagen, an einander, oder auch an einige Christlich-gesinnte Schwedische und deutsche Prediger in Moscau und Siberien, zum theil auch an auswärtige Freunde in Deutschland, Liefeland u. s. w. geschrieben haben"

95 By ordering Wreech's composition with regard to the original sources, Hermann Goltz (1998) has done an invaluable service to readers of the work. Goltz himself characterizes Wreech's book as follows: "Diese 'Historie' stammt nur zu einem geringeren Teil aus der Feder von Wreech. Vielmehr besteht sie aus einem reichen Mosaik aneinandergfügter und vom Autor des Buches durch kurze Texte miteinander verknüpfter Briefe, Brief-,Extracte' und anderer Text-Bausteine. So ist das nahezu neunhundertseitige Werk von Wreech eine ungeheuer facetten- und perspektivenreiche polyphone Darstellung [...]" (1998, 20).

of the work. The claim to present a truthful (*wahrhaftige*) history of the events in Siberia stresses that it is, on the one hand, telling the truth about events, and, on the other hand, transmitting the truth (true teachings) with regard to content. It is also a relational story (*umständlich*), i.e., a story regarding the circumstances, as well as a detailed story (on the verge of becoming tedious; the German word today might denote both possibilities). The threat of being accused of heterodoxy is pervasive. Accordingly, the ostensive denial of heterodoxy is vital to Wreech, particularly the rejection of the supposedly prominent Pietist practice to establish an alternative or even counter-ecclesiastical structure apart from the official church.⁹⁶ Emphatically, Wreech denies that the Swedish prisoners have broken with the true Lutheran faith and its church. On the contrary, Wreech claims, they have rather strengthened it:

Hopefully, it can be seen by the letters as well as by the report about the establishment and the implementation of the school that no one, if only he is willing to judge conscientiously and in a Christian manner, even if only reasonably, that the change, that partly occurred to us prisoners and that we have in praise of God preached to others as well, can ever be interpreted in such a way that we have broken with the Evangelic-Lutheran Religion and have joined another flock or have established another sect or church among us. Rather, the contrary is revealed [...].⁹⁷ (Wreech 1728, Vorrede, 7)

[58]

This is, however, well in accordance with the theory of the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* as promoted by Spener and Francke. For them, it is the conventicles, as they consist of more advanced firm Christians, that strengthen and guide the Church from within, thus providing it with a solid backbone. In any case, Wreech well knows that a (to his point of view) malevolent understanding of the religious conduct of the prisoners may be expected from official readers. A reader should not, as Wreech in his preface stresses, read his book in an inquisitorial manner: “[...] lest that it may be read preoccupied with determination to find something that one may suspect to be erroneous or enthusiastic” (1728, 14).⁹⁸ Here, the author addresses his main opponent, thus introducing his book to the ongoing discussion between Pietism and orthodox Lutheran church in Sweden. Wreech, as it seems, indorses the aims of the more moderate Hallensian Pietism that promotes the invisible church within the official one. He refuses a more radical approach that separates the true church from the ‘church of Babel’ (this more

[59]

96 Wreech quotes a letter of the official representative of the Swedish Church, the former preacher of Charles’ former personal Guard (the Trabants) and head of the field consistorium in Moscow Jöran Nordberg (Nohrberg), to the Tobolsk prisoners, where the pastor warns intensely about the Pietist practice: “Aber, mein liebster Herr Capitain, dagegen bitte ich Euch um GOTTes willen, daß ihr, sowol bey euch selbst, als bey andern solche Aergerniß in der Liebe und Sanfftmuth zu überwinden suchet, und keinesweges solchen Gedancken Raum geben wolltet, die einige hegen: als köntet Ihr Euch mit guten Gewissen von dem allgemeinen Gottesdienst abhalten, weil die Priesterschaft so gar verderbet sein und ihre grössere Erbauung in Eurer Privat-Andacht findet” (Wreech 1728, 205). On Nordberg and his attitude towards the religious situation at Tobolsk see Laasonen (1998, 13). Nordberg also “treasured his copy of the Swedish vicar Olof Ekman’s reform program *Siönödz-Löffte*” (Gudmundsson 2018, 828). Also compare on Nordberg’s latter attitude towards Pietism as one of its most fervent opponents Ljungberg (2019, 31).

97 “Aus den Briefen, sowohl als der Nachricht von Einrichtung und Führung des Schul-Wesens wird denn verhoffentlich zu sehen seyn, daß niemand, wenn er gewissenhaft und Christlich, ja nur vernünfftig urtheilen will, die Aenderung, so mit uns Gefangenen zum theil vorgegangen, und auch wir andern, zum Preiße GOTTes, verkündigt haben, dahin deuten könne, als ob wir von der Evangelisch = Lutherischen Religion abgefallen, und zu einem andern Hauffen getreten wären, oder eine eigene Seite und Kirchen-Wesen unter uns an- und aufgerichtet hätten. Vielmehr erhellet das Gegentheil [...].”

98 “[...] vielweniger, daß sie mit dem Vorsatz, darinnen etwas aufzuspüren, welches man als irrig und schwärmerisch verdächtig machen könne, gelesen werden möge.”

thorough approach was promoted by radicals such as Dippel⁹⁹—although his practice, in the end, might be the more subversive act in reforming the official church from within.

In any case, Wreech is thoroughly firm in his pietist beliefs and highlights its beneficial impact on the prisoners. Throughout his work, Wreech stresses the paramount importance of Francke's writings and his personal engagement for the spiritual welfare of the Tobolsk prisoners, above all in the 1728 supplements. Here it reads: [60]

For in this appendix, page 893, the faithful servant of God, i.e., the former professor of theology at Halle, August Hermann Francke, is referred to, in particular that by his small treatises that have been translated into Russian by some officers, also the Russians who have read them, were revived. On this occasion, I full-heartedly praise the ever-gracious GOD who among all others used him as a tool by which the Swedish prisoners in Russia and Siberia have experienced many good things of body and soul. For GOD the Lord used as a blessed means above all his inspired and powerful writings by which many in our captivity were freed with divine blessings from the bonds of Satan with which they were bound spiritually.¹⁰⁰ (Wreech 1728, 911) [61]

Thus, Francke and his writings appear as God's instruments and means for the salvation not only of the prisoners but also of some Russians from the 'bonds of Satan.' Accordingly, the emphatic reference to Francke's works contributed to the book's paramount subject: (Pietist) rebirth and its positive results on the prisoners, thus justifying the Pietists and the Pietist agenda. [62]

In general, the book is structured as a story of a (collective) conversion and its beneficial spiritual effects on the converted. This narrative serves to manifest God's master plan, not only with them in particular but also with humankind in general; a plan that humbles human reason in its miraculous progress. Accordingly, Wreech starts his book addressing the reader directly: [63]

Dear Reader! It is unfathomable to reason what miraculous ways to the Royal Swedish prisoners after the last unfortunate war against Russia the highest, almighty, and loving God has used to save the souls; has blessed them with heavenly treasures after the loss of temporal things and has done so much good in them and performed by them. The Lord, though, has treated them hard and gave them a draught of wine that they tumbled; but he also gave a sign of his mercy to those who learned to fear Him, which they raised and that made them confident and certain.¹⁰¹ (Wreech 1728, Vorrede, 2) [64]

The sojourn in Siberia is described as God's prominent and astounding means (*a draught of wine that they tumbled*) to show the prisoners his mercy. By subjecting them to harsh conditions, he converts them from worldly matters to spiritual ones. In the following, Wreech aims at showing the manifold ways in which God converts the sinner: [65]

99 See Wallmann (2005, 136), and, on Gottfried Arnold's *Babels Grablied*, *ibid.*, 153. On Dippel see *ibid.*, 166.

100 "Weil in diesem Anhang pag. 893. des treuen Knechtes Gottes, nemlich des Herrn August Hermann Franckens gewesenen Professoris Theologiae zu Halle, gedacht wird, insonderheit, daß durch seine Tractaetlein, die ein paar Officirer in die Russische Sprache übersetzt, auch die Rußen, so selbige gelesen, erwecket worden. So preise ich bey dieser Gelegenheit von gantzen Hertzen den grundgütigen GOTT, der Ihn vor allen andern zum Werckzeuge gebraucht, wodurch denen Schwedischen-Gefangenen in Rußland und Siberien sehr viel gutes an Leib und Seel widerfahren. Denn GOTT der Herr brauchte zu einem gesegneten Mittel vor andern dessen geistreiche und Kraft-volle Schrifften, wo durch viele in unserer Gefangenschaft aus

It is because a foolish man considers the Holy GOD's order an unbearable burden and holds the moving call and the friendly lure of GOD in contempt, and GOD nevertheless wants to save the poor soul, that he in his unfathomable wisdom has to treat the twisted men strangely and twistedly. [...] They often in an impudent manner refer to their false freedom und cut all of the gentle bonds of love by means of which GOD wants to draw them towards Himself; then, he releases the gravest mishaps on them, he pushes them into hard captivity, puts them in heavy bondage and spoils all their previous joys.¹⁰² (Wreech 1728, 2)

[66]

One of the hardships faced by future converts is the challenge of religious contact i.e., encountering others who represent a different religious tradition or idea, above all, the official church. Therefore, the prisoners' religious project is described as contested, not least by the official Swedish religiosity, or rather, the reference to it. This reference prevails throughout the whole book. To stress this point, Wreech includes in his text a circular letter by Ulrich Thomas Roloff, a German pietist pastor who had worked in Moscow since 1696 (he died 1721), that reads as follows:

[67]

If believers fail to be on their guard, they suffer from mischief; experience teaches that the weed takes the best of the land and the heavenly influx, yes, it does not allow the good semen to grow but rather suffocates it or hampers its growth, as it is read in the parable (v.7). Accordingly, the children of malice arm themselves with obtained teachings and approbations of the mistaken Synedrion, they threaten with authoritative ban or disgrace, pretend many a caring and made-up and false judgement, complain about hidden poison and more of the like.¹⁰³ (Wreech 1728, 262)

[68]

The good seed may be suffocated by the weed of the children of evil who are easily identified with regard to their major instruments such as official bans, restrictions and accusations. Moreover, the Pietist *topos* of the 'Church of Babel' is addressed by Roloff as well. As 'false Christianity,' it serves as a negative foil to those who are loved by God, no matter how distant

[69]

den Stricken des Satans, darinnen sie geistlicher Weyse gefangen waren, unter Göttlichem Seegen befreyet wurden."

101 "Geliebter Leser! Es ist der Vernunft unbegreiflich, was der allerhöchste, allmächtige und liebeiche Gott nach dem letzten unglücklichen Kriege mit Rußland an denen Königl. Schwedischen Gefangenen für wunderbare Wege gebrauchet, die Seelen zu erretten, nach dem Verlust der zeitlichen Dinge, sie mit himmlischen Schätzen zu beseligen, und so viel gutes in ihnen und durch sie herrlich zu wircken, und auszuführen. Der Herr hat ihnen zwar ein hartes erzeiget, und einen Trunck Weins gegeben, daß sie taumelten; aber Er hat auch ein Zeichen seiner Gnade gegeben, denen, die Ihn fürchten lerneten, welches sie aufwurffen [?], und sie getrost und sicher machte."

102 "Da nun der thörichte Mensch diese Ordnung des Heiligen GOTTes als eine unertragliche Bürde an siehet, und das bewegliche Zuruffen und freundliche Locken GOTTes verachtet, und GOTT gleichwol die arme Seele erretten will, so muß er nach seiner unerforschlichen Weißheit oft mit den verkehrten Menschen wunderbarlich und verkehrt umgehen. [...] Sie trotzen oft in frechen Sinn auf ihre falsche Freyheit, und zerreißen alle gelinde Liebes-Seile, womit sie GOTT zu sich ziehen will: Alsdenn läst Er die schwersten Unglücks-Fälle über sie kommen, Er stößet sie in harte Gefangenschafft, legt sie in schwere Feßeln, und versalzt ihnen alle vorige Lüste."

103 "Bleiben nun die Gläubigen nicht auf der Huth so leiden sie des Schaden, das Unkraut nimmt nach der Erfahrung die beste Kraft des Landes und des himmlischen Einflußes hinweg, ja lässet den guten Saamen nicht frey wachsen, sondern erstickt ihn gar, oder hindert ihm den Wachsthum, wie von dem Gleichniß stehet, v. 7. also die Kinder der Boßheit rüsten sich mit eingeholten Belehrungen und Approbationen deß irrenden Synedrion, drauen mit Obrigkeitlichen Verbote und Ungnade, geben viel besorgliches und erdichtetes und erlogenes Unheil für, klagen über verborgen Giff, und was das mehr."

they may be from the outward means of a possible Christian life. In a letter to Wreech, Roloff writes:

False Christianity is alas! boisterously evil everywhere and gets daily worse in enjoying but alas! disgracefully abusing the means of salvation; so, with His love, the Lord turns to those *who have been distanced to that far enough* and proves that His mercy is not bound to place or people nor to this and to that.¹⁰⁴ (Wreech 1728, 91) [70]

The distance from home thus becomes a sign of chosenness and, as a consequence, stabilizes their spiritual self-esteem, as the prisoners are far from the deteriorating Christian world and are allowed to practice Christianity properly. They are now unchallenged by the ‘false Christianity’ back home, but they are also well prepared to meet and deal with it accordingly—as soon as the prisoners are allowed to return. [71]

Contact with Other Religious Traditions as Reported in the *Wahrhaftige Historie*

The sense of being chosen is even strengthened by the experience of the exotic that is connected to the Swedes’ awareness of the indigenous people of Siberia. In their surviving diaries, Swedish prisoners talk about situations of religious contact, especially the contact with orthodoxy whose ceremonial splendor is described intensely. Moreover, parts of the orthodox clergy seem to appreciate the establishment of the school. Wreech reports about an old Russian priest who took keen interest in it and admired ‘the work of God’ performed here.¹⁰⁵ To a certain extent, however, orthodoxy is described as the tempter of the true believers, offering freedom from imprisonment, offices in the service of the Czar, good salary and, not at least, the opportunity to marry a Russian woman to those who are willing to convert. [72]

However, there are also situations of contact with Islam, primarily involving the Tatars,¹⁰⁶ and with indigenous religions which all are subject of description and consideration in Wreech’s collective work, i.e., prominently with the religious beliefs of the Votiaks (Udmurts) and the Ostiaks (Khanty). Here, one encounters an object-language report on a situation of religious contact that is conspicuously multi-layered. In this report, there are more participants in the situation of contact than only two religious traditions (Pietists and ‘pagans’) meeting [73]

104 [My emphasis] “Die falsche Christenheit ist nun leider! überall ausgelassen böse, und wird unter allem Genuß, aber leider! schändlichstem Mißbrauch der GnadenMittel täglich ärger, so wendet sich der Herr mit seiner Liebe zu denen die davon weit genug entfernt worden und zeigt, wie seine Gnade weder an Ort noch Volck, noch diß oder das gebunden sey.” Also see the letter of Erik Westadius to Tobolsk: “[S]ie haben solchen Appetit nicht mehr, sie achten nun Christum so hoch nicht, oder sie bilden sich einen ganz andern Christum ein nicht einen niedrigen, armen, demüthigen, sanfftmüthigen, leidenden, liebreichen, sondern einen stoltzen, prächtigen, hochmüthigen, Ihn selbst liebenden Heyland und Bräutigam: Eben und noch ärger, als wie die Juden vormals gethan. Das Christenthum ist nun bey den meisten nur als eine Ceremonie, sie haben nun nicht solche starcke Bewegung zu GOTTes Wort. Das Blut Christi ist nicht mehr warm in ihren Herzen” (404).

105 “Den 28ten kam ein alter Rußischer Priester, der ein ziemlich Erkänntniß hatte, und äußerlich ein stilles Leben führete, in die Schule, der bezeigte sein Wohlgefallen an GOTTes Werck mit großer Bewunderung, und nach einigen recht erbaulichen Discoursen wünschte er uns sämtlich allen Seegen und Gnade zu unsern Verrichtungen auf Latein” (Wreech 1728, 417). A Tartar priest visited the school as well, participated in a school meeting with singing and prayer and took interest in a lecture from the Bible performed by the pupils though he did not understand it (see 1728, 590).

106 On the history of Islam among the Tatars see Khairullina et al. (2015, 567–70).

via some of their representatives. It may be safely assumed that in the description of the religious traditions the Pietist Swedes encountered, the encounter with the Lutheran Orthodoxy is always present as well. Accordingly, descriptions, analysis and explanation of contact situations to be found in the *Wahrhaftige Historie* are always instrumental to respond challenges of Lutheran orthodoxy.

In this context the lines on the (Muslim) Tatars¹⁰⁷ and their beliefs are particularly interesting, for they serve Wreech as an instrument in the basic encounter of Pietism and Lutheran Orthodoxy, i.e., as a positive counterpart to ‘false Christians.’¹⁰⁸ Though the Tatars did not accept basic features of the Christian faith, their attitude and habitus is described as humble and honorable—in contrast to those who are described as *Maul-Christen* (i.e., those who only grandiosely claim to be Christians) in Wreech’s index of his book. The report on the Tatars reads as follows:

The first ones mentioned, the Tartars, have the Mahometian religion and, therefore, consider our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ a great prophet; they know many things about him from the Gospel that they approve; but if one states that he is the Son of God, truly born human and having by his life and death redeemed humankind etc, they usually are embarrassed or, though in humble wording, let know that they do not believe in that; and in particular the scholars among them whom they call Muhla do not contemptuously speak about a religion. But they take great offence from the hoarse obvious idolatry and the dastardly life of those who call themselves Christians. They themselves lead an outwardly honorable life [...].¹⁰⁹ (Wreech 1728, 591) [75]

The honorable conduct of life of the Tatars is furthermore stressed by a later story related by Wreech. Being informed about the school’s lack of money, a Tatar merchant who had monetary claims to it, not only stepped down from claiming the full sum, but also even apologized for asking for his money and was content with less money.¹¹⁰ [76]

Thus, the interreligious contact between Pietists and Muslims is instrumental in the persistent intrareligious encounter between Pietism and Lutherans, first in the Siberian diaspora [77]

107 On the Islam of the Tobolsk Tartars see Forsyth (2000, 27): “In fact, this pre-Islamic religion persisted among all the Siberian ‘Tatar’ peoples from the Ural to the Altai right up until the twentieth century, even if, as in the case of the Kazaks and Tobolsk Tatars. It was interwoven with elements of Islam.”

108 Wreech’s (and Tabbert’s) text, thus, is part of the ‘revolution of the image of the Tatars’ inaugurated by Johann Georg Gmelin, as described by Happel (2013, 14–15).

109 “Erstgedachte nemlich die Tartern haben die Mahometanische Religion, und halten dahero unsern HERRN und Heyland JESUM CHRISTUM für einen grossen Propheten, wissen auch unterschiedliches von Jhm aus der Evangelischen Historie, dem sie Beyfall geben, saget man aber daß Er GOTTES SOHN sey, wahrer Mensch geworden, und das menschliche Geschlecht durch sein Leiden und Sterben erlöset habe etc. so schlagen sie gemeinlich die Augen nieder, oder geben doch, wiewol mit ziemlich bescheidenen Worten, zu verstehen, daß sie solches nicht glauben, danu besonders die Gelehrten unter ihnen, welche sie Muhla heissen, reden nicht gerne von einer einzigen Religion verächtlich. Aber an der groben offenbaren Abgötterey und dem ruchlosen Leben derer, die sich Christen nennen, ärgern sie sich sehr. Sie führen auch selbst ein äusserlich ehrbares Leben [...]”

110 See Wreech (1728, 738–39): “Als aber dem Tartar die Unmöglichkeit vorgestellt wurde, war er gar nicht ungehalten, sondern bat um Vergebung, daß er sein Geld forderte, mit der Versicherung, er wollte es nicht verlangen, wenn ihn nicht die Noth dazu triebe.” The honorable conduct concerning debts of the school is confirmed by another reports on the Tartar’s willingness to wait for their money for reasons of mutual trust: „Doch waren die gedachten Tartern gar willig zu warten und gerne zufrieden, wenn sie nur etwas weniges bekamen, mit der Versicherung daß sie an der kümfftigen richtigen Bezahlung nicht zweifelten, ja was noch mehr» einige trösteten zuweilen den Oeconomum mit der unfehlbaren Hülffe des Herren” (1728, 742).

but also, after the prisoner's return and with the publication of Wreech's book, in the Swedish and German homeland of the Pietist soldiers. The favorable comparison of Swedes and Tatars, performed by the Pietists, thus contrasts with the unfavorable comparison of Tatars and other Christians as performed by the Tatars. The consequences, therefore, are obvious. The Tatars, as Wreech relates, granted their trust particularly to those Swedes who honestly converted to Christ, i.e., those who had experienced a Pietist conversion experience.¹¹¹ It is under these preconditions that Wreech considers a conversion of the Tatars possible,¹¹² if only the missionaries could master their language and perform a honorable conduct of life (see Wreech 1728, 592).

As the Tatars, on the one hand, represent the religious opportunities of the Siberian exile, another group of indigenous people represents the actual dangers, miseries and threats.¹¹³ Within Wreech's collective work, the description of these threats is the task of the man who provided the books for his spiritual rebirth. Not only with regard to his theological library, Tabbert's (Strahlenberg) contribution is without doubt the most eminent of the Swedish prisoners at Tobolsk.¹¹⁴ Most of the ethnographic material in Wreech's volume is taken from his reports, among them his considerations on the Ostiaks (Khanty)¹¹⁵ from the year 1714, whom he describes as follows:

When we asked the Ostiacks if they believed in a God, they answered that they were well aware that there is a God but besides, they had another whom they called Schaitan and whom they worshiped and revered. Next to their huts, these poor people had little sheds or shacks in which they kept small stuffed or wooden idols. When they go hunting or fishing, they first approach these idols, bow and pray before them and move away afterwards. According to their report, the Schaitan then visits them in bushes or copses, and, in a human shape, talks to them; sometimes he appears in a fiery shape that is as clear as the sun so that they cannot look at him and he talks to them; he even tells them what they saw on this day and what they shall shoot (but he betrays them and he often lies to them, in particular, when they had incensed him). We also saw little drums as those the Laps have, on which they drum if somebody approaches in order to talk to the idols in which they worship the Schaitan.¹¹⁶ (Wreech 1728, 176)

111 See Wreech [-wreech_wahrhafte_1728, 592]: "Denn ich habe [...] gemerckt, daß obgedachte ehrbare Tartarn zu denen gefangenen Schweden, die sich von Herzen zu GOtt bekehret hatten, ein gutes Vertrauen fasseten, und gerne mit ihnen umgiengen."

112 Though the Russian authorities themselves might even be reluctant to do so. In a part of his letter that is not quoted in the *Wahrhafte Historie*, Tabbert writes: "Ja der | Herr vom Lande selbst, wil nicht gerne, daß die Tat- | tern zu klug werden sollen, meinende, daß zugleich | die politique und andere dem Reiche schädliche di = | nge möchten introduciret werden" (Knüppel 2018, 120).

113 On the condescending attitude of Europeans towards indigenous Shamanism see Dahlmann (2009, 45 and 110).

114 Michael Knüppel recently published two original letters of Tabbert's about his expeditions that partly became part of Wreech's *Wahrhafte Historie* (2018).

115 On the major aspects of the 'tribal religion' of the Khanty see Forsyth (2000, 15–16).

116 "Als wir die Ostiaken gefragt: ob sie einen GOtt glaubeten? antworteten sie, daß ihnen wol bewust, es sey ein GOtt, aber darneben hätten sie auch einen andern, den sie Schaitan nenneten, welchen sie anbeteten und ehreten. Nebst ihren Hütten hatten diese arme Menschen kleine höltzerne Schoppe oder Schräncke hangen, worinnen sie kleine ausgestopffete. oder höltzerne Bilder hatten. Wenn sie auf die Jagd, oder zum Fischen gehen, so treten sie erstlich vor diese Bilder, bücken sich, und beten vor ihnen, und wandern drauf fort. Denn komme der Schaitan, ihrem Bericht nach, zu ihnen im Busch oder Gehöltze, rede mit ihnen in menschlicher Gestalt, bisweilen aber erscheine er in feuriger Gestalt, die so klar wie die Sonne seyn sol, daß sie ihn nicht ansehen könten. und redete mit ihnen, ja er sagte ihnen. was sie den Tag über sahen

Tabbert describes the beliefs of the Khanty (condescendingly referred to as the ‘poor people’) as a conglomerate of known, and, in fact, notorious, elements.¹¹⁷ It seems to be based on a dualistic world view comprising a significant asymmetry. Though there seems to be a God, the reverence of the Ostiaks is directed towards its counterpart whose name sounds suspiciously like the Islamic devil.¹¹⁸ In Wreech’s index he is referred to as the ‘evil foe’ (*der böse Feind*).¹¹⁹ He is worshipped in an idolatric manner, using stuffed or wooden images.¹²⁰ The *Schaitan* seems to play an active part in every-day life, for he is closely associated to hunting success and even personally appears in fire and is, moreover, inclined to lie to them if not properly worshipped. Applying an *interpretatio lapponica*, the Swedes interpret the drums of the Ostiaks as shamanic drums they know about because of the contact with the Sami people in the very north of the Swedish empire—the Sámi being at that time notorious for their black arts (*mit Trommeln wie die Lappen ihre Zauberey betrieben*)¹²¹ (Wreech 1728, 908). Modern scholarship has examined the connection of Sami and (Proto-) Uralic beliefs, thus confirming the connection drawn by Tabbert.¹²² His description, however, depicts the region the prisoners are forced to stay as a place where the devil is openly worshipped.¹²³ It should be well noted that in times of Tabbert’s visit the Khanty religion was under persecution due

und schießen sollten, (doch betrüge er sie, und lüge ihnen oft was vor, sonderlich, wenn sie ihn erzürnet hatten) Wir sahen auch bey ihnen kleine Trummeln, wie die Lappen haben. auf welche sie schlagen, wenn jemand hinzu tritt, mit den Bildern, in welchen sie den Schaitan anbeten, zu reden.”

- 117 Widget and Balalaeva stress the fact that in historical times “the actual Khanty response to Christianity was weak at best,” for “the Orthodox Church has not made and significant inroads among the Khanty” (2011, 164–65; also compare Forsyth 2000, 134–35). Dahlmann (2009, 99) stresses the fact that for reasons of taxation, the Russian state before Peter the Great has not been that interested in missionizing the non-Russian peoples as to support the Orthodox Church sustainedly. Tabbert reports a corresponding observation: “[...] die nächsten Völ- | cker nun hier herunter wärts, und von Tomski ab, sind auf | Rußische Ahrt getauft, haben ein Meßiges Kreuzlein am Halse | hängen, dabey ein holtzern Bildchen in ihren Hütten, wovor sie sich | krenzigen und bücken; wißen aber fast nicht das geringste | mehr als diese Ceremonie, dabey aber behalten viele ihre alte |] alte heydnische Gebräuchen welches alles aber daher ent- | stehet, weil sie bis dato weder gewisse Kirchen gebauet, | da man sie versammeln kan, (zumal sie in den Wüsteneyen und | an den Strohmnen ziemlich zerstreuet wohnen) noch von der Rußischen | Geistlichkeit Vorsorge getragen wird, daß die armen Leute ein | beßeres unterrichtet werden; wie wol mein Herten Bruder | selbst weiß, daß wenn auch dieß geschehe, wir die Rußischen | Hirten meistens beschaffen, was denn wol von solcher zerstreu- | ten Heerde zu hoffen ist” (Knüppel 2018, 117).
- 118 On this point, Widget and Balalaeva comment: “While it is true that in response to inquiries Khanty often equate their high god, Torum, with the Christian God and occasionally opposed by the Devil, this equation is probably less a matter of demonstrable Christian influence than perhaps a Khanty attempt to accommodate their beliefs to the cultural categories of inquiring Russian ethnographers, as the Khanty understood them.” (Widget/ Balalaeva 2011, 12). This is all the more likely if the intensified efforts to missionize the Khanty right in the time of the Swedes’ presence in the region is taken into account: “Under Peter the Great’s orders, aggressive efforts were made to extinguish Khanty native religion by destroying Khanty images of their gods, attacking sacred sites, and subjecting Khanty to compulsory baptism. Death threats and physical punishments, usually whippings administered by the priest, were proscribed if they did not confirm to Orthodox religious customs” (Widget and Balalaeva 2011, 164). The Khanty, thus, were under great pressure to accommodate to the ideas of the politically hegemonic Christian tradition.
- 119 Compare second quotation from Tabbert’s report on the Ostiacks, Wreech (1728, 908).
- 120 This seems to be a misunderstanding of Tabbert’s, although the word *shaitan* was well in use among the Khanty, it seems to have been used to describe the wooden images of the gods and not an evil entity the images represent (see Widget and Balalaeva 2011, 109).
- 121 “With drums as the Laps do their sorcery with.” See on the Siberian Shamanic drums and the Europeans’ fascination with them Happel (2017).
- 122 See for example the ‘three-zone cosmos’ that both Sámi and Khanty (these as one of the ‘most conservative Finno-Ugric people’) seem to have acknowledged (see Widget and Balalaeva 2011, 103; compare also Forsyth 2000, 15).
- 123 “Ich muß aber hiebey mich doch ver- | wundern (ob es zwar kein Anfang fast zu nennen) was der | Fürst der Finsterniß, und der in der Lufft herschet, für ein- | en Grimm, und Zorn heget; wo er nur prasumiret, der Name | Ihsus der der einst sol bekant werden” (Knüppel 2018, 117).

to decrees of the Metropolitan Filofey, who threatened those who resisted Christianization with death.¹²⁴

The seemingly naïve beliefs of the Khanty confirm the observer's (religious) superiority. [81]
Confronted with the Ostiak's beliefs, the Pietist Swedes adopt an enlightened and pragmatic perspective¹²⁵ in explaining religious phenomena:

The Schaitan, they said, at times punishes them with headaches and stomach ache [82]
(that, according to our opinion, is due to the baccy or tobacco they smoke and to the roots and mushrooms they eat). We gave them tobacco for fish and game (that they brought us), they smoked it and swallowed the smoke, then they dropped like dead and unconscious, and said hereafter that the Schaitan had tormented them.¹²⁶ (Wreech 1728, 177)

Moreover, the children of the Ostiaks are brought up as 'unreasonable cattle' (*unvernünftiges Vieh*), [83]
women are bought by their future husbands, while premarital intercourse is allowed (i.e. before the price of the bride is fully paid). The number of women an Ostiak can marry depends simply on the number he can sustain. In response to Tabbert's question about their belief in an immortal soul, they answer positively, but they differentiate between dying on the hunt or in fight (then the soul would go upwards), and dying at home (then the soul would go downwards and belong to the Schaitan) (see Wreech 1728, 178–79).

The following lines serve as a summary of the *Wahrhafte Historie's* attitude towards the [84]
Khanty. After having presented his positive account of the Tatars, the author comments on the Khanty in a contrasting manner:

It is for certain that they are really miserable people whose spiritual misery one [85]
has to lament in particular, and to implore GOD the LORD, who wants that all human beings are helped and may come to recognize the truth, on their behalf.¹²⁷
(Wreech 1728, 594)

After lamenting the poor state of the Ostiaks and cross-referencing it once more to Tabbert's [86]

124 Dahlmann quotes a decree of mission: "Find the seductive false idols, burn them with fire, and destroy their pagan temples and built at the very place chapels and put up holy icons, and baptize them, the Ostiaks. [...] If they present themselves to be resistant to our Holiest Decree, they will be punished with death" (Dahlmann 2009, 100). Tabbert himself is well aware of the situation, as it reads in the *Wahrhafte Historie*: "In Summe, ich kan die die äußerliche Einfältig- und Frömmigkeit dieser Heyden nicht gnung beschreiben; und daß die meisten von Natur so stille vor sich hin leben, darzu mag auch vieles contribuiren, weil sie unter der Rußischen Bothmäßigkeit leben, und von denen selben sehr gering geachtet werden" (Wreech 1728, 906). In his original letter, Tabbert is even more plain: "In Summa, ich kann die äu- | ßerliche Einfalt, und Frömmigkeit dieser Heyden nicht genug | beschreiben, und weil die meisten von Natur so stille vor sich, | so mag doch auch eintheils viel dazu contribuiren, weil sie un- | ter der Rußischen Pressure leben, die sie so wenig wie | Hunde achten [...]" (Knüppel 2018, 116).

125 On the contact of enlightenment and indigenous beliefs in the Swedish Empire itself compare Stünkel (2020).

126 "Dieser Schaitan, sagten sie, straffte sie auch zu Zeiten mit Kopf-Schmerzen und Bauchgrimmen, (welches doch nach unserer Meinung eher von dem Schaar oder Taback herrühren kann, den sie rauchen, und von denen Wurzeln und Schwammen, die sie eßen.) Wir gaben ihnen Schaar für Fische und Wild, (welches sie uns zubrachten,) den rauchten sie, und schluckten den Rauch hinter, fielen darauf als tod, und gantz von Sinnen nieder; sagten nachgehends, der Schaitan hätte sie geplaget."

127 "Dieses ist gewiß, daß sie insgesamt gar elende Leute sind, derer geistliches Elend man noch insonderheit Ursache hat zu bejammern, und ihretwegen GOtt den Herrn, der da will, daß allen Menschen geholfen werde, und zur Erkänntniß der Wahrheit kommen, anzuflehen."

report, Wreech relates their hedonist attitude towards temporal pleasures to the corresponding behavior of those ‘Christians by name,’ who ‘seek their pleasures’ there and do not ‘recognize the Creator in all things’ (see Wreech 1728, 595). By doing so, the author applies the insights about the Ostiak’s religiosity to the intrareligious conflict and tries to compromise the false Christian by associating him to the Ostiak heathens and idolaters.

In Wreech’s presentation of Tabbert’s reports, Siberia and the local religious field are presented as a liminal region regarding transfer processes. As a contact zone not only of diverse religious traditions, but also of civilization and wilderness (see Dahlmann 2009, 25) it becomes part of the reports of religious encounter, i.e., the explicit encounter with Orthodox Christianity and non-Christian traditions, but also in the implicit intrareligious encounter with Lutheran Orthodoxy. The latter zone of contact is the background of the other contacts that are presented to the reader and is the implicit focus of the Pietist’s reports. [87]

Conclusion: To Tobolsk and Back Stronger than Ever

On the return of the Swedish prisoners of war to their homeland Wreech comments as follows: [88]

Among those, who thus regained their bodily freedom, there were a great number of high and low people, who in captivity converted from darkness to light, and, thus, gained proper freedom in Christ, so that the realm of Sweden received a blessing of true Children of GOD, who, if they remain faithful (on which there is no doubt), amply compensate for the suffered loss of people and land.¹²⁸ (Wreech 1728, 842) [89]

According to Wreech, although the Lutheran Army and State of Sweden suffered severe losses in the Great Northern war, Sweden shall spiritually emerge stronger than ever. This transformation was attributed to the Pietist rebirths in Siberia and other parts of Russia, which claimed the true freedom in Christ in the country’s so-called ‘Age of Liberty’ that followed the era of the absolutist kings as champions of Lutheranism. From humble beginnings, corresponding to the poor state of the dislocated Swedes, Pietism gradually gained strength over time and space. Eventually, Pietism returned triumphantly, or at least as a significant challenge that demanded a corresponding response from the state and Lutheran orthodoxy. Having resisted despair and (orthodox) temptation in Russia, the former prisoners are likely to stay firm to their new convictions. [90]

The case of the self-reflection of the Swedish Pietist prisoners in Siberia as manifested in Curt Friedrich von Wreech’s *Wahrhaftige Historie* provides scholars studying situations of religious contact with a significant example. It illustrates the long-distance transmission of religious ideas, their consolidation in a distant area in the face of a religiously diverse (polyphone) region (early Tsarist Siberia), and their re-import or repercussion back to the original places of religious encounter.¹²⁹ It also shows the profound effects of a (political) promotor [91]

128 “Unter denen nun, die auf solche Weise ihre leibliche Freyheit erhielten, war eine ziemliche Anzahl von Hohen und Niedrigen, die in der Gefangenschaft sich von der Finsterniß zum Licht bekehret und also die rechte Freyheit in Christo erlanget hatten, so, daß das Reich Schweden einen großen Seegen von wahren Kindern GOTTes emfieng welche, wenn sie treu bleiben, (daran nicht zweifele) den erlittenen leiblichen Verlust an Volck und Ländern reichlich compensiren.”

129 In the case of the Swedish prisoners, there is, accordingly, a perhaps surprising answer to the question posed by Dittmar Dahlmann about the particular way of contact of cultures within a huge space such as Siberia. It is not at least the distance to the original place of encounter that allowed for sustained results among the parties involved (see Dahlmann 2009, 18).

of contact situations with regard to intensity and expansion. Here, religious ideas are being solidified in exile. For example, they are solidified by the orthodox ‘temptation’, something that—in contrast to the poor soldiers in the country who wished to escape their slave-like conditions for the worldly pleasures of Egypt, which seemed to provide some security—only very few Tobolsk Swedes succumbed to. There is also the repulsive example of the ‘pagan’ tribes, that is, in particular, the Ostiaks, that served to solidify the pietist convictions of the prisoners. On the other hand, the example of the devout Muslims and admiring orthodox priests, who, in Wreech’s report, appear to appreciate the piety of the reborn soldiers, further strengthened these convictions. The pietist ideas are closely connected to a certain carrier strata (the so-called *Karolinerpietisten*). Upon their return, these ideas triggered a stronger and more demarcating reaction of the predominant religious tradition, Lutheran orthodoxy, leading to the inauguration of the Act of Conventicles of 1726, the Diet of 1734, and the Decree on Religion of 1735. According to Johannes Ljungberg, the 1730s brought “a sense of Jacobian terror into the Swedish religious politics” (Ljungberg 2017, 232). Simultaneously, the challenging tradition, Pietism, is forced to a more radical approach, that is now willing to sever the bonds between the Pietists and the Church—something that the Pietist leaders, such as August Hermann Francke, have declined to do (see Pleijel 1935, 181). Thus, the ‘challenging’ part gained its special force, its threatening momentum via great distance, that had previously allowed it to prosper due to the lack of official church authority.¹³⁰ It is, therefore, an intensifying contact situation of a special kind: for in this case contact is not limited to a certain space, but is rather a process that may in fact cover virtually thousands of miles, not only one-directional, but rather reciprocally as a matter of ‘there and back again.’

Moreover, this case shows how a predominant tradition involuntarily provides its heterodox counterpart with the formal structures for survival, expansion, and consolidation. The latter inscribes itself into the model forms of the former, thus at the same time claiming for protection of authorities. In the case of the Carolean Pietists, these structures encompassed not only the forms of the official church, but also the structures of a religiosified military, which provided them with the self-understanding as the holy army, the condescending god-like leader and fundamental obedience to God’s will. All of these aspects were suitable model forms into which Pietism could easily inscribe itself. [92]

Last but not least, it can be shown that dynamics and stability of the religious traditions involved in a situation of contact are closely interconnected. The Swedish church in Siberia represents the stabilization of Pietism via institutionalization that reverts to the Hallensian Pietist tradition as exemplified by the *Franckesche Stiftungen*. After all, Pietism, having gained momentum through a 4000 kilometer-journey, displayed a dynamic force in the Swedish heartland that could only be countered by stout (solid) measures of the alliance of state and religion.¹³¹ [93]

130 Later accounts stress the fact that even the military chaplains of the Swedish army that is, those considered responsible for orthodox Lutheran indoctrination succumbed to the dynamics of the Pietist movement in Siberia and joined it: “Diese neue Geistesströmung wurde anfangs von den Feldpredigern nicht getheilt; diese schienen ihr zu mißtrauen und waren zu tief in der kirchlichen Orthodoxie jener Zeit befangen, als daß sie sich schnell in die neue Regung finden konnten. Aber nach und nach wurden auch sie lebendig und ein großes Band des für einander Betens und Helfens umschlang die Gefangenen, so daß Wreech mehr als einmal sagt, „die Wohlthat, die der Herr den Gefangenen durch die Noch erzeugt habe, sei gar nicht zu ermessen, des Segens zu geschweigen, den die also erweckten dem Lande ihrer Gefangenschaft gebracht hätten” (Glaubrecht 1855, 20–21).

131 In the long run, Carola Nordbäck argues, Pietists ideas succeeded even in Sweden, as they in combination with ideas of the early Enlightenment gradually forced Swedish orthodoxy towards pragmatic tolerance

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towards confessionalists of non-Lutheran denominations, removing orthodox obstacles preventing communication and exchange with on the political and the religious level (Nordbäck 2004, 416–17).

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