

Extract from **Amelie Lanier** at **Context XXI**

<http://contextxxi.org/--amelie-lanier--.html>
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State and Church

■ AMELIE LANIER

For someone not experienced in religious affairs, more so for an atheist, it is very difficult to understand the differences between the Orthodox and the Roman church, the antagonism and even at times bitter infighting between them. It is evident that mostly it has been a struggle for power and influence, trying to gain territory that belonged to the adversary.



The Preobrazhenskaya (transformation) church, part of the museum of rural architecture on the island of Kizhi, in Lake Onega.

It has been in a bad state for many years, due to the extreme humidity and winds on this island on Lake Onega. There are continuous attempts to restore it. The restoration works are progressing. The church has been supported from inside with a strong scaffolding and now its various floors are being partially lifted with jacks in order to exchange the decayed beams which are numerous given the age of the church and the humidity of the lake and its

surroundings. The restoration works have started years ago. The church isn't accessible to the public. There are calculations that the restoration will last until 2014.

The Preobrazhenskaya church is a "summer church", it cannot be heated. In winter the people used the other church beside it in the "pogost" (religious centre of a village or even some villages) of Kizhi, the Pokrovskaya (protection) church.

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As to the differences of liturgy and dogma, the unified churches of Eastern Europe are closer to many orthodox churches, than to most catholic ones. Also among the Catholics there are wider gaps and animosities between Latin American branches and Rome, than between for example Serb and Russian orthodox churches.



Detail from the church above.

The wooden shingles are made by hand and

should be from asp tree which is considered the best wood for these shingles. Some of those onion dome roofs are left in their natural colour, some are painted. The ones in Kizhi are painted in silver.

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I believe the main difference between Roman and Eastern church is in the relation between ecclesiastical and worldly power. The orthodox churches are national churches, the priests and patriarchs always considered themselves the first patriots of the country and their most important aim was to serve their nation. The rulers of the countries of orthodox faith knew they could count on their clergy in their *nation-building*. And Constantinople always consented to the idea of national churches, as a means of still maintaining themselves as the main ally of those new entities, states or dioceses. So Simeon founded a Bulgarian Patriarchate in 917, and Stefan Dušan founded a Serb Patriarchate in 1346. Orthodoxy has played a decisive role in the Balkans: it was the Serb resistance, backed by their church, that finally drew out the foreign rulers out of the Balkans.

A different relationship than with the Balkan's rulers developed between Constantinople and Russia.

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Forschungstätigkeit über die Geschichte Osteuropas und des österreichischen Kreditwesens. Publikationen zum Transformationsprozeß nach 1989 und den neueren Entwicklungen im Bankwesen. Wohnort: Zell

am See. Motto: „Wenn die Pforten der Wahrnehmung gereinigt würden, würde alles dem Menschen erscheinen, wie es ist: unendlich.“ (William Blake, Die Hochzeit des Himmels

und der Hölle)

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