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# Dissimulation and Memory in Early Modern Poland-Lithuania: the Art of Forgetting

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## Introduction: Orthodox Christians in "the Age of Dissimulation"

The most well-known practitioner of dissimulation among early modern Christians of the Eastern Rite is Meletii Smotryts′kyi (ca. 1577–1633), the Orthodox archbishop of Polatsk (in modern-day Belarus), who was suspected of being a Uniate for several years before he was openly charged with apostasy during a council of the Orthodox hierarchy of Poland-Lithuania in August of 1628.[1] For the previous year Smotryts′kyi had lived a double life, outwardly an Orthodox archbishop but secretly a Uniate, having formally accepted the Union with Rome on July 6, 1627. In this period of clandestine Uniatism and the years leading up to it, during which he flirted with conversion, Smotryts′kyi fulfilled his official duties, playing a leading role in Orthodox synods and risking exposure that would bring public disgrace and even physical harm. Smotryts′kyi had a positive reason for keeping his conversion secret: he argued that the Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition should allow him to remain in office as an Orthodox bishop so that he might convene a council of the Orthodox hierarchy and elite and, "received as a schismatic [an Orthodox], would be able to set forth and to explain the twofold causes of the present discord of the Church . . . and to cause doubt for them in the schismatic faith (through the reasons that had taught him himself that there was no contradiction in thing [essence], only in words, between the holy Greek and Latin fathers)."[2] Smotryts′kyi concluded his request for secrecy by comparing his situation with that of Jesuits

1. In keeping with early seventeenth-century usage, "Uniatism" here denotes the church that would later be known as Greek Catholicism. A Uniate was a proponent of papal supremacy over the Orthodox Church in Poland-Lithuania.

2. Meletii Smotryts′kyi, *Rus′ Restored: Selected Writings of Meletij Smotryc′kyj 1610–1630*, trans. and annotated by David Frick (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 357. This quote is found in a report of Smotryts′kyi's petitions, couched in the voice of Uniate Metropolitan Josyf Ruts′kyi to the Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, but in the words of Smotryts′kyi himself. Words in square brackets have been added by the authors for clarity; the parenthetical remarks occur in the original.

engaged in mission work with non-Christians: "Wherefore, indeed, if the fathers of the Society of Jesus and the other priests in India can live with the heathens in secular habit, this should cause no one scandal, especially since, with God's help, we will hope for the much greater fruit of holy Union from his hidden Catholicism . . . than if he were now known by all."[3]

Smotryts′kyi was not dissembling out of strict necessity; his dissimulation had a positive purpose: the conversion of the Orthodox. In fact, Smotryts′kyi's behavior epitomized the time referred to by historian Perez Zagorin as the "age of dissimulation."[4] The era of confessional conflicts in Europe and contact between Christians and non-Christian populations in Asia and the Americas lent a new urgency to the study of the persuasive arts by polemicists and missionaries of the time. Mental reservation achieved quasi-legitimacy among the Jesuits in the seventeenth century.[5] In a world expanding beyond Europe and the established churches, common ground had to be privileged over differences. This was true not only for religious nonconformists avoiding condemnation for heresy, but also for missionaries seeking to convert non-Christians. Finally, it was true for clerical elites like Smotryts′kyi, who were attempting to highlight points of agreement in raging religious conflicts. For pro-unionists of every stripe—the Catholics and Orthodox who sought to heal the Great Schism, or the Catholics and Protestants who worked to remedy the ruptures of sectarianism—dissimulation was an essential practice for creating unity in a bitterly divided world.

For Orthodox Christians, a lack of consensus in the Church about doctrinal issues also inclined polemicists like Smotryts′kyi to avoid taking unequivocal stands and to maintain a silence around their thoughts. The rules of the art of dissimulation (*ars dissimulandi*), well known to Europeans of all confessions, were practiced to no lesser degree by Orthodox Christians; if anything, their uncertainty about authority led Orthodox thinkers to be among the greatest of all early modern dissimulators.[6] In fact, if we look closely at the words of the Orthodox cleric Smotryts′kyi, we see dissimulation operating on a highly internalized level—namely, in Smotryts′kyi's mental processing of competing truths and use of dialectic to choose between them. Consider the self-alienated manner in which he assigned rhetoric a pivotal role in effecting his conversion in the passage cited above: according to Smotryts′kyi, the practice of dialectic itself ("the reasons that had taught him") revealed to him that the schism between the Greek and the Latin churches was an error. Furthermore, in what seems an attempt to recreate for the reader his own conversion experience, Smotryts′kyi proposed that his refutations of his earlier defenses of Orthodoxy be published, so that Orthodox readers, too, might embark upon the same journey of discovery

3. Ibid., 358.
4. Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 330.
5. Eventually, a widespread aversion to it among Catholics as well as Protestants would lead Pope Innocent XI to condemn the institution in 1679. See: Edmund Leites, *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1988), 6.
6. David Frick, *Meletij Smotryc′kyj* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 3–4.

by means of formal argumentation.[7] Rhetoric presented a mechanism for investigating knowledge that did not require the repudiation of preconceptions; a person could be led to the truth from where he stood, without first disavowing his beliefs. The practice of dissimulation of those beliefs was required, however, so that ideas that challenged them could be considered. Just as Smotryts′kyi considered dissimulation necessary for the dialectic to work upon himself, he expressed faith that his Orthodox audience would possess some capacity for dissimulating belief so that they, too, could be led to the truth.[8]

Obviously, this was neither the "Machiavellian" dissimulation practiced at the court of a sixteenth-century prince nor the religious practice of Nicodemism.[9] Instead, it was an epistemological tool and a cognitive operation. Until now, though, scholarly attention has been given primarily to political dissimulation rather than to dissimulation as a mental practice. Yet, the idea of dissimulation as a mental practice is vital to understanding how thinkers of the age could apply logic without fear for their mortal souls. Early modern literati did not necessarily cast aside their religious beliefs to engage in rational experimentation. As we propose here, they instead practiced dissimulation on a cognitive level and resorted to well-known rhetorical methodologies to speculate while preserving a mental and spiritual stasis.

What follows is an introduction to dissimulation in the early modern period across eastern Europe, including the communities of the Orthodox of Poland-Lithuania; a hypothesis about how dissimulation was practiced as an epistemological method, using the tactical oblivion learned in the memory arts; and, finally, three cases of speculation supported by dissimulation engaged in by Orthodox and Uniates of Poland-Lithuania.

## Dissimulation as the Human Condition

"The boundary between what we reveal and what we do not, and some control over that boundary, are among the most important attributes of our humanity," the philosopher Thomas Nagel writes in his famous "Concealment and Exposure." In his article, Nagel argues that dissimulation, "reticence and nonacknowledgment," is beneficial, and he introduces the idea that an act of balancing—controlling the "boundary between what we reveal and what we do not"—is necessary for human coexistence. While it has become a commonplace to link dissimulation to Machiavellian discourse in the political and social sciences, the phenomenon extends far beyond the realm of the sociopolitical. Nagel himself hints that dissimulation operates on a cognitive

7. Smotryts′kyi, *Rus Restored*, 356–57.
8. On Meletii Smotryts′kyi's dissimulative practices, see David Frick, "Fides Meletiana: Marcantonio de Dominis and Meletij Smotryc′kyj," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3/4 (December 1991): 383–414.
9. Nicodemism was the term coined by John Calvin to designate a strategy of dissembling or concealing one's religious beliefs in order to escape persecution. A reference to the biblical Nicodemus of John 3:1–2, who visited Jesus secretly and always under the cover of darkness, Nicodemism was adopted widely in the sixteenth century by Protestant minorities under pressure by Catholic authorities.

level and is creative, for it preserves the unarticulated "sheer chaotic tropical luxuriance of the inner life."[10]

The Orthodox Christians of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century central Europe practiced dissimulation in part out of necessity, for they experienced some of the same political and confessional pressures as did their Protestant and Catholic counterparts in England, France, Italy, and Germany. Particularly troublesome for the Orthodox was the necessity of dividing their loyalties in state and religious matters: politically, they were subject to non-Orthodox monarchs (the Polish kings and the Hapsburg emperors), while confessionally, they were subject to patriarchs appointed and controlled by the enemies of those monarchs (the Ottoman Turks and the Muscovite tsars). Nevertheless, the non-Catholic Christians of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth also engaged in dissimulation as a creative discourse: inarticulateness was carefully held in balance with expressiveness to suit the demands of modernity, urban life, and an increasingly heterogeneous world. Furthermore, Orthodox thinkers and writers engaged in a dissimulative discourse inhering in Eastern Christian tradition, which gave status to "reticence and nonacknowledgment" in a way that the Latin tradition of Thomas Aquinas did not. Eastern Christian thought, which shaped the development of the Russian and east-central European intellectual traditions, valued absence as well as presence, silence as well as utterance.[11] The Orthodox thinkers analyzed here shared much of the cultural experience of their counterparts in Latin Europe but stood apart as heirs to a late Byzantine tradition that balanced being and nonbeing. Thus, we will explore dissimulation as a rhetorical practice, one which accommodated the most essential certainties of the late medieval mindset, including an awareness of eternal damnation and the salvation of the soul, but which simultaneously obscured them so as to enable a shift from theocentrism to a pre-Enlightenment episteme based upon the preeminence of disciplinarity, reason, and scientific discourse.

## Antinomic Dissimulation: Balancing Absence and Presence

While studies of west European dissimulation are prolific, dissimulation in the greater Slavic context has remained on the margins of interest for researchers.[12] Yet our focus, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ruthenians, presents fertile ground for studying the emergence of dissimulation as an art.

10. Thomas Nagel, "Concealment and Exposure," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 27, no. 1, (December 1988): 3–4.

11. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY, 1976), 42. Identification of the Orthodox Church with apophaticism stems from the negative theology propagated by early church fathers, notably, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor.

12. Notable exceptions are the works of Lech Szczucki, "Ars dissimulandi: Andrzeja Dudycza rozstanie z Kościołem," in Maria Bogucka and Janusz Tazbir, eds., *Kultura polska a kultura europejska: Prace ofiarowane Januszowi Tazbirowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1987) and Frick, *Meletij Smotryc′kyj*. The extensive literature on dissimulation in western Europe includes Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del cinquecento, ricerche storiche* (Florence, 1939); Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo: Similazione e dissimu-*

The term "Ruthenian" indicates the people of the eastern regions of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the early modern period. While the Ruthenian demographic was predominantly Eastern Orthodox by confession, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation both swept through the region, leaving in their wake concentrations of Protestant and Catholic Ruthenians.[13] Indeed, dabbling in new confessions became prevalent enough for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to be known as the "refuge of the heretics" (*asylum hereticorum*), a safe harbor for radical Protestants and Antitrinitarians often persecuted in other countries.[14] Large populations of Jews, Muslim Tatars, Greeks, and Armenians maintained linguistic and cultural communities across the area. The problem of tolerant coexistence became particularly intense in this situation of multiconfessionalism, making dissimulation a feature of daily life in the Commonwealth.

In the late sixteenth century, after the Council of Trent, the Orthodox Church in the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania came under increasing pressure to accept a union with the Catholic Church and submit to papal authority. At this time, Orthodox Christians comprised a religious minority in Poland-Lithuania, but a large one that outnumbered the Catholic population in many of the eastern provinces of the Commonwealth. An attempt to force the Gregorian calendar reform of 1582 on the Orthodox of Poland-Lithuania transformed the Catholic–Orthodox confessional divide into an issue affecting everyday life and provoked strong resistance from the Orthodox laity. Furthermore, the actions of the Eastern patriarchs undermined the Orthodox metropolitanate; in transiting Ruthenian lands to gather alms for the Church, they sold episcopal offices and lay privileges, diffusing church authority and creating competing power centers within bishoprics. In 1596, the Ruthenian Orthodox hierarchy—the metropolitan of Kyiv and most of the bishops—agreed to a union with the Catholic Church (the Union of Brest) in exchange for the promise of greater political power, in particular, senatorial seats and the king's help in consolidating authority over their "unruly" dioceses. Few of the lower clergy or the peasantry accepted the Union, however, and it resulted in even greater conflict: the Orthodox hierarchs and a minority of the Orthodox pledged their allegiance to Rome (this faction was termed "Uniates" or, later, "Greek Catholics"), while most of the laity, under the leadership of Orthodox confraternities, rejected union with the Holy See (in the polemics of the Uniates and Catholics the remaining Orthodox were thus termed "schismatics"). In support of the newly minted Uniate hierarchy, the king of Poland issued decrees in 1596 that effectively outlawed any part of the Orthodox Church not in union with Rome. Officially, all formerly Orthodox churches, parishes, and hierarchs were either Uniate or illegal, a situation that persisted until 1632, when the newly elected king,

lazione religiosa nell'Europe dell' 500 (Turin, 1970); Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 2009); Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*.

13. Frick, *Meletij Smotryc'kyj*, 229–30, discusses contemporary self-definitions of "Ruthenian." We use the term to include Protestants, as well as Orthodox and Uniates.

14. This is the description of Poland by Papal Nuncio Giulio Ruggieri in 1568. See Stanisław Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce w skróceniu: 5 tomów w jednym, z dwoma mapami* (Cracow, 1908), 3.

Władysław IV, moderated the royal stance and restored some rights to the Orthodox, including the right to a metropolitan and bishops. It was one of the legacies of the Union of Brest, however, that the Orthodox remained suspicious of their hierarchs; metropolitans and bishops were often rumored to have converted to the Roman confession secretly.[15]

The Ruthenian writers of the early seventeenth century came predominantly from the clergy and the monasteries, but because crypto-converts and members of other confessions wrote anonymously on behalf of the Orthodox, authorship itself carried the taint of possible Nicodemism.[16] Yet, dissimulation was used by Ruthenians in texts as a rhetorical technique and a means of organizing a narrative, as well; it was not merely a mode of behavior (attegiamento) or practical strategy of survival.[17] It was proof of the link between dissimulation and philology. Dissimulation—especially as conceived by its "founding fathers," Domingo de Soto and Martín de Azpilcueta—was a means of exploring "the potentialities and limitations of human language, and the relationship between words and things."[18] It belonged to the sphere of hermeneutics as well as morality.[19] In truth, texts were the most visible manifestation of early modern dissimulation, for Ruthenians as well as other Europeans.

Within the realm of rhetoric, how does dissimulation function? Dissimulation is founded upon the antinomy of clarity and inscrutability. It is not about completely silencing facts or ideas. Instead, it involves balancing presence and absence, secrecy and revealing. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) wrote in his essay "On Simulation and Dissimulation" that the art of dissimulation should be practiced only by those possessing the judgment to decide what to disclose, what to keep secret, and what to show "at half lights."[20] Dissimulation, then, was not the same as absolute concealment or absence; in fact, it "incorporates openness," openness that "itself actually is a form of dissimulation."[21] Dissimulation, therefore, was a strategy that required

15. Serhii Plokhy [Plokhii], *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford, 2001), 65–95.

16. Significantly, some of the immediate responses to the Union of Brest were authored by non-Orthodox or anonymous writers: the Protestant, Marcin Broniewski, who published under the pseudonym "Christophor Philalet" (*Apokrysis albo odpowiedź na książki o synodzie brzeskim 1596*, published in 1597 in Vilnius, followed by a Church Slavic translation printed in Ostrih in 1598), and an anonymous author, "Kliryk Ostroz′kyi" (*Otpys na lyst . . . Potiia*, published in 1598/99 in Ostrih).

17. John J. Martin, "Nicodemismo," in Adriano Prosperi, Vincento Lavenia, and John Tedeschi, eds., *Dizionario storico dell′ Inquisizione* (Pisa, 2010), 2:1115.

18. Domingo de Soto (1494–1560) was a Dominican theologian and one of the founders of the School of Salamanca. Martín de Azpilcueta (1491–1583), also known as Doctor Navarrus, was a theologian and economist and one of the ideologues of the doctrine of mental reservation.

19. Stefania Tutino, "Nothing But the Truth? Hermeneutics and Morality in the Doctrines of Equivocation and Mental Reservation in Early Modern Europe," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 116.

20. Francis Bacon, *The Essays: Colours of Good and Evil & Advancement of Learning of Francis Bacon* (London, 1906), 12.

21. Martin Dzelzainis, "Bacon's 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation,'" in Michael Hattaway, ed., *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (Oxford,

balancing the extremes of complete openness and complete closure. It was a matter of judgment and prudence. In the elusive (and highly dissimulative) rhetoric of Bacon, the ideal was to possess "the penetration of judgment [to] . . . discern what things are to be laid open, and what to be secreted." Thus, he continues, a person who was not sure he possessed this capacity for judgment should choose the safer way—that is, complete closure, absolute secretiveness.[22]

It is vital to understand that dissimulation, in all its manifestations, was fundamentally discursive in nature. As was true of all discourse, it had in the early modern period a "natural" form (involuntary dissimulation—dissimulating under threat of death, for example) and a "trained" form, a complex mental skill that by the seventeenth century was increasingly associated with the virtue of prudence.[23] As a learned skill, the art of dissimulation shared capabilities with another even more prevalent, formally-structured art of the time: *ars memorialis*, the art of memory. Like dissimulation, memory can be understood narrowly, as an involuntary reflex—a characterization of memory that has been strengthened in the past century, since psychoanalysis identified memory ineluctably with trauma.[24] Yet, memory, like dissimulation, also has a rhetorical manifestation. For over two-and-a-half millennia, people considered memory to be a formal art, a skill that involved rhetorical operations enabling concealment and disclosure, reduction and expansion—the same operations, in other words, that characterize dissimulative discourse. It was in the realm of language that memory as an art was practiced and dissimulation implemented—in an oath of allegiance, the reinterpretation of one's own words, or a public debate. We will make the case here that the art of dissimulation exploited some of the mental apparatuses learned for the practice of the art of memory. A mind organized to recall information at will was a mind organized to selectively dissimulate.

The rhetorical operations enabling the mental balancing act of dissimulation were learned as aspects of the art of memory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as will be shown below. A memory skill that was borrowed with great application for the practice of dissimulation was an art of provisional forgetting that inhered in the very practice of the memory arts. The movement of the art of forgetting away from its dependent role within the art of memory led to the development of a modern art of oblivion, with its capacity for accommodating conflicting ideas. The early modern Ruthenian literary tradition, however, shows earlier evidence of oblivion operating uncoupled from the art of memory. Thus, the study of the Ruthenian art of dissimulation as it appears in the texts of the epoch sheds light on a broader trend toward an art of forgetting that marked modernity in European culture.

UK, 2003), 237.
    22. Bacon, *Essays*, 11.
    23. Snyder, *Dissimulation*, 14.
    24. See Anne Whitehead, "Involuntary Memories," in *Memory* (London, 2009), 84–122; and Patrick H. Hutton, "The Art of Memory Reconceived: From Rhetoric to Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48, no. 3 (July 1987): 371–92.

## The Art of Memory

### The Memory Arts: Building Blocks of the Art of Dissimulation

Thus far, we have discussed dissimulation as a sociopolitical reflex (dissimulation motivated by expediency) and as a discursive phenomenon (dissimulation as rhetoric). Focusing upon dissimulation as rhetoric, we have considered that it consists in balancing revelation with nondisclosure. Now we will discuss the ways in which dissimulation was practiced by the Ruthenians—in particular, how the mental operations taught as part of the art of memory enabled the balancing of revelation and disclosure. A case study from the mid-seventeenth century reveals how an old memory exercise was used to criticize the authorities while obscuring the purposefulness of the writer and dissimulating the very presence of an author.

In a prison cell in Warsaw in the winter and spring of 1644/45, the Orthodox monk Afanasii Filipovich awaited trial by royal authorities for communicating secrets to an emissary from Muscovy, Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich L′vov. Afanasii was the hegumen (head) of the Orthodox Monastery of St. Simeon in Brest and a vociferous opponent of the Union who had been arrested for revealing an anti-Muscovite conspiracy (the grooming of a candidate to the Muscovite throne in the 1620s, a false Dmitry named Jan Luba) to the tsar's representative. Under repeated questioning and physical mistreatment, Afanasii produced numerous writings, both exculpatory narratives for his interrogators and appeals to the king that included continued polemics against the Uniate and Catholic churches.[25]

Among the works written by Afanasii in prison was a curious one, based upon the thesis central to the debate between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches, that the five patriarchs reflected the image of God's church better than the one pope. Afanasii begins the text with a statement: "One can well recognize from the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit what is the true ecclesiastical order: [it is] in the five patriarchs [Orthodoxy], or in the single pope [Catholicism]."[26] This statement prepares the reader for a comparison of the multipolar Orthodox Church and the unitary Catholic hierarchy. What follows is a list of seven attributes or spiritual gifts with a breakdown of each gift into subordinate elements. After "wisdom" Afanasii writes "authority/government, that is, the Lord King in his kingdom"; after the next gift, "counsel," he writes "council, that is, the senate, synod, diets, and all courts of law." The column of spiritual gifts continues, numbered 1–7, with a word or phrase that was associated with the spiritual gift and further expansion of each of these into constituent parts. After the gift of "knowledge," he lists "servants," anatomizing the topic "servants" into the subcategories "subjects," "the obedient," "soldiers," and "slaves." The spiritual gift "fear of the Lord" has its counterpart in the term "reproaches," with the subcategories "threat," "banishment," "striking," "torture," "punishment," and "denigration."

Afanasii's use of the structure of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit is remarkable for a number of reasons. In his time, it was identified with the Latin,

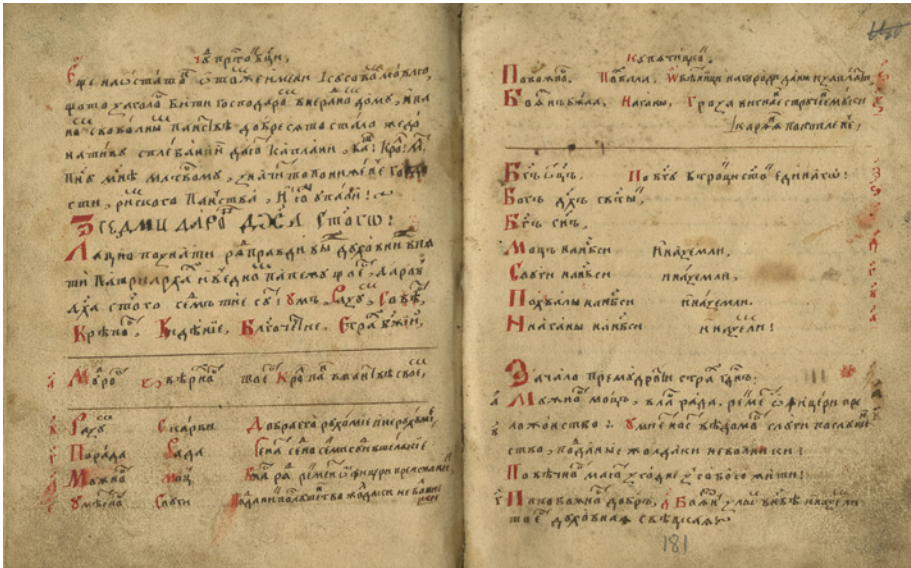25. A. Korshunov, *Afanasii Filippovich: Zhizn′ i Tvorchestvo* (Minsk, 1965), 56–61.
26. Ibid., 165.

**Figure 1. Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, a memory exercise in Afanasii Fili-povich's *Diariush*, with head words on the left and enumeration on the right. From the National Library of Russia, Manuscript Department, Q. XVII. 220, fols. 180v – 181r. Used with permission.**

not the Greek, church. The seven gifts were a catechistic exercise with roots in the Dominican memory arts. Each headword (that is, each gift) was a mnemonic for a recitation or a meditation upon wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.[27] Afanasii is using the seven gifts in a different way, not as mnemonics for a canonical response, but rather as an instrument for solving the problem "What is the true ecclesiastical order—the Orthodox or the Roman Catholic?" He allows the seven gifts to reveal the answer, as each spiritual attribute invokes a secular category, and each secular category unfolds into subordinate elements. The effect is that as the reader follows each term from the heavenly to the earthly, the gifts become transformed into perversions. For example, "knowledge," passing through an earthly filter devolves from "servants" to "slaves," while the spiritual gift of "fear of God" becomes "banishment," "torture," "punishment."

Afanasii's audience was his Roman Catholic interrogators, men with enough education to be acquainted with the seven gifts as a meditational or compositional tool. Did Afanasii's captors credit the seven gifts with revealing the brutality of earthly power to which the exercise pointed? We do not know the text's reception, but Afanasii seems to have intended such a reading. Furthermore, he chose a discipline, the memory arts, that was ubiquitous in the early modern period, and with which all educated people would have been acquainted as a skill for using knowledge and, in some cases, for divining truths. His application of this simple associative memory apparatus to a con-

27. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: Study of Memory in Mediaeval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), 328.

temporary problem was quite novel. It is as if he were saying, "You may not believe me, but can you doubt the result produced by this widely known art?"

Afanasii's seven gifts exercise demonstrates Ruthenian familiarity with the art of memory. It also shows the art being used as an authoritative apparatus to "prove" what Afanasii was loudly proclaiming. In discussions of Afanasii's work, *Diariush* (journal or diary), the seven gifts are usually passed over without comment, perhaps out of the assumption that this fiery monk and sometime fool for Christ was not adept at using the memory arts, or because scholars have not recognized in Afanasii's exercise a rational framework (by early modern standards) for discerning or demonstrating truths.[28] Yet he clearly was using the memory arts. Furthermore, he was exploiting the framework of rational discourse to dissimulate—not for the purpose of escaping punishment (Afanasii courted martyrdom, frequently placing himself in positions where arrest was a certainty), but rather to present his prophecy in such a way that the method might compel belief in those who did not find the prophet himself compelling. Afanasii was perfectly capable of expressing his opposition to the Union in a declamatory fashion, as he did when he distributed his objections in writing at the Sejm of 1643. In writing down the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Afanasii was engaging in the same demonstration of persuasion-by-rhetoric as Meletii Smotryts′kyi's had before him. The message that the Union was a grave sin that the king must destroy issued forth, effectively, from a rhetorical apparatus, rather than from an imprisoned Orthodox monk.

## Preserving and Purging: Memory and Oblivion

Afanasii Filipovich's application of an associative memory device to "erase" his persona from his prophecy shows the authoritative potential inherent in the art of memory. In the medieval period, mnemonic images and labels—the primary instruments of the art of memory—served as emblems of religious teachings or the Scriptures. Afanasii was exploiting the association of the art of memory with religious authority to dissimulate the sectarian nature of his complaint.

Here, the very presence of a memory device was meant to obscure authorship, but in fact, erasure was a feature of the memory apparatus itself; to learn the art of memory, the student had to learn to forget. Tracing its origins back to pre-Socratic Greece, the art of memory enabled much more than the storage of information and its rote recitation.[29] Memory's purpose was *compositio*—the composition of speeches, prayers, and sermons; the artificial memory systematized information for its easy retrieval in the compositional process.[30] Dissimulation, of course, was an act of composition, like praying or preaching. Thus, the codification of the memory arts in university courses and in

28. The exception is Frank Sysyn's review of Korshunov's *Afanasii Filippovich* in *Kritika* 8.3 (Spring 1972): 118–29. Sysyn (unlike Korshunov) recognizes and identifies the seven spiritual gifts in Afanasii's text.

29. Mary Carruthers, "Ars oblivionalis, Ars inveniendi: the Cherub Figure and the Arts of Memory," *Gesta* 48, no. 2 (2009): 100–1.

30. Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 124–29; Whitehead, *Memory*, 29.

handbooks that proliferated across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries described the method behind the art of dissimulation.[31] We will examine some of the dissimulative operations of the memory arts here.

Much has been written of the importance of the memory arts since Frances Yates published her groundbreaking work, *The Art of Memory*, in 1966.[32] Mnemonic images and schemata were used for memorizing written and oral material in the Middle Ages.[33] Memorization became a moral duty in the thirteenth century, when Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas imported into the Christian cardinal virtues the classical art of memory referenced by Aristotle, Cicero, the anonymous author of the memory handbook *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintillian.[34] The primary moral obligation of a Christian (and the justification for importing into Christianity the classical art of memory) was to remember heaven and hell—that is, to fix in the mind the topography of the two possible destinations in one's spiritual journey.[35] The memory arts served preachers and laypeople alike in enabling them to visualize heaven and hell, saints and sinners, in scintillating detail, to reinforce constantly the feeling of their vividness and reality.

The art of memory prescribed steps for organizing information mentally. Information was to be divided into small, easily remembered pieces, and each piece assigned a visual mnemonic. The mnemonic was a memory image (*imago*) or character or word (*nota*) constructed to represent words or concepts targeted for memorization. Images representing a complex of ideas or words would be distributed across places (*loci*) arranged within a specific hierarchy (the interior of a building, the alphabet, the zodiac). The ordered places would function as a mental map that could be searched from any starting point for a specific verse or concept to reconstitute the memorized information whole or in part. When a new subject or text had to be memorized, new memory places and images had to be created or old places reused and the images erased. This means that the capacity of the art of memory to remove or hide memory and inhibit recollection—the ability of the memory provisionally to forget—was vital to the functional memory.[36] Temporary forgetting, of course, was also essential for dissimulation.

### Ars oblivionalis and the Art of Memory

Mary Carruthers, the leading authority on medieval memory, asserts: "Forgetting has always been a necessary part of the craft of remembering."[37]

31. Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago, 2004), 15.

32. Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966). Jonathan Spence describes the Jesuit Matteo Ricci's use of the memory arts in proselytizing among the Chinese in Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1984).

33. Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 330–32.

34. Yates, *Art of Memory*, 20–21.

35. Ibid., 59.

36. Whitehead, *Memory*, 29–30.

37. Carruthers, "Ars oblivionalis," 99–100. Carruthers gives ample evidence to refute Umberto Eco's claim in Umberto Eco and Marilyn Migiel, "An Ars Oblivionalis? Forget It!," *PMLA*, vol. 103, no. 3 (May, 1988): 254–61, that an ars oblivionalis is impossible.

Purging the memory places (*loci*) of one set of memory images to make way for another set enabled the privileging of specific memories. Mental exercises for forgetting information not being sought appeared in early modern memory handbooks as *ars oblivionalis*.[38]

One fifteenth-century treatise on the art of memory includes a chapter entitled "De oblivione" (Regarding forgetting) and describes mental exercises for obscuring memories: "covering" them with a piece of cloth, imagining the collapse of the places in which they were positioned, conjuring flames to burn them up. Constantly battling the images created for the purpose of remembering, the art of memory seesawed between the preservative act of memorizing and the destructive act of forgetting.[39]

A subtler form of oblivion inhered in the systems of reduction and representation that made up the memory arts, however. After all, the operations of condensing and summarizing preceded the memorization of things (*res*—that is, arguments and notions).[40] The mental work required to reduce a text or body of knowledge into topical headings was necessarily repressive of memory, necessitating the erasure of the particular in favor of the general. Topical maps and books of topics (*loci communes* in Latin, τόποι *(topoi)* in Greek), including Rudolph Agricola's hugely influential *De inventione dialectica*, grew out of the art of memory, and bridged the gap between the preservative function of the classical version of the art and the inventiveness that the memory arts acquired in the early modern period. The topics were tools for the expansion and contraction of categories and subcategories of knowledge.[41]

Afanasii Filipovich's use of the seven gifts belonged to the same tradition as the use of topics and subtopics. He also incorporated the *ars combinatoria*— that is, the "combinatorial art," the use of a graphic schema to align and realign categories in the manner of the cylinders of a lock. Afanasii manipulates a series of attributes, listing them first in ascending (1–7), then in descending order (7–1), and then slipping the numbering of the categories by four places, so that the new number 1 is not "wisdom," but "fortitude."[42]

Some of the earliest publications of handbooks on the art of memory were printed in the first decade of the 1500s in Cracow, and likely found their

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38. Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park, 2010), 39–40.

39. Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto, 2001), 142–44.

40. Yates, *Art of Memory*, 8–9. Yates points out that Cicero makes this distinction between two types of memory (for words and for things).

41. Bolzoni, *Gallery of Memory*, 14. Yates defines topics as "the 'things' or subject matter of dialectic which came to be known as *topoi* through the places in which they were stored." See *Art of Memory*, 31.

42. Some form of Lullist combinatorial art is being employed here, using the memory mechanism to discover new orders, as described by Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: the Quest for a Universal Language* (Chicago, 2000), 32–36. Ramon Llull (c. 1232– c. 1315) was a Franciscan who constructed complicated schematics to guide meditation. His apparatuses influenced the later development of memory devices. On the relationship between the art of memory, topic-generating apparatuses, and "rhetoric machines," including Llull's combinatorial schemata, see Bolzoni, *Gallery of Memory*, 65–75.

way into Orthodox hands.[43] Certainly, by the seventeenth century we see evidence that the Ruthenian Orthodox were conversant in the memory arts. The library of the Orthodox metropolitan and founder of the Latin school in Kyiv, Peter Mohyla, included a copy of Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* and other works associated with the systematization of knowledge and the art of memory.[44] It is no surprise, then, that an Orthodox hegumen such as Afanasii Filipovich would have been familiar with the combinatorial memory apparatus and would use it to reveal the relationship between the state and the divine order.

## Mastering Oblivion

### Rhetoric of Oblivion

Our general hypothesis is that oblivion as a rhetorical art became crucial in early modern Ruthenian thought, in part because oblivion's function within the art of memory had already established it as a skill imbedded in the study of rhetoric. Although dissimulation as a term did not appear in Ruthenian letters, it functioned under the rubric of theology and philosophy, and emerged as a discourse dealing with the idea of the eternal damnation of the soul.

Historically, as we have shown, oblivion was a part of the art of memory. Its subordination to memory manifested a premodern fear of forgetting, as forgetting was a sign of the memory's imperfection. A belief in the immovability of the self—the "stasis of medieval personality"—placed custodianship of the person in the memory.[45] Dissimulation required one to "erase" episodes and particular knowledge from the memory, a technique of restructuring the self identified with the new flexibility of the Renaissance.[46] Only in early modernity could people conceive of an "acceptance of forgetfulness," a development that signaled the growing independence of oblivion from memory and the merging of the discourses of oblivion and dissimulation.[47] Yet, its independence from memory alone was not enough to endow oblivion with a creative potential.

43. Rafał Wójcik, *Opusculum de arte memorativa Jana Szklarka: Bernadyński Traktat Mnemotechniczny z 1504 Roku* (Poznań, 2006) and Wójcik, "Straßburg-Freiburg-Paris-Krakau: zu den möglichen Inspirationsquellen Thomas Murners, des Autors von "Chartiludium logicae sive logica memorativa" (1507/1509)," *Daphnis*, vol. 40, no. 1/2 (2011): 63–88.

44. Liudmila V. Charipova, *Latin Books and the Eastern Orthodox Clerical Elite in Kiev, 1632–1780* (Manchester, 2006), 71. Peter Mohyla (1596–1646) was the metropolitan of Kyiv, an Orthodox reformer, and the founder of the Mohyla collegium, later the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the first East Slavic institution of higher education.

45. Thomas Greene, "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature," in Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, Lowry Nelson, and René Wellek, eds., *The Disciplines of Criticism; Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History* (New Haven, 1968), 246.

46. This goes beyond Machiavellian "tactical flexibility" (i.e., responses to external inducements). See Greene, "Flexibility of the Self," 258.

47. Christine Bernier, "Art and Archive: The Dissimulation Museum," in Brian Neville and Johanne Villaneuve, *Waste-site Stories: The Recycling of Memory* (Albany, 2002), 66.

The Ruthenians, standing "between east and west," did not follow exclusively European patterns in their understanding of oblivion.[48] Instead, they created an original set of techniques that stemmed from both western European and Byzantine sources. The Ruthenian arts of dissimulation and forgetting reflected a combinatorial vector peculiar to the creative activity of an individual of the early modern and Baroque periods, as well as Byzantine exegetical methods of forgetting—that is, *forgetting through interpretation.*[49]

It is Byzantine experience that gives us a key to rethinking the link between rhetoric and oblivion. At first glance, it seems a truism that "repetition was the fight against silence, and silence was synonymous with oblivion," and that rhetoric, as an instance of verbal presence, was a tool against forgetting.[50] Byzantium developed a radically different link between rhetoricizing a narrative and forgetting, however.

Tracing back to the Romans, *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory) has been the familiar phenomenon of "forgetting through silencing." Indeed, eliminating all traces of a person's presence led to his complete disappearance as a social persona and, what is more important, eliminated him from public memory. Byzantine *damnatio memoriae* contrasted sharply with its Roman manifestation, as it artfully induced oblivion through the hyperintepretation or superexposition of events.[51] In a similar way, forgetting through interpretation is induced by the modern media. News about important events was forgotten not through silencing, but by rampant variations of interpretation, contradictory and abundant. For early modern Ruthenians, oblivion operated not only through silencing, but also through rhetoric and interpretation, mechanisms with currency in Ruthenian rhetoric and epistemology. In this culture, exegesis, too, could function as a means of oblivion.

Dissimulation employs a rhetorical apparatus (methods of persuasion, speech ornamentations, intonation), and plays with the written, spoken, and only-thought (silenced) word in order to enable an omission to become a part of the discourse. Oblivion, when placed into the field of dissimulation rather than memory, became rhetoric. Once absence was incorporated into the structure of discourse, oblivion ceased to be treated as a destructive act and became truly sense-generating and narrative-creating.

## Ruthenian Strategies of Oblivion

**Loci (Memory Places) and "Flexible" Grammar.** The art of memory conditioned its practitioner to organize information under mental rubrics and categories and, in some cases, to generate topics, using the combinatorial arts,

48. Ihor Ševčenko, *Ukraine between East and West: Essays on Cultural History to the Early Twentieth Century* (Edmonton, 1996).

49. Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa, *Barok polski: między Europą i Sarmacją* (Warsaw, 2011), 1:157.

50. Amy Papalexandrou, "The Memory Culture of Byzantium," in Liz James, ed., *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), 116.

51. Veselina Vachkova, "La méthode byzantine de la damnatio memoriae," in Albena Milanova, Veselina Vachkova, and Tsvetelin Stepanov, eds., *Memory and Oblivion in Byzantium* (Sofia, 2011), 167–74.

to create previously unknown or ideal memory places. For early seventeenth-century Ruthenians sacred *topoi* or topics (the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, for example) and even Bible verses could be used as organizational tools, as memory places, in contrast to their treatment in the medieval period. The Scriptures and heaven and hell were the *objects* of memory; profane memory places (the zodiac, numbers, the alphabet, mnemonic images) might be used to remember them, but Scriptures and images of heaven and hell were not to be used as memory places for the profane. We have already seen that this prohibition did not hold for Afanasii Filipovich, who used a meditational exercise to reveal not sacred, but rather political, truths of his day; the Ruthenian rhetoricians Meletii Smotryts′kyi, Lavrentii and Stefan Zyzanii, and Kyrylo Trankvilion Stavrovets′kyi were even more adventurous in obscuring the authoritative presence of sacredness in sacred texts.

It is generally accepted that Smotryts′kyi used Melanchthon's grammar as a source for his own *Slavonic Grammar* (Ev′ie, 1619), in addition to the works of Byzantine scholar Constantine Laskaris and the Portuguese philologist Alvares.[52] He seems to have shared Melanchthon's goal—that is, to establish *loci communes* (common places), applying rhetorical and dialectical tradition to create a new method.[53] As we shall see, Smotryts′kyi's experiment was preceded by the Ruthenian rhetorician, Lavrentii Zyzanii, who had attempted to establish new relationships between the various memory places of the lexicon that appeared in his *Primer* (*Azbuka*).[54] The lexicon lays out topics of secular knowledge and the limits of their translatability and transferability. Translation of the topics from the sacred tongue (Church Slavonic) into the vernacular (Ruthenian) established a link between sacred and secular knowledge. Not only did the *Primer* and lexicon introduce a system for youths to interpret Scripture, but the works also incorporated secular knowledge into that interpretation under the rubrics of biology, philosophy, and geography. This forced "mixing" of sacred and secular topics subtly focused attention on secular disciplines while avoiding characterization as rebellion against religion.

Zyzanii's use of topical headings reflected the trend in Europe for systematizing knowledge under rubrics whose origins lay in the mnemonic *notae* (alphanumeric characters, or 'notes'). However, Zyzanii and Smotryts′kyi's compositions incorporated absence into lexical classification (Zyzanii's lexicon) and a general theory of language (Smotryts′kyi's grammar), writings that functioned ostensibly as embodiments of mnemonic presence. Bacon's "half

52. Vasyl′ Nimchuk, ed., *Meletii Smotryts′kyi: Hramatyka* (Kyiv, 1979), 28. Meletii Smotryts′kyi's *Grammatiki slavenskiia . . . syntagma* (Ev′ie, 1619) is held by the National Library of Russia (St. Petersburg), Rare Book Department. I.8.27a. Constantine Laskaris (1434–1501) was a Greek scholar, grammarian, tutor, transcriber and copyist of manuscripts, and author of a grammar, *Erotemata* (Milan, 1476). Manuel Álvares (1526–1583?) was a Portuguese Jesuit grammarian and educator, and author of the influential Latin grammar *De institutione grammatica libri tres*.

53. Cesare Vasoli, "Loci communes and the Rhetorical and Dialectical Traditions," *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1980), 24–26.

54. Lavrentii Zyzanii, *Azbuka* (Vilnius, 1596). National Library of Russia, Rare Book Department. I.7.12. Lavrentii Zyzanii-Tustanovs′kyi (c. 1560–70s—after 1634) was a Ruthenian thinker, theologian, translator, teacher, Orthodox priest, author of one of the first Slavonic grammars (1596), and brother of Stefan Zyzanii-Tustanovs′kyi.
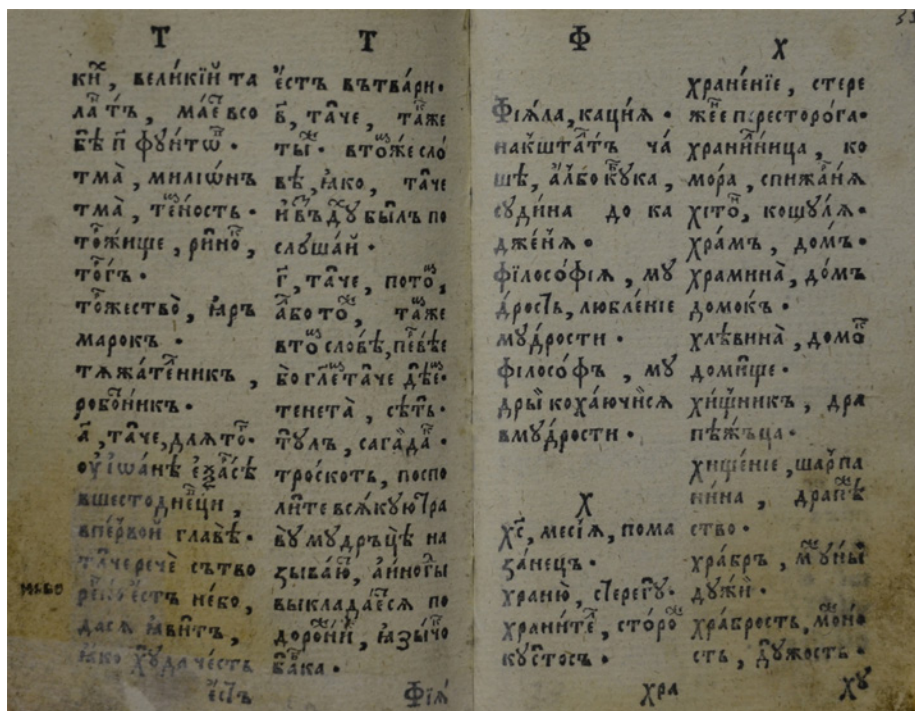
**Figure 2. The definition of "philosophy" and "philosopher" in the lexicon of Lavrentii Zyzanii's Slavonic primer (*Azbuka*, 1596). From the National Library of Russia, Rare Book Department. I.7.12, fol. Г8r. Used with permission.**

lights" of dissimulation glimmer throughout the rubrics and rules of these two works. Some subtle probing is required to pinpoint the absences and consider their import.

Smotryts'kyi takes a radical step, the significance of which goes far beyond the realm of philology. He uses biblical verses as illustrations of grammatical rules, but omits mention of their sacred context. By not calling attention to the citations' sacredness, he creates an absence—namely, an absence of religious authority. Smotryts'kyi does not exactly desacralize the biblical quotations; he simply maintains silence around their relation to secular learning in the cultural hierarchy.

Let us consider an example. Smotryts'kyi instructs the grammar student to render a Latin gerund and supine with the infinitive form of the verb in Church Slavonic. (He sometimes illustrates with translations into Ruthenian, as well.) Smotryts'kyi provides the following examples, taken from the Bible: "I came not to send peace, but a sword," and "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."[55]

What is remarkable here is a lack of contextualization for the examples, the silence regarding the quotations' sacred source. The verses appear simply

55. Smotryts'kyi, *Grammatiki slavenskiia*, 222v, cf. Matt. 10:34; Smotryts'kyi, *Grammatiki slavenskiia*, 222r, cf. Luke 19:10.

to provide a linguistic comparison; moreover, the grammatical framework he references is Latin, Orthodoxy's and Church Slavic's theological and cultural rival. One might even see a daring nonchalance in Smotryts′kyi's catholic choice of Catholic quotations in a textbook for the Orthodox student. Biblical quotations are present as signs, but as signs absent their sacred (or confessional) significance.

On the one hand, Smotryts′kyi's usage of these quotations belongs to the long-standing tradition of quoting Scripture as the highest authority. On the other hand, Smotryts′kyi refrains from exploiting that authority or even acknowledging it. He does not deny the lines′ sacredness, but dissimulates, showing the quotations functioning outside their sacred context. Tradition allowed the use of non-sacred institutions to affirm the authority of Scripture; here, Smotryts′kyi uses a text that just "happened" to be from Scripture in order to prove the authority of grammar. Afanasii Filipovich's use of the historically Dominican exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to condemn the anti-Orthodox policy of the government demonstrated a similarly "accidental" choice of forms: he set in motion a mechanism identified with Catholicism to render a verdict against Catholic policy. In his grammar, Smotryts′kyi uses biblical examples as memory places for remembering the rules of grammar, but with no allusion to their original context. The interpretative potential of those verses is limited to an illustrative function; they serve merely to corroborate the validity and importance of grammar. The original *significatum* (something that is indicated or signified) is obscured or concealed.

Smotryts′kyi's innovation is the combinatorial flexibility of the elements of language—especially the optional nature of their link to Scripture. Medieval philological tradition insisted on the impermissibility of changing a single word in a sacred text. Syntax, punctuation, and orthography were treated as sacred in precisely the form retained by tradition.[56] However, just as anthropological flexibility was being introduced into the medieval vision of the static human during the early modern period, a flexible vision of grammatical structures was being introduced by the Ruthenians into the medieval hieratical vision of syntactical sacredness.

In fact, Smotryts′kyi's work had another predecessor, the Antitrinitarian Szymon Budny's philological critique of biblical translation in the mid-sixteenth century. (Budny translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Polish as part of his program for legitimizing Slavic languages).[57] As Budny stated, any extant biblical text might be corrupt because of the copyists′ mistakes or "stupidity." Early modern Ruthenians were discovering that authoritative (often Greek) texts contained error through alterations, additions, deletions, and false interpretations.[58] This did not deprive holy texts of their sacredness, according to Budny, yet it would be wrong to preserve the error, insisting on

56. See, e.g., Harvey Goldblatt, *Orthography and Orthodoxy: Constantine Kostenečki's Treatise on the Letters* (Florence, c. 1987), 155, 282.

57. Szymon Budny, *Biblia. To iest, kśięgi starego y nowego Przymierza, znowu z ięzyka Ebreyskiego, Grecskiego y Laćińskiego, na Polski przełożone* (Nieśwież-Zasław, 1572).

58. David A. Frick, "The Uses of Authority and the Authority of Use: Philological Praise and Blame in Early Modern Rus′," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 18 (1994): 77.
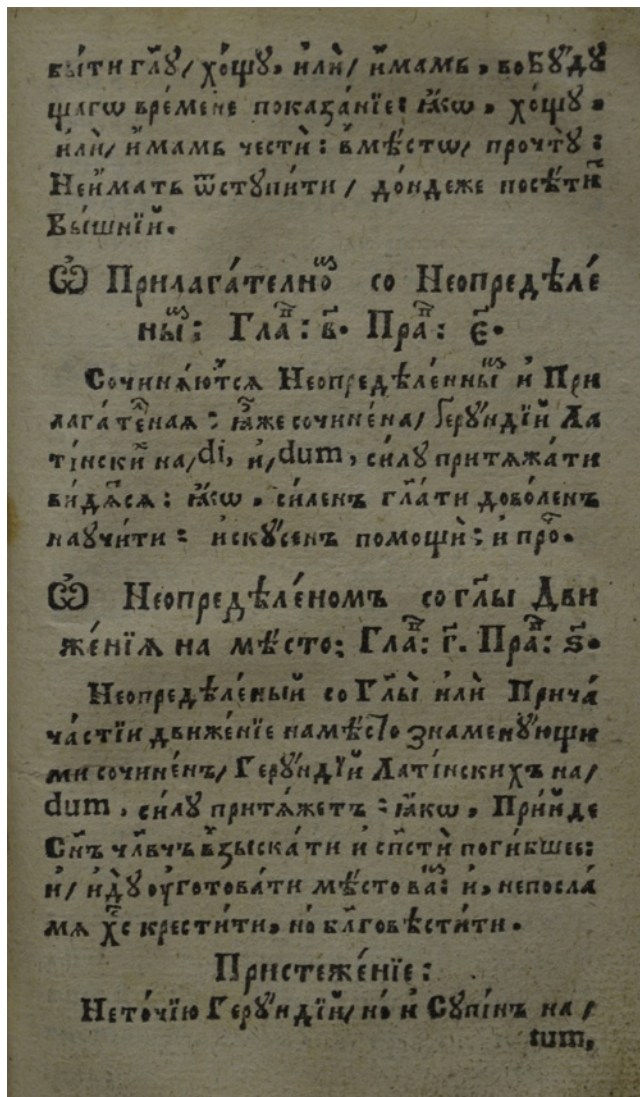
**Figure 3. The rule on the use of the indefinite with verbs of motion from Meletii Smotryts′kyi's grammar (Ev′ie, 1619). Smotryts′kyi illustrates the rule with a biblical quotation: "Прииде Сын человеч взыскати и спасти погибшее" ("For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"). From the National Library of Russia, Rare Book Department. I.8.27ª, fol. 222r. Used with permission.**

a particular word usage against common sense and rational judgment just for the sake of tradition. Smotryts′kyi, who was familiar with Budny's works (certainly with his catechism), shared this view. For Smotryts′kyi, philology, not the sacredness of a text, dictated the usage of a particular grammatical form. The supine did not become the supine as a grammatical concept just because it was found in the Bible. It was legitimate irrespective of its occurrence

in a biblical verse; its occurrence in the Bible might only add to the supine's legitimacy. Although many languages used the supine, neither grammar nor the Scripture would lose their validity if a different grammatical form were used to express a biblical verse.

One consequence of such an approach would be to dismantle the triad of sacred languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin) in order to introduce the Slavic languages (Church Slavic and the vernaculars) as suitable languages for sacred texts; that is, it could be seen as a legitimization of translation. The more important consequence was the separation of philology from Scripture, and science from theology, by means of dissimulation. The subtlety of this approach should be emphasized. The absence of the sacred *significatum* in biblical verses did not signal atheism on the part of Smotryts′kyi. As a monk, he never ceased to be a religious thinker and a believer who accepted the validity of Scripture. Instead, it was the validity of grammar and philology that were to be proved, by any means necessary. Biblical examples were used not to put philology in the shadow of theology, but to enhance philology as a separate sphere of human knowledge.

Zyzanii's lexicon had not concealed anything in the spheres of the natural sciences and philosophy; the secular topics were present, but their emergence was a result of the balance between their presence and their absence. For Smotryts′kyi, as the connection between a grammatical form (locus) and its sacred meaning became flexible—if one of the original languages of the Bible, for example, used a specific grammatical form in a verse for the expression of sacred meaning (here, the supine)—it did not mean that only that form was allowed in this verse for the expression of this meaning. Any other language, even those without a supine, might be used as the language of the Bible. The sacredness of the Bible was not addressed or questioned; it was concealed from the argumentation.

This noticeable absence of constant reiterations of the sacredness and authority of Scripture would disturb the medieval grammarian. The absence was intentional but not malicious. Here, Smotryts′kyi acted as a scholar rather than as a theologian. The silence where an affirmation of the authority of Scripture might be expected signaled Smotryts′kyi's strategy of dissimulation, not disbelief.

Zyzanii's and Smotryts′kyi's philological enterprise shows us how dissimulation operated as a methodological tool regulating the interrelation between two types of discourse: the theological and the philosophical, the theological and the scientific, or—better—the sacred and the secular. One who masters language through the rules of grammar can organize any narrative by knowing what to mention and what to omit. As Smotryts′kyi writes, grammar itself "will indicate the incorrectly placed word; it will indicate the excessive, it will indicate whatever is lacking."[59] Dissimulation enables the balancing of these discourses, offering an artful management of "insufficiencies" and "excesses"—concepts that might be viewed as a revision of Aristotle's virtuous mean.

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59. Smotryts′kyi, *Grammatiki slavenskiia*, fol. 2v. The translation is taken from Smotryts′kyi, *Rus′ Restored*, 98.

Instead of "condemning" the theological for the sake of the secular, dissimulation organizes a space for coexistence. Biblical quotes, whose sacred context is implied but concealed in the sphere of grammar (dealing with "insufficiencies" and "defects," the logic of absence), justify and enhance the newly born philological discourse. The logic of presence (dealing with "excesses") manifests itself in the creation of a lexical variety apt for an emerging scientific discourse and proto-disciplinarity.[60]

Thus, through this "emptying" of memory places, the touchstone of the art of memory, Zyzanii and Smotryts′kyi take a step towards legitimizing absence and justifying oblivion. By using the Scripture as a system of memory places for acquiring secular knowledge instead of making the Bible the object of memory, Smotryts′kyi practices dissimulation in order to create an intellectual space where sacred meanings are concealed within a discourse and secular meanings are validated. Dissimulation acts as liminality in the discourse, an artificial, intelligible border that is implanted at the very core of human cognitive capacity. The early modern Ruthenian philological project, which relied heavily on the phenomena of omission and oblivion, resulted in a pre-Enlightenment disciplinarity program, based upon the separation of spheres of knowledge. This became possible through the intentional forgetting of some aspects of discourse (here, theological discourse). Not only did Smotryts′kyi apply this strategy in his own grammar by omitting allusions to the sacred importance of biblical verses, but he also claimed grammar to be a manual for the management of intentional epistemic omissions. This was an important milestone on the way to a new understanding of oblivion as a productive and creative force, as well as a means of coping with the problem of forgetting.

**Oblivion of Hell and Eternal Damnation.** Intellectual culture in Ruthenia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was increasingly obsessed by the sensibility expressed in the expansion of the well-known maxim, *Memento mori* (Remember that you will die). Death, the Last Judgment, heaven, and hell were among the most frequent topics in Baroque poetry.[61] *Memory* of one's own mortality was a crucial tool for organizing life and the afterlife. The whole structure of life was subordinate to that ultimate memory practice, reminding oneself of a death, though it, paradoxically, had not yet happened. Human morality, actions, and day-to-day decisions always had to take it into consideration.

One of the most effective tools for making a man remember death in the context of religious culture was the memory of paradise and hell. Here, memory functioned as a severely repressive mechanism. It was a regulatory idea influencing human conduct by prescribing ethical norms; its purpose was to inspire moral behavior leading to the salvation of the soul. If taken seriously, however, the imperative constantly to remember one's death had the power to delegitimize all human activity, rendering the individual passive in the

60. On Smotryts′kyi's understanding of defects and excesses, see Frick, "*Fides Meletiana*," 395–98.
61. Dmytro Chyzhevs′kyj, "Do problem baroko," in vol. 2 of *Filosofs′ki tvory u chotyr′okh tomakh* (Kyiv, 2005), 74.

face of the continual memory of death and eternal damnation. Ruthenians had to deal somehow with the omnipresent memory of death and hell, as well as coping on a philosophical level with the idea of human mortality.

It is instructive to examine a macabre tendency in seventeenth-century Ruthenian thought, which manifested in writings about eternal death (*smert′ strashlivaia*) and hell. A striking example of such "infernal texts" is Kyrylo Trankvilion Stavrovets′kyi's *Lekarstvo . . . roskoshnikom togo sveta pravdivoie* (True remedy . . . for the pleasure-seekers of this world) from his *Perlo mnogotsennoie*, (*Pearl of Great Price*), where we find the following description of death, admittedly programmatic for the Baroque period:[62]

> O Death, how terrible it is *remembering* you,
> At which my soul trembles and quails.
> You have unsheathed your ruthless sword on all
> And with it cast down the strong and mighty ones
> Under your feet, and trampled them,
> And taken the glorious of this world
> And hidden them away in darkness *without memory*.[63]

Despite the need to prepare for the afterlife, people were beginning to face the possibility of a void and of an infinite universe. Orthodox preacher Stefan Zyzanii, in his *Kazan'e* (Sermon), of 1596, presented his Ruthenian listeners with the idea of an infinity of worlds, a theory appearing in Giordano Bruno's work just a decade earlier, in 1584.[64]

> For with respect to the amount of all the places, one has to think of the many inhabitants [of them]. For the whole Earth on which we live is like one dot in the middle of the heavens, and still, how many [inhabitants] it has; but the heavenly heavens have an even larger number. For it is written, "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him," not because there was only that number, but because the prophet could not utter more.[65]

Not only did Zyzanii propagate a radical vision of the physical world, but he also presented a different picture of the afterlife. Traditional Orthodox views on life after death included notions of hell and paradise as punishment for the sinful and reward for the righteous. Zyzanii, however, rethought this binary vision and depicted a manifold afterlife. To the duality of *ad* (hell) and *rai* (paradise), he introduced an additional pair, *peklo* (Gehenna) and *Tsarstvo*

62. On the "infernal text," see Olha D. Kharlan, "Infernal′nyi tekst u tvorchosti Kyryla Trankviliona-Stavrovets′koho ta Mykoly Khvyl′ovoho," *Aktual′ni problemy slov′ians′koï filolohiï*, 23, no. 2 (2010): 47–55. Kyrylo Trankvilion-Stavrovets′kyi (d. 1646) was a Ruthenian thinker, homilete, teacher, and printer who converted to the Union in the 1626.

63. Kyrylo Trankvilion-Stavrovets′kyi, *Perlo mnogotsennoie* (Chernihiv, 1646). National Library of Russia, Rare Book Department. 1.5.16a, fol. 117v. Emphasis added by the authors.

64. Stefan Zyzanii-Tustanovs′kyi (d. 1600) was a Ruthenian thinker, Orthodox priest, preacher, and later a monk, one of the most ardent opponents of the Union of Brest, and brother of Lavrentii.

65. Stefan Zyzanii, *Kazan'e sviatogo Kirilla patriarkhi Ierusalimskogo, o antikhriste i znakakh ego* (Vilnius, 1596). National Library of Russia, Rare Book Department. I.7.76, fols. 78r–78v. Zyzanii is quoting Dan. 7:10.

*nebesnoe* (Heavenly Kingdom), thus making the structure fourfold: "Chrysostom . . . writing on this word, that Christ told the thief "today shalt thou be with me in paradise," shows that paradise is not the Heavenly Kingdom, *whose joys no eye has seen, no ear has heard*. Paradise was seen by Adam's eye and heard by Paul's ear; and it was into that very Paradise that Christ took the souls of the thief and the other saints."[66]

Zyzanii's depiction of the afterlife is important because he portrays it as a dissimulative structure. For Zyzanii the distinction between the notions of hell/paradise and Gehenna/Heavenly Kingdom lies not in the sphere of ethics, but in the sphere of interpretation. The notions of Gehenna and Heavenly Kingdom are interpreted by means of traditional Orthodox exegesis, apophatically (*no eye has seen, no ear has heard*). As they cannot be understood by a finite human mind, no rational judgment can be made about them. They are not eliminated from the discourse, but silenced, concealed, or dissimulated. From Zyzanii's perspective, Gehenna and the Heavenly Kingdom are rigid ontological structures that the human mind cannot properly understand; no logical predicates can be ascribed to them. The only thing the human mind can do is to be certain of their existence, as it is certain of the existence of God.

Hell and paradise, on the contrary, are culturally articulated notions. If we bear in mind that, according to Zyzanii's claim in that same sermon, there is an infinite number of worlds in the universe, we might suppose that hell and paradise are articulated differently in each of these hypothetical worlds.

It should be stressed that Zyzanii's ideas did not belong to the widespread seventeenth-century libertine notion that hell was a fraud and religion imposture.[67] Zyzanii, as a preacher and later a monk, did not aim at subverting religion. His idea that the notion of eternal damnation in Gehenna might be omitted from the discourse reflected a philosophical innovation rather than a theological heresy.

Indeed, Zyzanii's innovation was not simply descriptive; it introduced a radical new ontology with a place for oblivion and dissimulation. Zyzanii's structure allowed for the coexistence of both modes, memory and oblivion. The rigid ontological notions of Gehenna and the Heavenly Kingdom epitomized regulatory memory. If a person remembers either eternal damnation or salvation, he will behave morally. Yet, nothing rational can be said about either of these, as the human mind is unable to produce any knowledge of the afterlife. Thus, these two notions cannot be rationally articulated. Still present in terse, moral prescriptions, they are nevertheless absent from rational discourse, where their counterparts, hell and paradise, reflect views on morality in a particular culture that can be rationally analyzed. This dissimulation occurs only in the realm of narrative; it is a phenomenon of rhetoric alone. The reality of eternal damnation and salvation continued to influence moral attitudes, but were suppressed, silenced, dissimulated. Only in concealment

66. Stefan Zyzanii, *Kazan'e*, fols. 14v–15r. The quote is from Luke 23:43; the emphasis is added by the authors.
67. Carlo Ginzburg, "The Dovecote Has Opened Its Eyes: Popular Conspiracy in Seventeenth-century Italy," in John Tedeschi, Charles Amiel, and Gustav Henningsen, eds., *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods* (Dekalb, Ill., 1986), 193.

did they come to their full epistemic potential. Eliminated from the discourse but still present in hiding, they created space for the rational articulation of questions about history, damnation, and salvation. Concepts of faith began to coexist with concepts articulated through philosophical investigation.

Stefan Zyzanii's move in his sermon is analogous to the one made by Smotrytsʹkyi. The philological endeavors of Smotrytsʹkyi's grammar led to the separation of secular from sacred and to the justification of discrete disciplines. Dissimulation of sacredness was employed in order to create a discursive field where secular disciplinarity could become possible. Zyzanii, in his turn, created a discourse where the instance of memory (memory of death) could be concealed from believers so that they could forget about the possibility of eternal damnation and act only through rationalized moral choice.

While western European literature offers many examples of theoretical treatises on dissimulation, Ruthenian writers present us with almost no such works. This does not mean that dissimulation as a phenomenon was absent among the Eastern Slavs, however. Ruthenians, under the sway of a literate culture still based largely upon theological-spiritual discourse and laboring under the complex sociopolitical circumstances of a religious minority in Poland-Lithuania, did not articulate dissimulation openly as "dissimulation." Nevertheless, Ruthenian thinkers did have a clear understanding of codified dissimulative techniques. Discourse on dissimulation differed from that of western Europe, a difference that lay not in the nature of the phenomenon, but rather in its mode of articulation.

Analysis of early modern Ruthenian texts, which have never been approached before in the context of the art of forgetting, reveals that the art was articulated predominantly in the discourse of oblivion. Is it possible deliberately to forget? In a time when all thought was to be dedicated to "work[ing] out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), dissimulating belief was necessary to engage in thought other than the contemplation of the Final Judgment. Every age has its orthodoxies, thus the need to somehow erase convictions continues to be of vital importance in contemporary culture. We have tried to argue that the problem can be examined at the cultural intersection of the art of memory and art of dissimulation.

The institution of the memory arts, with its explicit and implicit reliance upon an art of oblivion, renders Ruthenian dissimulation visible to us. The mental exercises and techniques taught to the educated elite of this period under the rubric of the art of memory created the infrastructure of an art of dissimulation on the level of rhetoric.

A constant shift between absence and presence and the balance of the two have featured in dissimulative ontology since Bacon wrote of it in "Simulation and Dissimulation." In Ruthenian writings of the seventeenth century, the shifting and balancing of presence (the memory of death), and its absence (the forgetting of death), reify Bacon's formulation of dissimulation. Oblivion, as our examination of the three cases of Stefan Zyzanii, Lavrentii Zyzanii, and Meletii Smotrytsʹkyi has shown, was used to incorporate absence into codified structures for the purpose of avoiding the prohibitions of strictly binary either/or systems.

Early modern life was permeated by dissimulative practices in all spheres of activity, including politics and social interactions. Our study suggests that dissimulation pervaded the realm of rhetoric and exegesis, as well; namely, dissimulation was a means of organizing a narrative or text. Ruthenian writers like the Zyzanii brothers and Smotrytsʹkyi signaled their membership in the culture of dissimulation by utilizing certain practices characteristic of the art of dissimulation. Furthermore, they shaped this very culture by creating a specific language, a language of concealment and intentional forgetting. Mastering oblivion through the sophisticated usage of the memory and dissimulative arts was a true milestone in Ruthenian intellectual culture, creating space for rational methodology, paving the way to the birth of disciplines, and preparing the East Slavic world to enter modernity.