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Nota di contenuto	Death ritual among Russian and Ukrainian peasants : linkages between the living and the dead / Christine D. Worobec -- Folk orthodoxy popular religion in contemporary Ukraine / Natalie Kononenko -- The miracle as sign and proof : 'miraculous semiotics' in the medieval and early modern Ukrainian mentality / Roman Holyk -- Sexuality and gender in early modern Russian orthodoxy : sin and virtue in cultural context / Valerie A. Kivelson -- The Christian sources of the cult of St Paraskeva / Eve Levin -- Popular religion in the time of Peter the Great / Paul Bushkovitch -- Letters from heaven : an encounter between the 'national movement' and 'popular culture' / Andriy Zayarnyuk -- For the beauty of God's house : notes on icon vestments and decorations in the Ruthenian Church / Sophia Senyk -- 'Social' elements in Ukrainian icons

of the Last Judgment through the eighteenth century / John-Paul Himka  
-- Between 'popular' and 'official' : akafisty hymns and Marian icons in  
late imperial Russia / Vera Shevzov.

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### Sommario/riassunto

Letters from Heaven features an international group of scholars investigating the place and function of 'popular' religion in Eastern Slavic cultures. The contributors examine popular religious practices in Russia and Ukraine from the middle ages to the present, considering the cultural contexts of death rituals, miracles, sin and virtue, cults of the saints, and icons. The collection not only fills a void in religious scholarship, but also responds to current theoretical challenges. Reflecting critically on the heuristic value of popular religion and on the concept of popular culture in general, Letters from Heaven is characterized by a shift of focus from churches, institutions, and theological discourse to the religious practices themselves and their interconnections with the culture, mentality, and social structures of the societies in question. An important contribution to the fields of religion and Eastern Slavic studies, this volume challenges readers to rethink old pieties and to reconsider the function of religion.

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