ABSTRACT

The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Greek Orthodox Thought: A Study of the
Hesychast Basis of the Thought of John S. Romanides and Christos Yannaras

Daniel Paul Payne, B.A., M.Div.

Mentor: Derek H. Davis, Ph.D.

In the 1940s Russian émigré theologians rediscovered the ascetic-theology of St.
Gregory Palamas. Palamas's theology became the basis for an articulation of an
Orthodox theological identity apart from Roman Catholic and Protestant influences. In
particular the "Neo-Patristic Synthesis" of Fr. Georges Florovsky and the appropriation
of Palamas's theology by Vladimir Lossky set the course for future Orthodox theology in
the twentieth century. Their thought had a direct influence upon the thought of Greek
theologians John S. Romanides and Christos Yannaras in the late twentieth century.
Each of these theologians formulated a political theology using the ascetic-theology of
Palamas combined with the Roman identity of the Greek Orthodox people. Both of these
thinkers called for a return to the ecclesial-communal life of the late Byzantine period as
an alternative to the secular vision of the modern West. The resulting paradigm
developed by their thought has led to the formation of what has been called the "Neo-
Orthodox Movement." Essentially, what the intellectual and populist thinkers of the
movement have expressed in their writings is "political hesychasm."

Romanides and Yannaras desire to establish an Orthodox identity that separates the Roman aspect from the Hellenic element of Greek identity. The Roman identity of the Greek people is the Orthodox Christian element removed from the pagan Hellenism, which, as they argue, the Western powers imposed on the Greek people in the establishment of the modern nation-state of Greece in 1821. Romanides and Yannaras want to remove the Western and pagan elements from the Hellenic identity of the people, and replace it with the Orthodox identity rooted in hesychast spirituality based on the teachings of Gregory Palamas.

Using an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the thought of Romanides and Yannaras, the work employs constructivist sociology with history and theology to arrive at a complete understanding of their politico-theological arguments. Furthermore, the work examines the theological sources as well as the historical setting for the development of their thought. Additionally, the project assesses their political theology and provides opportunities for further theological development.
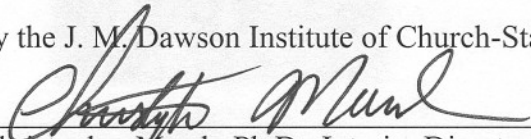
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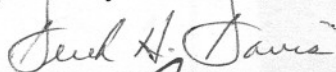
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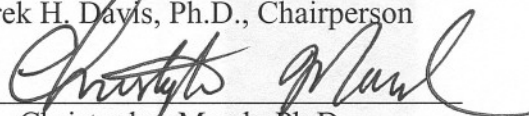Daniel Paul Payne, B.A., M.Div.

A Dissertation

Approved by the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies

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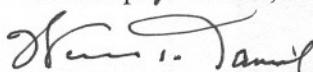
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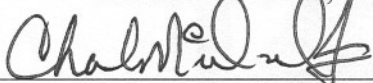
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Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
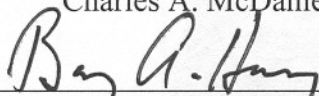
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PREFACE

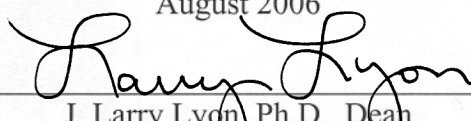In 1990 I began a journey of faith to the Orthodox Church. In that year I began

reading the works of Fr. Georges Florovsky, Fr. John Meyendorff, Fr. Alexander

Schmemann, and Vladimir Lossky. These writers introduced a spiritual and theological

world to me that I knew existed but had not experienced. In the course of reading their

writings, I became aware that my own theological thought had changed, and I entered the

Greek Orthodox Church in 1994. A few years later, I enrolled at Holy Cross Greek

Orthodox School of Theology to continue my theological education. There I was

introduced to the thought of Christos Yannaras and Fr. John Romanides.

At the seminary a group of seminarians assembled to read and discuss the works

of Romanides, for we had yet to be introduced to the hesychast tradition. Romanides's

understanding of the spiritual life intrigued us, as we hungered for spiritual food. His

insistence on the three-fold path of spiritual development of purification, illumination,

and glorification instilled in us the need for our repentance and cooperation with the Holy

Spirit in our lives, leading to participation in Christ. Furthermore, thanks to Fr. George

Dragas, we had the opportunity to meet and listen to Fr. John, as he had been invited to

receive an honorary doctorate from the school. While the effects of his ill health were

noticeable, his eyes and face shone with the love of Christ. During those years at the

seminary, the teachings of Fr. John and of his disciples provided many of us with the

spiritual nourishment to graduate. We owe much to him. May his memory be eternal.

I also became familiar with some of the writings of Christos Yannaras while at

seminary. Under the guidance of Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis, I began to realize the

importance of Yannaras's theology for social ethics, especially his understanding of the human person. During that time, I began to desire to do advanced graduate work on the thought of Yannaras. At the time, though, I did not realize what a daunting task that would be. Thank to Fr. Emmanuel, I had the opportunity to meet Professor Yannaras at a conference held at Holy Cross in 1996. His theology had had a large impact on my own thought.

While some may argue that the theology of Romanides and Yannaras leads to a Palamite fundamentalism in the church, I believe that their theology is important for the contemporary church, both in the homeland and in the diaspora. Their emphasis on the importance of the essence and energies distinction in God protects the transcendence of God in an age when God is domesticated and indistinguishable from the other consumer idols from which we choose in the marketplace of religion in the West. But the distinction also allows for a "knowledge" of God that "passes all human understanding," whereby human beings are enabled to participate in a relationship of communion with the source of all being that leads to the transfiguration of all of creation. In an age of ecological suicide and material hedonism, the world needs such a vision of transfiguration rooted in the Being and Energy of God. May we have the courage to be partakers in the divine nature that leads to the salvation of the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is the culmination of a spiritual and theological journey that began over twenty years ago. During that time numerous theologians, social scientists, historians, philosophers, and other intellectuals influenced my thought. As a result, this is a testimony to the education that they have given to me and to which I am indebted. I have been honored to discuss the ideas contained in this book with many people over the years, who have given me invaluable advice, direction, and feedback, challenging me to look at other dimensions of the issues. To all of my professors, friends, and family, I give you my most humble appreciation and thanks.

Especially, I would like to acknowledge the professors who have served on the doctoral committee. Dr. Derek Davis, former director of the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, has been my mentor in church-state studies for the past seven years. He has greatly influenced my thought on the necessity of holding a separatist position. Many times he has challenged me in this area. His advice, editing, and comments have been greatly appreciated as I worked through the arduous process of completing this project. Thank you Dr. Davis for bringing me to Baylor and helping me to understand the importance of religious liberty. I would also like to thank Dr. Christopher Marsh, who has also served as a mentor and friend to me. His influence upon me has chiefly been to return to the thought of Peter Berger and constructivism as a social science tool in understanding religious phenomena. His advice and friendship have provided the impetus for finishing the book. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Barry Harvey for his theological guidance and challenges over the past several years,

received from Katherine when I came home late from work, the hugs that I received from

Anna when I came home for dinner, the kisses that I received from Elise in the morning,

and the smiles and waves from Sophia all encouraged me to finish the manuscript, yet

showed to me what truly matters in life. Most importantly, I thank my wife, Elizabeth,

for her love and support over the past ten years. She took care of all the domestic matters

that enabled me to focus on my work. I could not have done this without her.

Unfortunately, she has been a "single" mother for way too long, having to share me with

my "mistress." Sweetheart, I cannot thank you enough for what you have done. I share

this work with you. You are my love and joy.

To Elizabeth, my soul mate
and companion on this
arduous journey, who
made this work possible

CHAPTER ONE

Ethno-Religious Nationalism as a Constructivist Project: An Evaluation of Recent
Scholarship and an Interpretation of the Neo-Orthodox Movement in Greece

Introduction

In the 1990s the social sciences were faced with the problem of the resurgence of

public religion around the world.[1] The social sciences, rooted in the positivism of the

Enlightenment, had maintained, especially since the 1950s, that as nations experienced

modernization they would also experience religious decline, particularly in the public

sphere. This concept, which came to be termed "secularization theory," became the basis

for understanding modernization, and indeed it seemed to describe what was happening

in the Western world, especially Western Europe. However, in the 1990s, with the

opening of the world due to the end of the Cold War, "secularization theory" with the

concomitant "modernization theory" came under review. "Secularization theory," as it

was traditionally expressed, could not explain the resurgence of public religion. Since

that time social scientists have either tried to make the data fit the traditional theories or

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[1]See in particular, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*
(Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Peter L. Berger, "Secularism in
Retreat," *The National Interest* 46 (winter 1996): 3-12; Robert W. Hefner, "Multiple
Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age," *Annual Review of
Anthropology* 27 (1998): 83-104; Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A
Global Overview," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World
Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
1999), 1-18; Willfried Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism and Religion: A Global
Perspective," *Current Sociology* 51 (May 2003): 265-86; Peter L. Berger, "Religion and
the West," *The National Interest* 55 (summer 2005): 112-19; Grace Davie, "Europe: The
Exception that Proves the Rule," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent
Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 1999), 65-84.

they have had to provide new theories for understanding the present realities. According to sociologist Grace Davie, sociologists have three basic schools of thought in which to operate today: secularization theory, rational choice theory, and a recent theory, which has some promise, multiple modernities theory.[2]

Similarly, the study of nationalism has been forced to undergo reevaluation. Having been based on the social science literature of the mid twentieth century, theories pertaining to nationalism have been constructed utilizing modernist concepts based on secularization theory. Consequently, these theories were lacking in being able to predict or describe the phenomenon of what is known as "ethno-religious nationalism" that exploded in the late twentieth century. Social scientists and historians that worked in the field of nationalist studies were caught unprepared to explain this phenomenon.

Noticeable in this was the inability of the Clinton administration to effectively respond to the Yugoslav crisis in the 1990s and the subsequent rise of anti-American sentiments in its NATO ally, Greece. According to journalist Takis Michas, the anti-American demonstrations that occurred in Greece in October, 1999 "surpassed by far the violence seen in any recent anti-American demonstration anywhere else in the world (with the possible exception of demonstrations in Tehran during the Ayatollah Khomeini

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[2]Grace Davie, "The Scientific Study of Religion and Culture: A *Tour d'Horizon*," paper presented at the conference "Religion, Culture, and Conflict in the Former Soviet Union and Beyond" (Moscow: The Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, Boston University with the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University, 2006). There has been a proliferation of work pertaining to multiple modernities. Besides the works mentioned in the first footnote of this chapter, see in particular S. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24, no. 2 (1999): 283-95; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129 (winter 2000): 1-29; Bjorn Wittrock, "Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition," *Daedalus* 129 (winter 2000): 31-60. For a recent critique of multiple modernities, see Volker H. Schmidt, "Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?" *Current Sociology* 54 (January 2006): 77-97.

era)."[3] Michas notes that the Clinton administration was not able to understand the

Greek anti-Americanism because it still believed that the issue concerned human rights

discourse of the 1960s when America supported the fascist regime of the Colonels.[4] The

Clinton administration had made a "category mistake" believing that the issue pertained

to the past when instead it actually pertained to recent developments in the political

culture of Greece. The people were not demonstrating against America's past actions,

but "were affirming the return to the homeostasis of a Balkan society marked by

communal bonding, religious solidarity, and the pervasiveness of tribal worldview."[5]

According to Michas, the root cause of the demonstrations was the rise of

ethnonationalism in Greece with its civilizational relationship with the Serbian people.

The bombing of Belgrade by American armed forces was seen as a betrayal of

Christendom and a western alliance against the Orthodox in support of Islam.

Michas argues that one of the root causes of the rise of ethnonationalism in

Greece in the late twentieth century is the politicization of the Church of Greece. Under

the leadership of former Archbishop Seraphim and current Archbishop Christodoulos, the

Church of Greece has played a prominent role in the public and political life of Greece,

supporting and denouncing the political decisions of the PASOK administration, headed

by Papandreou and Simitis.[6] In particular, Michas notes the importance of "a group of

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[3]Takis Michas, *Unholy Alliance: Greece and Milosevic's Serbia* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 77.

[4]Ibid., 139.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., 109-19. For a discussion on the policies of the PASOK administration in the 1980s see the doctoral dissertation of Elizabeth Prodromou, "Democracy, Religion and Identity in Socialist Greece: Church-State Relations under PASOK, 1981-1989,"

influential 'Neorthodox' thinkers who have revived and brought into focus the

antagonism that existed between the Orthodox East and the Latin West during the Middle

Ages" for promoting an anti-Western climate in the Greek Orthodox Church.[7] "What

these thinkers have done is recast traditional religious antagonisms in the contemporary

idiom of world politics and use them as the basis for advocating foreign policy positions

whose ultimate aim is the total separation of Greece from the West."[8] This movement,

which saw its greatest political importance in the 1980s, includes such influential

intellectuals as Christos Yannaras, professor of philosophy at Panteion University in

Athens, Stelios Ramfos, Kostas Zouraris, Kostis Moskof, Dionysis Savvopoulos, Nikos

Gabriel Pentzikis, Abbot Vasilios Gontikakis of Iveron Monastery, Abbot Georgios

Kapsanis of Grigoriou Monastery, Panagiotis Nellas, Fr. George Metallinos, and

Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos. The movement has also attracted entertainers such as

the composers Mikis Theodorakis and Giannis Markopoulos as well as the actor Manos

Katrakis.[9] Containing predominantly intellectual and cultural elites who are loosely

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(Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993). For Christodoulos's challenges to the Simitis' administration see Daniel Payne, "The Clash of Civilisations: The Church of Greece, the European Union and the Question of Human Rights," *Religion, State and Society* 31, no. 3 (2003): 261-71; Elizabeth Prodromou, "Negotiating Pluralism and Specifying Modernity in Greece: Reading Church-State Relations in the Christodoulos Period," *Social Compass* 51, no. 4 (2004): 471-85; Tassos Anastassiadis, "Challenging the Modernization-Secularization Dogma: The Identity Cards Crisis in the 90s and the Church's 'Conservative Renovation,'" First LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece, available at http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/symposiumPapersonline/.

[7]Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 137.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Vasilios Makrides, "Byzantium in contemporary Greece: the Neo-Orthodox current of ideas," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdolino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 141-43.

associated in promoting a Neo-Byzantinism, these thinkers have attempted to formulate

an Orthodox identity for contemporary Greece in the face of the social chaos that has left

the Orthodox rootless in a post-Cold War era. In particular, the retrieval of Orthodox

ascetic theology combined with a particular understanding of Greek identity, the

Romeosyne, has provided the theological basis for their political ideology. In this regard,

the thought of John Romanides has been highly influential.

Social scientific understandings of the Neo-Orthodox movement in Greece have

generally approached the issue from a civilizational standpoint, and indeed, the Neo-

Orthodox themselves have emphasized this contrast. Consequently, using the existing

social scientific literature to address the issue has had to place the movement within the

existing theories. In particular, as we have seen, Michas understands the Neo-Orthodox

to be an ethnonationalist movement, while sociologist Victor Roudometof has argued,

using the thought of Mark Juergensmeyer, that it is a religious nationalism.[10] While

these interpretations are somewhat helpful, they fail to take into consideration the

religious thought underlying their political stance. Certainly, Neo-Orthodox thought has

fueled anti-Western sentiments in Greece and produced ethno-religious nationalism;

however, their argument is not for Greece as such, but for the religion of Orthodoxy in its

universalist understanding. Social scientific literature, by ignoring the religious thought

of the Neo-Orthodox and its sources, has not properly understood this phenomenon. For,

according to some Neo-Orthodox thought, Orthodoxy is not a nationalist issue but a

transnational religion that incorporates people of all nationalities. It is not limited to

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[10]Victor Roudometof, "Orthodoxy as Public Religion in Post-1989 Greece," in
Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-first Century, ed. Victor
Roudometof, Alexander Agadjanian, and Jerry Pankhurst (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira
Press, 2005), 84-108.

Greeks as such. However, because Orthodoxy is Greek, all Orthodox are Greek (Roman). Here we see the importance of a civilizational understanding of identity constructed by the Neo-Orthodox. As such we are not dealing with a matter of ethnonationalism or even ethno-religious nationalism, but instead a religious culture that transcends nationalist categories. This religious culture is found in all Orthodox countries in the form of a culture of hesychasm, rooted in Orthodox monasticism. However, the degree of its public and political involvement is most strongly noticed in the case of Greece, where the Orthodox identity of the nation is under the strongest attack by the forces of Western secularization and liberalism on the one hand and the pressure of Islamic assault from the East on the other. It is my contention that the Neo-Orthodox movement of Greece, especially in its religious formulation, is an attempt by Orthodox intellectuals to construct a unique Orthodox identity separate from the West and distinct from the East as a means of answering the civilizational issues that confront the modern Orthodox peoples. In this regard, I do not understand Neo-Orthodoxy or Orthodoxy, for that matter, to be an alternative modernity, but instead a post-modern tribal sectarianism that represents a differing political vision against the West. Neo-Orthodox theologians root their political vision in the ascetic theology of the Christian East.

In this chapter, I will discuss the social science literature that pertains to the issues of social constructivism, secularization theory, nationalism, and alternatives to the predominant literature. In the second place I will briefly evaluate the literature on the Neo-Orthodox Movement in Greece. Third, I will then offer a possible corrective to the social science literature based on theological understandings lacking in the sciences. This

will then allow for the articulation of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of religion.

<div align="center">*Social Constructivism, Religion, and Identity Theory*</div>

In approaching the issue of nationalism, it is important to keep in mind that it is a constructed reality. The Austrian-American sociologist, Peter Berger, has maintained the position of the constructed nature of social reality. As the father of constructivism, Berger with Thomas Luckmann articulated a sociology of knowledge that is based on phenomenological theory. In their sociology Berger and Luckmann argue that social reality, that is "taken for granted" by the masses, must be understood as being a constructed reality. In their attempt to enlarge the understanding of sociology of knowledge, Berger and Luckmann provide the basis on which to understand the *sui generis* character of social reality as both "objective facticity" in the Weberian understanding and "subjective meaning" as understood by Durkheim. According to Berger and Luckmann the task of the sociology of knowledge is the analysis of how social reality is constructed.[11]

Berger and Luckmann's phenomenological analysis of social reality allows them to articulate an understanding of everyday human activity. As they note, "Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world." They continue, "The world of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is

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[11]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 1-17.

maintained as real by these."[12] What is important to note in Berger and Luckmann's

sociology of knowledge is both the objective and subjective components of social reality.

In approaching the world around us, the human being takes for granted his everyday

experience. But, that "everyday experience," which is understood as a "facticity," is only

given meaning by being subjectively internalized in the human consciousness.

According to Berger and Luckmann, this is accomplished through institutionalization and

socialization by which the dialectic of individual and society enables the objective "taken

for grantedness" of the world to be given meaningful experience in the life of the

individual. For Berger and Luckmann the subjective interpretation of the objective

facticity of the world always occurs under a "symbolic universe" that maintains and

provides meaning to that facticity. This "symbolic universe" provides legitimation to the

institutionalization of the constructed social world. "Legitimation 'explains' the

institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings.

Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical

imperatives."[13] As a form of legitimation, symbolic universes "integrate different

provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality."[14] In

effect, all human activity occurs within that symbolic universe. "The symbolic universe

is conceived of as the matrix of *all* socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings;

the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events

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[12]Ibid., 19.

[13]Ibid., 86.

[14]Ibid., 88.

taking place *within* this universe."[15] Furthermore, these "symbolic universes" are also socially constructed realities with their own histories. As such, they provide "sheltering canopies over the institutional order as well as over individual biography," containing human experience within the socially constructed reality.

The symbolic universe also serves to provide a history for the collectivity, subsuming past, present, and future within its structure of meaning. Berger and Luckmann explain the significance of this function of the symbolic universe:

> Thus the symbolic universe links men with their predecessors and their
> successors in a meaningful totality, serving to transcend the finitude of
> individual existence and bestowing meaning upon the individual's death.
> All the members of a society can now conceive of themselves as *belonging*
> to a meaningful universe, which was there before they were born and will
> be there after they die. The empirical community is transposed onto a
> cosmic plane and made majestically independent of the vicissitudes of
> individual existence.[16]

In this manner the symbolic universe attains a "taken for granted" status in the everyday life of the individual. However, the symbolic universe "is continually threatened by the presence of realities that are meaningless in *its* terms." In order to maintain order against chaos, society through its institutions reaffirms the symbolic universe, which holds the collectivity together.[17]

As can be surmised, religion plays the role of the symbolic universe in human society. In his book, *The Sacred Canopy*, Berger develops this concept of religion as symbolic universe that provides the legitimation of the social order. He states,

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[15]Ibid., 89.

[16]Ibid., 95.

[17]Ibid., 95-6.

> It can be described simply by saying that religion has been the historically most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation. All legitimation maintains socially defined reality. Religion legitimates so effectively because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality. The tenuous realities of the social world are grounded in the sacred *realissimum*, which by definition is beyond the contingencies of human meanings and human activity.[18]

Societal institutions are legitimated by religion "by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by *locating* them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference."[19] While human institutions are always in a state of flux in society, due to the vicissitudes of history and time, the religious legitimation of such institutions survives the contingencies of human history. "Their empirical tenuousness is transformed into an overpowering stability as they are understood as but manifestations of the underlying structure of the universe."[20] So long as the entire society exists as the "plausibility structure" for the symbolic universe (religion), then religion maintains a strong world maintaining presence for the society. However, when a pluralistic situation develops, where there is competition among religions in a society, the plausibility structure for that religion is weakened, and it is placed in a sub-societal location. "The problem of 'social engineering' is then transformed into one of constructing and maintaining subsocieties that may serve as plausibility structures for the demonopolized religious systems."[21]

It is from this standpoint, then, that Berger articulates and accepts "secularization theory," whereby the institutions of society are gradually removed from the sphere of

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[18]Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), 32.

[19]Ibid., 33.

[20]Ibid., 37.

[21]Ibid., 50.

influence of religion. Historically, he argues that the process of secularization occurs on

account of capitalism and its residual effects in society, that is, the type of life that

capitalism requires is antithetical to religious belief. Furthermore, he argues that

Christianity, in particular, contains within itself the seeds of its own corruption. "Ethical

rationalization," whereby the natural link between God and the world as found in pre-

biblical religion is replaced by a historic link between God and a chosen people. The

possibility of uncertainty and the contingency of religion come into being. While he

states that Catholic Christianity arrested the development of "ethical rationalization" for a

period of time, the Protestant Reformation rediscovered it in the pages of the Old

Testament, creating the possibility for religious pluralism and, therefore, competition

leading to the possibility of a secularized world.[22]

As stated above, the symbolic universe of a given society is constantly under

threat from competing symbolic universes. According to Berger, the constant threat that

derives from pluralism is a hallmark of modernity.[23] The pluralism of the modern world

undermines all symbolic universes or plausibility structures that provide meaning to the

individual's interpretation of the facticity of the socially constructed world. What results

is an anomic situation whereby the "taken for grantedness" of the world no longer holds

and the individual must choose his or her plausibility structure in order to deal with his or

her aloneness. "Thus the institutional pluralization that marks modernity affects not only

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[22]Ibid., 113-25. In a somewhat similar argument, William Cavanaugh argues that secularization and nationalism were the by-products of the rediscovery of the concept of religion and its application to the individual's relationship with the divine. See William T. Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House:' The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11 (October 1995): 397-420.

[23]Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979), xi.

human actions but also human consciousness: Modern man finds himself confronted not only by multiple options of possible courses of action but also by multiple options of possible ways of thinking about the world."[24] In this manner, the symbolic universe in which one locates his or her identity becomes a matter of choice. This is particularly true of one's religious identity.

According to Berger, pluralism in modern society affects choice on the part of the individual in regards to his or her religion or lack thereof. In this manner, modernity forces what Berger calls "the heretical imperative" upon the individual.[25] The sacred canopy of the society is no longer taken for granted; instead, religious bodies must choose how they are to respond to the loss of "taken for grantedness." Berger presents three possibilities religious bodies have for relating to modernity: deductive, reductive, and inductive. While Berger suggests the inductive response as the one that is most likely to survive in the modern world, at the present time, it is the reductive response that is generating the rise of religiosity in the postmodern world and the one which best explains the response by Neo-Orthodox intellectuals in Greece today.

The reductive approach of religion to modernity is presented in a reaffirmation of the tradition against modernity. This phenomenon is best witnessed in "neo-orthodox" movements, which are centered in the intellectual religious class. These movements seek to reaffirm the tradition in "theory as well as in religious and sociopolitical practice."[26] Berger defines neo-orthodoxy as, *the reaffirmation of the objective authority of a*

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[24]Ibid., 17.

[25]Ibid., 30-31.

[26]Ibid., 67-8.

religious tradition after a period during which that authority had been relativized and weakened."[27] Because of the fact that there has been an interval of time in which the tradition has been affirmed as authoritative, for the person this creates a cognitive dissonance whereby he realizes the contingency of his reaffirmation of the tradition. Berger states, "The problem is, quite simply, that it is very difficult to forget this interval. The individual who says, anew, that 'it can be no other' remembers the time when he thought that it *could* be other. This is why neotraditional and neo-orthodox movements come on with particular vehemence. Typically, they are a noisy lot. No wonder: The recollections of that interval when the tradition was less than certain must be drowned out."[28] In this manner, the convert must make a decision for the faith, as opposed to his predecessors who accepted the taken for granted nature of the symbolic universe. In making a decision there is always the possibility that he or she could decide not to belong to the group. Making faith a contingency upon individual decision creates the violent defensiveness of some neo-orthodox groups as they seek to forget the interval of time when the tradition was not affirmed. In order to buttress the decisions of the individual for the faith, communal ties are highly emphasized by neo-orthodox groups. Put in sociological terms, then, neo-orthodox groups tend toward sectarianism, as they seek to justify themselves against the larger social group against which they are defining themselves. As Berger states, "Every conversion is fragile; therefore, converts must huddle together for mutual support against an outside world that fails to understand; the

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[27]Ibid., 79.

[28]Ibid., 67-8.

sect is the social form par excellence for huddling."[29] In this manner, religion once again

provides the legitimating function of the social world in which the individual lives,

reifying his identity vis-à-vis the larger social order. For the convert, then, although he

has made the decision for the faith, the communal society allows for the objectivation of

reality providing for its internalization once again, making his world meaningful.

However, it is always in constant threat of being undermined by religious pluralism in the

marketplace of religion.

Nationalism as Social Construct and Symbolic Universe

In a perusal of the vast literature pertaining to the study of nationalism, three

issues become apparent. First, there is no basic understanding of the nature of

nationalism. Furthermore, in the literature itself, there is a "terminological chaos"

whereby the reader is unsure as to what exactly is being meant by such terms as "nation,"

"state," or "ethnicity," let alone "nationalism."[30] Second, due to the lack of existence of

a discipline of nationalist studies, there is no basic methodology employed. Each scholar

utilizes the tools of his or her own discipline to evaluate the phenomenon. While this

provides for a rich discussion across disciplines, it also leads to further confusion. Third,

because the social sciences are rooted in a particular understanding of the world, that is

that the forces of this world are based upon rational scientific explanations, the non-

rational/ empirical aspects of nationalism are excluded. In this regard, the role of religion

is dismissed as being a viable rationale for the development of nationalism around the

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[29]Ibid., 92.

[30]Walker Connor points this out in his essay, "A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a …," *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 89-117.

world. Recently, some social scientists and historians have sought to explain the complex relationship between religion and nationalism due to the existing theories' inability to provide an explanation to the phenomenon of religious nationalism.

The scholarly study of nationalism began in the 1920s through 1940s with the typological work of Carlton Hayes[31] and Hans Kohn.[32] Hayes defined a "nationality" as "'a group of people who speak either the same language or closely related dialects, who cherish common historical traditions, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society.'"[33] Nationalism, therefore, is a term that first means the process of nation-state building. Second, it implies "the theory, principle, or ideal implicit in the actual historical process."[34] Third, it can mean "the activities of a particular political party."[35] Fourth, it can mean "a condition of mind in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one's national state is superior to all other loyalties and of which pride in one's nationality and belief in its intrinsic excellence and in its 'mission' are integral parts."[36] It is this fourth meaning that concerns the phenomenon experienced in the twentieth century. In his analysis of nationalism, Hayes articulated six different types of

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[31]Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926).

[32]Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929); *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944); *Prophets and Peoples: Studies in Nineteenth Century Nationalism* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1946).

[33]Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 6-7.

[34]Ibid., 5-6.

[35]Ibid., 6.

[36]Ibid.

nationalism: humanitarian nationalism, Jacobin nationalism, traditional nationalism, liberal nationalism, integral nationalism, and economic nationalism.[37] While Hayes did not include religion as a type of nationalism in his typology, he did write that nationalism was a type of religion.[38] I will discuss his thought on nationalism as religion below.

Kohn's typology was much more influential in nationalist studies. He argued that there existed two basic types of nationalism: Western and Eastern. The Western type, based in Western Europe and America, was based on social, economic, and political development. It was rooted in the Enlightenment and centered on pluralism and rationality. In the East, which according to Kohn was less developed, nationalism coincided with cultural developments. In this regard, nationalism was related to traditional communal kinship ties. Eastern nationalism rejected the Enlightenment for authoritarianism. Furthermore, eastern nationalism was more concerned with the nation as a folk community than as a political identity.[39] While the weaknesses of Kohn's typology are readily apparent, his understanding of eastern and western nationalism influenced the succeeding generation of nationalist studies.[40]

In nationalist studies there are three basic schools of thought with a large variety of diversity within them. The first paradigm is what is known as primordialism. Primordialism essentially holds that nationalism is a natural part of being a human being.

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[37]Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 38-41.

[38]Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 93-125. See also Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960).

[39]Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 41-2.

[40]Ibid., 43.

Since nationalism is rooted in human nature, nations have existed since the beginning of the human race.[41] The second paradigm is known as modernism. Essentially, modernists hold that nationalism and the development of nations are recent phenomena rooted in modernity. Within this camp are a variety of theories, which we will briefly discuss. The third school is the ethno-symbolist paradigm, which roots nationalism in the cultural artifacts of the ethnic past.[42]

While the primordialist school is the earliest in regards to the history of nationalist studies, it is the modernist approach which is the most prevalent. Essentially, modernist approaches to the study of nationalism understand that nationalism is a product of modernity that arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The processes of industrialization and secularization enabled the development of nations and nationalism. Within this paradigm, Ozkirimli has identified three basic approaches to nationalism based on emphases in the work of the scholar: Economic Transformation,[43] Political Transformation,[44] and Socio/Cultural Transformation.[45] Within these camps are both instrumentalists and constructivists. Instrumentalists understand nationalism as a conscious creation of an educated elite that utilizes nationalism as a means of social

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[41]Primordialists include Edward Shils, Clifford Geertz, Frantisek Palacky, Eoin MacNeill, Nicolae Iorga, Josep R. Llobera, and Adrian Hastings.

[42]Ibid., 64. This paradigm includes such notable thinkers as Anthony Smith and John Armstrong.

[43]In this camp Ozkirimli places Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter.

[44]John Breuilly, Paul Brass, and Eric Hobsbawm are significant writers who hold this position. Brass and Hobsbawm represent instrumentalist approaches to the question as well.

[45]Ibid., 86. Ozkirimli places in this type such notable thinkers as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, who is also a social constructivist.

control. Constructivists, while understanding nationalism as a product of social construction, do not see it as a conscious attempt by an educated elite class to control society, but rather as a natural product of the social order itself. In this regard, the thought of Benedict Anderson is most important.

Like his predecessors, Anderson notes the difficulty in arriving at a definition for "nation." He argues that the concept of nationalism should be considered anthropologically rather than ideologically. In this regard, nationalism has more in common with "kinship" and "religion" than political ideologies. He articulates a definition of nation as "an imagined political community–and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[46] He states that the nation "is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[47] While Ernest Gellner articulates a similar understanding of the creation of the nation, he presupposes a falsity to the invention, whereas Anderson understands the construction of the nation to be a social given, neither true nor false.[48]

What concerns Anderson is the issue of why so many millions of people have been willing to die for their loyalty to the community. What is it about nationalism that infuses such loyalty and sacrifice? He believes that the answer is to be found in the

[46]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

[47]Ibid. Similarly, Walker Connor defines nationalism as "loyalty to an ethnic group" or nation, which is "'a social group which shares a common ideology, common institutions and customs, and a sense of homogeneity.'" Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" in *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 40-41.

[48]Ibid.

cultural artifacts from which nationalism arose: the taken for granted nature of the

"religious community" and the "dynastic realm." For Anderson, what is important are

"the large cultural systems that preceded [nationalism], out of which–as well as against

which–it came into being."[49] Nationalism arose out of the ashes of the demise of

traditional religious communities through the promotion of the vernacular in print

languages and the fall of royal dynasties. Furthermore, Anderson notes that the rise of

nationalism also was affected by the change in understanding of time. The idea of the

nation, according to Anderson, can only occur in a change from the medieval

understanding of time as prefigurement and fulfillment, which did not allow for

simultaneity of events across time or even a "conception of history as an endless chain of

cause and effect," to an understanding of time as "temporal coincidence, and measured

by clock and calendar."[50] Additionally, the creation of the novel and the newspaper

allowed for the possibility of the creation of an "imagined community," across time and

space with the reader. While Anderson's thesis is interesting and provides for a novel

basis for the development of nationalism, the recent assault on the secular

presuppositions of the social sciences demonstrates his indebtedness to modernization

theory and the concomitant secularization theory. While mentioning the demise of

religion as a root cause for the rise of nationalism, he fails to show the role religion

played in the development of nationalism either as a legitimating factor or as the

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[49]Ibid., 12.

[50]Ibid., 23-4.

transference of nationalism as the new religion.[51] Recent scholarship in the area has led

to a fresh look at the relationship between religion and nationalism.

Some students of nationalism have begun to raise the important question of the

role of religion in the formation of nationalism. The English historian, Adrian Hastings,

has argued that English people became a nation much earlier than the nineteenth century.

According to him, the translation of the Bible into English provided the English people

with the language necessary for the formation of a nation. Ancient Israel provided the

model for the idea of the nation. It is this word "nation" deriving from the Latin *natio*

that is utilized consistently from the fourteenth century in English translations of the

Bible.[52] While modernists do not share his pre-Enlightenment roots of nationalism,

Anthony Smith does appreciate his insistence on the role that religion played in the

shaping of European nationalism.[53] Similarly, Linda Colley argues that the origin of

British nationalism was a combination of the interplay of religion and warfare. As she

states, "War played a vital part in the invention of a British nation after 1707, but it could

never have been so influential without other factors, and in particular without the impact

of religion. It was their common investment in Protestantism that first allowed the

English, the Welsh and the Scots to become fused together, and to remain so, despite

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[51]See Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Dark and Bloody Crossroads: Where Nationalism and Religion Meet," *The National Interest* 43 (summer 1993): 53-61, where she discusses the omission of the role of religion in the thought of many prominent scholars of nationalism.

[52]Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15-25.

[53]Anthony D. Smith, "Adrian Hastings on nations and nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 1 (2003): 25-28.

their many cultural divergences."[54] Furthermore, Joseph Byrnes has recently argued that

religion played an important role in the construction of modern French nationalism.

Although the French Enlightenment launched a visceral attack upon the Catholic Church,

Catholic identity remained an important constituent factor in the self-understanding of the

French people. "In France [religion] was a foundation and catalyst under the old regime

and has been an antithesis (divorce/defense) or parallel force (détente) ever since."[55] As

such, Roman Catholicism has played an important role for the identity of the French

people. Additionally, Gertrude Himmelfarb has argued for the salience of the issue of

religion and nationalism, demonstrating the neglect of religion by scholars in nationalism

studies. She argues, though, that the problem of nationalism today can only be

understood if the religious component is taken seriously by scholars.[56] What is needed is

a change in the social scientific analysis of nationalism.

    As was mentioned earlier, modern social theory did not have the theoretical tools

to analyze the resurgence of public religion worldwide. The modernist presuppositions

of the social sciences prevented social scientists from being able to explain the events that

they were witnessing. According to José Casanova, the problem was based in a

misunderstanding of secularization theory. Casanova has shown that secularization

theory, as it has traditionally been understood, is simply wrong. The traditional

understanding of secularization as differentiation, religious decline, and privatization of

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[54]Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 367-68.

[55]Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 224.

[56]Himmelfarb, "The Dark and Bloody Crossroads," 55-60.

religion is based on a "fallacy" of substituting descriptive analysis with prescriptive

belief. Modernists believed that with the differentiation of societal institutions through

modernization from the oversight of religion, society would experience decline in

religious adherence, and / or religion would be increasingly privatized and removed from

the public sphere.[57] While on the one hand this understanding of secularization was

based on the experience of Western Europe, on the other hand, it also demonstrated the

positivist bias of the social sciences rooted in the French Enlightenment, which

disavowed religion for the cult of reason. With the resurgence of public religion in the

late twentieth century, such an understanding of secularization theory could not hold.[58]

As Grace Davie has argued, secularized Western Europe is the exception, not the rule for

understanding secularization theory today.[59]

Similarly, Peter Berger has disavowed secularization theory expressed as religious

decline after supporting and contributing to the sociological literature.[60] Berger

expresses the mistakenness of secularization theory (and his own mistake in supporting

it) by its presupposition that secularization (differentiation) automatically leads to

religious decline in both society and in the mind of the individual. But, the empirical data

suggests otherwise. Throughout the world, there has been a resurgence of religious

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[57]Casanova, *Public Religions*, 20-39.

[58]Casanova believes that the theory can somewhat be salvaged if one only understands secularization theory as differentiation of the institutions in society from the religious sphere. This may entail religious decline and privatization, but it does not necessarily lead to this.

[59]Davie, "Europe: The Exception that Prove the Rule."

[60]Berger, "Secularism in Retreat," 3-4. See also, Berger, "The Desecularization of the World," 1-4.

observance and belief in spite of the modernization of society. Berger finds the problem

in the assumptions of the Enlightenment.

Gertrude Himmelfarb has demonstrated that there was not just one Enlightenment

but actually three: British, French, and American.[61] The British and American

Enlightenments, she argues, were vastly different from the French Enlightenment, yet it

is the French Enlightenment, which is assumed by all when reference is made to the

"Enlightenment." She comments that the essential difference between the French and the

British lay in their emphasis. The British did not stress "reason" as the primary "driving

force." Instead, the British Enlightenment thinkers, such as John Locke, the Earl of

Shaftesbury, and Francis Bacon, stressed "social virtues." For the American

Enlightenment the stress was "political liberty." In each of these two separate

Enlightenments, which were much more closely aligned than to the French version,

religion played an important role as an ally to Enlightenment, not its enemy as in

France.[62] While Himmelfarb's treatment of the Enlightenment age is at times

simplistic,[63] her point is well taken. By understanding the Enlightenment based solely on

the French particularity leads to the assumption that religion and modernity are

incompatible. However, the British and American versions, which came earlier, allowed

for an interplay between religion and society that stressed republican and social virtue

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[61]Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

[62]Ibid., 3-22.

[63]For instance, she argues that the "driving force" of the American Enlightenment was "political liberty," yet as Edwin Gaustad has demonstrated, the American Revolution was as much about religious liberty as political liberty. See Edwin Gaustad, *Neither King nor Prelate: Religion and the New Nation, 1776-1826* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993).

necessary for a self-governing society. French anti-clericalism led to the moral anarchy that resulted following the French Revolution.

From a theological perspective, the one person who has leveled a severe critique of modernity and the outgrowth of the social sciences from the French Enlightenment is John Milbank, the father of Radical Orthodoxy. Milbank's critique of social theory argues that the modern experiment is based on an alternative mythology that is anti-Christian in origin. In fact, this mythology, which I will describe below, is an attempt to replace Christianity as the narrative of western society.

Milbank's critique simply put is that Christian theology has been re-positioned by social theory.[64] No longer is it the "metadiscourse" of western society, but rather it has been subsumed under various secular discourses of the social sciences. In fact, social theory is nothing less than an "anti-theology" and a Christian heresy that is sustained by the positing of the "secular" in place of the Christian world. While Milbank's critique of the social sciences is indeed "radical," he does make a valid point that the social sciences emerge from a particular understanding of the world that Christianity does not share. The myth of "original violence" is taken as the primary starting point for political and social theory. This understanding of the primordial beginnings of human history is rooted more in ancient pagan thought than in Christianity, for, according to Milbank, Christianity articulated an "original peace" not "original violence."[65]

Similarly, another theologian associated with Radical Orthodoxy, William Cavanaugh has argued that modern social theory is based upon an alternative mythology

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[64]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 1-2.

[65]Ibid., 5-6.

to Christianity. He states, "The modern state is, however, founded on certain stories of nature and human nature, the origins of human conflict, and the remedies for such conflict in the enactment of the state itself." [66] As Cavanaugh argues, the state itself is the embodiment of "an alternative soteriology to that of the Church."   "Both soteriologies pursue peace and an end to division by the enactment of a social body…"

According to both Milbank and Cavanaugh, the original state of humanity was peace and unity that was fractured by the violence of original sin, especially in Cain's slaying of Abel.[67] The Church is but the restoration of the original unity of human being in the Body of Christ. Contrasting to the Christian story is the state story. The founders of modern political theory, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau,[68] argue that the original state of human nature was separation and individuality that leads to violence. In order to protect the "rights" of the person, a "social contract" is entered into by all members of society to protect their individuality. The state as the guarantor of the social contract acts as a social body to unite the competing individualities in a state of peace. Here there is a coalescence between the two soteriologies: both have the end of peace and unity.

Ironically, as Cavanaugh points out, for the state, the very thing from which it saves the human being, is the church. "The modern secular state, after all, is founded precisely, the story goes, on the need to keep peace between contentious religious

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[66]William T. Cavanaugh, "The City: Beyond Secular Parodies," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, eds. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (New York: Routledge, 1999), 182.

[67]Cavanaugh, "The City," 183; Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 389-92.

[68]Immanuel Kant could also be placed in this list with his understanding of the social contract for both individuals and nation-states. See Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (Los Angeles, CA: U.S. Library Association, Inc., 1932).

factions." According to the state myth, what gave birth to the state were the "Wars of Religion."[69] The state emerged in order to save individuals from the church. Consequently, the church could not be tolerated as a competing social body to the state.

However, according to Cavanaugh, such an understanding of the birth of the state "is simply not true." What the Wars of Religion concerned was the "birthpangs of the state" and the creation of the concept of religion. The development of the concept of religion as an internalized individual relationship with the divine arose with the discovery of the individual at the time of the Renaissance. This concept was adopted by the Reformation and enabled the development of the modern nation-state, for it allowed the state to have authority over the human body, while the church or religion pertained to the human soul. With this comes the domestication of the church by the state and the secularization of human society. Interestingly, the state myth assumes that religion will decline and/ or be privatized.

What this argument demonstrates is that nationalism, or the religion of the state, replaces Christianity as the metanarrative of western society. Christianity no longer serves as the basis of unity of western people. Instead, human society is united by the nation-state, which is then in a world society of nation-states, ideally democratic and peaceful.[70] According to Carlton J.H. Hayes the existing understandings of the development of nationalism were not satisfactory to explain the immense emotional attachment that people have toward their nations. He asks, "Why are millions ready and

[69]Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House.'"

[70]Kant, *Perpetual Peace*.

willing to lay down their lives for nationalism?"[71] Whatever the cause of this loyalty, it

"causes them to subordinate all other human loyalties to national loyalty." He argues that

this loyalty to the nation is essentially a "religious" sentiment.

Hayes argues that nationalism as a religion came to replace traditional

Christianity. Especially in France, Christianity was replaced by French nationalism. He

attributes this to the *philosophes* who, through the use of reason argued against the tenets

of Christianity, yet they replaced these tenets in a general faith in the God of Nature and

the natural law, due to their inherent religious sentiment. Accompanying their denial of

Christianity, the French *philosophes* advocated a religion of the state, a political religion

as the basis for French society.[72] While at first French intellectuals articulated a syncretic

religion of Catholicism and the French state, whereby the state church would have a

national clergy, the Roman Catholic Church opposed such syncretism, arguing for its

universal, non-nationalist position. Henceforth, according to Hayes, Roman Catholicism

and nationalism were in conflict in France.

French revolutionaries articulated a radical civil religion against the teachings of

the Catholic Church. The official catechism of the French civil religion became The

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, "and solemn profession of belief in

it was prescribed by the Constitution of 1791."[73] Additionally, rites were added to

include "civic baptism," "civic marriage," and "civic funeral" with the accompanying

hymns, prayers, fasts and feasts. A genuine civic religion was created to replace Roman

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[71]Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 94.

[72]Ibid., 98-102. In particular see Jean Jacques Rousseau's argument for a civil religion in *The Social Contract* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 176-87.

[73]Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 102.

Catholicism. While this French civil religion went through a variety of changes,

essentially it remained a cult to reason and to the state. Hayes comments, "This religion

had already lodged deep in popular consciousness, and eventually it was to emerge, in

more or less curious syncretisms with older philosophies and world-religions, as the

dominant religion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Under the mask of

laicisation the new religion of nationalism soon claimed the allegiance of a multitude of

determined zealots throughout the world."[74]

　　　Understanding nationalism as "religion" is important for gaining an insight into

how nationalism reacts when challenged by the pressures of globalization in a post-

modern world. Just as the "taken for grantedness" of religion is challenged by religious

pluralism, the "taken for grantedness" of national identity is challenged by the increasing

plurality of ethnicities in a nation-state. National identity has to be redefined to

incorporate the incoming immigrants, or the traditional understanding is reified creating

the possibility of two or more nations existing in a nation-state. National identity then

becomes problematic. Furthermore, the effects of globalization break down national

identities and replace them with a homogenous culture. Cultural elites, seeking to protect

the national identity against the homogenizing effects, choose to emphasize their national

identity over and against the homogenous globalized culture. This is similar to what

Berger calls neo-orthodoxy in regards to religion as discussed earlier. The effects of

pluralism in the global world provide the same reaction from religion as from

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　　[74]Ibid., 104.

nationalism. Together, as Thomas Friedman writes, cultural and political elites reacting

against globalization produce a volatile combination.[75]

Multiple Modernities and Globalization Theory

As noted above, one of the more promising options for the social sciences in

analyzing contemporary data regarding the resurgence of religion is "Multiple

Modernities Theory." S. N. Eisenstadt is credited as the sociologist who originated this

theory. He contends,

> The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand
> the contemporary world–indeed to explain the history of modernity is to see
> it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of
> cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional
> and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in
> close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists, and also by
> social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very
> different views on what makes societies modern.[76]

What is important, Eisenstadt notes, is that the concept of "modernity" is separated from

its Western moorings, allowing for the possibility of other modernities.

But what exactly is meant by "modernity?" Eisenstadt comments that essentially

sociologists traditionally understood modernity as the process of differentiation of the

institutions of society from the traditional spheres of authority: culture and politics. What

occurred was a process of "reflexivity" whereby the traditional centers of authority could

be challenged. The taken for grantedness of the traditional understanding of the world

was undermined. Eisenstadt states,

> The degree of reflexivity characteristic of modernity went beyond what was
> crystallized in the axial civilizations. The reflexivity that developed in the

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[75]Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*,
rev. ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 344-47.

[76]Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," 2.

modern program not only focused on the possibility of different interpretations of core transcendental visions and basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a particular society or civilization; it came to question the very givenness of such visions and the institutional patterns related to them. It gave rise to an awareness of the possibility of multiple visions that could, in fact, be contested.[77]

With this differentiation of the spheres of society came also the loss of the traditional legitimating institutions of society. This allowed then for the possibility of differing ordering of societies based on alternative legitimations. What resulted was a contest over the boundaries and definition of the "political" arena.

From the ideology and premises of the political program of modernity and the core characteristics of modern political institutions, there emerged three central aspects of the modern political process: the restructuring of center-periphery relations as the principal focus of political dynamics in modern societies; a strong tendency toward politicizing the demands of various sectors of society, and the conflicts between them; and a continuing struggle over the definition of the realm of the political. Indeed, it is only with the coming of modernity that drawing the boundaries of the political becomes one of the major foci of open political contestation and struggle.[78]

This debate over the political produced antinomical ideological positions that contested over societal understandings of the political realm. What emerged was a clash of ideologies. Eisenstadt states,

These clashes emerged in all modern collectivities and states first in Europe, later in the Americas, and, in time, throughout the world. They were crucially important in shaping the varying patterns of modern societies, first within territorial and nation-states, generating within them differing definitions of the premises of political order. They defined the accountability of authority relations between state and civil society; they established patterns of collective identity, shaping the self-perceptions of individual societies, especially their self-perception as modern.[79]

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[77]Ibid., 4.

[78]Ibid., 6.

[79]Ibid., 10.

The political arrangement and its relationship with civil society developed uniquely in each society due to the social and cultural differences inherent in each society. Thus, there emerged different definitions of the state and of civil society. The Soviet and fascist/nationalist ideologies were some of the first alternatives to Western modernity. The Soviet and communist ideologies were completely defined by modernity within the confines of the Enlightenment. However, with the fascist/nationalist programmes, the universalistic Enlightenment ideals were challenged.[80]

Furthermore, Western institutions and values were adopted in each society. These institutions included the concept of the territorial state and the various political, legal, and bureaucratic institutions necessary to administrate such an entity. However, as Eisenstadt notes, "The appropriation of themes of modernity made it possible for these groups to incorporate some of the Western universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of their own new collective identities, without necessarily giving up specific components of their traditional identities (often couched, like the themes of Western modernity, in universalistic, especially religious terms)."[81]

Eisenstadt argues that the rise of religious fundamentalism in the late twentieth century is itself a process of an alternative modernity. He believes that these movements are very similar to Jacobinism and communism in their critique of the Enlightenment and also espousing "totalistic visions entailing the transformation both of man and of society." "It is the total reconstruction of personality, of individual and collective identities, by conscious human action, particularly political action, and the construction

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[80]Ibid., 10-11.

[81]Ibid., 14-15.

of new personal and collective identities entailing the total submergence of the individual in the community that they seek."[82] Furthermore, these movements seek to transcend the nation-state articulating a universalist vision for all human society.

Willfried Spohn has also argued for a multiple modernity approach to understanding the nationalist and religious resurgence in the late twentieth century.[83] He argues that both the modernist approach and the globalist approach to the understanding of the resurgence of religion and nationalism are essentially wrong, for "they essentialize either the nation-state system or the global system and directly correlate within each unit political, socioeconomic and cultural phenomena and dimensions, instead of considering the local, national and transnational macro-micro linkages, relations and interactions."[84] The problem with such an approach is the modernization and secularization bias of the social sciences. They fail to understand "the varying religious foundations and components in Western and Eastern European nationalism." Instead of the modernist and globalist approach, Spohn argues that the multiple modernities approach is better prepared to understand the development "of ethnic and religious nationalism particularly in the non-western world as the consequence of multiple forms of modernity, modernization and democratization in reaction to the former worldwide imposition of state secularism either by western liberal or eastern socialist regimes."[85]

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[82]Ibid., 19.

[83]Spohn, "Multiple Modernity, Nationalism and Religion," 265-86.

[84]Ibid., 266.

[85]Ibid., 266-67.

Recently, however, the multiple modernities approach has come under criticism. In perusing the developing literature, it becomes apparent that the concept of modernity has no substantive meaning. What is meant by saying that a particular society is "modern"? Previously, the concept of modernity implied a secularization of society from its traditional religious moorings. By arguing that there exist multiple modernities whereby any society can be construed as "modern" waters down the very idea of modernity to the point that it is simply meaningless. Are we then stating that there is no such thing as Modernity?

Similarly, Volker Schmidt of the University of Singapore has argued against the concept of multiple modernities and replaced it with the idea of varieties of modernity. In his critique of the literature, Schmidt notes the concern about the vacuity of modernity. As he states,

> The literature on multiple modernities contributes little to this understanding, it only distances itself from what it takes to be the most objectionable views of modernization theory without offering an alternative definition or proposal. Instead, it largely relies on an implicit notion of modernity which, when closely scrutinized, actually appears surprisingly similar to that underlying much of the work of modernization theorists, only thinner. Thus, whereas modernization theory aims to capture the *whole* structure of modern society and *all* aspects of the dramatic change processes that give rise to its emergence, the literature on multiple modernities focuses almost exclusively on *cultural* factors and the ways these are believed to frame *politics* and the *political order* (as though modernity was identical with its polity or with the modern state), as well as, in some instances, on *religion*. Not surprisingly, to the extent that a theory of modernity is outlined at all, it is a self-proclaimed cultural theory.[86]

In this regard, multiple modernities theory, by stressing the cultural particularities of societies over and against the West, seems to resemble the very theory from which they desire to distance themselves, modernization. "Modernity, in this view, crystallizes

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[86]Schmidt, "Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?" 78.

around major human civilizations, such as European (or western, or Judeo-Christian)

civilization, Japanese civilization, Sinic civilization, Indian (or Hindu) civilization,

Islamic civilization, Latin-American civilization, etc. (not unlike the typology offered by

Huntington, 1996), all of which leave their imprint on the institutions of society giving

them their peculiar shape and 'colour', as it were."[87] Because "culture and religion are

blended" in this perspective, it becomes problematic for discerning whether a particular

culture or religion is modern. In this regard, Schmidt asks how Japanese civilization

represents an alternative modernity to western modernity? What is the basis for

comparison, and what is it about Japanese civilization that makes it so different from the

West as to construe its own developmental modernization? The problem with the

multiple modernities approach is that it is unable to provide the substantive answer to

such a question, for it has yet to articulate the differences in the multiple modernities to

provide an explanation as to how a civilization or culture represents a differing

modernity. In fact, as Schmidt comments, the theory does not allow the question for the

very presupposition that it rests upon is that cultural differences are greater than the

differences that exist across time. "And given that almost everyone agrees that modern

society, be it in the singular or in the plural, differs from pre-modern societies, the

assumed differences between the newly discovered multiple modernities must be very

profound indeed. For if they were not, then there would be no sound basis for speaking

of modernity in the plural–of modernities."[88]

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[87]Ibid., 80.

[88]Ibid., 81.

In place of the concept of multiple modernities, Schmidt argues for "varieties of modernity." Drawing upon the economic and political science literature that discusses "varieties of capitalism," Schmidt articulates a theory that accommodates cultural differences in regards to modernity, without emasculating modernization theory completely. "Like the multiple modernities literature, [varieties of capitalism] emphasizes difference. However, the differences that it concerns itself with are seen as *family differences* within a common mode of societal (more specifically, economic) organization that of modern capitalism. Moreover, they are first and foremost *institutional differences*, not cultural ones, even though their sociohistorical embeddedness in particular cultural and political contexts is well traced and acknowledged."[89] Taking this stance, Schmidt is then able to articulate a theory for the comparison of societies across civilizational lines. Cultural distinctiveness does not play a central role, for what Schmidt is concerned about are the institutions that have developed in these societies. By comparing these institutions and their functioning in the particular society, social scientists can then deduce how "modern" a society truly is. In this way, Schmidt is able to salvage some aspect of modernization theory while allowing for a variety of modernities that cut across civilizational lines. This also allows for the real possibility that some societies have not yet achieved modernization, which the multiple modernities theory is incapable of deducing.[90]

While the debate about multiple modernities is certainly helpful in bringing a change to the social sciences in regards to the role of religion in society, it remains

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[89]Ibid., 82.

[90]Ibid., 82-87.

problematic for understanding religious nationalism. Religious nationalism transcends

the nation-state, and at times even challenges the existence of the state.[91] Multiple

modernities theory, as well as its parent, modernization theory, base nationalism solely in

the nation-state, for how can a nation or culture be declared to be modern apart from the

existence of a state and its societal institutions? As Liah Greenfeld has persuasively

argued, "the idea of the 'nation,' … forms *the constitutive element of modernity.*"[92] She

argues that nationalism is a hallmark of modernity because the nation has become the

identifier as opposed to the traditional identifier being religion. Because there has been a

social transformation whereby the person now identifies himself with the nation rather

than with religion, the society has approached modernity. Nationalism by preceding the

formation of nations, provided the means by which the political structure of the modern

world came to pass.[93] But again Greenfeld's concept of nationalism does not

satisfactorily address the issue of religious nationalism that is not tied to the creation of

the nation-state. The solution to the problematic of resurgent religious nationalism can be

found in globalist theory, for it is the only theory that can truly account for its origin and

development apart from the nation-state.

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[91]For nationalisms against the state, see David Lloyd, "Nationalisms against the State," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 173-97.

[92]Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 18.

[93]Ibid., 20-21. Here she is obviously refuting the theory of Eric Hobsbawm that nationalism can only occur after the creation of the nation-state. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

In 1993 Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington published a highly controversial essay entitled, "The Clash of Civilizations?", where he argued that the source of conflict in the twenty first century would be civilizational differences.[94] He followed the article with a revision and expansion of his thesis in the book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.[95] Huntington holds that with the end of the Cold War, conflict will cease to be about ideology, but will now be concerned with the cultural, and especially religious, differences that exist between what he discerns as the nine major civilizations that exist today (Sinic, Japanese, Indian, Buddhist, Islam, Western, Orthodox, Latin American, and African). While his groupings and the various civilizational alliances that he presupposes are highly questionable, his point is well taken that conflict is based upon cultural rather than ideological differences in the post-Cold War era. Particularly, this seems to be the case in regards to the conflicts that have occurred in what he calls the "fault lines" of civilizations, Yugoslavia and Chechnya being prime examples, but also Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the two Persian Gulf Wars. While he is not able to account for inter-civilizational conflict, and he seems to not be concerned about it, his thesis does allow for an explanation of the conflicts that the post-modern world is experiencing. Unlike other social scientists, Huntington takes seriously the role of religion in affecting world politics. However, like other social scientists, Huntington's thesis remains beholden to the modernist thesis. Not only are cultural differences between civilizations the source of conflict, but also the anti-modern

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[94]Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (summer, 1993): 22-49.

[95]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996).

tendency of non-western cultures, particularly Islamic civilization. Furthermore, Huntington is still arguing from the basis of Cold War politics, for the chief actors in the new world order are still nation-states, not civilizational entities. Thus, Huntington does not address the serious problem of ethno-religious nationalism that transcends the boundaries of the nation-state.

Social scientist Peter Beyer has presented a possible correction to Huntington by articulating the affects of globalization upon religion throughout the world. Beyer notes that globalization theory has argued that in the post-Cold War era "people, cultures, societies, and civilizations previously more or less isolated from one another are now in regular and almost unavoidable contact."[96] This proximity of cultural differences leads to two basic outcomes. First, "we see the conflicts that arise as quite diverse and often contradictory cultures clash within the same social unit." Second, "globalizing socio-structural and cultural forces furnish a common context that attenuates the differences among these ways of life." He argues that while globalization theory is able to provide an answer to some of the conflicts, it does not go far enough in understanding the inherent problem in the global system. What is required is "a more multifaceted approach." Beyer states,

> Juxtaposition of particular cultures or identities not only brings differences into sharper profile, it makes it much more visible that the diverse ways of living are largely human constructions. In the context of comparison, no single one of them is self-evidently 'correct'. Life-worlds and worldviews appear to a significant extent arbitrary; and as such we can change them. What makes this challenging of identities unavoidable under conditions of globalization, however, is the existence of powerful social structures that ignore or at least recast all group-cultural and personal identities, thus undermining attempts to respond to the situation through renewed communicative isolation. The effort on the part of many people in the world

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[96] Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 2.

nevertheless to preserve, stabilize, and (re)create particular identities
therefore constantly runs counter to this tendency of the global system to
relativize them. The resulting conflict, in this case, is then not so much
against rival cultures and identities, although people may formulate it as
such, as against the corrosiveness of the system itself.[97]

Thus, while Huntington understands the source of conflict to be civilizational differences,

Beyer sees the source to be the system of globalization that is the underlying source of

conflict, although this may not be recognized or articulated by the combatants. The

strength of Beyer's argument is that he focuses on the constructed nature of identities and

how these social constructions are both challenged and, paradoxically, reified by the

socio-structural forces of globalization. Beyer notes that the role of religion in the global

system is its ability to recreate and revitalize these social identities "as a way of gaining

control over systemic power."[98]

Ironically, even as religion opposes the forces of globalization throughout the

world, it also embraces them. In regards to the resurgence of Islam, Beyer notes that

"religion can be a proactive force in the sense that it is instrumental in the elaboration and

development of globalization: the central thrust is to make Islam and Muslims more

determinative in the world system, not to reverse globalization. The intent is to shape the

global reality, not to negate it." In this way religion can actually further globalization

through opposition of its effects.[99]

Furthermore, Beyer notes the secularizing effects of globalization on world

society. Religious resurgence is actually a response to the spread of secularism and the

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[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid., 3.

[99]Ibid.

marginalization of religion throughout the world. He argues that "globalization brings

with it the relativization of particularistic identities along with the relativization and

marginalization of religion as a mode of social communication." The resurgence of

religious identity in the post-Cold War era is a result of "a situation in which the

revitalization of religion is a way of asserting a particular (group) identity, which in turn

is a prime method of competing for power and influence in the global system."[100] In this

regard, religion's tie to "socio-cultural particularisms" provides a means of legitimation

to social movements vying for power in the global environment. In particular, such

social movements tend to be nationalist in nature. "Because of their emphasis on socio-

cultural particularisms, such religious movements often display the conservative option

with its typical stress on the relativizing forces of globalization as prime manifestations

of evil in the world."[101]

Likewise, Benjamin Barber has articulated the theory that the religious and

cultural conflicts experienced in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are

embedded in the process of globalization itself. He states, "Jihad not only revolts against

but abets McWorld, while McWorld not only imperils but re-creates and reinforces Jihad.

They produce their contraries and need one another."[102]   The forces of globalization

require people to seek out particularistic identities against the universalism of the global

market. He comments,

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[100]Ibid., 4.

[101]Ibid., 108.

[102]Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 5.

In being reduced to a choice between the market's universal church and a retribalizing politics of particularist identities, peoples around the globe are threatened with an atavistic return to medieval politics where local tribes and ambitious emperors together ruled the world entire, women and men united by the universal abstraction of Christianity even as they lived out isolated lives in warring fiefdoms defined by involuntary (ascriptive) forms of identity. This was a world in which princes and kings had little real power until they conceived the ideology of nationalism. Nationalism established government on a scale greater than the tribe yet less cosmopolitan than the universal church and in time gave birth to those intermediate, gradually more democratic institutions that would come to constitute the nation-state. Today, at the far end of this history, we seem intent on re-creating a world in which our only choices are the secular universalism of the cosmopolitan market and the everyday particularism of the fractious tribe.[103]

The "fractious tribe" is a result of the people attempting to construct an identity based on their historical particularity in the face of the homogenizing effects of globalization.[104] Both McWorld and Jihad attack the political construct of the nation-state. As the sovereignty of the nation-state is undermined, so also is the secular national identity of the people. In response they reconstruct their identities based on the historical and cultural commonalities that they share. What results is a multiculturalism within the nation-state that challenges the identity of the state. As Barber comments, "Jihad is then a rabid response to colonialism and imperialism and their economic children, capitalism and modernity; it is diversity run amok, multiculturalism turned cancerous so that the cells keep dividing long after their division has ceased to serve the healthy corpus."[105]

As stated earlier, there is an integral relationship between Jihad and McWorld. McWorld must package its goods for particular identities, while Jihad must make use of

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[103]Ibid., 7.

[104]Ibid., 9.

[105]Ibid., 11.

the commercial products of McWorld in order to participate in the modern world.[106]

Barber argues,

> What I have called the forces of Jihad may seem then to be a throwback to premodern times: an attempt to recapture a world that existed prior to cosmopolitan capitalism and was defined by religious mysteries, hierarchical communities, spellbinding traditions, and historical torpor. As such, they may appear to be directly adversarial to the forces of McWorld. Yet Jihad stands not so much in stark opposition as in subtle counterpoint to McWorld and is itself a dialectical response to modernity whose features both reflect and reinforce the modern world's virtues and vices–Jihad *via* McWorld rather than Jihad *versus* McWorld.[107]

This attack upon McWorld and the forces of modernity is made by a new form of nationalism that desires the destruction of the secular nation-state. This new form of nationalism is distinct, according to Barber, from the liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century that brought about the rise of the nation-state. The question that Barber asks is whether the new nationalism is compatible with the older form of nationalism?[108] His conclusion is, "As it turns out, neither Jihad nor McWorld–and certainly not the quarrel between them–allows democracy much room."[109]

While Barber's thesis is enlightening, especially the idea that globalization and tribalism have a Janus face, like Huntington, he is beholden to the modernist theory where the secular nation-state is the marker of modernity and the reactions to it are a pre-modern reaction to it. Religion is automatically assigned a place outside of modernity in the argument, rather, than, as multiple modernities theory holds the compatibility of

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[106]Ibid., 155.

[107]Ibid., 157.

[108]Ibid., 165.

[109]Ibid., 216.

religion with modernity. Thus, the religious nationalistic challenge to the forces of

globalization should not be understood as a revival of the ancient world, but rather as a

product of the modern world. Barber seems to hint at this when he argues for the

interdependence of Jihad and McWorld, yet his own secular social scientific bias blinds

him to the reality of the compatibility of religion and modernity. While it is true that

religious nationalism may seek to destroy the multicultural secular state, there is a way in

which religious nationalism is compatible with it.

Mark Juergensmeyer thinks differently from Barber. Religious nationalism is not

against the modern nation-state, but rather it is against the secular ideology undergirding

it. What religious nationalists desire is the formation of nation-states based upon their

religious ideology, not secularism which has eschewed religion. Thus, the conflicts that

have been witnessed beginning with the Iranian Revolution in 1978 have been attempts to

construct a modern nation-state based upon religious ideology and identity.[110] He

emphasizes that it is not helpful to label such movements as being fundamentalist in

nature because, essentially, religious nationalists are not concerned completely with

religious purity, but with society at large. Furthermore, religious nationalists are not pre-

modern peoples, but are modern in their identity and use of modern political structures.

To confuse them with their pre-modern predecessors is to make a sophomoric mistake.

They may use similar language as well as similar arguments, yet their desire is motivated

by modern concerns.

While Juergensmeyer's attempt to formulate the rationale for religious

nationalism is very helpful in the discussion, he too is unable to grasp the entire problem

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[110]Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 1-8.

with religious nationalism. First, his definitions pertaining to the nation and to

nationalism are problematic. He defines the nation as "a community of people associated

with a particular political culture and territory that possesses autonomous political

authority."[111] The nation, then, is legitimated by nationalism, which is "not only the

xenophobic extremes of patriotism but also the more subdued expressions of identity

based on shared assumptions regarding why a community constitutes a nation and why

the state that rules it is legitimate." Since he desires to show the compatibility of

religious nationalism with the modern concept of the nation-state, Juergensmeyer's

definitions limit the very concept of the nation and nationalism. He has essentially

defined the nation as the nation-state, rather than a group of people who have common

cultural and historical artifacts such as language, ethnicity, and religion. Nationalism

then is solely tied to the concept of the nation-state. But what about Barber's contention

that Jihad (religious nationalism) seeks to undermine the very existence of the nation-

state system? In this regard, Juergensmeyer is not able to address the issue of religious

nationalism as a transnational (trans-state?) phenomenon.

Recently, Juergensmeyer has addressed this issue in regards to religious

antiglobalism. He had argued in *The New Cold War?* that the rise of religious

nationalism was due to a loss of faith in secular nationalism.[112] This loss of faith in

secular nationalism creates an anomic situation whereby the citizens of the state

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[111]Ibid., 6.

[112]Ibid., 11-25.

experience "a loss of agency as well as identity."[113] In order to compensate for the anomie, "the assertions of traditional forms of religious identities are linked to attempts to reclaim personal and cultural power." Terrorist attacks tied to religious identities are violent attempts to control the social order. He comments, "Until there is a surer sense of citizenship in a global order, therefore, religious visions of moral order will continue to appear as attractive though often disruptive solutions to the problems of modernity, identity, and belonging in a global world."[114]

Susanne Rudolph has argued that the resurgence of religion as a transnational phenomenon allows for it to play both a positive as well as negative function in the formation of a global civil society. With the spread of globalization throughout the world has come an increased mobility of populations, allowing the spread of religions throughout the world. This proliferation of religion in all societies creates the possibility of dialogue and conflict. While the social science literature has tended to focus on the causes of conflict, religion can also serve as a basis for societal cooperation. Religion "give[s] structure and meaning to human relations" and "create[s] communities and enable[s] action." In this regard, religion serves a valuable "security" function to society by preserving the physical and social culture of the people.[115]

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[113]Mark Juergensmeyer, "Religious Antiglobalism," in *Religion in Global Civil Society*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 146-47.

[114]Ibid., 147.

[115]Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Introduction: Religion, States, and Transnational Civil Society," in *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, ed. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 6.

Peter Berger has also noted the growth of transnational religion, particularly with regards to Pentecostalism and Islam.[116] The effects of the spread of these two religions throughout the world have yet to be determined. David Martin has attempted to articulate the societal changes upon Latin America worked by the spread of Pentecostalism.[117] Furthermore, Philip Jenkins has described the growth of Christianity, especially in its Roman Catholic and Pentecostal varieties in the Southern Hemisphere. By the year 2050, the majority of Christians in the world will be living in the southern hemisphere, especially Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He argues that with the growth of Christianity in the southern hemisphere, the possibility of a transnational Christendom once again becomes possible.[118] José Casanova notes that since the middle of the nineteenth century until the present the Roman Catholic Church increasingly became a transnational religion in congruence with its teaching as a universal religion. In fact, the global system actually fostered an environment more at home for the universal vision of the Catholic Church than the nation-state system.[119]

What this discussion regarding the transnationalist aspect of religion has attempted to demonstrate is that while religion has been tied to nationalism in the late

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[116]Peter Berger, "Religion and Global Civil Society," in *Religion in Global Civil Society*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11-22.

[117]David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995).

[118]Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[119]José Casanova, "Globalizing Catholicism and the Return to a 'Universal Church," in *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, ed. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 121-22.

twentieth century, it also has been associated with movements that transcend the nation-state and reflect the universal vision of the religion, especially as it pertains to Christianity and Islam. While the ethno-religious conflicts that have been witnessed in the late twentieth century are tied to power struggles within transitional nation-states as they come out from under imperial and colonial domination, some religious nationalism does not associate itself with the nation-state system but seeks to replace it with an alternative political vision altogether. In this light, I shall briefly examine the Neo-Orthodox Movement in Greece.

The Neo-Orthodox Movement in Contemporary Greece

As was stated earlier, during the 1980s and 1990s, the Greek Orthodox Church became ever more politicized under the leadership of Archbishop Seraphim and Archbishop Christodoulos. While on the one hand, the Greek Orthodox Church has traditionally been a source of Greek nationalism and a legitimating institution of the Greek state, it has also not traditionally been an outspoken critic of the state. However, especially during the 1990s, the church began increasingly to attack the policies of the Simitis administration as it sought to put into place the social institutions necessary for full participation in the European Union.

In addition to the ethnonationalism of Archbishop Christodoulos, Michas notes the role of the so-called "neo-Orthodox" movement in catalyzing the spread of anti-western thought in modern Greece.[120] According to University of Erfurt professor, Vasilios Makrides, the neo-Orthodox movement is a loose association of like-minded Greek intellectuals and cultural elites of the Left who have shown an interest in the

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[120]Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, 137-39.

Orthodox spiritual and theological tradition.[121] Those associated with this movement, if

it can actually be called a movement, have not accepted the pejorative term "neo-

Orthodox," for according to the philosopher and theologican Christos Yannaras, these

thinkers, and he being one of them, did not discover a new form of Orthodoxy but rather

have returned to the forgotten "authentic Orthodox tradition."[122] According to Makrides,

"[Neo-Orthodoxy does] not, then, represent a mere religious revival, but a real

acquaintance with the spiritual legacy of Greek Orthodox civilization, a civilization

clearly differentiated from that of the West."[123] This rediscovery of the Orthodox

Christian civilization, identified with Byzantine or East Roman civilization, is offered by

the neo-Orthodox as a radical alternative to the secular western political state, which is

being required of Greece by the European Union.

The neo-Orthodox, led by such popular intellectual thinkers as Christos Yannaras

and Nikos Zouraris, seek to protect Greek Orthodox identity against the onslaught of

Western globalization. According to Victor Roudometof, the neo-Orthodox strain of

thought can be situated within the larger context of the search for contemporary Greek

identity. These thinkers "have advanced a populist interpretation that blends Greek

nationalism, anti-Western attitudes, anti-modernism, and Orthodoxy."[124] In their

interpretation of history, the formation of the modern Greek nation-state in 1821 with the

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[121]Makrides, "Byzantium in contemporary Greece," 141.

[122]Ibid., 142.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Roudometof, "Orthodoxy as Public Religion in Post-1989 Greece," 91.

concomitant formation of modern Greek identity was the attempt to divorce the Greek people from their traditional Orthodox identity and replace it with a western understanding. "As such, [this westernization] represents a threat to the broader historical and cultural unity of Greeks with the Eastern Orthodox religious heritage."[125] What concerns the neo-Orthodox and their sympathizers is the loss of Greek Orthodox cultural identity to a Western-style secularized society.

Interestingly, many of the more secular Neo-Orthodox derive from Marxism. Having engaged in a public dialogue between Marxism and Orthodoxy, various Leftist thinkers began to embrace Orthodoxy as a possible means for understanding Greek identity in the late 1980s. However, the Marxist-Orthodox debate came to an end even before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.[126] Consequently, with the demise of communism in Eastern Europe these thinkers came together to discuss the possibilities of a new Greek identity based upon Orthodoxy, sparking a renewal in Orthodox thought in the 1990s. "As a result, some Neo-Orthodox thinkers were recruited to a wider Hellenocentric quest for an authentic Greek way of life which might withstand the challenges of the next millennium."[127] Furthermore, it is also important to note that the Marxist-Orthodox debate, the generally leftist political position of many of the Neo-Orthodox, and their cultural popularity in the late 1980s can be explained by the leftist mood of the entire political culture of Greece shaped by the radical positions of the

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[125]Ibid., 91-92.

[126]Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece," 144

[127]Ibid.

Papandreou administration, especially against the West.[128] With the fall of the

Papandreou administration went the demise of Neo-Orthodoxy as a viable movement.

However, its influence in ecclesiastical thought continued, with the articulation and

development of their political ecclesiology shaped by what I will call "political

hesychasm."[129]

Therefore, the quest of the Neo-Orthodox movement, as a loose association of

like-minded intellectuals, was to arrive at a new understanding of Greek identity that

could withstand the vicissitudes of the economic and political changes occurring in

Eastern Europe. While Roudometof is correct to locate the Neo-Orthodox discourse

within the larger Greek context for the search for national Greek identity, the discourse

used by these thinkers goes beyond the confines of Greek identity. What they are

articulating is an Orthodox religious identity vis-à-vis the West that has been divorced

from the secular Greek identity. Roudometof, as well as Michas, is guilty of conflating

the ethnonationalism of Archbishop Christodoulos with the political theology of the neo-

Orthodox. In his essay, "Orthodoxy as Public Religion in Post-1989 Greece,"

Roudometof places Christodoulos in the neo-Orthodox camp.[130] However, according to

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[128]See Prodromou, *Democracy, Religion and Identity in Socialist Greece.*

[129]This term was originally used by the Russian Byzantinist Gelian Prokhorov in reference to the political culture of John VI Cantacuzenos and Patriarch Philotheos in the late fourteenth century. See G.M. Prokhorov, "L'hésychasme et la pensée sociale en Europe orientale au XIVe siècle," *Contacts* 31 (1979): 25-63. John Meyendorff comments that this concept is similar to what Nicolae Iorga called 'Byzance après Byzance'. See John Meyendorff, "Society and Culture in the Fourteenth Century Religious Problems," in *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological, and Social Problems* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1974), 65. I will use this term in reference to the attempt by Neo-Orthodox thinkers to reconstruct this political culture of late Byzantium.

[130]Roudometof, "Orthodoxy as Public Religion," 91.

Elizabeth Prodromou, there is no indication that Christodoulos has been influenced by

neo-Orthodoxy, although members of this movement sit on the Holy Synod of Greece

and are influential in the various committees of the Church of Greece.[131] Roudometof

seems to interpret neo-Orthodoxy through the lens of Christodoulos' program of

struggling for Greek Orthodox identity in the face of a growing secularism in Greece.

Neo-Orthodoxy desires something much more: the revitalization of Orthodox identity

socially, culturally, and politically. Roudometof fails to understand the theological basis

of neo-Orthodox thought.[132] However, Makrides does note the importance of the thought

of Gregory Palamas and hesychastic culture upon neo-Orthodox thinkers, especially

Christos Yannaras and Kostis Zouraris.

Neo-Orthodox thought, being a revitalization of Orthodox identity based on

hesychastic spirituality, essentially articulates a return to the lost hesychastic culture of

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[131]Elizabeth Prodromou, interview by author, 23 October 2005, Boston. She
stated that in her conversations with Archbishop Christodoulos he has never mentioned or
shown any inclination toward neo-Orthodoxy. In a perusal of his speeches and writings,
while they share some similarities with some of the themes of neo-Orthodoxy, there does
not seem to be any influence by neo-Orthodox writers.

[132]Makrides has explored some of the religious thought of the neo-Orthodox, but
he also states that more research is needed in this area. See Vasilios Makrides,
"Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: the Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas";
"Neoorthodoxie – eine religiöse Intellektuellenströmung im heutigen Griechenland," in
Die Religion von Oberschichten: Religion – Profession – Intellektualismus, ed. Peter
Antes and Donate Pahnke (Marburg: Verlag, 1989), 279-89; "Le Rôle de L'Orthodoxie
dans la Formation de L'Antieuropéanisme et L'Antioccidentalisme Grecs," in *Religions
et transformations de l'Europe* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1993),
103-16; "Aspects of Greek Orthodox Fundamentalism," *Orthodoxes Forum* 5 (1991): 49-
72; Vasilios N. Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann, "Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-
Westernism: The Need for a Comparative Research Agenda," in *Orthodox Christianity
and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven:
Peeters, 2003), 87-120.

late fourteenth-century Byzantium. As the great Byzantine historian Dimitri Obolensky

states,

> Byzantium, Bulgaria, Serbia, Rumania and Russia were all affected by this
> new cosmopolitan movement [of hesychasm]: monks, churchmen, writers
> and artists, traveling from country to country . . . found themselves in a
> similar spiritual and cultural environment; and through this 'Hesychast
> International,' whose influence extended far beyond the ecclesiastical
> sphere, the different parts of the Byzantine Commonwealth were, during the
> last hundred years of its existence, linked to each other and to its centre
> perhaps more closely than ever before.[133]

Hesychasm carried forth the ancient Byzantine universalism, competing against the

nationalism of Hellenism in the late Byzantine Empire. Hesychastic culture was

transnational, providing an Orthodox identity to all peoples regardless of nationality. As

John Meyendorff writes, "The victory of the Hesychasts encouraged trans-national

contacts between monastic communities, promoted numerous new translations of

Byzantine texts into Slavic, and undoubtedly had a profound impact upon Russian

medieval civilization . . . ."[134] In this manner an entire transnational hesychast culture

emerged in the Byzantine Commonwealth of nations. As Meyendorff argues, this

transnational movement was not only concerned about the spiritual life, but also provided

a means for "maintaining the values and structures of the Orthodox faith in the midst of a

rapidly changing political situation in the Middle East and Eastern Europe."[135] Just as in

the late fourteenth century, today's hesychast theologians in Greece are articulating a

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[133]Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1971), 390.

[134]John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 97.

[135]Ibid.

means for "maintaining the values and structures of the Orthodox faith in the midst of a rapidly changing political situation in the Middle East and Eastern Europe."

In order to understand the neo-Orthodox turn in contemporary Greek theology, this movement must be situated in the larger Orthodox theological revival that has occurred since the 1930s. This revival can be understood as the attempt to identify authentic Orthodoxy. At the First Congress of Orthodox Theology held in Athens in 1936, the great Russian emigrant theologian, Fr. Georges Florovsky, issued the call that became the beginning of what is known as the neo-patristic synthesis. Florovksy had written in his magnum opus, *The Ways of Russian Theology,* that Russian Orthodox thought was in a western captivity that had created a pseudomorphosis in its thought forms. In his address to the congress, Florovsky stated that what was needed was a return to the mind of the fathers and to their way of doing theology.[136] The year 1956 represents a revolution in Greek Orthodox theology. In that year, the Greek-American, Fr. John Romanides, published his doctoral dissertation, *The Ancestral Sin*, at the University of Athens.[137] According to Christos Yannaras, Romanides's dissertation was "the first fundamental theological critique of the dogmatic positions of the pietistic movement." His dissertation "considerably disturbed the faculty of theology of Athens."[138] This is not surprising since Romanides's dissertation challenged the

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[136]Georges Florovsky, "Western Influences in Russian Theology," *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh, vol. 4, *Aspects of Church History*, 157-82 (Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987).

[137]John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin*, tr. George S. Gabriel, (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr, 2002).

[138]Yannaras, "Theology in Present-Day Greece," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1972): 199.

Augustinian understanding of original sin that had been adopted by Greek theologians

under the influence of western theology. University of Athens professor, Fr. George

Metallinos comments,

> [W]e are forced by the facts to speak of an epoch before and after him. This is because he made a true incision and rupture in our scholastic past, which operated as a Babylonian captivity of our [Orthodox] theology. His doctoral dissertation decisively sealed this process of regeneration, to the point that even those who were his critics for a variety of reasons or his ideological opponents acknowledged in their writings the influence that Fr. John exerted on their theological thinking.[139]

From the publication of his dissertation to his death in 2001, Fr. John Romanides sought

the completion of the work, which his friend and mentor, Fr. Georges Florovsky, had

begun: the return of Orthodox theology to the Byzantine patristic sources.

The Neo-Orthodox critique of modernity, basically, attacks the roots of western

theological and social thought. Both Romanides and Yannaras critique the West on its

basis in Augustinian theology. Romanides argues that Augustine's Platonism blinded

him to three major understandings of the Christian tradition. First, Augustine failed to

grasp the important distinction of God's essence and energies for understanding the

relationship of the creation with the Creator. Second, Augustine embraced Platonic

eudaemonism for understanding the telos of the Christian life. This eudaemonism leads

Augustine and his successors to the possibility of the apprehension of the divine essence.

Third, Augustine failed to understand the Cappadocian teaching on the hypostatic

relations in the Trinity, leading him to develop the heretical doctrine of the filioque.

Essentially, Augustine's theological method of *credo ut intelligam* is criticized as being

an incorrect approach to matters of truth.

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[139]Quoted in George Dion Dragas, "Introduction," in John Romanides, *An Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics* (Rollinsford, NH: Orthodox Research Institute, 2004), xiv.

Romanides argues that Charlemagne and his court adopted the Augustinian position as a political ideology against the Christian East. Charlemagne used the *filioque* and the renaming of the Eastern Romans as "Greeks," indicating their heretical stance against the Church of Rome. This enabled Charlemagne to then offer as replacement to the East Roman Empire, his own Holy Roman Empire as mirror of the heavenly kingdom. Hence, Romanides places much importance on the Romeic theis for understanding Greek Orthodox identity.

Because Augustine had failed to understand the purpose of Christian theology to be deification, the ancient Christian approach to salvation was forsaken in the West. Knowledge of God, rather than participation in God, became the goal of the Christian life. What developed was what Romanides calls the "neurobiological sickness of religion." Essentially, Christianity in the West gave birth to all of the social illnesses that disturb modern humanity. What is needed, according to Romanides, is a return to the authentic Christian tradition, which he equates with hesychasm.

However, the project started by Romanides has evolved into a movement that not only seeks to offer authentic Orthodox theology but also desires the recovery of Orthodox identity culturally, socially, and politically. Herein lies the difference that Makrides notes between the theological revival of the 1960s and the neo-Orthodox movement of the 1980s. Neo-Orthodoxy wants to purge Orthodox culture of all vestiges of the West, and in turn offer a society, which is authentically Orthodox and authentically Greek.

Yannaras essentially agrees with Romanides, yet he utilizes Heidegger's critique against modernity. The problem with the West is that it divorced itself from the relational understanding of knowledge and being, articulating an individualist approach

to truth, which is equated with empiricism. Yannaras, like Romanides, argues that the problem essentially began with Augustine's *credo ut intelligam* and was developed by Descartes. Within this intellectual tradition were the seeds that eventually led to the death of God in western thought, allowing for the creation of secular liberalism and the birth of modernity. He states, "I would add in summation that those differences, which during the eleventh century (1054) led to the Schism between Christian East and West, are the same ones that caused western Christianity to give birth to the preconditions for Historical Materialism."[140] Yannaras argues in his critique of the West that such an understanding of human society is not authentic to human flourishing, for it essentially denies the hypostatic freedom of humanity within community, replacing it with an understanding of humanity in its sinful state. The West in its eudaemonistic pursuit of truth, adopted a cataphatic understanding of reality, which limits human freedom. Drawing upon Dionysian apophaticism and Vladimir Lossky's understanding of the human person, Yannaras articulates a social theology that supports human freedom within the context of the community. In his thought hesychastic understandings of the person are paramount.

Furthermore, Yannaras has espoused an anti-globalization position in his writings. In his book, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe,* Yannaras argues that the fall of Eastern European socialism was not the victory of the spirit of freedom over historical materialism, but rather the "desire *for more* Historical Materialism, and a more consistent Historical Materialism . . . . What triumphed was a more ingenious and more efficient

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[140]Ibid., 11. For a more developed critique of modern nihilism see his *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Aereopagite*, tr. Haralambos Ventis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005).

system of historico-materialist management of human life against a system that was inadequate and ineffective."[141] The globalization of the capitalist economic system of the West "thoroughly imposes upon peoples and nations the most vulgar practical application of Historical Materialism: consumerism made absolute."[142] Furthermore, Yannaras does not accept the other aspects of modernity that derive from the Enlightenment, especially the concept of human rights. Samuel Huntington has argued that there exists the potential for a "clash of civilizations" between Western and Orthodox civilizations, essentially because Orthodox civilization has not embraced the Western Enlightenment.[143] In his critique of Samuel Huntington's thesis, Yannaras states that there is indeed a "clash of civilizations" but not that which Huntington has argued.[144] Instead, the clash is between historical materialism deriving from Enlightenment thought and Christianity. Yannaras states,

> It is crystal clear that Huntington employs as his criteria of cultural difference among Europe's *religious* traditions the very products of European man's *anti-religious* rebellion. All of us know that individual rights, political liberalism, utilitarian rationalism, economic development and progress are the most representative products of the Enlightenment, products of modern Europe's zealous insistence on naturalism (physiocracy) as a substitute for Christian ontology, cosmology and anthropology.[145]

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[141]Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*. Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2003.

[142]Ibid., 2.

[143]Cf. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 45-6. See also Payne, "The Clash of Civilisations," 261-72.

[144]Ibid., 9. See also his larger critique in *Culture: The Central Problem of Politics* (Athens: Indiktos, 1997).

[145]Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, 10-11.

Regarding human rights specifically, Yannaras has demonstrated that at their fundamental level, human rights and Orthodoxy are antithetical. Additionally, human rights, as a political concept, are not necessary for the Orthodox peoples. Essentially, Orthodoxy as an ecclesial community, whereby the truth is revealed in and through relationships of love, does not need such a concept. Furthermore, the philosophical derivation of individual human rights runs counter to the Orthodox emphasis of truth in the communal gathering. Since truth itself is a communal event, for the individual to exercise his rights over and against the community is to challenge the essence of truth and the foundation of the community, which is the basis of the person's existence. For example, Socrates's chose death instead of exile, when he was punished for challenging the communal knowledge of Athenian society.[146]

Against western globalization, Yannaras offers the ecclesial community. In his treatment of post-communist Europe, he asks where "outposts" are located that can serve as resistance to western globalization and historical materialism. He states that the historic Orthodox countries of Eastern Europe serve such a bulwark against the spread of historical materialism. He argues that in these traditionally Orthodox countries, the Christian Orthodox tradition is "embodied in the popular experience and, more or less, in the art, the institutions and in the mentality of social life."[147] He notes that these countries remained strictly Orthodox until the arrival of the modern era, when these countries embraced the West and accepted nationalism as a way of "evolution and

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[146]Christos Yannaras, "Human Rights and the Orthodox Church," in *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation*, ed. Emmanuel Clapsis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004), 83-9.

[147]Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, 21.

progress."[148] Through the acceptance of this "progress" the traditionally Orthodox

nations have become Western and generally secularized, creating a human type that is

foreign to genuine human flourishing through acts of communion.[149] For Yannaras, the

"ecclesial event" is the only means by which secularization can be averted. He

comments, "The ecclesial parish and diocese is such an ever-timely possibility for the

realization of existential authenticity, for the endeavor to share life."[150]

But for Yannaras and the Neo-Orthodox the "ecclesial event" is not bound to

what would be considered to be the parish church in the West. Rather, the parish is the

community. According to Vasilios Makrides, for Yannaras the Orthodox tradition

survived during the Turkocratia in the guise of the "autonomous village communities."

"These communities," according to Yannaras, "represented the transformation of the

communal ideals of Orthodoxy into reality, social praxis and justice and enabled the

cohesiveness and the correlation, but not the differentiation, of the various social strata.

Communalism became thereby the way the Greek Romeic nation continued to exist,

whose foundations were not rational or economic, but *in nuce* spiritual Orthodox. The

Eucharistic community and the parish remained the major permanent archetypes of

communal life."[151]

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[148]Ibid., 22-3.

[149]Ibid., 26.

[150]Ibid., 27-8.

[151]Makrides, "Byzantium and Neo-Orthodoxy," 149.

As an alternative to western secularized society, Yannaras seeks to retrieve the Byzantine autonomous communities that developed in the Ottoman Empire. The life of these communities was centered around the life of the church. These communities continued the ancient patristic ethos of apophatic knowing and the accompanying cultural and social institutions that allowed for the experience of communal truth. Furthermore, the Byzantine tradition affirmed the identity of the person qua person, that is, not as an individual, but within the context of community. As Makrides states, "at the level of theory of knowledge, for the Hesychasts, the person and its energies can be known in a relational, communal way. Knowledge is seen as an erotic achievement and a self-transcending activity."[152] For Yannaras apophaticism allows for the full expression of the person since the person is not construed as an object of knowledge that can be comprehended, but as a subject that can be known through ecstasy and love. Only through a return to such a community can authentic human existence be achieved. For Yannaras, that community is none other than the Orthodox Church.

Thus, the ecclesial life of the Orthodox Church provides the means for human flourishing and salvation through deification. The Orthodox Church does not mean only a particular sphere of society for Yannaras and the Neo-Orthodox. Rather, it implies a way of life that encompasses the totality of human culture, including politics. Human freedom exercised in and through the church provides a means for political life where human freedom is protected in the collective experience of truth that comes only through participation in God.

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[152]Ibid., 147.

Similarly, Archimandrite Vasileios Gontikakis, abbot of Iveron Monastery, in a highly controversial essay, condemned the modern educational system of Greece for not properly teaching the Orthodox and Greek tradition to the Hellenic youth. In this essay, he contrasts contemporary life in Greece to traditional Orthodox life, as it is practiced in the monasteries on the Holy Mountain today. Instead of having a secular education, the youth, according to Fr. Vasileios, should be educated according to the tradition of St. Kosmas Aitolos, an eighteenth-century monk who opened schools for the Greek Orthodox during the Turkocratia, and the peasant-general Makriyiannis, who led the Greeks in their struggle for independence against the Turks in the 1820s, demonstrating his love for the people.[153] Both Yannaras, Fr. Vasileios, and the Neo-Orthodox thinkers in general, while dismissing any romantic utopianism, desire the Greek people to return to the ecclesial community as their basis for cultural identity. Basically this entails communal life centered around the life of the local church, with its rhythm of fasts and feasts, whereby the community is transformed into the church.

Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos and Fr. George Metallinos of the University of Athens were both highly influenced by the thought of Romanides. Romanides's thought fills the pages of their works. While each emphasizes a different aspect of Romanides's argument, each draws from the other's work. We will briefly look at their emphases as they appropriate Romanides and make similar arguments.

Metropolitan Hierotheos is chiefly known as the advocate of what he calls "Orthodox Psychotherapy." Drawing upon the threefold spiritual path of the neptic tradition of purification, illumination, and deification, he argues that Christianity is not a

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[153]Archimandrite Vasileios (Gontikakis), *What Is Unique about Orthodox Culture* (Montreal: Alexander Press, 2001).

religion but a means of salvation through therapy of the soul. In his work *Orthodox Psychotherapy: the Science of the Fathers*, Met. Hierotheos explains that Christianity is not a philosophical or religious system of thought as it has come to be understood.[154] Rather, Christianity is the Church, the Body of Christ. Within this body, human beings are called to union with God that leads to their transfiguration into the likeness of God. In this regard, Christianity is about healing. "It is the healing of a person's passions so that he may attain communion and union with God."[155] Because the Church is about the healing of the passions, it can be understood as a spiritual hospital. He states that he is indebted to John Romanides for this insight into the understanding of Christianity.[156] *Orthodox Psychotherapy* then is Metropolitan Hierotheos's attempt to develop the thought of Romanides in regards to the understanding of Christianity as therapy according to the neptic tradition of the church. Drawing heavily upon the thought of Gregory Palamas, Maximos the Confessor, and other patristic writers, Met. Hierotheos provides a persuasive argument for understanding Orthodox Christianity in this manner.

Furthermore, Met. Hierotheos is concerned about the secular way of life of the West and how it is being coerced upon Greece through the European Union. He contrasts the western way of life with that of the Orthodox tradition as explicated in the hesychastic tradition of the neptic fathers, especially that of Gregory Palamas. Reinterpreting the debate between Gregory and Barlaam the Calabrian as essentially a debate between Eastern hesychasm and Western scholasticism provides an easy means to

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[154]Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, *Orthodox Psychotherapy: the Science of the Fathers*, tr. Esther Williams (Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1994), 23-24.

[155]Ibid., 27.

[156]Ibid., 29.

counteract the evils of the West through eastern spiritual theology. He argues that only

by returning to the tradition of Palamas will the Orthodox people be able to fight against

the Barlaamistic spirit of the west.[157] In particular, he presents the communal life of the

Greek village from ancient Greece through the Ottoman period as central to Orthodox

life. Furthermore, village life was centered around the village church or monastery that

nourished the spiritual life of the people. Life itself was arranged by the ecclesiastical

life of the community.[158]

What Metropolitan Hierotheos emphasizes against the West is the Eastern

spiritual tradition of deification and healing of the soul. This could occur in a setting

where the life of the people was organically centered around the life of the church.

Western secular society divides the person from the centrality of ecclesial life. By

offering the vision of the late Byzantine village community as an alternative way of life,

he is seeking to preserve the Orthodox tradition.

Like Metropolitan Hierotheos, Fr. George Metallinos has been highly influenced

by the work of John Romanides. He too speaks much about the therapeutic tradition of

the church; however, his emphasis lies upon Greek identity. What does it mean to be a

Greek? Much of his work is a reaction against the neo-hellenic understanding, which

seeks to remove any trace of the Romeic identity. He insists in his work that the Romeic

identity is the Greek identity, and that the acceptance of the Greek identity is but the

acceptance of the Western imposition and definition of Greek identity. Central to that

Romeic identity is Orthodoxy. Greeks are Orthodox and Roman. In this regard he

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[157]Hierotheos Vlachos, *Orthodoxy and the Western Way of Life* (Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1994), 19-21.

[158]Ibid., 27-32.

struggles in his writings against the neo-pagan understanding of Greek identity. By insisting on the Orthodox Christian identity of the Greek people, Fr. George utilizes Romanides' argument of the authenticity of the neptic spiritual tradition of the fathers. True Orthodoxy is the Romeic tradition found in the hesychastic tradition.[159]

Today, the European Union, according to Metallinos, is embracing the vision of Charlemagne. With the leadership of the European Union centered in France and Germany, the Franks are once again asserting their authority over European man. The culture of western Europe is contrary to the culture of Greek Orthodoxy, which is centered upon the cultivation of saints through the empirical science of hesychasm. Western theology is enslaved to ancient Greek metaphysics and promotes an individualism that is contrary to the Orthodox East. By accepting the European Union Greece is capitulating its identity to the Franks. "Our culture, our historical existence and continuity, our Hellenic identity and our Orthodox faith is at stake inside the European Union. Our a-priori identification with Europe is a mistake. *It is a mistake to believe that European culture and our culture are identical and equal.* It is not an alliance, a simple sociopolitical connection with mutual relations. It is a total induction to a new framework of living. *'Europe' means the transfer of our interests into another area.*"[160]

Neo-Orthodoxy then represents a particular form of religious nationalism that transcends the limits of the nation-state system. It is rooted in the universal hesychast

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[159]See his *Historical and Theological Interventions* (Athens: Diegese, 1998); *Orthodoxy and Greek Identity* (Athens: Parousia, 1998); *Hellenism and Orthodoxy* (Athens: Tynos, 2000); *Thoughts and Antitheses: East and West in the Course of Neo-Hellenism* (Athens: Akritas, 1998); *Paganistic Hellenism or Helleno-Orthodoxy* (Athens: Ekdoseis Armos, 2003).

[160]George D. Metallinos, "Orthodox and European Culture: The Struggle between Hellenism and Frankism." Available at http://www.romanity.org/mir/me04en.htm.

culture of the late fourteenth century, and it seeks a return to that culture as the basis for understanding Greek identity in the twenty-first century. In this regard, it is against the secular nation-state and against Greek nationalism narrowly defined; although, it does articulate a Greek identity as being authentically Orthodox and Roman.

Because of its peculiarities, neo-Orthodoxy does not fit into the various categories of thought in today's social sciences. While some may label it as religious nationalism, it is distinct from the religious nationalism of the state church. Furthermore, while some may argue that the anti-westernism found in the neo-Orthodox is symptomatic of the larger desire to achieve national identity in the non-western world, and therefore represents an alternative modernity to the west, I would argue that instead we are witnessing not a characteristic of modernity but of postmodernity, whereby the loss of metanarratives in world society forces particular narratives to be formed to provide social meaning to the people facing an anomic world.[161] The creation of tribal, sectarian movements is symptomatic of the loss of metanarratives, including that of the nation-state. Yannaras and similar thinkers in Greece are aware of the contingency of national Greek identity and seek to root it in what they consider to be authentic existence in the church. In this regard, they articulate a narrative of an imagined religious community that is against the imagined community of the liberal secular state and its ideological mother, modernity.

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[161]For the problem of postmodernity, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, tr. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to articulate the changes occurring in the social sciences as they have had to adapt to the late twentieth century resurgence of public religion. While sociologists and scholars of nationalism have had to reevaluate the secularization theory to account for this phenomenon, alternative methodologies have developed. One viable possibility is the "multiple modernities approach" to the sociological study of religion. However, as Schmidt has pointed out its weaknesses, it fails to account for religious nationalism that is antithetical to the nation-state. Consequently, Schmidt articulates a reformed theory of "varieties of modernity" that may have some promise for being able to evaluate societies across cultures and civilizations.

Additionally, Schmidt's thesis does not help us understand the phenomenon of transnational religious movements. Global theories, such as Peter Beyer's as well as Stephen Barber's, attempt to articulate a rationale for the development of these public religious movements as reactions against the global economic, political, and cultural system that has developed since the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, Mark Juergensmeyer's understanding of religious nationalism is too committed to the nation-state and is unable to account for anti-globalist transnational religious movements.

In particular, I have briefly examined a development in Greek Orthodox political culture that emerged in the late 1980s. This loose association of Orthodox and politically Left thinkers developed into what became known as Neo-Orthodoxy. Attempting to articulate a new understanding of Greek identity, they retrieved the anti-western hesychastic tradition as the basis for understanding true Greek Orthodox identity. Furthermore, they articulated a vision that transcended the modern nation-state, returning

to the ancient Byzantine, Orthodox universalism. In this regard, the Romeic thesis of

Greek identity became of great importance. Many of the Neo-Orthodox religious

thinkers utilized the thought of John Romanides to develop the Romeic identity. What

emerged was an articulation of what is known as "political hesychasm," the political

culture of the late fourteenth century. Neo-Orthodox thinkers argue that hesychast

political culture is the only true Christian culture, and the only one that is appropriate for

human flourishing.

In order to properly understand political hesychasm, a constructivist approach is

necessary to explain both the nature of Orthodox identity, which is taken for granted, as

well as the problems associated with attempts to recreate a culture after it has ceased to

exist. In this case, the Greek Neo-Orthodox movement is truly a "neo-orthodox"

movement in sociological terms. The past must be reconstructed after a time in which it

has ceased to exist. However, the possibility of it not existing always remains a threat to

its possible existence, eliciting strong denials and reactions against any and all threats to

its existence. In particular, the Neo-Orthodox are vociferous against the West and its way

of life as it encroaches through the global system into Orthodox culture that has been

once again recreated in the imagined community of the Neo-Orthodox ecclesial mind.

Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach that employs the social sciences,

religious studies, and history is the only possible means at arriving at a comprehensive

understanding of Neo-Orthodoxy as a religious transnational movement. The thinkers

themselves utilize an interdisciplinary approach in their articulation of their political

theology, employing history, theology, social science, and philology. The project will

demonstrate the importance of interdisciplinary studies for the examination of the phenomenon of religious nationalism in the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

The remainder of the project will focus on the reconstruction of political hesychasm by the Neo-Orthodox. First, I will examine the change that occurred from Orthodox universalism to Greek nationalism, where the hesychast vision had been replaced by the modern liberal nation-state. In this context, I will look at how Orthodox identity became Greek nationalist identity. Second, I will articulate the hesychast vision of Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century, how it formed a culture, how it was forgotten and then recovered in the late eighteenth century. Third, I will then examine the retrieval of the hesychast spiritual tradition by Russian theologians in the twentieth century. This retrieval provided the theological base for the neo-patristic synthesis and the theological foundation of the prophet of the Romans, John Romanides, whose thought has greatly influenced the political hesychasm of the Neo-Orthodox. Fourth, I will examine Romanides's thought and his critique of the West. Fifth, the most important Neo-Orthodox thinker, Christos Yannaras, will be explored in the last chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Hellene or Romaios? The Debate over Modern Greek Identity

Introduction

In order to understand the particular issue of the Neo-Orthodox Movement in

contemporary Greece, it is important to grasp the serious issue of Greek national identity,

for as I have introduced the topic in the Introduction and as I will describe the thought of

John Romanides and Christos Yannaras in later chapters, the question of Greek national

identity is central to their political theology. The question of Greek national identity

arose during the era of nineteenth-century nation-state formation. The issue debated two

differing ideas as to who the Greeks were. First, Orthodox Christians under the Ottoman

Empire, deriving their heritage from the Byzantines, understood themselves to be

Romans, not Greeks. This "Roman identity" is best categorized as their Orthodox

Christian identity. Juxtaposed to this self-understanding is the second understanding of

Greek national identity: the "Hellenic identity." The "Hellenic identity" represents the

understanding of the Greeks as being the descendants of the ancient Greeks of Hellas.

During the late fourteenth century, a civilizational debate arose in Byzantium over the

identity of the Byzantines. Byzantine humanists argued that the Byzantines were

descendants of the ancient Greeks. As such, Byzantines should not disavow their ancient

identity but should resurrect it. Against this proto-nationalism, the church, led by the

hesychasts, argued for the Christian understanding of the Byzantine peoples as being

Romans, following Byzantine universalism.[1] However, in the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries, under the influence of German romanticism and French secularism,

Greek intellectuals once again began to articulate Hellenic identity. The "Hellenic

identity" tends toward nationalism and the acceptance of Enlightenment and Western

ideals, from whence this identity derived. It is such an identity that allowed the

formation of the modern Greek state. However, it is based on a pagan identity, not a

Christian one. Contemporary understanding of Greek identity is a mixture of these two

competing self-understandings of the Greeks. It is my contention that the Romanism of

the Neo-Orthodox Movement can best be understood in the light of the sparring of these

two identities as they seek to express the uniqueness of Greek Orthodox identity in a

globalized homogeneous world.

In this chapter I will describe the development of Greek nationalism and the

corresponding Hellenic identity as an attempt to formulate a national identity for the

Greek people. Additionally, I will examine some of the scholarship on eastern European

nationalism, attempting to provide a means for understanding the salience of this issue in

the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, especially as it pertains to Greece, but

also to the wider phenomenon of ethno-religious nationalism in the world. I will also

describe the inter-cultural debate between the Roman and Hellenic identities that

continues to the present in Greece and why this debate is important for the construction

of an Orthodox identity for the Neo-Orthodox Movement.

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[1]John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 96-107.

The Development of Eastern European Nationalism and the Formation of the Modern Greek State

Most scholars of nationalism agree that nationalism as it developed in the East is distinct from its West European counterparts.[2] As Hans Kohn, one of the fathers of nationalist studies states, "In the modern West, nationalism which arose in the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment, was predominantly a political movement to limit governmental power and to secure civic rights. Its purpose was to create a liberal and rational civil society representing the middle-class and the philosophy of John Locke."[3] In Central and Eastern Europe, the development was different due to, as Kohn's bias shows, the "less advanced" political and social institutions. In the east, according to Kohn, "nationalism became there first a cultural movement, the dream and hope of scholars and poets."[4] However, because East European nationalism was dependent upon Western ideas of nationalism that had spread to the East, in order to justify its beliefs, nationalists looked to the ancient mythic past of the peoples. According to Kohn, Western nationalism, firmly rooted in political ideas pertaining to individual liberty, had no need to make such justifications.[5]

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[2]Peter F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter F. Sugar and Ivo John Lederer (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1994), 20.

[3]Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, rev. ed. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1965), 29.

[4]Ibid., 30.

[5]Kohn's understanding of the differences between the nationalism of the East and the West is too forced. He ignores the attempts to develop a mythology of the American peoples at the time of the construction of the U.S. Constitution. Important here is the development of the American creed as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, the development of national symbols, and the development of the national mythology. Jefferson had attempted to articulate a mythology based on the Ancient Constitution of

In particular, the thought of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) is important for the development of Eastern nationalism. "Nationalism in the West was based on the concept of a society which was the product of political factors; German nationalism substituted for the legal and rational concept of 'citizenship' . . . the infinitely vaguer concept of 'folk' . . . which lent itself more easily to the embroideries of imagination and the excitations of emotion."[6] Herder believed that the various "nationalities are most natural historical divisions of the human race."[7] As Peter Sugar has shown, Herder's concept of the *Volk* was transformed in the Eastern European context. For Herder *Volk* simply meant *nationality* and did not pertain to the *nation* as such. In his arguments against the search for the ideal state, Herder maintained that the concept of liberty must conform to the needs of each particular nationality. Sugar notes, "This is a romantic and, even more, a humanitarian concept. It condemns those who place the state, even the ideal state, ahead of people."[8] Herder believed that each nationality should be free so that each could equally contribute to the society of peoples to create a peaceful and just world. Herder's romantic understandings of the *Volk* and the nation as the natural proclivity of

the Saxons in England prior to their enslavement by the Normans. However, Jefferson eventually expressed the myth of the American founding in Lockean philosophical principles of natural rights. See Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). The religious typology of the Israel-Exodus myth became the unifying myth of the American people. Unfortunately, this national myth has now been forgotten, and a new myth that unites the American people has yet to be formulated. See Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, second edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975, 1992).

[6]Kohn, 30.

[7]Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), 67.

[8]Sugar, 14.

human existence provided the basis for the development of cultural nationalism that is seen in the East. However, the concept of the *Volk* was very different. As Sugar comments, "No wonder that eastern European nationalism did not tend towards 'a consummation in a democratic world society,' but was 'tending towards exclusiveness,' seeking to find a justification, a specific *mission* for a given group that quite often did not even include all members of the nation or nationality."[9] Nationalism in Eastern Europe was messianic.

> Messianism cannot be egalitarian; it claims rights for a chosen people, the *Volk*, not for the individual or the citizen. This *Volk* concept is practically totalitarian. It stands for a group that has its history, national characteristics, culture, rights, and mission. It has to achieve this mission because some vaguely conceived laws (God-given, historical, natural) demand it. The individual, as a member of this *Volk*-community, has no history, no characteristics, rights, or so on, on his own.[10]

As such, the individual must conform to the will of the *Volk*, which is different from Rousseau's concept of the general will of the people, based on a social contract. Instead, by virtue of his birth, the individual is a member of the *Volk*. Sugar continues by arguing that the "confusion of nationality and nation, of cultural, political, and linguistic characteristics was further extended to justify the *Volk's* mission. This mission could only be accomplished only if it had free play in a *Volksstaat*, nation-state."[11] Thus, the concept of the nation-state as it developed in Eastern Europe was very different from the Western understanding. In the East each *Volk* needed its own nation-state in order to fulfill its messianic mission rooted in the *Volkswille*. Sugar notes that in the East,

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[9]Ibid., 11.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 11-12.

Herder's romanticism was combined with the political ideas of the West, creating the form of cultural-political nationalism that is uniquely its own.[12]

Additionally, Herder's romanticism inspired the creation of folklore studies that provided the historical justifications for the development of East European nationalism. According to Hayes, he had promoted "the scientific study of anthropology and philology, as well as history, with the object of establishing a comparative 'physiognomy' of the peoples of the world, and he implored intellectuals to apply such study to appreciation of the several national languages, literatures, religions, customs, costumes, and all other precious elements of cultural nationalism."[13] Histories were created to justify the existence of the various peoples in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the importance of linguistic studies for the development of East European nationalism cannot be understated. Important in this regard is the work of Rhigas Velestinlis, Adamantios Korais, Jan Kollár, Karel Havlícek, Vuk Karadzic, and Taras Shevchenko to mention only a few. Their grammatical works, histories, and recording of folklore provided the means for the inspiration of national movements ranging from Czech and Slovak lands in Central Europe to Ukraine in the East and Greece and Serbia in the South.

This "proto-nationalism," as Eric Hobsbawm would call it, for the peoples had yet to form their own nation-state, was also tied to religion.[14] In the West, as a result of the religious pluralism that exploded due to the Protestant Reformation and the rise of the

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[12]Ibid., 19-20.

[13]Hayes, 67.

[14]Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46-79.

nation-state against the central power of the Roman papacy, nationalism was not

essentially tied to religious belief.[15] In France, French citizenship was neither tied to

religion nor to language, but to being in the territory of France. What united the French

people was a religion of the nation, or a "civic religion" to follow the thought of

Rousseau.[16] In the East, however, as Ina Merdjanova has shown, religion itself, either

Roman Catholicism as in Poland or Eastern Orthodoxy as in Greece, Serbia, or Bulgaria,

provided the unifying ideology for the peoples.[17] Merdjanova distinguishes between the

ersatz religion that developed in Germany under the Nazis and what she calls "political

religion." While nationalism, especially its German form, developed into a secular

religion of the *Volk*, with the ascription of transcendent religious value to secular

institutions, political religion, as Merdjanova understands it, is more similar to what

Robert Bellah calls "civil religion." Merdjanova states, "Civil religion transforms

transcendent values into a pure this-worldly morality and thus in principle abolishes the

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[15]The creation of the nation-state of France owes much to the development of the idea of "religion." The theologian William Cavanaugh has demonstrated that one of the reasons for the development of the nation-state was the idea of "religion." *Religio* was rarely used as a term in the Middle Ages to designate a system of religious belief. However, with the Renaissance and the Reformation *religio* becomes associated with the individual's relationship to the divine. The question in the Reformation then becomes the issue of "true" religion. Religion becomes a matter for the individual to decide. Because the Reformation creates a schism in the church, the nation-state becomes the arbiter of religion. Due to this development, the church can only preach to the soul of the human, while the state controls the body. As a result, the state becomes sole authority, and the power of the church to challenge the state diminishes. See William T. Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House:' The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11 (October 1995): 397-420.

[16]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 167-76. See also, Hayes, 43-58.

[17]Ina Merdjanova, "In Search of Identity: Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe," *Religion, State and Society* 28, no. 3 (2000): 233-62.

transcendent dimension." Furthermore, civil religion "is constructed around the common elements of the major creeds in America, that is around 'genuine' beliefs and symbols."[18]

Merdjanova's distinction between *Ersatz* religion and political religion does not seem to be a satisfactory understanding of the religious nature of nationalism in Eastern Europe. Essentially, "civil religion," at least as it is understood in America, is as much an invented institution developed to provide legitimacy to the American political experiment as is any *Ersatz* religion. To be fair, she does note, "Postcommunist nationalism–even construed as political religion–does not seem to have much in common with the idea of civil religion."[19] What she is arguing, that in postcommunist Europe there is a revitalization of traditional religion that seems to provide the unifying ideology for the postcommunist state in the way that "civil religion" has traditionally done so in the West, has merit though.[20] The difference for the East is that the religious ideology is rooted in the traditional faith of the people - either Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. The nationalist conflict witnessed in these states is a result of competing traditional religions vying for civil religion status.

The relationship of religion to nationalism in Eastern Europe is highly complex and is rooted in the particular histories of the various peoples. As Sugar notes, the roots of the issue go back to the Byzantine understanding of the relationship between church

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[18]Ibid., 252.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Nikolas Gvosdev has argued something similar in regards to the role of Orthodoxy in Russia. See Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "'Managed Pluralism' and Civil Religion in Post-Soviet Russia," in *Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia*, ed. Christopher Marsh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 75-88.

and state. The Byzantine political ideology equated people, citizenship, and Christianity.

"From the days of Boris (852-89) and the introduction of Christianity into Bulgaria, to

the problems raised in our times by the assumption that a Catholic was by definition a

Croat just as a Serb was Orthodox, religion always had political meaning in the

Balkans."[21] When Simeon declared himself Tsar of Bulgaria in order to be of equal

status with the Byzantines, he believed that it was necessary that he have a bishop of

equal rank with the ecumenical patriarch. Thus, he elevated the archbishop of Ochrid,

Clement, to patriarchal status. Similarly, the Serbian nation under the rule of Stephen

Dusan elevated the bishop of Pec as patriarch of Serbia. "For both Simeon and Dusan,

full independence from Byzantium and beyond that imperial power was unthinkable

without a church controlled by themselves alone."[22] However, because the nation-state

was still not in existence, and the political ideology utilized by the Bulgars and the Serbs

was still tied to the Constantinian understanding of the oikoumene, neither the Serbian

Church nor the Bulgarian Church were exclusive to nationality. The ecumenical

patriarchate was not necessarily happy with the development, for it "considered the

establishment of these new patriarchates as detrimental to his dignity and to the unity of

the church."[23] However, this situation was rectified with the dissolution of these imperial

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[21]Sugar, 28. For the use of this ideology in the more recent Bosnian War, see Michael A. Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998). For a similar mythology involving the Slovenians and the Poles, see Mitja Velikonja, "Slovenian and Polish Religio-National Mythologies: A Comparative Analysis," *Religion, State and Society* 31 (September 2003): 233-60; and Mitja Velikonja, "Historical Roots of Slovenian Christoslavic Mythology," *Religion in Eastern Europe* 19, no. 6 (1999): 15-32.

[22]Ibid., 29.

[23]Ibid.

churches and placement of these Christian peoples under the authority of the Christian

millet headed by the ecumenical patriarch.

As the traditional historiography presents the story, with the advent of nationalism

in the late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries in Eastern Europe, which led to the

eventual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the various nationalities revolted not only

against their Ottoman overlords, but also their clerical authorities, especially the

ecumenical patriarchate. Under the leadership of the Greek patriarch, a process of

Grecification had occurred to insure ecclesiastical unity in the millet. Instead of the use

of Church Slavonic in the Slav churches, the Greek liturgy and practice was enforced.

Additionally, the high taxes placed upon the Orthodox people by the hierarchical

authorities to insure their positions with the Ottomans produced increasing anti-

clericalism in the Balkan peoples.[24] This anti-clericalism against the Greek bishops was

also rooted in the Enlightenment ideas of Western Europe. Borrowing the church-state

relationship that had developed in Western Europe, the principle of Erastianism, whereby

the church is placed under the authority of the state, East European secular nationalists,

desiring their own independent churches, argued for the creation and subjection of

national churches to political authority. As Aristeides Papadakis has argued,

"Significantly, one of the first steps taken by these independent states was to separate the

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[24]For instance, see Sugar, "Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," 30. He does note that the complaints against the Greek Patriarchate were not based on theology, but on modern nationalism read back into the history. However, he believes that their complaints do have merit.

church within their frontiers from the authority of Constantinople. By declaring it autocephalous, by 'nationalizing' it, they hoped to control it."[25]

This raises the question as to why the nationalization of the churches? What was it about the church that the nationalists opposed? At the time of development of nationalism in the Balkans, there were two differing opinions as to the direction of the polity to succeed the faltering Ottoman Empire. Many of the Phanariots[26] believed that the Ottoman Empire eventually would become Greek, allowing for the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire. Thus, they did not support the various nationalist movements that would lead to the breakup of the Ottoman Empire.[27] Instead, they looked to its natural devolution. This understanding was supported by the Byzantine political ideology of the oikoumene, which holds that the one empire has one church. In a modified position, Rhigas Pheraios of Velestino had articulated an understanding of an Orthodox commonwealth of nations in the succeeding empire, with the ecumenical patriarch as its head.[28] However, the vision of Rigas and what D.A. Zakythinos calls "neo-byzantine universalism" was contested by the secular nationalism of West-European educated

[25]Aristeides Papadakis, "The Historical Tradition of Church-State Relations under Orthodoxy," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 50.

[26]The Phanariots were the wealthy merchant class of families that settled in the Phanar distict of Constantinople next to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They sought to exercise control and gain prestige through their financial contributions.

[27]Although, Steven Runciman argues that the Phanariots were Greek nationalists. See *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 378-84. Against this position, see Victor Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453-1821," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1998): 20.

[28]D.A. Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, tr. K. R. Johnstone (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976), 157-65.

intellectuals. Following particularly the thought of Voltaire, these intellectuals articulated the development of nation-states with autocephalous national churches. It is this vision, derived from the West, that was adopted by the East.

Greek sociologist Paschalis Kitromilides presents a differing vision of the historiography, using Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities."[29] He argues that the antinomical relationship of Orthodoxy and nationalism has been smoothed over by the national historiographies. As he states, "It was the eventual abandonment of the ecumenicity of Orthodoxy, and the 'nationalization' of the churches, that brought intense national conflicts into the life of the Orthodox Church and nurtured the assumption concerning the affinity between Orthodoxy and nationality."[30] The various national historiographies were able to create an imagined national community whereby the church's opposition to nationalism was dismissed and its support as a nation-building institution was promoted. What Kitromilides argues is that the church instead opposed nationalism and the Enlightenment ideas underlying it in order to sustain its traditional theological position. For example, Kitromilides draws attention to the debate between Neophytos Doukas and Archbishop Ignatius concerning the issue of Greek nationality. Following Enlightenment ideas of nationality, Doukas had argued that the Greek community was composed of only Greek speakers. Missionaries should be dispersed from Mt. Athos to teach the various peoples the Greek language. Archbishop Ignatius's response, however, demonstrates the mind of the church:

[29]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1983, 1991).

[30]Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe* (London: Variorum, 1994), 179.

> The Hellenes, the Bulgarians, the Vlachs, the Serbs and the Albanians form today nations, each with its own language. All these peoples, however, as well as those inhabiting the east, unified by their faith and by the Church, form one body and one nation under the name of Greeks or Romans. Thus the Ottoman government, when addressing its Christian Orthodox subjects, calls them generally Romans, and the Patriarch it always calls Patriarch of the Romans.[31]

Furthermore, Kitromilides argues that the interpretation that the Ecumenical Patriarchate instituted a process of hellenizing the nationalities of the *Rum millet* in order to control them, simply misunderstands the reality and reads later nationalist understandings back into the church's intentions. Kitromilides states,

> First the official church never could have conceived of such a programme because this was entirely beyond its own theological and canonical terms of reference: as evidence to the contrary one could point to the survival of the Slavonic liturgical traditions among the South Slavs, not only in the Serbian lands with their stronger and more articulate ecclesiastical institutions but also among the Bulgarians.

He adds, "As a matter of fact, Greek nationalists in the late nineteenth century, like the historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos, criticized the Patriarchate of Constantinople for failing to do just that, to hellenise culturally the Orthodox of the Balkans."[32]

However, Kitromilides does point out that the church's position did assume a nationalist position over time. Especially with the Macedonian crisis in the late nineteenth century, the ecumenical patriarchate gradually assumed a more nationalist position in order to guard its ecclesiastical territories in what became northern Greece. Nevertheless, the ecumenical patriarchate resumed its position against nationalism with

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[31]Ignatius of Hungary-Wallachia, *Apologia istoriki kai kritiki yper tou ierou klirou tis Anatolikis Ekklesias kata ton sykofantion tou Neophytou Douka* (Vienna, 1815). Cited in Kitromilides, 158.

[32]Paschalis Kitromilides, "'Balkan Mentality': History, Legend, Imagination," *Nations and Nationalism* 2, no. 2 (1996): 181-82.

the attempt of Greek nationalist bishops to take control over it.[33] What resulted from the

ecclesiastical conflicts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the destruction

of the Orthodox commonwealth. What took its place was "the new sense of community

cultivated by the national states, which, after administratively and linguistically

homogenizing their societies, found in religion a powerful additional support for their

national unity and external aspirations."[34] For Kitromilides, East European nationalism,

especially its Balkan manifestation, was not developed by religion, but was cemented by

it.[35]

Victor Roudometof follows Kitromilides's argument about the importance of the

religious unity and vision of the Orthodox peoples. Consequently, it was not the

Enlightenment alone that inspired the Greek War of Independence; the religious

understanding of the people as their self-identification influenced the revolution of 1821.

Roudometof points out,

> The conflation of Greek ethnic identity with *Rum millet* identity was an
> indispensable component of the Ottoman social system. This conflation is
> revealed in the ethnic Greeks' view of their ancient Greek ancestors, the
> Έλληνες (Hellenes), whom they considered mythical beings of
> extraordinary stature and power, capable of superhuman tasks…In sharp
> contrast to this ancient race, the contemporary Greeks called themselves
> Ρωμαίοι (Romans) or Χριστιανοί (Christians).[36]

The Orthodox Christians of the *Rum Millet* also shared a common mentality shaped by

their shared religious beliefs and practices. Kitromilides has demonstrated that this

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[33]Ibid., 179-84.

[34]Ibid., 184.

[35]Ibid., 185.

[36]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 19.

"Balkan mentality" allowed for a fluidity among the populace that provided a means to transcend linguistic and ethnic distinctions.[37] This self-identification by the Orthodox peoples of the Ottoman Empire with their religion provided for a transnational identity. In fact, they saw themselves as composing a nation unto themselves: the Christian nation.

Additionally, Roudometof demonstrates that the name "Greek," which was used by the Greek speaking merchant class was not an ethnic identifier, but a synonym for Orthodox Christian or even Roman. A "Greek" then, at least prior to the birth of Greek nationalism in the 1830s, entailed anyone who spoke Greek and was of the Orthodox faith.[38] Furthermore, while the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastics exercised control over the *Rum Millet*, this was not an ethnic chauvinism. "Their Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical culture did not signify national supremacy of one people over another; rather, it signified a political and religious system that recognized the classifications of the Ottoman system alone (i.e., Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Catholic). This mentality was shared by the only other power center within the *Rum millet*–namely, the Phanariots."[39]

The Phanariots, according to Runciman, were wealthy Greek merchant families that settled in the Phanar district of Constantinople, near the Greek Patriarchate, in order to use their financial influence upon the church and ultimately upon the Ottoman Empire. The Phanariot families traced their genealogical lineage to Byzantine aristocracy (although this could not be proved) and dreamed of the glories of Byzantium. They

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[37]Kitromilides, "'Balkan Mentality': History, Legend, Imagination," 170-71.

[38]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 19.

[39]Ibid., 20.

desired through their influence to recreate the Byzantine Empire.[40] According to

Roudometof, this is reflected in their own ideology: "the Phanariots' world view was

mostly dominated by Orthodox universalism." In the writings of Nikolaos

Mavrokordatos (1680-1730) and Dimitrios Katartzis, an "enlightened despotism" was

articulated. Furthermore, Katartzis, an administrator in Bucharest, produced an argument

for the Romans constituting their own nation, against contrary arguments. "He argued

that the identity of the Orthodox Christians was that of the *Rum millet*."[41] Furthermore,

Katartzis and other Phanariots, while previously holding Enlightenment ideas, changed

their minds with the condemnation of Voltaire and "French" ideas by the Ecumenical

Patriarchate in 1791. The *Patrike Didaskalia* (1798) purportedly issued by Patriarch

Anthimos of Jerusalem, demanded "submission to the Ottoman authority, which it was

claimed, was ordained by God to prevent the contamination of Orthodox faith by western

heresies."[42] The Phanariots accepted this "instruction" from the church, supporting

Orthodox universalism. As Roudometof notes, "Nationalism was absent among the

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[40]Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, 360-63.

[41]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 20-21. Stephen Xydis and
Paschalis Kitromilides argue that Katartzis, in responding to the charge of Voltaire that
the Greeks did not have a homeland, began the process of developing a concept of a
Greek nation separate from the other *ethnoi* of the Balkans. However, while Katartzis
does argue that the Greeks constitute a "nation," his reference is not to a nation-state, but
to the *Rum millet*, preserving the universalism of the concept. See Stephen G. Xydis,
"Modern Greek Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter F. Sugar and
Ivo John Lederer (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1969), 224-25; and
Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 153-54. For a discussion of
Katartzis, see K. Th. Dimaras, *NeoHellenic Enlightenment* (Athens: Ermis, 1977), 177-
243.

[42]Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 280. See also, Anthimos,
Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Paternal Instruction* (Constantinople, 1798); Richard Clogg, "The
Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary
Propaganda," *Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 2 (1969): 87-115.

members of the *Rum millet* prior to the 1750s. Neither Phanariots, the high clergy, nor the Orthodox peasantry endorsed or advocated nationalist ideas."[43]

However, nationalist ideas began to slowly creep into the Balkans in the late eighteenth century. Roudometof notes that the process of education was paramount to the spread of Enlightenment ideas. The educated merchant class "born between 1757 and 1772" studied in Central Europe and worked and resided outside of the Ottoman Empire in the "Ionian islands, the Danubian principalities, and cities in Eastern or Western Europe."[44] This new Greek Orthodox intellectual class belonged to multiple ethnicities. For example, "The Bulgarian Nikolaos Pikolos, the Wallachian Iosipos Moisiodax (born in Dobrudja), and the Vlach Dhaniil of Moshopolis are Enlightenment figures of non-Greek descent."[45] Again, in their thought Orthodox universalism, as portrayed in the fluidity of ethnicity, is displayed. As Roudometof comments,

> Within Balkan society, class and ethnic lines overlapped to such an extent that Hellenism became a form of 'cultural capital' offering access to circles of wealth and prestige. Hellenization implied the acquisition of such capital and its associated benefits. The diffusion of 'enlightened reason' proceeded from the Grecophone middle-class stratum to the other sectors of Ottoman Balkan society.[46]

Kitromilides argues that the formation of nationalism in the Balkans begins with the publication of dictionaries of ethnic languages, allowing for the recognition of distinct ethnicities in the Balkan peninsula. He states,

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[43]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 21.

[44]Ibid., 22.

[45]Ibid., 23.

[46]Ibid.

Thus, on a certain basic level, the Enlightenment consisted essentially of signs that the ethnography of the Balkans was taking up a more complex character in the minds of the local intelligentsia. The older conception of a unified Orthodox Christian society which defined alien elements in religious terms had already receded with the gradual articulation of a sense of distinct historical identity among Serbian-speaking and Romanian-speaking intellectuals in areas bordering on the Habsburg Empire, and among Greeks of the diaspora and of the commercial urban centers of the Ottoman Empire.[47]

Mary Anne Perkins confirms Kitromilides's argument by asserting the importance of language in national identity formation in the early nineteenth century throughout Europe. She writes, "In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the question of linguistic identity became, particularly in German thought, one of the foundations on which the concept and the *feeling* of national identity was built. Dictionaries, etymologies, grammatical studies, philosophies of language and the comparative techniques in literary and historical studies all bore witness to the co-evolution of identity and language."[48]

Additionally, with the development of vernaculars came also the importance of translations of Scripture. As Adrian Hastings has pointed out,

The Bible, moreover, presented in Israel itself a developed model of what it means to be a nation–a unity of people, language, religion, territory and government. Perhaps it was an almost terrifyingly monolithic ideal, productive ever after of all sorts of dangerous fantasies, but it was there, an all too obvious exemplar for Bible readers of what every other nation too might be, a mirror for national self-imagining.[49]

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[47]Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 154.

[48]Mary Anne Perkins, *Nation and Word, 1770-1850: Religious and Metaphysical Language in European National Consciousness* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 25.

[49]Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18.

Similarly, the constructivist linguist, John Joseph, argues that the Old Testament provides a model on which nationalism could be constructed. "Developments in nationalism in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries were all interpreted via their refraction through the biblical texts, the common base of European culture across national and social divides."[50] While a study of the importance of the biblical model on Balkan nationalism has yet to be done, one can surmise that with the spread of vernacular translations in the nineteenth century, the Old Testament motif of Israel as a nation had an influence in the development of nineteenth-century Balkan nationalism.

Another influence upon the new Balkan intelligentsia was the "reemergence of classical antiquity into the discourse of the Western Enlightenment." This phenomenon, according to Roudometof, "strongly affected the secularization of the *Rum millet.*"[51] Ancient Greece and Rome played an important role in the formation of political and cultural thought of France and America. As Roudometof comments, "the ancient Greeks were looked upon as the 'fathers' of civilization."[52] German, French, and British scholars all looked to ancient Hellas for its ideals of civilization. While the Germans rarely visited the Balkan peninsula, French and British scholars became the predominant travelers to the Balkan world.[53] According to Artemis Leontis, "[Hellas] represents the political, cultural, and philosophical value of the Hellenic heritage for Western Europe.

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[50]John E. Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 95.

[51]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 23.

[52]Ibid.

[53]For a presentation of the history of travelogues to the Greek lands, see Robert Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land: The History and Literature of Travel to Greece* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1991).

During the late eighteenth century, the idea that Hellas is the harmonious origin of civilization became popular in the West; it became a kind of *topos* of the Western imagination that continues to feed upon itself, at times more avariciously than at other times."[54] Hellas and the ideals that emerged from it, then, was not so much a place for Western Europeans, especially Germans, but more a mythic ideal to be imitated. "Hellas represents a historical, philological, and literary *logos* as well as a *topos* of social, economic, and cultural activity. In Western Hellenism, Hellas occupies the realm of the imagination and intellect. It is a country of the mind, even when put on tour."[55] When Western Europeans journeyed to the lands of ancient Hellas, then they had in mind what Hellas was supposed to be. What they found genuinely shocked them.

Olga Augustinos has argued that the Western European travelers to the Greek world did not understand the modern Greeks to be Oriental but European, separated from their Ottoman overlords by language, religion, and cultural history. Because of their studies of the ancient world through ancient texts, "Western travelers felt that they were entering not an alien terrain but a land whose legacy they had absorbed and integrated into the matrix of their own civilization. The contemporary Greek reality that confronted them, however, disoriented them because it diverged vastly from their expectations."[56] In order to rectify the cultural dissonance that they experienced, Western philhellenes attempted to "bridge this gap and see Greek culture reunified by resuscitating its Hellenic

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[54]Artemis Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 4.

[55]Ibid., 24.

[56]Olga Augustinos, *French Odysseys: Greece in French Travel Literature from the Renaissance to the Romantic Era* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), x.

past and expelling what were perceived as foreign intrusions. This envisioned

rehabilitation of the Greek world sought to reclaim it and redeem it by purifying it and,

consequently, by suppressing certain eras of its past."[57] In particular, the Christian,

Byzantine, and Ottoman legacy was disavowed. As Augustinos notes,

> [Western philhellenism] was above all a manifestation of the *mission
> civilisatrice* of the culturally superior Europeans, who sought to bring about
> the rehabilitation of the modern Greeks on their own terms, namely, through
> the efficacious imitation of Western-derived classical models. Ironically,
> although it proposed the reunification of Greek culture, in actuality it
> fostered its bifurcation because it pitted its more recent Christian-
> Byzantine-Ottoman legacy against its ancient past.[58]

Thus, the Hellenic identity was more shaped by Western ideals of the ancient past than

the self-understanding of the Greek speaking peoples. Philhellenism and the

Enlightenment combined to construct a secular Greek identity apart from their Christian

identity of *Romeosyne.*

Furthermore, historical and genealogical texts were produced by Western

Europeans retelling the story of the ancient world. These texts were quickly translated

into Greek, providing textbooks for the Grecophone schools. Charles Rollin's sixteen

volume *Histoire Ancienne* (1730-1738) was extremely influential in this regard. With the

spread of these texts, what occurred was a cultural reevaluation in the Balkan world. The

works of Iosipos Moisiodax and Adamantios Korais reflect this critical evaluation.[59]

Moisiodax, the director of the Princely Academy of Jassy, observed two problems

with Greek culture. First, "knowledge of ancient texts was fragmentary, since the texts

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[57]Ibid., xi.

[58]Ibid., xii.

[59]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 25.

were largely unavailable." Second, he noticed a great superstition in that "the ancients were revered without question." His solution was to look to the West as a model for Greek culture.[60]

Korais played a much more important role in the Greek Enlightenment. As his biographer, Stephen Chaconas, states, "The most important intellectual figure of the Greek national revival in the first decades of the nineteenth century was the patriot and philologist of Smyrna, Adamantios Korais."[61] The English historian, Richard Clogg writes, "A leading role in this effort to re-awaken interest in the classical was played by that 'new Hippocrates,' Adamantios Korais, the dominant figure in the pre-independence cultural revival."[62] Korais was born in Smyrna in 1748, and attempted his hand as a merchant in Amsterdam. He learned medicine at Montpellier, but his chief interest was classical philology. He resided in Paris from 1788 to 1833 where he "laboured ceaselessly to raise the educational level of his fellow countrymen and to instil in them a sense of Hellenic consciousness." He was known for his nationalist polemics and being "one of the foremost Hellenists of the Europe of his day."[63]

In Paris, he witnessed the events of the French Revolution first hand. Michael Jeffreys describes his reaction: "His strongest personal reaction is to project the events

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[60]Ibid. For a biography on Moisiodax, see Paschalis Kitromilides, *Iosipos Moisiodax* (Athens: National Bank of Greece, 1985). See also Dimaras, *NeoHellenic Enlightenment*, 15-16.

[61] Stephen George Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais: A Study in Greek Nationalism* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 11.

[62] Richard Clogg, "Sense of the Past in Pre-Independence Greece," in *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, eds. Roland Sussex and J.C. Eade (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1985), 11.

[63]Ibid.

from Paris to the Ottoman Empire. The confiscation of church property, for example,

gives him an opportunity for the vicarious satisfaction of his own anticlericalism against

the Orthodox Church, an attitude he seems to have combined with unquestioned religious

faith."[64] As Chaconas notes, the French Revolution "transformed Korais from a

dreaming patriot into a revolutionary nationalist." Korais "applauded" the anticlericalism

and republican sentiments of the French.[65] Basically, the influences upon Korais were

the same that influenced the French Revolution: the ancient Roman and Greek writings.

The ancient republican heroes of Greece and Rome were imitated by the French

revolutionaries. This could not have pleased Korais even more. As Chaconas comments,

"Consequently, the words and deeds of the revolutionaries always implied, in Korais'

mind, some connection with the 'subjugated' Greeks of his day. It was during this period

of war in France and Europe that he wrote his anonymous pamphlets urging the Greeks to

rise up against the Turks and to unite with their spiritual brothers, the French, for the

cause of national independence and liberty."[66] However, he came to the realization that

the Greek people were not prepared for such a revolution for they had yet to become

enlightened. To this end, Korais devoted his life work.

Korais sought to bridge the distance between the ancient Greeks and the modern

Greeks through the use of education, especially by republishing Greek classical literature.

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[64]Michael Jeffreys, "Adamantios Korais: Language and Revolution," in *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, eds. Roland Sussex and J.C. Eade (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1985), 45.

[65]Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais*, 29.

[66]Ibid., 30.

His work became the leading textbooks in the Greek schools.[67] He believed that the

ideas found in the classic literature would inspire the Greeks to the nationhood and thus

to liberty. His editions of the classic literature were published as the Ἑλληνικη

Βιβλιοθηκη (Hellenic Library). The volumes of the Hellenic Library included Korais's

introductions that espoused his nationalism and the desire that the Greeks would

overthrow their Turkish overlords. Furthermore, Korais argued for the purification of the

Greek language. The language should be purified, according to Korais, because the use

of Turkish forms and vocabulary demonstrated the subservience of the Greek nation.

Furthermore, other non-Greek forms and words should also be removed because they

demonstrated additional subjugations.[68] Additionally, he "attacked the monkish

ignorance and obscurantism of the Orthodox clergy." By liberating themselves from

their religious and political rulers, the Greek people would be able to regain their ancient

glory in establishing their own rule. Of course, Korais never stated how this was to

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[67]Jeffreys, "Adamantios Korais," 48.

[68]Ibid., 52. See also Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais*, 45-83; and Peter Mackridge, "Byzantium and the Greek Language Question in the nineteenth century," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 49-61. The debate concerning the use of Demotic or puristic Greek began with the discussions instigated by Korais in the early nineteenth century. Jeffreys argues that Korais's *Katharevousa* (pure Greek) was actually a moderate position leaning toward the Demoticists, who desired to use the natural spoken Greek of the people as the official language. Korais's *Katharevousa* became the official language of the modern Greek state. However, with the new constitution in 1974, Demotic Greek became the official language of the people. Interestingly, while it takes us beyond the scope of this work, the demoticists were generally the same intellectuals who argued for the primacy of the Romeic identity against the Hellenic identity.

occur.[69] Believing that the revolution should occur in 1850, Korais was completely

surprised, believing that the Greeks were unprepared, when they revolted in 1821.

Besides the revitalization of the ancient Greek world in the minds of the modern

Greeks, the French Revolution also inspired thoughts concerning government. What type

of government would be best for a liberated Greek people? French republicanism

became the chief inspiration. In responding to the *Paternal Instruction* of 1798, Korais

issued the *Fraternal Instruction*, "which disowned Ottoman tyranny and its Christian

sycophants and reiterated the hopes in political emancipation on the French model."[70]

While Korais and some of his French compatriots, Konstantinos Stamatis and Dimo and

Nicolo Stephanopoli, encouraged French republicanism throughout the Greek diaspora

and the Peloponnesus, the work of Rhigas Velestinlis ranks as the most important. As

Kitromilides states, "The most significant case of republican activism was that of Rhigas

Velestinlis, a Greek [Vlach] patriot who absorbed integrally the radical message of the

Enlightenment and the French Revolution and attempted to implant them in the politics

of Southeastern Europe."[71] Similar to Korais's plan of educating the Greeks to their

ancient glory, Rhigas translated French republican texts, like Montesquieu and

Marmontel, to bring about a rise in understanding of republicanism among the Greeks.

Furthermore, he translated an important text that served as an educational tool for the

Greek people: Abbé J.J. Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce, dans le*

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[69]Clogg, "Sense of the Past," 12. See also, Jeffreys, "Adamantios Korais," 48, Chaconas, *Adamantios* Korais, 31-35, Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 25, and Demaras, *NeoHellenic Enlightenment*, 106-19.

[70]Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 280.

[71]Ibid., 278-79.

milieu du quatrième siècle avant l'ère vulgaire. This story of the journey of the fabled

Anacharsis and his conversations with famous Greeks between 363 and 338 BCE, served

to educate and inspire the Greeks about their glorious past. While Georgios Sakellarios

began the translation, Rhigas was the one who brought it to fruition in 1797. However,

the project of translating the work came to an end with Rhigas's arrest and execution in

1798.[72]

Rhigas's republicanism was mixed with the universalism of Orthodoxy to create a

secular nationalistic republican state for the Balkan peoples. In his *Χάρτα της Ελλάδος*

(*Map of Greece*), which was based on his reading of *The Voyage of the Young Anacharsis

in Greece*,[73] Rhigas "identifies *Hellas* [ancient Greece] with the Ottoman Empire's

'central lands' (i.e., the Balkans and Anatolia) and calls for the overthrow of the despots

by the coordinated action of all Balkan peoples."[74] What this entailed, notes

Roudometof, was a replacement of the Orthodox understanding of the *Rum Millet* with a

secular national vision based on French republicanism.[75] The radical French constitution

of 1793 provided the basis for Rhigas's own constitution of the Greek republic.

However, his constitutional charter was not limited to Greeks alone, but also for all

peoples, including Turks, Jews, and all Christians. His constitution provided for religious

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[72]Clogg, "Sense of the Past," 14.

[73]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 29.

[74]Ibid., 28.

[75]Ibid., 29. Roudometof also mentions the importance of Masonic teaching in the ideas of Rhigas. Although there is no proof that Rhigas was a mason, his ideas represent similar ideas stemming from Masonic thought coming from the French Revolution.

freedom for all religions, and articulated a doctrine of individual rights.[76] As

Roudometof comments, "In place of the *Rum millet's* religious Orthodox identity, the

new mentality postulated a secular identity based on the knowledge of the West and the

ideology of liberalism."[77] However, Roudometof does not mention that underlying

Rhigas's vision is Orthodox universalism maintained in the political vision.[78] Rhigas did

not limit his concept of the political institution to Greeks alone, but allowed for a republic

to exist for all the Orthodox peoples, similar to the idea of the Byzantine commonwealth

at the time of its demise.

Rhigas organized a secret society, similar to a Masonic organization. In 1796-97

Rhigas's society planned an insurrection in the western and southern parts of mainland

Greece. This insurrection was planned to coincide with Napoleon's presence in the

Adriatic as he journeyed to his campaigns in Egypt and northern Africa. Many had

believed, including Korais, that Napoleon could help liberate the Greek people. The

revolutionary plans came to an end when in 1798 he was arrested in Trieste by the

Habsburg authorities, who desired to learn of his relations with the French forces. After

his interrogation, the Austrians turned the society over to the Ottoman authorities who

promptly executed them in Belgrade in the same year.[79]

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[76]Ibid. See also Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 279.

[77]Ibid., 30.

[78]Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece*, 157-65. George Metallinos also notes this basis in Rhigas's thought. See *Tourkokratia: The Hellenes in the Ottoman Empire* (Neo Smyrna, Greece: Akritas, 1988), 264-65.

[79]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 30; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 279.

Rhigas's attempt to mount an insurrection party and a Balkan revolution cannot be over emphasized. His political movement and the republican ideas on which they were based provided a model for future liberation attempts. As Kitromilides states regarding the importance of Rhigas,

> By bringing together in his program the most progressive elements of Enlightenment thought with the politics of the French Revolution, he projected for the first time in the history of Southeastern Europe an unequivocally radical collective future of all Balkan peoples. In his political theory the accent was unequivocally on equality and his constitution stipulated important measures that gave specific social content to his legislation. His proclamation appealed to the fraternity and common moral humanity of all Balkan nationalities–including the Turks–whose moral liberation was to be achieved by the values of republican hellenism.[80]

Thus, what we see in Rhigas's political vision is actually the transmutation of Orthodox political culture into a secular vision. As a result, the Church of Constantinople condemned Rhigas and his thought.

Consequently, the Ottoman authorities pressured the Orthodox Church to maintain control over its peoples. In order to maintain its position in Ottoman society as well as to pronounce its own theological position on the matter, the church condemned liberalism and all of its excesses coming from the West. Additionally, as Kitromilides points out, "All aspects of modern culture, including modern science came under vehement attack by traditional intellectuals as destructive of the fabric of society and poisonous of all morality and faith."[81] The *Paternal Instruction* of 1798 was a response to the supporters of liberalism in the *Rum Millet.*

However, both the liberalism from the West and the revival in pagan literature concerned the church. Richard Clogg points out,

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[80]Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, 279.

[81]Ibid., 279-80.

It was the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church that was most outspoken in its attacks on this resurgence of interest in the classical past. Equating as it did the ancient world with idolatry, the hierarchy was fearful that this obsession with antiquity, combined with a growing interest in the natural sciences, might fatally undermine the attachment of the Greek people to the Orthodox faith.[82]

In this regard, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, according to Clogg, descended into cultural obscurantism and political conservatism, eliciting the anticlericalism of the Greek intelligentsia in the early nineteenth century.[83]

One of the chief traditionalists was Athanasios Parios of the Kollyvades Movement on Mt. Athos. In response to Korais's rebuttal of the *Paternal Instruction* of 1798, Parios offered his *Neos Rapsakis*, which was never published due to its theft by two followers of Korais.[84] According to George Metallinos, "Athanasios Parios (1722-1813) was the most militant of the *Kollyvades*,[85] and also the most martyric. From 1776

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[82]Clogg, "Sense of the Past," 21. Vasilios Makrides has written about the Orthodox response to modern science in "Science and the Orthodox Church in 18th and Early 19th Century Greece: Sociological Considerations," *Balkan Studies* 29, no. 2 (1988): 265-82.

[83]Richard Clogg, "Anti-clericalism in pre-Independence Greece c. 1750-1821," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West: Papers Read at the Fourteenth Summer Meeting and the Fifteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 258-67.

[84]Ibid., 260. Christos Yannaras argues that the *Paternal Instruction* (*Patriki Didaskalia*) was written by Athanasios Parios. See Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece* (Athens: Domos, 1992), 181. D. A. Zakythinos also supports this view of authorship. See Zakythinos, *Making of Modern Greece*, 173.

[85]The *Kollyvades Movement* of Mt. Athos during the late eighteenth century was led by Athanasios Parios, Makarios of Corinth, and Nikodemos the Agiorite. They were given the pejorative name, *Kollyvades*, because of their insistence that memorials for the dead should only be conducted on Saturdays, according to the tradition, instead of the innovation of conducting them on Sundays. *Kollyvades* refers to the boiled wheat that was used for the memorial services. Furthermore, the *Kollyvades* also taught frequent communion and traditional Orthodox spirituality in the form of hesychasm. See chapter

to 1781 he remained unfrocked as a 'heretic' because of his vigorous stand on the issues

of tradition. He passionately fought the European Enlightenment, Voltaireanism, and

atheism, and was accused of being an obscurantist by his 'West-struck'

contemporaries."[86]

Parios's stance against the Enlightenment and the West can be understood from

the traditional hesychast understanding of the separation of theological and scientific

truth on the one hand and the universal vision of Orthodoxy on the other. Hesychasm has

traditionally not been aligned with the state, seeing its role pertaining to heavenly

salvation. However, at times hesychasm, and monasticism in general, have supported the

state in securing the universal vision of Orthodoxy apart from heresy.[87] The nationalism

and republicanism of Korais and Rhigas both represent a dangerous innovation in terms

of the universalism of Orthodoxy. The church, and its most traditional adherents,

attacked these innovations as heresy.

Along with the cultural and political revival of the Greeks, Korais instigated an

identity change. According to John Romanides, Korais "started the war against

three below for the *Kollyvades*' revival of hesychasm on Mt. Athos and their influence on St. Paisius Velichovsky. See George D. Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism . . . : Interpretation and Application of Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council by the* Kollyvades *and Constantine Oikonomos*, tr. Priestmonk Seraphim (Holy Mountain: St. Paul's Monastery, 1994), 24-29; Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece*, 176-209.

[86]Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism,* 28. See also Clogg, "Sense of the Past," 22.

[87]St. Gregory Palamas defended the reign of Emperor John VI Cantacuzene, who supported the hesychasts, against the insurgent John V Palaeologos, who supported the anti-hesychasts and was supported by the zealots of Thessaloniki. Gregory's defense of Cantacuzene was not due to his political leanings, but was entirely due to his theological position of hesychasm and the universal vision of Orthodoxy. See Met. Hierotheos Vlachos, *St. Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, tr. Esther Williams (Levadia, GR: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2000), 204-34.

Romanism." Korais argued that the proper name for the Greek speaking people was either Γραικοί or Έλληνες (Greeks or Hellenes). Because Western Europeans called them Greeks, Korais chose that term.[88] But this acceptance of the Western understanding of Greek identity created a disjunction in the territorial understanding of the Greek people. The Western European understanding of Greece was associated only with what is properly known as *Hellas*, not the larger area of Romania or Roumeli known by the Orthodox peoples. As Roudometof comments, "Hence the identification of the 'Romans' as 'Greeks' was bound to create an important disjuncture between the intellectuals' version of 'Greece' (the so-called Hellenic ideal) and the popular 'Romeic' religious and political identity. Not surprisingly, the Phanariot-religious establishment was at odds with Korais's project."[89] As we have already noted, Athanasios Parios was one of the more vocal opponents of Korais. Christos Yannaras argues that Parios attacked Korais not only for his Western Enlightenment ideas but also for the change in name for the Orthodox people. "Parios opposed the obsession with the idea of the polyethnic empire which grounded politics of unity in a cultural basis."[90] While Korais's program amounted to an attempt to provide a cultural continuity between ancient and modern Greeks, it also had the more subtle idea of replacing Orthodox identity with a secular identity. As Roudometof argues, the use of "Greek" or "Hellene" in place of the

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[88]John S. Romanides, *Romanism and Costes Palamas* (Athens: Romania Press, 1978), 19; John S. Romanides, *Romanism, Romania, Roumeli* (Thessalonike: Pournara Press, 1975), 47; Panagiote K. Chrestou, *The Adventures of the National Names of the Hellenes* (Thessaloniki: Oikos Kuromanos, 1993), 50-51; Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 26.

[89]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 26.

[90]Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece*, 181.

Orthodox "Roman" identity was a deliberate attempt to challenge the authority of the patriarchate. It also can be argued that it was a deliberate attempt to undermine the religious identity of the people as the basis of unity, substituting an alternate secular vision of national identity, divorced from religion. "The gradual use of the words "Greek" or "Hellene" and similarly of the word εθνος reflects the slow transformation of a religious identity into a secular one."[91] Rhigas's republican vision was the political instantiation of the replacement of the Orthodox identity with a secular one.[92]

While Rhigas's planned insurrection of 1796-97 did not come to pass, and his arrest and execution in 1798 prevented any future attempt by his secret society, the *Philiki Etairia* continued his vision and attempted an armed revolution in the Romanian provinces on 6 March 1821. The *Philiki Etairia* (Friendly Society) was a semi-masonic organization, similar to that of Rhigas Velestinlis, organized by three Greeks in the Diaspora. It was organized in 1814 in Odessa by Nikolaos Skoufas, Athanasios Tsakalof, and Emmanuel Xanthos with the express purpose of the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. There has been some discussion as to whether their intent was to create a Greek nation-state or a multinational state similar to the vision of Rhigas. Stephen G. Xydis has argued that the resultant formation of the Greek nation-state was part of the plan of the *Filiki Etairia*. He notes that the society combined with Greek nationalists in the Diaspora and in the Pelopponesus for a coordinated uprising in the Greek lands of the Ottoman Empire.[93] However, Zakythinos and Roudometof both argue that essentially the *Filiki*

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[91]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 26.

[92]Ibid., 30.

[93]Stephen G. Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," 232-33.

Etairia desired the formation of a multinational state, employing the universalism of

Byzantine Orthodoxy as the model.[94] Only later after the initial uprising in Romania did

the revolt, led by Greek nationalists and Philhellenes in the Pelopponesus, become a

movement for a Greek nation-state. Xydis's argument betrays a reading of Greek history

through the lens of later nationalism that simply did not inform the thought of the

majority of Greek Orthodox intellectuals, who continued to emphasize the importance of

the universal vision of Orthodoxy and a restoration of the Byzantine Empire.[95]

Roudometof's argument that the vision of the Friendly Society was a multinational

republican state is based on three basic premises.[96] First, the name "Greek" or

"Hellenic" had not come into "common discourse" by this time. Its use still implied the

concept of "Roman." Second, the idea of the "nation" still was imbued with the concept

of the *Rum Millet*; thus, it did not have the connotation of an ethnic nation-state at this

time. Third, if the revolution is limited to the Pelopponesus, "it was religious and not

ethnic solidarity that shaped the popular attitude vis-à-vis the revolt."[97] This claim is

legitimated by the fact that other Balkan peoples participated in the revolt alongside the

Greeks.

The society had been able to infiltrate communities throughout the Ottoman

Empire. According to Xydis, the organization had "sought to enlist the support of

eminent Greeks outside the Ottoman Empire while within it tried to get the cooperation

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[94]Zakythinos, *Making of Modern Greece*, 190-91; Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 30.

[95]Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 30.

[96]Ibid., 30-31.

[97]Ibid., 31.

of Ali Paşa of Janina and of Alexander Karadjordje of Serbia, being successful only with

the latter."[98] The headquarters of the society were even relocated to Istanbul itself.

According to Xydis, by 1819-29 the society's membership may have reached 15,000 in

the capital alone.[99] In Bulgaria, Dimitrios Vatikiotis had mustered 14,000 members,

while another 10,000 Serbs were to join their force under the leadership of the Serbian

prince Miloš. Thus, the very plans of the society entailed "a revolution of the Orthodox

millet against the Ottoman authority structure," not a "Greek revolution understood in a

nationalist manner.[100] It is interesting, as Roudometof points out, that the Greek

Catholics did not join in the rebellion against the Ottoman authorities. "Although

Ottoman rule was not welcome, they hesitated to identify with a movement that was

predominately Orthodox."[101] Thus, the revolution originally pertained to a revolt of the

Orthodox peoples against their Islamic overlords, not Greek nationalism.

On 25 March 1821, the Feast of the Annunciation, Metropolitan Germanos of

Patras, a member of the society, raised the Greek flag in revolt at the monastery of Hagia

Lavra. The Greek *klephtic* general, Kolokotrones, also a member of the society, had

organized Greek troops in the Pelopponesus for the insurrection.[102] With the design to

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[98] Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," 233. See also Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 31.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation," 31.

[101] Ibid. Furthermore, the reluctance of the Greek Catholics to participate in the revolution may be associated with the Roman Catholic position that did not favor the reestablishment of the Byzantine Empire in the East. See chapter five.

[102] Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," 233. The *klephts* were highland bandits that fought a guerilla war against the Turks. Many of the leaders of these brigands became the military leaders in the war for independence.

revolt on the Feast of the Annunciation (*Evangelismos*), Kolokotrones demonstrated the

"religious" quality of the revolt. Similarly, the Greek flag that arrayed with Aegean blue

and the Christian cross demonstrates that the revolution represented a Christian religious

crusade for religious (national) liberation, not an ethnic nationalistic uprising.

Additionally, the Ottoman authorities understood it as an Orthodox uprising, and

not simply an ethnic nationalist movement. Even though Patriarch Gregory V had

denounced the uprisings and excommunicated the leaders of the rebellion, the Ottomans

hung him from a gate at the patriarchate by his *omophorion*.[103] By hanging him by this

portion of his vestments, the Ottomans were demonstrating his lack of ability to control

his rebellious flock. The Turks understood the rebellion as coming from the Orthodox

millet; therefore they executed its leader.[104]

From the outset, though, two differing visions conflicted over the ensuing

governmental structure that the fledgling nation would take. The "military" party, headed

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[103]Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 54-55. The *omophorion* is part of the bishop's vestment symbolizing his oversight over his flock.

[104]While someone may challenge this assertion because the patriarch was an ethnarch who ruled over a people group, the Ottomans understood the ethnarchy to be based upon religion not nationality. Nationalism did not enter Turkish thinking until the late nineteenth century, especially with the rise of the Young Turks. The Ottomans clearly thought along Islamic imperial lines, similar to Byzantine Orthodox political theory. See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

by the *klephtic* leaders, like Kolokotrones[105] and Makrigiannis,[106] represented the universalist vision of the church. In fact, they desired to replace the Ottoman authority with an oligarchy with the church serving as one of the primary institutions of the new state. The other vision, represented by the "civilian" party, desired a western state based on constitutional law and republican principles.[107] But in the end, it was the "civilian" party that determined the vision and direction of the new Greek nation. However, the universalist position morphed into what became known as the *Megale Idea* (Great Idea).[108]

The Westernizing "civilian" party, although by far in the minority, was able to promote its vision due to the support of the western powers who provided financial and political support to the insurgents. The imposition of a western style government upon a non-western populace created the fundamental tensions within Greek political culture that exist to this day.[109] The attempt to conflate western constitutional law with Romeic

[105]For the life of Kolokotrones, see Theodoros Kolokotrones, *The Old Man of Morea: An Autobiography*, tr. Elizabeth M. Edmonds (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1984).

[106]For the life of Makrigiannis, see Ioannis Makriyannis, *The Memoirs of Makriyannis, 1797-1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

[107]Ibid., 60-61. Clogg notes that the very dress of these parties demonstrated their loyalty. The "civilian" party dressed in western clothes, while the "military" party wore the traditional *foustanella*.

[108]Zakythinos, *Making of Modern Greece*, 190-92.

[109]Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece,* 61.

values and a patronage system of power relating has been one of the chief reasons for the inability to foster a civil society in modern Greece.[110]

In April 1827 a provisional government was established through the aid of the western powers. John Capodistrias, formerly secretary of state to Tsar Alexander I of Russia, was elected president of Greece. Having been previously invited to lead the *Filiki Etairia*, due to his diplomatic skills, and because of his neutrality in regards to the anarchic warring parties of the new Greek nation, he was seen as a natural choice. However, because of his authoritarian style, which he had learned from the Russians, he made many enemies with the *klephtic* leaders, resulting in his assassination in October 1831, sending the fledgling nation into anarchy.[111] In response to this situation, the Great Powers intervened once again in the internecine Greek struggle for power. They established a monarchy for Greece under the rule of Prince Frederick Otto of Wittelsbach, thus functionally creating the western basis of the modern state of Greece. Until Otto reached his maturity, though, the Kingdom of Greece was to be ruled by a committee of three Bavarian magistrates with a Bavarian army of 3,500 men.[112]

At once the Bavarian regency attempted to establish a government structured upon the modern Western European models, while "in the process riding roughshod over the traditional forms of communal government that had developed under the Ottomans."[113] While a thorough study of the semi-autonomous self-rule of the Greeks

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[110]See Keith R. Legg and John M. Roberts, *Modern Greece: A Civilization on the Periphery* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 2-4, 194-96.

[111]Ibid., 64-68.

[112]Ibid., 69.

[113]Ibid., 71.

under the Ottomans has yet to appear, mainly due to the lack of available historical sources, some knowledge is available. Many of the islands, as well as some of the traditional Byzantine themes, continued a semi-autonomous rule from the Byzantine period through the Ottoman Empire. These areas were granted special privileges to continue their way of life so long as they paid tribute to the governing authorities. Generally, these areas were left to govern themselves. Additionally, the most common form of autonomous self-rule under the Ottomans was the κοινοτης (commune). Semi-autonomous villages and farms joined together to form the commune. The commune was headed by officers elected by the people and affirmed by the governing authorities. The powers of the communal officers varied. Mainly administrative in function, these officers were responsible for collection of taxes as well as public health and education. For many of these communes, like those in the Morea and in Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia, this semi-autonomous rule was a tradition from the Byzantine Empire that the new Turkish rulers simply continued. This semi-autonomy dated back for many of these areas to the fifteenth century. The Ottomans simply tolerated the Byzantine system of government in order to maintain the peace over the subject populace.[114] The new German government did not respect the semi-autonomy of many of these areas, leading to difficulties in government of these areas. Roman law as it had developed in Western Europe supplanted customary law. The French and German systems of public education became the model for the Greek educational system. But, the most sweeping changes occurred in the ecclesial structures of the state.[115]

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[114]Zakythinos, *Making of Modern Greece*, 53-67.

[115]Clogg, *Short History of Greece*, 71-72.

These semi-autonomous communes existed with the churches and monasteries as

the center of their life. Philip Sherrard and John Campbell note,

> the people of the villages, in any case in close touch with the life of the
> monasteries and for the most part providing their members, remained linked
> intimately to the mysteries of the Christian faith through the great liturgical
> cycle of the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox liturgy is not simply a piece
> of static ritual or an elaborate but ultimately aesthetic spectacle. On the
> contrary, it is a theology made visible whose 'mysteries' (the sacraments)
> constitute the basis of Orthodox spirituality. Into it are woven extracts and
> reminiscences from the Bible, the theology of the Fathers, the dogmas of
> the Oecumenical Councils, all transmuted into an intense and moving
> dramatic form. Moreover, this liturgical poetry and action is not something
> that the priest performs or recites in isolation from the people; it is itself the
> work of the people, a drama in which they intimately participate . . . .[116]

Thus, these communes were intimately shaped by the liturgical life of the church, which

shaped the identity of the people. Only with the state sanctioned nationalism was their

identity transformed from Orthodoxy to Hellenism.

Anthropologist Laurie Kain Hart has studied the local religious life of a rural

village in contemporary Greece. In her ethnography, she demonstrates the "natural" link

between Orthodoxy and the life of the villagers, whose identity is shaped by the cycle of

life of the Orthodox Church.[117] Her research suggests that the communal life that existed

in the late Byzantine and Ottoman periods has continued to some degree in the rural

village life of Greece to this day. Thus, her research is important for understanding the

traditional life of the Greek Orthodox people, as well as their own self-understanding as

Romaioi (Orthodox Christians).

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[116]Philip Sherrard and John Campbell, *Modern Greece* (New York: Frederik A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969), 195.

[117]Laurie Kain Hart, *Time, Religion, and Social Experience in Rural Greece* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992).

The most influential thought on the church-state relationship of the modern Greek state came from the ideas of Adamantios Koraes. Having understood the Orthodox tradition to be caesaropapist, whereby the church is subservient to the state, he argued for the establishment of a state church separate from the ecumenical patriarchate. This nationalist church was to be led by a national synod of bishops and laity, who were to be popularly elected. Furthermore, clergy were to receive their pay from the state, rather than from parish gifts or donations, to insure the non-acquisition of wealth by the clergy. Additionally, the state was to determine the number of clergy as well as the number of churches and monasteries in an area. Buildings were to remain plain and simple, rather than ostentatious edifices being built.[118] Generally, Korais's view of the church-state relationship became the guiding principles for it in Greece.

On 23 July 1833 the state declared the Church of Greece to be autocephalous from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Historian Richard Clogg provides the state's rationale: "It was held to be unbefitting the dignity of the newly sovereign state that the Church should remain under the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarch, himself highly susceptible to the pressures of a sultan with whom Greece had recently been engaged in bitter conflict."[119] Such a declaration was in violation of Orthodox canon law. Only the Ecumenical Patriarch could recognize a church as autocephalous. By separating itself, even administratively from the Mother Church, the Church of Greece created a schism in which the Ecumenical Patriarch declared the status of the Greek Church to be. For the next two decades the Church of Greece existed in a schismatic relationship with the

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[118]Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais*, 120-21.

[119]Ibid., 72.

canonical Orthodox churches.[120] Essentially, this decision on behalf of the nascent

Kingdom of Greece to form its own separate state church based on western Erastian

principles of church-state relations abolished the Orthodox oikoumene, paving the way

for future nationalist state churches and the heresy of *phyletism*, which, according to

Bishop Kallistos Ware, has been the "bane of Orthodox Christianity."

Of particular importance is the case of Bulgaria. In order to retain control over

some portion of the Balkans, the Turkish authorities agreed to the establishment of the

Bulgarian Orthodox Church headed by an exarch independent of the ecumenical

patriarchate in 1870. The church in Bulgaria had been able to provide a cultural and

national identity of the people during the Ottoman period. With the birth of nationalism

in the nineteenth century, the Bulgarians sought to liberate themselves not only from their

Turkish overlords, but foremost from the Greek hierarchs that controlled the church.

Thus, having declared independence from the Greek patriarchate in 1860 and its

recognition by the Turkish authorities in 1870 as a national church, the Bulgarian schism

provided the opportunity for the ecumenical patriarch to rule on the issue of

nationalism.[121] In 1872 a council was called in Constantinople to deal with the issue of

nationalism, or *phyletism,* as it pertained to the Bulgarian situation.

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[120] Theofanis G. Stavrou, "The Orthodox Church of Greece," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 188. The Ecumenical Patriarchate ended the schism in 1850 with the issuance of the Synodal Tome. The Orthodox Church of Greece agreed to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarch as its spiritual leader as well as to receive the holy *myron* used for the sacrament of chrismation from him. Thus, the relations with the canonical Orthodox churches were regularized.

[121]Philip Walters, "Notes on Autocephaly and Phyletism," *Religion, State and Society* 30 (December 2002): 360.

The issue debated at the council concerned not the question of the legitimacy of

an independent church, for the canons had provided for such a basis, but a church based

solely on ethnicity. The ecumenical patriarch excommunicated the Bulgarians due to their

ethnic chauvinism, not the establishment of a separate church. The council also

distinguished between the "local church" and a church based on ethnicity. The local

church allowed for inclusivity of all people regardless of their nationality. The

Bulgarians, and they were not alone in this, had equated the church with nationality.[122]

Such an equation violated the very unity and catholicity of the church.[123]

Furthermore, the ecumenical patriarchate condemned the Bulgarian schism as a

violation of the principles of the local church. The exarch of the Bulgarian Church

resided in Constantinople, establishing a church alongside the bishop of Constantinople.

Having two churches in the same city violated the ancient prescription of having only one

church in a city.[124] Multiple churches in a locale violated the unity and catholicity of the

church rooted in the office of the bishop. The ecumenical patriarch condemned

phyletism, or the equation of the church with a particular nationality, on the basis of

ecclesiology rooted in the church's understanding of the catholicity of the local church.

Unfortunately, Byzantine universalism and the concomitant understanding of the

local church was replaced by the heresy of phyletism in the modern nation-states of

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[122]John Binns, *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 184-85.

[123]See John Karmiris, "Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism," in *Proces–Verbaux du Deuxième Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes 19-29 Aout 1976,* ed. S. Agourides (Athens, 1978). See also, Jaroslaw Buciora, "Ecclesiology and National Identity in Orthodox Christianity," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 27-42.

[124]Walters, "Notes on Autocephaly," 361.

Eastern Europe. The church did not have the institutional resources to battle the

nationalist forces arrayed against it. In fact, as Metropolitan John Zizioulas has argued,

the very concept of *autocephaly* is a modern concept of the church, rooted in nineteenth-

century nationalism. "According to this principle, the Orthodox Church in each nation is

governed by its own synod without interference from any other Church and has its own

head (patriarch, archbishop or metropolitan)." He comments that what has occurred in

Orthodox ecclesiology is a confusion concerning the understanding of the office of the

bishop. In this confusion, many hold that the autocephalous churches are local churches.

To hold such an ecclesiological position is to violate the very idea of the local church

headed by the local bishop in his diocese. Instead, the autocephalous national church

replaces the actual local church of the bishop, denying the principal understanding of the

unity of the church and replacing it with the heresy of nationalism.[125]

In regards to the newly established Church of Greece, it was modeled upon the

Russian Synod established by Peter the Great. Thus in the mind of the monarchy, the

church was "a department of state." Under the new constitution, the Catholic King Otto

was declared head of the Greek Orthodox Church. Administrative authority was vested in

a synod of five bishops, supervised by a government commissioner. The bishops were to

be appointed by the state. In addition 412 of the 593 monasteries in Greece were

secularized, following the examples of Henry VIII in England and Catherine II in Russia,

with the monies going to the crown.[126] The secularization of church property

undermined the economic base for the church, making it increasingly dependent upon the

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[125]Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 253.

[126]Clogg, *Short History of Greece*, 72.

state for its financial support. In addition, responsibility for education was taken from the church and placed in the hands of the state. The church could participate in public education, but only as far as the government determined what role it would play.[127] According to Theofanis Stavrou, "The 1833 arrangement providing autonomy for the Greek church, allegedly to safeguard the political autonomy of the Greek state as well as the health of the church, also set in motion the process of separation of church and state." The church was relegated to "purely religious functions."[128]

The church did not simply acquiesce to the new situation. Many of the ecclesiastical leaders were complicit in the church-state arrangement. Stavrou comments, "From the beginning the hierarchs appreciated sufficiently the benefits accrued from the official status accorded the church by the state." The church believed that it could influence the state by having such an established position in the state. Eventually, the Greek hierarchy accepted the situation and "identified itself more and more with the state's policy objectives both on domestic and foreign issues."[129]

One of the major foreign policy issues in which the church supported the state was the *Megali Idea*. The Great Idea was a hangover from Orthodox universalism. As D. A. Zakythinos observes, "The ideal behind the 'Great Idea', and the political programme which evolved from it, was intended to offer a compromise between the two opposed schools of universalism and nascent nationalism and to reconcile the contradictory doctrines behind the political, ideological and intellectual leanings of the modern

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[127]Stavrou, "The Orthodox Church of Greece," 189.

[128]Ibid., 188.

[129] Ibid., 190.

Greeks."[130] The Great Idea was the incorporation of all Greeks in the Eastern

Mediterranean world into the newly formed Greek state. Of course this was to be done at

the expense of the Ottoman Empire. King Otto was one of the greatest supporters of

Greek irredentism. The issue arose with the first Greek constitution, which identified

Greeks as only those who were citizens of the Greek state. Those Greek-speaking people

outside of the Greek state were not Greeks, but Romans. But with the popular conflation

of "Greek" with "Roman", confusion arose concerning the status of these Greek speaking

people. In 1844 John Kolettis, the leader of the "French Party" and Otto's appointed

spokesperson for the Great Idea provided in a speech before the Parliament its meaning:

> The Kingdom of Greece is not Greece. [Greece] constitutes only one part,
> the smallest and poorest. A Greek is not only a man who lives within this
> kingdom but also one who lives in Jannina, in Salonica, in Serres, in
> Adrianople, in Constantinople, in Smyrna, in Trebizond, in Crete, in Samos,
> and in any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race . . . . There
> are two main centers of Hellenism: Athens, the capital of the Greek
> kingdom, [and] 'The City' [Constantinople], the dream and hope of all
> Greeks.[131]

Thus, the universal vision of Orthodoxy was transformed into a nationalist quest to

reunite the Greek speaking inhabitants of the lands of the Byzantine Empire. However,

as Xydis notes, "In its most utopian form, the goal of the Megali Idea was the recreation

of the Byzantine Empire, with a restored Constantinople as the capital of a multinational,

Greek Orthodox, Hellenized state."[132]

Through warfare with the Turks, the intervention of the Great Powers, and

revolution in Greek occupied lands, additional territories were added to the Greek

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[130]Zakythinos, *Making of Modern Greece*, 192.

[131]Cited in Clogg, *Short History of Greece*, 76.

[132]Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," 238.

kingdom between 1864 and 1947. In 1864 the Ionian Islands were incorporated; a

portion of Epirus and Thessaly in 1881; Macedonia, Crete, the remainder of Epirus, and

the Aegean Islands in 1913; Western Thrace in 1918 with the Treaty of Versailles; and

the Dodecanese Islands in 1947 following World War II. The attempted annexation of

Cyprus in the 1970s brought Turkish occupation on the north side of the island in 1976.

While additional lands have not been annexed at this time, the dream of reconquest of the

ancient Byzantine capital continues to play a role in Greek politics today.[133]

Therefore, from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, the

self-understanding of the Greek people gradually shifted from a multinational identity

based on Orthodox Christianity to a limited nationalist understanding of the "Hellene."

However, the "Hellenic identity" continued to be informed by the universalist vision of

Orthodoxy. This dual nature of the Neohellenic identity is the source of tension within

modern Greek society. Who are the Greeks? They are both Roman and Greek, shaped

by the historiography that emerged in the late nineteenth century. The desire to provide a

historical continuity, that began with Adamantios Koraes, between the ancient and

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[133]In his March 25, 2000 sermon commemorating the Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day, Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and all Greece made reference to the "unforgettable lands" now under the control of Turkey. As a result of his comments, the Turkish government placed Archbishop Christodoulos on a list of persons not permitted entry into Turkey. When this list became public knowledge, the Greek government demanded a retraction. The Turkish government did comply, removing Christodoulos's name from the blacklist. "Turkey denies blacklisting Christodoulos," *Athens News*, March 28, 2000. See also "Athens wants Ankara to explain itself," *Macedonian Press Agency*, March 26, 2000; "Athens reacts to alleged Turkish entry ban against nine Greek public figures," *Athens News Agency*, March 27, 2000; "Ankara: There is a list, but Archbishop's welcome," *Macedonian Press Agency*, March 27, 2000; "The Greek Orthodox Church Is Playing Dangerous Games," *INAF News Bulletin*, April 4, 2000. In addition, a recent ten volume set of books was published by the Greek Ministry of Culture entitled, "The Unforgettable Lands: Northern Epirus, Upper Macedonia, Eastern Rumeli, Eastern Thrace, Constantinoupolis, Pontus, Little Asia." See "The Renascent 'Megali Idea,'" *INAF News Bulletin,* May 8, 2000.

modern Hellenes allowed for the construction of an ethnic identity that is today taken for granted by contemporary Greeks.

Similarly, Carsten Riis has argued that the same process has occurred in shaping modern Bulgarian identity. Modern historiography has attempted to provide a historical linkage between the disparate historical periods of the Bulgarian people. However, for the construction of the Bulgarian identity, the influence of the West in shaping the identity was not as important. Rather, it was the Bulgarians' reaction to the Greeks and the Muslim Turks that allowed for the ethnic and religious contrast to establish their identity as Bulgarians. As Riis states, "The Bulgarian national movement, with the exception of some small revolutionary groups, thus defined national characteristics by transforming *millet* thinking and emphasizing a cultural, linguistic and church historical difference *vis-à-vis both* the Muslim Ottomans and the Greeks." He continues, "The national idea thus transformed both medieval history and Ottoman rule, first by placing the people (the nation) in the political centre and second, by transforming the concept of *millet* into the concept of nation. This turned national identity into a question of religious affiliation and vice versa."[134] Thus, the transformation of the Orthodox identity into ethnic nationalism was not limited to the Greeks, but influenced the entire Balkan peoples as they experienced the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Orthodox identity having been constructed through its relationship with the Roman and Byzantine empires was suddenly faced with an ambivalent political situation.[135] Because the development

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[134] Carsten Riis, *Religion, Politics, and Historiography in Bulgaria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 144-45.

[135] Similarly, Egyptian and Jewish identities have been shaped by a retrospective retrieval of their past history and the influence of Western understandings of what their identity should be. See Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism*, 28. For the problem of

of nationalism and the formation of nation-states was something new in the experience of

the Orthodox Church, it was unprepared to handle the splintering of the Orthodox

oikoumene into multiple nationalist churches united to nation-states. This problem

continues to disturb Orthodox ecclesiology and intra-ecclesial relations among the

Orthodox churches.

The National Identity Debate

In 1830 the German historian, Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, published the

controversial work, *Geschichte des Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters,* in which

he argued that the inhabitants of the Greek mainland were not descendants of the ancient

Greeks, but were descendants of Slavs who had moved into the area in the Middle Ages

and had destroyed the Greek inhabitants.[136] Having been inspired by local historiography

and folklore studies stemming from Herder's philosophy, Fallmerayer's thesis challenged

the nascent nationalist identity of the Greeks. As the ethnologist Michael Herzfeld states,

"When cultural continuity is quite obviously a political issue–and in Greece it was never

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modern Jewish identity, see Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation
and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (summer 1993): 693-725. Marc
Ellis has attempted to create a modern post-Holocaust Jewish identity against what he has
called "Constantinian Judaism." See *Practicing Exile: The Religious Odyssey of an
American Jew* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002). While he expresses distaste for
diaspora theologies, his own religious experience has been shaped by diaspora
understandings of Judaism, and his own theology represents a "diaspora theology" apart
from official Judaism. Therefore, if I am reading Ellis's works correctly, he is
articulating a retrieval of what he considers to be "authentic" Judaism as contained in
prophetic challenge to the official powers of the Israeli-Jewish establishment.

[136]Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Halbinsel Morea während des
Mittelalters,* two volumes (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta, 1830, 1836). See Xydis,
"Modern Greek Nationalism," 238; and Hart, *Time, Religion, and Social Experience,* 12.
For the political and cultural reasons for Fallmerayer's thesis, see Konstantinos P.
Romanos, "Introduction," to Jacob Philipp Fallmerayer, *Περι της Καταγωγης των
Σημερινων Ελληνων* (Athens: Nephele, 1984), 7-27.

anything else, since it provided the theoretical justification for creating the nation-state in the first place–the observer's personal politics are crucial in determining whether such continuity is admitted to exist."[137] Thus, as Romanos points out, Fallmerayer's pan-Slavism and the general Germanic desire to not see the re-creation of the Byzantine Empire influenced his historical scholarship.[138] As a result, Greek historiography and folklore studies sought to refute Fallmerayer, arguing for the historical continuity of the Greek people.

In particular, the work of Constantinos Paparrhigopoulos (1815-1891) is important. In 1843 he responded to Fallmerayer's claims in his book, *On the Colonization of the Peloponnese by Certain Slavic Tribes*. Paparrhigopoulos argued that the Slavic tribes did indeed come into the Greek peninsula, but not as conquering warriors, rather "peaceful nomads." As such, they were "culturally assimilated by the indigenous Greeks."[139] Furthermore, Paparrhigopoulos became the first modern Greek historian. His *History of the Greek Nation* contained five volumes, published from 1860-1872. The importance of this work was that it demonstrated for the first time the continuous history of the Greek people from ancient Hellas to the contemporary present. His use of Medieval Hellenism was particularly important, for it provided a basis for the

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[137]Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 4.

[138]Romanos, "Introduction," 7-27.

[139]Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," 239.

link between the ancient and modern Greeks. Furthermore, his work "paved the way for 'the Rehabilitation of the Fame of Byzantium.'"[140]

Under the influence of Koraes, Greek nationalists had spurned the Byzantine era of Greek history. Byzantium was understood to be against the spirit of Hellenism, and was thus looked upon with disdain. Koraes had learned to hate Byzantium from the writings of Edward Gibbon. However, with the beginnings of historical and folklore studies in the mid nineteenth century, Greek scholars began to realize the importance of Byzantium for understanding the identity of modern Greeks. Paparrhigopoulos was one of the first to begin the trend to revitalize Byzantium in the mind of the Greeks.

Another very important intellectual at this time was Alexandros Papadiamantis (1851-1911). Papadiamantis, in his writings, explored the folklore and folkways of the Greek people, coming to the realization of the importance of the religious identity of the Greek people. As Christos Yannaras writes, "With different presuppositional cultural awareness, the language of Papadiamantis would work for the people as elementary education, just as Homer in the Byzantine ages."[141] The stories of Papadiamantis brought to the attention of the Greek people the popular folk stories of the Byzantine era, demonstrating the Romeic heritage of the Greek people. Yannaras states,

> Papadiamantis is the most noteworthy and most genuine theological
> personality of the Helladic land, precisely because he reconsidered–only he
> in the general forgetfulness–the pivotal and the point of departure
> presupposition of the ecclesiastical proclamation: "That we know God
> cultivates a relation, not understanding a thought. The relation with God is
> immediate and perceptible with the ascetic practice of the ecclesiastical
> community: the struggle in the ec-stasy from the fantasy of autarchy of
> individualistic pleasure, seeing that as we grope for the beauty of nature as

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[140]Ibid.

[141]Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece*, 408.

God's energetic reason desiring passionately for the personal uniqueness of each human."[142]

With Papadiamantis is witnessed the rebirth of the Romeic identity of the Greek people.

In 1901 Argyres Ephtaliotes wrote *History of Romanism*. In this history, Ephtaliotes argues that the beginnings of Romeosyne (Romanism) could be found with the conversion of Constantine to Orthodox Christianity, uniting Christianity with the Roman polity.[143] Immediately, Ephtaliotes's work came under question. George Soteriades criticized the work for the use of the word "Roman" and "Romanism" in place of "Hellene" and "Hellenism," demonstrating Ephtaliotes's lack of patriotism. Why would Ephtaliotes use such a name to denigrate the Greek people? The poet Costes Palamas came to the defense of Ephtaliotes, beginning the debate concerning the name of the Greek people.[144]

Palamas responds to Soteriades asking him why Ephtaliotes should use the word "Hellene" in place of "Roman?" Does he not remember that he translated Krumbacher's *The History of Byzantine Literature*, in which it is stated, "'The name (Roman) was preserved…during the terrible years of the Turkish occupation until today, as the real and indeed prevalent name of the Greek people, in contrast with which the sporadically appearing name Greek has little meaning, and the name Hellene, introduced artificially

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[142]Ibid., 411.

[143]Argyres Ephtaliotes, *History of Romanism* (Athens: K. Maisner and N. Kargadoure, 1901). Published in Argyres Ephtaliotes, *Apanta*, vol. 2, ed. G. Baletas (Athens: Peges, 1962), 33-299. See John S. Romanides, *Romanism and Costes Palamas*, 15, 30-31.

[144]Romanides, *Romanism and Costes Palamas*, 16. See Costes Palamas, "Romios and Romanism," in *Apanta*, vol. 6, 2d ed. (Athens: Mpires, n.d.), 273-81.

by the government and the school has no meaning?'"[145] Furthermore, the name

"Hellene" has as much a pejorative meaning as "Roman." As Palamas states, "'Each

time the names Hellene, Hellenes, Hellenic things etc. appear in life–to be sure planted–

with all their classical halo, they are also used, according to the circumstance, most

ironically and most disdainfully. However it did not enter anyone's mind to send them to

the disinfectant machine.'"[146] Thus, as he states, "'We are Hellenes in order to hoodwink

the world, but in reality Romans.'"[147]

The problem, as Michael Herzfeld discusses, is that the imposition of the name

"Hellene" caused a cultural disemia between the two differing visions of Greek identity.

Herzfeld defines disemia as "the formal or coded tension between official self-

presentation and what goes on in the privacy of collective introspection."[148] The

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[145]Romanides, *Romanism and Costes Palamas*, 16-17.

[146]Ibid., 17.

[147] Ibid., 18-19.

[148]Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 14. In order to attempt to go beyond a binary understanding of Greek identity, Herzfeld has suggested the concept of "cultural intimacy." Essentially, this concept implies that the Greeks utilize both concepts of their identity in differing manners. For the outside world, the Hellenic identity is presented, mainly because it is this identity which is expected, particularly by the western world which gave the Hellenic identity to Greece. However, internally when Greeks are relating with themselves, sharing their "cultural intimacy," they utilize the Romeic identity, which is self-critical and introspective.
     Herzfeld's research continues the long discussion in western literature concerning the dual nature of Greek identity. The English historian Arnold Toynbee had raised the issue in his work, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, 2nd ed. (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), and he continued with the question in his later work, *The Greeks and Their Heritages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). The most famous discussion of the dual identity of the Greeks is Patrick Leigh Fermor's *Roumeli: Travels in Northern Greece* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966). Fermor's text is important for he qualifies the distinctive characteristics of each identity. While the Hellenic identity represents the "glory of ancient Greece," the Romeic identity "conjures

question that troubled the Greeks was the very use of the term "Hellene," which had

formerly meant "pagan." How could the modern Greeks who were Orthodox Christians

be given a name which meant "pagan?" Furthermore, how could they be given this name

when their very language betrayed their Romeic identity? As Herzfeld comments,

"What, more generally, were Greeks to make of all the cultural traits which, though, a

familiar part of their lives, were now under attack by their leaders as well as by foreigners

as 'barbarous' and 'oriental' and therefore as the very antithesis of Greek? Such

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up feelings of warmth, kinship and affection, of community of history, of solidarity in trouble, of sharing the same hazards and aspirations, of being in the same boat. It is the emblem of membership of the same family, a think that abolishes pretence and explanation and apology." (Fermor, *Roumeli*, 103.) The Hellenic identity is symbolized by the Parthenon, while the City and Hagia Sophia represent the dreams of Romeosyne.

More popular journalist writers like Robert Kaplan and Victoria Clark have sought to capitalize upon the dual identity of the Greeks in their works. However, each betrays the lack of sophistication in understanding the relationship between the identities, stressing their separateness to a fault, as well as their lack of what Herzfeld calls, "cultural intimacy." See Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993, 1996), 233-81; Victoria Clark, *Why Angels Fall: A Journey through Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). Clark, in particular, misunderstands the relationship between nationalism, hesychasm, and anti-westernism, believing that the hesychasts, who represent the universal heritage of Orthodoxy should be the more tolerant and liberal. What she experiences confuses her due to her presuppositions. The nationalists are actually more liberal, while the hesychasts are just as anti-western as the nationalists.

More recently, Dimitrios Tziovas has articulated a new approach to the problem of Greek identity. Rather than considering the dual aspects as a binary dualism, he argues for an understanding along the lines of hybridity. The Hellenic and Romeic identities do not exist apart from themselves; rather, they exist in a hybrid or syncretic relationship within each Greek. He demonstrates his hybridity hypothesis by noting the syncretic use of pagan and Orthodox elements in the works of the artists Photios Kontoglou and Nikos Engonopoulos. He expresses the hybridization in Bahktinian dialogism, whereby the differing identities are brought into a dialogical relationship that shapes each identity. Accordingly, this hybridity of identity is seen in the works of Vizyenos, Cavafy, and Kazantzakis, to name a few. As he argues, "Greek culture then requires a more subtle approach than facile categorizations and binary oppositions." Dimitrios Tziovas, "Beyond the Acropolis: Rethinking Neohellenism," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 19 (2001): 189-220.

difficulties threatened the coherence of the national ideology as the moment of its supreme political triumph."[149]

Costes Palamas was essentially asking these same questions to his interlocutors.

Nicholas Polites responded to Palamas's criticism of Soteriades. In his essay, "Hellenes or Romans?" Polites accepted Palamas's critique regarding the name "Greek." However, Polites provided a constitutional and legal answer to the problem. Following the constitutions of the day, Polites argued that the Hellenes were those who were citizens of Hellas; he did not associate the name with "Romans" in general. While the non-Helladic Romans were knowledgeable of their Hellenic descent, the "Hellenes of Hellas were genuine descendants only of the ancient Hellenes."[150] The idea of Hellenism was not imposed upon the Greek people; rather, it was the concept of Romanity. He concluded his diatribe, "'Let him therefore not persist in seeking that Queen Hellas remain forever hidden under the rags of Romanism.'"[151] Palamas did not respond to Polites, because, as he stated, the newspaper simply would not permit his rebuttal.[152]

The debate essentially ended in 1903, until it was resurrected in the 1970s with the work of the Greek-American John Romanides. As Panagiotes Chrestou notes, for Romanides the question became the origin of his name: "son of the Roman." Chrestou comments that for Romanides, the issue of the name resolves around the understanding of

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[149]Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 6.

[150]Romanides, *Costes Palamas and Romanism*, 25-26.

[151]Ibid., 26.

[152]Ibid.

Greek culture.[153] Is Greek culture pagan or Orthodox? For Romanides, authentic Greek culture is Orthodox. Furthermore, in an interesting understanding of history, which I will discuss in chapter six, Romanides argues that the ancient Romans were actually ancient Greeks. Thus, the Romans of the Byzantine era were actually Christianized Greeks.[154] As Chrestou states that Romanides argued that the Romans were divided between Greek-speaking Hellenes and Latin-speaking Hellenes,[155] Romanides later stated that the Romans were always bi-lingual, even unto today.[156]

Following Romanides, the Neo-Orthodox thinkers of the 1980s and 1990s have revived the discussion concerning the Romeic identity of the Greek people.[157] As Vasilios Makrides states concerning Yannaras, "The main problem is the loss of the Romeic Greek identity through an inferiority complex and the unthinking imitation of foreign lifestyles. Only if Greeks accept their otherness . . . can they interact fruitfully with the West." He continues stating that for Yannaras, and generally for the Neo-Orthodox, the creation of the modern Greek state based on western models, was a failure in regards to the authentic being of the Greek people. The separation of modern Greece from Byzantium, and its hesychastic culture, has led to the problems confronting Greeks

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[153]Chrestou, *Adventures of the Names of the Hellenes*, 153-54.

[154]Romanides, *Costes Palamas and Romanism*, 32-35.

[155]Chrestou, *Adventures of the Names of the Greeks*, 154. See Romanides, *Romeosyne, Romania, Roumeli*, 48.

[156]Romanides, *Costes Palamas and Romanism*, 32-35.

[157]In a newspaper article entitled "Hellene or Romios?" K. Tsoucalas discusses the dichotomy in Greek identity. K. Tsoucalas, "Hellene or Romios?" *To Bema*, January 30, 1994.

today.[158] Patrick Leigh Fermor had prophesied in the 1960s, "The Helleno-Romaic

Dilemma seems a small affair beside the tremendous new forces of change; but it is from

the two poles of the Dilemma that the strongest resistance will come. The traditional

framework of life in the mountains acts as a barrier or, at the least, a series of obstructing

hurdles, against innovation."[159] Little did he know that the resistance would actually

come from the intellectual left in the cities.

Alongside the revived debate over Romeic or Hellenic identity has arisen the

question concerning the relationship between ancient Greece and Orthodox Christianity.

The question over the religious identity of the people has become a central issue. Are

Greeks pagans or Christians? What is the relationship between Hellenism and Orthodox

Christianity? Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and all Greece has argued that the

relationship was a natural development in the history of Hellenism whereby the pagan

culture was Christianized beginning with St. Paul's missions to the Gentiles. The fourth

century witnessed the central debate concerning the relationship between the two

competing worldviews. Emperor Julian apostasized from Christianity and promoted

Hellenic culture distinct from Christianity. The Cappadocian fathers, Gregory of

Nazianzus, Basil the Great of Caesarea, and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, articulated the

basis for a Christian Hellenism, *Ellenorthodoxia.* Thus, Christianity is the fulfillment of

Hellenism in its evolution.[160] Similarly, the Neo-Orthodox thinker, Fr. George

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[158]Makrides, "Byzantium and Neo-Orthodoxy," 149.

[159]Fermor, *Roumeli*, 121.

[160] Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and all Greece, *Hellenism Converted: the Transformation of Hellenism from Antiquity to Christianity* (Athens: Media Ecclesiastica, 2004).

Metallinos, professor at the University of Athens, has argued for the importance of

understanding the intimate relationship between Christianity and Hellenism. Again, he

utilizes the thought of the Cappadocians as proof for the transformation of Hellenism to

Christianity, arriving at *Ellenorthodoxia*.[161] Hellenism and Orthodoxy are intimately

related and cannot be separated. Here the hybridity of Greek identity between the

Hellenic and the Romeic identities becomes apparent. To separate the one identity from

the other actually leads to a schism in the Hellenic identity. Both must be held together,

sometimes in tension, in order to be truly a Hellene. The work of Archbishop

Christodoulos and Fr. George Metallinos is important in drawing this important

understanding of the Greek identity, that the modern Greek identity is a synthesis of the

pagan and Christian identities of the historical Greek people. Hellenism and Orthodoxy

are inseparable elements of the one identity of the Greek people.

However, this construct of national identity based upon the synthesis of the

Hellenic and Orthodox elements creates a problematic for the modern nation-state and its

understanding of citizenship. The views of Christodoulos and Metallinos imply that to be

a Greek means, by definition, that one is an Orthodox Christian. In May 2000,

Christodoulos stated that "For Greeks, to be an Orthodox Christian is a defining attribute

of their identity."[162] Essentially, to be Greek is to be Greek Orthodox. This explains

much of the debate concerning the 2002 national debate concerning the identification of

religion on national identification cards. The Church of Greece argued that the removal

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[161]George D. Metallinos, *Paganistic Hellenism or Hellenorthodoxy?* (Athens: Armos, 2003); George D. Metallinos, *Hellenism and Orthodoxy* (Athens: Thenos, 2000).

[162]Athens News Agency, "Greek Church head charges gov't with breaking promise over Ids," *Athens News Agency*, June 1, 2000.

of religious affiliation from the national identification card amounted to the state taking

an improper role in regards to the relationship between church and state, as well as, the

state betraying the very identity of the Greek people. Since the state understands Greek

identity to be a product of citizenship, it is a political construct; however, the church

understands it as a moral and natural construct of the Greek *genos*.[163] While the church

eventually lost the debate, the popular support elicited by the ecclesial engagement with

the state may have led to the political loss of the Simitis administration in the 2004

elections.

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[163]Payne, "Clash of Civilisations," 265-67. Instead of understanding the debate over Greek identity as a "clash of civilizations," Elizabeth Prodromou chooses to use the "multiple modernities" approach of Eisenstadt to analyze the debate. Consequently, she believes that a reading of church-state relations in Greece based upon the church's ability to "negotiate the empirical realities and evolving features of pluralism" is a more productive approach to the problem. Elizabeth H. Prodromou, "Negotiating Pluralism and Specifying Modernity in Greece: Reading Church-State Relations in the Christodoulos Period," *Social Compass* 51 (No. 4, 2004): 471-85. Yet, while acknowledging that the "empirical evidence indicates some of the merits of a secularization-civilizational reading of the Church-state controversies," her multiple modernities approach fails to generate a satisfactory analysis of the church-state relationship in Greece, simply because, as discussed in chapter one, the multiple modernities approach is unable to discern what a modern nation is. Secondly, Prodromou's analysis of Christodoulos's decisions in the 1990s fails to take into consideration his understandings of national identity, which are ideologically antithetical to liberal (modern) understandings of national citizenship. Accepting Prodromou's argument would then entail that Christodoulos's religious nationalism is a type of modernity. If that is the case, then Greece is caught in a clash of differing understandings of "modernity": western liberalism based upon neo-Kantian political philosophy and religious nationalism. Christos Yannaras argues that there is indeed a "clash of civilizations" between Greece and the West, but it is not between Eastern and Western forms of Christianity, but rather between atheistic materialism and Christianity. See Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe* (Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2003), 10-11; Christos Yannaras, *Culture: the Central Problem of Politics* (Athens: Indiktos, 1997).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown the changes that occurred in the consciousness of the Greek speaking people brought by the advent of western nationalism as it was interpreted in the Eastern European context. Essentially, the people of the *Rum Millet* of the Ottoman Empire held to a multinational universal understanding of their identity expressed as "Roman" in the late eighteenth century. However, with the rise of the Enlightenment in the West and the resultant revolutions that engulfed the western world (English Civil War, American Revolution, and French Revolution) the nationalist and republican concepts came to the East through the Greek speaking diaspora, especially in the thought of Adamantios Korais and Rhigas Velestinlis. While Korais's thought was a conscious attempt to develop a Greek nation-state and to remove the universal Roman conceptual basis of the people, Rhigas Velestinlis's republicanism was a moderate attempt to form a modern republic on the basis of the universalism of the Roman identity. Because each represented a radical change to the basis of the *Rum Millet* and the theological basis of the Orthodox Church, each was consequently condemned by the church. As Roudometof and Kitromilides have argued, though, the universal concept framed the basis for the Greek revolution, allowing for the national construct of the modern Greek state in 1821. However, the nationalist understanding of Korais became the basis for the new Greek state, setting aside the universalist idea, which was transformed into the *Megali Idea*, or Greek irredentism.

The debate between the pagan Greek identity that was revived by the nationalists and the Orthodox Romeic identity continued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the publication of Argyres Ephtaliotes's *History of Romanism*. Ephtaliotes

was criticized for his use of the name "Roman" instead of "Greek" or "Hellene."

Entering into the debate was the renowned poet, Costes Palamas, who argued that the

name "Roman" was more proper for the cultural identity of the Greek people, for it

represented the identity of the common people. Nicholas Politis disagreed with Palamas,

arguing that the "Greek" identity was the more ancient and basic identity of the people.

Politis's position won the day, and Greek nationalism continued to develop, intertwining

the two identities. In the 1970s Fr. John Romanides raised the question again, arguing

that the Romeic identity was the most basic identity of the Greek people, for the Romans

were originally Greek. The Neo-Orthodox thinkers of the 1980s and 1990s, searching for

a new identity for the Greek people, accepted Romanides's thesis and developed it,

arguing that the unity of Hellenism and Orthodoxy were inseparable. Other nationalist

thinkers, like Archbishop Christodoulos, also articulated a similar argument uniting

Hellenism with Orthodoxy, allowing for a theological and ethnological understanding of

the identity of the Greek people. Consequently, with the equation of Hellenism with

Orthodoxy came the disagreement with the Greek state over the modern concept of Greek

identity based on citizenship, essentially nullifying the religious nationalist understanding

of Greek identity. The conflict between Hellenic and Romeic identity continues to be a

major issue in the discussion of Greek political culture.

CHAPTER THREE

The Development of Hesychasm from the Fourth through Fourteenth Centuries

Introduction

The theology of the Neo-Orthodox Movement is firmly rooted in the tradition of

Byzantine hesychasm, particularly the thought of St. Gregory Palamas. As demonstrated

in chapter two, the debate concerning modern Greek identity is virtually a continuation of

the debate concerning Byzantine or Orthodox universalism and modern secular

nationalism. While it is possible to argue that the universalist position is grounded in the

political theology of the Byzantine Empire, it is also important to keep in mind the

importance of the spiritual vision of Christianity, particularly as it was manifested in

monastic hesychasm.

During the fourteenth century, the Byzantine Empire experienced a religious and

cultural renaissance based on what became known as the Hesychast Movement. This

movement, essentially tied to the ministry of Gregory of Sinai, provided the impetus for

not only a religious revival in the empire, but also beyond its borders. Hesychastic

monasticism spread throughout Eastern Europe finding its way eventually to Northern

Russia and the Thebaid. As John Meyendorff states, "Their essential motivation went

certainly beyond 'Hesychasm' as a technique of spirituality, and was rather aiming at

maintaining the values and structures of the Orthodox faith in the Middle East and

Eastern Europe."[1] Hesychasm as a political and cultural movement provided the context for the development of a theology of hesychasm in the fourteenth century. This theology "enabled Oriental Christianity to survive under the Turkish yoke, and long to remain a stranger to the great crisis of secularism which was brought on by the Renaissance in the West."[2]

Consequently, before the life and thought of Gregory, Palamas, the "theologian of Hesychasm," is examined, it is important that we have an understanding of "hesychasm" and the general spiritual tradition of Orthodoxy. According to Bishop Kallistos Ware, "hesychasm," which essentially means "stillness" or "quietness," has five basic meanings in the Orthodox tradition.[3] First, "hesychasm" can refer to the "solitary life." Beginning with the fourth century, "hesychasm" simply referred to the eremitic life. The second meaning of the term implies, "the practice of inner prayer, aiming at union with God on a level beyond images, concepts and language." Thus, one who practices hesychasm practices "inner prayer" in order to arrive at union with God. Ware states that this is what was meant by St. John Climacus, who wrote, "The hesychast is one who struggles to confine his incorporeal self within the house of the body, paradoxical though this may sound." According to Climacus, the hesychast is one who has a "continual awareness of

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[1]John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia: A Study of Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 97.

[2]John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, tr. George Lawrence (London: The Faith Press, 1964), 25.

[3]Kallistos Ware, *'Act out of Stillness' The Influence of Fourteenth-Century Hesychasm on Byzantine and Slav Civilization*, ed. Daniel J. Sahas (Toronto: The Hellenic Canadian Association of Constantinople and the Thessalonikean Society of Metro Toronto, 1995), 4.

God's presence." As Ware notes, "More particularly, the state of stillness that the

hesychast seeks is a consciousness of God and union with him on a level free from

mental images and discursive thinking."[4] In this regard, Ware notes the antiquity of

hesychasm, stressing that it is found in such thinkers as Evagrius of Pontus, St. Maximus

the Confessor, and St. Symeon the New Theologian.[5] Third, the term can entail "the

quest for such union through the repetition of the Jesus Prayer." The earliest reference to

such a practice is found in St. Diadochus of Photiki (c. 450).[6] Through the repetition of

the name of Jesus in the Jesus Prayer, the hesychast brings a transformation in his whole

being, allowing for union with God to occur. The fourth meaning of the term is also

related to the Jesus Prayer. In this sense hesychasm refers to "a particular psychosomatic

technique in combination with the Jesus Prayer" to attain union with God. The technique

employed by some hesychasts is a particular bodily position, where the person controls

his or her breathing and concentrates usually on the heart. The use of this technique dates

to the thirteenth century, although it may be quite older.[7] The fifth meaning is "the

theology of St. Gregory Palamas," which will be discussed in chapter four.[8]

　　　In this chapter, I will explore the development of Byzantine hesychasm and the

sources that informed the theology of Gregory Palamas. Beginning with the origins of

Christian monasticism in the fourth century and tracing the development through the

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[4]Ibid., 5.

[5]Ibid., 4-5.

[6]Ibid., 4-6.

[7]Ibid., 4-7.

[8]Ibid., 4.

fourteenth century will provide a continuity of the tradition that will be important for the

arguments in support of hesychasm representing the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox

faith. After tracing the development of thought, I will then explore the creation of a

hesychast culture in the fourteenth century, setting the stage for the theology of Gregory

Palamas that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Early Byzantine Hesychasm

Orthodox monasticism began in the fourth century, particularly due to the influx

of new converts to the faith after the legalization of Christianity under Emperor

Constantine. As Meyendorff writes, "But in the fourth century a new era began for

Christianity. At that moment the Church, secure in newly-won imperial protection,

luxuriating in wealth and privileges, was invaded by thousands of converts. Then the

need arose to preserve in the Christian community that character that must remain until

the Lord returns, of 'the Woman fleeing into the desert.'"[9] While monasticism and

anachorism began in the third century prior to the legalization of Christianity, the new

church-state relationship "brought an extra incentive to the ideal of monastic

renunciation." Derwas Chitty continues, "Pagan and Christian alike had been inspired by

the example of the martyrs. In the new worldly security of the Church, the Christian

would seek to recover the old martyr spirit; while the pagan, brought to the Faith by what

he had seen of the life and death of Christians in time of persecution, would seek a way

of life of not less absolute devotion to Christ."[10] Early monasticism, according to

[9]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, tr. Adele Fiske
(Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 10.

[10]Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian
and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,

Meyendorff, represented a continuation of the prophetic spirit of ancient Israel. "It bore

witness against a bourgeois and worldly Church that easily welcomed the Greco-Roman

masses and accepted the bounties of 'the most pious emperors' without remorse."[11]

Furthermore, as Douglas Burton-Christie has persuasively argued, the pursuit of holiness

arose from what he calls "the desert hermeneutic" in reading Scripture. He states,

> Certain key texts from the Scriptures, especially those having to do with
> renunciation and detachment, stood at the beginning of desert monasticism,
> serving as primary sources of inspiration for the whole movement. These
> and numerous other biblical texts filled the day-to-day existence of the
> desert monks, providing a horizon of meaning in light of which they
> understood their ongoing quest for salvation: the Scriptures were
> experienced as authoritative words which pierced the hearts of the monks,
> illuminated them concerning the central issues of their lives, protected and
> comforted them during dark times of struggle and anxiety, and provided
> practical help in their ongoing quest for holiness. The characteristic
> spirituality or expression of holiness which emerged in the desert movement
> was a fundamentally biblical one: the monks appropriated Scripture so
> deeply that they came to be seen by their contemporaries as living "bearers
> of the word."[12]

An example of this use of Scripture in the spiritual quest for holiness can readily be seen

in the life of St. Antony, the father of eremitic monasticism. Hearing the Gospel lesson

of Jesus telling the rich young man to sell all of his belongings, to give the proceeds to

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1966), 7. Chitty notes that Antony's call to monasticism began in the late third century prior to the Edict of Milan. At the time "*anachoresis* was in the air" as men would withdraw into the desert to escape taxation and their public responsibilities. This "anachoresis" though was not specifically Christian. However, the escape from public duty as well as the relaxation of the strictness of Christianity in the churches provided ample reason for the growth of monasticism.

[11]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 11-12.

[12]Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

the poor, and to come follow him struck a resonance in Antony to a radical renunciation of the world.[13]

Thus, early monasticism as a social movement sought to retain the purity of the faith apart from imperial contamination. As Meyendorff argues, "Throughout the history of the Orthodox East, the Church was saved from absorption into the Empire by the hermits of the desert, the stylites standing year after year on their pillars, the great monastic communities that, like the monastery of Studios in Constantinople, preached the monastic ideal at the very heart of the city, commanding the reverence of the emperors and the Christian people."[14] Historian Peter Brown has demonstrated the role of the holy man in late antiquity as an authority in all aspects of life, replacing the role of the pagan priests and priestesses in Roman society. Monastics, like St. Antony of Egypt or St. Symeon the Stylite, not only chastised the Roman officials, but also served as their religious advisors.[15] As their prestige grew in the empire, so did it grow in the church. According to Meyendorff, they became the "authoritative spokesmen for the Eastern Church."[16] Monastic worship, spirituality, and holiness all became the definition of Orthodox Christianity.[17]

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[13]Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, tr. Robert C. Gregg (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980).

[14]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 12.

[15]Peter R. L. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

[16]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 12.

[17]For the role of monasticism in shaping the worship of the Christian East, see Alexander Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, third edition, tr. Asheleigh E. Moorhouse (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997); Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its*

According to Meyendorff, "Evagrius [of Pontus] was the first intellectual to adopt

the life of the anchorites in the Egyptian desert." Evagrius had been a disciple of the

Cappadocian fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

Steeped in the thought of Origen and Christian neoplatonism, Evagrius attempted to

integrate monastic practice with neoplatonic thought.[18] In his flight from Constantinople

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Meaning for Today (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986); Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992); Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy: The Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997). For monastic commentaries on the Divine Liturgy, see St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986); Maximos the Confessor, *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor* (St. Bede's Publications, 1982); St. Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); St. Symeon of Thessalonike, *Treatise on Prayer: An Explanation of the Services Conducted in the Orthodox Church*, tr. Harry L. Simmons (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005); Nicholas Cabasilas, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

[18]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 14. For a critical edition of the *Praktikos*, see Evagrius Ponticus, *Praktikos, Évagre le Pontique, Traité Pratique ou le Moine*, ed. A. and C. Guillaumont, 2 vols., *Sources chrétiennes* 170-171 (Paris, 1971). The literature on Evagrius is extensive. Some important studies are David Linge, "Leading the Life of Angels: Ascetic Practice and Reflection in the Writings of Evagrius of Pontus," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68, no. 3 (2000): 537-68; Andrew Louth, "Evagrios on Prayer," in *"Stand up to Godwards:" Essays in Mystical and Monastic Theology in Honour of the Reverend John Clark on His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 2002), 163-72; Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (summer 2001): 173-204; Jeremy Driscoll, "Apatheia and Purity of Heart in Evagrius Ponticus," in *Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature: Essays in Honor of Juana Raasch, O.S.B.*, ed. Harriet A. Luckman and Linda Kulzer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 141-59; Kallistos Ware, "Prayer in Evagrius of Pontus and the Macarian Homilies," in *An Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Ralph Waller and Benedicta Ward (London: SPCK, 1999), 14-30; Dominique Bertrand, "L'implication du nous dans la prière chez Origène et Évagre le Pontique," *Origeniana Septima* (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 355-63; Michael O'Laughlin, "Evagrius Ponticus in Spiritual Perspective," *Studia Patristica* 30 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997): 224-30; Diogenes Allen, "Ascetic Theology and the Eight Deadly Thoughts," *Evangelical Journal* 13 (spring 1995): 15-21; Barbara Maier, "Apatheia bei den Stoikern

around 381, he came to Jerusalem to the monastery on the Mount of Olives where he met

Melania and Rufinus, two ardent Origenists. Under the tutelage of Rufinus, who was

translating Origen's works into Latin, Evagrius applied "Origen's metaphysic precisely

onto the praxis of an individual's ascetic and mystical ascent, thus making this kind of

'theology' profoundly relevant to the burgeoning desert movement, and to Christian

asceticism in general. This could be argued, historically speaking, to be the archetypal

moment of the founding of Christian mystical theology, as a discipline."[19]

Evagrius, following his master, taught that the *nous*–the intellectual aspect of the

soul, usually equated with mind–"had been created pure in a pre-cosmic state, but had

fallen." The world was created by God as a place of habitation for the fallen "to purify

themselves prior to their spiritual assent back to the heavenly regions."[20] The body was

given to the soul as a vehicle to aid in the spiritual ascent, although, the body itself had to

be disciplined for this purpose. As McGuckin states, "For Evagrios the purification of

the senses by strict asceticism, and the training of the mind to transcend the limits of the

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und Akedia bei Evagrios Pontikos: ein Ideal und die Kehrseite seiner Realität," *Oriens Christianus* 78 (1994): 230-49; Jeremy Driscoll, *The* Ad Monachos *of Evagrius Ponticus: Its Structure and a Select Commentary* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S Anselmo, 1991); Gabriel Bunge, *Akedia: La doctrine spirituelle d'Évagre le Pontique sur l'acédie* (Bellefontaine, 1991); Gabriel Bunge, *Das Geistgebet: Studien zum Traktat De oratione des Evagrios Pontikos* (Cologne: Luther, 1987); Nicholas Gendle, "Cappadocian Elements in the Mystical Theology of Evagrius Ponticus," *Studia Patristica* 16, pt. 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985): 373-84; Gabriel Bunge, "Évagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire," *Irénikon* 56, no. 3 (1983): 323-60; Henry J.M. Turner, "Evagrius Ponticus, Teacher of Prayer," *Eastern Churches Review* 7, no. 2 (1975): 145-48; Antoine Guillaumont, "Un philosophe au desert: Evagre le Pontique," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 181 (January 1972): 29-57.

[19]John A. McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire: The Byzantine Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 39.

[20]Ibid.

flesh, were paramount factors in allowing the ascetic or monk to return to the spiritual

state from which the soul or *nous* had declined."[21]

For Evagrius the means of ascent is pure prayer. However, because the soul has

been dulled by the passions toward the things of this world, the soul must be liberated

from its worldly attachments. The passions arise from "thoughts" that come from the

flesh. These "thoughts," or *logismoi*, distract the *nous* from prayer and contemplation. In

order to grow spiritually, the monk must practice controlling the "thoughts." As Evagrius

states, "But all thoughts producing anger or desire in a way that is contrary to nature are

caused by demons. For through demonic agitation the intellect mentally commits

adultery and becomes incensed. Thus it cannot receive the vision of God, who set us in

order; for the divine splendour only appears to the intellect during prayer, when the

intellect is free from conceptions of sensory objects."[22] "The goal of askesis, or the

spiritual discipline of controlling these thoughts, was *hesychia*, spiritual stillness, where

the mind (the *nous*) was able to enter a state of spiritual acuity that was almost *contra*

naturam–or at least certainly beyond the 'natural' capacity of an undisciplined human

mind."[23] Once *hesychia* has been attained, the monk could then attain the state of

apatheia, or dispassion, wherein the body is unable to tempt the mind through the

logismoi. At this point the monk can experience pure prayer and the vision of God,

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[21]Ibid., 40.

[22]Evagrios the Solitary, "Texts on Discrimination in respect of Passions and Thoughts," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 39.

[23]McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 45.

which is the goal of the Christian life.[24] Evagrius states, "When the soul has been

purified through the keeping of all the commandments, it makes the intellect steadfast

and able to receive the state needed for prayer. Prayer is communion of the intellect with

God. What state, then, does the intellect need so that it can reach out to its Lord without

deflection and commune with Him without intermediary?"[25] That state is *hesychia,*

which brings *apatheia.* Once *apatheia* is attained, pure prayer, or "prayer of the heart," is

given by God as a gift.

However, there were problems with the ascetic teaching of Evagrius. In 553 at

the Fifth Ecumenical Council, he was posthumously condemned by the church. As John

Meyendorff states, "The Neoplatonic concept of the natural divinity of the human mind

(*nous*) led him to see monastic asceticism not as a witness proclaimed *by matter itself* to

the presence of the Kingdom of God within us, but as a disembodiment of the mind in

prayer to give itself over to its 'proper activity.'" Equally troublesome is that Evagrius

does not mention the name of Jesus once in his treatise *On Prayer.* Furthermore,

Scripture plays little role in the spiritual teaching of Evagrius.[26] In the end, his

neoplatonic thought, like that of Origen, brought his condemnation. However, his ascetic

theology continued to have a great influence on the Eastern Christian tradition of ascetic

theology.

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[24]Ibid., 45-46.

[25]Evagrios the Solitary, "On Prayer," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 57.

[26]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 17.

In order to make Evagrius's Hellenized Christian asceticism appropriate for

Orthodox Christianity, his thought had to be reworked in light of the Gospel of Christ,

essentially Christianizing his Hellenism. The process of reworking Evagrius's thought

begins with the writings attributed to his contemporary, Macarius of Egypt.[27] In Egypt,

Evagrius had come under the guidance of the great Macarius at Scete. Later in the

spiritual tradition a set of writings were published under the pseudonym of Macarius,

being associated with Macarius of Egypt. In these writings, Macarius instructed his

disciples in the practice of "pure" prayer, which was the constant recitation of the name

of God as "Lord." In its earliest form, the Jesus Prayer of the later hesychasts was

essentially, "Lord have mercy." Meyendorff notes that the influence of this early practice

is seen in the Eastern Divine Liturgy, with the constant repetition of "Lord have

mercy."[28]

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[27]For a discussion on the authorship of the Macarian writings, see chapter five. The scholarly research on Macarius is also extensive. See Marcus Plested, *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Marcus Plested, "Macarius and Diadochus: An Essay in Comparison," *Studia Patristica* 30 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997): 235-40; Marcus Plested, "A Survey of Recent Research on Macarius-Symeon (Pseudo-Macarius)," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 47, nos. 3-4 (2003): 431-40; Marcus Plested, "The Holy Spirit in the Macarian Homilies," *Sourozh* 75 (February 1999): 35-39; Alexander Golitzin, "Temple and Throne of the Divine Glory: 'Pseudo-Macarius' and Purity of Heart, together with some remarks on the limitations and usefulness of scholarship," in *Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature: Essays in Honor of Juana Raasch, O.S.B.*, ed. Harriet A. Luckman and Linda Kulzer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 107-29; Kallistos Ware, "Prayer in Evagrius of Pontus and the Macarian Homilies;" Justin Popovitch, *Les voies de la connaisance de Dieu: Macaire d'Égypte, Isaac le Syrien, Syméon le Nouveau Théologien* (Lausanne: Age d'Homme, 1998); Simon Tugwell, "Evagrius and Macarius," in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (London: SPCK, 1986), 168-75.

[28] Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 18.

The writings associated with Macarius demonstrate an important change in anthropology from that of the neoplatonism of Origen and Evagrius. Macarius's anthropology reflects the Semitic understandings of the body as found in the Scriptures, which have a more foundational role in the teaching of Macarius. Rather than the body being a vehicle for the salvation of the soul, the body and soul are viewed as an integrated whole.[29] The human person is not only *nous*, as with Evagrius, but is soul and body united as one organism, created for communion with God. As Meyendorff states, "the unceasing prayer of the monk is not aimed at freeing the spirit from the impediment of the flesh; it allows man even here below to enter into eschatological reality, the Kingdom of God, which embraces him, his spirit and his body, in a divine communion. The whole man, body and soul, was created in the image of God and the whole man is called to divine glory."[30]

Instead of focusing on the intellect, as with Evagrius, Macarius articulates an asceticism based on the human heart. In Homily XV, Macarius explains his teaching on the centrality of the human heart:

> It is like this in Christianity for anyone who tastes the grace of God. For [Scripture] says: 'Taste and see how sweet the Lord is' (Ps 34:8). Such a taste is this power of the Spirit working to effect full certainty in faith which operates in the heart. For as many as are sons of light and in the service of the New Covenant through the Holy Spirit have nothing to learn from men. For they are taught by God. His very grace writes in their hearts the laws of the Spirit. They should not put all their trusting hope solely in the Scriptures written in ink. For divine grace writes on the 'tables of the heart' (2 Cor 3:3) the laws of the Spirit and the heavenly mysteries. For the heart directs and governs all the other organs of the body. And when grace pastures the heart, it rules over all the members and the thoughts. For there,

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[29]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 18.

[30]Ibid., 20.

in the heart, the mind abides as well as all the thoughts of the soul and all its hopes. This is how grace penetrates throughout all parts of the body.[31]

For Macarius purification of the heart is the means towards which the monk moves towards *apatheia*. "This growing purity of the heart invites Christ to take up his dwelling within, like a King establishing his Kingdom."[32] By replacing Evagrius's emphasis on the *nous* with the place of the heart, Macarius is able to express an anthropology more in keeping with the Scriptures and Christian teaching. It is this emphasis on the heart "that Makarios was to have his greatest influence over the later Byzantine teachers of the early Hesychast period." Macarius's teaching on the heart combined with Diadochus of Photiki's teaching on the luminosity of the human heart and the Syrian understanding of purity of heart sets the anthropological stage for the later Byzantine development of hesychasm.[33] However, Evagrius's emphasis on the purification of the *nous* as well as mental prayer will continue to have a place in the later hesychast tradition.

The reworking of Evagrian spirituality continues in the thought of Diadochus of Photiki, an early fifth century bishop in Epirus.[34] Diadochus corrects Evagrius's

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[31]Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, tr. George A. Maloney (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 115-16.

[32]McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 69.

[33]Ibid., 70.

[34]For works on Diadochus of Photiki, see Marcus Plested, "Macarius and Diadochus: an Essay in Comparison," *Studia Patristica* 30 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997): 235-40; Nicholas Madden, "Aisthesis Noera (Diadochus-Maximus)," *Studia Patristica* 23 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989): 53-60; David Hester, "Diadochos of Photiki: the Memory and Its Purification," *Studia Patristica* 23 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989): 49-52; Kallistos T. Ware, "The Origins of the Jesus Prayer: Diadochus, Gaza, Sinai," *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold (London: SPCK, 1986), 175-84; Kallistos T. Ware, "The Jesus Prayer in St Diadochus of Photice," in *Aksum-Thyateira: Festschrift for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain*, ed. George D. Dragas (London: Thyateira House, 1985), 557-68.

intellectualism with the Macarian concept of the preeminence of the heart. In fact,

Diadochus equates the *nous* with the heart, "the locus of the inner self where the meeting

with God takes place."[35] Accepting the Semitic anthropology, Diadochus stresses the

importance of the human body and its place in the concept of prayer. With Diadochus,

emphasis is placed on the "Jesus Prayer," that is recited with the body while the mind

contemplates the sacred name.

For Diadochus, the heart is the locus for the experience of God. Only through the

purification of the *logismoi*, which distract the heart and bring impurity, is the heart

prepared to receive the divine presence. But this work is only accomplished by the

workings of the Holy Spirit:

> Only the Holy Spirit can purify the intellect, for unless a greater power
> comes and overthrows the despoiler, what he has taken captive will never
> be set free (cf. Luke 11:21-22). In every way, therefore, and especially
> through peace of soul, we must make ourselves a dwelling-place for the
> Holy Spirit. Then we shall have the lamp of spiritual knowledge burning
> always within us; and when it is shining constantly in the inner shrine of the
> soul, not only will the intellect perceive all the dark and bitter attacks of the
> demons, but these attacks will be greatly weakened when exposed for what
> they are by that glorious and holy light.[36]

The illumination of the heart by the energy of the Holy Spirit allows for communion with

God to occur. "For unless His divinity actively illumines the inner shrine of our heart, we

shall not be able to taste God's goodness with the perceptive faculty undivided, that is,

with unified aspiration."[37] Diadochus states that the illumination of the intellect can

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[35]McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 63.

[36]Diadochos of Photiki, "On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination: One
Hundred Texts," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy
Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos
Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 260.

[37]Ibid., 261.

occur through the constant remembrance of the Holy Name of Jesus. Through the

recitation of the Jesus Prayer, the intellect is purified, allowing for illumination to occur

through the working of the Holy Spirit.[38] The effects of this illumination of the heart do

not issue forth in a visible experience of the divine light, according to Diadochus, but

rather the divine light is perceived in the heart:

> You should not doubt that the intellect, when it begins to be strongly
> energized by the divine light, becomes so completely translucent that it sees
> its own light vividly. This takes place when the power of the soul gains
> control over the passions . . . . Our one purpose must be to reach the point
> when we perceive the love of God fully and consciously in our heart–that is,
> 'with all your heart, and with all your soul . . . and with all your mind'
> (Luke 10:27). For the man who is energized by the grace of God to this
> point has already left this world, though still present in it.[39]

Diadochus explains that the reception of the divine light in the illumination of the

intellect issues forth in the attainment of "spiritual love" that leads to the acquisition of

the "likeness of God," *theosis*. Such spiritual transformation requires the cooperation of

the Christian.

> Our power of perception shows us that we are being formed into the divine
> likeness; but the perfecting of this likeness we shall know only by the light
> of grace. For through its power of perception the intellect regains all the
> virtues, other than spiritual love, as it advances according to a measure and

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[38]Ibid., 270.

[39]Ibid., 265. He states that the perception of a visible form or shape in the state of
illumination is a demonic vision. See also p. 263. While this seems to contradict the
later teaching of Gregory Palamas, it does not do so. Gregory states that the illumination
of the intellect by the divine light leads to a transformation of the body that allows it to
perceive the supernatural. See Gregory Palamas, "To the Most Reverend Nun Xenia," in
The Philokalia, vol. 4, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios
of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and
Faber, 1995), 317-19; and Gregory Palamas, "The Declaration of the Holy Mountain in
Defence of Those who Devoutly Practice a Life of Stillness," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4,
compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E.
H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 423-24.
At this point, I am unaware of any works that compare the teaching of Gregory Palamas
with Diadochus of Photiki.

rhythm which cannot be expressed; but no one can acquire spiritual love unless he experiences fully and clearly the illumination of the Holy Spirit. If the intellect does not receive the perfection of the divine likeness through such illumination, although it may have almost every other virtue, it will still have no share in perfect love. Only when it has been made like God–in so far, of course, as this is possible–does it bear the likeness of divine love as well.[40]

Therefore, with Diadochus, we see development of hesychasm as the recitation of the Jesus Prayer and the concomitant experience of the illumination of the *nous* (heart) as the means of experiencing deification (*theosis*).

The Evagrian tradition continued to be reworked in the seventh century by the greatest of the hesychast fathers, St. John of Sinai (c. 580-650). His work, the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, gave to him his cognomen, Climacos.[41] Like Diadochus, John's

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[40]Diadochos of Photiki, "On Spiritual Knowledge," 288.

[41]The bibliography on St. John Climacus is extensive. See John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); John Chryssavgis, "The Resurrection of the Body according to Saint John of the Ladder," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (winter 1985): 447-53; John Chryssavgis, "The Notion of 'Divine Eros' in the Ladder of St. John Climacus," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 29, no.3 (1985): 191-200; John Chryssavgis, *Ascent to Heaven: The Theology of the Human Person according to Saint John of the Ladder* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1989); John Chryssavgis, "The Sources of St John Climacus (c. 580-649)," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 37, no. 1 (1988): 3-13; John Chryssavgis, "The Jesus Prayer in the Ladder of St. John Climacus," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 35, no. 1 (1986): 30-33; John Chryssavgis, "The Theology of Tears in Saint John Climacus," *Sourozh* 22 (November 1985): 37-44 and 23 (February 1986): 32-41; D. Barsotti, "L'amore di Dio in S. Giovanni Climaco," *Rivista di vita spirituale* 8 (1954): 179-85; D. Bogdanovic, *Jean Climaque dans la littérature byzantin, et la littérature serbe ancienne*, Institut d'Etudes Byzantines, Monographies, Fascicule 11 (Belgrade, 1968); A. Bontschew, *Die Asketik und Mystik des Johannes Klimakos*, unpublished thesis (Marburg, 1945); P. Christou, "Ioannes o Sinaites," in *Threskeutike kai Ethike Enkyklopaideia* (Athens, 1962-68), 1211-13; A. Colugna, "La escala spiritual de san Juan Climaco," *Vida sobrenatural* 31 (Salamanca, 1936): 269-77; N. Corneanu, "Contributions des traducteurs roumains à la diffusion de 'l'Echelle' de saint Jean Climaque," *Studia Patristica* 8 (Berlin: Peeters, 1966): 340-55; G. Couilleau, "Saint Jean Climaque," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris, 1974), 369-89; J. Fountoulis, "O Aghios Ioannes tes Klimakos, Didaskalos tes Proseuches," *Leitourgika Themata* 4

presentation of the mystical life is centered on the recitation of the name of Jesus.[42] His

masterpiece on the spiritual life (it continues to be the chief source on the monastic life in

Eastern monasticism) is a synthesis of the spiritual traditions deriving from both the

Egyptian and Palestinian deserts.[43] While he adopts the Evagrian distinction between

praxis and *theoria* (active and contemplative), he chiefly focuses on the former, holding

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(Thessalonika, 1979): 75-89; K. Georgoulis, "Ioannes tes Klimakos," *Enkyklopaidikon Lexikon Heliou* 7 (Athens, 1949): 702-4; I. Hausherr, "La théologie du monachisme chez saint Jean Climaque," *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Paris, 1961), 385-410; G. Hofmann, "Der Hl. Johannes Klimax bei Photius," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 7 (Rome, 1941): 461-79; J. Kornarakis, "E Krise tautotetos kata ton Osion Ioannen ton Sinaiten," *Koinonia* 1-4 (Athens, 1979): 40-67; P. Miguel, "Saint Jean Climaque," *Supplément à la letter de Ligugé* 178 (July 1976); K. Mouratides, "E Theologia tes Klimakos tou Agiou Ioannou," *Praktika Synaxeos Theologon* (Athens, 1974), 1-18; L. Petit, "Saint Jean Climaque," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 8 (Paris, 1924), 690-93; I. Phokilidis, "Ioannes o tes Klimakos," *Ekklesiastikos Faros Alexandreias* (Alexandria, 1920): 432-64; A.B. Pitsilkas, *E Adialeipte Proseuche sten Didaskalia tou Agiou Ioannou tes Klimakos* (Thessalonika, 1981); Iosaf Popa, "Invatatura ascetica a Spintului Joan Scaracul," *Studii Teologice* 10 (Bucharest, 1958): 253-69; I. Pouloupatis, "Ioannou tou Sinaitou Plakes Pneumatikai e Klimax," *Paradose* 12-14 (Athens, 1989): 127-36; S. Rabois-Bousquet and S. Salaville, "Saint Jean Climaque: sa vie et son oeuvre," *Échos d'Orient* 22 (Paris, 1923): 440-54; A. Sandreou, "Doctrine spirituelle de Saint Jean Climaque," *La Vie Spirituelle* 9 (Paris, 1924): 353-70; I. Schuster, "La dottrina spirituale di S. Benedetto e la Scala di perfezione di S. Giovanni il Climaco," *La Scuola Cattolica* 72 (1944): 161-76; Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), "De la nécessité des trios renoncements chez St. Cassien le Romain et St. Jean Climaque," *Studia Patristica* 5: *Texte und Untersuchungen* 80 (Berlin, 1962): 393-400; M. O. Sumner, "St. John Climacus: The Psychology of the Desert Fathers," *The Guild of Pastoral Psychology, Guild Lecture* 63 (London, 1950); A. Vedernikov, "Der heilige Johannes Klimakos als Lehrer des Gebetes," *Stimme der Orthodoxie* 4 (Berlin, 1964): 43-49 and 5 (1964): 46-52; Hierotheos Vlachos, "Illness, Cure and the Therapist according to St. John of the Ladder," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44 (spring-winter, 1999): 109-30; W. Völker, *Scala Paradisi: Eine Studie zu Johannes Climacus und zugleich eine Vorstudie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen* (Wiesbaden, 1968); Christos Yannaras, "Eros divin et éros humain selon St. Jean Climaque," *Contacts* 21 (Paris, 1969): 190-204; Christos Yannaras, *La métaphysique du corps: Etude sur saint Jean Climaque*, unedited thesis (Paris: Bibliothèque la Sorbonne, 1970).

[42]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 30.

[43]Chryssavgis, *John Climacus*, 10-11.

that hesychia, theoria, and theologia, are only for the few. As John Chryssavgis notes,

"He speaks at length about the warfare and struggle of the ascetic but avoids mentioning,

or gives only few subtle hints about, the transfiguration of the ascetic or about the vision

of divine light."[44]

Furthermore, according to Chryssavgis, it is apparent that the Macarian homilies

exercised an influence on John. He utilizes Macarius's emphasis on the importance of

the human heart as the locus of spiritual activity. However, as he avoids the over-

intellectualism of Evagrius, he also avoids the over-spiritualism of Macarius, following a

middle way, similar to Diadochus. As Chryssavgis states, by following this moderate

position, John is able to provide for a "synthesis between Evagrius and Macarius."[45]

This new synthesis of the Egyptian and Palestinian spiritualities provides for the

development of the later hesychast spiritual tradition.[46]

As the hesychast father par excellence, John gives to the meaning of hesychasm

its primary definition: monasticism.[47] In Step 27 of the *Ladder*, John states,

> A friend of solitude [*hesychia*] is a courageous and unrelenting power of
> thought which keeps constant vigil [*nepsis*] at the doors of the heart and
> kills or repels the thoughts that come. He who is solitary [*hesychast*] in the
> depth of his heart will understand this last remark; but he who is still a child
> is unaware and ignorant of it. A discerning solitary [*hesychast*] will have
> no need of words, because he expresses words by deeds. The beginning of
> solitude [*hesychia*] is to throw off all noise as disturbing for the depth (of
> the soul). And the end of it is not to fear disturbances and to remain
> insusceptible to them [*apatheia*]. Through going out, yet without a word,
> he is kind and wholly a house of love. He is not easily moved to speech,

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[44]Ibid., 31.

[45]Ibid., 37.

[46]Ibid., 39-40.

[47]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 31.

nor is he moved to anger. The opposite of this is obvious. A solitary [*hesychast*] is he who strives to confine his incorporeal being within his bodily house, paradoxical as this is.[48]

Thus, hesychasm or solitude focuses upon the inner life of the monk. The hesychast must be constantly vigilant, watching and observing the demonic attacks that come upon him in the form of the passions. "Watch, solitary monk, be vigilant at the times when wild beasts prowl; otherwise you will not be able to adapt your snares to them."[49] In order to keep the heart and *nous* focused, "Some diminish the passions, others sing psalms and spend most of their time in prayer, while some apply themselves to contemplation, and live their life in profound contemplation."[50] For as St. John states, "[*Hesychasm*] is unceasing worship and waiting upon God."[51] The means by which this is done is through the constant remembrance of the sacred name of Jesus. "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of [*hesychasm*]."[52] As Meyendorff comments, "The Jesus prayer thus is found at the center of all hesychast spirituality. The Name The Incarnate Word is bound up in the essential functions of being: it is present in the 'heart,' it is linked to the breath."[53] Following the tradition of Macarius and Diadochus, the body, for John, is intimately involved in the experience of God's grace, and leads to the goal of the Christian life: deification.

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[48]St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, tr. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 237.

[49]Ibid., 241.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., 246.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 31.

The other spiritual ascetic father of this time period that had a profound influence on the later development of hesychast spirituality was Isaac of Nineveh.[54] Isaac was born in the region of Qatar in the early seventh century. Around 646 he was consecrated bishop of Nineveh, a position he held for only five months, resigning to pursue the solitary life. Isaac was deeply influenced by the thought of John the Solitary of Apamea and Evagrius.[55] Consequently, his thought focuses upon the mercy of God and how human beings are to show mercy.[56]

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[54]The chief English translation of his work is *The Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian*, tr. D. Miller (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1984). For commentary on the life and thought of St. Isaac see, Sebastien B. Brock, "St Isaac of Nineveh and Syriac Spirituality," *Sobornost'* 7, no. 2 (1975): 79-89; Sebastien B. Brock, "Some Uses of the Term *theoria* in the Writings of Isaac of Nineveh," *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (Paris, 1995): 407-19; Sebastien Brock, "Isaac of Nineveh: Some Newly Discovered Works," *Sobornost'/Eastern Churches Review* 8, no. 1 (1986): 28-33; Sebastien Brock, "Lost-and found: Part II of the Works of St Isaac of Nineveh," *Studia Patristica* 19, no. 4 (1990): 230-33; Sebastien Brock, "St Isaac of Nineveh," *The Way* (January 1981): 68-74; Sebastien Brock, "St Isaac of Nineveh," *The Assyrian* 3, no. 6 (1986): 8-9; Gabriel Bunge, "Mar Isaak von Ninive und sein 'Buch der Gnade,'" *Ostkirchliche Studien* 34 (1985): 3-22; Gabriel Bunge, "Mar Isaac of Nineveh and His Relevance Nowadays," *Christian Orient* 7, no. 4 (1986): 193-95; J. B. Chabot, *De sancti Isaaci Ninevitae* (Paris, 1892); E. Khalifé-Hachem, "La prière et la prière spirituelle selon Isaac de Ninive," in *Mémorial Mgr Gabriel khouri-Sarkis* (Louvain, 1969), 157-73; E. Khalifé-Hachem, "Isaac de Nineve," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 7 (Paris, 1971), 2041-2054; E. Khalifé-Hachem, "L'âme et les passions des homes d'après un texte d'Isaac de Ninive," *Parole de l'Orient* 12 (1984-1985): 201-18; D. A. Licher, "Tears and Contemplation in Isaac of Nineveh," *Diakonia* 14 (1979); Justin Popovitch, "He gnoseologia tou hagiou Isaak tou Syrou," *Theologia* 38 (Athens, 1967): 206-25, 386-407; P. Sbath, *Traités religieux philosophiques, et moraux, extraits des oeuvres d'Isaac de Ninive par Ibn As-salt* (Cairo, 1934); Constantine Tsirpanlis, "Praxis and Theoria: The Heart, Love and Light Mysticism in Saint Isaac the Syrian," *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 6, no. 2 (1987): 93-120; Kallistos Ware, "The Meaning of 'Pathos' in Abba Isaias and Theodoret of Cyrus," *Studia Patristica* 20 (Louvain, 1989): 315-22.

[55]Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 32.

[56]Mary Hansbury, "Introduction," to St. Isaac of Nineveh, *On Ascetical Life*, tr. Mary Hansbury (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 12.

St. Isaac accepts the Pseudo-Dionysian tripartite understanding of the means of salvation: purification, illumination, and deification or perfection. However, Isaac's approach to the ascetic attainment of perfection has a slightly different emphasis. For Isaac the progression is through the "way of the body, the way of the soul, and the way of the spirit."[57]   The means of purification for the body are "fasting, vigils, and psalmody."[58] The "way of the soul" is a two-stage process of purification and transfiguration. The first stage of purification is the attainment of detachment from the things of this world, which leads to "contemplation of God's wisdom." The second stage of transfiguration then becomes possible, providing the attainment of "limpidity of heart," which is "total openness of the soul to the future hope."[59] The third stage of progression is the "way of the spirit." Isaac refrains from speaking about this stage, since very few can achieve this level of spirituality. The third stage is the attainment of "pure prayer." Hansbury comments, "Knowledge is the ladder by which one ascends to faith, but knowledge becomes dispensable once faith is reached. From this point on, the spiritual light of faith which shines in the soul by grace takes the place of knowledge."[60] At this point, the soul experiences the blessed state of "wonder." As Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev notes, when the soul attains the stage of "wonder," or ecstasy, the monk has reached "spiritual prayer," which is beyond "pure prayer." At the stage of "pure prayer,"

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[57]Ibid., 13.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., 14.

[60]Ibid., 15.

the monk still experiences movement of mind; however, at the stage of "spiritual prayer,"

the mind reaches "a state of peace and stillness."[61] At this point prayer actually ceases:

> In the life of the spirit . . . there is no longer any prayer. Every kind of
> prayer that exists consists on the level of the soul of beauteous thoughts
> which arise in a person . . . . On the level and in the life of the spirit, there
> are no thoughts, no stirrings; no, not even any sensation or the slightest
> movement of the soul concerning anything, for human nature completely
> departs from these things and from all that belongs to itself. Instead it
> remains in a certain ineffable and inexplicable silence, for the working of
> the Holy Spirit stirs in it, having been raised above the realm of the soul's
> understanding.[62]

Stillness of mind or "spiritual prayer" is not attained by the human person, but are a gift

from God, given to those who have prepared themselves through purification to receive

it.

The state of "spiritual prayer" does not involve the annihilation of personal

existence. Instead, the mind is "entirely under the power of God" that involves the

person in "an intense personal communion between a human person and a personal

God."[63] In this communion the person experiences the "wonder" of God through the

Pseudo-Dionysian process of "unknowing."[64] As Alfeyev states, "The state of wonder

which ascetics experience during their lifetime is a symbol of that wonder in which the

saints live in the age to come; it is 'a taste of the kingdom of heaven' and 'a revelation of

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[61]Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 218.

[62]Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*, tr. David Miller (Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1984). Quoted in Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 218-19.

[63]Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 220-21.

[64]Ibid., 222. For the Pseudo-Dionysian concept of "unknowing," see Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Mystical Theology," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, tr. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 133-41.

the New World'."[65] Therefore, for Isaac the monk who attains the level of "spiritual

prayer" has entered into the eschatological kingdom, full of joy and celebration in the

presence of God.

Isaac's gnoseology is also important for an understanding of the later hesychast

fathers. Isaac makes a distinction between "faith" and "knowledge." "Acquiring faith

presupposes silencing knowledge, and the increase of knowledge contributes to the

extinguishing of faith."[66] As St. Isaac states,

> The soul that by the pathways of discipline journeys on the road of faith
> often makes great progress therein. But if the soul returns once more to the
> ways of knowledge, she will straightway become lame in her faith and be
> bereft of faith's noetic force . . . . For the soul which in faith has
> surrendered herself to God once and for all, and has received through much
> experience the taste of his help, will not again take thought for herself. Nay
> rather, she is still in awestruck wonder and silence and has no power to
> return to the modes of her knowledge . . . . For knowledge is opposed to
> faith; but faith, in all that pertains to it, demolishes laws of knowledge–we
> do not, however, speak here of spiritual knowledge . . . . Knowledge in all
> its paths keeps within the boundaries of nature. But faith makes its journey
> above nature.[67]

From this quote it is apparent that Isaac understands knowledge to reside within the study

of nature. The laws of nature limit knowledge. However, faith is able to go where

knowledge is not. Faith transcends nature, allowing the person to have "an experience of

encounter with divine reality." "The faith Isaac speaks of is an experiential awareness of

God, an experience of the divine presence which he expresses in the terminology of

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[65]Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 247.

[66]Ibid., 256.

[67]Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetical Homilies*, Homily 1.52. Quoted in Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 256-57.

'inebriation,' 'wonder' and 'vision'–his most characteristic mystical terminology."[68]

Consequently, faith is a type of knowledge, distinguished from "worldly knowledge,"

that "'swallows up knowledge, converts it, and begets it anew, so that it becomes wholly

and completely spirit.'"[69] This new knowledge that is birthed by faith is the experience

of the presence of God. It is the attainment of "unknowing" that issues forth in divine

communion. Isaac's gnoseology will have a profound impact on the fourteenth-century

discussion on the relationship of faith and knowledge.

With the later hesychasts, according to Meyendorff, there is a synthesis of the

spiritual ascetic tradition with the theology of deification, developed by the Cappadocian

fathers, Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor. What Diadochus and John

Climacus were able to do in transforming the practical aspects of Evagrian Christian

neoplatonism, Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor were able to do with

Christian neoplatonic thought.[70]

For Gregory the chief issue was the question regarding God's knowability. How

can a person have an experience of a transcendent God that is by definition

"unknowable?"[71] Reflecting on the life of Moses, Gregory is able to offer a possible

means by which the person can have a real experience of God without betraying God's

transcendence. As Meyendorff states, for Gregory, "The Unknowable makes itself

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[68]Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian*, 259-60.

[69]Ibid., 261-62.

[70]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 35.

[71]For one to be able to "know" God would entail that he has the same ontological status as "God," i.e., he would have to be God. This concept is expressed in the New Testament in the words of Christ, "Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father" (John 6:46).

known while remaining unknowable and its unknowability is deepest for the one who

sees It." While using neoplatonic language, Gregory Christianizes it, making reference to

the "Holy One of Israel." Meyendorff continues, "Yet God is a living God and

communicates Himself to man. To express this communication Gregory has already

distinguished between the divine essence and its 'energies,' that is, the real

manifestations that make the divine life accessible without destroying the inaccessibility

of God."[72]

The distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies, rooted in

Cappadocian thought, expressed for the purpose of protecting the divine transcendence of

God, provides, according to Meyendorff, a corrective to the experience of God in

monastic practice.[73] The theology of the church provides a construct for understanding

the experience of God that the monastics experience. Without denying the reality of the

experience, apophatic theology, expressed by the Cappadocian and Dionysian tradition,

articulates a paradigm for the monastic experience of ecstasy. Without this theological

corrective, monasticism was doomed to never escape the neoplatonic paradigm

established in the thought of Origen and Evagrius.

Maximus the Confessor continues the development of apophatic theology,

expressing in dogmatic language the mystical experience. Maximus argues that

Gregory's "vision of the divine darkness" is actually a real "participation in God, a

deification (*theosis*)."[74] According to Maximus, the person participates in Jesus Christ

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[72]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 38.

[73]Ibid., 39.

[74]Ibid.

through the human will (*energeia*) of Christ. By uniting oneself to Christ through his

human will, the person then is united with Christ to the divine will (*energeia*) allowing

for a real participation in God without betraying the transcendence of God.[75]

With the Cappadocian fathers and the Byzantine theologians, a synthesis occurs

between monastic and spiritual theology. Their teachings on theology are practical and

experiential, lending them their mystical character. Theology is prayer and experience of

God. The union of *praxis* and *theoria* in the thought of these men provided the basis for

the development of what became known as hesychast theology in the fourteenth century.

Byzantine Hesychasm from the Tenth through Fourteenth Centuries

The tenth century witnessed the continued synthesis of the Evagrian and Macarian

traditions of spirituality combined with the theological synthesis of the Middle Byzantine

period. Additionally, in the spiritual writers of the late tenth century is witnessed the

emphasis on the vision of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, the

charismatic experientialism of the monastic fathers challenged the formalism and

intellectualism that had developed in the Byzantine Church.[76] In particular, the writings

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[75]Ibid., 39-41.

[76]See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 73-75; Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 48; McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 112; Basil Krivocheine, *In the Light of Christ: St Symeon the New Theologian: Life–Spirituality–Doctrine*, tr. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), 43-63; J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 365; Maloney, "Introduction," to Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, tr. C. J. deCatanzaro (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 10-12.

of St. Symeon the New Theologian[77] had the greatest influence on the later theological

development of the fourteenth century.[78]

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[77]In the Orthodox tradition, there are only three saints designated with the title "theologian:" John the Evangelist, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Symeon the New Theologian. There is some debate concerning the meaning of "New" in his title. In can either be a reference to the fact that he is indeed a "new" theologian compared to the older saints with the same title. It may also be a reference to distinguish him from his spiritual father, Symeon the Elder. *Neos* can mean either "new" or "young". If this is the case then, Symeon would be called St. Symeon the Young Theologian. See George A. Maloney, "Introduction," 4-5.

[78]George Ostrogorsky states that the theological disputes of the fourteenth century can indirectly be traced back to St. Symeon. See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed., tr. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 511-12.

The bibliography on Symeon is very extensive. Besides the works utilized here, see Hilarion Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Hilarion Alfeyev, "The Patristic Background of St Symeon the New Theologian's Doctrine of the Divine Light," *Studia Patristica* 32 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997): 229-38; Alexander Golitzin, "Hierarchy Versus Anarchy? Dionysius Areopagita, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, and Their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1994): 131-79; Andre de Halleux, "Symeon le Nouveau Theologien," in *Experience de la priere dans les grandes religions* (Louvain-La-Neuve: Centre d'Histoire des Religions, 1980), 351-63; Joan M. Hussey, "Symeon the New Theologian and Nicolas Cabasilas: Similarities and Contrasts in Orthodox Spirituality," *Eastern Churches Review* 4 (autumn 1972): 131-40; Anestis Keselopoulos, *Man and the Environment: A Study of St. Symeon the New Theologian*, tr. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001); Deppe Klaus, *Der wahre Christ: Eine Untersuchung zum Frömmigkeitsverständnis Symeons des Neuen Theologen und zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Messialianismus und Hesychasmus*, unpublished dissertation (Göttingen, 1971); Basile Krivochéine, "The Writings of St Symeon the New Theologian," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 20, nos. 3-4 (1954): 298-328; Basile Krivocheine, "Le theme de l'ivresse spirituelle dans la mystique de Saint Syméon le Nouveau Théologien," *Studia Patristica* V: *Texte und Untersuchungen* 64 (Berlin, 1962): 368-76; George A. Maloney, *The Mystic of Fire and Light* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1975); John A. McGuckin, "The Luminous Vision in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Interpreting the Biblical and Theological Paradigms of St Symeon the New Theologian," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050-1200* (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1997), 90-123; John A. McGuckin, "Symeon the New Theologian (d 1022) and Byzantine Monasticism," in *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), 17-35; John A. McGuckin, "Symeon the New Theologian: His Vision of Theology," *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 3, no. 3 (1984): 208-14; P. Miquel, "La

Symeon was born in 949 at Galatea in Paphlagonia.[79] His family was of the

aristocratic class involved in the politics of the day. At a young age, his father brought

him to Constantinople to receive an education and eventually to work in the imperial

court. However, after finishing his secondary education, he decided against his father's

wishes for higher studies, and descended into a dissolute life. For some time he

wandered the streets of the city. Eventually, he began a spiritual quest to find a holy man

to teach him holiness. He found that person in Symeon the Pious of Studios Monastery

in Constantinople. The elder Symeon instructed his new disciple in the ascetic life by

providing him with reading material, especially the work of St. Mark the Ascetic.[80]

Symeon progressed in the spiritual life, through prayer, prostrations, and reading.

At one point, his asceticism was rewarded by a vision of the divine light. However, he

did not respond to the vision, but instead strayed back into his previous profligate life.

conscience de la grace selon Syméon le Nouveau Théologien," *Irenikon* 42 (1969): 314-42; Gabriel Patacsi, "Palamism before Palamas," *Eastern Churches Review* 9, nos. 1-2 (1977): 64-71; Istvan Perczel, "Denys l'Aréopagite et Syméon le Nouveau Théologien," in *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 341-57; Demetri Stathopoulos, "Divine Light in the Poetry of St Symeon the New Theologian," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 19 (autumn, 1974): 95-111; Theodore G. Stylianopoulos, "Holy Scripture, Interpretation and Spiritual Cognition in St Symeon the New Theologian," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 46 (spring-summer, 2001): 3-34; Panagiotis Trembelas, "Symeon the New Theologian," *Mysticism-Apophaticism: Cataphatic Theology*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1974), 57-58; Constantine Tsirpanlis, "The Trinitarian and Mystical Theology of St Symeon the New Theologian," *Church and Theology* (London: Archbishopric of Thyateira and Great Britain, 1981), 507-44; Joost Van Rossum, "Priesthood and Confession in St Symeon the New Theologian," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1976): 220-28; Walther Völker, *Praxis und Theoria bei Symeon dem Neuen Theologen: Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Mystik* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974).

[79]Krivocheine, *In the Light of Christ*, 15. Biographical material here presented comes from this source.

[80]See his works in *The Philokalia*, vol. one, compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 110-60.

This continued for a period of six or seven years. During that time he had some contact with his spiritual father, but did not follow his direction. However, at the age of twenty-seven, Symeon had an awakening experience of conversion, and decided to enter the monastic life under the guidance of his spiritual father.

As a young monk he advanced quickly in the ascetic disciplines. Over time he experienced additional visions of the divine light. As Krivocheine states, "From there, by inner purification and as the result of a new mystical instruction through a vision of light, Symeon reached the highest summit. In an intimate, personal and unifying encounter he met Christ, and Christ transformed his entire being into light by speaking in his heart through the Holy Spirit."[81] Symeon describes the vision:

> Even so Thou Thyself becamest visible when Thou, by the clear light of the Holy Ghost, hadst entirely cleansed my mind. As through Him I saw more clearly and distinctly, Thou didst grant me to see the outline of Thy form beyond shape. At that time Thou tookest me out of the world–I might even say, out of the body, but Thou didst not grant me to know this exactly *(cf. 2 Cor. 12:2-3)*. Thou didst shine yet more brightly and it seemed that I saw Thee clearly in Thy entirety. When I said, "O Master, who art Thou?" then, for the first time Thou didst grant me, the prodigal, to hear Thy voice. How gently didst Thou speak to me, who was beside myself, in awe and trembling, and somehow thought within myself saying, "What is that glory, and what is the meaning of the greatness of this brightness? How and whence have I been found worthy of such great blessings?" Thou saidest, "I am God who have become man for your sake. Because you have sought me with all your soul, behold, from now on you will be My brother *(cf. Mt. 12:50; Mk. 3:35; Lk. 8:21)*, My fellow heir *(cf. Rom. 8:17)*, and My friend *(cf. Jn 15:14-15)*."[82]

This vision immediately instilled in Symeon a zeal for the experience of God, which he continued to have throughout his life. He equated the vision with the "pearl of great

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[81]Ibid., 25.

[82]St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, 374-75.

price" or the "hidden treasure," given by God. He could not hide this treasure, but had to

speak of the possibility for all to experience the grace of God. As he exhorts his brethren:

> Yes, my brothers, run toward Him through your actions. Yes, my friends,
> arise; yes, do not be out-distanced. Yes, do not speak against us by
> deluding yourselves. Do not say that it is impossible to receive the Spirit of
> God. Do not say that it is possible to be made whole without Him. Do not
> say that one can possess Him without knowing it. Do not say that God does
> not manifest Himself to man. Do not say that men cannot perceive the
> divine light, or that it is impossible in this age! Never is it found to be
> impossible, my friends. On the contrary, it is entirely possible when one
> desires it–but only to those whose life has been purified of passion and
> whose eye of the mind has been cleansed.[83]

At the age of thirty-one, Symeon was elected abbot of the monastery of St.

Mamas in Constantinople. His zeal for the spiritual life was embodied in his approach to

his new duties as abbot, exhorting the monks under his direction to a pursuit of virtue

leading to the experience of the divine light of Christ. As abbot his fame continued to

spread, which brought him into conflict with one of the leading ecclesiastical personas in

Constantinople, Stephen the *syncellos*.

Stephen requested an appearance with Symeon at the patriarchal residence in

order to lead him into a theological trap to demonstrate Symeon's theological ignorance.

In the encounter, Stephen asked Symeon whether the distinction between the Father and

the Son was a theological construct or a real difference. Symeon's response in the form

of a hymn raised the ire of Stephen, for Symeon made the charge of impiety. If Symeon

had been a "true" bishop, then he would "know" the distinction by personal experience of

Christ. However, because he had not had such an experience, he could not possibly

"know" the answer, nor realize that to answer the question would be all impiety. So

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[83]St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Hymn* 27, quoted in Krivocheine, *In the Light
of Christ*, 26.

began a debate that lasted six long years, which ended with Symeon's exile, for his improper celebration of his spiritual father as a saint.[84]

While the debate concerned personal holiness of the ecclesial authorities, it also expressed two different understandings of spirituality. Stephen represented the formalistic, intellectual, and conservative approach, whereby the people, through the reception of the sacraments, would experience the grace of God that would lead toward salvation. However, with Symeon, there is a more charismatic emphasis on personal experience of the grace of God. The sacraments affected a real experience of grace, such that if one had not been enlightened with the divine vision, one should not receive the grace of the episcopacy.[85] Symeon represented a challenge to the dead formalism of the church and the empire, by proclaiming that anyone could have an experience of God, if one so desired to pursue the path of perfection.

Symeon's importance for the later hesychast tradition lies in three basic areas. First, his spiritual experience and detailed commentary on the vision of the divine light of Christ provided a confirmation for the spiritual experiences of the hesychasts in the fourteenth century. Additionally, the importance that Symeon placed on the role of the spiritual father and his own holiness was to play an important role in the theology and practice of the later hesychast fathers. Symeon's writings were kept on Mt. Athos, where they were to be discovered by St. Gregory of Sinai and St. Gregory Palamas, providing a source for their own spiritual theology. Second, Symeon's synthesis of the Evagrian and Macarian spiritualities combined with the apophatic theology developed by the

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[84]Krivocheine, *In the Light of Christ*, 43-58.

[85]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 75.

Cappadocians and Maximus provided a basis for understanding the experience of the

divine light. While Meyendorff believes that Symeon did not express the doctrine of the

distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies, Krivocheine argues that in

his response to Stephen, Symeon did indeed make this distinction.[86] Thus, the idea of the

essence and energies of God continues to be reflected on in the tenth century as a basis

for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity and creation. Of course, it finds its formal

doctrinal exposition in the fourteenth century. Third, the debate with Stephen and the

other ecclesiastical authorities concerning spiritual authority and the tradition of the

church provides a basis for the similar debate that will be encountered in the fourteenth

century over spiritual experience and formal intellectualism. Symeon's charismatic

theology provides an example to be followed by the later hesychast fathers in their

encounters with the imperial authorities.

In the thirteenth century, St. Nikiphoros the Hesychast came to Mt. Athos, having

renounced Roman Catholicism, to practice the life of stillness.[87] He settled in a skete

outside of Karyes, the capital of Mt. Athos, where he acquired many disciples from

among the "spiritual elite of Byzantium."[88] His solitude, however, was interrupted by

his arrest and imprisonment by Michael VIII Paleologos for his outspoken criticism of

the unionist policy of the emperor.[89] However, his teachings on hesychast practice,

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[86]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 74; Krivocheine, *In the Light of Christ*, 47-48.

[87]"Nikiphoros the Monk: Introductory Note," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4, compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 192; Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 54.

[88]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 54.

[89]Ibid.; "Nikiphoros the Monk," 192.

especially the prayer of the heart and the psychosomatic techniques utilized to attain this

level of spirituality, are invaluable.

In one of the few works that have come down to the present, "On Watchfulness

and the Guarding of the Heart," Nikiphoros explains hesychastic practice as he had been

taught on Mt. Athos. First, he explains his purpose:

> If you ardently long to attain the wondrous divine illumination of our
> Saviour Jesus Christ; to experience in your heart the supracelestial fire and
> to be consciously reconciled with God; to dispossess yourself of worldly
> things in order to find and possess the treasure hidden in the field of your
> heart (cf. Matt. 13:44); to enkindle here and now your soul's flame and to
> renounce all that is only here and now; and spiritually to know and
> experience the kingdom of heaven within you (cf. Luke 17:21): then I will
> impart to you the science of eternal or heavenly life or, rather, a method that
> will lead you, if you apply it, painlessly and without toil to the harbour of
> dispassion, without the danger of being deceived or terrified by the
> demons.[90]

Obviously, Nikiphoros has been shaped in the tradition of Macarius and Symeon, with

the emphasis on the heart's experience of the divine light. He continues his exhortation

by demonstrating the continuity of teaching in the spiritual fathers since the fourth

century, many of whom have been addressed here. Second, Nikiphoros calls attention to

what the fathers call *nepsis*, or vigilance. The teaching of the fathers all emphasize the

importance of vigilance on the part of the monk in guarding the heart and intellect.

"Attentiveness is the sign of true repentance. It is the soul's restoration, hatred of the

world, and return to God. It is rejection of sin and recovery of virtue. It is the unreserved

assurance that our sins are forgiven. It is the beginning of contemplation or, rather, its

presupposition, for through it God, descrying its presence in us, reveals Himself to the

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[90]Nikiphoros the Monk, "On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart," in *The Philokalia,* vol. 4, compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, ed. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 194.

intellect."[91] Third, in order to attain this gift from God, the monk must be taught by an

experienced spiritual guide. Again, the teaching of St. Symeon the New Theologian is

apparent. If the monk does not have such a guide, he must find one; otherwise, there is

the possibility that he will be led astray by demonic delusions that assail the person who

draws near unto God. However, Nikiphoros states, "If, however, no guide is to be found,

you must renounce worldly attachments, call on God with a contrite spirit and with tears,

and do what I tell you."[92] Nikiphoros, through his exhortation, becomes the spiritual

guide for those who are unable to find one.

Nikiphoros then explains the psychosomatic technique used by the hesychast to

prepare for the reception of the "prayer of the heart." The purpose of the technique is to

acquire *nepsis* so that a union occurs between the *nous* and the heart. Nikiphoros writes,

> Seat yourself, then, concentrate your intellect, and lead it into the
> respiratory passage through which your breath passes into your heart. Put
> pressure on your intellect and compel it to descend with your inhaled breath
> into your heart. Once it has entered there, what follows will be neither
> dismal nor glum. Just as a man, after being far away from home, on his
> return is overjoyed at being with his wife and children again, so the
> intellect, once it is united with the soul, is filled with indescribable
> delight.[93]

He continues in his description of the technique:

> Therefore, brother, train your intellect not to leave your heart quickly, for at
> first it is strongly disinclined to remain constrained and circumscribed in
> this way. But once it becomes accustomed to remaining there, it can no
> longer bear to be outside the heart. For the kingdom of heaven is within us
> (cf. Luke 17:21); and when the intellect concentrates its attention in the

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[91]Ibid., 204.

[92]Ibid., 205.

[93]Ibid.

heart and through pure prayer searches there for the kingdom of heaven, all external things become abominable and hateful to it.[94]

In order to keep the *nous* attentive to the heart and not be distracted by the *logismoi*, the

monk should endeavor to make use of the Jesus Prayer in combination with his breathing.

> Moreover, when your intellect is firmly established in your heart, it must not remain there silent and idle; it should constantly repeat and meditate on the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me," and should never stop doing this. For this prayer protects the intellect from distraction, renders it impregnable to diabolic attacks, and every day increases its love and desire for God.[95]

However, what if the monk finds that he is not able to do this practice

successfully, leading to the acquisition of attentiveness? Nikiphoros encourages the

monk:

> You know that everyone's discursive faculty is centred in his breast; for when our lips are silent we speak and deliberate and formulate prayers, psalms and other things in our breast. Banish, then, all thoughts from this faculty–and you can do this if you want to–and in their place put the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me," and compel it to repeat this prayer ceaselessly. If you continue to do this for some time, it will assuredly open for you the entrance to your heart in the way we have explained, and as we ourselves know from experience.[96]

Once the monk is able to attain *nepsis*, or attentiveness of the heart, then he is prepared to

ascend the heights to the attainment of virtue and pure prayer of the heart.

According to Meyendorff, Nikiphoros is very important for Christian

anthropology. The neoplatonic dualism prevalent in the intellectualism of the Evagrian

tradition is overcome by the important relationship of the mind and the heart in

Nikiphoros's spirituality. "His method of prayer is based on an anthropology which is

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[94]Ibid., 205-06.

[95]Ibid., 206.

[96]Ibid.

like that of Macarius but which is derived primarily from Semitic origins. The Biblical

concept of man as an indivisible psycho-physical unity here triumphs in the monastic

spirituality of Byzantium, in spite of centuries of temptation by Neoplatonistic

dualism!"[97] Therefore, Nikiphoros bequeaths to the fourteenth-century hesychasts the

psychosomatic technique associated with hesychasm with its anthropological

understanding of the human being. This teaching will resonate in the teachings of

Theoleptus of Philadelphia, Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory of Sinai,

and his namesake, Gregory Palamas of Thessalonike.[98]

Like Nikiphoros the Hesychast, Theoleptus, Metropolitan of Philadelphia (c.

1250-1322), had a profound impact on the spirituality of Gregory Palamas. Theoleptus,

who decided to pursue the ascetic life while being a married deacon, found himself

embroiled in the ecclesio-political events of his day. Like Nikiphoros, Theoleptus

protested the unionism of Michael VIII. He was arrested, beaten, and briefly imprisoned

by the imperial court early in 1275 for his vocal opposition. Following his release,

Theoleptus retired to a hermitage outside of his hometown of Nikaia. There he spent

eight years pursuing the spiritual life.[99]

In his early spiritual development, Theoleptus was engaged with three different

spiritual fathers. First, the spiritual father, whom he does not mention by name, that first

guided him when he first visited the monastery as a young man, had a lasting impact on

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[97]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 58.

[98]Ibid., 59.

[99]Robert E. Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," in Theoleptos of Philadelphia, *The Monastic Discourses*, tr. Robert E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1992), 3.

his career. Second, he may have been under the spiritual guidance of Nikiphoros the

Hesychast. Gregory Palamas mentions this fact in the *Triads*. Apparently, Nikiphoros

and Theoleptus met during their mutual imprisonment in Constantinople in 1276.[100]

According to Gregory, Nikiphoros instructed Theoleptus in the hesychastic method of

prayer.[101] However, Sinkewicz believes that "the witness of Palamas should be treated

with some caution."[102] There is some possibility that he may have been with Nikiphoros

on Mt. Athos prior to his election as Metropolitan of Philadelphia, although Theoleptus's

hagiographer, Nikephoros Choumnos, does not mention this sojourn.[103] Angela Hero

states that he was "reported to be on Mt. Athos" following the "restoration of Orthodoxy"

by Emperor Andronicus II in 1282.[104]

The third spiritual father who guided Theoleptus was St. Neilos. Sometime

before 1283, Theoleptus had sought out Neilos to inquire about his spiritual state. After

Neilos had become mortally ill, "Theoleptos was inconsolable over their impending

separation." But his state of mourning ended three days after the death of Neilos, when

Neilos appeared to Theoleptus in a dream. Sinkewicz states, "It was through this

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[100]Ibid., 4.

[101]Angela C. Hero, *The Life and Letters of Theoleptos of Philadelphia* (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1994), 12-13.

[102]Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," 5.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Hero, *Life and Letters of Theoleptos*, 13-14.

experience that Theoleptos received the gifts of the Spirit that enabled him to write about vigilance and watchfulness of the mind."[105]

In 1283 Theoleptus was elevated to the episcopacy as Metropolitan of Philadelphia. His years of monastic retirement came to an end, as he entered the public service of the church. As metropolitan, he was involved in the ecclesial politics of his day, including the debate over the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son in the Tome of 1285 issued by Patriach Gregory II of Cyprus and the schism of the Arsenites.[106] While he was a much beloved bishop, his writings on the spiritual life insured his importance in the canon of Orthodox spirituality.

Theoleptus's spiritual teachings are a complete description of the spiritual and sacramental life found in the church. Monastic asceticism finds its completion in the sacramental life of the church. Sinkewicz states, "The asceticism of the virtuous life in turn can only be supported by the contemplative remembrance of God rooted in the practice of unceasing prayer of the heart. Finally, the 'place' of man's healing and transfiguration is to be found only in the Church, the Body of Christ."[107] Likewise, Meyendorff comments, "Theoleptus certainly deserves credit for integrating the spiritual tradition–often a spiritualizing one–of the Oriental Christian mystics into an

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[105]Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," 5. See also Hero, *Life and Letters of Theoleptos*, 13.

[106]For the debate concerning the Tome of 1285, see Aristeides Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium: The* Filioque *Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283-1289)* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983). See also, Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," 6-8; Hero, *Life and Letters of Theoleptos*, 14-16; John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, tr. George Lawrence (London: The Faith Press, 1964), 13-17.

[107]Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," 26.

ecclesiological and Christocentric framework."[108] In this he foreshadows the work of

Gregory Palamas and Nicholas Cabasilas.

In the first of the *Monastic Discourses*, Theoleptus discusses the distinction and

relationship of monastic *praxis* with *theoria*. Like his predecessors, the monastic practice

begins first with separation and detachment from the things of the world and the

acquisition of virtue. After the monk or nun has separated himself or herself from the

world and has begun to acquire virtue, he or she is open to the experience of *theoria*.[109]

Sinkewicz comments, that for Theoleptus, there is no distinction nor separation between

the two stages of the monastic life. Both are interdependent. Regarding *theoria*,

Theoleptus follows the path of Nikiphoros the Hesychast and the *Methodos*, which had

been attributed to St. Symeon the New Theologian.[110]

Theoleptus counsels the abbess Eulogia:

> Seated then in your cell, set your remembrance on God, raising the mind
> from all things and casting it soundlessly towards God, pouring out the
> entire disposition of your heart before him, while binding yourself to him in
> love. For the remembrance of God is contemplation of God, who draws the
> seeing and the longing of the mind to himself, enveloping it with the
> radiance of his Light. When the mind turns to God by halting all form-
> encumbered considerations of beings, it sees without forms and it illumines
> its vision by means of a transcendent unknowing on account of the
> inaccessibility of God's glory. Because of the incomprehensibility of the
> object of its vision, the mind knows without knowing on account of the
> truth of the one who truly is and who alone possesses transcendent being.[111]

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[108]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 20.

[109]The *Monastic Discourses* were written expressly for Irene-Eulogia, the widow
of John Paleologus and daughter of Nicephorus Choumnos, who became the abbess of
the monastery Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople.

[110]Sinkewicz, "Life and Works of Theoleptos," 33.

[111]Theoleptos of Philadelphia, *The Monastic Discourses*, 96-97.

In this brief passage from Theoleptus, the synthesis of Symeon with Nikiphoros are

apparent. Additionally, the apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius is utilized together

with the spiritual experience of *theoria*. Theoleptus continues, describing the process and

experience of hesychastic prayer,

> Prayer is a dialogue of the discursive intellect with the Lord, in which the
> discursive intellect runs through the words of supplication with the mind's
> gaze fixed entirely on God. For when the discursive intellect is repeating
> the *Name of the Lord* without ceasing and the mind has its attention clearly
> fixed on the *Invocation of the Divine Name*, the Light of the knowledge of
> God overshadows the soul completely like a luminous cloud. Love and joy
> follow upon true remembrance of God, for scripture says, "I remembered
> God and I rejoiced." Knowledge and compunction follow upon pure
> prayer, for scripture says, "On the day when I call upon you, behold I know
> that you are my God," and also, "A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit."[112]

With Theoleptus, hesychasm enters the life of the church outside of the

monastery. The teachings contained in the multitude of his writings witness the synthesis

of a spirituality that is concerned both with the individual monastic pursuit of the

experience of God and the ecclesiastical life founded in the sacraments. Furthermore,

Theoleptus, together with Patriarch Athanasius I of Constantinople,[113] began a cultural

transformation of Byzantium. Meyendorff states, "Neither Theoleptus nor Athanasius

were hermits shut up in a cloister or hidden in a desert; both on the contrary are linked

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[112]Ibid., 97.

[113]Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople (1289-1293, 1303-1309), was a
hesychast who undertook a spiritual reform in Constantinople both within the clergy and
in the society in general. He played an important role in balancing the ecclesiastical
interventions of Andronicus II with his own interventions in Byzantine politics. He
became involved in a controversy concerning the secularization of monastic property,
which he supported due to the immense wealth that had been accumulated. Meyendorff
notes that in general the hesychasts did not protest this decision. It may be the case that
the hesychast emphasis on the solitary life and detachment from the world would lead
them to support such a policy. The early Slav hesychasts continued in this same
direction. See Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 20-25.

with social and spiritual reforms of Christian society and throughout their whole career

sought to encourage an ecclesial community and sacramental spirit in Byzantium."[114]

In the early fourteenth century, a spiritual revival in the Byzantine Empire began

chiefly with the arrival of Gregory of Sinai to Mt. Athos and subsequently to Paroria on

the border between Byzantium and Bulgaria.[115] Both Obolensky and Ostrogorsky state

that the origins of the Hesychast Movement belong to Gregory of Sinai. His spiritual

teaching paved the way for the future spread of hesychasm throughout Eastern Europe

and Russia, creating what has been called the "Hesychast International."[116]

Gregory of Sinai, after experiencing captivity under the Turks as a young boy,

decided to enter the monastic life on Cyprus. From there he traveled to Sinai, where he

felt uncomfortable with the theological discussions that preoccupied the life of the

monks. From Sinai he traveled to the island of Crete, where he found a spiritual father

that could guide him in the monastic life. There he learned the art of hesychasm from

Arsenius the monk. According to McGuckin, "It was here that he was advised to make

the Jesus Prayer the centre of all his spiritual endeavours. The constant and slow

repetition of the phrase: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me,' was given to

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[114]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 60.

[115]Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1971), 389; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 512; Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, 287; Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 60; McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 117-19.

[116]Obolensky utilizes this term of A. Elian to describe the international commonwealth that was created by the Hesychast Movement of the fourteenth century. See A. Elian, "Byzance et les Roumains à la fin du Moyen Age," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London, 1967), 195-203.

him to serve as the very pulse of his spiritual consciousness."[117] After some time,

Gregory relocated to the Holy Mountain, to the skete of Magoula near Philotheou

Monastery. At the same time that Gregory resided on the Holy Mountain, Gregory

Palamas also lived near Vatopedi Monastery and later at the Great Lavra of St.

Athanasius. However, there is no evidence that the two ever met, and Gregory Palamas

infrequently mentions his name.[118] Following the instability coming from increasing

Turkic raids on the peninsula, in 1330 Gregory of Sinai relocated to Paroria in Thrace,

establishing a monastery near Mt. Katakekryomene. There he drew monastics from

every ethnicity to come learn the practice of hesychasm. He remained at Paroria until his

death in 1346.

Like his hesychast predecessor, Nikiphoros the Hesychast, Gregory speaks of the

bodily position necessary for the psychosomatic technique to be utilized with the

recitation of the Jesus Prayer. In his treatise "On Prayer," he tells the monk to "sit on a

stool, because it is more arduous." While sitting the monk is to "bend down and gather

[his] intellect into [his] heart–provided it has been opened–and call on the name of the

Lord Jesus to help [him]." In such a position the monk will most likely experience pain

in the shoulders or the head, but such pain should be endured. "Patience and endurance

in all things involve hardship in both body and soul."[119]

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[117]McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 118.

[118]Ibid., 118-19; Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 52.
Against this position, David Balfour has argued that Gregory Palamas was Gregory of
Sinai's disciple. However, the proof Balfour provides is not strong. See David Balfour,
"Was St Gregory Palamas St Gregory the Sinaite's Pupil?" *St Vladimir's Theological
Quarterly* 28 (1984): 115-30.

[119]St. Gregory of Sinai, "On Prayer: Seven Texts," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4,
compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, ed.

In this bodily position, the monk is to then make use of the Jesus Prayer. He

counsels beginners to not necessarily say the entire prayer, but rather divide it into parts

to make it easier at first. "For no one on his own account and without the help of the

Spirit can mystically invoke the Lord Jesus, for this can be done with purity and in its

fullness only with the help of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Cor. 12:3)."[120] In regards to its

vocalization, he recommends that it be said silently at times, but also aloud, especially

when the "intellect grows listless and cannot repeat the prayer."

According to Gregory, there are two ways to realize the baptismal grace given to

the person. First, the person can choose the longer path of keeping the commandments.

The second path is through constant recitation of the Holy Name of Jesus and the

constant remembrance of God under spiritual guidance. This second path, the way of the

hesychast, engenders baptismal grace, which is a gift, more quickly than the former path.

However, without guidance the person may be tempted toward the "energy" of delusion,

which is a work of the demons and the passions, demonstrating that the heart has yet to

be purified by the grace of God.[121]

Through the purifying energy of the Holy Spirit, the monk is able to experience

noetic prayer. "Noetic prayer is an activity initiated by the cleasning power of the Spirit

and the mystical rites celebrated by the intellect. Similarly, stillness is initiated by

attentive waiting upon God, its intermediate stage is characterized by illuminative power

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G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1995),
275.

[120]Ibid., 276.

[121]St. Gregory of Sinai, "On How to Discover the Energy of the Holy Spirit," in
The Philokalia, vol. 4, op.cit., 259; St. Gregory of Sinai, "On the Different Kinds of
Energy," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4, op.cit., 261.

and contemplation, and its final goal is ecstasy and the enraptured flight of the intellect

towards God."[122] This noetic flight of the intellect is likened to the experience of the

Eucharist whereby the communicant partakes of the very body and blood of Christ:

> Prior to the enjoyment of the blessings that transcend the intellect, and as a
> foretaste of that enjoyment, the noetic activity of the intellect mystically
> offers up the Lamb of God upon the altar of the soul and partakes of Him in
> communion. To eat the Lamb of God upon the soul's noetic altar is not
> simply to apprehend Him spiritually or to participate in Him; it is also to
> become an image of the Lamb as He is in the age to come. Now we
> experience the manifest expression of the mysteries; hereafter we hope to
> enjoy their very substance.[123]

Thus, the goal of the hesychast life through noetic prayer is to be transfigured into the

likeness of the glorified Son of God: deification. The hesychastic method of noetic

prayer allows for this transfiguration to occur, not mechanistically, but as an opportunity

to cooperate with the free grace of God that is bestowed to the person in his baptism.

Gregory describes the effect of the deifying grace of God operative in the person through

the Holy Spirit:

> According to theologians, noetic, pure, angelic prayer is in its power
> wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit. A sign that you have attained such
> prayer is that the intellect's vision when praying is completely free from
> form and that the intellect sees neither itself nor anything else in a material
> way. On the contrary, it is often drawn away even from its own senses by
> the light acting within it; for it now grows immaterial and filled with
> spiritual radiance, becoming through ineffable union a single spirit with
> God (cf. I Cor. 6:17).[124]

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[122]St Gregory of Sinai, "On Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and
Promises; on Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and also on Stillness and Prayer: One
Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4, op.cit., 237.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid., 239.

Gregory's hesychasm, therefore, continues the tradition as developed by the

hesychast masters of the church. Gregory draws upon their experience both written and

oral, that had been handed down through the generations of spiritual fathers. He

continued that tradition by teaching his disciples the hesychast method of spiritual

perfection, resulting in the Hesychast Movement of the fourteenth century.

<p style="text-align:center">*The "Political Hesychasm" of the Fourteenth Century*[125]</p>

When Gregory moved to Paroria in 1330, monastics from all parts of the

Byzantine Empire and neighboring states gathered to follow their new spiritual master.

According to Obolensky, for "the next twenty years the monastery of Paroria played a

leading part in a revival of contemplative monasticism which spread in the late Middle

Ages through the whole of Eastern Europe."[126] The teachings of Gregory of Sinai

radiated from Paroria to the entire Byzantine Commonwealth. The importance of Paroria

as a center of hesychasm is demonstrated by the fact that it was counted as being second

in importance to only Mt. Athos for the dissemination of hesychast teaching.

Hesychasm, as understood by Gregory of Sinai and his disciples, was not

essentially a monastic discipline. Kallistos Ware has persuasively demonstrated that for

the hesychasts hesychasm was "a universal vocation" for all people regardless of

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[125]The term "Political Hesychasm" was first used by Gelian Prokhorov in regards to the cultural developments shaped by hesychasm in the fourteenth century. See John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 148-49. See Gelian Prokhorov, "Isikhasm i obshchestvennaia mysl' v vostochnoi Europe v XIV-m veke," in *Akademiia Nauk SSSR, Trudy otdela drevne-russkoi literatury* 21 (1968), 95. For a French translation, see G.M. Prokhorov, "L'hésychasme et la pensée sociale en Europe orientale au XIVe siècle," *Contacts* 31 (1979): 25-63.

[126]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 389.

ecclesial position. Ware provides an example from the life of Gregory of Sinai where he

commissioned a lay monk to return to Thessaloniki to teach the people the method of

hesychasm. Furthermore, Gregory Palamas debated successfully the monk Job about the

appropriateness of unceasing prayer for laity. Nicolas Cabasilas, a non-monastic

hesychast theologian, also wrote about the importance of the hesychast life for all people

regardless of position.[127] Thus, a missionary movement was birthed from the teachings

of hesychasm, opening a way for a generalization and universalization of hesychasm for

all Orthodox believers.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, similar to the western Renaissance in

Italy, the Byzantines also experienced an intellectual Renaissance.[128] Since the Fourth

Crusade of 1204 and the capture of Constantinople by the Franks, the Byzantines became

increasingly aware of their Hellenic cultural roots. While they referred to themselves as

Romaoi, or Romans, they spoke the language of their ancestors, Greek. In the face of the

cultural and political threat represented by the West, the Byzantines began to refer to

themselves as Hellenes. In fact, the Kingdom of Nicea was called the *Hellenikon*, or

even *Hellas*. Along with this cultural identity shift, and it was not complete, for they

continued to refer to themselves as the true Romans, the Byzantines sought a new

appreciation for things Hellenic.[129] In particular, the late thirteenth century witnessed a

revival of ancient Greek philosophy, against the official condemnation of the church.

This revival of ancient Greek philosophy would be challenged and defeated in the

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[127]Ware, *Act Out of Stillness*, 9-11.

[128]Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*, The Birkbeck Lectures, 1977 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 31-65.

[129]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 99-101.

Hesychast controversy of the fourteenth century. However, the revival of ancient Greek

learning was sufficiently strong enough to bring about a challenge from monastic and

ecclesial teaching.[130]

In this regard, intellectuals from throughout the Eastern European world came to

learn hesychasm from Gregory. As Obolensky states, "His Slav and Greek disciples who

received their monastic training there included highly educated men who later rose to

prominent positions in the churches of their respective lands; and through them their

master's writings and oral teaching spread through the monasteries and royal courts of

Eastern Europe."[131] A network of prominent hesychast intellectuals, all spiritual

disciples of St. Gregory, arose in the Byzantine Commonwealth. Obolensky states that

"the different parts of the Byzantine Commonwealth were, during the last hundred years

of its existence, linked to each other and to its centre perhaps more closely than ever

before."[132]

One of these intellectual hesychasts was St. Theodosius of Trnovo. Theodosius, a

prominent disciple of Gregory, established the important monastery of Trnovo near Mt.

Kilifarevo under the patronage of Tsar John Alexander of Bulgaria in 1350. His fame

and reputation drew monastics from the surrounding Balkan lands. Theodosius not only

practiced hesychasm, but like his fellow hesychast leaders, was involved in the

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[130]Ibid. See also Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 27; Meyendorff, *Byzantine Legacy*, 133-35; Ware, *Act Out of Stillness*, 12-14. It should be noted that the hesychast monks were not anti-intellectual. They argued that worldly knowledge could not replace the mystical knowledge of true theology given to the person in communion with God. Such "knowledge" was superior to that of the ancient Greeks. See chapter four for this debate between Gregory Palamas and the anti-Palamites.

[131]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth,* 390.

[132]Ibid.

ecclesiastical politics of the day. Obolensky demonstrates the universalism of hesychasm

and the fellowship that the disciples of Gregory had in a major political event involving

the Patriarchate of Bulgaria and the Great Church of Constantinople.

In 1235 the Church of Bulgaria received patriarchal status from the Church of

Constantinople. One of the conditions of their autocephaly was the recognition of the

Church of Constantinople as the Mother Church. The visible sign of this was the

commemoration of the presiding Constantinopolitan patriarch in the diptychs. Failure to

commemorate the patriarch would be tantamount to schism between the churches.[133] For

this time period, it also represented a political schism between the two empires. The

Bulgarian patriarch refused to commemorate Patriarch Callistus of Constantinople in the

dyptichs. Theodosius immediately protested such an action. Callistus and Theodosius

had both been friends and spiritual brothers under Gregory's tutelage. Against his

ecclesiastical superior, he sided with the See of Constantinople, upholding the importance

of the universal significance of the Christian faith.[134]

From the monasteries of Paroria and Trnovo, hesychasm spread throughout the

rest of Eastern Europe. Disciples of Gregory and Theodosius eventually brought

hesychasm to the Kingdom of Serbia in the late fourteenth century. Through Trnovo,

hesychasm spread throughout Bulgaria and later into the principalities of Romania.

Additionally, patriarchs and bishops of these churches were experienced hesychast

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[133]In 1992, a schism occurred between the Church of Russia and the Church of
Constantinople when Patriarch Alexey II refused to commemorate Patriarch
Bartholomew in the Divine Liturgy. This signified a schism between the Mother Church
of Constantinople and the daughter Church of Russia. At issue was Bartholomew's
granting of autonomous status to the Church of Estonia.

[134]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 391.

monks during this time period.[135] In fact, the Great Church of Constantinople after 1347,

experienced a hesychast takeover, with the succeeding five patriarchs all being disciples

of Gregory Palamas from Mt. Athos.[136]

The internationalism of the Hesychast Movement of the fourteenth century is

further displayed in the lifting of the excommunication of the Serbian Church under

Patriarch Philotheus. The Serbian monk Isaiah, who was abbot of the Russian monastery

of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos, persuaded Patriarch Philotheus of Constantinople to lift

the excommunication of the Church of Serbia, which had sought to establish its own

patriarch apart from the Mother Church under the rule of Tsar Stephen Dusan in the

fourteenth century. In 1375 Prince Lazar of Serbia requested Isaiah to petition Philotheus

for the removal of the excommunication. Isaiah's petition was successful and the

Byzantine commonwealth was once again restored under hesychast guidance.[137]

Meyendorff states that this recognition of the Patriarch of Peč was due to Philotheus's

attempt to seal Orthodox unity for the upcoming negotiation with Rome in 1369.[138]

In addition to the work of the disciples of Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, and

Theodosius of Trnovo, their disciples continued to spread hesychasm further north into

Romania and eventually Russia. One of the disciples of Nicodemos of Tismana most

likely established the important monastery of Neamt in Moldova, which was involved in

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[135]Ibid., 391-93.

[136]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Legacy*, 129-30. These patriarchs were Isidore (1347-1349), Callistus I (1350-1354, 1355-1363), Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), Macarius (1376-1379), Nilus (1380-1388). Meyendorff states that this linkage between Mt. Athos and Constantinople occurred through the placing of Mt. Athos under the authority of Constantinople by Andronicus II in 1312.

[137]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 393-94.

[138]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 181.

the translation of the works of St. John Climacus and St. Gregory of Sinai. These

hesychast monks also sought a change of the lifestyle of monastics from what had

become the idiorhythmic back to cenobitic monasticism. Of great importance was the

monastic vow of obedience given to the spiritual elder of the community. In Russia this

type of monasticism influenced the growth of lavras throughout the lands north of

Moscow. In particular, hesychasm influenced the life and teachings of St. Sergius of

Radonezh and later St. Nil of Sora.[139]

Meyendorff argues that the revival of antique Hellenism in the form of Byzantine

humanism was only located in Constantinople, Thessalonike, and Mistra because it

appealed only to an educated elite, whereas monastic hesychasm had a much broader

appeal because of its universal character. Furthermore, the larger populous had a realistic

sense of the impending doom coming upon the empire. Any attempt to preserve the

antique past seemed to be pure folly. Christianity, in the form of hesychasm, offered an

alternative reality to that which the empire was experiencing. It offered the people a

sense of hope that was not tied particularly to the future state of the empire. Additionally,

the international link between the hesychast prelates, monks, and laity provided an

independence to the church that it had seldom experienced in the history of the Byzantine

state.[140] Hesychasm freed the church from its imperial link, such that when the empire

did indeed collapse in 1453, the church was able to survive through its international and

universal character. Meyendorff writes, "Through the mere size of its administrative

apparatus, its international connections, and the support it received from the people, the

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[139]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 394-97.

[140]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 102.

Church, after the hesychast victory, was, in many ways, a more powerful body than the impoverished Empire. Psychologically and institutionally, this newly gained power made the survival of the Church possible after the empire's fall."[141]

However, with this new found independence and strength, the church continued to support the empire and its imperial universal vision. Meyendorff states that

> after the victory of the Hesychasts, the Byzantine Church continued very actively to maintain and to promote the ideal of a Christian *oikouméne*, centred in Constantinople and headed by the emperor, whose role was defined in traditional terms of *Roman* and Christian universalism, whereas the concern of the 'humanists' for the preservation of *Greek* civilization was *de facto* resulting in an understanding of Byzantium as a Greek *nation* (*γένος*).[142]

The Byzantine humanist vision of a revival of a Greek Empire was melded with a nationalist vision of the East Roman Empire. This "nationalist" vision of the empire came into direct conflict with the universalist position of the monastic community as well as the general Christian values of the empire. With the victory of the hesychasts and the takeover of the patriarchate, the universal vision of the Christian Roman Empire continued in the theological thought of the monastic community. However, the universal vision continued to conflict with the revival of antique humanism in its modern secular form. Having lost the battle for the empire, Byzantine humanists found their home in Western Europe, experiencing its own renaissance of antique humanism.[143]

With the hesychastic takeover of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, the position and power of the Ecumenical Patriarch rose to a new height. Because of the hesychast

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[141]Ibid., 103.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Ibid., 104-5.

commitment to the ecclesiology and sacramentalism of the church, the office of the

bishop and particularly the patriarchate was held in high esteem. In the history of the

church, monastics had generally viewed ecclesial office with some hesitancy due to what

they perceived as the duplicitous nature of the office: bishops had to make compromises

with the world, tainting their personal holiness. The hesychast sacramental vision of the

church, combined with its universalism, provided a new position for the monastic view of

the office of the bishop. Along with the hesychast takeover of the patriarchate came also

its doctrinal maximalism. This maximalism was displayed in the role that the

patriarchate played in the cultural and political spheres of the East Roman Empire in the

late fourteenth century.[144]

Beginning with Athanasius I, a precursor to the Hesychast Movement, the power

of the partriarchate began to grow.[145] Athanasius was a strict monastic who began a

process of reforming ecclesial and societal life in Byzantium. He preached against the

wealth that had been obtained both by members of the church and by leading officials

and its lack of use in helping the poor. He secularized monastic property and opened

"soup kitchens" for feeding the poor. Athanasius even admonished the emperor to

regulate the food supply so that the poor would be fed.[146] In regards to monastic life, he

emphasized spirituality, obedience, and poverty. He forced bishops who chose to reside

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[144]Ibid., 108-110.

[145]For Athanasius's reign as patriarch see, A.-M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, members of the Imperial family and officials. An Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (Washington, D.C., 1975); and John C. Boojamra, *The Ecclesiastical Reforms of Patriarch Athansius of Constantinople*, unpublished dissertation (New York: Fordham University, 1976).

[146]Nicol, *Church and Society*, 12-13.

in the capital to return to their home sees. In the Balkans and in Russia he reformed the

ecclesiastical structure and created new metropolitan sees, including the important

Metropolis of Galicia. In regards to church-state relations, Athanasius respected the

imperial throne, yet he "demanded from the emperor a strict adherence to the faith and

ethics of Orthodoxy, and obedience to the Church."[147] Upon his return to the city in

1303, he exhorted Emperor Andronicus II "'not only to keep the Church fully

independent and free . . . , but also to practice towards Her a servant's obedience, and to

submit to Her every just and God-pleasing demand.'"[148] Athanasius's policies served as

the model for his successors of the hesychast discipline.

Like Athanasius, hesychast bishops preached against policies that hindered the

poor, particularly usury. The political problems of the empire were a direct repercussion

of the economic woes of the poor. Patriarchs Callistus (1350-1353, 1354-1363) and

Philotheus (1353-1354, 1364-1376) reformed the clergy and liturgical practice.

Furthermore, as Meyendorff points out, while official documents pertaining to the

relationship between the patriarchate and the empire are not available, Philotheus was

able to pursue a political program in direct contradiction to the unionist policy of John V

Paleologus, focusing on the universal vision of the Orthodox, rather than the particular

political needs of the empire.[149]

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[147]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 113.

[148]V. Laurent, "Le serment de l'empereur Andronic II Paléologue au patriarche Athanase Ier, lors de sa seconde accession au trône oecuménique," *Revue des études byzantines* 23 (Paris, 1965): 136, quoted in Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 113.

[149]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 114-15. For Philotheus's political activities, especially in regards to Russia, see Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 181-99.

Under Callistus and Philotheus the universal power of the patriarch was heightened. This power of position was understood as the "universal solicitude" of the Ecumenical Patriarch. In his role the patriarch had full authority over his particular area, but also could intervene in the affairs of other churches. Philotheus, in particular, based this "universal solicitude" on the ninth-century doctrine of church-state relations, expressed in the *Epanagoge*, which defined the particular roles of the emperor and patriarch in relation to one another. Philotheus expanded this role to include the entire Orthodox oikoumene. Interestingly, as Meyendorff mentions, the basis of this authority was not theological, but legal, "representing Byzantine political ideology." Consequently, Meyendorff argues that the church under the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate "was becoming the guardian of the *oikuméne* and of the ideology which sustained it."[150] This made perfect sense due to the fact, as Ostrogorsky states, "The Church remained the most stable element in the Byzantine Empire."[151]

While Meyendorff seems to argue that the rise of patriarchal power derives from the adoption of the ideological vision of the Byzantine Empire, it is also important to keep in mind the theological basis of that vision. Justinian's doctrine of expressing the church-state relationship as *symphonia* in his Sixth Novella is a direct political formulation of the church's doctrine of the Incarnation contained in the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451.[152] The relationship between the

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[150]Ibid., 117.

[151]Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 487.

[152]For a discussion on the importance of Chalcedon for Justinian's political policies, see Meyendorff, *Byzantine Legacy*, 43-66. For Justinian's theology, see Kenneth P. Wesche, *On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

human and the divine in the Person of Christ became the basis for understanding the

church-state relationship in Byzantium. This same doctrine was further developed under

Basil II with the guidance of Patriarch Photius in the formulation of the *Epanagoge.* This

document explained the duties and responsibilities of the emperor and the patriarch in

relation to one another. Thus, the political ideology of the Byzantine Empire, reflected in

the legal documents, is based upon christological formulations of the church.

Furthermore, the universalism of the Byzantine Empire is also a clear union of two

separate but similar visions: Christianity and Roman political ideology. Garth Fowden

has argued that the particular Christian vision was able to be incorporated into the Roman

Empire precisely because of its universalism. Problematic for the empire, however, was

the apolitical stance of Christianity.[153] However, the fact remains that the universal

vision of the Roman or Byzantine Empire was a politico-theological construct that was

developed over many centuries of reflecting upon the relationship between Christ and

culture through the christological dogmatic formulations.

In addition to the affects of the Hesychast Movement on the ecclesial and imperial

politics of the day, it also played an important role in the shaping of cultural achievement

during the late fourteenth century. In particular this cultural achievement is seen in the

literature and art of the period.

In 1371 Euthymius, a hesychast disciple of Theodosius of Trnovo, was elected

Patriarch of Trnovo. Obolensky states, "As patriarch he became noted for his prolific

writing, his championship of Hesychasm and his courageous behaviour in the face of the

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[153]Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

growing Turkish menace."[154] In particular, his fame is tied to the literary movement that he began in the late fourteenth century. Euthymius believed that the moral and spiritual health of the people was in direct correlation to the faithfulness of the liturgical texts used in the churches. In order to bring about moral and spiritual reform for his flock, he requested an assessment of the Slavonic texts with the Greek. What his disciples found was a very sad state of affairs. The previous translators had not faithfully translated the liturgical material, providing for the possibility of the growth of heresy in his patriarchate, which was witnessed in the fourteenth century in Bulgaria.[155]

In order to rectify the divergences from the Greek, Euthymius made two proposals. First, he desired a return to the original grammar and orthography of Cyril and Methodius. Second, he proposed a restructuring of Church Slavonic on the basis of Greek syntax. This decision by Euthymius, argues Obolensky, was in full keeping with the Hesychast desire to reform Byzantine society and culture through a revitalization of the spiritual life. It was believed that such a revitalization could only occur through doctrinal purity reflected in the liturgical texts. By restoring the texts to best conform with the original, spiritual revitalization would then occur.[156] What did occur, however, was a separation between the spoken language of the people and the language of worship, which was construed in a language and syntax that none could understand.[157]

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[154]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 434.

[155]Ibid., 434-35.

[156]Ibid., 435-36.

[157]Ibid., 438.

However, the literary movement began by St. Euthymius became an international event whereby the Slavic churches were united by a common ecclesiastical language and liturgy. This union of the Slavic churches was tied to the Byzantine Mother Church through the strict dependence upon the Greek liturgical texts and syntax. Furthermore, the hesychast monks at Paroria and Kilifarevo, through their transcribing activities, provided an international literature that they distributed through their migrations into the northern Balkans and Russia following the political turmoil of the south Balkan peninsula. Thus, Euthymius's literary reform continued the Byzantine vision of universalism by allowing for a universal liturgy and ecclesiastical language. In an age where empire and culture were threatened by heresy and political decline, such a union was construed of the most importance for the preservation of the Orthodox culture.[158]

Not only was the Hesychast Movement involved in literary reform, but it also influenced artistic development in the late fourteenth century. Many art historians have argued that the victory of hesychasm in Byzantium created a stifling effect upon the artistic creativity that occurred in the "Paleologan Renaissance."[159] As a result, according to this theory, artistic development ceased in Byzantium in the fourteenth century. However, Meyendorff argues that this interpretation is not only based on an errant understanding of the Hesychast Movement, but also betrays the ideological presuppositions of the art historians.

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[158]Ibid., 437-39.

[159]For instance, see "The artistic climate in Byzantium during the Palaeologan period," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, ed. P. A. Underwood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); and V. N. Lazarev, *Istoriya vizantiiskoy zhivopisi*, I (Moscow, 1947).

While hesychasm was victorious over secular humanism as the guiding philosophy of late Byzantium, hesychasm was never completely against secular learning. Gregory Palamas and Patriarch Philotheus had both received secular educations prior to entering the monastic vocation. Each valued secular learning on it own terms. Furthermore, secular humanism continued to flourish in late Byzantium even after the hesychast victory. Such philosophers as George Gemisthos Pletho (c. 1360-1452) and Bessarion of Nicea (1402-1472) were highly successful humanist philosophers of this period. Hesychasm simply asserted the priority of spiritual knowledge over secular knowledge as the means for attaining union with God. In terms of the secular world, secular knowledge retained its place.[160] Furthermore, the artistic creativity of the Paleologan Period continued in the Slavic lands of the Balkans. Hesychasm had spread to these areas, yet there was no decline in artistic creativity, where the Paleologan forms blended with monastic spirituality.[161]

What then was the distinction between the Slavic lands and Byzantium? It appears that the chief reason for a decline in artistic achievement in Byzantium compared with the Slavs was the lack of patronage in Byzantium.[162] With the political decline of Byzantium came also its economic decline. The empire increasingly became indebted to the Venetians and Genoese, to the point that during the enthronement of John VI Cantacuzenos, glass jewels had to be utilized, since the dowager empress had pawned the

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[160]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 139-40.

[161]Ibid., 140; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 444-53.

[162]Obolensky discusses the issue of patronage. See Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 445.

crown jewels to the Venetians to cover expenses during the civil war.[163] Furthermore,

the depopulation of Constantinople and the surrounding region during the first year of his

reign due to the Black Death created even more economic hardship for the region that

had just come out from under six years of civil war. As Nicol states, "The Black Death

reduced the survivors to fatalistic despondency. They were glad that the fighting was

over. But it would be very hard to recreate in them a feeling of optimism about the future

of their society…."[164] With such economic hardship, the Byzantines had little money to

spend on artistic enterprises. The Russians, however, under the wealthy princes of

Moscow, were able to finance artistic endeavors, and it is here that the flowering of

hesychast art is to be found.

According to Obolensky, the hesychast influence on art can be seen in the number

of churches that were dedicated to the Holy Transfiguration of Christ in the late

fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, especially in Russia. Additionally, the image of

the Transfiguration becomes a central motif in hesychast art. In particular, the work of

Theophanes the Greek is very important for the dissemination of Byzantine iconographic

techniques influenced by hesychast thought.[165]

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[163]See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 526; Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 215.

[164]Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 218.

[165]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 460-61. Obolensky claims that while Theophanes may have been in Constantinople during the heychast controversy and moved in hesychast circles, it is very hard to prove that hesychasm had an influence on his art. However, Meyendorff argues that if one only understands hesychasm as pertaining to the spiritual life creating a division between the sacred and the profane, rather than as a cultural movement, then one is justified in accepting the argument that Theophanes was not influenced by hesychasm. See V.N. Lazarev, *Feofan Grek i ego shkola* (Moscow, 1961). But if hesychasm is understood as a cultural movement, then

Theophanes began his career in the fourteenth century as an iconographer in

Constantinople, Chalcedon, Galata, and Caffa. For some reason, like many migrants of

his time period, Theophanes migrated north and wrote the icons for the Church of the

Transfiguration in Novgorod in 1378.[166] In addition to Novgorod, he decorated churches,

some forty in all, in Nizhni-Novgorod and Moscow, including the Church of the

Annunciation and the Church of Michael the Archangel in the Moscow Kremlin.

Describing his technique, Meyendorff states, "Always personal, dynamic and colourful,

using slightly impressionistic methods and original compositions, reflecting a very

suggestive sense of human psychology, Theophanes succeeds in showing man's quest for

God and God's gift of 'deification' to man, in an unequalled way."[167]

Consequently, the hesychast influence on Russian medieval art finds its

completion in the work of Theophanes's disciple, Andrei Rublev (c. 1370-1430), of the

Holy Trinity Lavra. How deep the relationship between Theophanes and Rublev

developed is unclear; however, Theophanes most likely instructed Rublev in the

the artwork of Theophanes, who was well known by Epiphanius the Wise of Holy Trinity
Lavra, can be understood as a result of the diffusion of hesychast ideas in the larger
culture, influencing artistic creativity. In this regard, Theophanes's disciple, Andrei
Rublev, of Holy Trinity Lavra, is of prime importance. See Meyendorff, *Byzantium and
the Rise of Russia*, 140-144.

[166]Could his migration be simply for the fact that he was able to find work in
Russia, not in the environs of Constantinople due to the lack of patronage? This is
speculation, however, it does seem that the standard reason given for his migration being
that the hesychasts had stifled artistic creativity in Constantinople is an importation of a
biased understanding of the hesychast movement. Obolensky simply states that
Theophanes migrated to Russia simply because he was part of the general pattern of
intellectual and monastic migration to Russia and the Slavic lands during this time period.
See Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 460. Pestilence and warfare as well as the
general economic situation of late Byzantium is more than enough reason for migration.

[167]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 141.

Paleologan technique of icon writing. Together, he and Theophanes were commissioned to write the icons for the Church of the Annunciation in Moscow in 1405. Following the completion of this project, the grand prince of Moscow hired him to decorate the Church of the Dormition in Vladimir. Later, in 1425 he wrote the icons for the new cathedral at Holy Trinity Lavra.[168] While it is uncertain which icons he actually wrote, it is certain that his greatest masterpiece is the icon of the three angels representing the Holy Trinity. Obolensky states, "Never before or since did the Byzantine tradition reach such mature perfection on Russian soil as in the figures of the three angels, symbolizing the triune God, seated in total stillness round the eucharistic table, expressing in a subtle rhythm the idea of harmony and mutual love. It is with good reason that this masterpiece of medieval Russian painting has been called 'a Greek hymn upon a Slavonic tongue.'"[169]

Theophanes and Rublev represent the crowning achievements of monastic art in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Their art influenced by the hesychast culture in which they were immersed reflects the hesychast ideals of the transfiguring presence of Christ in the person's life. According to Meyendorff,

> Their message to their contemporaries pointed to communion with God, as the most essential content of human destiny: their art, just as the spirituality and the theology of the Hesychasts, intended to show that such communion was *possible*, that it depended both on divine grace and upon human desire to achieve it, and that it concerned not only a disincarnated human spirit, but the totality of human existence, body and soul, assumed by God in Jesus Christ.[170]

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[168]Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 463-64.

[169]Ibid., 464. The quote is from C.R. Morey, *Medieval Art* (New York, 1942), 167.

[170]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 144. However, Christos Yannaras offers a differing view toward Russian iconography. He argues that Russian iconography focuses more on "theoretical formalism" than Byzantine iconography.

To argue that the hesychast spirituality of the fourteenth century somehow stifled artistic creativity due to its "theological obscurantism" is to fail to see the importance that hesychasm had on the cultural milieu of the Orthodox Commonwealth. In this regard, progress or development is understood only as a secularization of the world, whereby religion is separated from cultural achievement as in the Western Renaissance.[171] For there to exist a culture based on religious values automatically presupposes that it is not developed. However, the Renaissance of the West with its Enlightenment did not occur in the East in the same way, partly due to the hesychast culture that had developed in the late fourteenth century. Nevertheless, this culture of hesychasm, while it eventually lost its hegemony, served as the guardian of Orthodox Christian values in the Byzantine Commonwealth.

The Hesychast Revival of the Eighteenth Century

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Greek Orthodox Church descended into the "Dark Ages" of its history under Turkish rule. Theological and liturgical development came to an end, as the church fought for the survival of Orthodox culture. As Bishop Kallistos Ware writes, "The great aim was *survival*–to keep things going in hope of better days to come. The Greeks clung with miraculous tenacity to the Christian civilization which they had taken over from Byzantium, but they had little opportunity to

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"Looking at a Russian Orthodox icon, what one finds very often is not proof of the existential transfiguration of nature but rather the *idea* of transfiguration, presented in a schematic and ornamental way. Formalization replaces faithfulness to nature, and tends to aid the *impression* that nature is spiritualized and dematerialized." This dematerialization is demonstrated in the use of lighting that seems to blend into the color. See Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, tr. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 261.

[171]Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 144.

develop this civilization creatively."[172] The clergy, for the most part, were uneducated,

and those that had the opportunity to acquire an education attended the theological

schools in the West, especially Padua.[173] As a result of this formal theological training,

Orthodox theology began to take on a Roman Catholic or Protestant ethos.[174] The basic

dogmas of the Orthodox were still affirmed, however, the arguments for the faith

essentially became Roman Catholic or Protestant depending to whom the polemic was

being addressed at the time. The hesychast tradition of spiritual theology had simply

come to an end in Greece, except in some remote monasteries on Mt. Athos or other parts

of the Ottoman Empire.[175]

In Russia after the sixteenth century, Orthodoxy gradually became westernized as

well. Florovsky argues that the development of the "Third Rome" political ideology in

the sixteenth century began a process of separation from the Byzantine tradition.[176] In

the political ideology of Feofei, the assumption was that Byzantium was not to be

recreated in Moscow, for it had become corrupted through heresy; rather, Byzantium was

to be replaced with the "Third Rome," for there was not to be another. According to

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[172]Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), 91.

[173]Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 5-7.

[174]George A. Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), 90-91.

[175]Ware points to the fact that the greatest Orthodox theologian of the eighteenth century, Eustratios Argenti, who was educated in Padua and Halle, was obviously not even aware of the Patristic tradition of spiritual theology, for he fails to mention or quote them at all in his polemics against the West. See Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 170.

[176]Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, part 1, tr. Robert L. Nichols, in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, vol. 5, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979), 12.

Florovsky, what this amounted to was the Russian Tsar uniting all Orthodoxy in his

position, resulting in the denial of the Byzantine tradition. Moscow simply replaced

Byzantium; it did not understand its role being a continuation of the Byzantine tradition,

causing a "crisis in Russian byzantinism." Furthermore, because of the collapse of

Constantinople, and the perceived cause being its union with Rome, Russia, in its

dealings with the West, especially in Poland-Lithuania, came increasingly under the

influence of Western ideas. The event that began the "westernization" of the Russian

Church is no other than the wedding of Tsar Ivan III to Sophia Paleologus, who had been

raised in Rome, in 1472.[177] This westernization beginning with Ivan and completed with

Peter the Great and Catherine II resulted both in the formation of Russian nationalism, for

the universal concept had died with Constantinople, and in what Florovsky calls the

"pseudomorphosis" of the church.

Increasingly, Russian Orthodox thought was captivated by Western theological

norms and practice. Latin became the language of the schools, and Orthodox catechetical

books were filled with Roman Catholic and Protestant theological positions, resulting in a

scholasticism. The effects of this scholasticization of Orthodox theology were manifest

in the separation of theology from the life of the people. "A malignant schism set in

between life and thought," issuing forth in a "'pseudomorphosis' of Orthodox

thought."[178]

Against this background must be understood the hesychast revival of the late

eighteenth century. The hesychast tradition had continued to some degree in the

[177]Ibid., 13.

[178]Ibid., 85.

monasteries on Mt. Athos. Around 1750 a debate emerged in the Greek Orthodox

Church concerning the rebaptism of western converts.[179] Patriarch Cyril V ruled that

western converts were to be rebaptized according to Canon VII of the Second

Ecumenical Council concerning rebaptism of heretics. This decision immediately caused

an uproar among the Roman Catholic residents of Constantinople as well as some

Orthodox. Coming to the support of Cyril were Eustratios Argenti, Neophytos

Kafsokalyvitis, Athanasios Paros, Nikodemos the Hagiorite, and Makarios of Corinth.[180]

Around the same time, a debate began on Mt. Athos concerning the celebration of

memorials for the dead on Sundays. Kafsokalyvitis, Paros, Nikodemos, and Makarios all

argued that such a practice was a deviation from the tradition and should be discontinued.

Their opponents gave them the pejorative name *Kollyvades* in reference to the boiled

wheat used in the memorial.[181] Furthermore, these monastics also promoted a restoration

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[179]For a discussion of this issue, see Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 65-107; George D. Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism . . . : Interpretation and Application of Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council by the* Kollyvades *and Constantine Oikonomos*, tr. Priestmonk Seraphim (Holy Mountain: St. Paul's Monastery, 1994).

[180]For Eustratios Argenti, see Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*. For Neophytos Kafsokalyvitis, see Theodoritos the Monk, "The Code of Church Laws and Canons by Neophytos Kafsokalyvitis," *Koinonia* IH (1975): 197-206. For Nikodemos, see Theokitos Dionysiatos, *Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain* (Athens, 1959); George S. Bebis, *St Nikodemos the Hagiorite* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1978); George S. Bebis, "Introduction," to Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, tr. Peter A. Chamberas (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 5-65; Constantine Cavernos, *St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1979). For Makarios of Corinth, see Constantine Cavarnos, *St. Macarios of Corinth* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1972).

[181]For a discussion of this controversy, see S. Tzogas, *The Memorial-service Dispute on the Holy Mountain in the Eighteenth Century* (Thessaloniki, 1969); C.C. Papoulidis, *The "Kollyvades" Movement* (Athens, 1971); C.C. Papoulidis, "Nikodème l'Hagiorite (1749-1809)," *Theologia* ΛΖ (1966) and ΛΗ (1967); C.C. Papoulidis, "A

of frequent reception of Holy Communion, which had also fallen by the wayside. As hesychasts, they "emphasized the issue of worship, for they diagnosed that there, i.e. in the area of spirituality that preserved the unity of the subjugated Orthodox people, the problem of estrangement was perceptible."[182]

Additionally, while struggling to reinvest the people and the church with traditional hesychast spirituality and theology, these men also struggled against Western Enlightenment ideas that were coming into the Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire. It should be recalled from chapter two that Athanasios Paros was one of the most outspoken opponents of Koraes. Against the Enlightenment the *Kollyvades* Movement offered a renewed hesychasm.

The literary program for this renewal came from the pen of St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain with the aid of Bishop Makarios of Corinth. Makarios, like Athanasios Paros, was seriously concerned about western Enlightenment ideas in his diocese, especially among the youth. To counteract these ideas he put forth the idea of compiling and translating the ascetic fathers into modern Greek. Makarios solicited the aid of Nikodemos of Dionysios Monastery on Mt. Athos in this task. Makarios selected and translated the texts, while Nikodemos added an introduction and biographical sketches to the work. Together, these men produced the single most important work in Orthodox spirituality, *The Philokalia* (Love of Beauty). This five-volume work contained writings of the spiritual fathers from the fourth through the fourteenth century. According to

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Case of spiritual influence on the Balkans by the Holy Mountain during the eighteenth century," *Makedoniká* 9 (1969), 278-94; Ch. G. Sotiropoulos, *Kollyvades and Anti-Kollyvades* (Athens, 1981).

[182]Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism,* 26.

George Metallinos, "To the *Kollyvades* is owed the rebirth of hesychasm in the nineteenth century. Even today, the *Kollyvades* Fathers continue to be spiritual guides for the Orthodox, and the principal bridge of reconnection with the patristic tradition. The rediscovery of the hesychasm of the fourteenth century, and chiefly of its champion St. Gregory Palamas (d. 1357), was accomplished thanks to the seeds that the *Kollyvades* of the eighteenth century sowed."[183]

In addition to the *Philokalia*, Nikodemos wrote many other works pertaining to all aspects of the spiritual life. He translated patristic exegetical works, hagiographies, and a text on spiritual warfare, known as *The Unseen Warfare*. Interestingly, this text was originally written by an Italian Roman Catholic named L. Scupoli. However, when Nikodemos had finished editing the text, very little of the original remained. Furthermore, Nikodemos is known for compiling and editing a book on Orthodox canon law, known as *The Pedalion* (*Rudder*). This text has come to be the most important book on canon law in the Orthodox Church. However, Christos Yannaras has pointed to the fact that the ethos of the book and the very compilation of canon law represents western influence on Nikodemos.[184] Yananaras's criticism of Nikodemos has elicited charges of Neo-Nicolaitism (anti-nomianism) against him.[185] While this is an interesting critique of Yannaras, it has yet proven to be of substance.

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[183]Ibid., 29.

[184]Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece* (Athens: Domos, 1992), 203-9; Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 189-93.

[185]See Theoklitos Dionysatos, *The Heresy of the Neo-Orthodox: The Neo-Nicolaitism of Christos Yannaras* (Athens, 1988) and Vasilieou E. Voloudake, *Orthodoxy and Chr. Yannaras* (Athens: Ypakoe, 1993).

In 1739 the Ukrainian-born monk Paisius Velichovsky of Poltava left the Academy of Kiev in search for true spiritual guidance. He had been at the academy for three years gradually being pulled toward the monastic life, for the "pagan mythology" of the academy no longer interested him. He was made a riasophore monk at the Kiev Lavra, receiving the name, Platon. From Kiev he migrated to Moldova, moving from monastery to monastery, eventually coming under the spiritual guidance of starets Onuphrious at Kiarnel Skete. Under the influence of Onuphrious and Priest-monk Mikhail, Platon was being pushed in the direction of ordination to the priesthood. In order to test this calling, in 1746 Platon decided to go to Mt. Athos to grow deeper in the spiritual life. On Mt. Athos he made his way to the Slavic Pantokratoros Monastery. There he searched for someone to guide him in patristic literature and the monastic life. However, he could not find anyone qualified to guide him.

In 1750 Starets Vasilii of Moldava arrived on Mt. Athos. There he explained to Platon the different types of monasticism and the necessity of spiritual maturity to live the life of a hesychast. At the request of Platon, Vasilii elevated him to the rank of mantiya-bearer, giving him the name of Paisius. Shortly thereafter, disciples began to come to Paisius for spiritual guidance. Together, they formed the St. Constantine Skete, which was a brotherhood of Wallachians and Slavs. Desiring a father-confessor, the monks pleaded with Paisius to become their priest. Eventually giving in to their pleadings, Paisius was ordained in 1758.

Having not been able to find a hesychast spiritual guide, Paisius learned the hesychast life from the texts on Mt. Athos. He began to notice immediately that the Slavonic texts that he had brought to the Holy Mountain were inaccurate in their

translations. As a result, he began his great project of translating the fathers into Slavonic. Taking Greek texts with him, Paisius moved his community of monks to Moldava, where they eventually settled in the Neamts Monastery. Here Paisius and his monks produced Slavonic translations of the spiritual fathers, including *The Philokalia*.

The biographies are unclear whether Paisius met Nikodemos and Makarios on Mt. Athos.[186] However, Yannaras states, "Paisius connected personally with Makarios Notaras, who also sent him a copy of the *Philokalia*."[187] But, Serge Bolshakoff maintains that Paisius himself states that he found twenty-four books of the *Philokalia* at St. Basil Skete on Mt. Athos. However Paisius came into possession of the *Philokalia,* he began the work of translating it into Slavonic under the patronage of Metropolitan Gavriil of Novgorod and St. Petersburg, who published the translation in Russian in 1793.[188] In addition to the *Philokalia*, Paisius and his monks translated the works of Isaac the Syrian and other fathers into Slavonic.

Paisius reinstituted the practice of hesychasm in Romania, Ukraine, and Russia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Having learned hesychasm on the Holy Mountain, through the influence of Starets Vasilii of Moldova[189] as well as the

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[186]A critical edition of the biographies of Paisius has been prepared by J.M.E. Featherstone, *The Life of Paisij Velyĉkovs'kyj*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). See also, Sergii Chetverikov, *Starets Paisii Velichkovskii*, tr. Vasily Lickwar and Alexander J. Lisenko (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1980). Much of the biographical information about Paisius comes from these two sources.

[187]Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece*, 192.

[188]Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, 156; Segius Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 87-92.

[189]For the teachings of Starets Vasilii, see Chetverikov, *Starets Paisii Velichkovskii*, 159-77.

writings of the fathers, especially Gregory of Sinai, Paisius trained his own disciples in the practice. Furthermore, he wrote a treatise on the Jesus Prayer, defending the practice against its detractors in Moldova. In this text, Paisius demonstrated his patristic knowledge, quoting from the hesychast masters, including Gregory of Sinai and Symeon the New Theologian. His writing also includes references to St. Nil of Sora regarding vigilance of the heart. Thus, Paisius's hesychast teaching drew from several traditions, including Athos, Sinai, and Russia.

In addition to his teachings on the Jesus Prayer, Paisius is important for reforming the practice of monasticism in Moldova and Russia. Again, under the influence of Starets Vasilii, he learned the importance of cenobitic monasticism headed by an experienced spiritual father. Thus, Paisius is important for introducing the concept of the starets, or elder, to Russian monasticism. His emphasis on obedience to the spiritual father of the community, life in common, and regular sacramental participation provided the model for later hesychast monasteries, in particular Optina Pustyn in Russia.[190]

Paisius's disciples disseminated his teaching on the Jesus Prayer and hesychast practice, including the importance of reading Scripture and the writings of the Fathers, throughout Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. In particular, his disciple Theodore discipled two priest-monks, Cleopas and Leonid, at Belo-Berezhsky Monastery. Theodore was also influential in establishing the Athonite Rule of Paisius in the monasteries of Cholnsky, Novoezersky, Paleostrovsky, Valaam, and St. Alexander Svirsky.[191] His

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[190]Bolshakoff, 93.

[191]Ibid., 94.

disciple Leonid was the first starets at Optina-Pustyn, which became famous for its line

of startsy, including Anthony, Macarius, and Ambrose.[192]

These descendants of Paisius continued his important translation work, making

the teachings of the fathers available to the people. In particular the Optina Pustyn

Monastery exercised an important role in the dissemination of patristic and hesychast

teaching. As Bolshakoff states, "No Russian monastery attained such an influence on the

Russian elite and people in the nineteenth century as the Monastery of Optino." Its fame

was purely based on the wisdom of its spiritual fathers.[193] Such thinkers as Constantine

Leontiev, the Kireevsky's, Khomiakov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy all spent time at

Optina Pustyn under the guidance of the startsy.[194] With the help of the Slavophile

writers, the monastery continued translating the works of the fathers and publishing them

for general use. It is from this monastery that the spiritual revival of the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century emerged, providing the impetus of Lossky and Florovsky to

return to the fathers in the twentieth century.

One other saint that needs to be mentioned for his hesychast spirituality is

Seraphim of Sarov, who helped instigate the spiritual revival of the nineteenth century.[195]

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[192]See Clement Sederholm, *Elder Leonid of Optina* (Platina, CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1990); Clement Sederholm, *Elder Anthony of Optina* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996); Leonid Kavelin, *Elder Macarius of Optina* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996); Macarius, Starets of Optino, *Russian Letters of Spiritual Direction 1834-1860*, tr. Iulia de Beausobre (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975); Sergius Chetverikov, *Elder Ambrose of Optina* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1997).

[193]Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics*, 164.

[194]Ibid., 164-65.

[195]See Julia De Beausobre, *Flame in the Snow: A Life of St. Seraphim of Sarov* (Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 1996).

He entered the monastery at the age of eighteen and became a monk at the age of twenty-

seven when he was ordained to the priesthood. He soon withdrew into the forest to live

as a hermit. There he practiced the solitary life, experiencing many visions from God. In

1810 he was ordered to return to the monastery of Sarov, where he secluded himself.

There his mystical experiences continued, with one vision lasting for five days. He

remained in seclusion for five years, until the Holy Virgin visited him and directed him to

begin providing spiritual guidance to the people. Having come out from seclusion,

Seraphim became a starets, attracting vast crowds to his hermitage. At one time up to

5,000 people would visit him for a festival.[196]

Seraphim's abilities as a starets drew the people to him. Bolshakoff states,

"Recorded and authenticated cases of clairvoyance, prophecy and healing of the sick by

St Seraphim are so numerous that it is impossible to give even a summary account of

them in one chapter."[197]   The most famous case, of course, is his encounter with the

journalist Motovilov, who was healed by the saint and given the experience of the divine

light while being in his presence.[198] Bolshakoff states, "The conversations of Seraphim

with Motovilov are the summit of Russian mysticism."[199] They also represent one of the

most important testimonies to the hesychast experience in modern day life. Seraphim's

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[196]Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics*, 122-27.

[197]Ibid., 128.

[198]For the experiences and conversations, see Bolshakoff, 128-140.

[199]Ibid., 140.

hesychasm provided the spiritual foundation that helped to bring about the important

return to the patristic tradition in the twentieth century.[200]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate the importance of the hesychast

tradition and its revival in the modern period. Beginning with the Christian neoplatonism

of Evagrius, monasticism emphasized the importance of personal communion with God

through the detachment of the *nous* from the cares of the world. The Macarian writings

and the teachings of Diadochus of Photiki corrected the neoplatonist leaning by

emphasizing the Biblical understanding of the unity of the person expressed in the

understanding of the human heart. Gradually, monasticism emphasized the union of

heart and *nous*, providing for an experience of the divine light. As a means of guarding

the heart and intellect, the spiritual masters introduced the Jesus Prayer, bringing the

presence of Christ through the Divine Name into the heart and intellect. Especially

important for this teaching was John Climacus, the hesychast *par excellence*. Later

hesychasts built upon the Evagrian and Macarian synthesis, emphasizing the importance

of vigilance in protecting the heart. Consequently, in the tenth and eleventh centuries,

Symeon the New Theologian zealously emphasized the personal experience of the divine

light as the criterion for salvation and deification. His example was taken up by the later

hesychast theologians, especially Nikiphorus the Hesychast and Gregory of Sinai whose

teaching led to the Hesychast Movement that brought about a cultural change in late

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[200]Other hesychast saints of the modern period who helped in the revival are St. John of Kronstadt, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, St. Ignatiy Brianchinov, St. Silouan of the Holy Mountain, Elder Joseph the Hesychast, Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain, Amphilochius of Patmos, and Sophrony Sakharov. These modern day holy men exercised a profound influence on many of the contemporary spiritual and theological writers of the Orthodox tradition.

fourteenth-century Byzantium. This Hesychast Movement affected all of culture,

including politics, literature, and the arts. It also provided an international linkage for the

Orthodox that preserves the universal vision of Orthodoxy after the fall of the empire in

1453.

The importance of the universalist vision of Orthodoxy is later expressed in the

Kollyvades Movement of the late eighteenth century in the revival of hesychasm through

the teachings of Athanasios Paros, Nikodemos the Hagiorite, and Makarios of Corinth.

The publication of the *Philokalia* and its translation into Slavonic by Paisius

Velichkovsky provided continuity to the universal Orthodox spiritual tradition.

Furthermore, Paisius's resurrection of the hesychast method of prayer as well as the

tradition of the spiritual elder enabled a rebirth in Romanian and Russian monasticism

that spread throughout the Orthodox world, even back to Mt. Athos. This hesychast

tradition was then imparted to the theological and cultural writers of the Russian Golden

and Silver Ages, that allowed a *ressourcement* of Orthodox patristic theology in the

twentieth century. This hesychast vision united all of Orthodoxy in a common pursuit of

communion with God.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Life and Thought of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonike

Introduction

Neo-Orthodox theology is essentially tied to the theology of hesychasm. In

particular the theology and epistemology of neo-Orthodoxy is drawn from the thought of

the great "theologian of hesychasm" St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359). In regards to his

importance for Orthodoxy, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos, a neo-

Orthodox religious thinker, writes that Gregory's teachings on epistemology, or

"knowledge of God," "preserves the true teaching of the Church." Furthermore, Gregory

is important for Orthodoxy today because people are seeking the true knowledge of God.

There are two basic paths that people follow to the knowledge of God. One is the path

taken by Gregory's opponents, "who give priority to reason and depend mainly on man."

The second path is the way of Gregory, the path of hesychasm, rooted in the "Biblico-

patristic Tradition" of the church. Being that Gregory's path was the one judged by the

church to be the authentic tradition, it is the only one which leads to the true knowledge

of God.[1] As Fr. John Meyendorff, the leading exponent of Gregory's thought, states,

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[1]Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, tr. Esther Williams (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1997), 23-28.

"The Eastern Church has therefore regarded the victory of his teaching in fourteenth-century Byzantium not as the triumph of a particular form of mysticism but of orthodoxy itself. And this ecclesiastical approbation effectively disengaged from purely monastic tradition what was of lasting and universal validity."[2] Additionally, Fr. John Romanides states, "Within these frameworks it is only possible to fully understand correctly the colossal work of Romanity of Saint Gregory of Palamas."[3] Thus, for the neo-Orthodox thinkers, who follow Romanides, the theology of hesychasm represents the quintessential aspect of the Romeic identity. According to Vasilios Makrides, central to Christos Yannaras's attempt to locate "authentic" Orthodoxy is the hesychastic controversy of the fourteenth century and the culture deriving therefrom,[4] which is labeled *Romeosyne* by Romanides and his theological disciples. Therefore, in order to understand the political theology of Romanides and Yannaras, it is important to have an understanding of the theology of hesychasm as expressed by Gregory Palamas, as well as the historical milieu in which he wrote.

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[2]John Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, tr. Adele Fiske (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1959, 1974), 3.

[3]John S. Romanides, "Saint Gregory Palamas (1296-1359): Introduction to the Theology and Spirituality of the Romans against the Franks," in *Romans and Roman Fathers of the Church*, ed. John S. Romanides and D.D. Kontostergios (Thessaloniki, Greece: Pournara, 1984), 189. In reference to "frameworks" Romanides is speaking about the proper Orthodox understanding of Gregory's theology set within the debate between the Romans and the Franks. In chapter seven, I will explore these "frameworks" in how Romanides interprets history. He argues that western interpreters of Gregory do not properly understand his thought since they do not understand hesychasm.

[4]Vasilios N. Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: the Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 146-47.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief biographical sketch of the life of Gregory Palamas. In this sketch I will highlight the important historical events that shaped his thought, particularly the theological debates with Barlaam and Akindynos, as well as the civil war between John VI Cantacuzene and the dowager Empress Anne. After providing a discussion of his life, I will then examine the thought of Gregory Palamas, highlighting the importance of his epistemology for Orthodoxy, his understanding of the distinction between the essence and energies of God, his emphasis on hesychasm as the proper method for the attainment of deification and the experience of the divine light, and his anthropology, all of which provide for a defense of the psychosomatic technique employed in hesychast practice. Additionally, I will briefly discuss his importance for the Orthodox tradition and his appropriation by the neo-Orthodox movement in contemporary Greece.

The Life of St. Gregory Palamas

Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) was born into a wealthy senatorial family in Constantinople. His father, Constantine, was close to Emperor Andronicus II, who entrusted his grandson, the future Andronicus III to Constantine for his education. Constantine was a very pious Christian, who practiced hesychasm as a married man. Gregory's entire family, in fact, was very pious. His mother, sisters, two of his brothers, and Gregory himself eventually entered monasteries after the death of Constantine in 1303.[5] With Constantine's death, Gregory came under the care of the emperor. Thus, Gregory grew up in the palace being friends with the young Andronicus.

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[5]John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, tr. George Lawrence (London: The Faith Press, 1964), 28; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 30-33.

Gregory's education occurred in the palace and most likely in the Imperial University of Constantinople. There, under the tutelage of the famous Byzantine philosopher, Theodore Metochites, he studied grammar, rhetoric, logic, physics, and science, all in the Aristotelian tradition. This secular instruction was fully intended for his service in the Byzantine government. Thus, he did not receive a theological education from the Patriarchal School. Apparently, at the age of seventeen he impressed the imperial court and the great philosophers of his day with his knowledge and exposition of Aristotelian philosophy.[6] Thus, Gregory was educated in the philosophy of his day, something which his later theological opponents accused him of not possessing.

Meyendorff points out, though, that Gregory was not educated in Platonic philosophy. The study of Plato was reserved for more advanced studies after the completion of the trivium and quadrivium in the Byzantine universities. It appears that Gregory, having attained the age of adulthood, did not advance to the higher secular education, for he did not see any reason to do so. According to his own thought, which will be discussed below, Gregory believed that profane studies were only a preparation for the true philosophy of Christianity. Furthermore, in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy of the eleventh century, which condemned the Platonic philosophy of John Italos, platonic philosophy was understood to be a danger to Christianity.[7]

Gregory's education was not limited to secular studies, however. As a young boy, his father had entrusted his spiritual growth to monastic fathers.   While in university, Gregory continually visited his spiritual fathers, seeking their guidance and admonition.

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[6]Meyendorff, *Study of Gregory Palamas*, 29.

[7]Ibid., 29-30.

One of his spiritual fathers, Theoleptus of Philadelphia, instructed Gregory in the

hesychast method of prayer. The influence of the monastics determined his vocation, for

at the age of twenty, Gregory renounced the world, placed his mother and sisters in a

women's monastery, and went to Mt. Athos with his two brothers, Macarius and

Theodosius.[8]

On the way to the Holy Mountain, the three brothers wintered at a monastery near

Mt. Papikion. At this monastery he encountered a heretical sect of "Messalians," whom

Meyendorff describes as either Bogomils or Paulicians. In the theological discussions,

the Messalians became frustrated at their inability to refute Gregory's teaching about the

spiritual life and the teachings of Christianity. As a result, they attempted to poison him;

however, because of Gregory's keen discernment, he realized their deception and

demonstrated his "supernatural" gift. Thereafter, the heretics, being persuaded of the

truth of orthodox Christianity, reconciled themselves to the church.[9]

In the spring of 1317 Gregory reached Mt. Athos with his brothers. They found a

residence near the monastery of Vatopedi, under the guidance of Nicodemus, who was a

former hesychast of St. Auxentius monastery. For three years Gregory practiced a strict

hesychast life that involved "'fasting, sleeplessness, spiritual vigilance and uninterrupted

prayer.'"[10] Under the guidance of Nicodemus, Gregory became a monk.[11] Furthermore,

having asked for the aid of the Mother of God, he received a vision of St. John the

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[8]Ibid., 31-32; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 33-37.

[9]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 32-33; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 36-37.

[10]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 33.

[11]Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 37.

Theologian, who told him that the Holy Virgin would indeed be his helper.[12] Sadly,

during this time his brother, Theodosius, died a premature death. When his spiritual

master also passed away, Macarius and Gregory moved to the Great Lavra of St.

Athanasius, "which thereafter became *par excellence*, the 'mother-house' of Palamas."[13]

After three years he moved to the hermitage of Glossia, on the northwestern edge of the

Holy Mountain, where he practiced an austere hesychasm for an additional two years,

under the guidance of the hesychast Gregory.[14] In 1325 Turkish pirates began raiding the

Holy Mountain. The hesychast monks were forced to migrate to safer regions. Gregory

of Sinai with his disciple, Callistus, the future patriarch of Constantinople, left their skete

of Magoula, which was not far from Glossia. Gregory Palamas also left with his

companions. Both groups found themselves in Thessalonike, where they planned to

venture to Jerusalem and Sinai. However, this plan was never realized, with Gregory and

Callistus only making it as far as Constantinople. Gregory Palamas remained in

Thessalonike with Isidore, one of Gregory of Sinai's disciples.[15]

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[12]Ibid., 38. It is important to note that, according to his biographer, St. Philotheus Kokkinos (future Patriarch of Constantinople), Constantine on his deathbed had entrusted Gregory to the care of the Theotokos. Gregory had a deep piety and relationship with the Mother of God. See Hierotheos, 33. Gregory's homilies on the Mother of God demonstrate his great piety. See Hierotheos, 269-297 for Gregory's teachings on the Theotokos.

[13]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 33.

[14]Ibid., 33-34; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 39. Meyendorff is doubtful that this "Gregory," whom Philotheus calls "Gregory the Great," is St. Gregory of Sinai. However, see David Balfour, "Was Gregory Palamas St Gregory the Sinaite's pupil?" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1984): 115-30. Balfour's proof is highly speculative, but it is an interesting possibility.

[15]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 34. See also, Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite,* 39-40.

In Thessalonike, Gregory and Isidore participated in a society of monastics and laity who wanted to pursue the spiritual life. Isidore was the primary leader of this society, being commissioned by Gregory of Sinai to be a missionary. Isidore's teaching was very austere and controversial. His opponents accused him of separating husbands and wives and children from their parents in pursuit of the religious life.[16]

At the canonical age of thirty in the year 1326, Gregory accepted ordination to the priesthood, encouraged by his friends. In that same year Gregory and his disciples left Thessalonike and formed a *frontisterion* near Beroea. At this hermitage, Gregory practiced austere hesychasm in seclusion, only appearing publicly on Saturdays and Sundays to guide his disciples and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. However, his life at Beroea was interrupted with Serbian incursions into the area. Therefore, the community once again moved, this time back to Mt. Athos, forming the hermitage of St. Sabbas near the Great Lavra where he continued his life of seclusion.[17]

At St. Sabbas, Gregory continued to live five days of the week in seclusion, coming out of his cell to converse with the monks and celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Saturdays and Sundays. However, he was tempted to the pursuit of individual prayer at the expense of communal worship. Consequently, he received a vision from St. Antony who directed Gregory to not forsake communal worship. According to Meyendorff, this episode demonstrates the temptation in the monastic community of the fourteenth century. However, because of the hesychast emphasis on sacramentalism and liturgical purity, the hesychast movement never promoted individual piety over corporate worship.

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[16]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 34-35.

[17]Ibid., 37-38; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 40-41.

Later in Thessalonike, Gregory promoted "liturgical renewal," just as his disciple,

Philotheus did in Constantinople as Ecumenical Patriarch.[18]

At St. Sabbas, according to Hierotheos Vlachos, Gregory experienced many

visions on his path to deification. Some of these visions were prophetic, as in the time

that he saw the abbot Macarius wearing a bishop's stole. Some years later Macarius was

installed as archbishop of Thessalonike. He also had visions of the Mother of God

protecting and watching over him. Additionally, he received a vision in which God had

bestowed on him the gift of theology. From that time, Gregory began to write and

preach. His first two homilies were on the founder of the Holy Mountain, St. Peter the

Athonite (*The Life of St. Peter the Athonite*), and the Protectress of the Holy Mountain,

the Theotokos (*Treatise on the Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple*). In addition, he

wrote other works including *Chapters on Prayer and Purity of Heart*, *Answer to Paul

Asen concerning the monastic tonsure*, and the *Apodictic Treatises*, which concerned the

doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, being discussed in the possible union of

churches in 1333-34.[19]

Around 1335-36 Gregory was appointed as abbot of Esphigmenou Monastery in

the north of Mt. Athos. While Gregory became the spiritual father of over two hundred

monks at the monastery, he continued to long for the hesychast life of solitude.

Meyendorff states that he left shortly thereafter because he did not "come to a good

understanding with the monastery." However, Hierotheos believes that the essential

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[18]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 39.

[19]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 39-40; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 44-45.

reason for resigning the position was his desire for solitude. In any case, Gregory left the

monastery with many disciples who soon dispersed throughout the Holy Mountain, with

Gregory returning to St. Sabbas.[20] At this time Gregory began to pay attention to the

teachings of Barlaam the Calabrian, who had arrived in Thessalonike.

Barlaam was a Greek Calabrian, educated in the West and "imbued with the spirit

of the Italian Renaissance." He had come to the East because he desired a deeper

knowledge of "the land of Plato and Aristotle." He arrived in Constantinople around

1330. There he came under the patronage of John Cantacuzene, the Great Domestic of

Andronicus III and future emperor, who sponsored his work on elucidations of Pseudo-

Dionysius. Being close to the court, he became an advisor on all areas of science,

philosophy, religion, and diplomacy. However, his fame and arrogance brought jealousy

and envy from the Byzantine educated class. These humanists, though, had good reason

for their dislike of this foreigner: "he treated them with disdain." Therefore, Barlaam's

arrogance made him enemies with those who should have supported him.[21]

Barlaam's writings against the *filioque* arrived on Mt. Athos in 1337.   Barlaam

had argued in these writings on the basis of his understanding of the Pseudo-Dionysian

writings, that since God is unknowable, then it is pointless for the Latins to try to argue

for the dual procession of the Holy Spirit. Instead, because the fathers are unclear about

the issue, Barlaam suggested that the point be left at the point of a *theologoumenon*, or

theological opinion. Because *theologoumena* are not doctrines, unity between the

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[20]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 41; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 45.

[21]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 43.

churches can be attained. As Meyendorff states, "Barlaam's theological agnosticism ended in dogmatic relativism."[22]

At this same time, Gregory had written his own theological understanding of the matter in the *Apodictic Treatises*. Gregory's position was a direct refutation of the position of Barlaam, holding that the Orthodox position could be maintained through the revelation of God. Barlaam's agnosticism had actually "undermined the Orthodox position" on the procession of the Holy Spirit. In a letter to his former disciple Akindynos, Gregory expressed his dismay at Barlaam's teachings. Did not the God of Dionysius reveal himself to the fathers? If so, then does he not reveal himself in the present day to the theologians called upon to defend the doctrine of the Trinity?[23]

Akindynos and Barlaam both answered Gregory's teaching on the subject. Akindynos, following a moderate position between the two, argued that there were two basic meanings to the term "demonstration." Barlaam had argued on the basis of syllogistic logic in "order to confound the Latins." His use of "demonstration" was essentially different from that of Gregory, who argued on the basis of Scripture and the fathers. Barlaam's argument was purely a logical syllogism used to demonstrate the folly of the Latin position. However, Barlaam was less congenial than Akindynos. Barlaam's arrogance got the best of him as he decided to put the ignorant monk of Athos in his place. Barlaam's reply to Gregory in argument is similar to that of Akindynos, justifying

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[22]Ibid., 43.

[23]Ibid., 44.

the different meanings of "demonstration." But then, Barlaam raises the bar and equates the philosophic learning of Hellenism with that of theological revelation.[24]

Gregory's reply was not long in coming. He accused Akindynos of being profaned by Hellenism. How could he show favor to Barlaam? Against Barlaam, he wrote a treatise against the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle regarding matters of theological truth. Knowledge of God is not a matter of philosophic syllogism or rhetoric, but comes only from a direct experience of the divine through the working of the Holy Spirit. Through such an experience the mind is transformed and is then able to speak about the mysteries of God. Barlaam, by equating philosophy with theology, had actually reduced the status of the latter, by understanding "grace to [be] a natural gift."[25]

While at Thessalonike, Barlaam became acquainted with some uneducated hesychast monks, who were not prepared to answer the philosophical questions of Barlaam regarding their spiritual practices. His disdain toward the uneducated was reflected in his treatises against the practice of hesychasm. The whole idea of the possibility that the human body could experience the grace of God was completely foreign, and naïve, to Barlaam. Thus, in his treatises against the hesychasts, Barlaam labeled them as *omphalopsychoi* (navel-gazers). The seriousness which Barlaam took the issue is shown in his formal complaint against the practice presented to the Ecumenical Patriarch John Calecas in 1338. The complaint was dismissed by the patriarch, but Barlaam continued his assault against the monks.[26]

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[24]Ibid., 44-45.

[25]Ibid., 45.

[26]Ibid., 46; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 46-47.

In 1338 Gregory descended from Mt. Athos in order to defend the practice of hesychasm at the suggestion of his friend Archbishop Isidore of Thessalonike. For three years Gregory responded to Barlaam's accusations, writing the first part of the *Triads*, which is a collection of three texts of three parts each defending hesychast practice. Akindynos had gone to Constantinople to be with Patriarch John Calecas, attempting to offer a moderating position between Barlaam and the monks. Akindynos, however, this time came to the defense of the monks against the assault of Barlaam. Calecas responded strongly against Barlaam; nevertheless, since Barlaam enjoyed the favor of John Cantacuzenos, the patriarch's rebuff had little effect.[27]

Barlaam continued with his position of "dogmatic relativism" in regards to the *filioque* controversy and the possible reunion of the separated churches. While his position was not rejected by the Holy Synod of Constantinople, it was not made the official position either. So when Barlaam traveled to Avignon to meet with Pope Benedict XII, his position did not have the support of the Eastern Church. However, the western pontiff did not accept Barlaam's relativism either. As a result, union did not occur on the basis of agnosticism and dogmatic relativism.

While Barlaam was negotiating with the West, Gregory had the opportunity to analyze Barlaam's position in depth. In reply he wrote the second treatise of the *Triads*, refuting Barlaam's anti-hesychast position. Consequently, Barlaam could not let the monastic challenge stand against his position. Barlaam continued his attack against the monks raising the charge of heresy. Akindynos had suggested to Barlaam to drop the attack against the monks, especially one so noted as Gregory Palamas, since such an

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[27]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 46-47.

attack could not end in victory for Barlaam. In his letters to Barlaam, Akindynos even

stated that he agreed with Barlaam's position, calling the monks "uneducated" and

mocking them. However, to issue the charge of heresy against "a man so worthy of

respect as Palamas" was a grave mistake.[28]

Meyendorff points out that Akindynos did not condemn the monastic practice,

whether he disagreed with it or not. Instead the issue for Akindynos always revolved

around theology, especially Gregory's distinction between essence and energies. The

hesychast method of prayer was generally accepted by all in fourteenth-century

Byzantium.[29] Barlaam's attack on the monastic practice betrayed his own ignorance in

regards to the spiritual tradition of the Byzantine church, which he would not have known

being from the West.

Around the time of Barlaam's return to the East, Gregory had visited Mt. Athos to

seek approval from the leading spiritual authorities for the condemnation of Barlaam's

ideas. This condemnation was published as the *Hagioretic Tome*. The *Hagioretic Tome*

includes six anathemas toward those who disagree with the teaching of the Holy Fathers

regarding the "uncreated, ungenerated and really existent" "deifying grace of God;" those

who believe "that union with God comes about only by imitation and relationship with

Him, without the deifying grace of the Spirit;" those who assert that those who believe

that the "nous has its seat in the heart" are heretics; those who believe that the divine light

of Tabor is an "apparition;" those who argue that only the essence of God is uncreated,

not the divine energies; and those who hold the view that the bodies of those on the

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[28]Ibid., 47-48.

[29]Ibid., 48.

spiritual path do not participate in the divine energies of the Holy Spirit.[30] Essentially, the *Hagioretic Tome*, whose signatories included "the *protos* Isaac," the future patriarch Philotheus, Gregory of Sinai's disciples: Isaiah, Mark, and the future patriarch Callistus, condemned each position held by Barlaam against the hesychasts. The *Hagioretic Tome* also demonstrated the universal nature of hesychasm, for other signatories included the Georgian abbot Anthony of Iveron monastery, the Serbian abbot of Chilandar monastery, and a Syrian monk from Karyes.[31]

While Gregory intended in taking the document to Constantinople, he was waylaid in Thessalonike, where he once again encountered Barlaam. In their meetings, Gregory expressed a willing tolerance towards Barlaam, and even agreed to a modification of Barlaam's works if he was so willing to do so. However, Barlaam, instead of accepting the olive branch offered to him by Gregory, chose to continue the attack accusing Gregory by name of Messalianism in his book, *Against the Messalians*. In this work, Barlaam associated Gregory with the heresy of Theodore, a priest of Blachernae who had been condemned by Alexius Comnenus.[32]

Barlaam took his work to Constantinople, once again complaining to Patriarch John Calecas concerning the heresy of Gregory Palamas and the hesychast monks. A local synod was called to answer the charges raised by Barlaam. Akindynos spoke on behalf of Gregory and the monks, calling for a dismissal of the case. The patriarch even spoke on behalf of the hesychast position. However, Barlaam would not be dissuaded,

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[30]Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 303.

[31]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 49.

[32]Ibid.

publicly proclaiming the heresy of hesychasm in the streets of Constantinople. Gregory decided to come to Constantinople to answer the charges. He would be traveling with his supporter and childhood friend, Emperor Andronicus III.

While the patriarch had only wanted a local council to rule on the matter, Empress Anne of Savoy and Barlaam, however, both wanted an imperial ruling. Due to this decision, an official summons was dispatched to Thessalonike requiring the presence of Gregory in Constantinople. Patriarch John Calecas, with Akindynos, had attempted to stop the official summons, but the letter had already been sent to the officials at Thessalonike. Thus, it appeared that Gregory was already condemned before his official hearing. Along with Gregory, Mark, Isidore, and Dorotheos joined him from Thessalonike. Additionally, Joseph Calothetos, a monk, received an official summons. Gregory also requested David Dishypatos from Paroria to join the defense in Constantinople. However, having received a summons from Akindynos, David had already left Paroria for Constantinople.[33]

In June 1341, Emperor Andronicus III assembled a council with himself as the head. The emperor, the patriarch, and many of the notables of Constantinople did not desire a dogmatic debate concerning theology. Instead, they wanted to regain the peace concerning the charges against monastic practice. Consequently, in his arguments, Barlaam raised the theological question concerning the issue of essence and energies in God, accusing Gregory of ditheism. However, because according to the Holy Canons, bishops alone in an ecumenical council can discuss matters of doctrine, Patriarch John Calecas ended the theological discussion. Gregory was allowed to respond to his

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[33]Ibid., 50-52.

accuser, and then Barlaam's text accusing Gregory and the hesychasts of Messalianism was examined by the council. At the end of the day, John Cantacuzenos persuaded Barlaam to "confess his error," and Gregory forgave him. Peace had once again been restored, and Andronicus III "celebrated the general reconciliation." However, matters were to soon change.

The reconciliatory mood ended when Andronicus died five days after the council. Barlaam continued his attacks, but realizing that he was having little effect, left for Italy, where he became the teacher of Petrarch and bishop of "Gerace in the Greek Uniate Church." Patriarch John Calecas denounced Barlaam's teachings against the hesychasts and called on the inhabitants to turn over any of Barlaam's writings in their possession on pain of excommunication.[34]

However, peace was not to occur. Andronicus in his conciliatory speech had affirmed Gregory's teaching concerning the distinction between essence and energy. No one at the June council had vocalized disagreement with the proclamation. However, Akindynos, who had been harboring his theological disagreement with Gregory, now raised the issue, since it had been publicly proclaimed at a council. Akindynos's challenge raised the theological debate that would soon have political ramifications.

Another council was called in August of 1341, this time headed by John Cantacuzene as Great Domestic, since there was no emperor. Again, he and Patriarch John Calecas decidedly were against a theological controversy. Reserving the issue to one of discipline, the patriarch took an obvious pro-hesychast position against Akindynos. Akindynos was condemned along with a reaffirmation of the condemnation

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[34]Ibid., 55-56.

of the teachings of Barlaam, which Akindynos was forced to sign.[35] But even with this

condemnation, Akindynos continued his attack on Gregory's theology.

The problem with Akindynos's theological position was that he separated

theology from practice. While approving monastic hesychasm, his theological position

against the distinction between God's essence and energies undermined his support of

monastic practice, for without this distinction, the hesychast experience of God is

untenable. Akindynos asserted the possibility for participation in the essence of God,

which would violate the transcendence and "unknowability" of God.[36]

Following the death of Andronicus III a political struggle over the regency of the

empire ensued between John Cantacuzene and Patriarch John Calecas. At first, the

theological dispute did not play a part in the political struggle. However, the question of

the August council played an important role. The question that the council raised was the

role of John Cantacuzene as Grand Domestic. How could a council be presided over by

someone other than the emperor? If Cantacuzene rightly presided over the council, then

his claim to regency of the empire would be de facto acknowledged. In order to avoid

this possibility, John Calecas refused to publish the tome of the August council. While

not publishing the official tome of this council, "he agreed to publish a document

confirming the victory of the monks." The official Synodal Tome of 1341 did not

mention the August council nor John Cantacuzene as presider over it; rather, it pertained

only to the decisions of the June council. The official pronouncement of the decisions of

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[35]Ibid., 57-58.

[36]Ibid., 56.

the council included "a formal interdict against reopening the arguments," preserving a

hesychast victory.[37]

The contest over the regency of the empire involved John Cantacuzene, as the

Great Domestic, on one side, and Patriarch John Calecas with the support of Empress

Anne of Savoy on the other. Calecas was able to cite precedence for the regency going to

the patriarch due to a similar event occurring in the tenth century with Nicholas the

Mystikos. Cantacuzene's claim to the throne was based solely on his friendship with

Andronicus III and the role that he had played as his Great Domestic, basically running

the empire for Andronicus. Cantacuzene and Calecas arrived at some agreement that

would allow both to hold the regency until John V Paleologus came of age. Cantacuzene

even agreed to the final addition of the Synodal Tome of 1341 in order to keep the peace

with the patriarch. However, a *coup d'etat* occurred in October, when Cantacuzene was

in the Balkans on a military campaign. Calecas with the aid of Alexis Apocaucus seized

control of the imperial government and condemned John Cantacuzene. This fatal event

drew the hesychasts into the fray.

Gregory had remained in Constantinople following the August council. He had

regained his popularity, and due to his nobility, he had access to the other nobles in the

empire. Because of his authority and reputation, Calecas summoned Gregory to support

the *coup*; however, Gregory responded for the status quo that had been worked out

between Cantacuzene and Calecas, which infuriated the patriarch. Apocaucus had to

defend Gregory's intentions, against the wrath of the patriarch. Thus, Gregory cannot be

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[37]Ibid., 58-59.

said to be on the side of the nobility, represented by Cantacuzene, but instead was for peace in the empire between the two contenders.[38]

When Cantacuzene left to secure the surrender of the Morea in September, 1341, Apocaucus, who had once supported Cantacuzene and even suggested his elevation to the throne after Andronicus's death in June, turned his support from Cantacuzene to Calecas, securing a *coup d'etat* for control of the empire. Cantacuzene's property was confiscated, his mother was confined to house arrest, and his servants fled to his camp in Didymoteichon. Empress Anne, having been convinced by Calecas and Apocaucus that Cantacuzene was plotting against her, appointed Apocaucus as governor of the city, enabling him to appoint enemies of Cantacuzene to high office. Calecas was pronounced regent of the empire, and Cantacuzene was condemned.[39]

In retaliation for the *coup*, and in order to protect the regency of John V Paleologus, whom Cantacuzene always supported, he was proclaimed emperor by his troops in Didymoteichon on 26 October 1341. This coronation amounted to a proclamation of war. Calecas and Apocaucus had desired this very "usurpation" so that Cantacuzene's condemnation was justified. They believed that the eminent civil war would be short, and their victory sealed by the common support of the people, who had developed an antipathy toward the wealthy ruling class. They did not realize that their

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[38]Ibid., 63-64.

[39]Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 2[d] ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 188-189; George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed., tr. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 510-11.

actions would lead to a civil war that lasted six years, completely weakening the empire to the point of its inability to recover during the last one hundred years of its existence.[40]

Apocaucus had been successful in creating a class envy against Cantacuzene among the populace of Byzantium. Revolutions occurred in Adrianople and Thessalonike against the ruling aristocracy. In Thessalonike an actual political movement, called the Zealots, led an overthrow of the aristocratic rule. Historian Donald Nicol states that "in the early summer of 1342 they conceived and established a régime which had no real precedent or parallel in any other city in the history of the Byzantine Empire. It made Thessalonica a republic managing its own domestic and foreign affairs." Furthermore, Apocaucus, realizing the importance of this revolution, arrived in Thessalonike with an army and seventy ships to support the Zealots against Cantacuzene and the aristocracy. Apocaucus even installed his son, John, as governor of Thessalonike, as he had done with his other son, Manuel, in Adrianople, securing a seminal loyalty to the empire against Cantacuzene. While the Zealots continued to rule in Thessalonike, the fiction was maintained.[41]

Cantacuzene gained the support of the provincial landed aristocracy, who had become fearful of the loss of their lands due to the uprisings in Adrianople and Thessalonike. However, their support was not enough to fight the war against the imperial troops led by Apocaucus. Consequently, Cantacuzene solicited troops from Tsar Stephen Dušan of Serbia and the military aid of Umur Aydin of the Turks. With the aid

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[40]Nicol, *Last Years of Byzantium*, 190-91; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 511.

[41]Nicol, *Last Years of Byzantium*, 194-95.

of the political enemies of Constantinople, Cantacuzene secured the western provinces in Thrace and Thessaly.

In order to counteract the Turkish threat, Empress Anne, in 1343 sent an envoy to Pope Clement VI in Avignon, requesting military aid. The letter to Clement confirmed both her and her son's (John V Paleologus) submission to the Holy See. It also suggested that Calecas and Apocaucus would also submit. However, as Nicol points out, Calecas and Apocaucus would never have made such a submission to Catholicism.[42] However, it is important to remember that John V did indeed submit to the authority of Rome.

While Anne was not able to benefit from the solicitation to Avignon, she did gain aid from the Venetians and Genoese. In order to finance the civil war, as stated earlier, the crown jewels were pawned to the Venetians for 30,000 ducats, and were never regained by the Byzantines.[43] However, Anne's attempt to gain western favor was in the end not enough. Cantacuzene continued to gain territory in Thrace and northern Greece, even with the defection of the Serbian troops. Adrianople submitted in 1345 with Manuel, Apocaucus's son, changing sides. However, Thessalonike continued to hold out its independence.

Apocaucus seems to have realized the growing tide against him. He had stationed a military warship in the harbor for escape. He also kept a military bodyguard for protection. However, he did not have his bodyguard on 11 June 1345 when he went to inspect a new prison that was being built for the growing number of political prisoners. Seeing him unprotected, a group of prisoners took the liberty of murdering him with their construction tools, beheading him with an axe. Believing that they would be heralded for

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[42]Ibid., 198-99.

[43]Ibid., 199.

their deed, the prisoners chose to stay in the prison, rather than escape. However, the

Empress Anne, seeing the horror of the event and losing her trusted military and political

advisor, allowed Apocaucus's troops to massacre all of the prisoners, including those

who had not participated in the murder. Some 200 prisoners were executed by the

troops.[44]

This event marked the turning point in the war, although it continued for another

two years, laying waste to Thrace by Serbian, Byzantine, and Turkish troops. Stephen

Dušan had himself coronated as Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks on 16 April 1346,

challenging the Byzantine claim to the throne. He had been able to capture the important

city of Serres in Macedonia in 1345, and was making preparations for taking

Thessalonike. In order to counter Stephen's political claims, Cantacuzene allowed

himself to be crowned emperor on 21 May 1346, the Feast of Ss. Constantine and Helen.

However, at the coronation, John V was proclaimed co-emperor, being named before

him. On 2 February 1347, Cantacuzene with 1000 troops was able to breach the walls of

Constantinople. Six days later Empress Anne surrendered, with the condition that her

son be named co-emperor. Anne had already realized the impending surrender, for she

had deposed Calecas a week before.[45]

In this civil war there is some controversy about the role of the hesychasts

supporting John Cantacuzene. Recalling that Gregory Palamas had defended the peace

that had been negotiated between Cantacuzene and Calecas immediately after the death

of Andronicus, it is difficult to argue that the hesychasts supported Cantacuzene because

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[44]Ibid., 201.

[45]Ibid., 205-7.

of his aristocracy.[46] However, this has exactly been maintained, that the hesychasts were

supporters of the aristocracy against the claims of the Zealots and Calecas. What

emerged was the hesychast party defending Cantacuzene and the anti-hesychast party of

the Zealots supporting Apocaucus.[47] However, Meyendorff contends that such an

argument does not hold that the hesychasts were supporters of Cantacuzene simply

because of his aristocracy. Rather, the support given to Cantacuzene was genuinely out

of a desire for peace in the empire and against the injustice that had been committed

against him by Calecas.[48]

From 1341-42, Gregory found himself being constantly persecuted by the

activities of Calecas. Additionally, Calecas turned against the hesychasts, allowing

Akindynos to issue his attacks against Gregory's theology, especially the distinction

between the essence and energies of God. Eventually, Gregory was arrested in

September 1342, and placed in the imperial prison with the other political prisoners. On

4 November 1344, Calecas summoned a synod, which deposed bishop-elect Isidore and

excommunicated Gregory for "religious reasons."[49]

Aid for Gregory came from an unlikely source, the Empress Anne. She had not

sided with Calecas against Gregory, and she opposed Calecas's decision to raise

Akindynos to the office of the episcopacy, which Calecas believed would aid

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[46]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 64.

[47]Ostorgorsky states that the Zealots were known to have been supporters of
Barlaam and Akindynos. Because the Zealots were against Cantacuzene, who was
supported by the hesychasts, the Zealots maintained a violent antipathy against the
hesychast monks. See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 515.

[48]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 64-65.

[49]Ibid., 66-74.

Akindynos's authority against Gregory's teachings. Along with Anne, Apocaucus once again came to the defense of Gregory against Calecas. To ordain Akindynos would be direct violation of the decree of her deceased husband Andronicus. Disobeying the empress, Calecas decided to ordain Akindynos to the diaconate. As a result, Akindynos was arrested by the imperial authorities. However, Akindynos escaped and was further ordained to the priesthood.[50]

Calecas continued his anti-palamite activities by ordaining anti-hesychast bishops to the important sees of Monembasia and Thessalonike. Hyacinth, who replaced the hesychast Macarius in Thessalonike, supported the Zealots in rooting out Palamism in the city. However, this use of force by Calecas and his bishops, led to a reaction against their anti-hesychasm, driving the supporters of the hesychasts into the Cantacuzene political camp, giving it a hesychast color.[51] Thus, the hesychast support of Cantacuzene occurred more because of the anti-hesychast stance of the imperial church, headed by Calecas. With Anne's support, he was deposed on 2 February 1347, having previously been declared deposed by the synod of Adrianople on 21 May 1346 by rebel bishops. Ironically, having removed the obstacle of peace, under the guidance of John V Paleologus, Anne sent as her envoy to entreat peace with John VI Cantacuzene none other than Gregory Palamas, who had been released from prison to negotiate the peace settlement.[52]

Following the restoration of peace, a new synod was called to deal with the issue of John Calecas. The decisions of the synod are contained in the Tome of 1347, which

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[50]Ibid., 75-76.

[51]Ibid., 76-77.

[52]Ibid., 78-80.

promulgated the previous Synodal Tome of 1341, condemned and deposed Calecas, and renewed the excommunication of Akindynos. Because the religious leaders who had been present in Adrianople for the coronation of John VI Cantacuzene had not yet arrived, another synod assembled three weeks later, confirming the Tomes of 1341 and 1347, and affirming the teachings of Gregory Palamas.[53]

The next important business for the empire was the election of a new patriarch to replace Calecas. Both Sabbas of Vatopedi and Gregory Palamas were mentioned as possible successors due to their spirituality and support of Cantacuzene. However, some reservations were still voiced concerning Gregory's theology, and due to this controversy, Sabbas became the primary choice. Consequently, Sabbas rejected the nomination, choosing to remain on Mt. Athos. In his place, Isidore, the bishop-elect of Monembasia, was elected as Patriarch of Constantinople. Isidore completed the hesychast takeover of the patriarchate and the Byzantine church by appointing thirty-two bishops who supported the Tome of 1347. One of these appointments was Gregory Palamas to the Metropolis of Thessalonike, the second city of the empire.[54]

Because the anti-Cantacuzenist Zealots still held the city of Thessalonike, Gregory was unable to be installed as their archbishop. Previously, I discussed the role of the Zealots in the civil war as being against the aristocracy of the empire, represented by Cantacuzene. It is important that we understand who the Zealots were and what they desired. In the Zealot movement there were two main factions driving their political agenda. The first was the sailors and pirates of the merchant class that had settled in

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[53]Ibid., 86.

[54]Ibid., 87.

Thessalonike. These men were strongly loyal to the Paleologan family, for some of their

leaders were members of this important family. The "political" zealots, as Ostrogorsky

calls them,[55] desired to maintain a feudalist society, independent of the centralized

Byzantine state apparatus. Cantacuzene desired a more centralized administration of the

empire, which was opposed by the merchant class and reflected in the anti-aristocratic

sentiments of the "political zealots." Because the hesychasts had supported Cantacuzene

against the decisions of Calecas, the political zealots became anti-hesychasts.

Furthermore, the second group that composed the Zealot movement in Thessalonike were

what Ostrogorsky calls the "religious zealots." Ostrogorsky states that the political

zealots were enemies of the religious zealots. The religious zealots were primarily monks

who had migrated to Thessalonike. According to Hierotheos Vlachos, they disliked

Gregory due to his hesychasm and because he was a supporter of Cantacuzene. But also,

the relationship with Rome played a factor in their anti-hesychast stance against

Cantacuzene and Gregory. The Zealots favored union with Rome, which also explains

their support of the Paleologi family.[56] Empress Anne of Savoy was Roman Catholic,

and as we have seen, was not above putting the empire in union with Rome for political

gain. But the Zealot desire favoring union with Rome may simply be their desire

reflecting their independence from Constantinople, for they also sought union with Tsar

Stephen Dušan and the Serbs.[57]

Meyendorff argues that the religious zealots were not anti-hesychast when the

revolt began in the early 1340s. This is accounted for by the fact that Calecas had

[55]Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 515.

[56]Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 208-09.

[57]Ibid., 209; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 522.

appointed a hesychast, Macarius, to be bishop of Thessalonike, to replace Isidore.

Consequently, after a renewed violence against the aristocracy in 1345, Macarius was

deposed, and Hyacinth, a vocal anti-hesychast, was appointed by Calecas to deal with the

hesychast menace in the city. Thus, according to Meyendorff, there must have been a

prominent hesychast presence in the city, which in the eyes of Calecas were supporting

Cantacuzene. Furthermore, if there was a hesychast presence in the Zealot movement, it

would be understandable on the basis that they tended to side with the poor and

underprivileged.[58] George Metallinos has argued that the monastic vision of the

communal life informed and shaped the political communalism of the Zealot movement.

The monks together with the poor provided the anti-aristocratic flavor to a movement

which was politically led by the merchant class of Thessalonike.[59] To maintain that the

hesychast party supported Cantacuzene simply because he was an aristocrat is to

misunderstand the complexity of the religious and social nature of the conflict. However,

it is Gregory's linkage to Cantacuzene that caused the citizens of Thessalonike, led by the

Zealots, to refuse to accept him as their hierarch in 1347.[60]

In order to deal with the Zealot menace and independence of the city as well as

the Serbian attempt to take the city, John VI Cantacuzene sailed with John V Paleologus

to Thessalonike in 1350. The zealot leader, Andrew Paleologus, took refuge with the

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[58]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 90.

[59]George Metallinos, "Hesychasts and Zealots: Spiritual Acme and Social Crisis in Byzantium in the 14th Century," *Myriobiblos Bibliotheke*, April 19, 2004, available at http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/greek/metallinos_14c.html. Metallinos also argues that the condemnation of the Zealots by Patriarch Philotheus was chiefly due to their violent behavior which disturbed the God-established order of the empire.

[60]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 91.

Serbs, and the city surrendered to the rightful emperor, John V Paleologus with his co-emperor John VI Cantacuzene. Gregory, too, was received as the hierarch of the city and installed on his throne. Three days after his accession to the city, Gregory preached a sermon condemning the violence of the zealots, but also addressing the social and economic grievances of the poor, which he attempted to ameliorate during his tenure as bishop.[61]

Having ended the civil war and once again bringing a measure of peace to the late Byzantine Empire, Cantacuzene could once again turn to the theological issue of Palamism that was continuing to be a source of conflict in the empire. The historian and humanist Nikephoros Gregoras, a supporter of Cantacuzene, had begun writing anti-Palamite treatises as early as 1346, under the direction of Empress Anne. While these were not widely circulated, Gregoras's thoughts remained quiet while the dispute between Calecas, Akindynos and Gregory occurred. In 1348 Gregory arrived in Constantinople, after having met with Stephen Dušan on Mt. Athos to discuss monastic support for the Serbian Empire. Gregory had refused Stephen's overtures; however, Stephen sent him to Constantinople to negotiate on his behalf. In Constantinople, Gregory had the opportunity to confront Gregoras in front of Emperor John VI Cantacuzene. Not resolving the issue, a synod was called in June 1351 to finally end the theological dispute.[62]

[61]Ibid., 92-93; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 522. For Gregory's social teaching, see Ioannes E. Anastasiou, "The Social Teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32 (Summer, 1987): 179-90; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 241-261.

[62]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 91-94; Hierotheos, *Saint Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 225-26. Gregory's mission to Constantinople in 1348 may have

The council of 1351 was much larger than the previous councils of 1341 and 1347. Presided over by John VI Cantacuzene in the presence of many other notable officials of Constantinople, the full synod of bishops assembled, including twenty-five metropolitans and seven bishops. This is important to remember, for only bishops can rule on dogmatic issues according to canon law. The council began in late May with the anti-Palamites, led by the Metropolitan Matthew of Ephesus and Metropolitan Joseph of Ganos with other notable theologians and monastics, including Nikephoros Gregoras, making their arguments against the teachings of Gregory.

Four sessions of the synod were called, debating the theological position of Gregory. The fourth session was paramount, for the Tome of 1341 was produced as a definitive ruling on the issue in support of Gregory. Additionally, the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, produced at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, was read. This document proclaims the teachings of the church having been affirmed at the Seventh Council. The document also condemns any who do not accept the teachings of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, which proclaimed the teaching of St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Martin of Rome regarding the distinction between energies (wills) and nature in Christ. Gregory had asserted that his teaching was only a development of the theology of this council. Having read the definitive documents, John Cantacuzene asked for the recantation of all those who had accused Gregory of heresy. He then had read the Tome of 1347, which had condemned Matthew of Ephesus and his supporters. The opinions of the bishops were solicited as to their support of the Tome. Those who did not recant their position

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alerted Cantacuzene to the necessity to act regarding the situation in Thessalonike. The empire could ill afford to lose this valuable city to the Serbs.

against the teaching of Gregory were deposed. This included Matthew of Ephesus and Joseph of Ganos.[63]

Cantacuzene called a second council in July in order to officially formulate the doctrine of the church. This synod met without the presence of the anti-Palamites. In turn, they expounded the questions regarding Gregory's theology, and then adopted a formula of faith. They compared the formula with the writings of Akindynos. The bishops voiced their opinion confirming the Orthodoxy of Gregory's teaching. Then, Metropolitan Philotheus of Heraclea drafted the Synodal Tome of 1351, pronouncing the truth of Gregory's theology and condemning any who did not accept this teaching of the church. In 1352 the church attached the Tome of 1351 to the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, which is read every year on the First Sunday in Lent in the Orthodox Churches around the world.[64]

In 1351 Gregory attempted to return to his see in Thessalonike. However, once again, the citizens refused him entrance to the city. John V Paleologus had begun an insurrection against John VI Cantacuzene at the instigation of Stephen Dušan and his grandfather-in-law Andronicus Asen. Because Gregory was a supporter of Cantacuzene, the emperor would not permit his entrance to the city. However, three months later, when Empress Anne arrived in Thessalonike, she persuaded her son to end the rebellion and allow Gregory entrance to his see.[65]

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[63]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 93-100.

[64]Ibid., 101. For a hesychast discussion of the Synodikon, see Hierotheos Vlachos, Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, *The Mind of the Orthodox Church*, tr. Esther Williams (Levadia, GR: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1998), 213-39.

[65]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 102.

Always the peacemaker, in 1354 John V sent Gregory to negotiate a peace with John VI Cantacuzene at the behest of his mother, Anne. Gregory obliged his emperor and set sail for Constantinople. Having to make land at Gallipoli due to a fierce storm, some Turks, who were occupying the city, took him and his entourage captive. For the next year, Gregory and his men moved from town to town in Turkish Anatolia under light arrest. There they experienced the tolerance of the Turks and the ability to worship with their own people. Gregory also engaged in theological discussions with the Muslims, arriving at the conclusion that Islam would eventually be converted to Christianity. Furthermore, the tolerant aspect of Islam shown by the Turkish authorities demonstrated to the hesychast monks an alternative to the subjection that they had endured under the Latins following the Fourth Crusade. This attitude toward the Turks would open a path of survival for the Orthodox people under the Ottomans after 1453.[66]

In 1354 John V laid claim to the throne of Constantinople. John VI Cantacuzene abdicated and became a monk, taking the name Joasaph. Patriarch Philotheus, too, stepped down from the patriarchal throne, allowing the restoration of Patriarch Callistus, who had been dethroned for his refusal to coronate Matthew Cantacuzene as co-emperor in 1353. Nikephoros Gregoras perceived an opportunity to once again rebut the theology of Gregory Palamas. John V had changed his position regarding Gregory, according to Gregoras, however, he was unable to voice his discord due to the popular opinion in favor of Gregory as well as the official statement of 1351 affirming Gregory's teaching. Furthermore, John V did not want to have a divided empire or church heading into the important discussion with the Roman Catholic Church regarding reunion of the churches.

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[66]Ibid., 103-07.

Gregoras and Gregory Palamas in 1355 had an informal debate in the presence of the emperor, without any decision forthcoming.[67]

Gregory returned to Thessalonike in 1355 where he remained until his death in 1359. He continued refuting Gregoras's position. On the basis of inaccurate patristic texts, Gregoras had begun to argue that "the grace of deification was created," quoting from St. Basil. Gregory produced authentic texts from the libraries at Thessalonike that demonstrated otherwise. He next wrote texts defending the experience of the uncreated light of Mt. Tabor, which Gregoras had understood to be created. In 1359 he succumbed to an internal disease that he had suffered from for many years. Following his death, the people proclaimed him to be a saint. In 1368 the church officially canonized him and added his feast to the liturgical calendar of the Great Church, not only on Nov. 14th but also the Second Sunday of Lent, attaching his theology as a formal recognition of the Orthodox faith.[68]

The Theology of St. Gregory Palamas

Having discussed the life of Gregory Palamas, it is now important to turn to the thought of this saint, which became the definition of Orthodox theology. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I will discuss the theology of Gregory Palamas, focusing on his epistemology, his doctrine of God and his relationship to creation, his understanding of salvation as deification, and his anthropology.

In elucidating the epistemology or gnosiology of Gregory Palamas, I will first examine the nature of the theological debates of the fourteenth century in its larger

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[67]Ibid., 109-10.

[68]Ibid., 110-12.

philosophical and cultural context and then discuss Gregory's understanding of the

relationship of philosophy to theology.

As has already been stated, the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries

witnessed an intellectual revival in Byzantium. Donald Nicol comments that "the

Byzantines were the librarians of the Middle Ages."[69] Andronicus II's court was

compared to the great philosophical schools of antiquity: the Academy, the Stoa, and the

Lyceum. Such men as Theodore Metochites, the most brilliant philosopher of his age and

the "father of secular humanism"[70] in the fourteenth century, his disciple Nikephoros

Gregoras, his philosophical opponent Nikephoros Choumnos, and Nilas and Nicholas

Cabasilas were all influential humanists in the mid- to late-fourteenth century.[71] This

humanist intellectual movement paved the way for the flowering of Greek philosophy in

the thought of George Gemistos Plethon and Bessarion in the mid fifteenth century.

Alongside this humanist revival appeared also the hesychast revival of the

fourteenth century, discussed in the previous chapter. Led by such luminaries as Gregory

of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, Theodosius of Trnovo, Theoleptos of Philadelphia, and

Philotheus Kokkinos, the monastic movement ascended, eventually gaining the superior

hand over the humanist movement in the fourteenth century. The thought of Gregory

Palamas was essential for elucidating the superiority of theology over humanist

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[69]Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 34.

[70]John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), 138.

[71]Stavros Yangazoglou, "Philosophy and Theology: The Demonstrative Method in the Theology of Saint Gregory Palamas," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 41, no. 1 (1996): 1-2; Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*, 2[d] ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 162.

philosophy. However, as John Meyendorff points out, the separation of hesychasts and humanists is much too simple a paradigm for understanding the theological debates of the fourteenth century. Many of the hesychasts were humanists, including Gregory Palamas, who had been instructed by Theodore Metochites and Philotheus Kokkinos. These men had a positive understanding for secular learning; however, they simply asserted that such learning has a proper place. For philosophy to traverse its proper boundaries is inappropriate, especially in regards to theological matters.[72] Donald Nicol aptly comments on the monastic approach: "Ancient Greek literature and philosophy were known in monastic circles as the 'outer' wisdom, the learning 'outside the door', the wisdom of 'the Hellenes.' They could provide a preparation or an introduction to the truth. But beyond a certain point in the development of the inner wisdom no form of human vocabulary was adequate."[73]

St. Basil in the fourth century had provided the model for this understanding of the relationship between Christianity and classical learning. He had argued for a propaedeuctic role whereby classical literature or philosophy served a preparatory role for the understanding of the Gospel. Just as the pagan world had provided a *preparatio evangelium*, so too does it function in the life of the educated Christian.[74] Furthermore, as discussed in chapter three, Isaac the Syrian had understood the relationship of

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[72]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Legacy*, 133-39.

[73]Nicol, *Church and Society*, 35-36.

[74]See chapter six below. The understanding of the pagan world serving as a preparation for the reception of the gospel is found as early as the New Testament writings. In the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul uses the phrase, "fullness of time" in reference to the birth of Christ (Gal 4:4). This same idea is taken up in the apologies of Justin Martyr, and especially in the *Preparatio Evangelica* and the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, as well as his panegyric to Constantine.

philosophy to theology to be one of separate areas of understanding. Secular knowledge, expressed as philosophy or science, was limited by the very subject matter to which they pertained. The laws of nature limit such knowledge. However, theology, because it pertained to God was unlimited, and thus superior to the knowledge of this world, for the knowledge of God was a personal revelation through the illumination of the nous united with the heart.

This understanding of the relationship of philosophy to theology also influenced Gregory Palamas. As has been shown, after completing the quadrivium and the study of Aristotle, he forsook higher education for the monastic vocation. Meyendorff states, "Palamas in fact often asserts that the study of profane philosophy was only useful as a preparation for the 'true philosophy' of Christianity, and that it would be wrong to spend too long upon it."[75] Responding to Barlaam's assertion that knowledge of God can only occur through creation, Palamas writes,

> What then should be the work and the goal of those who seek the wisdom of God in creatures? Is it not the acquisition of the truth, and the glorification of the Creator? This is clear to all. But the knowledge of the pagan philosophers has fallen away from both these aims.
> Is there then anything of use to us in this philosophy? Certainly. For just as there is much therapeutic value even in substances obtained from the flesh of serpents, and the doctors consider there is no better and more useful medicine than that derived from this source, so there is something of benefit to be had even from the profane philosophers–but somewhat as in a mixture of honey and hemlock. So it is most needful that those who wish to separate out the honey from the mixture should beware that they do not take the deadly residue by mistake. And if you were to examine the problem, you would see that all or most of the harmful heresies derive their origin from this source.[76]

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[75]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 30.

[76]Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff, tr. Nicholas Gendle (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 28.

Gregory's metaphor of the use of dead serpents recalls Basil's analogy of the bee that

gathers the better part from the flower to produce honey. Likewise the person is to gather

the useful part from pagan culture and leave that which is poisonous behind.[77] Similarly,

Gregory demonstrates the superiority of theological knowledge to philosophy in *The One*

Hundred and Fifty Chapters on Topics of Natural and Theological Science, the Moral

and the Ascetic Life. He mentions that Euclid, Marinos, and Ptolemy as well as the

Empedocleans, Socratics, Aristotelians, and Platonists had not been able to ascend the

heights of the knowledge of God through their scientific and philosophic methodologies.

He states, "Knowing God in truth to the extent that this is possible is not only

incomparably better than Hellenic philosophy, but also, knowing what place man has

before God, alone of itself, surpasses all their wisdom."[78] Continuing in the *Triads*,

Gregory argues that the contemplation of God in creation automatically propels the

person to the higher knowledge of the Creator.

> Then it is struck with admiration, deepens its understanding, persists in the
> glorification of the Creator, and through this sense of wonder is led forward
> to what is greater. According to St. Isaac, 'It comes upon treasures which
> cannot be expressed in words'; and using prayer as a key, it penetrates
> thereby into the mysteries which 'eye has not seen, ear has not heard and
> which have not entered into the heart of man', mysteries manifested by the
> Spirit alone to those who are worthy, as St. Paul teaches.[79]

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[77]Basil, "*Ad Adolescentes*," *PG*, XXXI, 569.

[78]Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, tr. Robert E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), 110-11.

[79]Palamas, *Triads*, 28.

According to Meyendorff, Gregory believes that the philosophic tradition necessitated "a baptismal rebirth–a death and a resurrection–as a condition for its integration into the Tradition of the Church."[80]

In addition to Palamas's emphasis on the superiority of Christian experience as knowledge of God to philosophy, in his argument with Barlaam, it became apparent that each was operating under different philosophical principles. According to Yangazoglou, Barlaam, having been educated in the early Italian Renaissance, expressed a philosophy that was "something of a dialectical synthesis of Thomistic scholasticism and the positivism of Duns Scotus." On the basis of an early western nominalism, he sought "to redefine the philosophical and theological traditions of Byzantium." According to this philosophy, Barlaam interpreted the teaching of the Areopagitic corpus. Additionally, he approached theology from this philosophical perspective, much as his predecessor John Italos had done.[81] In this vein, he was selected by Andronicus III to represent the Byzantines in the official talks with Rome concerning reunion of the churches. Barlaam defended the Eastern understanding of the Trinity on the basis of western scholastic principles and methodology.[82] According to Meyendorff, "Barlaam's contacts with

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[80]John Meyendorff, "Introduction," to Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff, tr. Nicholas Gendle (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 11-12.

[81]John Italos was condemned in the eleventh century by Alexius I for his ardent use of pagan philosophy beyond the educational level. The Syndodikon of Orthodoxy condemns all those you use pagan philosophy for metaphysical and theological understandings. See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State,* 374; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 30. For a discussion of the Synodikon see Hierotheos, *The Mind of the Orthodox Church,* 213-39.

[82]Yangazoglou, "Philosophy and Theology," 3-4.

Western thought and his involvement in the 'humanist' milieus in Byzantium were leading him to an enthusiastic endorsement of Aristotle and Neoplatonic authors, as criteria of Christian thought."[83]

As previously discussed, Barlaam's defense of the Eastern doctrine of the Trinity was based on syllogistic logic regarding "demonstration." He was able to show that dialectical arguments about the *filioque* did not hold for the East because they did not share the same "formal presuppositions for Latin syllogisms." However, in regards to "demonstrative" argumentation, Barlaam had to revert to another tactic.[84] According to Meyendorff, Barlaam shared William of Ockham's skepticism concerning the ability of "the human intellect by itself to know God." Therefore, "such nominalism led to an even greater exaltation of the authority of Scripture and the Fathers, as sources of an *ex machina* incomprehensible revelation." In this regard, Scripture was understood as a philosophical or scientific textbook proving God. It was "not a means of living communion with the spirit of God." With this understanding of Scripture, "an abyss, which the humanists made no claim to cross, yawned between intellectual activity and the religious life, between philosophy and theology."[85] For Barlaam, with his philosophical nominalism, "theological opinions have only a relative validity." It is not possible to penetrate into revealed truth, to understand the revelation itself. "Therefore, neither

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[83]Meyendorff, "Introduction," 11. Romanides raises the important question, though, as to how a person could be both a nominalist and a neoplatonist? Meyendorff's contention that Barlaam is a nominalist shaped by western scholasticism is incorrect, as is shown below. However, Barlaam is definitely a neoplatonist informed by Augustinian neoplatonic presuppositions. For Romanides critique see below.

[84]Yangazoglou, "Philosophy and Theology," 4.

[85]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 116.

knowledge, nor science, not even demonstration, but faith alone is applicable to the questions of theology."[86] Barlaam's solution to the theological quest is fideism.

Because the arguments of demonstration are based on formal logic and syllogism and "is structured and actualized by the use of primary data such as the universal laws, premises, and axioms which precede all conclusions," the demonstrative method is limited to the realm of creation and is unable to comprehend the divine. According to Yangazoglou, for Barlaam "the human mind cannot know of any law or axiom which could constitute the cause for a conclusion regarding the Holy Trinity."[87]

Barlaam then turned to the apophaticism of Dionysius to finalize his argument regarding knowledge of God. Barlaam understood Dionysian apophaticism according to the West, where it serves as a corrective that limits the ability of the human intellect to comprehend the divine. Barlaam argued that Dionysius maintains "an agnostic denial of the possibility for *theognosia*, or knowledge of God." Aristotle himself had maintained such a position. The only recourse for knowing God was revelation.

According to Meyendorff, the essential difference between Barlaam and Gregory was their differing use and interpretation of the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. "For Barlaam it was Dionysius, more than any of the other Fathers, who knew how to use Neo-Platonism, and who, by his apophatic theology, had established the solid basis of a nominalist philosophy; did not God infinitely surpass all the names that could be applied

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[86]Yangazoglou, "Philosophy and Theology," 4.

[87]Ibid., 5.

to him?"[88] Furthermore, Gregory, in his argument against Barlaam, used passages from

Dionysius that referred to the mystical experience of God, "passages which Barlaam

deprived of their realist sense." Because of this reasoning, Meyendorff asserts that there

is a bifurcation in the spiritual tradition of the Eastern Church: Neo-platonism stemming

from the Evagrian tradition and the Biblical Semitic tradition of Macarian spirituality.

As Meyendorff argues,

> Palamas's attitude to classical philosophy in general, and especially his
> correspondence on this subject with Barlaam, prove how far from correct it
> is to regard him as heir to the Neo-Platonists in Christian thought. Though
> he continued to use the terminology of Plotinus, borrowed from St. Gregory
> of Nyssa or from Dionysius, he never had recourse directly to the authority
> of the ancients, and he definitely wished to turn his contemporaries away
> from them. His thought, taken as a whole, certainly marked a step forward
> in the progressive liberation of Eastern Christian theology from Platonic
> Hellenism, and his final victory in 1351 amounted, for Byzantine culture, to
> a refusal of the new humanist civilization which the West was in process of
> adopting.[89]

Therefore, Meyendorff reads the debate from a clash of philosophical presuppositions

pertaining to the use of the patristic sources, especially the Neo-Platonic element found in

these sources.

Meyendorff's interpretation of the debate has come under criticism by the Greek

theologian John Romanides. Romanides does not understand the debate to be "a

domestic quarrel between certain Byzantine humanists and a large segment of Byzantine

monastics and their adherents."[90] Nor does he understand the debate to be a conflict

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[88]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 133. See also, John Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas, Défense des saints hesychastes*, vol. 1 (Louvain, 1959), xxxv.

[89]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 133.

[90]John S. Romanides, "Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 6 (Winter, 1960): 186-205.

between the nominalism of Barlaam and the realism of Gregory. Instead, Romanides

argues that it is a debate concerning Augustinian Franco-Latin Scholasticism and

Orthodoxy. According to Romanides, Barlaam introduced into Byzantine thought

Augustinianism, rather than nominalism, as the foundational philosophical school from

which he operated. Barlaam is also the one who introduces western scholasticism into

Byzantine philosophy.[91]

Meyendorff had argued that in the thought of Palamas there was no anti-western

sentiment, since the debate was an internal Byzantine philosophical argument. In fact,

Meyendorff states, "As Augustine had done in his writings against Pelagius, Palamas

insists on the basic incapacity of man to reach God by his own efforts: in this respect

Palamas is one of the most 'Augustinian' writers of the Christian East."[92] Palamas even

makes use of an analogy of the internal relationship of the Trinity that is very similar to

that of Augustine's view of the Spirit as the love that binds Father and Son.[93]   Gregory

states,

> But that Spirit of the supreme Word is like an ineffable love of the Begetter
> towards the ineffably begotten Word himself. The beloved Word and Son
> of the Father also experiences this love towards the Begetter, but he does so
> inasmuch as he possesses this love as proceeding from the Father together
> with him and as resting connaturally in him. From the Word who held
> concourse with him and us through the flesh we have learned also the name

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[91]For Romanides's discussion of the debate, see *Romaioi e Romeoi Pateres tes Ekklesias*, vol. 1, ed. John S. Romanides and D.D. Kontostergios (Thessalonike: Pournara, 1984), 96-101; "Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 6 (winter 1960): 186-205; "Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics," part 2, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 9 (winter 1963): 225-70.

[92]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 118.

[93]Ibid., 232.

of the Spirit's distinct mode of coming to be from the Father, and that the Spirit belongs not only to the Father but also to the Son.[94]

Later in the same passage, he states that the "pre-eternal joy of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit in that he is common to them by mutual intimacy." However, it must be pointed out that Gregory continues to hold to the Eastern understanding of the single procession of the Spirit from the Father: "Therefore, he is sent to the worthy from both, but in his coming to be he belongs to the Father alone and thus he also proceeds from him alone in his manner of coming to be."[95]

Romanides is not alone in asserting the Augustinian or western roots of Barlaam's theology. As mentioned earlier, Yangazoglou holds that Barlaam has a strange mixture of "Thomistic scholasticism and the positivism of Duns Scotus." Michael Azkoul, a student of Romanides, holds a rather hostile anti-Augustinian position and argues that the fourteenth-century debate entailed Augustinianism versus Orthodoxy.[96] Additionally, the thesis that Barlaam was a representative of Latin theology is also held by such theologians as John Karmires, Vladimir Lossky, Myrna Lot-Borodine, Maximos Aghiorgoussis, Constantine Tsirpanlis, and K. Bonis.[97] All of these Orthodox

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[94]Palamas, *One Hundred Fifty Chapters*, 123.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Reinhard Flogaus, "Palamas and Barlaam Revisited: A Reassessment of East and West in the Hesychast Controversy of 14th Century Byzantium," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (fall 1998): 3-4. See Michael Azkoul, *The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on the Orthodox Church* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990).

[97]Ibid., 5. See John Karmires, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church*, vol. one, 2nd ed. (Graz, 1968); Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976); Myrna Lot-Borodine, *La deification de l'homme selon la doctrine des Pères grecs* (Paris, 1970); Maximous Aghiorgoussis, "Christian Existentialism of the Greek Fathers: Persons, Essence and Energies in God," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 23

theologians perceive the influence of Augustinian scholasticism in the thought of Barlaam.

However, Reinhard Flogaus points out that all of these theologians have not taken seriously the scholarship of H-G. Beck and Gerhard Podskalsky, who have each demonstrated that the fourteenth-century debate was an internal argument concerning philosophical methodology, not a larger debate between Eastern and Western understandings of metaphysics.[98] Furthermore, refuting the claim that Barlaam had been influenced by Western philosophical developments, A. Fyrigos has shown that Barlaam had little to no knowledge of Thomism in the theological debates that he had with the Latins concerning the *filioque*.[99] Flogaus concludes, "An attentive reading of Barlaam's writings belies the claim that he was a great connoisseur of Thomistic theology and of the Western philosophical trends of his time."[100] Instead, due to the polemics between East and West, Barlaam had the unfortunate/ fortunate position of being labeled by the East as a western theologian.

(spring 1978): 15-41; K.G. Bonis, "Gregorios Palamas, der lezte der großen byzantinischen Theologen (1296-1359)," *Theologia* 50 (1979); Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, "Byzantine Humanism and Hesychasm in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century: Synthesis or Antithesis, Reformation or Revolution?" *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* 12, nos. 1-3 (1993): 13-23.

[98]Flogaus, "Palamas and Barlaam Revisited," 5. See H-G. Beck, "Humanismus und Palamismus," in *XIIe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines 1961, Rapports I* (Belgrad-Ochrid, 1961), 63-82; Gerhard Podskalsky, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz* (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1977).

[99]Flogaus, "Palamas and Barlaam Revisited," 6. See A. Fyrigos, "Quando Barlaam Calabro conobbe il concilio di Lione I (1274)?" *Rivista di Studi Byzantini e Neoellenici* 17-19 (1980-82); 248-53.

[100]Flogaus, "Palamas and Barlaam Revisited," 7.

But what then do these Orthodox theologians notice in the thought of Barlaam that allows them to justify labeling him as a western theologian? While denying that Barlaam was influenced by scholasticism, Flogaus maintains the Barlaam was influenced by the thought of Augustine. Maximos Planudes (c. 1255-1305) had translated Augustine's *De Trinitate* by 1282 under the patronage of Michael VIII Paleologus. It appears that Barlaam utilized Augustine's theology to refute the Latin *filioque*.[101] Thus, it can be argued that Barlaam does represent a Byzantine appropriation of Augustinian theology.

The question is raised, though, whether Gregory was influenced by Augustine. The history of this question goes back to at least the beginning of the twentieth century with the work of the Assumptionist Father, Martin Jugie.[102] As was pointed out above, Gregory employs similar language to Augustine in regards to his expression of the Spirit being the love that unites the Father and the Son. Meyendorff argues that this is only an apparent similarity, for the real source of Gregory's theology derives from the teaching of Gregory II of Cyprus.[103] However, as Flogaus argues, Palamas was a disciple of

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[101]Ibid., 10-11.

[102]Martin Jugie, "Palamas Grégoire," in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, vol. 11, (Paris, 1903-1950), 1766.

[103]Flogaus notes that several theologians have argued that Palamas is dependent on Gregory of Cyprus's understanding of the filioque, including Jugie, Lossky, Meyendorff, and Papadakis. Additionally, Robert Sinkewicz does not see an Augustinian source for Gregory's teaching in chapter 36. See Sinkewicz, "Introduction," 18. See also Methodios Phougias, "The Prelude of Helleno-Byzantine Humanism and the Anthropology or Mysticism of Fourteenth Century: Palamism, Scholasticism, and Italian and Byzantine Humanism," *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 12, nos. 1-3 (1993): 5-12; M. Edmund Hussey, "Palamite Trinitarian Models," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1972): 83-89; Alfons Fürst, "Augustinus im Orient," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 110, no. 3 (1999): 293-314; Jacques Lison, "L'esprit comme amour

Theoleptus of Philadelphia, who opposed Gregory of Cyprus. Palamas "explicitly

repudiated the possibility of eternal *revelation* as a Latin impiety and understood

revelation, like creation, to be a *temporal effect* (αποτελεσμα) of the eternal energy"

against Gregory's understanding of the Trinity. Consequently, Flogaus demonstrates

Palamas's own use of Augustine in the *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* directed against

Barlaam. Gregory quotes essentially verbatim from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, especially

in chapters 125-35.[104]

If Flogaus is correct that there is a direct influence of Augustine on the thought of

Gregory Palamas, then what are the larger implications? First, he is correct to assert

against the claim that Barlaam was influenced by western scholasticism, that such a claim

is incorrect. Barlaam may be construed as a western theologian, but he is not a western

scholastic or nominalist; rather, he should be read in the light of Augustinian

neoplatonism. Second, Romanides's contention that Barlaam was influenced by

Augustinian presuppositions are confirmed by Flogaus's research. However, this does

not mean necessarily that the controversy of the fourteenth century was between Eastern

Orthodoxy and Augustinianism. Third, because Gregory himself was influenced by

Augustinian theology, then the argument between Barlaam and Gregory essentially is a

Byzantine debate about the theological method using Augustine, as well as Pseudo-

Dionysius, as a source. Thus, it is a Christian neoplatonic debate. Fourth, since Gregory

utilized Augustine to construct his own Orthodox theology, to a degree Augustine's

theology is also canonized as being Orthodox. This means, then, that the larger debate

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selon Grégoire Palamas: une influence augustinienne?" *Studia Patristica* 32 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997): 325-31.

[104]Ibid., 16-17.

between East and West is due to other factors including scholasticism and nominalism, as well as polemicism.   In fact, can it be stated that the East-West divide is more about polemics and misrepresentation of theology than about theology per se? Fifth, if Augustine can be interpreted or corrected in an Orthodox manner as were the Eastern Christian neoplatonists, does this then provide an opportunity for an Orthodox reassessment of Augustinian theology apart from the scholastic presuppositions that usually accompanies Augustinian theology? Can an Orthodox Augustinianism develop that would provide a bridge between East and West? If so, could Gregory Palamas provide a model for such a bridge?

Returning to Gregory's epistemology, it is important to remember that he maintains the traditional understanding of Orthodox monasticism that there are two kinds of knowledge, philosophical and theological (true philosophy). In his debate with Barlaam, the issue particularly centered on the role of the first type of knowledge. As we have seen, philosophy, according to Gregory, cannot save a person; it can help prepare the person for the reception of the gospel, but in itself it cannot lead the person to the gospel. For Barlaam the issue was different. He argued that natural knowledge was equal to theological knowledge for both were confined to the human intellect, and thus, were unable to ascend to the height of knowledge of God, which could only be experienced as revelation from God.

Against Barlaam's agnosticism, Gregory asserts the second type of knowledge, which is superior to that of the philosophers. In *Triad* I i., in regards to Barlaam's charge of ignorance directed towards monastics, as well as the need for mediated revelation of God, Gregory expresses his inability to answer the question; however, on the basis of

monastic practice he understood that what was being asserted was incorrect.[105]

Consequently, in I i. 18, he states, "By examining the nature of sensible things, these people have arrived at a certain concept of God, but not at a conception truly worthy of Him and appropriate to His blessed nature. For their 'disordered heart was darkened' by the machinations of the wicked demons who were instructing them."[106] Essentially, Gregory argues against natural theology, for the philosophers surely would have been able to reason to a concept of God that was worthy of him, rather than following the demons leading them to polytheism. Rather, philosophy properly understood is truly a "gift of God." He asks, "What then should be the work and the goal of those who seek the wisdom of God in creatures? Is it not the acquisition of the truth, and the glorification of the Creator? This is clear to all. But the knowledge of the pagan philosophers has fallen away from both these aims."[107] He then discusses the use of serpents for medicine, and how this serves as an analogy for the proper use of pagan philosophy.

> In the case of secular wisdom, you must first kill the serpent, in other words, overcome the pride that arises from this philosophy. How difficult that is! "The arrogance of philosophy has nothing in common with humility," as the saying goes. Having overcome it, then, you must separate and cast away the head and tail, for these things are evil in the highest degree. By the head, I mean manifestly wrong opinions concerning things intelligible and divine and primordial; and by the tail, the fabulous stories concerning created things. As to what lies between the head and the tail, that is, discourses on nature, you must separate out useless ideas by means of the faculties of examination and inspection possessed by the soul, just as pharmacists purify the flesh of serpents with fire and water.[108]

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[105]Palamas, *Triads*, 25-26.

[106]Ibid., 26.

[107]Ibid., 28. See also, Palamas, *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, 113.

[108]Ibid., 29.

Thus, secular wisdom is not evil in and of itself, as along as it stays within its proper

bounds. Like its subject matter it is limited to the sphere of creation. Once it attempts to

transgress the bounds of creation to a higher order, it results in impiety. Gregory

continues:

> Nonetheless, if you put to good use that part of the profane wisdom which
> has been well excised, no harm can result, for it will naturally have become
> an instrument for good. But even so, it cannot in the strict sense be called a
> gift of God and a spiritual thing, for it pertains to the order of nature and is
> not sent from on high.[109]

If one cannot come to a knowledge of God through creation, then how does one

arrive at a knowledge of God? For Palamas knowledge of God comes to the person who

has prepared to receive the divine illumination. It is a gift of God.

> The human mind also, and not only the angelic, transcends itself, and by
> victory over the passions acquires an angelic form. It, too, will attain to that
> light and will become worthy of a supernatural vision of God, not seeing the
> divine essence, but seeing God by a revelation appropriate and analogous to
> Him. One sees, not in a negative way–for one does see something–but in a
> manner superior to negation. For God is not only beyond knowledge, but
> also beyond unknowing; His revelation itself is also truly a mystery of a
> most divine and an extraordinary kind, since the divine manifestations, even
> if symbolic, remain unknowable by reason of their transcendence.[110]

Since God is transcendent and the human mind is limited by its createdness, how does the

mind perceive God? Gregory states that in the transcendent ecstatic experience of the

divine light, the mind is transformed, it "becomes supercelestial" due to its union with

God. In such a state the mind "contemplates supernatural and ineffable visions being

filled with all the immaterial knowledge of a higher light." "Then it is no longer the

sacred symbols accessible to the senses that it contemplates, nor yet the variety of Sacred

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[109]Ibid.

[110]Ibid., 32.

Scriptures that it knows; it is made beautiful by the creative and primordial Beauty, and illumined by the radiance of God."[111] This experience of God, then, is an incomprehensible knowledge. "Those who see, in fact, do not know the one who enables them to see, hear and be initiated into knowledge of the future, or experience of eternal things, for the Spirit by whom they see is incomprehensible."[112]

Yet, this incomprehensible knowledge of God is positive knowledge. "Contemplation, then, is not simply abstraction and negation; it is a union and a divinisation which occurs mystically and ineffably by the grace of God, after stripping away of everything from here below which imprints itself on the mind, or rather after the cessation of all intellectual activity; it is something which goes beyond abstraction (which is only the outward mark of the cessation)."[113] Thus, for Gregory divine knowledge is not only apophatic it has also a cataphatic quality. In the *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* he states, "Apophatic theology does not contradict nor does it deny cataphatic theology; rather, with respect to cataphatic statements about God, it shows that they are true and are made in an orthodox manner, and that God does not possess these things as we do."[114] As John Meyendorff writes, "Thus, the cataphatic and apophatic 'theologies' are relegated by Palamas to the domain of natural thought in so far as they depend on an 'intellection' and only bring a knowledge of God 'through beings.'"[115] Through

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[111]Ibid., 33.

[112]Ibid., 34.

[113]Ibid., 34-35.

[114]Palamas, *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, 225.

[115]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 210.

Dionysian conceptualization, Palamas is able to liberate theological methodology from its philosophical moorings. Any conceptualization of God, either apophatically or cataphatically can be transcended. In order to escape Barlaam's agnosticism, Gregory appeals to the one experience that is real: "'the complete and unadulterated existence in us of Jesus.'" Meyendorff states, "The presence of God in us is therefore a personal existence and it excludes all definition of the divine Being in the context of an essentialist philosophy."[116]

This means then that the experience of God is a positive knowledge of God that goes beyond natural means of knowing, i.e., the physical senses and the human intellect.[117] Barlaam had argued that all knowledge comes only through the senses. Revelation of God was apprehended through the natural senses. Thus he placed an emphasis on philosophical knowledge of creation. However, Gregory refutes this position by arguing that the experience of God, which brings about positive knowledge of God occurs outside of creation and the natural means of knowing. He states,

> Do you now understand that in place of the intellect, the eyes and ears, they [the hesychasts] acquire the incomprehensible Spirit and by Him hear, see and comprehend? For if all their intellectual activity has stopped, how could the angels and angelic men see God except by the power of the Spirit? This is why their vision is not a sensation, since they do not receive it through the senses; nor is it intellection, since they do not find it through thought or the knowledge that comes thereby, but after the cessation of all mental activity. It is not, therefore, the product of either imagination or reason; it is neither an opinion nor a conclusion reached by syllogistic argument.[118]

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[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid., 206-07.

[118]Palamas, *Triads*, 35.

But this experience of God is not a participation in the essence of God. "However, the union of God the Cause of all with those worthy transcends that light. God, while remaining entirely in Himself, dwells entirely in us by His superessential power; and communicates to us not His nature, but His proper glory and splendour."[119]

The Sixth Ecumenical Council had established the Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor that every nature must have a will or energy. This teaching safeguarded the two natures and two wills in Jesus Christ, human and divine. Without this teaching, salvation was in jeopardy, for how could the human nature exist without a will or energy? Furthermore, in the doctrine of the hypostatic union, the human nature is united to the divine hypostasis, i.e., it is a personal union, not an essential union. In this manner, the human nature, according to the teaching of Leontius of Byzantium, is enhypostasized in the divine hypostasis of the Second Person of the Trinity. The human nature then participates in the energy of the divine hypostasis bringing about its deification. Human beings, united to the human nature of Christ participate in that deifying energy of the divine hypostasis not by an essentialist union with the human nature, but a hypostatic union in and through the human energy, allowing then for a participation in the deifying energy of Christ. If an essentialist union is held, whereby the human nature is united to the divine hypostasis by nature, then the possibility exists for a polyhypostatization of the

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[119]Ibid., 39.

divinity.[120] Instead of a Trinity of three hypostases, a Poly-Unity would exist leading to pantheism.[121]

Gregory, as we have previously argued, believed that his theology was a continuation of the teachings of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. If God has a divine nature, then he must also have a divine energy, otherwise God would not exist. This divine energy allows for the experience of God by creation, for if creation experienced God in and through the divine essence, then God's transcendence would be obliterated, and the result would be pantheism and the loss of personal existence. But since the basis of Palamas's thought is the positive experience of God, then that experience must be on the basis of the divine energy. Meyendorff writes, "It is the real experience of God which is the best 'proof' of his existence, for it touches that existence itself: 'Contemplation surpassing intellectual activities is the only means, the plainest means, the means *par excellence* to show the real existence of God and the fact that he transcends beings. For

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[120]See Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 183-84. See also, Christos Yannaras, "The Distinction Between Essence and Energies and Its Importance for Theology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (summer 1975): 232-45.

[121]This is definitely the problem that occurs with the Russian Sophiologists, who give the Divine Wisdom (an energy) hypostatic existence, bringing the whole race of humanity into the Divine Essence. See the discussion in chapter six concerning the sophiology of Bulgakov. This also may be a problem with the theology of John Zizioulas. By denying the distinction between essence and energy, he raises "communion" and "love" to an ontological status of the person. The person is united to Christ ontologically. Does this mean "essentially" or "energetically?" If it is the latter, then Zizioulas's personalism may be able to be maintained. However, if it is an essentialist union, then does this not make possible the problem here discussed? Zizioulas seeks to maintain God's transcendence through logical freedom, however, if an ontological union occurs that is essentialist then pantheism is the result. Zizioulas also avoids this by arguing that the union between Christ and the human is a "hypostatic" or personal union. Thus, Zizioulas attempts to steer clear of the problems associated with Palamism, while also attempting to avoid the problem of pantheism. In the end, the question remains as to whether he has been able to secure human freedom. See John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: 1985).

how could the essence of God not exist, since the glory of that divine nature makes itself seen by men?'"[122] As demonstrated above, the knowability of God is firmly rooted in a free divine gift of revelation. This revelation is in and through the divine energy.

This self-communication of the divine Being is not an essentialist communication, but rather a personal communion between humanity and divinity. In this self-communication of God, God's personal Being is communicated to the human person. In understanding this communication, Palamas conceives his greatest theological understanding: "'The essence,' he writes, 'is necessarily being, but being is not necessarily essence.'" This distinction provides the opening for participation in God's Being without participation in his essence. The problem with Barlaam was that he maintained an essentialist understanding of the divine Being. Such an understanding logically prevents a distinction between essence and energy, for it violates the logical principle of the divine simplicity. Yet, Gregory maintains the doctrine of divine simplicity in the Being of God while making a distinction between the divine essence and energies. For Palamas the divine simplicity is able to be defended through a personalist or hypostatic understanding of God.[123]

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[122]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 211.

[123]It is my contention that the western criticisms of Palamism are due to the fact that the western understanding of God is predicated on an essentialist understanding of divinity deriving from Greek metaphysics, either Platonic or Aristotelian. Martin Jugie and Sebastien Guichardon due to their essentialism have to divorce Palamas from the patristic tradition in order to provide a continuity with the west. In this regard, Palamism is an innovation, yet the historical and theological continuity of the thought of Gregory Palamas is maintained by the teaching of the Eastern Christian churches. Additionally, theological critiques of Palamas that argue that he removes the necessity for the Trinity or Christology fail to take into account the distinct roles of the Son and Spirit in his theology as well as his ecclesiology and sacramentalism as means to experience the deifying grace of God. Gregory does not offer a theological system, only a defense of the transcendence

M. Edmund Hussey has elucidated Palamas's teaching on the personalist nature of the divine energy. Palamas emphasizes that the divine energy is not a hypostasis; rather it is always enhypostasized in the divine Persons. This is an important theological point, for if the divine energy was not enhypostasized, then the experience of God in and through the divine energy would be through another hypostasis creating a Tetrarchy in place of a Trinity, leading to pantheism, once again. Instead, the enhypostatization of the divine energy allows for the participation of persons in the divine Son of God. Furthermore, Hussey stresses the importance of Palamas's emphasis on the singularity of the divine energy that is common to all three Persons in the Trinity. In this Palamas follows Maximus's important argument that energy or will follows nature not hypostasis.

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of God that allows for a real personal communion to occur between the person and God, chiefly through the deifying energy that the Son and Spirit bestow upon the human person. An essentialist understanding of God, even under the guise of personalism, fails to grasp the importance of this doctrine for theology. For contemporary criticisms of Palamism, see in particular Dorothea Wendebourg, "From the Cappadocian Fathers to Gregory Palamas: The Defeat of Trinitarian Theology," *Studia Patristica* 17, pt. 1 (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1982): 194-98; and Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1993), 181-205. For a response to LaCugna, see Michael Hryniuk, "Triumph or Defeat of the Trinity? An Eastern Christian Response to Catherine LaCugna," *Diakonia* 33, no. 1 (2000): 5-26. David Coffey has attempted to answer the critique of Roman Catholic Thomists against Palamism by arguing that Palamas did not hold to a "real" distinction between the divine essence and divine energy. Holding to this position, he then argues for a reassessment of Palamism on the basis of later scholasticism, especially the thought of Karl Rahner and his philosophical category of quasi-formal causality. However, Coffey's attempt, while sincere, does not do justice to the Palamite distinction, and the application of foreign scholastic categories to Palamite thought contorts and obliterates it to the point that it is simply meaningless, although he attempts to salvage it by arguing for an equation of the divine energy with the role of the Holy Spirit. But, the question that his work raises is simply why hold to a distinction to begin with? It is apparent, though, that like most scholastic theology he is attempting to find a true place for the Holy Spirit in the life of the Trinity that is not subordinate to the Son, which the western doctrine of the Trinity implies. See David Coffey, "The Palamite Doctrine of God: A New Perspective," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (summer 1988): 329-58.

If energy were to follow hypostasis, then the unity of the Trinity would be obliterated through the existence of three divine natures adhering to each of the divine Persons. The divine energy, then, is common to all three Persons of the Trinity, allowing for a perichoresis of personhood in the Trinity.[124]

Furthermore, Palamas argues that the divine simplicity is protected through the "divisible indivisibility" of the divine energy. He writes, "The divine transcendent being is never named in the plural. But the divine and uncreated grace and energy of God is divided indivisibly according to the image of the sun's ray which gives warmth, light, life and increase, and sends its own radiance to those who are illuminated and manifests itself to the eyes of those who see. In this way, in the manner of an obscure image, the divine energy of God is called not only one but also many by the theologians." He continues, "Therefore the powers and energies of the divine Spirit are uncreated and because theology speaks of them in the plural they are indivisibly distinct from the one and altogether indivisible substance of the Spirit."[125]

The essence–energies distinction in Gregory's thought is enunciated due to his concern to protect the radical transcendence of God on the one hand, and on the other to allow for a real participation of the human being in the glory of God that leads to a real deification of the person. Thus, the essence–energies distinction is the means by which Gregory understands God's relationship with creation. Meyendorff comments that Gregory is very familiar with the patristic view "that 'to beget is the property of nature, and to create that of energy.'" The procession of the Spirit and the generation of the Son

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[124]See M. Edmund Hussey, "The Persons–Energy Structure in the Theology of St. Gregory Palamas," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 18 (fall 1974): 22-43.

[125]Palamas, *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, 163.

are due to the divine nature not to the divine will or energy. Creation, however, is understood to be a work of the common divine energy, allowing, through the perichoretic understanding of the hypostases in the Trinity, all three Persons to participate in the creative act proper to each hypostasis. This distinction protects the divinity of the Son and Spirit, for if they were products of the divine will or energy, then they would be creatures and not divine. Meyendorff argues that Gregory's (and the patristic) distinction between "begetting" and "creating" manifest in the divine nature and the divine will respectively, is an attempt to steer between Eunomianism on the one hand and Sabellianism on the other. Gregory does not want to maintain with Eunomius that creation participates in the divine essence, which leads to pantheism, or with Sabellius that the Son and Spirit are subordinate to the Father, leading to their creaturehood à la Arius. If there is no distinction between nature and will, essence and energy, then Akindynos and Gregoras are correct, and creation, then, subsists within God, leading to pantheism. Gregory's theology protects against pantheism on the one hand, while allowing a real participation in the Being of God by creation on the other hand.[126]

Furthermore, the essence–energies distinction protects the freedom of God. If God creates by virtue of his divine nature, then creation is a natural act whereby God is determined by his very nature to create. It is not a free act that God chooses to do; rather, it is more like a Plotinian emanation from the divine essence, giving it at least a semi-divine existence. However, if God creates by virtue of his will or energy, then creation is a free act on the part of God that does not affect the divine simplicity nor lead to pantheism, but rather a dependence upon the Creator for its sustenance. Furthermore, the

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[126]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 221-22.

distinction allows for both the existence of God outside of time while he creates within time.[127]

Thus, Gregory, by holding to a personalist understanding of the Being of God, escapes the philosophical problems associated with an essentialist understanding.[128] His interlocutors, Barlaam, Akindynos, and Gregoras, all held essentialist positions, unable to reconcile their understanding of God with that which the hesychast monks understood through their religious experience as well as their reading of the theology of the ascetic tradition. Neoplatonic understandings of God, either derived from Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius or Augustine, in the case of Barlaam, were unable to accept the distinctions that Gregory made in his understanding of the Being of God. With their theological positions, based on an essentialist understanding of the divinity, Gregory's opponents had no ability to articulate a theology of experience, which Gregory's theology presupposed.

In the Orthodox monastic tradition, there was always the temptation toward neoplatonic denial of the human body in the spiritual life. However, Gregory's understanding of creation leading toward deification avoids this temptation. Gregory, following the Macarian tradition of anthropology affirms the goodness of creation, including the human body. According to George Papademetriou, Gregory is firmly rooted in a biblical understanding of the human being, apart from Greek metaphysics.[129] This human being, which is both *psyche* and *soma*, is created as the height of creation, combining both the physical and spiritual in his being. Gregory states,

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[127]Ibid., 222-23.

[128]Ibid., 223.

[129]George C. Papademetriou, "The Human Body According to Saint Gregory Palamas," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 34 (fall 1989): 1-3.

> He did not derive everything from this matter and the sensible world like the other animals but the body only; the soul he derived from the realities beyond the world, or rather, from God himself through an ineffable insufflation, like some great and marvelous creation, superior to the universe, overseeing the universe and set over all creatures, capable of both knowing and receiving God, and, more than any, capable of manifesting the exceeding greatness of the Artificer; and not only is the human soul capable of receiving God through struggle and grace, but also it was able to be united with God in a single hypostasis.[130]

In the creation of humanity, the capacity is given by God for communion in the very nature of humanity. The human soul is created to be united with God. This communion is hypostatic, that is personal, involving soul and body. Thus, the purpose of creation is communion with God. Humanity, combining both the physical and the spiritual aspects of creation, unites creation with God through communion with him. St. Paul states, "For creation groans awaiting the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). Through the salvation of humanity, creation itself is saved, being brought into the deifying energy of God. Thus, creation of humanity implies its deification through communion with God.

The heart of Gregory's theology is his understanding of deification as a real experience of communion with the glory of God. The human being in the process of deification does not commune with the divine essence, as Akindynos and Gregoras maintained. Rather, deification occurs through the deifying energy of the deified humanity of Jesus Christ. By being united to him through sacramental participation in the life of the Body of Christ, the church, the human person enters into communion with the deified humanity of Christ, leading to its experience of deification.[131] Because of his

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[130]Palamas, *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, 108-09.

[131]See Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 161. Gregory's ecclesiology and sacramentalism are paramount for understanding his doctrine of deification, for it is through the church and its sacraments that the person is united to the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ.

sacramentalism and his emphasis on the church, Gregory's thought cannot be construed as Messalian, as accused by Barlaam and some of Gregory's western opponents. "Palamas's thought is perfectly clear on this subject; redeeming, sanctifying and deifying grace is bound up with baptism and the Eucharist. It is completely and objectively present in the Church."[132]

Baptism and the Eucharist unite the person to Christ, allowing for the working of the deifying grace of Christ's deified humanity in the person's being. The person then, in order to complete the deifying activity of the working of grace, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, cooperates with that grace through purifying the soul and body, preparing them for divine illumination and sanctification. This doctrine of "synergy," or cooperation, preserves human freedom while also allowing for the efficacy of the divine grace in the person. Furthermore, against the Platonism of Barlaam, Gregory affirms that it is not only the mind which experiences the deifying energy, it is also the body. Through ascetic effort, the body is purified with the soul for this experience. "Man then rises to what Gregory calls a 'divine state' (εξις θεία), the result of collaboration (συνεργία) between grace and human effort manifested in 'the practice of the commandments': 'It is when thou hast in thy soul the divine state, that thou really possessest God within thyself; and the true divine state is love towards God, and it only survives by practice of the divine commandments."[133]

Gregory follows the teaching of the hesychast fathers in prescribing the means by which the person is purified. Through the ascetic disciplines, the person achieves

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[132]Ibid.

[133]Ibid., 165.

detachment from the things of this world, quieting the passions that attack the soul and

lead it astray from its proper aim. The monk achieves detachment through the practice of

hesychasm, or solitude. Gregory writes to the abbess Xenia, "You can be completely

healed from all these things if you become aware of divine glory and long for it while

regarding yourself as unworthy of it, and if you patiently endure people's scorn while

thinking you deserve it." Furthermore, he tells her, "A great help in healing these

passions is withdrawal from the world and living a life of solitude, keeping yourself to

your cell."[134] Gregory describes the state of detachment:

> Impassibility does not consist in mortifying the passionate part of the soul,
> but in removing it from evil to good, and directing its energies towards
> divine things . . . and the impassible man is one who no longer possesses
> any evil dispositions, but is rich in good ones, who is marked by the virtues,
> as men of passion are marked by evil pleasures; who has tamed his irascible
> and concupiscent appetites (which constitute the passionate part of the
> soul), to the faculties of knowledge, judgement and reason in the soul, just
> as men of passion subject their reason to the passions.[135]

Gregory goes on to say that the person who has achieved detachment or impassibility

"has put that part of his soul under subjection, so that by its obedience to the mind, which

is by nature appointed to rule, it may ever tend towards God, as is right, by the

uninterrupted remembrance of Him." Through this constant remembrance of God, the

person is elevated to the higher spiritual states, allowing for the achievement of the

commandments, acquisition of the love of God, and the ability to love one's neighbor.[136]

As we have seen, the "remembrance of God" in the ascetic tradition of the East is

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[134]Gregory Palamas, "To the Reverend Nun Xenia," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 4, compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, ed. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 307.

[135]Palamas, *Triads*, 54.

[136]Ibid., 54-55.

connected with the concept of pure prayer, through the use of the Jesus Prayer. Once the

nous and heart are united in the remembrance of God, which is a gift of God's deifying

grace, the person is prepared for the gift of the vision of the divine light of Tabor.

Gregory teaches that the person who is worthy to experience the glory of God

experiences a transformation of the senses that allows him to perceive the uncreated glory

of God as divine light. He states,

> Such a divine and heavenly life belongs to those who live in a manner
> agreeable to God, participating in the inseparable life of the Spirit, such as
> Paul himself lived, "the divine and eternal life of Him Who indwelt him," as
> St. Maximus puts it. Such a life always exists, subsisting in the very nature
> of the Spirit, Who by nature deifies from all eternity. It is properly called
> "Spirit" and "divinity" by the saints, in-so-much as the deifying gift is never
> separate from the Spirit Who gives it. It is a light bestowed in a mysterious
> illumination, and recognized only by those worthy to receive it.[137]

Barlaam, especially, opposed the hesychast teaching regarding the experience of the

uncreated light, holding that the monks in their ignorance were only experiencing the

created illumination of their mind at best. According to Gregory, Akindynos and

Gregoras had argued that either the divine light was created and thus it was a creature or

it was the divine essence itself.[138] Therefore, the monks were either contemplating

creation, which is idolatry and folly, or they were contemplating the divine essence,

which is impossible by definition. However, according to Gregory, the experience of the

divine light is revealed to us through the Transfiguration of Christ on Mt. Tabor. The

disciples witnessed the event, declaring that they had seen the divine glory transfiguring

the flesh and clothes of Christ (Luke 9: 28-36). This experience of the transfiguring

presence of the deifying glory of Christ as the divine light by Peter, James, and John is

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[137]Ibid., 71.

[138]Palamas, *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, 253-57.

also, according to Gregory, the same experience of the hesychasts. The disciples did not

receive an extra revelation about Christ or witness something new in him; rather, they

were given the ability to see Christ's divine glory that was always present. Through the

working of the Holy Spirit, their eyes were transformed, allowing them to see the

spiritual reality of Christ.[139] Thus, the Transfiguration of Christ was not something

happening to Christ, but rather, to the disciples! As Peter, James, and John experienced

the divine light of Tabor and the manifestation of the divinity of Christ, those who

practice hesychasm by purification and constant remembrance of God are given the gift

of seeing God, not in his essence but in his uncreated energy. Mantzaridis states, "On the

day of the transfiguration, when God's uncreated grace had not yet been given to man, it

illuminated the three disciples from without through the medium of their corporeal sight;

but it is subsequently bestowed on the faithful through the sacrament of the Holy

Eucharist and dwells within them, illuminating from within the eyes of the soul."[140]

Through the working of the spirit the "eyes of the soul" are purified and illuminated

allowing the experience of the vision of the uncreated light.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show the importance of Gregory Palamas in the

Orthodox theological and ascetic tradition. The confirmation of his teachings at the

councils of 1341, 1347, and 1351 established the direction of Orthodox theology for

posterity. The hesychast tradition of prayer and theology were united in the defense of

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[139]See George Mantzaridis, *Deification of Man: St Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*, tr. Liadain Sherrard (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 100-101; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 174.

[140]Ibid., 101.

Gregory against Barlaam the Calabrian, Gregory Akindynos, and Nikephoros Gregoras.

Meyendorff concludes his important study of Gregory Palamas by stating that Orthodox

theology was confirmed setting itself in direct contradiction to philosophical principles

underlying the Renaissance of the West. In the East in the thought of the anti-hesychasts,

such principles were present, but with the victory of hesychasm in the affirmation of

Gregory's theology, these principles were rightly understood to be against the spirit of

Orthodoxy.[141] In another work he writes,

> Therefore the victory of Palamas was the victory of Christian humanism
> over the pagan humanism of the Renaissance. The full measure of the
> controversy's significance can be grasped only in the light of what
> followed. An ineluctable decision was set before the Orthodox Church in
> the fourteenth century: a choice between a unitary (integral) concept of man
> based on the Bible, affirming the immediate efficacy of redemptive grace in
> every sphere of human activity, or the choice of an intellectualized
> spiritualism claiming independence for the human intellect, or at least
> autonomy from all matter, and denying that any real deification is possible
> here below. There is no doubt that the secularism of the modern age is the
> direct consequence of the second choice.[142]

This does not mean then that Orthodoxy was doomed to obscurantism. Instead,

hesychasm offers an alternative philosophy–and for Orthodoxy the "true" philosophy–

that enables communion between God and man here on earth. Secularism, whereby God

is removed from human culture, violates the very being of man, according to Orthodox

teaching. Meyendorff states that "man is not a spirit imprisoned in matter and longing to

be free, but a being who, by the very nature of his composite character, is called upon to

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[141]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 239-240.

[142]Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 171.

establish the Reign of God over matter and spirit inseparably joined."[143] Culture, as a

reflection of man's creativity, is to be an offering of humanity to the Creator, allowing for

its transfiguration and sanctification by the deifying grace of God actualized in human

creativity. Florovsky will argue for the importance of human asceticism (*podvig*) in this

struggle in bringing creation into the deifying presence of God.

Through its captivity to Islam in the Turkocratia and in its westernization from the

sixteenth through twentieth centuries, Orthodox theology divorced itself from the

spiritual life, abolishing the synthesis that Gregory had achieved in the fourteenth

century. However, in the twentieth century, certain theologians, especially of the Russian

immigration, began to realize the importance of Gregory's thought for providing an

Orthodox critique and answer to the problems that they experienced in western society.

In Greece John Romanides and Christos Yannaras pressed those criticisms in their

polemic against the West. Yet, they too attempt to offer an alternative to the problems of

secularization of the West utilizing the important thought of Gregory Palamas. As the

Exapostilarion of St. Gregory reminds the Orthodox on his feast day,

> Hail, glory of the fathers, voice of the theologians, tabernacle of inward
> stillness, dwelling-place of wisdom, greatest of teachers, deep ocean of the
> word. Hail, thou who hast practiced the virtues of the active life and
> ascended to the height of contemplation; hail, healer of man's sickness.
> Hail shrine of the Spirit; hail, father who though dead art still alive.[144]

Gregory's teaching continues to demonstrate the goal of human life: communion with

God and the deification of all of humanity in and through the Second Person of the

Trinity, Jesus Christ.

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[143]Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 240.

[144]Hierotheos, *St Gregory Palamas as a Hagiorite*, 394.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Rediscovery of Orthodox Spiritual Theology in the Twentieth Century

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, Orthodox theologians began to return to the Patristic sources for their theology. This return to the fathers of the church came about for several reasons. Russian émigrés in Paris encountered Roman Catholic theologians who were also attempting to recover the patristic tradition. This encounter with Western theologians forced the Orthodox thinkers to define their own uniqueness. Furthermore, some of the Roman Catholic interpretations of the thought of Gregory Palamas and hesychasm were simply erroneous from an Orthodox standpoint. Orthodox writers sought to correct these misunderstandings of the Eastern spiritual tradition. Most importantly, Orthodox writers realized that the theology that they had studied from the nineteenth century was not patristic and simply did not offer the solutions to the spiritual malaise that had grasped Europe following the First World War. In this, Orthodox theology was not able to answer the human existential predicament due to its basis in German idealism. Orthodox writers, beginning with the Romanian, Dumitru Staniloae, and the Russian émigrés, began the search for a proper Orthodox theology that would offer to Europe a solution to the problems of modern humanity. They found their solution in the spiritual theology of the Eastern tradition, especially the work of St. Gregory Palamas.

Especially important for the rediscovery of the spiritual tradition of Orthodox theology was the work of the Russian émigrés, Vladimir Lossky and Fr. John Meyendorff. Lossky was the first theologian to develop a theology centered on the thought of Palamas and the Orthodox spiritual tradition. Meyendorff continued the work of elucidating the thought of Palamas and making it available to the western Christian world. In this chapter I will describe the work of some of the major Orthodox contributors to the revival of Palamism in the twentieth century.

<div align="center">Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Churches</div>

The rediscovery of the thought of St. Gregory Palamas can be situated within the ecumenical relationship that was developing between Roman Catholic scholars and the Russian Orthodox émigrés following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Roman Catholic scholars had begun to study the Eastern theological and ascetical tradition during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to bring about the reunion of the Orthodox churches with the Roman Catholic Church. Especially during the pontificates of Benedict XV (1914 -1922) and Pius XI (1922-1939), increasing emphasis was placed upon the reconciliation of the two traditions and the support of the Eastern Catholic churches. During the reigns of these two popes, the development and establishment of Oriental studies programs were encouraged in many of the great Roman Catholic schools in Europe. Benedict XV in his Motu Proprio of May 1, 1917, *Dei providentis,* created the Congregation for the Oriental Church, which had been a section of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith since 1862.[1] He placed himself as the prefect of the

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[1] Benedict XV, "Dei providentis," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis: Commentarium Officiale* IX (Nov 1917): 529-531.

Congregation, signifying how important he considered the mission to be.[2] The purpose

of the Congregation was to provide oversight and direction to the Eastern Catholic

churches.[3] In that same year, Benedict XV established the Pontifical Oriental Institute in

Rome.[4] The purpose of the institute was to inform the Roman Catholic Church about the

Churches of the East, "thereby preparing those who would work with Orientals to do

their task better and helping the Orientals themselves to a deeper understanding of their

own traditions and rites."[5] But as Edward Farrugio has commented, Benedict "wavered

between a missionary and an academic goal of the Oriental Institute."[6] His successor,

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[2]John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), 195.

[3]Joseph Gill, SJ. "Higher Studies and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches," in *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-five Years 1917-1992* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana, 1993), 135.

[4]Benedict XV, "Orientis catholici," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis: Commentarium Officale* IX (Nov 1917): 531-533. Edward G. Farrugia, SJ has shown that the desire to create a separate ministry for the Oriental churches goes back to the Eucharist Conference of Jerusalem in 1893. The following year the Melkite patriarch Gregory Youssef proposed the idea to Pope Leo XIII at the Conference of Patriarchs. At this conference Leo XIII commented several times his desire to establish a pontifical institute for Oriental studies. See Edward G. Farrugia, SJ, "The Theological Profile of the Pontifical Oriental Institute," in *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-five Years 1917-1992* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana, 1993), 14. See also Cyrille Korolevskij, "La foundation de l'Institut Pontifical Oriental," in *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-five Years 1917-1992* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana, 1993), 66-72; P. Vincenzo Poggi, SJ, "Il settantennio del Pontificio Istituto Orientale," in *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-five Years 1917-1992* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana, 1993), 49-50; and Giuseppe M. Croce, "Alle origini della Congregazione Orientale e del Pontificio Istituto Orientale: Il contributo di Mons. Louis Petit," in *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-five Years 1917-1992* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana, 1993), 147-207.

[5]Gill, "Higher Studies," 135.

[6]Farrugia, "Theological Profile," 14.

Pius XI, commented on the importance of the establishment of this institute and placed it under the leadership of the Society of Jesus in his 1928 encyclical *Rerum Orientalium*.[7] It was at this institute and its sister schools that much of the Roman Catholic research was produced in regards to Eastern Orthodoxy.

While the initial intent of the establishment of the Congregation for the Eastern Church and the Pontifical Oriental Institute was the potential reunion of the Orthodox churches with the Roman Catholic Church, it can also be argued that the Roman pontiffs were also jealously guarding their own against the threat of an Orthodox revival in the declining Ottoman Empire. John Pollard writes, "While Benedict was ultimately concerned with the great goal of the hoped-for reunion of the schismatic churches, for which he had instituted a prayer in 1916, his initial concerns were about defending the rights, and in some cases the existence, of the eastern branches of the Roman Catholic Church."[8] Furthermore, the Oriental Christians in communion with Rome who lived in the crumbling Ottoman Empire suffered the most during the First World War. As Pollard notes, "For the Vatican in the months immediately following the end of the First World War, the future for Catholicism in the Middle East looked very bleak indeed."[9] Along with the persecution of Catholic Christians in the Middle East, the Vatican was increasingly alarmed at the potential of the reestablishment of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople. The reestablishment of an Orthodox Empire on the borders of Catholic Europe, with Russia being the driving political force, would challenge Roman Catholic

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[7]Pius XI, "Rerum Orientalium," in *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939*, ed. Claudia Carlen Ihm (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 329-34.

[8]Pollard, 195.

[9]Ibid., 196.

hegemony in Eastern Europe. Additionally, Greek aims in realizing the *Megali Idea* and placing all Greek speaking Christians under the authority of Constantinople represented a grave threat to Roman Catholic claims.[10] The Vatican faced the potential reality of losing the Oriental churches in the Ottoman Empire following World War I. In this context, the increasing desire of the Vatican to shore up its claims of catholic unity is understandable. *Dei providentis* and *Orientis catholici* as well as the encyclical *Principi Apostolorum Petro*, which elevated the fourth century Syrian saint, Ephrem, to Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, were promulgated in order to maintain unity with the Roman Church. It is interesting to note, as Pollard comments, that *Principi Apostolorum Petro* in its title asserts the primacy of the See of Peter over the Christian Church.[11] The first paragraph of the encyclical states, "And on this mystical rock [Peter] the foundation of the entire ecclesiastical structure stands firm as on a hinge. From it rises the unity of Christian charity as well as our Christian faith."[12]

From this context, Benedict's and Pius XI's concern to reach out to the Eastern churches, both those which were in union with Rome and those Orthodox churches which maintained their independence, can be understood. In order to better communicate with and understand the Oriental Christians, these two pontiffs promoted programs of Oriental studies. The Pontifical Oriental Institute was the chief means for achieving this end.

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[10]Ibid., 196-98.

[11]Ibid., 196.

[12]Benedict XV, "Principi Apostolorum Petro," in *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939*, ed. Claudia Carlen Ihm, (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 195.

While Eastern Christian spirituality was not originally studied at the Institute, courses in Orthodox theology, liturgics, canon law, and history were offered.[13] One of the first professors of theology at the Institute was the Assumptionist Fr. Martin Jugie, who later moved to the Lateran Athenaeum after the Institute was placed under the authority of the Jesuits in 1928. Jugie had previously taught Eastern Christian theology "at the seminary of Kadiköy across the Bosphorus from Istanbul."[14] His influence upon the teaching of theology at the Institute cannot be overstated.[15]

During this time, Fr. Martin Jugie[16] and Sebastien Guichardon[17] both argued against the teachings of Gregory Palamas, asserting that the thought of Palamas was heretical. In his entry in the *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, Jugie asserts that Palamas's distinction between the essence and energies of God is fundamentally a "grave philosophical error" and "a veritable heresy" according to Catholic doctrine.[18] Bishop Basil Krivocheine notes in his work on Palamas that Jugie "expresses the hope that his exposition of the history of the Palamite controversy will supply these Roman Catholic

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[13]See Farrugia, "Theological Profile," 38-39.

[14]Ibid., 15-16.

[15]Ibid., 16-17.

[16]Martin Jugie, "Palamas Grégoire," in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, vol. 11, (Paris, 1903-1950), 1735-1776; "Palamite (Controverse)," in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, vol. 11, (Paris, 1903-1950), 1777-1818; "De Theologia Palamitica," in *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium* (Paris, 1933), 47-183; "Les origins de la méthode d'oraison des hésychaste," *Echos d'Orient* 30 (1931): 179-85.

[17]Sebastien Guichardon, *Le probleme de la simplicité divine en Orient et en Occident aux XIV et XVcc. Grégoire Palamas, Duns Scott, Georges Scholarios* (Lyons, 1933).

[18]Jugie, "Palamas," 1764.

theologians who are in difficulties with the arguments they lack in their struggles with Orthodoxy." Additionally, Krivocheine comments that Jugie holds that the Orthodox acceptance of Palamite thought was granted by God as a "chastisement" "for her refusal to accept the infallibility of the Pope." In regards to Guichardon, Krivocheine states that his methodology is "even more primitive." "In some parts of his work he is satisfied with the superficial rational explanation of the peculiarity of Gregory's doctrine by the low level of culture of the milieu in which it arose . . . ."[19] Furthermore, Jugie and Guichardon both accuse Palamas as being an innovator and creating a novel theology.[20] Guichardon, writes Krivocheine, even justifies his argument of Palamas's innovation by asserting that Palamas "falsified the texts of the holy fathers" without offering any proof.[21]

In continuing the work of Oriental studies in Western Europe, other Catholic theologians became involved in studying the Eastern and patristic spiritual tradition. The Catholic *ressourcement* movement, which included such notable theologians as Jean Danielou, Henri de Lubac, and Yves Congar, began the auspicious project of cataloguing and translating the fathers into French in the series *Sources Chretiennes*. Because contemporary philosophical theology had not been able to relate to the problems associated with the Great War, these Catholic theologians began a movement to retrieve the Christian tradition, which they believed would provide the answers to the existential

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[19]Basil Krivocheine, "The Ascetic and Theological Teaching of Gregory Palamas," *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1938): 154-55.

[20]Jugie, "Palamas," 1738, 1742.

[21]Krivocheine, "The Ascetic and Theological Teaching," 213. See Guichardon, *Le probleme*, 119, 183.

dilemmas of modern man. This research provided both Eastern and Western theologians

access to some of the most important texts of the Christian spiritual tradition.

The Orthodox Rediscovery of Gregory Palamas

As we have previously shown, Orthodox theology since the sixteenth century

neglected the traditional spiritual theology for western scholastic forms. In the beginning

of the twentieth century, Orthodox theologians began to research and write on the thought

of this fourteenth-century father of the church. Beginning in 1906 the Russian bishop

Aleksij wrote an article entitled, "The Mysticism of the Byzantine Church in the

Fourteenth Century." This was followed by a book by the Greek theologian, Gregory

Papamichael, entitled *St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki*.[22] While

Papamichael writes about the life of Gregory, according to Krivocheine, he "does not

give enough attention to Gregory's doctrine."[23]   It was left to the theological giants of

the Russian emigration to extrapolate Gregory's doctrine for the twentieth century.

The first major work on Gregory's theology was that of Bishop Basil Krivocheine

when he was a monk at St. Panteleimon's Monastery on Mt. Athos. He had graduated

from the Sorbonne in 1921 and moved to Mt. Athos where he remained from 1925 to

1947.[24] His treatise on St. Gregory's thought *L'Enseignement Ascétique et Mystique de*

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[22]Gregory Papamichael, *St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki* (St. Petersburg and Alexandria, 1911).

[23]Krivocheine, "Ascetic and Theological Teaching," 30.

[24]Either in Paris or at St. Panteleimon, Krivocheine must have come into contact with Sophrony Sakharov, who left Paris to go to Mt. Athos in 1925. They were both members of the Russian Student Movement in the early 1920s, which was instrumental in establishing the Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris. At St. Panteleimon Monastery on Mt. Athos, Krivocheine must also have met the great Athonite staretz Silouan, who would have instructed him in the ways of hesychasm in the tradition of St.

Grégoire Palamas was published in Prague in 1936. It appeared as four articles entitled

"The Ascetic and Theological Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas," in German and English

translation in 1939.[25] Krivocheine articulated in these four articles Gregory's

understanding of the apophatic knowledge of God, his theological anthropology, the

distinction between God's essence and energies, the uncreated light, and the meaning of

Gregory's thought for contemporary Orthodoxy.[26] In regards to Gregory's significance

for Orthodox theology, Krivocheine states, "To sum up in short the significance of

Gregory Palamas in the development of Orthodox thought, we may say that the

traditional ascetico-mystical teaching of the Orthodox East not only finds in his works its

final and systematic expression but also its theological and philosophical justification."[27]

At the same time that Krivocheine was writing his treatise on Palamas, the

Romanian theologian, Fr. Dumitru Staniloae also made the discovery of Palamite

thought. After completing seminary at Cernauti in 1927, where he was instructed in the

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Paissy Velichovsky. Sophrony became the chief expositor of the teaching of Staretz
Silouan and his hagiographer. See Archimandrite Sophrony, *The Monk of Mount Athos,*
tr. Rosemary Edmonds, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973, 2001);
The Undistorted Image: Staretz Silouan: 1866-1938, tr. Rosemary Edmonds, (London:
The Faith Press, 1958); *St. Silouan the Athonite* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's
Seminary Press, 1999). For information on Sophrony Sakharov, see Nicholas V.
Sakharov, *I Love Therefore I Am: The Theological Legacy of Archimandrite Sophrony*
(Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), and the introduction to
Archimandrite Sophrony, *His Life Is Mine*, tr. Rosemary Edmonds (Crestwood, NY: St.
Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 7-13.

[25]George Mantzaridis, "Der heilige Gregorius Palamas und die russische
Theologie unserer Zeit," in *Tausend Jahre Christentum in Rußland: Zum Millennium der
Taufe der Kiever Rus`*, ed. Karl Christian Felmy, Georg Kretschmar, Fairy von
Lilienfeld, and Claus-Jürgen Roepke, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988),
682-83.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Krivocheine, "The Ascetic and Theological Teaching," 207.

westernized theology popular at the time, Staniloae spent the next two years studying

abroad in Athens, Munich, Berlin, and Paris. In Paris he transcribed some unpublished

texts of Palamas stored at the Bibliotheque Nationale. In 1928 he completed his doctoral

dissertation on Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem and Romania. The following year he

returned to his native Romania where he became professor of theology at the Theological

Institute of Sibiu.[28]

As a professor, Staniloae became increasingly dissatisfied with the available

theological manuals. He began a translation of Christos Androutsos's *Dogmatics*,[29] with

which he became familiar in Athens. However, Androutsos's theology was much like the

western style theology of which he was instructed as a seminarian. As Lucian Turcescu

has noted, Staniloae's realization of Androutsos's scholastic approach to theology and his

"rediscovery of the Fathers of the Church led Staniloae to be among the first to break

with the scholastic approach that dominated Christian theology during the first half of the

twentieth century."[30]

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[28]Kallistos Ware, "Foreward," in Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 1, *The Experience of God*, tr. Ioan Ionita and Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994), x-xi.

[29]Kallistos Ware comments that Androutsos's *Dogmatics* (1907) together with the three-volume *Dogmatics* (1959-1961) of Panagiotis Trembelas and the work of Ioannis Karmiris represents the "theology of the university lecture room, academic and scholastic rather than liturgical and mystical." Additionally, the methodology employed by these University of Athens theologians is "borrowed from the west." See Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), 140-41. As we will see, it is their theology that John Romanides will respond to in his dissertation. To this day, Androutsos's and Trembelas's dogmatic theology represent the standard texts of Orthodox theology in Greece.

[30]Lucian Turcescu, "Introduction," in *Dumitru Staniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology*, ed. Lucian Turcescu (Iasi: The Center for Romanian Studies, 2002), 7. See also, Andrew Louth, "The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology of Dumitru Staniloae," in the same volume.

In 1938 Staniloae published his first original work, entitled *The Life and Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas*. While Krivocheine had responded to the work of the Roman Catholic theologians Jugie and Guichardon and provided an Orthodox understanding of Palamas's theology, Staniloae was able to add to the Orthodox position on Palamas because of his previous work on the unpublished manuscripts of Palamas in Paris, which were unknown by Krivocheine.[31] Throughout his dogmatic works, the influence of Palamite thought, especially the distinction between the essence and energies of God, is apparent.

Unfortunately, Staniloae's work is relatively unknown outside of Romania due to the lack of translation, and his theology has had little influence on the development of Orthodox thought outside of his native land. However, Staniloae's work is important in that it demonstrates the change occurring in Orthodox theology, from academic and scholastic methods and categories to the ancient patristic and mystical methodologies witnessed in the majority of contemporary Orthodox theological works henceforth.

In Paris, another Russian continued to develop the work of Krivocheine on Palamas. Archimandrite Cyprian Kern, a student and later a professor at the Russian Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris, published his first work on Palamas in 1947 entitled, "Elements of the Theology of Gregory Palamas." While Krivocheine had emphasized and defended the ascetical and mystical practice of Palamas, Kern emphasized and developed Palamas's theological teachings.[32] Palamas scholar Georgios Mantzaridis comments that Kern emphasized the importance of apophatic theology for

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[31]Ware, "Foreward," xii.

[32]Mantzaridis, "Der heilige Gregorius Palamas," 683-84.

the Orthodox tradition. "Apophatic theology does not fight kataphatic theology nor disproves it. Apophatic theology 'shows that the kataphatic attributes of God are true and pious in relation to God; God however possesses it not as we do.'"[33] From this apophatic methodology, Kern elucidated Palamas's "distinction between nature, energy, and hypostasis in the Trinity and the number of the divine energies and their relationship with the divine nature."[34]

Kern continued his work on Palamas's theology with his next manuscript entitled, *The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas.*[35] In this work, he developed the anthropological thought of Palamas. Kern focused on Palamas's understanding of the importance of the human body for Orthodox tradition. Mantzaridis states, "the science of Palamas became…the praise song of Christian asceticism."[36] According to Mantzaridis, Kern stressed that "deification is the religious ideal of Orthodoxy."[37] Deification or *theosis* was once again asserted as the Orthodox understanding of salvation.

These early writers on the thought of St. Gregory Palamas provided the foundation on which the later Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century would build. Basil Krivocheine, Cyprian Kern, and Dumitru Staniloae had introduced the western world to the Orthodox understanding of the spiritual theology of Palamas. Russian

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[33]Ibid., 684.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Archimandrite Kiprian, *Antropologija sv. Grigorija Palamy* (Paris, 1950).

[36]Mantzaridis, "Der heilige Gregorius Palamas," 684.

[37]Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man: St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*, tr. Liadain Sherrard (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 12.

theologian Alexander Schmemann remarked, "It is to the merit of Basil Krivoshein [sic], and C. Kern, that they not only have given first-rate expositions of Palamism, but have also reintegrated it into creative Orthodox thought."[38] These early pioneers in the study of the mystical-ascetical tradition of the Orthodox faith enabled their successors to formulate a renewed Orthodox theology.

<p align="center">*The Palamite Theology of Vladimir Lossky*</p>

Vladimir Nikolaevich Lossky (1904-1958), son of the famous Russian exiled philosopher Nicholas Lossky, was the first Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century to utilize Palamite theology systematically. Together with Fr. Georges Florovsky, Lossky began the systematic retrieval of the Orthodox patristic tradition. Lossky was not a polemicist, arguing for the greatness of the Byzantine tradition vis-à-vis the West; rather, he desired to offer Orthodox answers to the problems within Western Christianity. According to Rowan Williams, Lossky wanted to express "what was authentically *Christian*."[39] In fact, Lossky had a genuine love for the West. He studied and later taught at the Sorbonne. His theological mentor was Etienne Gilson, who wrote the foreward to his posthumously published dissertation on Meister Eckhart. He also counted among his friends the leaders of the *nouvelle theologie*: Henri de Lubac and Jean Danielou, and he influenced the theology of Yves Congar and Louis Bouyer.[40] However, Lossky was

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[38]Alexander Schmemann, "Russian Theology: 1920-1972: An Introductory Survey," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1972): 183.

[39]Rowan Williams, "Eastern Orthodox Theology," *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David L. Ford (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1997), 506.

[40]Ibid., 506.

strident in his emphasis on theological methodology, which leads to a proper Christian understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Utilizing patristic methodology, particularly the Pseudo-Dionysian method of apophaticism, Cappadocian trinitarianism, and Palamite existentialism, Lossky produces the classic theological synthesis of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century.

The incarnation is the starting point for theology, according to Lossky. The incarnation makes theology possible, for it is the revelation of an ineffable God. "The incarnation reveals who God is, i.e., God as Trinity and as such 'forms the basis of all Christian theology.'"[41] Lossky maintains that this revelation of the Trinity that derives from the Incarnation is a "primordial fact, ultimate reality, first datum which cannot be deduced, explained or discovered by way of any other truth; for there is nothing which is prior to it."[42] The Incarnation, as the divine *katabasis,* or descent, is "God's movement manwards."[43] As such, the Incarnation is God's *oikonomia*, or revelation of His creative and redemptive work. This is to be distinguished from *theologia*, or the knowledge of God. *Oikonomia* is always a work of God's will, not a manifestation of the divine essence, which remains transcendent.[44] "To the economy in which God reveals Himself

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[41]Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God," *Modern Theology* 19 (July 2003): 358.

[42]Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), 64.

[43]Paul Negrut, "Orthodox Soteriology: *Theosis*," *Churchman* 109, no. 2 (1995): 159.

[44]Vladimir Lossky, "Apophasis and Trinitarian Theology," *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 15.

in creating the world and in becoming incarnate, we must respond by theology,

confessing the transcendent nature of the Trinity in an ascent of thought which

necessarily has an apophatic thrust."[45] Theology, then, is an *anabasis*, or an ascent, to

God, made possible by the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Incarnation.[46]

> Accordingly, the way of the knowledge of God, contrary to that of the
> manifestation of God, will be not a katabasis, a descent, but an anabasis, an
> ascent–an ascent towards the source of all manifesting energy, towards the
> "thearchy," according to the vocabulary of Pseudo-Dionysius, or towards
> the monarchy of the Father, according to the expression of St. Basil and
> other Greek Fathers of the fourth century.[47]

Consequently, this ascent is not just an intellectual experience whereby the person arrives

at the contemplation of the divine essence; rather, it is the way of union or *theosis* that

transfigures the person into the likeness of God.[48] As Lossky states,

> to know the mystery of the Trinity in its fullness is to enter into perfect
> union with God and to attain to the deification of the human creature: in
> other words, to enter into the divine life, the very life of the Holy Trinity,
> and to become, in St. Peter's words, "partakers of the divine nature"–
> θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως.[49]

The means by which this ascent and union occurs is apophaticism.

Lossky utilizes the Pseudo-Dionysian distinction between cataphatic and

apophatic theology. According to Pseudo-Dionysius, the cataphatic way is the use of

affirmations in the description of the being of God. The apophatic way employs

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[45]Ibid.

[46]Lossky states, "The descent (κατάβασις) of the divine person of Christ makes
human persons capable of an ascent (ἀνάβασις) in the Holy Spirit." "Redemption and
Deification," *In the Image and Likeness of God*, 97.

[47]Lossky, "Apophasis," 16.

[48]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 43.

[49]Ibid., 67.

negations to arrive at the unknowing of God.[50] "The first leads us to some knowledge of God, but is an imperfect way. The perfect way, the only way which is fitting in regard to God, who is of His very nature unknowable, is the second–which leads us finally to total ignorance."[51] Because God is unknowable due to His transcendence–for to know God would require the person to be God–"in order to approach him it is necessary to deny all that is inferior to Him, that is to say, all that which is."[52] Through negation one is able to arrive at total ignorance of who God is, allowing for the possibility of union to occur. "Proceeding by negations one ascends from the inferior degrees of being to the highest, by progressively setting aside all that can be known, in order to draw near to the Unknown in the darkness of absolute ignorance."[53]

The ascent to the knowledge of God is not a dialectic process or synthesis as with Aquinas. "One could not attain the transcendent Trinity of θεολογία through the notion of 'opposed relation.'" The Trinity cannot be reduced to the "logic of opposition as well as use of arithmetic numbers" because the Trinity surpasses the opposition of the Dyad. In fact, it suggests to us a distinction more radical than that of two opposites: an *absolute* difference, which can only be personal, proper to the three divine Hypostases, 'united by distinction and distinct by Union.'"[54] Instead, the ascent is a *katharsis* or purification.[55]

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[50]Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Mystical Theology," *The Complete Works*, tr. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 139.

[51]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 25.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Lossky, "Apophasis," 28.

[55]Pseudo-Dionysius, "Mystical Theology," 136-37.

The mind or *nous* is purged of all sensual and intellectual experience to arrive at absolute unknowing. Once one attains the height of unknowing, God no longer is an object of knowledge. As St. Gregory of Nyssa states,

> For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees, it keeps on penetrating deeper until by the intelligence's yearning for understanding it gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible, and there it sees God. This is the true knowledge of what is sought; this is the seeing that consists in not seeing, because that which is sought transcends all knowledge, being separated on all sides by incomprehensibility as by a kind of darkness. Wherefore John the sublime, who penetrated into the luminous darkness, says, 'No one has ever seen God' [John 1:18], thus asserting that knowledge of the divine essence is unattainable not only by men, but also by every intelligent creature.[56]

The apophatic way of knowledge, then, is not a means toward intellectual understanding of God, but rather, it is "a way towards mystical union with God, whose nature remains incomprehensible to us."[57]

However, this ascent to God by means of negation is not the same as that of Plotinus. While there is a similarity by virtue of the ascent and the means by which union is achieved, the object of the ascent is wholly different. For Plotinus, the object of union is the One. What is purged in the ascent to union is "multiplicity," which is the defining characteristic of being. The One to which one attains is "beyond being." By stripping the person of the multiplicity of being, one is then capable of achieving union with that which is beyond all being, the absolute One. However, "The ecstasy of Dionysius is a going forth from being as such. That of Plotinus is rather a reduction of being to absolute

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[56]Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, tr. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 80-81.

[57]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 26-28.

simplicity."[58] Thus, for Plotinus, God is still comprehensible as the One, as the divine

simplicity. Dionysius moves beyond Plotinus in his understanding of the Trinity, which

expresses the incomprehensibility of God. "God is neither one nor many but that He

transcends this antinomy, being unknowable in what He is."[59]

 Here Lossky reiterates the Trinitarian teaching of the Cappadocian fathers. St.

Basil, in his defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, articulated the argument of the

radical incomprehensibility of the Trinity. Demonstrating that the use of arithmetic is

inappropriate for understanding the Trinity, Basil states,

> If we count, we do *not* add, increasing from one to many. We do not say,
> "one, two, three," or "first, second, and third." God says, "I am the first and
> I am the last." We have never to this present day heard of a second God. We
> worship God from God, confessing the uniqueness of the persons, while
> maintaining the unity of the Monarchy.[60]

St. Gregory of Nazianzus states that the concept of "three" is the "'name which unites

things united by nature, and never allows those which are inseparable to be scattered by a

number which separates.'"[61] As Lossky explains, "Two is the number which separates,

three the number which transcends all separation: the one and the many find themselves

gathered and circumscribed in the Trinity."[62] One may object that Gregory is utilizing

the number "three" to circumscribe the Trinity; however, what Gregory is doing is to

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[58]Ibid., 30.

[59]Ibid., 31.

[60]St. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 72.

[61]St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oratio XXIII," *PG*, XXXV, 1161. Quoted in Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 47.

[62]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 47.

show that the concept of "three" goes beyond any arithmetical or numerical understanding of the Trinity.[63] "The three-fold number is not, as we commonly understand it, a quantity; when it relates to the indivisibly united divine hypostases, the 'sum' of which is always the unity, 3=1, it expresses the ineffable order within the Godhead."[64]

Furthermore, in the apophatic ascent to the Godhead, one does not arrive at knowledge of the divine essence. Instead, one has a personal encounter with the persons of the Trinity. This occurs in and through the *divine energies* that make possible union with God. Following the Trinitarian thought of Basil and the two Gregories, Lossky articulates a patristic understanding of the person.

The fathers of the fourth century were faced with a theological problem: how to maintain the unity of the one essence with the multiplicity of the divine persons. "It was a question of finding a distinction of terms which should express the unity of, and the differentiation within, the Godhead, without giving the pre-eminence either to the one or to the other; that thought might not fall into the error of a Sabellian Unitarianism or a pagan tritheism."[65] The genius of the fourth-century fathers was that they were able to hold the theological antinomy through the differentiation of two philosophical synonyms: *ousia* and *hypostasis*.[66]

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[63]Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 44-45.

[64]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 48.

[65]Ibid., 50.

[66]Ibid., 51.

Aristotle distinguished two understandings of *ousia*, calling them "first *ousias*" and "second *ousias*." First *ousias* were "individual subsistences," as "this man." Second *ousias* were "essences, in the realistic sense of the word." An *hypostasis* had the common usage of "that which really subsists, subsistence."[67] "The two terms would thus appear to be more or less synonymous; *ousia* meaning an individual substance, while being capable at the same time of denoting the essence common to many individuals; *hypostasis*, on the other hand, meaning existence in general, but capable also of application to individual substances."[68] What the Cappadocian fathers were able to utilize these two terms "to distinguish in God that which is common - *ousia*, substance or essence - from that which is particular, υπόστασις or person."[69]

Formerly, the term *prosopon* or the Latin *persona* was used to signify the individual. However, this term was without "ontological content."[70] Instead, it constituted the role that an individual played in the theater or in the various relationships that the person engaged in society. Thus, the term was purely *relational* in content, not pertaining to the *being* of the person.[71] The Greek fathers of the fourth century were able to bring ontological content to the person through the equation of *prosopon* with *hypostasis*.[72] In order to avoid the modalism of Sabellianism on the one hand, and the

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[67]Ibid., 50.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid., 51.

[70]John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 34.

[71]Ibid. See also Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 51; Lossky, *Introduction*, 40-41.

[72]Ibid., 36. See also Papanikolaou, 366.

charge of tritheism on the other, the fathers were able to construct the orthodox understanding of the Trinity by equating *being* with *person*.

Yet, Lossky emphasizes that there is no division within the Trinity. The divine essence belongs to all three persons; the essence is not divided amongst the Trinity, nor do the persons only share partially in the attributes of divinity; rather, each person of the Trinity contains within himself the fullness of divinity.[73] The Greek fathers had equated *ousia* with *hypostasis*. "The ὑπόστασις is the same as the οὐσία; it receives all the same attributes–or all the negations–which can be formulated on the subject of the 'superessence'; but it nonetheless remains irreducible to the οὐσία. This irreducibility cannot be understood or expressed except in the relation of the Three Hypostases who, strictly speaking, are not 'three' but 'Tri-Unity.'"[74] Furthermore, because the *being* of God is equated with the *hypostasis*, the Greek patristic understanding of the Trinity emphasized the priority of the person over the essence, contrary to the theological understanding of the West. For the West, "the ontological 'principle' of God is not found in the person but in the substance, that is, in the 'being' itself of God." However, in the East because the essence is associated with the person, the ontological "cause" is identified with the person of the Father.[75] God the Father is the source of being in the Trinity. "If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love

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[73]Lossky, "Redemption and Deification," 106; *Introduction*, 41-42.

[74]Vladimir Lossky, "The Theological Notion of the Human Person," *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 113.

[75]Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 40.

freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person–as the hypostasis

of the Father–makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God."[76]

Because of the importance of defending the personalism of the Trinity and the

monarchy of the Father (without subordinating the Son and the Holy Spirit), Lossky

vehemently decried the Western *filioque*. The proper understanding of the Trinity is

crucial for salvation, for it is symptomatic to how the human person, as well as human

society, are understood.[77] "The main preoccupation, the issue at stake, in the questions

which successively arise respecting the Holy Spirit, grace and the Church herself–this last

the dogmatic question of our own time–is always the possibility, the manner, or the

means of our union with God."[78] The proper understanding of the Trinity, according to

Lossky, is a matter of life and death. "If we reject the Trinity as the sole ground of all

reality and of all thought, we are committed to a road that leads nowhere; we end in an

aporia, in folly, in the disintegration of our being, in spiritual death. Between the Trinity

and hell there lies no other choice."[79]

Lossky makes three basic interconnected arguments against the use of the

filioque. First, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone protects the

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[76]Ibid., 41.

[77]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 21-22. Jurgen Moltmann and Leonardo Boff have both recognized this issue in their Trinitarian theologies. Utilizing perichoretic understandings of the relationship between the persons of the Trinity, each has articulated a relational understanding of the Trinity that is not far from Orthodox understandings. See Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, tr. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

[78]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 10.

[79]Ibid., 66.

"diversity of the three hypostases." Second, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the

Father alone transcends the laws and limitations of the logic of opposed relations. Third,

the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone preserves the antinomy between

the divine essence and the three hypostases within the Godhead.[80] I will briefly examine

each of his arguments against the *filioque*.

The Western and Eastern understandings of the hypostatic procession of the Holy

Spirit, either from the Father and the Son as one principle of origin or from the Father

alone, "represent two different solutions of the question of personal diversity in the

Trinity, two different triadologies."[81] Essentially, the approach to understanding the two

understandings is rooted in the understanding of the relationship of the hypostases to the

divine essence and to the understanding of person.

For Lossky, the problem with the *filioque* begins in the West with the Augustinian

understanding of the Trinity. In *De Trinitate* Augustine argues for the divinity of the

Holy Spirit against the Arians. However, unlike the East, which maintains a distinction

between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, Augustine confuses the two, speaking of the sending

of the Holy Spirit as the procession of the Holy Spirit.[82] He argues in this manner

because of the equation of the qualities "holy" and "spirit," which the Father and the Son

both possess. Since the Father is "holy" and the Son is "holy" and because they are both

"spirit" and they are "one," the Holy Spirit, as being the "spirit" of the Father and the

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[80]Vladimir Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine," in *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 87-88.

[81]Ibid., 75-76.

[82]Augustine, *The Trinity*, tr. Stephen McKenna (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 37-38, 168, 514.

Son, is the "ineffable communion of the Father and the Son."[83] The Spirit proceeds from

both the Father and the Son, as the love that binds the two together.[84] While Augustine

does assert that the Holy Spirit principally proceeds from the Father as a gift to the Son,

he maintains that the Spirit also proceeds from the Son since the Father and the Son are

one. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of both Father and Son.[85] Because of this, it can

properly be asserted that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

Further development of the rationale for the *filioque* comes from Thomas

Aquinas. Using Augustine's assertion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son

since Father and Son are one, Thomas argues that the *filioque* is proper because of the

principle of the logical relations of opposition. In order to have a third person, he must

be distinguishable from the other two. The distinguishing characteristics of "generation"

and "procession" are not enough to hold to this principle, because "generation" and

"procession" do not signify any true distinction. Therefore, the principle of relational

opposition, which distinguishes between two terms, requires that the Father and Son must

be considered as one principle distinguishable from the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit

proceeds from Father and Son as one principle in order to maintain the distinction

between persons.[86] Thomas asserts that if the Holy Spirit does not proceed from Father

and Son, then by the principle of relational opposition, the Holy Spirit and the Son would

not be distinguishable, but would be themselves one person, "destroying faith's teaching

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[83]Ibid., 190.

[84]Ibid., 492-96.

[85]Ibid., 493.

[86]Lossky, "Procession of the Holy Spirit," 76.

on the Trinity." The only alternative to the Son and the Holy Spirit being indistinguishable is to assert that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.[87] However, Lossky argues that while the principle of relational opposition has "logical clarity," the use of this logical principle presupposes that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Additionally, it assumes the following: "(1) That relations are the basis of the hypostases, which define themselves by their mutual opposition, the first to the second, and these two together to the third. (2) That two persons represent a non-personal unity, in that they give rise to a further relation of opposition. (3) That in general the origin of the persons of the Trinity therefore is impersonal, having its real basis in the one essence, which is differentiated by its internal relations."[88] The issue raised by the *filioque* is the source of the origin of the persons of the Trinity. The *filioque* can only be articulated when the source is the common essence, understood as having "an ontological primacy . . . over the hypostases."[89]

According to Lossky, the Orthodox refuse to utilize the logical principle of relational opposition in its understanding of the Trinity. The principle itself can only be used if the *filioque* is presupposed, because by definition relational opposition can only occur between two terms. Instead, the Orthodox maintain the essential diversity of the three hypostases in the Trinity on the basis of their unique relation to the source of divinity within the Godhead: the Father. By maintaining their essential distinctiveness, a logical impossibility occurs, preventing the use of logic in understanding the relations

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[87]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* vol. 7, tr. T. C. O'Brien (London: Blackfriars, 1976), 59.

[88]Lossky, "Procession of the Holy Spirit," 76-77.

[89]Ibid., 77.

within the Godhead. This apophatic refusal to accept logical rationality in understanding the mystery of the Trinity is essential for understanding the Orthodox approach to the Trinity. Furthermore, by maintaining the "traditional teaching about the 'monarchy of the Father'" as the source of the divinity and personhood of the Son and Holy Spirit, the Orthodox do not equate personhood with relation.[90] "Here it may be stated that the relations only serve to *express* the hypostatic diversity of the Three; they are not the basis of it. It is the absolute diversity of the three hypostases which determines their differing relations to one another, not *vice versa.*"[91] Responding to Thomas's objection that the Son and Holy Spirit are not differentiated because an oppositional relationship does not obtain, Lossky states that such an understanding is not appropriate for Orthodox thought and that the East has a different understanding of the "'relations of origin.'"[92] Instead of "relations of opposition" the Orthodox understand it as "relations of diversity."[93]

In his discussion of the *filioque* what Lossky is essentially arguing is that the use of positive or cataphatic theology is inappropriate for a proper understanding of the Trinity. "To follow here the positive approach, and to envisage the relations of origin otherwise than as signs of the inexpressible diversity of the persons, is to suppress the absolute quality of the personal diversity, *i.e.* to relativize the Trinity and in some sense to depersonalize it."[94] Only by using the apophatic method of understanding the Trinity

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[90]Ibid., 77-78.

[91]Ibid., 79.

[92]Ibid., 78.

[93]Ibid., 79.

[94]Ibid.

is the antinomy between essence and persons maintained. The purpose of this method is not to express the Trinity in terms of philosophy and to make it rational, but rather to allow for the transformation of the person "by becoming more and more open to the mysteries of revelation."[95] The cataphatic approach, on the other hand, which introduces qualities into the interiority of the Trinity, leads to a natural theology and the god of the philosophers, replacing the unknowable God of Christianity. Instead, "we get 'God in general,' who could be the god of Descartes, or the god of Leibnitz, or even perhaps, to some extent, the god of Voltaire and of the dechristianized Deists of the eighteenth century."[96]

If the apophatic method does not lead to the intellectual contemplation of the divine essence, but to personal transformation in union with God, then how is this accomplished? How does one experience deification? For the answer to this question, Lossky resorts to the hesychastic tradition, especially the thought of Gregory Palamas.

As we have seen, Lossky asserts that *theologia*, or the knowledge of God, only occurs through union with God. However, if God is "unknowable" and "inaccessible" in his being, then how is one to participate in God? "The question of the possibility of any real union with God, and, indeed, of mystical experience in general, thus poses for Christian theology the antinomy of the accessibility of the inaccessible nature."[97] Gregory Palamas asserts the importance of maintaining this antinomy for a proper understanding of the Christian faith. Against the Western commentators of Gregory–

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[95]Ibid., 80.

[96]Ibid., 88.

[97]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 69.

Denis Petau, Martin Jugie, and Sebastien Guichardon–Lossky maintains that Gregory's

methodology is solely in keeping with the Orthodox spiritual tradition as developed from

Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, and Maximus the Confessor. Gregory simply

applies and develops the Dionysian antinomical methodology. Cataphatic theology is

proper to understanding the economic manifestation of God's presence in the world,

while the apophatic methodology is proper for understanding the Trinity in itself; thus,

the distinction between *oikonimia* and *theologia*.[98] "Like all theological antinomies–like

that of unity and trinity, which postulates a distinction between nature and persons–the

antinomy of the two ways discloses to our spirit a mysterious distinction in God's very

being. This is the distinction between essence and divine operations or energies."[99] As

Pseudo-Dionysius writes,

> It might be more accurate to say that we cannot know God in his nature,
> since this is unknowable and is beyond the reach of mind or of reason. But
> we know him from the arrangement of everything, because everything is, in
> a sense, projected out from him, and this order possesses certain images and
> semblances of his divine paradigms. We therefore approach that which is
> beyond all as far as our capacities allow us and we pass by way of the
> denial and the transcendence of all things and by way of the cause of all
> things. God is therefore known in all things and as distinct from all
> things.[100]

Lossky argues that participation and union with God can only occur

through the divine energies. If we were to be united to God's essence, "we should

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[98]Vladimir Lossky, "The Theology of Light in the Thought of St. Gregory Palamas," *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 45-52.

[99]Ibid., 53.

[100]Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," *The Complete Works*, tr. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 108.

not at the moment be what we are, we should be God by nature."[101] Union with

the divine essence would also create a problematic for the Trinity, for God would

be "'of myriads of hypostases.'" The divine essence would be composed of all of

the hypostases participating in the essence. Furthermore, union with God does

not occur through participation in one of the divine hypostases. Such a union is

proper to the second Person of the Trinity through the hypostatic union with God.

"Even though we share the same human nature as Christ and receive in Him the

name of sons of God, we do not ourselves become the divine hypostasis of the

Son by the fact of the Incarnation."[102] Since the human person is not capable of

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[101]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 69.

[102]Ibid., 70. John Zizioulas argues that the human hypostasis is united to and becomes the hypostasis of the Son. "This adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, is the essence of baptism" (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 56). However, Zizioulas understands the hypostasis of Christ to include his body, the Church. When a person is baptized, he becomes a new hypostasis *in Christ*. "Thus the Church becomes Christ Himself in human existence, but also every member of the Church becomes Christ and Church" (58). According to Jaroslav Skira, Zizioulas learned this idea of "corporate personality" from his professor, George Florovsky. (See Jaroslav Skira, "The Synthesis Between Christology and Pneumatology in Modern Orthodox Theology," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 68, no. 2 [2002]: 439.) Zizioulas bases his concept of the "ecclesial Christ" in the concept of "corporate personality" as developed by H. Wheeler Robinson and S. Pederson. "The idea of the incorporation of the 'many' into the 'one,' or of the 'one' as a representative of the 'many' goes back to a time earlier than Paul. It is an idea basically connected with the figures of the 'Servant of God' and the 'Son of Man'" (145-46). St. Paul simply continues the Israelite understanding of the corporate personality and applies it to the person of Christ. Zizioulas, by arguing through the incorporation of the person in Christ's hypostasis in and through the Church, circumvents the debate concerning the deification of the person through participation in the divine energies. Participation in the *Person* of Christ becomes the means for deification. Lossky agrees with Zizioulas that deification occurs through the hypostatic union, but this deification is only that of human nature. "What is deified in Christ is His human nature assumed in its fullness by the divine person" (Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 155). While our nature has been deified, we have not yet entered into communion with the Godhead, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Lossky argues that while we are in Christ, the Holy Spirit is the one who bestows

participating in either the divine essence or the divine hypostases, he or she must

then participate in God through the divine energies.

Answering the charge against Palamas by Denis Petau, Martin Jugie, and

Sebastien Guichardon, among others, that the distinction between the essence and

energies of God was his innovation, Lossky argues in a series of lectures

published as *The Vision of God* that such a distinction is rooted in Scripture and

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deifying grace upon the person, changing him into the likeness of Christ (163-64). While the hypostasis of Christ as the Church is composed of all of his members, "They are not mingled or one with the divine Person of Christ. For one hypostasis cannot be identified with another hypostasis without ceasing to exist as a personal being: that would mean the annihilation of human persons in the unique Christ, an impersonal deification, a blessedness in which there would be no blessed" (165-66). Thus, the human person participates in the divinity of Christ in and through the divine energies bestowed upon the person in the descent of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of holy chrismation. Distinguishing between the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, Lossky argues, "Christ becomes the sole image appropriate to the common nature of humanity. The Holy Spirit grants to each person created in the image of God the possibility of fulfilling the likeness in the common nature. The one lends His hypostasis to the nature, the other gives His divinity to the persons" (166-67). While the human person participates in the human nature of Christ by virtue of his or her common human nature, personal deification can only occur, according to Lossky, through the work of the Holy Spirit. "Thus, the work of Christ unifies; the work of the Holy Spirit diversifies" (167). Zizioulas overcomes the issue of the loss of personality in the one by arguing that the many retain their unique identity by virtue of their hypostatic existence in and through a communion of love manifest in the Church, the ecclesial Christ. While Lossky wants to emphasize the distinctiveness of the work of the Spirit and the importance of the distinction between the essence and energies of God for the deification of the human person, Zizioulas offers a pneumatological Christology that enables a dialogue with the West by setting aside the doctrine of the divine energies. The question posed to Zizioulas is that raised by Lossky, what is the role of ascesis in deification if the person is deified simply through participation in the hypostasis of Christ? Zizioulas has not been able to offer an answer. This separation between theology and spirituality is symptomatic of a bifurcation in Orthodox theology between what Petros Vassiliadis calls "eucharistic spirituality" and "therapeutic spirituality" (Petros Vassiliadis, "Eucharistic and Therapeutic Spirituality," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42, nos. 1-2 [1997]: 1-24). It can be argued that this distinction goes back to at least to the fourth century with the development of monastic spirituality outside of the main body of the church. In its most radical form it led to the excess of Messalianism, a charge leveled against Gregory Palamas by his opponents, both East and West.

developed particularly in the fourth century by the Cappadocian fathers in their

debate with Eunomius, who believed that the human person could actually behold

the essence of God.[103]   The thought of the Cappadocians was combined with

monastic spirituality in the thought of St. Macarius and St. Diadochus of Photike.

St. Diadochus, in "On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination," states that "love

unites the soul with the excellence of God, searching out the Invisible by means

of intellectual perception."[104]   As Lossky surmises, in Diadochus we see the

union of the "mysticism of the intellect" with the "mysticism of the heart."[105]

Furthermore, Diadochus places special emphasis on the remembrance of the name

of Jesus, and may have been one of the first to utilize the Jesus Prayer in Christian

spirituality.[106]

The spiritual theology of Macarios and Diadochos combined with that of

the Cappadocians is further developed in the thought of Dionysius and Maximus

in the sixth and seventh centuries. "With Dionysius and Maximus we enter

Byzantine theology properly so called. This body of thought makes a distinction

between God's unknowable ουσία and His manifestations (dynamic attributes,

δυνάμεις or energies), a distinction which, instead of limiting the mystical flight

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[103]Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, tr. Asheleigh Moorhouse (London: The Faith Press, 1963), 65-74.

[104]St. Diadochos of Photiki, "On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, tr. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 253.

[105]Lossky, *Vision of God*, 97-98.

[106]St. Diadochos, "On Spiritual Knowledge," 261, 262, 270, 271, 285, 287, and 293.

by placing the human being before a closed door, opens up an infinite path beyond knowledge."[107] It is the spiritual theology of Dionysius interpreted by Maximus that becomes "the doctrinal basis for a mysticism in which the whole man, in the totality of his being, will be involved in communion with God."[108] Following Dionysius and Maximus, John of Damascus applies the essence–energies distinction to the area of Christology. He utilizes the Transfiguration as an example of the distinction within Christ of the divine essence and energies. The disciples of Christ see in the Transfiguration the divine glory of the divine nature. The divine nature of Christ "remains inaccessible in itself, but its nature, its eternal glory penetrates created nature and communicates itself to it." Christ's humanity through the hypostatic union participates in the divine energies issuing forth from the divine nature of Christ. This penetration of the divine energies through the humanity of Christ in the Transfiguration enabled the disciples to see God.[109]

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, St. Symeon the New Theologian, while continuing the spiritual tradition, develops the idea of the experience of the uncreated light. Lossky attributes this theological vision to a change in direction in theology. St. Symeon places emphasis on pneumatology rather than Christology. "For him it involves above all a revelation of the Holy Spirit in us, the life in grace which cannot remain hidden but manifests itself, on the higher

[107]Lossky, *Vision of God*, 110.

[108]Ibid., 115.

[109]Ibid., 112-13.

plain of eternal life, as light."[110] By placing an emphasis on pneumatology,

theology becomes more and more inseparable from spirituality. In the thought of

St. Symeon, a "theology of mystical experience" is birthed, giving rise to the

theological controversies of the fourteenth century.[111]

As we have seen previously, Gregory's opponents, Barlaam and

Akindynos, challenged the possibility of the mystical experience of the divine

light, which the monks of Mt. Athos claimed. Gregory's response to this

challenge, resulting in the affirmation of the distinction between the essence and

energies of God, provides "a dogmatic basis to mystical experience" rooting such

experience in "the mode of God's existence."[112] In his reply to his opponents, St.

Gregory presented them with this theological option: either they must accept the

doctrine of the divine energies distinct from the essence, in which case they would

be obligated to hold that the glory of God, the divine light, and grace are created,

due to their philosophical essentialism, or they must deny the distinction, making

them equate the "unknowable" with the "knowable," "essence and grace." In

accepting either position, deification is not possible. This is because of their

philosophical presupposition regarding the simplicity of God, which is based on

an essentialist understanding.[113]

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[110]Ibid., 117.

[111]Ibid., 124.

[112]Lossky, "Theology of Light," 53-54.

[113]Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 77-78.

Lossky accuses Gregory's opponents of being captured by a non-Eastern view of God. Barlaam and Akindynos charged Gregory with "ditheism" and "polytheism" for betraying the divine simplicity by asserting the essence/energies distinction. "Having become alienated from the apophatic and antinomical spirit of eastern theology, they set up against it a conception of God which saw Him, primarily at any rate, as a simple essence, in which even the hypostases assumed the character of relations within the essence." Understanding God as *actus purus* "cannot admit anything to be God that is not the very essence of God." Only that which is of his essence is God. Thus, for Barlaam and Akindynos, either the energies are the essence of God as *actus purus* or they are the created manifestations derived from the essence.[114] Such an understanding of God does not allow for any true deification to occur.

Lossky comments that the western understanding of the Trinity, by emphasizing the one essence rather than the distinction between the essence and the energies, falls into the same problematic as that expressed by the opponents of St. Gregory. By disavowing the essence/energies distinction and emphasizing the simplicity of the divine essence expressed as *actus purus*, western theology is forced to admit a "supernatural order" between creation and the Creator. Orthodoxy does not admit such an order, but instead speaks of the "uncreated" divine energies. For the West, though, "grace implies the idea of causality," similar to that of creation itself.[115] Thus, the idea of deification, at least as it is

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[114]Ibid., 76-77.

[115]Ibid., 88.

understood in the East, remains an impossibility for the West because of its

understanding of the Godhead and its theological methodology.[116]

Lossky's theology has been challenged on a number of points. First,

inherent in Lossky's theology are the problems of Palamism itself, which we have

discussed in chapter two. Lossky responds to the critics of Palamism, especially

pertaining to the issue of the simplicity of God, by pointing out that this critique is

based on a false philosophical presupposition, which the East does not hold.

Second, built into the problematic with Palamism is the work of Christ. Is it the

Person of Christ who saves us or deifies us, or is it the divine energies? Does

Lossky minimalize the saving work of Christ? As we have seen, Lossky responds

to this critique by asserting that in and through Christ, human nature is

regenerated and deified, yet it is the work of the Holy Spirit to deify each unique

human hypostasis that is united to Christ. The question this raises though is how

each person is united to Christ. Is each person united to Christ by virtue of the

common human nature? Or is each person somehow hypostatically united to the

Person of Christ? Lossky seems to emphasize the former, that each person is

united to Christ by virtue of the common human nature assumed by Christ in the

Incarnation. However, he does state that we are regenerated in Christ through the

work of the Church in the sacrament of baptism. Does, then, baptism provide the

means for a hypostatic union to occur between the person and Christ? If so, then

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[116]Both Christos Yannaras and John Romanides will build upon Lossky's apophaticism and critique of the western concept of the divine. Whereas Lossky did not make the jump to the western culture that derived from such a theology, Yannaras and Romanides will critique western culture on the basis of what they believe to be a problematic understanding of God and the human person, created in the image of God.

what of the work of the Holy Spirit who deifies the person through the divine

energies? As Paul Negrut has pointed out, "since the divine energies express

what the Persons are (*enhypostatic*), without being themselves Persons, the three

divine Persons are removed a step back from the economy of salvation."[117]

Similarly, George Florovsky challenged Lossky's pneumatological understanding

on this same issue.[118] While Lossky is responding to the critique of Palamism

leveled by the Catholic theologians since the fifteenth century, he has not

satisfactorily responded to these charges raised by contemporary theologians.

Unfortunately, his untimely death in 1958 prevented him from working towards

the synthesis of pneumatology and Christology that he was beginning in his later

work. What is important in the thought of Lossky is that he was one of the first to

attempt to reconcile these two important aspects of the Eastern theological and

spiritual traditions.

Consequently, R. G. Williams has pointed out that while Lossky's attempt

to emphasize the continuity in the Orthodox theological tradition is "a little too

schematic," his insistence on personal encounter with God following the

Dionysian *ekstasis* is "more genuinely and consistently significant, and more

capable of use as some sort of criterion for differentiating between fundamentally

Hellenic, Platonic, or intellectualist doctrines of the knowledge of God, and a

more radically Christian view."[119] In answering the criticism of the Roman

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[117]Negrut, "Orthodox Soteriology," 167.

[118]Skira, "Synthesis Between Christology and Pneumatology," 442-44.

[119]R. G. Williams, "The Via Negativa and the Foundations of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of V.N. Lossky," *New Studies in Theology* 1 (1980): 105.

Catholic theologians, particularly Petau, Jugie, and Guichardon, Lossky's

interpretation of the Eastern theological tradition may be too forced. He leaves

out important aspects of Origen's thought in order to distinguish between the

Hellenic tradition and the apophatic tradition of Byzantine theology as developed

by Dionysius. Furthermore, he relies on some ambiguous understandings of

Dionysius's work to further his interpretation of continuity. However, Lossky's

understanding of the knowledge of God as personal encounter through personal

ekstasis will resonate in future discussions of the nature of the person.[120]

John Meyendorff and the Historical Tradition

One other Orthodox theologian that is important to discuss in relationship

to the rediscovery of the theology of Gregory Palamas is John Meyendorff.[121] As

we have seen in chapter three, Meyendorff's scholarship on Gregory Palamas is

definitive. He wrote the first critical edition of the *Triads*, and his dissertation on

the life and thought of Gregory are indispensable for Palamite studies.[122]

Following Lossky, Meyendorff continued the process of defending the continuity

of Orthodox spiritual theology, especially in the light of the charge against

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[120]Zizioulas and Yannaras are both indebted to the work of Lossky in understanding the nature of the person. However, as Papanikolaou notes, Zizioulas does not admit Lossky's even indirect influence via Yannaras due to their different theologies. See Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies," 383.

[121]Other notable Orthodox theologians who have continued the work on Gregory Palamas, especially since the 1960s are Panagiotis Chrestou, Panagiotis Nellas, Christos Yannaras, John Romanides, George Mantzaridis, and Hierotheos Vlachos.

[122]Jean Meyendorff, *Défense des saints hésychastes*, 2d ed., vol. 1-2 (Louvain: Specilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, nos. 30-31, 1973); *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1959).

Gregory for being an innovator. Throughout his life, Meyendorff argued and

defended the *living Tradition* of the Orthodox Church against the charges of

innovation from the West and the stagnation of the tradition from Orthodox

fundamentalism.[123]

In his monograph, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal

Themes*, Meyendorff presented the living historical Tradition of the church,

demonstrating the importance of monastic spirituality for the development of

theological thought in the Byzantine world. He writes, "The whole of Byzantine

theology–and particularly its 'experiential' character–would be completely

misunderstood if one forgets its other pole of reference: apophatic, or negative,

theology."[124] He comments that this apophatic theology of the fathers is "already

fully developed in the fourth century in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers

against Eunomios."[125] As we have shown, Lossky too rooted the apophatic

tradition in the biblical interpretation of the fathers of the fourth century. The

Greek fathers argue that there is a distinction in knowledge appropriate to the

subject matter. Human knowledge can only relate to creatures, while the Divine

Being, God in Himself, is unknowable. However, this does not mean, then, that

God is incapable of being experienced. Meyendorff writes,

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[123]Michael Plekon, *Living Icons: Persons of Faith in the Eastern Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 203-33.

[124]John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1974, 1979), 11.

[125]Ibid.

> A possibility of experiencing God through means other than intellectual knowledge, emotion, or the senses stands behind the Greek patristic understanding of the Christian faith and theology. This means simply an opening of God, His existence outside of His own nature, His actions or 'energies' through which He *voluntarily* reveals Himself to man, as well as a peculiar property of man, which permits him to reach outside of the created level.[126]

Gregory of Nyssa distinguished these two types of knowing according to God in Himself and God in His energies. "In speaking of God, where there is question of His essence, then is *the time to keep silence*. When, however, it is a question of His operation, a knowledge of which can come down even to us, that is *the time to speak* of His omnipotence by telling of His works and explaining His deeds, and to use words to this extent."[127] According to Meyendorff, this methodology shapes the entire development of theological debate in the Byzantine East.[128]

Meyendorff stresses the importance of the monastic community for the development and continuity of Orthodox thought. He notes that the role of the monks in the Iconoclastic Controversy demonstrates "their traditional involvement in theological debates." The monastics were not withdrawn from the empire and its church, but rather took an important role in adhering the church to its tradition. In this we see the "responsibility for the content of the faith and for the fate of the Church as a whole" that the monastic community felt. Due to the monastic influence in shaping the tradition and theology of the church, "the particularity of the monastic polity and ideology, its foundation upon the notion that 'the Kingdom of God is not of this world,' and its

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[126]Ibid., 13.

[127]Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, sermon 7, *PG* 44:732; quoted in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 14.

[128]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 14.

opposition to all compromises with 'this world's' requirements, gave rise in Byzantium to a theology which can properly be called 'monastic.'" This "monastic" theology "happened also to be the most dynamic and creative current in Byzantine thought as a whole."[129]

First, and foremost, the Byzantines learned how to pray from the monastic community. The prayer life was both communal and personal, focusing on "participation in God, *theosis* through communion with the deified humanity of Christ in the Holy Spirit." The means toward deification differed between the cenobitic and hesychastic spiritualities. The cenobites stressed corporate prayer through the liturgical cycle, while the hesychasts emphasized "personal effort."[130] However, this bifurcation in monastic spirituality cannot be stressed too far, for hesychasts also participated in the sacramental and liturgical life of the church, and cenobites enjoyed a personal prayer life as well. As Georges Florovsky states, "The two aspects of Christian existence–personal and corporate–are linked together inseparably. One is saved only in the Community, and yet salvation is mediated always through personal faith and obedience."[131] Meyendorff notes that in the post-Iconoclastic period, these spiritualities "interpenetrated" each other, leading to a common monastic theology.[132]

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[129]Ibid., 66.

[130]Ibid., 66-67.

[131]Georges Florovsky, "The Worshipping Church," in *The Festal Menaion*, tr. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1996), 22.

[132]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 67.

Meyendorff traces the development of this monastic theology, beginning

with Evagrius Ponticus (c. 399), a disciple of the writings of Origen. Evagrius is

important for the development of monastic theology due to his understanding of

the passions and the use of prayer.

> According to Evagrius, the true nature of the "mind" is to be fixed in God,
> and anything which detaches it from God is evil. Thus, since the Fall, the
> human mind is captured with self-love, which generates "thoughts;"
> "thoughts," a definitely pejorative term in Evagrius, imply interest in
> sensible things and distraction from God. Acting upon the passible part of
> the soul, they can lead it to *passions*.[133]

As Evagrius states, "Do you desire, then, to embrace this life of solitude, and to seek out

the blessings of stillness? If so, abandon the cares of the world and the principalities and

powers that lie behind them; free yourself from attachment to material things, from

domination by passions and desires, so that as a stranger to all this you may attain true

stillness [*hesychia*]."[134] According to Evagrius, one is able to set oneself free from the

worldly desires "through fasting, vigils and sleeping on the ground, and he tames his

incensive power through long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness and acts of

compassion."[135]   Thus, the solitary is to achieve a state of *apatheia,* or passionlessness,

through the subjugation of the passions through acts that focus the intellect on God rather

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[133]Ibid.

[134]Evagrios the Solitary, "Outline Teaching on Asceticism and Stillness in the Solitary Life," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 31-32.

[135]Evagrios the Solitary, "Texts on Discrimination in respect of Passions and Thoughts," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 39.

than the pleasures of this world. When the person has achieved this state, then it is possible for the person to achieve union with God and the intellect. For Evagrius, this union with God occurs through prayer.[136] "It is Evagrius who first coins the term 'prayer of the mind' which will become standard in Byzantine hesychasm."[137] As Evagrius states, "Do not let your eyes be distracted during prayer, but detach yourself from concern with body and soul, and give all your attention to the intellect."[138] Focusing on the intellect and its union with God is the means toward deification.

The problem with Evagrius's theology, according to Meyendorff, is that he has solely identified the person with the intellect, accepting the Hellenistic dualism of mind and body found in the thought of Origen.[139] Evagrius's thought is corrected by the biblical anthropology of his teacher, Macarius of Egypt.[140] Macarius places paramount

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[136]Evagrios the Solitary, "On Prayer," in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 57.

[137]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology,* 68.

[138]Evagrios, "On Prayer," 68.

[139]John Anthony McGuckin points out that while Evagrius emphasized the *nous* and its "escape from the body," he did not understand the body to be an evil thing. Instead, the body served as the vehicle for the soul's (intellect's) ascent to God. Thus, the monk had to care for the body and not allow for its debasement. See John Anthony McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire: The Byzantine Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 39-40.

[140]The authorship of the Macarian writings has been questioned. While attributed to St. Macarius of Egypt, it appears that the author is rather Syrian in origin, possibly even Symeon of Mesopotamia. See Marcus Plested, *The Macarian Legacy: The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12-16.
Marcus Plested has challenged this reading of the differences between Evagrius and Macarius. The Roman Catholic spiritual theologian, Irenee Hausherr, first made the distinction between the intellectualization of Evagrius deriving from Origen and the affective spirituality of Macarius deriving from the biblical/semitic tradition. See Irenee

emphasis on the heart as the center of the human being, not the intellect. The final goal

of the Christian life is not union with God through the separation of the soul or intellect

from the material body, but rather, deification of the whole body through the union of

God with the human heart.[141] The gift of "pure prayer" or "unceasing prayer" comes

from the deifying grace of the Holy Spirit who descends into the human heart to make it a

"throne of glory."[142] Thus, instead of the "prayer of the mind" as found in Evagrius, we

find in Macarius the "prayer of the heart."[143]

Consequently, with all of this emphasis on prayer and the discovery of these

writings in works associated with the Messalian movement, the Macarian writings have

come under suspicion as being anti-ecclesiastical focusing on the person's deification

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Hausherr, "Les Grands Courants de la spiritualité orientale," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 1 (Rome, 1935); and his "L'erreur fondamentale et la logique du Messalianisme," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 1 (Rome, 1935) which softens his argument. Vladimir Lossky and John Meyendorff continued this interpretation in their histories of the development of Eastern spiritual theology. Alexander Golitzin was one of the first to question this dichotomy in Eastern spirituality. The head-heart dichotomy, according to Golitzin, derives from the nineteenth-century reading of Christian history developed by Adolf Harnack concerning the Hellenization of Christianity and its separation from its semitic roots. This bias has been absorbed in interpreting the differences between Evagrius and Macarius, stressing the Hellenization of the one and the pure faith of the other. See Alexander Golitzin, "Hierarchy versus Anarchy? Dionysius Areopagitica, Symeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, and their Common Roots in Ascetical Tradition," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994), 131-79. Following Golitzin, Plested believes that this reading is somewhat forced, for the affective dimension is to be found in Evagrius as well, and the emphasis on the intellect is also found in Macarius. See Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 59-68. In another recent treatment of the Orthodox spiritual tradition, John A. McGuckin continues the dichotomist position. See McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire,* 37-75.

[141]George A. Maloney, "Introduction," to Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 3-4.

[142]Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 201-202, 267-68.

[143]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 68.

through prayer alone. However, Meyendorff emphatically disagrees with this position.

Much of the problem, as Plested also points out, is the definition of Messalianism. The

early conciliar anathemas against it did not include a definition. Rather, it appears to be

"little more than a sobriquet for a radical ascetic tendency stemming from the Syrian

East, and, . . . , little welcomed or understood by the Greek bishops who confronted it."[144]

Eventually, due to definitional imprecision, "the term eventually becomes a sobriquet

meaning little more than a perceived emphasis on the conscious experience of God in

prayer."[145] With the emphasis on prayer, the corporate, sacramental life is diminished.

But in the Macarian writings, as Meyendorff and Plested demonstrate, the sacramental

life is part of the means toward which the person achieves deification. The person needs

to experience both the external means of grace in the sacraments and the internal means

of grace through the descent of the Holy Spirit in the personal communion of prayer.[146]

As Lossky, Meyendorff emphasizes the importance of Diadochus for being the

bridge between the early spiritual fathers, Evagrius and Macarius, and the later hesychast

tradition found in Symeon and Gregory. Meyendorff states,

> In the writings of Diadochus, the teaching on incessant prayer, adopted
> from Evagrius and Macarius, presupposes a constant invocation of the name
> of Jesus; an essential orientation of spirituality toward the Person of the
> Incarnate Logos, with a resurgence of the role played in Biblical theology
> by the concept of the "name" of God, thus replaces in Diadochus the much
> more abstract and spiritualistic understanding of prayer in Evagrius.[147]

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[144]Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 21.

[145]Ibid., 27.

[146]Ibid., 38-42; Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 68-69.

[147]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 70.

As Plested, comments, "Diadochus' work represents a conscious and creative synthesis of the spiritual traditions of Evagrius and Macarius."[148] By focusing on the name of Jesus, Diadochus's gives the intellect an activity that prevents it from the distractions of the world or of the spiritual realm. The use of the name of Jesus as a prayer allows the intellect and the heart to be joined in the constant remembrance of God and unceasing prayer.[149] In this union, the soul experiences *ecstasy*, an element not found in the teachings of Evagrius or Macarius. For Diadochus, knowledge of God is the experience of ecstasy, which entails the loss of perception of the self.[150] This knowledge of God as ecstasy is expressed in the mystical language of "love, fire, and light" similar to that of Macarius. Diadochus states,

> He who loves God consciously in his heart is known by God (cf. 1 Cor 8:3), for to the degree that he receives the love of God consciously in his soul, he truly enters into God's love. From that time on, such a man never loses an intense longing for the illumination of spiritual knowledge, until he senses its strength in his bones and no longer knows himself, but is completely transformed by the love of God. He is both present in this life and not present in it; still dwelling in his body, he yet departs from it, as through love he ceaselessly journeys towards God in his soul. His heart now burns constantly with the fire of love and clings to God with an irresistible longing, since he has once and for all transcended self-love in his love for God.[151]

This mystical experience of ecstasy expressed in the language of love, fire and light, will be highly influential in the thought of the later hesychasts.

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[148]Plested, *Macarian Legacy*, 134.

[149]Ibid., 168-69.

[150]Ibid., 171.

[151]Diadochos, "On Spiritual Knowledge," 256.

In John of the Ladder (Climacus) (c. 579-649), abbot of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, we see the development of hesychastic spirituality.[152] As Meyendorff comments, in John Climacus the Evagrian tradition is continued, although the Macarian and Diadochian emphases on the name of Jesus and the experience of the whole body are present.[153] For the first time, John places the remembrance of the name of Jesus with the bodily necessity of breathing. "Solitude (*hesychia*) is unceasing worship and waiting upon God. Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of solitude (*hesychia*)."[154] With John we find the definition of hesychasm as the "eremitic, contemplative life of the solitary monk practicing the 'Jesus prayer.'"[155] Through the linkage of bodily breathing and the remembrance of the name of Jesus through the "Jesus Prayer," union of body and soul occurs with the "transfigured Christ."[156] Deification and transfiguration of the person result through communion with Christ. This communion with Christ, notes Meyendorff,

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[152]For a recent treatment of John Climacus by an Orthodox theologian, see John Chryssavgis, *John Climacus: From the Egyptian Desert to the Sinaite Mountain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publications, 2004).

[153]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 70.

[154]St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, tr. Lazarus Moore (Willits, CA: Eastern Orthodox Books, 1959), 246.

[155]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 71.

[156]However, John Chryssavgis does not believe that this is a mention of the actual hesychastic technique of associating breathing with the use of the Jesus Prayer. Instead, John Climacus emphasizes the importance of the continual remembrance of Christ through the use of the Jesus Prayer. The association with bodily breathing comes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See Chryssavgis, *John Climacus*, 231.

is "an objective reality of the transfigured Christ," and not a "symbol" or "image,"
dependent upon the human imagination.[157]

The Evagrian and Origenist tradition is reworked by Maximus the Confessor in
the sixth and seventh centuries. Following Evagrius, Maximus holds that the monastic
praxis is to achieve *apatheia* in order to experience communion with God. In order to
love God and neighbor and to obey the commandments of Christ, one must separate
himself from material things. "Indeed at the same time to attend to the material and to
love God, simply cannot be."[158] With this emphasis on the love of God, Maximus
overturns the Evagrian understanding of the identity of the person. For Evagrius,
according to Meyendorff, the monk following the way of *apatheia*, must detach himself
even from the virtues, including love. Intellectual knowledge is the way to union of the
soul with God. However, in Maximus, detachment leads to love, the highest virtue,
which is transfigured through union with Christ into *agape*,[159] leading to love of
neighbor, allowing for the fulfillment of Christ's commandment to love God and
neighbor.

Love of God is expressed through keeping the commandments and through
vigilance. Vigilance (*nepsis*) derives from the fear of God, and results in continual
devotion to God. Through continual devotion to God (unceasing prayer), the mind is
freed from worldly thoughts achieving dispassion.[160] As Maximus states, "Charity is a

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[157]Ibid.

[158]Maximus the Confessor, *The Ascetic Life and the Four Centuries on Charity*,
tr. Polycarp Sherwood (New York: Newman Press, 1955), 106.

[159]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 72.

[160]Maximus the Confessor, *The Ascetic Life*, 114-17.

good disposition of the soul, according to which one prefers no creature to the knowledge

of God. It is impossible to attain a lasting possession of this charity if one has any

attachment to earthly things."[161]

The love of God is expressed as a burning fire in the soul. "When the mind by the

burning love of its charity for God is out of itself [*ecstasy*], then it has no feeling at all for

itself nor for any creatures [*apatheia*]. For, illumined by the divine and infinite light, it

has no feeling for anything that is made by Him, as the eye of the senses has no

perception of the stars when the sun is risen." And again, "All the virtues help the mind

towards the burning of divine love; more than then all, pure prayer. For by this winging

its way to God, the mind gets outside all things [*ecstasy*]."[162] As we have seen with the

earlier spiritual fathers, Maximus continues the tradition of explaining the union with

God as an ecstatic mystical experience of the divine light. Maximus has transformed the

intellectual union of the soul with God as seen in the Evagrian tradition into knowledge

of God through the highest virtue of love of God. Through love, the person is united to

God, forsaking all worldly cares, to arrive at deification and the transformation of human

desire into *agape*.[163]

With Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), we arrive at the mystical

theologian of the Middle Ages.[164] In his discourses and poetry, Symeon emphasized the

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[161]Ibid., 137.

[162]Ibid., 138.

[163]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 72.

[164]The literature on St. Symeon is vast. For an Orthodox treatment of St. Symeon, see Basil Krivocheine, *In the Light of Christ: Saint Symeon, the New Theologian (949-1022)*, tr. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986).

direct experience of Christ as light through the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. In this,

Symeon's theology is highly experiential stressing the mystical experience as "the

necessary sign of an authentic Christian life."[165] According to Meyendorff, Symeon

follows the Macarian tradition, focusing on the "sensible" experience of God. Here

Symeon, like Macarius before him, "border[s] on Messalianism," yet Meyendorff

believes that his intent saves him from this charge. "What Symeon wants to make clear

is that the Kingdom of God has indeed become an attainable reality, that it does not

belong only to the 'future life,' and that, in this life, it is not restricted to the 'spiritual' or

'intellectual' part of man alone, but involves his entire existence."[166]

Like his predecessors, Symeon articulates the experience of God as light. In fact,

he has been called the "theologian of divine light."[167] Symeon states,

> Let no one deceive you! God is light (*1 John 1:5*), and to those who have
> entered into union with Him He imparts of His own brightness to the extent
> that they have been purified. When the lamp of the soul, that is, the mind,
> has been kindled, then it knows that a divine fire has taken hold of it and
> inflamed it. How great a marvel! Man is united to God spiritually and
> physically, since the soul is not separated from the mind, neither the body
> from the soul. By being united in essence man also has three hypostases by

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For a more recent treatment, see Hilarion Alfeyev, *Saint Symeon and the Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). See also Justin Popovitch, *Les voies de la connaissance de Dieu: Macaire d'Égypte, Isaac le Syrien, Syméon le Nouveau Théologien* (Lausanne, Switzerland: Age D'Homme, 1998).

[165]Basil Krivocheine, "Preface," in St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, tr. C. J. deCatanzaro (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), xiii.

[166]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 74.

[167]This is a common reference to Saint Symeon. I have not found the original attribution at this time.

grace. He is a single god by adoption with body and soul and the divine
Spirit, of whom he has become a partaker.[168]

In order to attain to this experience, the person must seek the purity of the heart and set

himself free from all worldly attachments. This is done through compunction of the heart

(*penthos*) and the practice of the virtues, especially love and humility. Only by attaining

such a state of purity, is one able to have the experience of God as the Divine Light,

which is only given as a gift from God to those who are prepared to receive it.

Symeon's experience of the Divine Light and the insistence on the acquisition of

the Holy Spirit infuse with the hesychast tradition of the remembrance of Jesus and the

use of the body to attain union with the transfigured Christ. This mystical experience of

the Divine Light becomes the dogmatic issue of the fourteenth century, as we have seen

in chapter two. Gregory's defense of this tradition as developed through the centuries in

Byzantine monasticism enables him to arrive at the Orthodox synthesis of the Macarian

and Evagrian traditions.

What was at stake in Gregory's defense, according to Meyendorff, were the issues

of the "knowability" of God and the psychosomatic practice used by the hesychasts to

achieve union with God. In his arguments against his opponents, as we have seen,

Gregory was able to articulate a spiritual theology that allowed for the bodily

participation in the mystical experience. Summarizing Gregory's argument, Meyendorff

states, "In Christ, God assumed the whole of man, soul and body; and man as such was

deified. In prayer–for example, in the 'method'–in the sacraments, in the entire life of the

Church as a community, man is called to *participation* in divine life: this participation is

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[168]St. Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, tr. C.J. deCatanzaro (New
York: Paulist Press, 1980), 195.

also the true knowledge of God."[169] Such participation in the divine life is only through

the divine energies of God. God in his essence is inaccessible, but he makes himself

known through the divine energies. In this distinction, Gregory safeguarded the

transcendence of God against any form of pantheism. Furthermore, as Meyendorff

comments, Gregory did not make an attempt to provide a philosophical rationale for the

distinction in God between the essence and the energies, for "his God is a living God,

both transcendent and willingly immanent, who does not enter into preconceived

philosophical categories." God cannot be circumscribed. However, Meyendorff does

point out that Gregory bases human participation in the divine energies in the decision of

the Sixth Ecumenical Council, which affirmed two wills or energies in Christ according

to the respective natures. "For Christ's humanity itself, enhypostasized as it is in the

Logos and thus having become truly God's humanity, did not become 'God by essence';

it was penetrated with the divine energy–through the *circumincessio idiomatum*–and, in

it, our own humanity finds access to God in His energies."[170]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the rediscovery of the spiritual theological

tradition of the Orthodox Church in the twentieth century. As a response to the polemics

of the Roman Catholic Church in the early part of the century and to the ineffective

scholastic theology that had dominated Orthodoxy since the seventeenth century,

Orthodox theologians of the Russian emigration in Paris began to discover the authentic

Orthodox spiritual tradition. Such writers as Basil Krivocheine, Dumitru Staniloae, and

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[169]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 77.

[170]Ibid.

Cyprian Kern began a reassessment of the work of Gregory Palamas for contemporary

Orthodox theology, providing the beginnings for their later theological successors.

Vladimir Lossky was the first to offer a specific theology based on the spiritual

tradition of the church. Responding to Roman Catholic critics of Palamism as well as to

the sophiology of Sergius Bulgakov, Lossky offered a theology based on patristic

interpretation. He emphasized the importance of a proper understanding of the Holy

Trinity, which issues forth in a Christian understanding of the human person, that allows

for his participation in the divine life of God. Drawing upon Dionysian apophaticism as

the proper means for doing theology, Lossky is able to present an Orthodox epistemology

that culminates in the thought of Gregory Palamas, with the distinction between the

essence and energies of God. In so doing, Lossky argues that Palamas is not an innovator

of the faith, but the faithful interpreter of the theological tradition of the East.

Of particular importance for our later chapters is Lossky's argument against the

western *filioque*. Lossky argues that the *filioque* is a result of an improper trinitarian

theology that emphasizes the essence over the hypostases and that fails to grasp the

importance of the apophatic methodology that issues forth a proper understanding of the

relationship between the hypostases in the inner working of the Trinity. Western

theology, by accepting philosophical categories, fails to grasp this issue. As a result, the

concept of the person is askew, giving birth to a different understanding of human

society. Both John Romanides and Christos Yannaras will be influenced by these themes

found in Lossky's thought.

The other notable theologian of the twentieth century to work in the field of the

Orthodox spiritual tradition is the Franco-Russian Fr. John Meyendorff, former dean of

St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York. Known for his critical editions of the

works of Gregory Palamas and his church history, Meyendorff continued the work of his

predecessors to articulate the importance of the Orthodox spiritual tradition. Like

Lossky, he emphasized the importance of continuity in the tradition, demonstrating that

Gregory Palamas was not an innovator of the teachings associated with him. On the

contrary, Gregory synthesized the two spiritual traditions handed down from the fourth

century of the church. Gregory's emphasis on the unknowability of God with human

participation in God through the divine energies becomes the Orthodox understanding of

God and his relationship with creation.

Fr. Meyendorff emphasized the importance of this Palamite teaching for

contemporary human life. Like his fellow theologians, he believed that the great crisis of

the twentieth century was the loss of faith in God. The Russian Revolution had

demonstrated this in apocalyptic fashion. But European life since the eighteenth century

had witnessed the growth of atheism and the removal of God from the human

understanding of the world. Positivism in the social and natural sciences had replaced the

traditional religious understandings of the world. The "sacred canopy" of European

civilization had been removed, and a creeping secularism had replaced it.[171]

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[171]Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

With this secularism, as Meyendorff's colleague, Fr. Alexander Schmemann states, came

the dehumanization of humanity. Secularism is a heresy that devoids the human being of

being properly human, that is, being a worshiping being. It creates a bifurcation between

the person's relationship with God and his relationship to the world. Only through

worship does the human being commune with God and creation in their proper

relationship; and only in such communion is the human being authentically human.[172]

Likewise, Meyendorff believed that the thought of Gregory Palamas could provide the

answer to the modern existential predicament and man's loss of faith. Meyendorff stated,

> The victory of Palamism in the fourteenth century was therefore the victory
> of a specifically Christian, God-centered humanism for which the Greek
> patristic tradition always stood, in opposition to all concepts of man which
> considered him as an autonomous or 'secular' being. Its essential intuition
> that 'deification' does not suppress humanity, but makes man truly human,
> is, of course, greatly relevant for our own contemporary concerns: man can
> be fully 'human' only if he restores his lost communion with God.[173]

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[172]Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 118-121.

[173]Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology,* 78.

CHAPTER SIX

The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky

Introduction

During the same time as many of the Russian theologians were rediscovering the works of Gregory Palamas, another Russian émigré theologian was formulating a basis for construing the authentic Orthodox tradition. Fr. Georges Florovsky, probably the most notable Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century, argued that what Orthodoxy and the Christian church needed to heal the schisms within it was a return to the patristic mind. The church needed to be doing theology as had the fathers of the fourth through eighth centuries. He called this methodology the "neo-patristic synthesis." Orthodoxy had lost its way under the influence of western theology, and with the current cultural crisis of the west, only a return to the fathers could provide an answer.

In this chapter I will explore the life and work of Fr. Georges Florovsky, especially as they pertain to his ideas about the neo-patristic synthesis and Christian Hellenism. These paradigms will shape the future of Orthodox theology in both its Russian and especially Greek forms. Due to limitations of this project, I will not summarize Florovsky's ecumenical activity, for which he is most known in the West, nor will I explore his ecclesiological thought, which remains his greatest contribution to Orthodox theology. Florovsky's understanding of Hellenism and the importance of the patristic theology shape the thought of the later Greek theologians who continue his work.

"The Return to the Fathers"

Georges Florovsky was born on August 28, 1893 in the Russian village of Elizavetgrad to Fr. Vasilii Florovsky and Klavdia Popruzhenko Florovsky. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to the cosmopolitan city of Odessa, where Georges was raised and educated.[1] His family was pious and very well educated. Vasilii had been educated at the seminary in Novgorod and at the Theological Academy of Moscow. From 1900 to 1903 Vasilii served as principal at the Odessa Theological Seminary. In 1905 Vasilii became dean of the cathedral in Odessa. Klavdia derived from a clerical family. Her father had been educated at the Kiev Academy, where he became a Master in Theology. He served as professor of Greek and Hebrew at the Odessa Theological Seminary and priest at the Church of the Meeting of the Lord. Klavdia received advanced degrees in the humanities and education. Her brothers, Sergei and Mikhail, had advanced degrees in geophysics and Slavic philology and taught at the University of Odessa. Futhermore, Georges's oldest brother, Vasilii, graduated from medical school in 1905 and went on to serve as a surgeon in the Russian army. Georges's oldest sister, Klavdia, attended school in St. Petersburg and later studied abroad in Bologna, Paris, Florence, and Rome. Her expertise was in medieval history with an emphasis on the Franciscans and Joachim of Flora. She would eventually become a professor at the University of Odessa and at the University of Sofia after the emigration. The third sibling, Antonii, also became a

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[1]Andrew Blane, "A Sketch of the Life of Georges Florovsky," in *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman*, ed. Andrew Blane, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 17.

professor at the University of Odessa, and after the emigration taught at the Russian University Center and at Charles University in Prague.[2]

Plagued by ill health throughout his childhood, Georges attended himself to his studies. Because of the high level of education in the family, Georges was exposed to the various intellectual currents in Russian society. His biographer, Andrew Blane, comments that during adolescence, Florovsky had read Soloviev's *History of Russia*, Golubinskii's *History of the Russian Church*, "the works of Kliuchevskii, Chaadaev, and most of the Slavophiles." Furthermore, while in the gymnasium, he read Zelinskii, Karamzin, Platonov, Vladimir Soloviev, Pavel Florensky, and Sergius Bulgakov.[3] But his reading was not limited to Russian topics. He learned to read English, French, German, Latin, and Greek. He enjoyed reading such authors as Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Cooper, Mayne-Reid, and Bret Harte.[4]

Florovsky's education was not just academic. He also experienced the regular cycle of services of the church year. Unlike most children of clergy, Georges did not participate in the services as an acolyte or sub-deacon. Instead, his father instructed him to "pray and listen." Following his father's advice, Georges learned the services and the theology of the church. The theology of the church services gave Florovsky his theological education. In a comment to Andrew Blane, he stated, "there is no

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[2]Ibid., 19-21.

[3]Ibid., 22.

[4]Ibid.

tension between worship and theology, rather they belong together."[5] Because of the

capacity of his mind, Florovsky had the services memorized by age eleven. As he

remarked, "My mind was filled with their images, and it has remained so ever

since."[6]

After completion of the gymnasium, Florovsky enrolled in the Faculty of

History and Philology at the University of Odessa to major in philosophy. His

advisor was N. N. Lange, who had been a student of the positivist psychologist

Wilhelm Wundt. Florovsky expressed the oddity of the situation, "If you wanted to

invent a student who was the least suitable for Lange, it was me. I was above all

interested in religion and metaphysics; he was not at all. He never tried to influence

me, and he supported me even when no one understood why he did."[7] Because the

philosophy program at the University of Odessa was in the Faculty of History,

philosophy majors also had to take a full course in history. The combination of

history, philosophy, and psychology provided Florovsky with the educational

foundation for his later work.[8]

He completed his undergraduate work in 1916 and began preparations for the

Master's degree in philosophy at the University of Odessa. Having passed his

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[5]Ibid., 25.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., 28.

[8]Lange insisted that Florovsky master the positive sciences if he was going to pursue his interests in metaphysics. Florovsky's first published paper was "On the Mechanism of Reflex Salivary Secretion," which was sent to I. P. Pavlov, who published the results in the *Bulletin de L'Academie Imperiale des Sciences* in February, 1917 (Blane, 29).

qualifying examinations, Florovsky began his university teaching career in 1919.

However, his teaching career at the University of Odessa was short-lived. In 1920 the

Florovsky family left Russia as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution.[9] They settled in

Sofia, Bulgaria.

In Sofia, Florovsky joined the Russian Religious-Philosophical Society, which

led to his involvement in what became known as the "Eurasian Movement." This

group of four men included Prince Nikolai S. Trubetskoi, Petr N. Savitskii, Petr P.

Suvchinskii, and Georges Florovsky. In 1921 they published the papers from their

symposium entitled, *Iskhod k vostoku* (Exodus to the East).

> They held that the war in Europe and the revolution in Russia were not
> simply political catastrophes but signs of the breakdown of European
> culture. World cataclysm and historic change were upon mankind. In
> the maelstrom, they believed, there could be seen the dying of the West
> and the rising of the East, out of which would emerge a new human
> age.[10]

From the beginning, though, Florovsky was only loosely associated with the

group. In the succeeding symposia, he contributed only sporadically. This was

basically for two reasons. First, the various members of the group had moved away

from Sofia. Second, the "Eurasian Movement" had taken on a political program, in

which Florovsky was not interested. Rather than a political revolution, Florovsky

was more interested in cultural revival. His complete break with the movement

occurred in August 1923 at a meeting in Berlin. At the meeting Florovsky was

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[9]Blane, 30-32.

[10]Ibid., 38.

rejected by the movement while he was rejecting its premises. However, his

association with the group followed him for many years.[11]

The "Eurasian Movement" must be understood in the context of the historical

ideas in which it originated. The Eurasians believed that the Bolshevik Revolution

had created a break in the natural evolutionary development of the Russian nation.

The question was raised as to the role of the Russian people in world history. What

emerged became known as the "Russian Idea." Nikolas Berdiaev, in his book with the

same title, explains:

> The inconsistency and complexity of the Russian soul may be due to the
> fact that in Russia two streams of world history–East and West–jostle
> and influence one another. The Russian people is not purely European
> and it is not purely Asiatic. Russia is a complete section of the world–a
> colossal East-West. It unites two worlds, and within the Russian soul
> two principles are always engaged in strife–the Eastern and the
> Western.[12]

This idea that in Russian culture the two worlds of East and West are joined into a

new synthesis was combined with the messianic consciousness of the Russian people.

As Berdiaev notes, "Messianic consciousness is more characteristic of the Russians

than of any other people except the Jews. It runs all through Russian history right

down to its communist period."[13]   For the Eurasians Russia was to provide the

solution to the European social crisis. The October Revolution interrupted this role.

Furthermore, as Marc Raeff has commented, "the events of 1917-21 again

pushed to the fore the very questions that had been raised by [the intelligentsia of the

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[11]Ibid., 39.

[12]Nikolai Berdiaev, *The Russian Idea*, tr. R. M. French (New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1992), 20.

[13]Ibid., 26.

Vekhi conference], and not surprisingly the answers were sought along similar lines by all those who were not firmly committed to a political ideology. [14] The complete reliance on reason, the belief in automatic social and cultural progress, the excessive materialism and worship of science and technology (the 'Americanization' of Western civilization)–all were violently, emotionally rejected."[15] The Eurasian Movement was forced to answer the question of what happened to Russia. Their answer came in the first two volumes of their works, *Exodus to the East* and *On the Ways*.

The contributors arrived at the conclusion that what had befallen Russia in the October Revolution was "an exemplary instance of the profound and universal *cultural* and *spiritual* crisis" of European civilization. The revolution was "not

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[14]In 1909 a collection of essays was published under the title, *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*), which criticized the gross materialism of the Russian intelligentsia. The contributors to the collection were all united in having rejected their former Marxist positions and embracing the Orthodox faith. These contributors included Nikolas Berdiaev, Mikhail Gershenzon, Sergius Bulgakov, Semen L. Frank, and Peter S. Struve. In the preface of the collection, Gershenzon writes, "Their common platform is the recognition of the theoretical and practical primacy of the spiritual life over the external forms of community. They mean by this that the inner life of the personality is the sole creative force of human existence, and that this inner life, and not the self-sufficient principles of the political sphere, is the only sound basis on which a society can be built." (Quoted in Catherine Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997], 132-33). Evtuhov remarks, "Like his co-authors, Gershenzon perceived the new locus for reform in the religious rather than the secular life of the Russian people."

[15]Marc Raeff, "Enticements and Rifts: Georges Florovsky as Russian Intellectual Historian," in *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman*, ed. Andrew Blane (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 244.

merely . . . a Russian phenomenon."[16] In response to the crisis, "the primary task is

not to offer alternative socio-economic solutions to the needs of the people, but to

elaborate an ideology based on the restoration and defense of the individual

personality."[17]

Florovsky's contribution to the first volume, *Exodus to the East*, took the form

of a serious critique of Western society and a call for its spiritual renewal. In "The

Cunning of Reason," Florovsky echoes the critique of European culture of

Romanticism and the Russian Slavophiles. The central problem of European culture

is its "rationalism" and its worship of knowledge. But the issue is not so much the

crisis as whether Europe has within its intellectual tradition the possibility of

renewing itself. The Russian intellectual Alexander Herzen had asked the same

question in the mid 1800s. Florovsky's answer is the same as Herzen's: "we too must

now answer with at least sceptical [sic] doubt, if not yet with complete denial."[18]

Europeans are trying to find the answer to their crisis, not in Protestant Scholasticism

nor in Roman Catholicism, but rather by withdrawing into "the religion of monism, to

theosophy, to Buddhism!" According to Florovsky, Europeans are replacing the

Christian God with a pagan understanding of Nature or of a Higher Force, but in the

end Europeans are still caught in the hold of "rationalism." "Thus, in the uprising

against 'Scholasticism' European thought does not go further than Gnosis–that is,

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[16]Ibid., 246.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Georges Florovsky, "The Slyness of Reason," in *Philosophy: Philosophical Problems and Movements*, vol. xii, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 14-15.

than the ideal of religious knowledge–not attaining the true freedom of religious

life."[19] Even in Western mysticism, this rationalism is symptomatic:

> In this difference, undoubtedly, the contrast between the religious
> elements nourishing "the East" and "the West" is revealed. And
> between them now lies the same abyss which in ancient times separated
> the mysticism of the East from the thought of Montanus, the Athonite
> Hesychasts from the German Flagellants, St. Simeon the New
> Theologian from St. Teresa of Spain. *The naturalism of Western
> mysticism is organically connected with the rationalism of Western
> thought . . . .*[20]

Who is to blame for the rationalistic nature of Western thought? For

Florovsky the problem lies with Judaism and Roman Catholicism. From Judaism

European culture inherited the concept of "law." "Religion becomes a legal code."

And the Creator "is an administrator and an impartial judge, a strict observer of the

order that has been established once and for all . . . ." Herein lies the connection with

Roman Catholicism, which "converted the Evangelical message into a theological

system based on the model of Aristotelian Logic and the Justinian Code." "In both

cases there is the same juridical understanding of the world as a system of divine law-

order, which realizes the pre-eternal thoughts and predeterminations of the Almighty

and Supremely-Wise Creator."[21]

The answer given to the crisis of European civilization is to be found outside

of European thought. It is to be found in "the 'blowing' of the liberated spirit," found

in the "national geniuses of the Russian people" and in "the insights of the American

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[19]Ibid., 15.

[20]Ibid., 16.

[21]Ibid., 19-20.

genius."[22] As Raeff remarks, "Thus, let us turn away from these false children [of rationalism and development]; let us return to the land of the fathers to renovate Russia on a new basis!"[23] This idea of a return to the "fathers" in order to revitalize Russian and European culture becomes the theme that he will develop in his future writings.

In 1928 Florovsky wrote his last essay, "The Eurasian Temptation," that pertained to the Eurasian question. In the essay he "argued that the historical problem raised and illuminated by the Russian revolution could never be solved by the 'political and Slavophile concerns of the Eurasians' but only by the revitalization of culture through the renewal of Orthodox faith and life."[24]

In his 1922 article, "Dostoevsky and Europe," Florovsky continued to develop the themes of his Eurasian period. In this article, he argues that for Dostoevsky Russia is both a part of Europe and separate from it. Russia has embraced the universal ideas of Europe, yet it rejects becoming European. The universal idea of "Europe" is that to be "European" is to embrace all of humanity, rather than to live in the manner of Europeans. "So, 'to be a European' can mean two things: on the level of culture it means that you are possessed of the spirit of Homer and Sophocles, Cervantes and Da Vinci; on the level of everyday life it means that you live in *forms*

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[22]Ibid., 22.

[23]Raeff, 247.

[24]Blane, 40.

of the Latin-Germanic way of life, that you dress and carry on as in Paris or Berlin."[25]

But in the acceptance of European universalism, Russia demonstrates her unique role

in the history of humankind: "Russia gives not only *individual* values, but also the

total *reconciliation* of all the universally significant achievements of culture."[26] In

this manner, Russia becomes an image of Christ taking on the role of servant to all of

humanity through the reconciliation of all with all. Yet, Dostoevsky did not

understand this as the coming of the earthly kingdom of God. His dream was "of the

Kingdom of God which is within us, which is built within a man's spirit and which

transforms from within, renews and regenerates all of life and social relations. It is

the dream of a universal religious culture, when everything will be of spirit, infused

with the faith, and not of everyday life, not of any one social system, not of the

Civitas Dei established on earth."[27]

Dostoevsky distinguished European, or Western culture, from Russian, or

Eastern culture, on the basis of the earthly and heavenly ideas of the kingdom of God.

The ancient Roman Empire was built on the basis of world unity. "'The empire itself

was created as a religious idea, offering in and through itself an outlet for all the

moral impulses of the entire ancient world.'" It was in the Roman Empire that the

idea of the "Man-god" appeared.[28] However, with the advent of Christianity and the

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[25]Georges Florovsky, "Dostoevsky and Europe," in *Theology and Literature*, vol. xi, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 69.

[26]Ibid., 72.

[27]Ibid., 73.

[28]Ibid.

church, the form was destroyed, but not the idea. European civilization was built

upon its basis. "'A compromise was reached: the Empire adopted Christianity and

the Church adopted Roman law and government. In the western half, the State finally

completely overcame the Church. The Church was destroyed and was ultimately

transformed into the State. The Papacy appeared–a continuation of the ancient

Roman Empire in a new form.'"[29] According to Florovsky, Dostoevsky was correct

in his analysis of the "Western Catholic solution of the social problem–through the

formula of organizations and power." The origins of which could be traced to the

Roman Empire itself.[30] Likewise, those who are forsaking the religious roots of

European civilization in favor of socialism are also following the same formula that

had been adopted by Roman Catholicism from the ancient Roman Empire.

Because of the forsaking of the spiritual for the worldly and the erection of the

earthly city, which Dostoevsky called an "anthill," he perceived that European

civilization was coming to an end. There was no hope for Europe within its own

ideal. However, for Dostoevsky and for Florovsky, the hope for renewal is to be

found in the East. Russia is to show to the world Orthodoxy. This is Russia's

messianic calling. Yet, Europe, because of the ancient Roman spirit, is suspect of

Russia's intentions. Europe believes that Russia is after "political hegemony and

power." "And to a certain extent Europe would be right, because the victory of

Orthodoxy will 'undermine' the 'man-God' idea held by the West at its very roots."[31]

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[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., 74.

[31]Ibid., 77.

What Dostoevsky proclaimed was the coming unity of all humanity in Christ in the

embrace of Orthodox Christianity. This embrace is not to be like that of the ancient

Roman idea, by political coercion and violence, rather it will occur through love and

sacrifice. The new-man that Europe awaited would come, not from the West, but

from the East, and he will proclaim to the world "Christ, the God-man."[32]

Dostoevsky provided for Florovsky a means to answer the historico-spiritual

problem that had resulted from the Bolshevik Revolution and the First World War.

Dostoevsky enabled Florovsky to see beyond the utopianism proclaimed by the

political and ideological programs of his day. The problem with the answers given to

the social problem by the authors of *Vekhi*, Soloviev, Tiutchev, Fedorov, or the

Eurasians, was the drive towards utopianism. As Raeff points out,

> Florovsky… discovered that at the source of this utopian lure was the
> identification of human history with nature and its organic development.
> The temptation to which all the thinkers succumbed was that of
> yearning to be at one with the process of nature, at one with the larger
> unity of humanity and a universe that is identified with God (or in
> whose every element God is present). The enticement was dangerous,
> argues Florovsky, since it robbed the individual of his freedom, his
> moral personality, and left no room for his culturally creative act . . . .[33]

Florovsky found the answer to this utopianism in Dostoevsky. "In

Dostoevesky, or rather in the heroes his genius created, Florovsky found examples of

the extreme to which the enticements of the 'cunning of reason' could lead, but also

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[32]Ibid., 80. Both Dostoevsky and Florovsky were keenly aware of the
problems associated with the Church of Russia. As the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky
argues from an idealistic view of Orthodoxy, or Orthodoxy in its purity. What
Florovsky is arguing through Dostoevsky is that the *spirit* of Orthodoxy, or
Orthodoxy in its essence, as an idea can provide the answer to the spiritual problem
faced by European civilization.

[33]Raeff, 251.

discovered adumbrations of the alternative path; a spiritual regeneration stemming from a full acceptance of the Christian faith within the framework of the Russian Church."[34]

Florovsky continued his studies and preparation on his dissertation on Alexander Herzen in Prague, where he and his new wife, Xenia Ivanovna, had moved in 1921. Coming to Prague would provided Florovsky with the contacts in the Russian emigration that would enable him to attain to the heights of his scholarly career. In Prague, Florovsky met Sergius Bulgakov, Nicholas Lossky, Vladimir Lossky, P. I. Novgorodtsev, and Petr Struve. It was Novgorodtsev who gave Florovsky the scholarship necessary to continue his studies in Prague and who also gave him a teaching position in the Russian Faculty of Law at Charles University. After reworking his thesis on Herzen, Florovsky publicly defended his work in June, 1923. Questioning his thesis were such notable thinkers as Nicholas Lossky, Petr Struve, and V. V. Zenkovsky. [35] Following his successful defense, which awarded Florovsky with the Master of Philosophy, he continued his research on history and philosophy, writing several important essays on some of the major Russian historical philosophers. During this time he wrote such important essays as "Dostoevsky and Europe" and "The Metaphysical Premises of Utopianism."

While in Prague Florovsky had the opportunity to meet with a consultation committee on the viability of opening a theological school for the training of Russian priests in Western Europe. Under the leadership of Metropolitan Evlogii and the

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[34]Raeff, 253.

[35]Blane, 42-44.

Methodist John R. Mott, a leader in the YMCA movement, the decision was made to

open a university level theological school in Paris in 1924. In 1925 the Institut de

Theologie Orthodoxe de Paris, otherwise known as St. Sergius Theological Institute,

opened its doors. The initial faculty of the Institute included Bishop Benjamin, S.

Bezobrazov, A. Kartashev, and P. Kovalevsky. Additionally, other faculty were

added that included Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, V. Il'in, and V. Zenkovsky. Under the

suggestion of Bulgakov and Zenkovsky, the faculty invited Georges Florovsky to

serve as Professor of Patristics.[36]

This turn from the history of philosophy to patristics was a momentous

decision on the part of Florovsky that came as a result of a suggestion by Sergius

Bulgakov, who was his spiritual father and confessor, "'Why don't you turn to

Patristics, no one else is doing it?'" According to Florovsky, "'I discovered it was

my true vocation.'"[37] While Florovsky knew Patristics well enough, "his mastery of

the field came through teaching a required course of four years duration." This

course began with the Ante-Nicene Fathers, proceeded through the Age of the

Councils, then covered Byzantine theology, and concluded with the history of

Russian theology.[38]

Consequently, this turn to teaching Patristics raises the question as to why

Florovsky responded with such zeal that it became the single canon by which he

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[36]Blane, 46-47.

[37]Ibid., 49.

[38]Ibid., 50. These lectures serve as the basis for volumes vii–x of the *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989).

judged all religious and historical thought. Why did Florovsky seek the answer to the existential predicament of modern man in the theology of the Byzantine Orthodox Church? Why did he not continue in the path of Russian religious philosophy as did Sergius Bulgakov, Pavel Florensky, Semen Frank, and Nicholas Berdiaev?[39]

The answer is complex and multifaceted. Yet, as we have seen, Florovsky was already moving in this direction in his own thought prior to becoming a patrologist. The Eurasian controversy and his research on Alexander Herzen and Dostoevsky provided Florovsky with the critique necessary to judge the historical development of Russian thought. In "The Metaphysical Premises of Utopianism," written in 1926, Florovsky criticizes the whole notion of the creation of the Social Ideal toward which many of the Russian philosophers had been dedicated to achieving. Social utopianism itself is "suggested and reinforced by a particular understanding and interpretation of the meaning and character of the historical process."[40] Florovsky understands this underlying view of history to be an organic worldview whereby the historical process is seen as an unfolding of "predetermined inclinations" that removes the individual from the historical process and makes him

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[39]Konstantin Gavrilkin has argued, "This dramatic, and rather surprising, change in Florovsky's style and thought can hardly be explained through a 'natural evolution.'" While it is indeed true that Florovsky's intellectual development undergoes a radical turn toward the Patristics, it can be shown that Florovsky's thought did experience an evolutionary development, as Marc Raeff has demonstrated. See Konstantin Gavrilkin, *Church and Culture in the Thought of Georges Florovsky: the Role of Culture in the Making of Theology*, Master's Thesis (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1998), 34-35.

[40]Georges Florovsky, "The Metaphysical Premises of Utopianism," *Philosophy: Philosophical Problems and Movements*, vol. xii, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 83.

"a part of nature."[41] "If history is the continuation and completion of 'nature,' a

natural process of development, then it proceeds automatically–in which case it is

inescapably necessary, with all of its parts and stages." This view of history is rooted

in what he calls the "'Roman Idea,'" which entails the forcible uniting of all

humanity. This "Roman Idea" is rooted in Hellenistic pagan cosmotheism.[42] In the

organic view of the historical process, the process itself encapsulates the divine and is

equated with God. "And this means, therefore, that the world is God. All other

existences are in the world, and are only for it. The world as a whole lives, develops,

'becomes'–the unified system is enriched, formed, revealed and individualized

because of the perishing of all particular existences." "In this closed-off world unity

there is no room for self-definition or for freedom. Here any kind of self-definition is

transparent, and therefore unnecessary and evil." "The pathos of collectivism is

nourished by the primordial naturalistic point of view, by its perception of the world

as an interrelated, unified system tending towards the completed organization of all of

its natural and material forces."[43] As Marc Raeff comments, for Florovsky "the great

error in conceiving of history as progress is that it implicitly assumes a naturalistic

deterministic universe of human action in which the individual personality–his ability

and his will to act freely–become impossible, where everything becomes movement

leading to a final stage that itself is meaningless from the perspective of a spiritual,

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[41]Ibid., 84-85.

[42]Ibid., 91.

[43]Ibid., 88.

i.e., religious, definition of the nature of man."[44] Utopianism deprives the human of the possibility of individual struggle and historical achievement. This idea of struggle or ascetic achievement (*podvig*) becomes the key to understanding Florovsky's view of history and the human being. Human freedom is essential for the person to overcome the natural inclinations of the flesh. History is a record of humanity's struggle, "the feat of freely and passionately outliving of sin."[45] To escape the "naturalistic dead end" of utopianism one must turn toward "the transformation of experience" through "the experience of faith, in religious experience."[46] The turn to the Fathers of the Byzantine period of the church provided Florovsky with the understanding to answer the modern predicament of humanity.[47]

Additionally, Florovsky's return to the Fathers can be understood as his solution to the crisis in Russian religious philosophy that erupted in the 1930s in the Sophiological Controversy. Developing the thought of Vladimir Soloviev, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, dean of St. Sergius, posited *Sophia*, or divine Wisdom, as the mediator between the Creator and creation. Many of the Russian emigration, including Florovsky, perceived this deviation as a heresy. What emerged was a

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[44]Raeff, 256.

[45]Ibid., 257.

[46]Florovsky, "Metaphysical Premises of Utopianism," 93.

[47]Many of Florovsky's contemporaries accused him of obscurantism. Berdiaev especially leveled this critique against him in his review of *The Ways of Russian Theology*. Karl Barth also commented about Florovsky's obscurantism in a personal note to Edward Thurneysen. See Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, tr. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976), 215.

theological controversy that brought the end of Russian religious philosophy and set the direction for Orthodox theology as a return to the Fathers.

Born in 1871 in Livny to a poor priestly family, Sergei Bulgakov experienced first hand the plight of the rural Russian peasant. Following in the family tradition, Sergei attended seminary at the age of fourteen in Orel. Three years later, after losing faith at the seminary, he entered a secular gymnasium to complete his studies. Catherine Evtuhov remarks that this was the beginning of his transition to becoming an "intelligent."[48] This transition from the seminary to atheism was not uncommon in late nineteenth-century Russia. Like the Russian writers Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov, who left seminary after reading Feuerbach, Bulgakov followed an all too familiar pattern in the life of Russian intellectuals.[49] In 1890 in his predecessor's footsteps, Alexander Herzen, Bulgakov enrolled at Moscow University to take a degree in political economy and law. He chose these fields rather than literature and philosophy because he believed that these could "more likely contribute to his country's salvation."[50] After graduation in 1894, he began graduate studies under the tutelage of Aleksandr Chuprov, who also had a "clerical background."

Bulgakov's studies at Moscow University coincided with the Second International–Marxism's Golden Age. He became an avid Marxist, having much in common with the thought of European Marxists in general, although Lenin described

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[48]Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle*, 25.

[49]Ibid., 26-27. Dostoevsky portrays this pattern in the character of Rakitin in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

[50]Ibid., 28.

him as a "legal Marxist."[51] From 1896 to 1898 Bulgakov published several

unremarkable articles, demonstrating his Marxist position.[52] In 1898 he left for

Western Europe to do research for his dissertation on Marxism and agriculture. In his

dissertation[53] he argued against Marx, holding that agriculture was not following the

social development called for in Marxist doctrine toward greater centralization, but

rather was in a process of decentralization. Needless to say, Bulgakov's analysis was

wrong, and his dissertation was not accepted. However, through his research,

Bulgakov questioned the central tenets of Marxism, and he began his drift away from

the Marxist camps.[54] Rejecting Marxism, he turned to Kantian idealism and political

liberalism as providing the bases for modern Russian society. Consequently, his turn

to liberalism saw a development of a gradual return to the church, which he had

dismissed in his youth. Bulgakov was not alone in this turn toward religion. Other

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[51]Ibid., 29. Evtuhov writes that there were two Marxist camps during these years. The first group accepted the Marxist view of social development and the collapse of capitalism while being willing to supplement it with insights from Kantianism and positivism. The other group, to which Lenin belonged, accepted Marxism as doctrine, unwilling to change or modify it. Evtuhov rightly places Bulgakov with the first group. Ibid., 30.

[52]These articles include "On the Regularity of Social Phenomena," *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii,* reprinted in Sergei Bulgakov, "O zakonomernosti sotsial'nykh iavlenii," *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* (St. Petersburg, 1903); "Zakon prichinnosti," *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*; "Khoziaistvo i pravo," *Ot marksizma k idealizmu;* and his debate with Struve, "O rynkakh pri kapitalisticheskom proizvodstve."

[53]Sergei Bulgakov, *Kapitalizm i zemledelie* (St. Petersburg, 1900).

[54]Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle*, 36.

members of the intelligentsia, Berdiaev, Florensky, and Frank to name but a few notables, followed this same path.[55]

This turn to idealism by Bulgakov witnessed also a rejection of nineteenth-century positivism. During the early 1900s, Bulgakov's work demonstrated this rejection.[56] In this regard, Bulgakov can be situated in the general European rejection of positivism and a return to metaphysics at the turn of the century. Because positivism had failed to provide the solutions to the ethical issues of the day, many of the intelligentsia turned to the question of metaphysics as a possible solution. Eventually, for Bulgakov and his cohort, this would lead many back to the Orthodox Church.[57]

Bulgakov's rejection of positivism and his embrace of metaphysics came through the influence of Vladimir Soloviev. As Evtuhov notes, "As early as 1903 Bulgakov had pinpointed the centrality of the Christian concept of Christ's human and divine natures to Soloviev's thought."[58] Soloviev, according to Bulgakov, perceived that the central problem of the late nineteenth century was the

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[55]Ibid., 10. Many of these thinkers were involved in the *Vekhi* conference noted above.

[56]See Sergei Bulgakov, *Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip* (Moscow, 1902) and *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* (St. Petersburg, 1903).

[57]Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle*, 49-65. For a history of this change in European social thought see H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (New York: Knopf,1958). For Bulgakov, part of this change could be due to the influence of the work of Soloviev which he began to read during this time period. See Vladimir Solovyov, *The Crisis of Western Philosophy (Against the Positivists)*, translated by Boris Jakim (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1996) for Soloviev's critique of positivism.

[58]Evtuhov, 104.

Christological issue. Liberal theology had missed this point, providing an

interpretation of Christ as a moral example rather than as *theanthropos*, i.e. the God-

man. The concept of divine humanity, as developed by Soloviev, provided an answer

to the civilizational question that haunted European man. As Evtuhov comments,

"Soloviev's philosophy contained the Christian kernel that Bulgakov missed in

Feuerbach: 'In Soloviev's doctrine Christ is the unifying principle of the universal

organism, the positive *all*.'"[59] As he developed Soloviev's understanding of God-

manhood, Bulgakov was able to argue for a Christian political and economic

philosophy grounded in Christianity.[60]

Soloviev, in his *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, argued that Christ consists of

two concepts.

> In the divine organism of Christ, the acting, unifying principle, the
> principle that expresses the unity of that which absolutely is, is
> obviously the Word, or Logos. The second kind of unity, the produced
> unity, is called Sophia in Christian theosophy. If we distinguish in the
> absolute in general between the absolute as such (that which absolutely
> is) and its content, essence, or idea, we will find the former directly
> expressed in the Logos and the latter directly expressed in Sophia,
> which is thus the expressed or actualized idea. And just as an existent
> being is distinct from its own idea but is at the same time one with it, so
> the Logos, too, is distinct from Sophia but is inwardly united with her.
> Sophia is God's body, the matter of Divinity, permeated with the
> principle of divine unity. Actualizing in Himself, or bearing, this unity,
> Christ, as the integral divine organism, both universal and individual, is
> both Logos and Sophia.[61]

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid. For his proposed political economy see Sergei Bulgakov, *The Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*, tr. Catherine Evtuhov (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

[61]Vladimir Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, ed. Boris Jakim, tr. Peter Zouboff, (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1995), 107-8.

In fleshing out the concept of all-unity, Soloviev, drawing upon German idealism and

theosophy, utilizes the concept of Sophia as the unifying principle in God Himself. It

appears that Soloviev identifies the *ousia* or essence of God with Sophia, yet Sophia

is the actualization of the Divine in the person of Jesus Christ united with the Logos.

Furthermore, as Paul Valliere surmises, "Christ/Sophia is the 'world' which God

experiences from all eternity, the world which he begets for himself."[62] Because

human beings are the creatures by which the noumenal and phenomenal worlds are

united, Soloviev links the Divine Sophia with humanity itself.[63] Humanity exists

eternally in the Divine Sophia as the object of God's love. Soloviev states,

> Consequently, for God to exist eternally as Logos, or as active divinity,
> it is necessary to assume the eternal existence of real elements that
> receive the divine action. It is necessary to assume the existence of a
> world that is patient of divine action, that makes room in itself for the
> divine unity. The specific, produced unity of that world–the center of
> the world and the periphery of Divinity–is humanity . . . .
> Consequently, God's actuality, based upon God's activity presupposes a
> subject that receives this activity, namely humanity, and presupposes it
> *eternally*, since God's activity is already presented in the Logos is not
> valid, for the Logos is God made manifest. This manifestation
> presupposes that other for which, or with respect to which, God
> manifests Himself, that is, it presupposes humanity.[64]

     What Soloviev had done was to create the possibility for the salvation of

individual human beings in the eternal divine humanity of Christ. This divine

humanity, or God-manhood, contains within itself unity and multiplicity. As such the

essence of this humanity is not an abstraction, but a reality comprised of all individual

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[62]Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 159.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Solovyov, 114.

human beings. "Every one of us, every human being, is essentially and actually rooted in and partakes of the universal, or absolute, human being."[65]

Bulgakov continued to develop Soloviev's concept of God-manhood. In his defense of sophiology, he articulated the concept of Sophia by rooting it in the Old Testament passages pertaining to Sophia. Whereas Soloviev had not sought to base his sophiology in the Old Testament vision of Sophia, Bulgakov needed to provide a theological basis for his defense. Equating God's glory with God's wisdom, Bulgakov came to the realization that the divine essence, divinity itself, is God's glory and wisdom.[66]

According to Mikhail Sergeev, Bulgakov and his supporters "were trying to rethink the tradition of Eastern Christianity in light of modern intellectual developments."[67] The formulation of the doctrine of Sophia was Bulgakov's attempt to answer the question of the relationship between God and the world without entering into pantheism, which German idealism had accepted. In fact, Bulgakov insists that the concept of Sophia, as he has articulated it, leads to panentheism, since "nothing can exist outside God, as alien or exterior to him."[68] Yet, the creaturely Sophia that participates in the Divine Sophia "belongs to the being of God, the world

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[65]Solovyov, 118.

[66]Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 25-33.

[67]Mikhail Sergeev, "Divine Wisdom and the Trinity: A 20th century controversy in Orthodox Theology," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 45, nos. 1-4 (2000): 574.

[68]Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God*, 72.

as such maintains its existence and its identity distinct from that of God." The world, the creaturely Sophia, does not exist by necessity, but comes to be through God's freedom in his "superabundant love."[69]

The problem associated with Bulgakov's sophiology–and one can also attribute these to a much greater extent to Soloviev and Florensky–was the attempt to argue a traditional understanding of God's relationship to the world through the use of categories of thought that were foreign to the tradition. As Sergey Horuzhy has pointed out, the Russian religious philosophical tradition of "All-Unity" as expressed in the philosophical systems of the great thinkers of the Russian "Silver Age" "belongs to the line of Christian Platonism, its type of ontology a so-called 'panentheism,' according to which the world and all its phenomena are imbued with the essence which is in God."[70] The metaphysics of All-Unity does not address the traditional elements of the Russian Orthodox ascetic tradition, namely "the struggle against passions, the purification of the soul, and the deification of man by God's grace."[71] This issue arose in the context of the Onomatodoxy, the "Name-Worshippers" of Mt. Athos and the Caucasus.

The "Name-Worshippers" believed that the name of God was God himself. Apparently, the controversy began when the monk Hilarion from the Caucasus sent a treatise to St. Panteleimon's monastery on Mt. Athos for spiritual review in 1872. In the treatise Hilarion makes the observation that in the practice of the Jesus Prayer,

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[69]Ibid., 72-73.

[70]Sergey S. Horuzhy, "Neo-Patristic Synthesis and Russian Philosophy," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 44, nos. 3-4 (2000): 314.

[71]Ibid.

"The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we may so speak, becomes incarnate. The man clearly feels it with the interior sentiments of his soul. The Lord himself is the Divine Name. This feeling of the Lord himself and his Name unites them together in such a way that they can not be distinguished one from another."[72] This claim that God could be identified with his name created a turmoil on the Holy Mountain and in the monasteries of the Russian Caucasus. While the treatise was accepted by the monks of St. Panteleimon monastery, the monks of the Skete of St. Elias made the accusation of pantheism against Hilarion. The debate eventually included such notable Russian intellectuals as Alexis Kireevsky and Anthony Bulatovich.[73] Eventually, the hierarchical authorities intervened. The treatise was condemned by Joachim III of Constantinople, and the Russian Synod concurred. However, many of the Russian philosophers disagreed with the decision of the Russian Synod. Bulgakov and Florensky both supported the movement on the basis of their understanding of the theological tradition as found in the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas. His distinction between God's essence and his energies provided the basis for the belief and practice of the "Name-Worshippers." Because Palamas's thought had recently been rediscovered by Russian thinkers, it was too new to utilize in their defense. Furthermore, while the followers of Soloviev embraced Russian hesychasm and Palamism in the defense of Onomatodoxy, they could not integrate this theology

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[72]Sergius Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 247. Quoted from *Na gorach Kavkaza Schimonach Ilarion* (Batalpasinsk, 1910), 12.

[73]Ibid., 251.

with their own. In the end, Russian religious philosophy had to reject Palamism on its own philosophical bases.[74]

Bulgakov's sophiology was the chief reason why we see in Florovsky a turn to patristic theology and the development of the neo-patristic synthesis. Much of Florovsky's work can be understood as a response to Bulgakov's sophiology and the development of Russian religious philosophy. In order to articulate a traditional response to Bulgakov, Florovsky found his answer in the resurrection of the ascetic-theological tradition of Gregory Palamas as taught by Paisius Velichovsky and Silouan of Mt. Athos.

As we have seen, Florovsky and Bulgakov developed a close relationship in the 1920s when they met in Prague and subsequently moved to Paris. The closeness of their relationship can be seen in Bulgakov's diary where he makes the remark that he is Florovsky's spiritual father.[75] Yet, even from the beginning of their relationship there were differences between them.   In 1923 the Brotherhood of St. Sophia was formed for "the study and propagation of Orthodox Christian beliefs."[76] Florovsky was one of the original signatories to the Brotherhood, as was Bulgakov, but Florovsky left the group within a "few months" "due to his unease about the philosophical views of the other members."[77] Similarly, when Bulgakov offered him

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[74]Horuzhy, 316.

[75]Alexis Klimoff, "Georges Florovsky and the Sophiological Controversy," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, nos. 1-2 (2005): 70. See also Aleksei Kozyrev and Natal'ia Golubkova, "Prot. S. Bulgakov. Iz pamiati serdtsa. Praga (1923-1924)," in *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi mysli. Ezhegodnik za 1998* (Moscow, 1998), 156.

[76]Klimoff, 71.

[77]Ibid.

a position with the new theological faculty in Paris, Florovsky showed his uneasiness

with the philosophical positions of the other faculty members.[78] While the

philosophical position of the other faculty members is not explicitly mentioned in the

correspondence between Bulgakov and Florovsky, it can be surmised that the issue

was the acceptance of the philosophical legacy of Vladimir Soloviev by members of

the Russian theological faculty, including Bulgakov.[79] While Florovsky eventually

accepted the position at St. Sergius, he distanced himself from the

predominant philosophical theology articulated at the school. In a letter dated 30

December 1925 to Bulgakov, Florovsky explains his position regarding Soloviev:

> As far as I am concerned, I see the rejection of Solov'ev in toto . . . as a
> personal religious duty and as a task that needs to be undertaken in due
> course by contemporary Russian religious and philosophical thought.
> By virtue of this rejection we shall liberate ourselves from the whole
> murky tradition . . . for I believe that it has been this very tradition that
> has shackled our creative powers.[80]

It is this from this project as a reaction to the philosophical legacy of Vladimir

Soloviev that Florovsky's thought can be situated.

While Florovsky did not criticize the theology of Bulgakov explicitly in his

writings, he did offer a subtle critique in the patristic theology that he articulated. For

example, his 1928 essay entitled "Creation and Creaturehood," can be understood as a

refutation of the sophiological relationship of the world to the Creator.[81] In the text,

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[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid., 71-72.

[80]Ibid., 73. Quoted from Aleksei Kozyrev, "Prot. Sergii Bulgakov. O Vl. Solov'eve (1924)," in *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi mysli*, 207.

[81]Ibid., 77.

Florovsky offers three basic arguments against Bulgakov's theology without

mentioning Bulgakov, Soloviev, or sophiology. First, Florovsky articulates the

creatio ex nihilo whereby creation is created; it is not eternal. "In the created world

itself there is no foundation, no basis for genesis and being. Creation by its very

existence witnesses to and proclaims its creaturehood, it proclaims that it has been

produced."[82] Drawing upon the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa,

and John of Damascus, Florovsky argues the "infinite distance between God and

creation" that exists by virtue of the nature of Creator and creation.[83] "Any

transubstantiation of creaturely nature into the Divine is as impossible as the changing

of God into creation, and any 'coalescence' and 'fusion' of natures is excluded."[84]

Even in the case of the hypostasis of the God-man, Jesus Christ, the two natures

remain unchanged, yet inseparable. Furthermore, creation is a result of the divine

will, not the divine nature. Drawing upon the thought of St. Athanasius, whom

Bulgakov also liked to use, Florovsky states, "Creating is *an act of will* [έκ

βουλήματος], and therefore is sharply distinguished from the Divine generation,

which is an *act of nature* [γεννά κατά φύσιν]."[85] This distinction is paramount for

understanding the separateness of creation from the Creator. According to patristic

theology, that which is "begotten" resembles that which it is "begotten" from. As St.

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[82]Georges Florovsky, "Creation and Creaturehood," in *Creation and Redemption*, volume three, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), 45.

[83]Ibid., 46.

[84]Ibid., 47.

[85]Ibid., 48.

John of Damascus states, "'Begetting means producing from the substance of the begetter an offspring similar in substance to the begetter. Creation, or making, on the other hand, is the bringing into being, from outside and not from the substance of the creator, an actor of something, entirely unlike [by nature].'"[86] This focus on creation as being distinct from the Divine nature counteracts the Sophiological view that creation somehow is based in the Divine nature itself through the participation of the creaturely Sophia in the Divine Sophia. In this manner creation is eternal and exists in the Divine nature itself, denying the absolute freedom of God and confusing creation with the Creator.

The second argument that Florovsky makes follows from the first that "*God creates in perfect freedom.*"[87] Florovsky argues that it was possible for the world not to exist, and in this manner, it is possible for God to exist without the world. Yet, the greater issue is the "idea" of creation. If the *possibility* of the world exists in the mind of God, then God is not perfectly free in the creation of the world, since the "idea" would be determinant of the world. Additionally, the "idea" of the world would be co-eternal with God and would imply then the eternality of the "other" to God.[88] "And it must be said at once that any such admission means introducing the world into the intra-Trinitarian life of the Godhead as a co-determinant principle. And we must firmly and uncompromisingly reject any such notion."[89] However, Florovsky

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[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid., 52.

[88]Ibid., 55-56.

[89]Ibid., 56.

does admit that the idea of creation "is obviously *eternal*, but in some sense *not co-eternal*, and *not conjointly everlasting* with Him, because 'distinct and separated,' as it were, from His 'essence' by His *volition*." The "idea" of creation, since it arises from God's will and not his nature, remains eternal with God, but not co-eternal with the divine essence. Drawing upon the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus, Florovsky argues that God "thinks up" creation, but by "thinking up" creation this does not mean that God must create.[90] Rather, out of his good pleasure, God creates the world. Furthermore, the "idea" of creation is to be found in the everlasting thoughts of God. The Divine Ideas or patterns by which God creates through his will are to be distinguished from creation itself. Following the thought of Pseudo-Dionysios and Maximos the Confessor, Florovsky states,

> The Divine idea remains unchangeable and unchanged, it is not involved in the process of formation. It remains always outside the created world, transcending it. The world is created *according to the idea*, in accordance with the pattern–it is the realization of the pattern–but this pattern is not the subject of becoming. The pattern is a norm and a goal established *in God*. This distinction and distance is never [sic] abolished and therefore the *eternity of the pattern*, which is fixed and is never involved in temporal change, is compatible with temporal beginning, with the entering-into-being of the bearers of the eternal decrees.[91]

Here Florovsky is making the important point that Christian theology is not Neo-Platonic. Creation is not an emanation of the Divine Idea found in the will of God. Creation and the "Idea of Creation" are distinct. The "Idea of Creation" is the pattern or norm for creation by which God creates; creation is not an outgrowth of the "Idea." This argument can be understood to criticize the sophiological claim that the

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[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid., 61.

creaturely Sophia is an emanation of the Divine Sophia, which Bulgakov equates with

the Divine Nature. Florovsky is showing that the sophiological claim is closer to neo-

platonism than to traditional patristic theology, which Bulgakov claims to represent.

The third point that Florovsky makes in his understanding of the Christian

doctrine of creation is the distinction between God's essence and his energies. Here

for the first time Florovksy utilizes the important Palamite distinction and brings its

importance to bear for an Orthodox understanding of creation. Together with the

distinction between God's nature and his will "is the distinction in God between

'essence' [ουσία] and 'that which surrounds the essence,' 'that which is related to the

nature.' A distinction but not a separation."[92] Here Florovsky delves into the

traditional apophatic theology of the church, arguing that the divine nature is

unknowable and unattainable. "Only the powers and operations of God are accessible

to knowledge." Again, Florovsky appeals to the theology of the Cappadocians and to

John of Damascus for his foundation. Then he moves to the thought of Gregory

Palamas and the Synods that approved the theology of Palamas.

> There is a real distinction, but no separation, between the *essence* or
> *entity* of God and His *energies*. This distinction is manifest above all in
> the fact that the Entity is absolutely incommunicable and inaccessible to
> creatures. The creatures have access to and communicate with the
> Divine Energies only. But with this participation they enter into a
> genuine and perfect communion and union with God; they receive
> "deification."[93]

This distinction is paramount for understanding the difference between "generation

and creation" in regards to God. Gregory had argued that if these operations of God

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[92]Ibid., 63.

[93]Ibid., 67-68.

are confused then creation becomes an act of the divine nature not of the divine will.

Generation occurs within the divine nature in the Godhead, while creation is an act of

the divine will and therefore is not of necessity.

> And as St. Mark of Ephesus explained, "Being and energy, completely
> and wholly coincide in equivalent necessity. Distinction between
> essence and will [θέλησις] is abolished; then God only begets and does
> not create, and does not exercise His will. Then the difference between
> foreknowledge and actual making becomes indefinite, and creation
> seems to be coeternally created."[94]

Again, Florovsky emphasizes the radical separation between God and creation, that

the two are not joined by nature nor by emanation, but by the love of God in his

absolute freedom. "The sole foundation of the world consists in God's freedom, in

the freedom of Love."[95]

In 1935 Bulgakov was brought up on charges of heresy by the Synod of the

Church of Moscow and the Karlovci Synod in exile. Both found Bulgakov's

sophiology to be heretical.[96] Metropolitan Evlogii of Paris had no choice but to look

into the matter by appointing a committee. To head the committee he chose Fr.

Sergei Chetverikov,[97] who was the chaplain of the Russian Christian Student

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[94]Ibid., 68. John Romanides will use this same argument against Augustine in his work. See chapter seven below.

[95]Ibid., 71.

[96]According to Klimoff, the charge of heresy was raised by Bulgakov's Parisian colleague, Vladimir Lossky, who had written a letter to the Moscow Patriarchate containing the accusations. See Klimoff, 84.

[97]Sergei Chetverikov must have influenced Florovsky in regards to the importance of the ascetic tradition of the church. Chetverikov's research focused on hesychasm, especially the elders of Optina-Pustyn monastery, the use of the Jesus Prayer, and the life of St. Paisius Velichovsky. While the influence of Chetverikov upon Florovsky has not been ascertained, it appears that Florovsky may have learned much from this hesychast priest.

Movement in Paris. Interestingly, Chetverikov had become Florovsky's spiritual father sometime during the Paris years.[98] While Florovsky never publicly accused Bulgakov of heresy, he did so in a communication with Militsa Zernova, the wife of Nicolas Zernov.[99] But because Florovsky respected Bulgakov, he reluctantly agreed to serve. Consequently, it appears that he only attended one meeting of the committee. As noted by Klimoff, the commission was immediately "polarized" with the majority defending Bulgakov and the minority, which included only Chetverikov and Florovsky, "expressing grave reservations."[100] Majority and minority reports were produced. Chetverikov requested several times for Florovsky to express his thoughts on the matter. However, Florovsky did not respond. In the end Chetverikov drafted the minority report and requested Florovsky's signature to it. While not formally accusing Bulgakov of heresy, the minority report did state that his ideas "'provoke great anxiety' . . . and constituted a danger to Orthodox thinking, a danger the Commission's majority had chosen to ignore."[101] Metropolitan Evlogii was not satisfied with the split in the committee and asked for a unanimous decision on its part. The commission continued to meet through 1937, after which Chetverikov appears to have resigned the chair because of Florovsky's reticence and lack of participation. A report was submitted to the Synod of bishops, and a decision was made that exhorted Bulgakov "'to eliminate whatever could prove troubling to simple

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[98]Blane, 57.

[99]Klimoff, 85.

[100]Ibid., 88.

[101]Ibid., 89.

souls unversed in theology and philosophy.'" Bulgakov made a promise to Met. Evlogii that he would discontinue teaching sophiology at St. Sergius. Yet, he continued to promote his sophiological position until his death in 1947.[102]

During the years 1935-1936, Florovsky spent time away from Paris attempting to stay clear of the theological and political divide in the Russian community. In 1936 he completed his magnum opus, *The Ways of Russian Theology*. Again, while he briefly mentions Bulgakov in the second volume, he does pertain himself to the larger theme raised by Bulgakov in his sophiology: that the patristic tradition of the church was not capable of answering the problems of modernity,[103] and that the philosophical tradition of Soloviev was the true Russian answer. In his preface to the first volume, Florovsky writes:

> Studying the Russian past led me to the conviction and strengthened me in it that in our day the Orthodox theologian can only find for himself the true measure and living source of creative inspiration in patristic tradition. I am convinced the intellectual break from patristics and Byzantinism was the chief cause for all the interruptions and failures in Russia's development . . . . Yet the return to the fathers must not be solely intellectual or historical, it must be a return in spirit and prayer, a living and creative self-restoration to the fullness of the Church in the entirety of sacred tradition.[104]

Florovsky argues that the problem to be found in contemporary Russian philosophical theology is not a new phenomenon, but the continuation of a change that occurred in Russian theology and the church at the end of the fourteenth century. The change that

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[102]Ibid., 94.

[103]Ibid., 93.

[104]Georges Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*, part 1, vol. 5, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh, tr. Robert L. Nichols (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979), xvii.

resulted was the complete disavowal of the Byzantine tradition and the rise of

Russian nationalism that separated Russia from its theological roots and allowed her

to adopt Western ways of doing theology.[105] Confronted with an aggressive Roman

Catholicism in Poland and Lithuania and the Reformation in Northern and Western

Europe, the Russian Orthodox were faced with the challenge of defining their own

identity. The question emerged, "Should Orthodoxy remain purely 'eastern,' or under

the new conditions would it in some way have to be 'westernized?'" Borrowing a

term from Oswald Spengler, Florovsky argues that what occurred in Russian

Orthodox thought was a "pseudomorphosis."[106] While retaining the identifying

aspects of Orthodox theology, the thought forms and patterns of doing theology

became westernized. Soloviev and his philosophical children could be understood as

continuing the westernization of Russian theology.[107] In the second volume he

addresses the birth of Russian religious philosophy in the philosophical world of

German idealism and romanticism. It is this philosophy combined with the Western

esotericism of Jacob Boehme and the theosophists that influenced the thought of

Soloviev and his followers, including Berdiaev and Bulgakov. As he states,

> The Russian religious 'renaissance,' [of the early twentieth century],
> strictly speaking, was only a return to the experience of German
> idealism and German mysticism. For some it meant a return to
> Schelling or Hegel, for others to Jakob Böhme, and for still others to
> Goethe. The increasingly powerful influence of Solov'ev only served to

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[105]Ibid., 12-13.

[106]Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, part one, 36-37.

[107]It should be noted that Bulgakov believed that the philosophy of Soloviev was the answer to the problem of western positivism. However, as Florovsky shows in his critique of idealism, Bulgakov's philosophy cannot escape the basic presuppositions of idealism.

reinforce the enchantment with German philosophy, while the actual expanses of church history remained virtually unknown.[108]

In earlier essays, Florovsky had made similar remarks in regards to German idealism. In "The Crisis of German Idealism I: The 'Hellenism' of German Idealism," he maintains that the current philosophical crisis of European history can be rooted in the inability to disavow German Idealism on the basis of Protestant theology. What had occurred was the systematic acceptance of German Idealism by Protestantism as its theology. However, in reality what was embraced was a revival of Greek Idealism leading to pantheism. This pantheism could not be overcome because, as Florovsky understands, even the opponents accepted the basic presupposition of German Idealism: "either the world does not exist or God does not exist without the world."[109] As we have already seen, Florovsky had argued against this idea in his previous essay, "Creation and Creaturehood." The flaw with idealism was in its misunderstanding of the relationship between Creator and creation. If it is maintained that the creation is related to God by nature, then the presupposition of idealism remains. For Florovsky the only means to escape the fundamental problem of idealism was the patristic response to Greek idealism as found in Origen's cosmology. Three distinctions must be maintained: between Creator and creation, between nature and will, and between essence and energies. Otherwise, Christianity

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[108]Georges Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*, part 2, vol. 6, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh, tr. Robert L. Nichols (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 275.

[109]Georges Florovsky, "The Crisis of German Idealism I: The 'Hellenism' of German Idealism," in *Philosophy, Philosophical Problems and Movements*, vol. 12, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 27.

falls back into pantheism, equating the Creator with the creation, nullifying God's free, creative act of salvation.

Furthermore, Florovsky discovered another major flaw in German idealism, which he argued in "The Crisis of German Idealism II: The Crisis of Idealism as the Crisis of the Reformation." This flaw was the lack of a proper historicism. Historical reality becomes a "symbol" or a "shadow" of the idea of history; history ceases to exist.[110] However, Christianity counters this idealism by asserting the historical event of the Incarnation. Christianity pertains to actual historical events, not symbols that point to another reality. In this manner idealism leads to docetism denying the historicity of the salvific event of God in the world. Symptomatic of this is the denial of the historicity of Scripture and the use of myth in nineteenth-century theology. Thus, we witness the complete de-historicization of Christianity by nineteenth-century Protestant theology, which sets aside the historical Christ for the myth of the universal God-man, and as he argues, with Hegel we witness this de-historicization through the equating of Christianity with primordial history itself in the realm of the ideas.[111] In this regard, it can be stated that Florovsky desired to maintain the separateness of God from creation so that he could have a proper understanding of human history. Only through separating God from creation is it possible to understand the acts of God in the world, chiefly the salvific event of the Incarnation

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[110]Georges Florovsky, "The Crisis of German Idealism II: The Crisis of Idealism as the Crisis of the Reformation," in *Philosophy, Philosophical Problems and Movements*, vol. 12, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 31.

[111]Ibid., 35-37.

of Christ. Otherwise, the event is lost in the realm of mythology, as a symbol that points to the Absolute Idea.

For Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology* provided him with the opportunity to argue that the historical path taken by Russian theology since the late fourteenth century in embracing Western theological categories, and especially German philosophical ideas, had led to the philosophical impasse that had now engulfed Russian and European culture. Christianity, by accepting German idealism, was now unable to answer this impasse concerning human existence. Nietzsche was correct and Marxist interpretations of anthropology and history were all that remained, unless, as Florovsky maintained, a *ressourcement* of the patristic tradition was accomplished. As he states,

> Recovery of the patristic style is the primary and fundamental postulate
> for Russia's theological renaissance. Renaissance does not mean some
> sort of 'restoration' or some repetition of or return to the past.
> 'Following the fathers' always means moving forwards, not backwards;
> it means fidelity to the patristic spirit and not just to the patristic letter.
> One must be steeped in the inspiration of the patristic flame and not
> simply be a gardener pottering around amongst ancient texts.[112]

At the First Congress of Orthodox Theology at Athens in 1936–the same year that Krivocheine published his work on Palamas–Fr. Georges Florovsky sounded a clarion call for the future direction of Orthodox theology:

> *Western influences in Russian theology must be overcome.* This
> concerns, first of all, the inorganic *"Western style."* This process
> actually began long ago in the Russian schools–precisely at the time of
> Philaret and in connection with the revival of asceticism in Russian
> monasteries. It is sufficient to recall the school of *Staretz Paisii
> Velichkovskii* and especially the hermitage of Optino. Orthodox
> theology can ultimately restore the independence from Western

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[112]Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, part 2, 294.

influences only through a *spiritual return to patristic sources* and foundations.[113]

The return to the fathers was not to be simply a return to the intellectual tradition. Rather, Florovsky's call was a return to the *ascetic* tradition, to the spiritual theology of the patristic tradition. For Florovsky, this return to the patristic sources of the church provided the means by which the church could retain its relevance and identity in a secular world.[114]

The Christian Hellenism of Georges Florovsky

According to his close friend, church historian George H. Williams, Florovsky's "neo-patristic synthesis" "meant primarily a reworking of the Fathers from the fourth through the eighth centuries. Thus for Florovsky the *fully scripturalized* or Christian Hellenism is that of the age of the completed patristic synthesis (which was also the age of the gradual differentiation between Roman and Byzantine imperial Christendom)."[115] As noted above, Florovsky had called for a

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[113]Georges Florovsky, "Western Influences in Russian Theology," *Aspects of Church History*, vol. 4, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 180-81.

[114]In 1931 Karl Barth invited Florovsky to give a guest lecture in his class on Schleiermacher. Following the lecture, Barth commented, "'I did not have an overwhelming impression that we really needed this Eastern theology' and the 'obscurantist effect of Russian thought-patterns.'" Quoted in Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth*, 215. Florovsky's commitment to return to patristic theology, especially the categories of thought of Byzantine theology did not impress Barth. In regards to the theological exchange between Barth and Florovsky, see my article, "Karl Barth and Georges Florovsky on the Meaning of 'Church,'" *Sobornost'* 26 (winter 2004): 36-63.

[115]George H. Williams, "The Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky," in *Georges Florovsky: Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman*, ed. Andrew Blane (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 292.

return to the fathers of the church in order to surpass the pseudomorphosis that had

occurred in Orthodox theology. In a second lecture at the Athens Congress,

Florovsky stated that what was needed was a "re-hellenisation" of Orthodoxy. "What

is really meant and required is not a blind or servile imitation and repetition but rather

a further development of this patristic teaching both homogeneous and congenial.

We have to kindle again the creative fire of the Fathers, to restore to ourselves the

patristic spirit."[116] What he meant was a reworking of the spiritual theology of the

church as the later Byzantine theologians, notably, Gregory Palamas (1359), Nicholas

Cabasilas (1371), and Symeon of Thessaloniki (1429) had reworked the earlier

fathers of the patristic synthesis of the fourth through eighth centuries. As George

Williams comments, "By 'hellenisation' Florovsky meant, of course, Christian or

'canonised' Hellenism which he regarded as 'a standing category of the Christian

experience.'"[117]

Florovsky had already begun the process of reworking the fathers in his

lectures at St. Sergius. Beginning with the tumultuous fourth century, he began a

reassessment of the Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers in their engagement with the

Hellenistic world. Unlike Harnack and liberal Protestantism, which understood this

period of Church history as the "Hellenization" of Christianity, Florovsky saw the

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[116]Georges Florovsky, "Patristics and Modern Theology," *Diakonia* 4, no. 3 (1969): 230.

[117]George H. Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovsky: His American Career (1948-1965)," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 11 (summer 1965): 37.

process as the opposite: "the Christianization of Hellenism."[118] The fathers of the

fourth century utilized Greek philosophical terminology in the process of exegeting

Scripture to arrive at the Trinitarian and christological formulations that became

dogma for the Christian Church. "The achievement was 'Christian' or 'sacred

Hellenism.'"[119]

   According to Florovsky, the fathers of the fourth century, notably the

Cappadocians and Athanasius of Alexandria, synthesized the Hellenic mind with

Christianity into a new culture and philosophical system. "The new culture was a

great synthesis in which all the creative traditions and moves of the past were merged

and integrated. It was a 'New Hellenism,' but a Hellenism drastically christened and,

as it were, 'churchified.'"[120] But Hellenism did not go quietly into the night. What

occurred in the fourth century was a heated debate concerning the role of Christianity

in the Roman Empire.

   The first three centuries of the church witnessed the gradual engagement of

Christianity with the pagan Hellenic world of the Roman Empire. From the

beginnings of the Church there was an uneasiness in the relationship between

Christianity and the empire.[121] "Christianity entered the historical scene as a Society

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[118]Georges Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," *Christianity and Culture*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1974), 25.

[119]Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovksy," 54.

[120]Georges Florovsky, "Christianity and Civilization," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 1 (fall 1952):14.

[121]In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in examining the relationship between the New Testament writings and the claims of the Roman Empire. The material in this area is extensive. See Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and*

or Community, as a new social order or even a new social dimension, i.e. as the

Church. They felt themselves to be a 'chosen race,' a 'holy nation,' a 'peculiar

people,' i.e. precisely a New Society a 'New Polis,' *a City of God.*"[122] Barry Harvey

has argued, using the thought of Florovsky, that the early church existed as an *altera*

civitas within the Roman Empire. Christians did not simply exist as citizens of the

empire, rather, they understood themselves as belonging to a different city or

polity.[123] "Early Christians felt themselves, as it were, *extraterritorial,* just outside of

the existing social order, simply because the Church was for them an order itself."[124]

This self-understanding is reflected in the Christian scriptures as well as the writings

of the sub-apostolic age. Christians saw themselves as "a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (I Pe 2:9); their "citizenship is in

heaven" (Ph 3:20). In the early Christian writing, *The Epistle to Diognetus*, the

unknown author describes this self-understanding:

> For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race
> by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their

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Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003); Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003); Richard A. Horsley, ed. *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation.* Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000); Richard A. Horsley, ed. *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997); N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997).

[122]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 26.

[123]Barry A. Harvey, *Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 21-31.

[124]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 27.

own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life . . . . Yet although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land . . . . They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.[125]

The writer of this letter demonstrates that the early Christian community understood itself to be its own commonwealth, not a religious sect within the Roman Empire. According to Florovsky, "The Church was an 'outpost of heaven' on the earth, or a 'colony of heaven.'"[126] Their allegiance was to Jesus the Christ, the true *basileus,* not to the emperor. As Origen states, Christians had another "*sustema patridos*"[127] or, as Florovsky interprets this phrase, "*another system of allegiance,*" for their "citizenship" rested elsewhere.[128]

However, the Christian Church exists in an antinomical relationship to the world. It has a choice. Either it can choose to remain segregated from the world, which it has chosen at times in various movements throughout its history, or it can choose to embrace the world and work towards its Christianization. The earthly city can be transfigured into the Christian city. During the fourth century both options

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[125]"The Letter to Diognetus," in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril Richardson (New York: Collier Books, 1970), 216-17.

[126]Georges Florovsky, "Antinomies of Christian History: Empire and Desert," vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1974), 68.

[127]Origen, *Contra Celsum*, *PG*, VIII, 75.

[128]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 27. See also, "Antinomies of Christian History," 68-69.

were attempted. But as Florovsky states, "both solutions proved to be inadequate and unsuccessful."[129] Yet with the conversion of Constantine and the Roman Empire in the fourth century, a Christian society was born. "The new *Christian Society* came into existence, which was at once both 'Church' and 'Empire,' and its ideology was 'theocratical.'"[130] Christianity, due to its missiological understanding of bringing the Gospel to the world, accepted the challenge offered by the empire. The fathers of the fourth century faced this crucial issue of the transfiguration of the Roman Empire into a Christian society. Florovsky describes the situation faced by these early Christian theologians:

> With the beginning of the fourth century a new epoch opened in the life of the Church. Caesar, the 'equal of the apostles,' was baptized and in his person the empire accepted Christianity. The Church came out of hiding and offered its solace to the dissatisfied classical world, a world filled with anxieties, doubts, and temptations. This world brought with it both a great longing, which the Church had to satisfy, and a great pride, which the Church had to subdue. The classical world was reborn and became part of the Church but only after a period of confusion and struggle. A spiritual excitement gripped not just ecclesiastical circles but all of society, from the top to the bottom. The calculations of rulers and politicians, personal ambitions, and tribal dissensions all found their way into the religious upheavals.[131]

While the early church retained a segregated relationship to the empire, its relationship to the Greco-Roman culture was more complex. The church was immersed in the culture of its day. It existed in a Hellenistic world, shaped and

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[129]Ibid., 28.

[130]Ibid., 29.

[131]Georges Florovsky, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century*, vol. 7, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 15.

formed by Greek philosophical and religious concepts. The church's beliefs and

practices were influenced by this culture.   The very language that the New Testament

writers and sub-apostolic writers used was Greek. As Werner Jaeger states, "It is not

only as an element of dogmatic theology that [Hellenism] later enters the Christian

mind; it is there from the very beginning in a very practical form, inseparable from

life itself."[132] The Greek language and philosophical terminology utilized by the

second and third century Christian apologists provided an opening for Hellenism to

enter the church and become "amalgamated with its life and doctrine."[133] However,

this amalgamation of Hellenism and Christian thought does not occur unnoticed. As

Jean Danielou notes, "In Greek culture there were certain elements which the

Apologists did indeed wish to preserve; but in its religious aspect they regarded

Hellenism as an error to be condemned without qualification."[134] The second century

apologist, Tertullian, asked the famous question, "What does Athens have to do with

Jerusalem?" Yet, Tertullian as a skilled Roman rhetorician was not afraid to utilize

the rhetorical skills of Greek paideia in his defense of Christianity before the Roman

authorities.[135] Origen and Augustine both expressed this same ambiguity in regards

to the Greco-Roman culture. These Christian thinkers reflected in their ambiguity the

same tension that was occurring at the larger cultural level in the empire. As

[132]Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 21.

[133]Ibid., 35.

[134]Jean Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, vol. 2, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, ed. John Austin Baker (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1973), 16.

[135]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 23.

Florovsky states, "The inner struggle was much more difficult and tragic: every follower of the Hellenic tradition was called at that time to live through and overcome an inner discord."[136]

The Hellenic tradition remained strong in many of the early Christian fathers. Clement of Alexandria, and his successor in the catechetical school, Origen, both relied heavily on the Greek philosophical tradition to rearticulate biblical revelation in the Greco-Roman philosophical idiom of their day. As Danielou has argued, the chief reason that the apologists utilized the philosophical terminology of their day "was to present the Gospel to the Hellenistic world, and to define it in relation to that world."[137] Yet, despite their attempts to reinterpret the Gospel in a Hellenistic key, Clement, and particularly Origen, were not able to escape the hold of their Hellenistic tradition to create a synthesis between biblical revelation and Hellenic culture. They remained Hellenists, and can properly be called Hellenic Christians. Clement and Origen are important for the fourth century theologians precisely because they were able to articulate the faith in the new idiom. Yet, what was needed was the vision of a Christian culture, which the fourth-century theologians were able to offer.[138] As the renowned historian Christopher Dawson writes,

> Thus by the beginning of the fourth century, classical culture had gained
> a sure foothold within the Church, and the establishment of the
> Christian Empire was actually followed by a considerable literary
> revival… The Fathers of the fourth century, alike in the East and the
> West, were essentially *Christian rhetoricians* who shared the culture
> and traditions of their pagan rivals, but whose art was no longer an

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[136]Florovsky, "Christianity and Civilization," 13.

[137]Danielou, *Gospel Message*, 39.

[138]Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 73-74.

endless elaboration of the worn-out themes of the lecture-room, but had
become the instrument of a new spiritual force.[139]

Faced with the conversion of the emperor to Christianity and with the violent

struggle to maintain the segregation of Christianity from Greco-Roman culture in the

pagan revival of Julian, the Cappadocian fathers, articulated the basis for a Christian

culture.[140] Basil and the two Gregories demonstrated in their writings the underlying

assumption that Christians were part of the Hellenic tradition. Following Clement

and Origen they presented Christianity as the true philosophy, the fulfillment of the

Hellenic philosophical tradition. As Jaeger comments, the Cappadocians, like

Origen, understood "theology as a great science based on supreme scholarship and as

a philosophical pursuit of the mind. And this science is part of the entire civilization

that is theirs and in which they feel at home."[141] Julian's prohibition of the active

role of Christians in the arts and sciences of the empire posed a critical problem to the

Christian theologians. As Florovsky astutely recognizes, "This was in fact a belated

attempt to expel Christians from the making of civilization, to protect the ancient

culture from Christian influence and impact."[142]

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[139]Christopher Dawson, *Christianity and European Culture: Selections from the Work of Christopher Dawson*, ed. Gerald J. Russello (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 158.

[140]Florovsky, "Christianity and Civilization," 14; see also Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism*, Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen, 1992-1993 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 169.

[141]Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 74.

[142]Florovsky, "Christianity and Civilization," 14.

While Basil did not address directly the challenge put forward by Julian, he did discuss the issue in an oration directed toward Christian youth. In this oration, Basil articulated a balanced Christian approach to the Greek tradition. He exhorted them to imitate the bee in taking the nectar from the flowers. Christians can accept what is best in the Greek philosophical tradition and reject the teachings that are contrary to the Christian tradition.[143] Basil finds examples in the Old Testament, of Moses learning from the Egyptians and Daniel learning from the Babylonians, for justifying the learning of pagan knowledge.[144] "For Basil, then, Greek culture is the cooperative and foundational *preparation* for Christian truth. The Christian παιδεία supersedes Hellenic wisdom but does not supplant it–fulfills but does not abandon it. Culture, no less than the 'old man,' is being made new."[145] Yet, as Raymond Van Dam points out, Basil's justification for the study of classical literature does not hold, for he argues that while classical learning may have a propaedeutic role for Christianity, the true source for virtue, which is Basil's true aim, is the Bible.[146] Basil argues for the study of classical literature in preparation for the philosophic (ascetic) life, because it is simply what he had done in his own life.[147] There is no real reason

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[143]Basil, "*Ad Adolescentes*," *PG*, XXXI, 569.

[144]Ibid., 568.

[145]Robert C. Gregg, *Consolation Philosophy: Greek and Christian Paideia in Basil and the Two Gregories*, Patristic Monograph Series, No. 3 (Philadelphia, PA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 128.

[146]Raymond Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 185.

[147]Ibid. For an excellent discussion of the model of the classically educated bishop that renounces the world for the sake of the church see Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity*

why Christian youth should study classical literature to learn Christian virtue. According to Van Dam, Basil was coming to terms with the division in his own life between the classical and Christian worlds. What he had done, though, was to provide a model for future Christian Hellenists.

Gregory of Nazianzus was the one Cappadocian who did challenge the policy of Julian. Gregory, in his orations against Julian, presents the most developed thought on the relationship between Christianity and classical culture. Yet, as Rosemary Radford Ruether comments, "In terms of content his writings achieved in a high degree the synthesis of Christianity with classical culture, and yet there seems to be little development of a corresponding theoretical rationale for this synthesis."[148] However, such a rationale was not necessary for Gregory, for the union of classical culture and Christianity was assumed to be the case.[149] This is why Julian's stance came as an abrupt shock to this father of the church.

When Julian became emperor in 361, he set about a program of promoting pagan culture including the sponsoring of rebuilding pagan shrines throughout the empire. He surrounded himself with the best of the pagan rhetoricians and philosophers, and promoted pagan learning. In 362 he issued an edict on education prohibiting Christians from participating in classical education. According to Van

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). Sterk presents the Cappadocian fathers as the role models for future Byzantine bishops. In Orthodox tradition and iconography, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), and John Chrysostom are presented as the model pastors of the church.

[148]Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Rhetor and Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 156.

[149]Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), 114.

Dam, the glue that held Julian's program together was his understanding of

Hellenism. Julian viewed Hellenism as "Greek culture in all its many aspects,

language, literature, philosophy, mythology, art and architecture." Additionally,

Hellenism was equated with paganism, especially by pagan intellectuals, who

understood the mythology and philosophy contained in the classical literature to be

sacred texts. Julian argued that the classical authors wrote "under the influence of

divine inspiration."[150] Julian's equation of Hellenism with paganism had two basic

consequences. First, Julian's program did provide a revival of the cities with their

classical pagan cults. Those prominent citizens who accepted Julian's policies poured

funds into public building works to revitalize the ancient cultus of the cities. Second,

and more important for our argument, because classical culture was presented as

pagan, Christians were forbidden to use classical literature, for it was disingenuous

for Christians to use these texts.[151] It was against this prohibition that Gregory

Nazianzus responded.

In his first oration against Julian, Gregory identified classical culture and

Christianity. Julian's policies were in effect a religious persecution against

Christianity, and Christians could thus suffer martyrdom in defense of classical

culture.[152] In his defense of Christianity and classical culture, Gregory employs the

artistry and skills of the rhetorician, which he learned in his studies in Athens. He

uses the concept of *logos* and its relationship with the *Logos,* Jesus Christ, as the

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[150]Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow,* 166-67.

[151]Ibid.

[152]Ibid., 192-93.

answer to the relationship between Christianity and Hellenic culture. The word

"*logos*" is virtually untranslatable. According to Liddell and Scott, "*logos*" has the

basic meaning of "word" or "reason," but it also implies "discourse" or the content of

that discourse. Furthermore, the derivative "*logios*" has the connotation of

"culture."[153] Using his rhetorical skills, Gregory trades upon the meanings of these

words, "imply[ing] that the identification of Jesus Christ with the *Logos* entailed a

natural connection between Christianity and classical culture. Because Jesus Christ

had been the embodiment, the fulfillment, of 'reason' and 'culture,' there could not be

any antagonism between classical culture and Christianity."[154] Julian had failed to

understand this relationship between *logos* and the *Logos*.

Essentially, Gregory provides the foundation for a Christian understanding of

culture. Jesus Christ as the embodiment of *logos* is culture. Within himself, Jesus

Christ sums up all that is human, including human culture, transfiguring it in union

with his divine nature. Human culture is taken up into the divine life of the Trinity in

the person of Jesus Christ. Gregory is fond of saying, "That which is not assumed is

not saved." For Gregory this includes human culture.

However, Gregory, like Basil, does not believe that all aspects of classical

culture are useful for the Christian life. According to George Metallinos, Gregory

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[153]*An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1995), 476-77.

[154]Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, 195-96.

"expresses authentically the Christian Hellenism" in his funeral oration for St.

Basil.[155] Gregory states,

> I take it all intelligent men agree that among human advantages
> education holds first place. I refer not only to our nobler form of it
> which disdains all the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric and attaches
> itself only to salvation and the beauty of spiritual contemplation, but
> also to that external culture which many Christians by an error of
> judgment scorn as treacherous and dangerous and as turning us away
> from God. The heavens, the earth, the air, and all such things are not to
> be condemned because some have wrongly interpreted them and
> venerate the creatures of God in place of God. On the contrary, we
> select from them what is useful both for life and enjoyment and we
> avoid what is dangerous, not opposing creation to the Creator, as the
> foolish do, but acknowledging the Maker of the world from His works,
> and as the holy Apostle says, bringing every mind into captivity to
> Christ . . . . So also from the pagans we have received principles of
> inquiry and speculation, while we have rejected whatever leads to
> demons, and error, and the abyss of perdition. And from such material
> we have drawn profit for piety, by learning to distinguish the better from
> the worse, and from its weakness we have made our own doctrine
> strong.[156]

As for Basil, "usefulness" becomes the central criterion of the Christian's use of

classical culture.[157] Both Gregory and Basil would agree with St. Paul's exhortation

to his spiritual children: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,

whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any

excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil

4.8).

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[155]George D. Metallinos, *Paganistic Hellenism or Hellenorthodoxy?* (Athens: Armos, 2003), 29.

[156]Gregory Nazianzen, "On St. Basil," in *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Amrbrose*, tr. Leo P. McCauley, John J. Sullivan, Martin R. P. McGuire, and Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 1953), 35-36.

[157]Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, 183.

While the Cappadocian fathers did not articulate what a Christian culture might be, they did demonstrate in their writings what Christian culture is. Through the use of classical literature juxtaposed with biblical citations, Basil, and especially Gregory Nazianzus, provided a model for future Christians. The cultural synthesis that they produced in their writings was not experienced in the West. As Werner Jaeger comments, "It is characteristic of the differences between the Greek and the Roman spirits that the Latin West had its Augustine, while the Greek East through the Cappadocian fathers produced a new culture."[158] Florovsky agrees with Jaeger, arguing that Augustine continued the more ancient Christian position of a rejection of pagan culture.[159] Yet, Augustine, according to Florovsky, maintained a Hellenistic mind.[160]

In the East, the rejection of the synthesis of classical culture and Christianity was expressed in the monastic movement. As previously stated, Florovsky's articulation of the neo-patristic synthesis involved an antinomical understanding of Christian history. The Christians of the fourth century had a choice to make. Either they could embrace the empire and create a new culture or they could retire to the desert setting themselves apart from the existing society. However, both directions were absorbed into the new Christian empire.

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[158]Jaeger, *Early Christianity*, 75.

[159]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 24.

[160]Georges Florovsky, "The Greek and Latin Mind in the Early Ages of the Church," in *Ecumenism II: A Historical Approach*, vol. 14, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 40.

Mark Stokoe has argued, and I believe correctly, that Florovsky identified the "new philosophy" of Christian Hellenism with monasticism.[161] In the fourth century, philosophy comes to be equated with asceticism, and the philosopher becomes the monk, even wearing the philosopher's robe.[162] The fathers of the Church "have created a new philosophy, very different from both Platonism and Aristotelianism, or anything else."[163] The creation of this "new philosophy" was the genius of the fathers of the fourth century. Utilizing philosophical categories and biblical revelation, Basil and the two Gregories were able to formulate a manner of life that resulted in what Florovsky calls Christian Hellenism. As Stokoe comments,

> It is in monasticism, as the summit of Christian striving, that the greatest antinomies between Hellenism and Christianity are manifest–and the deepest unity revealed. Christian Hellenism, as exemplified by the monastic movements, lay grounded in the spiritual horizon of the earlier philosophical ascesis. Yet its practitioners freed themselves from the closed intellectual horizon of ancient Hellenism through the contemplation of the revelation of the *Logos*, Jesus Christ.[164]

Basil and Gregory Nazianzus did not shy away from classical culture, yet they manifested a certain ambivalence to it. For both of them, the Christian revelation provided the philosophic basis for their use of classical literature. As monastics, they pursued the philosophic life, not detached from society, but involved within it. In doing so, they provided the models for future bishops and monastics of the church. Basil created a new society in Caesarea, called the *Basileiad*, where monastics cared

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[161]Mark Stokoe, *Christian Hellenism*, Master's Thesis, St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1981, 17.

[162]Ruether, *Gregory Nazianzus*, 14-15.

[163]Florovsky, "Patristics and Modern Theology," 231.

[164]Stokoe, *Christian Hellenism*, 18.

for the physical and spiritual needs of the people. He brought the monastics into the

larger communal life of society, yet retained for them enough distance for their life of

prayer.[165] Monastic communities, following the example of Basil, did not reject

culture, but became "the most powerful centers of cultural activity" in the empire.[166]

However, because monasticism represented another city that challenged the

Roman *polis*, it was always in tension with the empire.[167] It represented the ancient

church's stance toward the empire, that the Christian loyalty is to the one Lord, Jesus

Christ, not Caesar, even if he claims to be a Christian. They rejected the world with

all of its pomp, for it was under another master.[168] Yet, as Florovsky argues, the

monastic movement was always about "social reconstruction." It renounced the

world in its social structures, and sought to remake it along the lines of the precepts of

Christianity. St. Basil recognized this, and sought such a reconstruction in his own

diocese.[169] Monasticism sought to create the new society against that of the world.

"As in the pagan Empire the Church herself was a kind of 'Resistance Movement,'

Monasticism was a permanent 'Resistance Movement' in the Christian Society."[170]

In the end, the Byzantine experiment failed. The Byzantines had sought to

create the heavenly city on earth through the synthesis of Christianity and classical

[165]Gregory Nazianzus, "On St. Basil," 80-81.

[166]Florovsky, "Faith and Culture," 30.

[167]Florovsky, "Antinomies of Christian History," 83.

[168]Ibid., 84.

[169]Ibid., 85.

[170]Ibid., 88.

culture. The Empire fell, yet monasticisim, according to Florovsky, was more successful in its synthesis. "It will remain for ever to witness to the creative effort of the Early Church, with its Byzantine theology, devotion and art." "And on the very eve of the fall of 'corrupt Byzantium,' the glorious flowering of mystical contemplation on Mount Athos and the Renaissance in art in Philosophy which was to nourish the Western Renaissance too. The fall of the Empire and the Fulfillment of the Desert . . . ."[171]

Florovsky and Gregory Palamas

While Florovsky spoke about the importance of the later Byzantine fathers, especially Gregory Palamas, Symeon the New Theologian, and Nicholas Cabasilas, he did not actually write much about their thought. Instead, he focused on the thought of the fathers of the fourth through eighth centuries. However, he did author one essay on the relationship of Gregory Palamas to the patristic tradition of the church, and he did explicate the Palamite doctrine of the distinction between the essence and the energies of God in his work on the patristic doctrine of creation.

In 1959 Florovsky was invited to participate in the six hundred anniversary of the death of Gregory Palamas at the University of Salonica in Greece. There he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the university, and he gave the keynote address entitled, "St. Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers."[172] According to

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[171]Florovsky, "Christianity and Civilization," 20.

[172]Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovsky," 51. See also Blane, "A Sketch of the Life of Georges Florovsky," 130.

Andrew Blane, it was this "academic trip that he recalled with most pleasure."[173] In

the address, Florovsky demonstrated that the patristic age did not end in the seventh

century with St. John of Damascus, as is claimed by most church historians. Rather

the patristic age continues to the present in the "worshipping church." In the West,

the patristic age had been superceded by Scholasticism, but in the East no such

development occurred in the theology of the church. The patristic age continues and

remains normative for the theology of the church.[174] The theology of St. Gregory

Palamas is normative for it is patristic theology.

Florovsky singles out what he claims to be the most crucial element of

Gregory's theology: *theosis*, or deification.[175] Gregory does not invent the idea, nor

does he simply reiterate it, but he develops it within the context of his understanding

of the person's relationship with God. This concept of deification is rooted in

apostolic tradition (2 Pe 1.4) and was developed by the later fathers. Irenaeus had

argued in the third century, "the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did,

through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be

even what He is Himself,"[176] and Athanasius had stated in the fourth century, "He

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[173]Blane, "A Sketch of the Life of Georges Florovsky," 130.

[174]Georges Florovsky, "St. Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers," *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, vol. 1, *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, ed. Richard S. Haugh (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 109-113.

[175]Ibid., 114.

[176]Irenaeus, *Aganist Heresies*, book 5, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and* Irenaeus, vol. 1, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 526.

became man that we might be made god."[177] The Cappadocians further developed

the concept in their definition of the person as *hypostasis*, making the concept not one

of ontology, but of "personal encounter."[178]   However, a paradox results in the

formulation of the fathers. How is it possible to have an "experience" of God if He is

unapproachable? How is it possible for human beings to have a "personal encounter"

with the transcendent God? Basil had already given the answer in his letter to

Amphilochius of Iconium. He made the distinction between the essence of God,

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[177]Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, *PG* XXV,

[178]Florovsky, "St. Gregory Palamas," 115. John Zizioulas, a doctoral student of Florovsky, has articulated the idea of "personal encounter" as "communion", making it an ontological category. However, the problem associated with Zizioulas's thought is that he removes any possibility of ascetic achievement in the attainment of deification. See John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 27-65. Florovsky would disagree with Zizioulas, as does Christos Yannaras and Met. Hierotheos Vlachos, on this point. For Yannaras see *The Freedom of Morality*, tr. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 13-27, 109-117; and "The Distinction Between Essence and Energies and Its Importance for Theology." For Met. Hierotheos Vlachos, see *The Person in the Orthodox Tradition*, tr. Esther Williams (Levadia: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 1999). Zizioulas's problem may be with his conscious setting aside of Gregory's distinction between essence and energies. Zizioulas's thought, while making a distinction between the person and the community, or "the one and the many," does not allow for that which makes the person unique in his or her spiritual development. See Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Divine Energies or Divine Personhood: Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas on Conceiving the Transcendent and Immanent God," *Modern Theology* 19 (July 2003): 357-85, for a discussion of Zizioulas's understanding of personhood without Gregory's distinction between essence and energies. Papanikolaou believes that the Palamite distinction, at least as expressed by Lossky, is too problematic. Zizioulas's concept of personhood holds more promise, especially in a reconciliation with the West. The problem with this position is that it excludes the possibility of ascetic achievement in the attainment of deification. Setting aside asceticism in the process of salvation is foreign to the Orthodox theological tradition. This may be why Zizioulas's thought is more popular in the West than in the East.

which is unknowable and simple, and His energies, which are a plurality, through

which we experience God's deifying grace.[179]

Gregory Palamas explained the issue similarly, distinguishing between God's

"nature" and "will." As we have shown in Florovsky's use of Palamas for the

patristic understanding of creation, if there is not a distinction, then the generation of

the Son and the creation of the world both result from God's essence leading to

pantheism and "utter confusion in the Trinitarian doctrine."[180] Drawing upon the

work of Cyril of Alexandria (who simply reiterated the thought of Athanasius),

Gregory articulates the distinction between nature and will. The generation of the

Son is *kata physein*, according to nature or essence, while the creation of the world is

bouleseos ergon, the energy of the will.[181] In a rare theological polemic, Florovsky

comments that Augustine failed to understand this point and separated himself from

the Eastern tradition. "Under Augustinian presuppositions the teaching of St.

Gregory is unacceptable and absurd."[182] Florovsky insists that Gregory's thought is

not an innovation, nor is it contrary to the patristic tradition, but is simply a

development of the thought of the fathers of the fourth century. "In this connection

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[179]Basil, *Ad Amphilochius*, *PG*, XXXII, 869.

[180]Florovsky, "St. Gregory Palamas," 118.

[181]Ibid., 119. For Athanasius, see *Contra Arianos*, *PG*, III, 64-66.

[182]Ibid., 118. This is one of the few times where Florovsky criticizes Augustine. Florovsky's Greek successors will develop this polemic in there attempt to offer an authentic Orthodox identity. Florovsky, by this time, had read John Romanides's dissertation *The Ancestral Sin*, tr. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr Press, 1998, 2002) which argues against the Augustinian view of original sin and the Augustinian failure to understand this crucial distinction in Eastern theology.

we may regard St. Gregory Palamas as our guide and teacher, in our endeavour to theologize from the heart of the Church."[183]

Conclusion

Florovsky's neo-patristic synthesis set the pattern for the future of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century. His call to return to the fathers and their methodology was a reaction against the "pseudomorphosis" that had occurred in Orthodox theology since the sixteenth century. By setting aside the Byzantine tradition and adopting Western theological categories, Orthodoxy had lost its unique identity. Russian theology in the nineteenth century had accepted German idealism and romanticism as the basis of its thought. Consequently, Orthodoxy could not answer the problems associated with European civilization in the early twentieth century any more than could the liberal theology of Protestantism or Catholicism. At the same time that Karl Barth was developing his neo-orthodoxy by returning back to the scriptures, and the Roman Catholic *nouvelle theologie* was returning back to the foundations of Western theology, Florovsky argued for a return to the patristic sources of the Church. In his turn from German idealism expressed in Russian philosophy, Florovsky began to explore the thought of the later spiritual fathers of the Church, especially St. Gregory Palamas, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Theophan the

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[183]Ibid., 120.

Recluse, and even the future St. Silouan of Mt. Athos.[184] In the thought and life of

these saints, Florovsky came to the realization of the patristic doctrine of theosis and

the importance of ascetic achievement in the process of deification. Furthermore, he

realized the importance of the Palamite distinction between God's essence and

energies for participation in God to be a reality. Augustine and the western tradition

had ignored this important distinction, or even did not understand it. Instead, the

West came to understand Palamas as an innovator of the faith and a heretic, while

from the Eastern Orthodox viewpoint, he simply reiterated the apostolic faith as

developed by the fourth century fathers of the church.

Florovsky is important for twentieth-century Orthodox thought because he

stressed the importance of the fathers against scholasticism that had developed in the

academies and because of his development of the doctrine of creation utilizing the

Palamite distinction between essence and energies. Only through such a distinction,

Florovsky believed, could God's ontological freedom be maintained, while also

respecting the freedom of the human being to develop into the likeness of Christ.

Florovsky's student, John Romanides, will continue to develop Florovsky's thought,

except with a new interpretation of Christian Hellenism.

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[184]Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovsky," 64. Florovsky wrote the foreward to Archimandrite Sophrony's book on St. Silouan. See Archimandrite Sophrony, *The Undistorted Image: Staretz Silouan: 1866-1938*, tr. Rosemary Edmonds (London: The Faith Press, 1958). Florovsky had come to know St. Silouan in his visits to Mt. Athos. He kept a photograph of Silouan in his office (Williams, "Georges Vasilievich Florovsky," 65). Certainly, Silouan influenced Florovsky's spirituality and his insistence on the importance of the neptic fathers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Synthesis of Hesychasm and *Romeosyne* in the Thought of John S. Romanides

Introduction

The year 1956 represents a revolution in Greek Orthodox theology. In that year,

the Greek-American, Fr. John Romanides, completed and defended his doctoral

dissertation, *The Ancestral Sin*, at the University of Athens.[1] According to Christos

Yannaras, Romanides's dissertation was 'the first fundamental theological critique of the

dogmatic positions of the pietistic movement." His dissertation "considerably disturbed

the faculty of theology of Athens."[2] This is not surprising since Romanides's dissertation

challenged the Augustinian understanding of original sin that had been adopted by Greek

theologians under the influence of western theology. University of Athens professor Fr.

George Metallinos comments,

> [W]e are forced by the facts to speak of an epoch before and after him. This
> is because he made a true incision and rupture in our scholastic past, which
> operated as a Babylonian captivity of our [Orthodox] theology. His
> doctoral dissertation decisively sealed this process of regeneration, to the
> point that even those who were his critics for a variety of reasons or his
> theological opponents acknowledged in their writings the influence that Fr.
> John exerted on their theological thinking.[3]

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[1]John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin,* tr. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr, 2002).

[2]Yannaras, "Theology in Present-Day Greece," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16 (summer 1972): 199.

[3]Quoted in George Dion Dragas, "Introduction," in John Romanides, *An Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics* (Rollinsford, NH: Orthodox Research Institute, 2004), xiv.

From the publication of his dissertation to his death in 2001, Fr. John Romanides sought the completion of the work, which his friend and mentor, Fr. Georges Florovsky, had begun: the return of Orthodox theology to the Byzantine patristic sources.[4] In the words of Fr. George Metallinos,

> Fr. Romanides a) brought back to the academic, theological territory the priority of the Patristic empirical method of doing theology, setting aside the intellectual-stochastic-metaphysical method; b) he linked academic theology with worship and the tradition of the *philokalia*, demonstrating the mutual interpenetration (*perichoresis*) of theology and spirituality and the therapeutic character of dogmatic theology; c) he discerned and adopted in the method of theology the intimate bond between dogma and history and consequently was able to understand as few did the alienation and fall of theology in Western Europe, which followed the Frankish invasion and domination; and d) he assisted in the fuller investigation of Hellenism, outside the stereotyped Western positions, by recovering with impressive and accurate documentation the exact use, meaning and dynamic application of the historic names of Hellenism in its journey through time.[5]

While Romanides has not received much attention in the West, he has had considerable influence on the development of contemporary Greek theology. When asked about whom Romanides has influenced, Fr. George Dragas, professor of patristics at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, replied, "Who has not been influenced by him?"[6] Having served as professor of theology at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (1958-1965) and at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece (1968-1984), as well as teaching intermittingly at Balamand University in Lebanon, Fr. Romanides educated thousands of Orthodox clergy and lay people in his understanding of Roman Orthodoxy.

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[4]Romanides had studied under Florovsky at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary from 1951-1953. Communication from Ann Sanchez, assistant to the Dean, St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary, July 25, 2005.

[5]Dragas, "Introduction," xiv-xv.

[6]George D. Dragas, interview with author, 28 Oct. 2005.

His political theology has also had an influence on the thought of the Neo-

Orthodox Movement in Greece. While Vasilios Makrides aptly points out that

Romanides should not be considered part of this movement as has been maintained by

the Greek Catholic Yannis Spiteris, his thought has been closely associated with the

theological ideas informing many of the neo-Orthodox intellectuals, especially those of

the clergy, but also the movement's greatest thinker, Christos Yannaras.[7] In addition to

Yannaras, such theologians as Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos,

Archimandrite Vasilios Gontikakis of Iveron Monastery, and Fr. George Metallinos are

deeply indebted to the thought of Romanides. Metropolitan Hierotheos's works are

sprinkled with quotations and citations of Romanides.[8] In his new tribute to Romanides,

George Metallinos expresses his debt to Romanides:

> The ever-remembered Fr. J. Romanides I knew first from his texts. I was a
> graduate student in Cologne in West Germany, when his polygraphic
> *Dogmatics* fell into my hands, as a gift of the grace of God, as he taught it at
> the University of Thessaloniki from 1970. It was in the year 1973. From
> the first pages of the book, I was able to perceive that it was a Dogmatics
> 'of another kind,' beyond the scholastic sketches that I had studied until
> then, chiefly in the west . . . . My reaction? I thrust aside immediately all
> the Germanic–Catholic and Protestant–manuals and systematic theology
> works (I had engaged in them considerably!) and I began gluttonously to

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[7]Vasilios N. Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: the Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 142. Yannis Spiteris, *La Teologia Ortodossa Neo-Greca* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1992), 279-95. Yiannaras was accused in a recent theological conference of harboring a "sub-Romanidesian interpretation of history" by the French Catholic Hervé Legrand. See Marcus Plested, "Orthodoxy and the Future of Europe: An Account by Marcus Plested of the Turin Conference," available at http://www.orthodox.clara.net/orthodoxy_and_europe.htm.

[8]See the importance of Romanides for Metropolitan Hierotheos in the November and December 2001 issues of the Metropolis's newsletter at http://www.parembasis.gr/2001/.

study indeed the patristic Dogmatics of the Greek-American Cleric-Professor, who I did not have yet the blessing to know.[9]

Metallinos's own texts from this time began to reflect the change in his thought toward the patristic tradition of the church, especially reflected in the spiritual and liturgical traditions of the church. This became the framework for the interpretation of dogma and church history.

In the West, very little has been written about Fr. John Romanides. The most important work has been that of the Canadian theologian Andrew Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy: The Theology of John Romanides*.[10] Sopko provides an excellent introduction to Romanides's thought, especially his theology, but he has little to say about the political aspects of his thought as well as the sources from which Romanides drew them. The only other commentaries on Romanides have been the works of Yannis Spiteris and Andre de Halleux. Spiteris provides a good description of the thought of Romanides, yet he makes some crucial mistakes in regards to the biography of Romanides as well as his above-mentioned mis-attribution of Romanides to the Neo-Orthodox Movement. George Metallinos has refuted the charges leveled against Romanides by Spiteris.[11]

Andre de Halleux provides a critique of Romanides's concept of *Romeosyne* that includes the importance of his historiography with Romanides's radical critique of

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[9]George D. Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides: The "Prophet of Romanity" Portrayed from inside by unknown or some known Texts* (Athens: Armos, 2003), 9.

[10]Andrew J. Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy: The Theology of John Romanides* (Dewdney, BC: Synaxis Press, 1998).

[11]Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 36-55.

Augustine.[12] In summation, de Halleux states, "Under the name of Romanity, Professor Romanides presents an ideal of Christianity that combines the patristic tradition of Orthodoxy with a utopian nostaligia of the Constantinian Empire." De Halleux does note, though, that the importance of Romanides's concept of Romanity leads to a political confederation of the Balkans based on its common Romanity. He argues that Romanides's vision is a new variation of the political and cultural imperialism of the phanariots. Such a realization of this political agenda would be very difficult to achieve because of the political situation that exists between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Turkish government, which intervened in 1974 to prevent the union of Cyprus with Greece. A Balkan confederation based on Orthodoxy, possibly aligned with Russia, would not be accepted by the Turks, nor the Western powers.

Additionally, de Halleux critiques Romanides's historiography and anti-Augustinianism. Romanides's utopian vision of Romanity causes him to make some gross historiographical errors as well as theological misunderstandings of the theology of Augustine. His thought "confounds religious and nationalist factors" that "are dangerously arbitrary." At stake is the possibility of making the reunion of churches virtually impossible. However, Romanides, according to de Halleux, does help the West recognize its own "europeancentrism" and its own problems with its historiography biased against the East. The importance of this recognition is the inclusion of the history of the eastern churches in recent histories of the universal church.

Yet, de Halleux's critique, while being very important for understanding Romanides's thought, does not address the sources of his theology, nor does it recognize

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[12]André de Halleux, "Une vision orthodoxe grecque de la romanité," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 15 (1984): 54-66.

the embeddedness of theology in history. Romanides's genius, while his historiography is open to serious critique, is that he was able to provide a historical and cultural reason for the schism, grounded in the thought of Augustine. Even without his anti-Augustinianism, Romanides point is well-taken. Florovsky, as I have argued, believed that one of the problems of western theology was its "historical gnosticism." Romanides's attempt to integrate theology and history is due to Florovsky's challenge. Whether Romanides successfully does this is another question. Also, it should be pointed out that, which de Halleux does, the work of Romanides and of Yannaras is to find a basis for Greek Orthodox identity caught between the West on the one hand and Islam on the other. Romanides's political theology is an articulation of what an authentic Orthodox political theology might look like.

In this chapter, I will present a brief summary of the political theology of Romanides, especially how he articulates a synthesis between hesychasm and the Romeic thesis. In this regard it will be important to look at his relationship to his theological mentor George Florovsky as well as other theological and spiritual influences upon his thought. Additionally, I will examine his anti-Augustinianism as it fits within his Romeic thesis. Finally, I will look at the importance of the hesychast tradition for Romanides's theology.

Brief Biography

John Sabbas Romanides was born in Peraia, Greece on 2 March 1927. Because of the genocide committed by the Turks against the Greeks in Anatolia, his family left the familial village in Arabbessos of Cappadocia as refugees to settle in Greece in 1922.[13]

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[13]Dragas, "Introduction," xi.

The village where the Romanides family had resided was known for Saint John of Russia, who was Romanides's namesake. His parents, Sabbas and Eulampia Romanides left, Peraia and settled in New York not long after John's birth. He received his childhood education in New York, even being instructed in the thought of Thomas Aquinas by a Roman Catholic who had become Orthodox. Following high school, Romanides attended seminary at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, after it had moved from Pomfret, CT. He was a member of one of the first graduating classes of the seminary in 1949. In 1951 he was ordained as a priest, installed at Holy Trinity in Waterbury, CT, which he served until 1954. During this time he enrolled at Yale University; however, through an exchange program, he attended classes at Columbia University and the new Russian seminary, St. Vladimir's, in New York City, where he was instructed primarily by Fr. Georges Florovsky, who became his theological mentor. Completing his masters degree in theology at Yale, Romanides, under the influence of the Russian theologians, who had begun the neo-patristic synthesis, attended classes at St. Sergius School of Theology in Paris where he studied with John Meyendorff.[14] In 1955 he moved to Athens to complete his doctorate at the University of Athens under the prominent Greek theologian John Karmires.[15]

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[14]John Romanides, to Fr. Florovsky, 5 May 1954, *Florovsky Archive*, Box 21, Folder 1, Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton. Romanides had written a paper entitled, "The Doctrine of Original Sin according to St. Paul," which he had sent to Florovsky for publication in the *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*. The article was published as "Original Sin According to St. Paul," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 4 (1955-56): 5-28.

[15]"Fr. John Romanides," available at http://www.parembaseis.gr/2001/01_11_19_11.htm. This eulogy, published by the Church of Greece has some obvious errors in regards to the non-Greek aspects of his biography, including naming Georges Florovsky, "John." Additional biographical material can be found in Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*; Romanides, *An*

However, his thesis, submitted in 1957, began a controversy concerning authentic

Orthodox theology.

Like Russia, theology in Greece came under western influence. The University of

Athens was modeled on the western schools of higher education, predominately German.

The theological faculty at the University of Athens were primarily educated in western

schools (see Metallinos's comment above). There they learned Roman Catholic and

Protestant systematics and dogmatics, which they brought back to Greece with them. In

particular, two works stand out by the professors of the early- to mid-twentieth century:

Dogmatics by Christos Androutsos and the three-volume *Dogmatics* by Panagiotis

Trembelas. Together with the *Synopsis* of John Karmiris, these three theologians

represent the classic eastern adoption of the western scholastic and systematic

methodology. As Kallistos Ware states, "The theology of Androutsos, Trembelas and

Karmiris is very much a theology of the university lecture room, academic and scholastic

rather than liturgical and mystical." Commenting particularly on Trembelas's theology,

Ware states, "The Fathers are frequently quoted by Trembelas, but they are fitted into a

framework that is on the whole not Patristic."[16]

In arriving at Athens, Romanides was confronted by this westernized Orthodoxy.

He had experienced it in America and in France, but he had not realized that he would be

confronted by a non-traditional Orthodoxy in a traditionally Orthodox country.

Commenting on the present state of Orthodox theology in 1954, he wrote, "There are so

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Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics; and Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos and Hagiou Vlasiou, "Funeral Oration for Fr. John Romanides," available at http://www.parembaseis.gr/2001/01_11_13_8.htm.

[16]Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), 140-41.

few real Orthodox theologians and so many superficial ones, all expressing ideas so much

in opposition one wonders what exactly is Orthodoxy today."[17] Against the

westernization of Orthodoxy, Romanides sought to develop an authentic Orthodox

theology dependent upon the thought of the fathers, "both hierarchical and ascetical." Fr.

George Dragas comments regarding the position of Romanides:

> As he explained to me on several occasions, growing up in a Western
> context and being fully exposed to Western Christian traditions, he was
> forced not to take his own Orthodoxy for granted, but to examine its depth
> and recover and defend its integrity. Thus he became deeply convinced that
> the Orthodox Patristic Tradition was radically different from the Western
> Traditions which, due to historic exigencies, had imposed their influence on
> the former.[18]

Thus, Romanides had become aware through growing up in a western country and

through the studies of Florovsky and Meyendorff of the "pseudomorphosis" of

Orthodoxy from it patristic foundations. Romanides sought, in his work, to rectify this

problem. As a result, he came into direct conflict with the Athenian theologians and the

American Archdiocese.

In addition to the "pseudomorphosis" and western captivity of Greek Orthodox

theology, Romanides came into conflict with the pietist movement Zoe in Athens. The

main opponent to his theology at the University of Athens was Panagiotis Trembelas, a

leader in the Zoe Movement. Other members of the theological faculty were also

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[17]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, *Florovsky Archive*, Box 21, Folder 2, Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[18]Dragas, "Introduction," xiii.

involved in Zoe.[19] Along with theologians, the brotherhood including hierarchs,

including Archbishop Hieronymous Kotsonis of Athens (1967-1973). The Zoe

Brotherhood had been established in 1907 by Eusebius Matthopoulos in order to establish

a missionary society within Greece.[20] According to Vasilios Makrides, the organization

had two basic purposes: "the spiritual growth of its members according to the principles

of Orthodox spirituality and complete dedication to the expansion of Orthodoxy within

Greece in view of the growing urbanization and secularization which were taking

place."[21] However, as Romanides discovered (as well as Yannaras) this movement was

not dedicated to practicing the traditional spirituality of Orthodoxy, at least in its

heyschast form, but instead had accepted Protestant pietism, emphasizing individual

morality and worship within a pseudo-monastic community. In fact, the movement was

anti-monastic, focusing on the social ills of society through individual rehabilitation.

Instead of traditional Orthodox reading materials, they used Roman Catholic and

Protestant pietistic works. Furthermore, their evangelistic outreach emphasized

education through establishing Protestant-styled Sunday schools, publishing Bible

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[19]Romanides mentions Panagiotis Bratsiotis and an Ioannides. See John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 12 June 1957, Box 22, Folder 4, *Florovsky Archive* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[20]See Seraphim Papakostas, *Eusebios Matthopoulos, Founder of Zoe: A Biography*, tr. A. Massaouti (London, 1939); Theophanis Chronis, "Eusebios Matthopoulos, a Contemporary Prophet," in *Post-Byzantine Ecclesiastical Authorities*, ed. Nomikos M. Vaporis (Brookline, MA: Bookworld Services, 1978), 87-110.

[21]Vasilios N. Makrides, "The Brotherhoods of Theologians in Contemporary Greece," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33 (winter 1988): 168.

studies, and other educational endeavors for reviving the low level of spirituality in

Greece in the early to mid twentieth century.[22]

Romanides's doctoral dissertation indirectly challenged the theology that

provided the basis to Zoe, in addition to the theology that was being taught in the

textbooks of Androutsos and Trembelas. What occurred was a theological debate

between John Romanides and Panagiotis Trembelas that was particularly vicious with

each being labeled a heretic by the other.

In his dissertation, *The Ancestral Sin*, Romanides sought to provide the traditional

Orthodox teaching on the subject of original sin (and other doctrines), as enunciated by

the early fathers of the church against the teachings of Augustine, which were considered

Orthodox by Androutsos and Trembelas. In a letter to his friends and disciples, Katigko

and Panago Patera, Romanides explained his purpose:

> We much wanted from the beginning our most noble offering to be
> received, however, not on account of our personal friendship, as if we had
> simply an economic difficulty, but because we believe that you want to
> contribute to the restoration of continuous Orthodox thought and practice in
> the pure tradition of the Holy Martyrs and Fathers of our only truly
> Orthodox faith. On account of this, before our offering is received
> practically or finally, we want to await the approval of my work from the
> Professors of the University, and likewise we want you to read it, so, if you
> publish it, you will know that you are printing not the work of Father John,

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[22]Ibid., 168-72; Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 134-36; Christos Yannaras, *Kataphygio Ideon: Martyria* (Athens, 1987), 199-255; Panagiotes Bratsiotis, "Die Theologen-Bruderschaft Zoe," *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geitesgeschichte* 12 (1960): 371-84; E. Psilopoulos, "Le movement Zoi dans l'église orthodoze de Grèce," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 40 (1966): 258-89; Demetrios Constantelos, "The Zoe Movement in Greece," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 3 (1959): 11-25; Christoph Maczewski, *Die Zoi-Bewegung Griechenlands. Ein Beitrag zum Traditionsproblem der Ostkirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970).

but the common confession of the Orthodox Christians of the first two centuries.[23]

Likewise, in the preface to the work, he explains that his intentions for the study was to provide an authentic Orthodox voice for the American Orthodox to defend their faith without adopting either Roman Catholic or Protestant answers to the challenges of their faith.[24] Thus, the question debated in his thesis defense was what the authentic Orthodox answer is. Having adopted the Roman Catholic and Protestant answers in their dogmatic works, Romanides challenged their own theological presuppositions.

While the theological arguments that Romanides raised in the dissertation will be discussed later in the chapter, it is important to know that Trembelas attacked Romanides's thesis, labeling it as heresy. Andrew Sopko states that Trembelas, representing Zoe, "waged a systematic campaign against the dissertation after its submission in 1957."[25] This campaign was chiefly fought in a series of letters submitted by both Trembelas and Romanides to the Theological Faculty. These letters were preserved by Romanides as *Encheiridion*.[26] The exchange concerned three major theological issues. The first concerned the western understanding of God as *actus purus*. Romanides had refuted such an understanding of God on the basis that it "leads to

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[23]Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 94-95.

[24]John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin: A Comparative Study of the Sin of Our Ancestors Adam and Eve according to the Paradigms and Doctrines of the First- and Second-Century Church and the Augustinian Formulation of Original Sin*, tr. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr, 2002), 13-15.

[25]Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 12.

[26]This remains unpublished; however, Sopko gives a good description of these letters in his book. See Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 19-45.

pantheism."[27] Furthermore, Romanides argued that the patristic understanding of the distinction between essence and energies is incompatible with, and refutes, the understanding of God as *actus purus*. The second issue that was raised in the exchange was the understanding of God as Intellect. Romanides had simply discarded such an understanding of God. Trembelas argued for its importance in maintaining the theological archetypes necessary for creation. Romanides opposed the concept of archetypes existing in the divine essence because such a construction is not able to allow for the real deification of the person. The third and more critical issue pertained to the question of the *analogical* method of understanding the relationship between God and creation. Again, Romanides resorts to the distinction between essence and energies to refute the *analogia entis*, as well as the *analogia fidei*. Roman Catholicism, which used the Thomistic *analogia entis*, and Protestantism, which used the *analogia fidei*, are both incorrect in their understanding of this relationship. Instead, Romanides offered the Orthodox doctrine of deification as expressed in the thought of Gregory Palamas.[28]

Needless to say, Romanides successfully defended his dissertation against the wiles of Trembelas, who did not even show for the defense. According to Romanides, Bratsiotes asked Trembelas's questions, which "were very silly and only served to better my whole position." Furthermore, he comments that the theological faculty, after casting

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[27]Ibid., 21.

[28]Ibid., 19-45.

their favorable vote, noted that "the majority went on record declaring that my thesis is thus far the best to have been submitted in dogmatics at the University of Athens."[29]

He was greatly relieved by the favorable acceptance of his dissertation. In a letter to George Metallinos by a sister Orthodoxia, it is stated that during this agonizing period, Romanides spent his time teaching and learning the hesychast tradition. Furthermore, his father confessor was the Hagiorite Philotheos Zervakos, and he received notable hesychast fathers, including Fr. Amphilochios of Patmos. It appears that Romanides had assembled a group of people who desired to learn the hesychast tradition, for the letter states that "their first reading was St. Symeon the New Theologian." They studied his writings along with Romanides teachings. "He spoke to them about the *komboschini* and the Jesus Prayer, at a time when the *komboschini* was unknown to many of them and very little known in the circle of those equipped. He changed completely the way of their thinking."[30]

After Romanides successfully defended his dissertation, he continued to suffer Trembelas's attacks. In a letter written to Florovsky in December, 1957, Romanides states,

> The members of the Zoe brotherhood are very much worried about their future. The passing of my thesis and Trembelas' setback have been the first serious defeat they have had. Ever since the war between Trembelas and myself started they have been spreading the rumor that I am a heretic and a dangerous person. When my thesis finally passed not only were they defeated but they could not explain to the members how a supposedly heretical thesis could pass and how Trembelas could be wrong. They tried

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[29]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 2 Nov. 1957, Box 22, Folder 5, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[30]Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 78-80.

to spread the rumor that my thesis was cleansed from its heresies but even
they realize that this is dangerous because it is really an attack on the
integrity and orthodoxy of the professors.[31]

In the same letter he comments that the works of Kotsonis were under review by the Holy
Synod for heresy, and Trembelas and other members of Zoe were being investigated.
Vasilios Makrides notes that at this time, Zoe experienced a decline, and Trembelas and
other members left Zoe because of differences in theology. He states that the movement
was divided between liberals and conservatives, with the theological conservatives
desiring to retain the traditional goals and purposes of the movement. The conservatives
left Zoe and formed the brotherhood Sotir. Trembelas was one of those who left to form
Sotir.[32] While Makrides does not mention the Romanides–Trembelas debate, from
Romanides's perspective, the decline of Zoe in the late 1950s was not due to social
conservatism, but because of their theological defeat. In any event, Zoe declined, and
patristic theology had begun in Greece. Christos Yannaras states,

> This study [*The Ancestral Sin*] brought for the first time to light the true
> ecclesiastical scrutiny of sin and the sinfulness of the ancestors, but also the
> salvation and divinization of humanity, to the antithetical expansion and
> anticomparison to the western transcription and duplicitous alteration of
> their existent facts.[33]

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[31]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 13 Dec. 1957, Box 22, Folder 5,
Florovsky Archive, Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton
Univesity, Princeton.

[32]Makrides, "The Brotherhoods of Theologians in Contemporary Greece," 170-
71.

[33]Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West in Contemporary Greece* (Athens:
Domos, 1992), 441.

Having received his doctoral degree, Romanides decided to return to the United States to continue his studies with Georges Florovsky at Harvard University. In a letter to Florovsky, Romanides states,

> I feel that I still need a few more years of quite [sic] research. I've been working for 4 yrs on ancient theology and have not done enough work in other fields. I am thinking seriously of applying for admission to the Department of History and Philosophy of Religion at Harvard and working with you for another two years. You were mostly responsible for getting me to think in an Orthodox manner and I feel that I would be greatly benefited under your directions for a few more years.[34]

Romanides truly believed that the education that he had received from Florovsky and from further studies with him that an Orthodox theological revival could be effected in America. He states,

> I firmly believe that only a theological revival can bring about a renewal of Orthodox spiritual life. Most Orthodox are concerned with our Church's problems and usually think that solutions are to be found in more finances and better organization but very few are willing to entertain the possibility that it is a bad theology which is actually the root cause of our modern troubles. We expect our Church to be something it is not doctrinally and attempt to do away with what it actually is doctrinally. This is certainly the reason why such activistic and sentimental movements as Ζωή have become a necessity to some peoples ecclesiology. For them Ζωή is the only proof that Orthodoxy is not a complete flop. I think that the Archbishop's staunch support of Ζωή stems from such reasons. Ζωή is a necessity for his ecclesiology. Did you see his recent long article in defense of Ζωή? You see for him Ζωή is our Dominican order and Trembelas is Thomas Aquinas. And one must not shake these dreams for a loss of faith in the Orthodox Church may ensue, that is unless loss of faith is not already a reality.[35]

In addition to a theological revival in the Greek Orthodox Church in America, Romanides also worked for a spiritual revival by attempting to sponsor the development

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[34]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 8 Aug. 1957, Box 22, Folder 4, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[35]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 6 Mar. 1958, Box 23, Folder 1, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

of monasteries in the United States. In 1957 or early 1958, Romanides had written a

letter to Theoklitos Dionysiatos of the Holy Mountain mentioning this possibility. He

had requested possibly five to ten monks being sent from Mt. Athos "to serve as a core

for the development of a spiritual life among our people in the traditional patterns."

According to a letter to Florovsky, he believed that such a transplantation of monastic

spirituality could counteract the influence of Ζωή in America. However, his plans came

to naught, for Archbishop Michael of North and South America received word of this

plan as well as his criticism of Zoe. Because of this, Romanides was summoned to New

York in order to "show humility and repentance in my attitude to the brotherhood of

Ζωή."[36]

Furthermore, in Boston he met a disciple of Elder Joseph the Hagiorite,

Panteleimon. Together they worked on establishing a monastery in Boston. In a letter to

the Patera family, Romanides states that he attempted to establish a little monastery with

him, but the plans were discarded by the archbishop.[37] However, a month later the

archbishop changed his mind after meeting Panteleimon. He was given permission to

establish a monastery as well as a women's monastery in Boston.[38]

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[36]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 11 May 1958, Box 23, Folder 1, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[37]Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 128-29.

[38]Ibid., 134-35. These monasteries (Holy Transfiguration and Holy Nativity) separated from the Greek Archdiocese and are now under the authority of the Holy Orthodox Churches of North America, in schism from the canonical Orthodox churches. Additional monasteries have been built in the United States and Canada by another disciple of Elder Joseph, Geronta Ephraim of Philotheou monastery, who resides at St. Anthony Monastery outside of Phoenix, Arizona.

Upon returning to America, he enrolled at Harvard University while at the same time taking a teaching position at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 1958. During this time, he began to develop what became his great work on *Romeosyne*. However, he did not finish his degree at Harvard. This may have been done in protest to the dismissal of Georges Florovsky from Holy Cross by Archbishop Iakovos in 1965/1966.

There is some debate as to why Florovsky was dismissed. The official reason was that Florovsky refused to kneel on Sundays, according to the tradition and the canons of the church. Archbishop Michael had promulgated an official encyclical in 1957 stating that it was proper to kneel on Sundays, since there were very few opportunities for people to kneel in service during the weekdays. It appears that this became an issue under Archbishop Iakovos, who felt that Florovsky was being disobedient.[39]

However, two other theories are revealed in the letters of Romanides to Florovsky. The first pertains to Florovsky's firing from the school in 1959. It appears that Archbishop Iakovos was under pressure from the Greek government to hire only Greeks as professors of the seminary. While Florovsky was in Thessalonike receiving an honorary doctorate from the Aristotle University, he was dismissed as a member of the faculty. According to Romanides, after having fired Florovsky, Archbishop Iakovos wanted to keep Florovsky around to "offer lectures from time to time." However, Romanides states, "The Greek authorities want no non-Greeks on the faculty." In speaking with Constantine Bonis, dean of the University of Athens, the professor stated

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[39]This is confirmed by a letter to Father Zenophon (Panago) and Katigko from Romanides. Metallinos comments that this shows the pietism of the archbishop. Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 174.

that Florovsky "had a bad influence on students from the nationalistic viewpoint."

Romanides further states, "I am led to believe that Cavarnos Constantine [sic] did a good

job in this respect in Greece and your association with bishop Elaias, who is considered

by the Greek government a dangerous man for Greek nationalism, did not help either. So

even though you are so pro-Greek and Hellenic (patristic) in your way of thinking the

very fact that you are Russian makes you easy to suspect." In the same letter, dated the

next day, Romanides states, "Today I said good-by to Prof. Bonis who is leaving for

Greece Monday. I gathered that your dismissal is supposed to be for reasons of higher

policies pertaining to the National interests and that your cooperation is otherwise very

much desired."[40] Furthermore, in an earlier letter of that same month, Romanides states

that Karamanlis (Prime Minister of Greece) had sent sixteen representatives to the United

States to gather information pertaining to the state of affairs of the Greek Archdiocese.[41]

It appears, then, that Florovsky's dismissal in the summer of 1959 was tied to

interference on the part of the Greek government in the internal affairs of the Greek

Archdiocese.

 The 1965/66 firing may also be tied to this issue. George H. Williams, a friend of

Florovsky's at Harvard University, wrote a letter dated January, 13, 1966 to G. A.

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[40]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 21 Aug. 1959, Box 23, Folder 4, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[41]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 8 Aug. 1959, Box 23, Folder 4, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

Panichas at Holy Cross implying that Florovsky was fired because of his ethnicity.[42]

However, Florovsky seemed to know that his dismissal was imminent, for he had already

secured a position from Princeton University. In a letter from James H. Billington, dated

January 21, 1964, Florovsky was offered a position as visiting professor of Slavic

Studies.[43] With his retirement from Harvard in 1966 and his formal dismissal from Holy

Cross, Florovsky moved to Princeton, where he finished his career.

The third theory that seems to have some plausibility is that Florovsky was

dismissed because he did not have a true doctorate in theology. This would have come to

the attention of the archbishop through three possible means. First, Holy Cross was

seeking accreditation as a school of higher learning in order to offer accredited advanced

degrees. Second, much was made of the fact that Florovsky was finally getting a

doctorate from Aristotle University. Third, the archbishop may have learned of this fact

from Florovsky's participation in ecumenical discussions on behalf of the Greek

Archdiocese. Some comments may have been made as to why he was on a committee if

he did not have the theological credentials. Furthermore, Romanides's own comments

lend to this interpretation. He states, "I see now where His Eminence is now decided that

I am like you no longer a theologian so I also have been cut off from theological

commissions, etc. I have just received notice of appointment to Haverhill, Mass. full

time." Romanides's appointment to Haverhill was done in retaliation for Romanides's

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[42]George H. Williams, to G. A. Panichas, 13 Jan. 1966, Box 27, Folder 4, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[43]James H. Billington, to Fr. George Florovsky, 21 Jan. 1964, Box 26, Folder 3, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

resignation in protest of the firing of Florovsky. He continues, "I am finishing my

Harvard dissertation, but I am not planning on submitting it for any degree. I will go

ahead and publish it as soon as possible with proper acknowledgements to you as advisor.

It is important that I pursue my career with the sufficiency of my Orthodox doctorate.

The imbiciles [sic] at Holy Cross and elsewhere must learn that one does not need an

anglo-saxon [sic] doctorate to be an Orthodox theologian."[44] Interestingly, along these

same lines, Florovsky was notified in June of that year that his services were no longer

needed in serving on a theological commission on behalf of SCOBA. Archbishop

Iakovos had canceled the commission.[45]

The dismissal may also be associated with the traditionalism of Florovsky, which

conflicted with the modernism of Iakovos. In a letter to Theodore Hesburgh, President of

the University of Notre Dame, Florovsky wrote,

> The problem of "Modernism"–in the sense in which this term has been
> used, especially in Europe, in the first decade of this century, both in a
> pejorative and in the programmatic sense–has never been solved, or even
> visualized, *theologically*, and it is still with us. It is imperative to clarify all
> implications of the new slogan: *Aggiornamento*. As for myself, I believe
> that the true *aggiornamento* is only possible by a new synthetic approach to
> "tradition." It may be just a bias, perhaps.[46]

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[44]John S. Romanides, to Fr. George Florovsky, 14 Apr. 1966, Box 27, Folder 5, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[45]P. W. Schneirla, to Very Reverend George Florovsky, 8 Jun. 1966, Box 27, Folder 5, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

[46]Georges Florovsky, to Theodore Hesburgh, President University of Notre Dame, 5 Jul. 1966, Box 12, Folder 3, *Florovsky Archive,* Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

Florovsky's refusal to kneel on Sunday's reflected his stance toward "modernism" in the church. He did not believe that the church should relax or change its stance in the light of changing cultural norms. Instead, as I have argued, he believed that instead the church should be about transfiguring culture. The changes in the church brought by Archbishop Michael and Archbishop Iakovos in order to modernize or Americanize it on the basis of pietism conflicted with the traditional theological position of Florovsky and Romanides.

In 1968 Romanides became professor of Dogmatics at Aristotle University in Thessalonike. There he continued his research on the *Romeosyne,* publishing his *Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church* in 1973, *Romeosyne, Romania, Roumeli* in 1975, and *Franks, Romans, and Feudalism: An Interplay between Theology and Society* in 1982. According to Yannis Spiteris, he was also involved politically, during this period, with the Colonels, and after the junta he ran as a candidate for an ultranationalist party. [47] However, Metallinos disputes this, saying that Spiteris has confused P. Chrestou with Romanides. Romanides was never associated with the the administration of the Colonels. After the junta, he was approached by leaders of a royalist party who wanted him as their candidate. He refused, but later found that they had listed him on the party ticket for the election. According to Metallinos, he attempted to withdraw his name, but with pressure he continued to run, enjoying the campaign. First, with what party did Romanides run for election? Second, did Romanides subscribe to a royalist political platform? Metallinos names the political party as "Ethnike Paratakse" (Ethnic political party), but most likely it was the very minor National Democratic Union, which existed for the election of 1974. While this party was

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[47]Spiteris, *La teologia ortodossa neo-greca*, 283.

associated with nationalism, the leader of the party confirmed to Romanides that he was indeed a socialist and not a royalist. This comment assuaged Romanides, who was a democrat and not a royalist.[48] This also corresponds with some of his anti-nationalist bias in his Orthodox beliefs. He may have been on the party ticket, but it does not appear that he supported all of their political agenda.

From 1970 Romanides also taught at Balamand University in Lebanon. He was very active in ecumenical affairs, representing the Church of Greece at many of the bi-lateral discussions, including those with the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Oriental Orthodox. In these talks, he presented the same stance as his theological mentor: an uncompromising defense of the truthfulness of the early Christian tradition continued in the Orthodox Church. In 2001, after suffering a stroke a few years earlier, on his way home from celebrating the Divine Liturgy, Fr. John Romanides suffered a heart attack and departed this life.

It is important to note the influences upon Romanides's theology. First and foremost, Georges Florovsky influenced Romanides's theology. As I have noted, Romanides considered Florovsky as the one who "taught him to think like an Orthodox." It was Florovsky who introduced him to patristic theology with his "neo-patristic synthesis." Furthermore, Florovsky introduced Romanides to the concept of Christian Hellenism. Romanides develops this concept in his Romeic thesis, however, he makes a change to Florovsky's thought. Florovsky had argued that Christianity was not equated with a particular culture; it found itself in a particular culture that allowed for its theological expression. Christianity in coming in contact with Hellenic culture brought

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[48]Metallinos, *Protopresbyter John S. Romanides*, 45.

about a transfiguration of that culture, thus creating a Christian culture. Florovsky saw

this as the model for the modern world. A renewal of Christianity in western culture

could bring about a transformation of western culture. In this theology of culture,

Florovsky has an eschatological emphasis, of the breaking-in of the gospel of Christ that

allows for a transfiguration of culture. This transfiguration is to occur through ascetic

struggle (*podvig*) in the exercise of human freedom. With Romanides there is a subtle

change of emphasis. The eschatological element disappears,[49] being replaced by the

historic Greek (Roman) people. Romanity becomes Christian Hellenism. The universal

element remains in how he defines "Romanity," yet, the emphasis lies on the identity of

the Greek people, something which Florovsky was not concerned.

Florovsky also most likely was the first to introduce Romanides to the neptic

theological tradition, especially the work of Gregory Palamas. Romanides continued to

educate himself in this tradition by going to St. Sergius Theological Institute to study

with John Meyendorff, the leading expert on Gregory Palamas. He studied in Paris for

two years. But his research on Palamas was limited due to the lack of texts. This was

remedied in the 1960s with the publication of the corpus of Palamite texts under the

guidance of Panagiotis Chrestou of Aristotle University in Thessalonike.[50] In 1984,

Romanides published an edited volume entitled, *Romaioi or Romeoi Fathers of the*

Church, Gregory Palamas Works. 1. Concerning the Holy Hesychasts. Triads A, in

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[49]I am indebted to Athanasios Papathanasiou of *Synaxis* and Fr. George Dragas of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology for this insight into the distinction between Romanides's and Florovsky's understanding of Christian Hellenism.

[50]Chrestou brought Romanides to Thessalonike in 1969. Under Chrestou, Hierotheos Vlachos worked on the compilation and editing of the texts of Gregory Palamas that had been collected from Mt. Athos.

which he argued for a continuity between Palamas and the earlier Christian ascetic and theological tradition.

Concerning the ascetic tradition, the question is raised as to where Romanides learned hesychasm. As noted earlier, he knew the use of the *komboschini* and the Jesus Prayer prior to his arrival in Greece. Did he learn them from Florovsky? Possibly, but Florovsky is not known for being a hesychast. Meyendorff? Again this is a possibility, but unlikely. It appears that he learned it from his mother, Eulampia. She was a very pious woman, who became a nun after the death of her husband at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston. Eulampia eventually became a *gerontissa* at the monastery of St. John the Evangelist in Thessalonike. Apparently, she had a great influence on the spirituality of Romanides.[51] While learning the spirituality of hesychasm from his mother, he learned the theology from his professors.

The Romeic Thesis of John Romanides

The Romeic Thesis of Romanides is an attempt to construct a modern Greek identity based on the Christian past. It represents the possibility of understanding a group of people based on religion rather than ethnicity. How Romanides is able to construct this identity is the subject of the last part of this chapter. There are three basic elements to his project. First, he defines who the Greeks are as Romans. This is important for establishing an identity that provides a continuity with the past. It also allows him to set up the next issue, which pertains to a false understanding of Greek history. In this he provides an original historiography that demonstrates the role that the West has played in falsifying Greek identity as well as presenting a new identity that is constructed by the

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[51]See Lambros Fotopoulos, "Gerontissa Eulampia Romanides," *Ephemerios*, June 2003, 11-14.

West. Central to this argument is the importance of the *filioque* based on Augustinian

theology. The third element of the thesis is his contention that the West developed along

a different theological horizon from the East because of its Augustinianism. In fact, the

West is an Augustinian project, according to Romanides. Against the Augustinian

project, Romanides presents the hesychast tradition as the model of Romanity in the East.

Only through such a recovery of Romanity will the Greek people be able to have their

own identity apart from the West.

In elucidating his thesis, I will broadly outline the theory along the major points

that he makes. For more detailed argumentation, the reader should consult the various

works of Romanides noted in the text. Additionally, I will not be offering countering

historical information to the thesis of Romanides. The purpose of this project is to

provide a description of his theory, not necessarily a critical examination of it. Such a

project would be worthwhile in the future, and it would be a monograph in itself. For

countering historical information, I recommend consulting the general historical texts of

the West.

Before examining the three points of his thesis, it is important that we have an

understanding of the concept of *Romeosyne* and the project that he is constructing in his

works. As he states in the "Introduction" to his great work *Romeosyne, Romania,*

Roumeli (henceforth *Romeosyne*), "The offering of this book is the Romeic synthesis and

hermeneutic of the knowledgeable elements for the most part." He continues, "Certainly

in this work this study is antithetical and a remonstrance to the European, Russian, and

American syntheses and hermeneutics, in which Romanity is subjugated through the

reigning Neograicism in Greece."[52] By Graicism and Neograicism, Romanides means

the non-Romaic aspects of the NeoHellenic identity. He states,

> Neograicism as also Graicism before the Fall [of Constantinople] was by
> nature of the slavery made worse by the Frankocratia and Turkocratia. The
> Frankocratia and Turkocratia were the enslavement of the body. Graicism
> and Neograicism are the enslavement of the spirit. The Romans of the
> Frankocratia and of the Turkocratia are those who did not follow their
> paradigm which made Franks and Turks.[53]

According to Romanides, today's Romans are neither those who were made Turks,

Franks, or Greeks. "The one who is made a Greek is more identified with the one who is

made a Frank." "It remains today the Americanized, Russified, Frenchified, Germanized,

therefore have become a spiritual slave of those outside of Romanity." Thus, those

Greeks who have adopted an identity other than that of Romanity have accepted a false

identity to whom they are as a people. Only the Romans remain free spiritually from the

false identity. "From this point of view of Romanity, the Greeks are all traitors."

However, what Romanides explains is that by adopting a non-Roman identity, the Greeks

have betrayed their own identity, causing them to divide as a people into the identities of

the diaspora. Consequently, they become allies with that which is foreign to their

identity, and they become enslaved physically and spiritually to the foreign elements.

The Roman, however, does not accept the foreign elements as part of his identity,

remaining free from their enslavement. The Roman, though, does not adopt a sectarian

identity. Romanides explains,

> This, however, does not mean again, that he accepts only the Roman and
> not the foreigner. He accepts whatsoever is good and makes it Roman.
> Whoever he becomes an ally with he benefits whosoever ethnically, in the

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[52]John S. Romanides, *Romeosyne, Romania, Roumeli* (Thessalonike: Pournara, 1974), 9.

[53]Ibid., 10.

same way he obtains all that is necessary from the wisdom of the knowledge of the world, but that which adjusts to his Roman culture. He never confuses natural science with the culture, for he knows that also the barbarian is able to have or to obtain and to advance the natural science, in order to use it for the purpose of enslaving and destroying of human beings.[54]

Thus, the Roman rules spiritually, through which technocratic and economic power are manifested.

Additionally, Romanity expresses a universality, which the Neo-Greek identity is not able to express.

This is because he knows that God loves all human beings and all races and all peoples without judgment and without preference. The Roman knows that his Romanity contains the truth and is the highest transformation of culture. But he fully understands correctly the fact that God loves the Roman, not however more than the others. God loves those who possess the truth but equally he loves the advocate of lies. He loves the saint, but he loves equally yet also the devil.[55]

However, Romanides points to the fact that the Romans of today have become enslaved to the Neo-Greek identity foisted upon them by the Great Powers. But even more than this, they are enslaved by European and Russian civilization in all of its cultural artifacts. In order to free itself of this epistemic enslavement, it is necessary to recover the Romeic identity from the false neo-graicism that was put in its place beginning with the Franks in the ninth century.[56]

In examining what Romanides identifies as *Romeosyne*, or Romanity, it seems that what he is articulating is a return to the hesychast culture of the later fourteenth century. His description of the cultural approach to accepting the foreign is very similar

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[54]Ibid., 12.

[55]Ibid., 13.

[56]Ibid., 15.

to that which was articulated in the thought of Gregory Palamas, who in turn borrowed from the writings of Isaac the Syrian and Basil the Great. By taking the good from the world and making it Roman seems curiously similar to their methodology.

It also interests me that Romanides equates being Roman with being Christian, particularly Orthodox. This equation of Roman and Christian goes back to the fourth century in the conversion of the empire to Christianity. To be a Roman citizen after 381 CE meant being an orthodox Christian.[57] If Romanides is articulating a theory of political citizenship, which I do not believe that he is, this conflicts with the modern understanding of citizenship that is open to all people regardless of religious identity. Essentially, this is the controversy that the Greek government faced with the Church of Greece in the 1990s. How is citizenship to be defined? The government had accepted the standards of liberal democracy, while the church articulated a theory of Greek identity that was inseparable from religious identity.[58] To be Greek was to be Orthodox. Romanides's understanding of identity is similar to that of the Church of Greece.

Who are the Romans? As we have seen from chapter two, the Romans were the various orthodox Christian peoples of the Roman Empire. They spoke Greek, but the culture was an amalgamation of Roman law with Hellenic culture. Thus, Romanides argues that the Romans were Greeks and the Greeks were Romans. According to Romanides, who draws his historical understanding from the ancient Hellenic and Roman

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[57]For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Nikolas Gvosdev, *An Examination of Church-State Relations in the Byzantine and Russian Empires with an Emphasis on Ideology and Models of Interaction* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2001), 55-72.

[58]See Daniel P. Payne, "The Clash of Civilisations: The Church of Greece, the European Union and the Question of Human Rights," *Religion, State and Society* 31 (spring 2003): 261-71.

historians[59] as well as the work of the writer Kostas Palamas, the early Romans were

Greeks. The early Romans never identified themselves as Latins, and the Greeks, who

came under Roman rule came to be known as Romans. The people who inhabited Rome

were bilingual, speaking and writing both Latin and Greek, although Greek had the

ascendancy. Thus, under Roman rule, the peoples of the Mediterranean world were

culturally Roman. Ironically, the Roman Empire was a Hellenized empire.[60] When

Constantine moved the capitol from Rome to Constantinople/Byzantium, he did not

establish the Byzantine Empire or a Greek Empire. Nor did the Emperor Justinian.

Rather, according to Romanides, the so-called Byzantine Empire is a lie put forward by

Charlemagne to challenge the legitimacy of the Roman emperor in Constantinople.

Romanides asserts that the schism that occurred between the Eastern Orthodox

and the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 was a result of the politics of the Franks.

Frankish theologians used the *filioque* issue to demonstrate that the Eastern churches

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[59]In particular, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities*, vol. 1, tr. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937). Virgil is at pains to establish a Roman identity that is separate from the predominate theory that the Romans were Greeks. His famous axiom about the Romans provides their unique identity:

> Others will cast more tenderly in bronze
> Their breathing figures, I can well believe,
> And bring more lifelike portraits out of marble;
> Argue more eloquently, use the pointer
> To trace the paths of heaven accurately
> And accurately foretell the rising stars.
> Roman, remember by your strength to rule
> Earth's peoples–for your arts are to be these:
> To pacify, to impose the rule of law,
> To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, tr. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 190.

[60] John S. Romanides, *Romanism and Costes Palamas* (Athens: Romania Press, 1976), 30-36.

were in heresy, and by not recognizing the authority of the Bishop of Rome as universal

bishop of the Christian Church they were separated from the Christian Empire. At its

root the schism was more political than theological.[61]

In the eighth century, Romanides asserts, a division occurred in the Christian

Church based on ethnicity rather than heresy. "Thus, in West European sources we find a

separation between a Greek East and a Latin West. In Roman sources this same

separation constitutes a schism between Franks and Romans." He emphasizes that the

division was not between Eastern and Western Romans, but rather between East Romans

and "the conquerors of the West Romans," that is the Franks.[62]

With the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 CE as the "Emperor of the Romans,"

a conflict occurred within Christendom. Who indeed was the true "Emperor of the

Romans?" In order to remedy the political problem, a distinction was introduced

between Latins and Greeks. If Charlemagne ruled over the Romans, then the Romans of

the East Roman Empire were not Roman but Greek. The Romans that Charlemagne and

his successors ruled over were simply the inhabitants of what was left of the Roman

Empire in the West, the Papal States, which were given to the papacy in the forged

document of the Donation of Constantine.[63]

For evidence of his claims, Romanides uses the Council of Frankfurt in 794.

While the Roman Empire was still in existence both in East and West, and Pope Hadrian

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[61]John S. Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism and Doctrine* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1981), 10.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., 15.

had affirmed the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). However, in the presence of the Papal Legates at the Council of Frankfurt, the *Greeks* were condemned for heresy for the use of icons, yet the Romans were not. Ironically, Pope Hadrian, as the Bishop of the Romans, had excommunicated all those who did not uphold the teachings of the Seventh Council. The Franks at the Council of Frankfurt pronounced their own excommunication![64]

Additionally, the *filioque* became a political tool of the Franks. Charlemagne coerced the addition to the Frankish Creed. In 809 at the Council of Aachen, the addition was pronounced necessary for salvation. However, Pope Leo III had not been consulted, and he resisted the addition to the Nicene Creed. Consequently, without a political force to resist the Carolingian armies, the pope did not enforce his position, but simply ignored the addition.[65]

From the time of Constantine and the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the term "Greek" did not mean an ethnic group but a "pagan." A Roman was a Christian, while a Greek or Hellene was a pagan. This distinction was utilized astutely by the Frankish court, according to Romanides. "By Frankish logic this meant that if the East Romans became heretics, this would be proof that they had given up Roman nationality and that their empire was no longer Romania." Furthermore, the defeats suffered by the East Romans at the hands of the Muslim Arabs were proof of the loss of Roman

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[64]Ibid., 15-16.

[65]Ibid., 16.

(Christian) identity by the East Romans. They were in heresy, and thus they were

Greeks.[66]

　　For evidence of this mentality on the part of the Franks, Romanides cites a letter

written from Emperor Louis II to Emperor Basil I. In the letter Louis remarks,

> We have received the government of the Roman Empire for our orthodoxy.
> The Greeks have ceased to be emperors of the Romans for their cacodoxy.
> Not only have they deserted the city (of Rome) and the capital of the
> Empire, but they have also abandoned Roman nationality and even the
> Latin language. They have migrated to another capital city and taken up a
> completely different nationality and language.[67]

Interestingly, during the Crusades, the lands liberated from Muslim rule by the Crusaders

were once again called Romania. These lands had previously been called Graecia by the

Franks.[68]

　　Romanides argues that eventually the Roman papacy was captured by the Franks,

and the last resistance to Frankish rule in the Western Church ended. The Church had

resisted through the growth of papal authority and its challenges to the Western emperors.

The "Donation of Constantine" and the placing of all bishops under the authority of the

Roman bishop were attempts by the Roman bishop to maintain Roman control over the

church. Consequently, the Frankish emperors placed non-Romans on St. Peter's chair,

bringing about the Frankish takeover of the Roman Catholic Church, which in reality is a

Frankish Church separated from the true Church of Rome. However, with an interesting

twist on history, Romanides believes that the revolutions that occurred throughout the

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[66]Ibid., 17.

[67]Ibid., 18. Quoted from Brian Pullan, *Sources for the History of Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1971), 16-17.

[68]Ibid.

history of Western Europe were attempts by the Roman peoples to throw off the heavy

yoke of their Frankish overlords.[69]

Returning to the East Romans, Romanides argues that they have accepted the

Western propaganda, believing that they are Greeks and the descendants of the ancient

Hellenes. Quite to the contrary, however, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453,

the conquered peoples, regardless of ethnicity, continued to understand themselves as

Romans, as did their conquerors. To this day, the Patriarch of Constantinople is known

as the Patriarch to the Rum by the Turks.

However, the Greek Enlightenment, as I have shown, led by Adamantios Korais,

fostered the understanding of the East Romans as Greeks. Korais lived in Paris and was

an assistant to Napoleon. Having been influenced by the French and German

Enlightenments, Korais sought to liberate his people, whom he called Greeks, from the

Turkish yoke. He chose the name Greek, "because all the enlightened nations of Europe

also name us thus."[70] Western European historians and popular writers with their

emphasis on the classical world argued that the modern Greek speaking people were

descendants of the ancient Hellenes. Thus, the true identity of these people was Hellene

or Greek, not Roman, even though the people considered themselves to be so.

With the rise of nationalism and the Balkan revolutions against the Ottoman

Empire in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the various peoples known as Romans

divide into ethnic groups based on their homelands. The ancient Roman names for these

homelands become the names of these national groups. Thus, the Roman province Hellas

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[69]Ibid., 22-31.

[70]Romanides, *Costes Palamas*, 19.

becomes the name of the state of Greece, Ellada, and the Greek is a Hellene. The Roman

province of Romania gives rise to the state of Romania and the national group of

Romanians. Interestingly, as Romanides comments, with this arrangement, a Greek-

speaking Roman who lives outside of Hellas can only become a Hellene by moving to

this province, according to the 1822 constitution of Greece.[71] Romans became Greeks

through the political machinations of the Great Powers and through the coercion of the

nation-state educational system implemented by the new government. Furthermore, it is

telling that the Church of Greece was established as a national church apart from the

Mother Church of Constantinople, separating the Church of Greece from its Roman

Orthodox Mother.

The modern debate over Greek identity began in 1901 when the Greek historian

Argyres Ephtaliotes wrote, *History of Romanism*. Immediately, neo-Hellenic

intellectuals criticized the name of the work. What ensued was a public discussion over

Greek identity that continues to this day in the works of the neo-Orthodox. George

Soteriades criticized the title of the work, insinuating that the use of the word "Roman"

instead of "Greek" is unpatriotic and vulgar. Costes Palamas responded to Soteriades's

criticism by demonstrating that the common people understand themselves to be Romans

and that the name "Greek" is a derisive term imposed by the state authorities under the

influence of the Western powers. Responding to Palamas's defense of Romanism,

Nicholas Polites asserts that the name "Roman" was an imposition from the beginning,

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[71]Ibid., 27.

and that the descendants of the ancient Hellenes should once again take their rightful and proper name of "Greek."[72]

Of course, Romanides believes that such an acceptance of the NeoGreek identity is a betrayal of their true identity as Romans and an enslavement to a paradigmatic structure placed upon the people by the outside western powers. This is in fact what the Greek nation did. By adopting this identity, adding it on to the Romeic cultural identity, they created an artificial bifurcated identity that has produced the political, social, and economic problems of their society.[73] Continuing on the path toward a greater

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[72]Ibid., 15-19, 25-26.

[73]See Keith R. Legg and John M. Roberts, *Modern Greece: A Civilization on the Periphery* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 194-96. The chief exponent of this view has been Nikos Diamandouros. See "Politics and Culture in Greece, 1974-1991: An Interpretation," in *Greece 1981-1989. The Populist Decade*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1993), 1-25; *Cultural Dualism and Political Modernization in Post-Authoritarian Greece* (Madrid: Instituto Juan March, 1994). It is this position that many of the younger sociologists are challenging through the use of Multiple Modernities Theory. See the works of Vasilios Makrides, "Orthodox Christianity, Rationalization, Modernization: A Reassessment," in *Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-first Century,* ed. Victor Roudometof, Alexander Agadjanian, and Jerry Pankhurst (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005), 179-209; Vasilios Makrides and Lina Molokotos-Liederman, "Introduction: Orthodoxy in Greece Today," *Social Compass* 51 (summer 2004): 459-70; Lina Molokotos-Liederman, "The 'Free Monks' Phenomenon: Music and Modernity in Contemporary Greek Orthodoxy," A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Atlanta, GA, 15 August 2003, available at http://hirr.hartsem.edu/sociology/sociology_online_articles_liederman.html; Elizabeth Prodromou, "Democratization and Religious Transformation in Greece: An Underappreciated Theoretical and Empirical Primer," in *The Orthodox Church in a Changing World,* ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Thanos Veremis (Athens, 1998), 99-153; Elizabeth Prodromou, "Negotiating Pluralism and Specifying Modernity in Greece: Reading Church-State Relations in the Christodoulos Period," *Social Compass* 51 (summer 2004): 471-85; Elizabeth Prodromou, "Paradigms, Power, and Identity: Rediscovering Orthodoxy and Regionalizing Europe," in *Religion and Politics*, ed. John T. S. Madeley (Dartmouth, NH: Ashgate, 2003), 663-92; Efterpe Fokas, "Greek Orthodoxy and European Identity," in *Contemporary Greece and Europe*, ed. Achilleas Mitsos and Elias Mossialos (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 275-300; and Anastassios

westernization will only further lead them astray, according to Romanides, from their authentic culture rooted in Orthodox Christianity.

This raises a crucial point in regards to Romanides's understanding of history. Obviously he believes that Eastern and Western Christendom experienced different historical and theological development. But the question that this begs is what was the cause for the different paths of development if they each derived from the Roman Empire? Was the *filioque* controversy simply a matter of politics? Romanides argues in his more theological works that the Western separation from Eastern Christendom is because of the thought of Augustine and the post-Augustinian theological development in Scholasticism. As has already been shown, Romanides believed that the theological controversy in fourteenth-century Byzantium was essentially a debate between the Augustinianism of Barlaam and the Orthodoxy of Gregory Palamas. While this controversy was simply between two men, its political ramifications influenced the entire Eastern Empire. Similarly, Romanides believes that the conflict between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Franks can be laid at the feet of Augustine.

Romanides's anti-westernism and anti-Augustinianism is based on three basic critiques of Augustinian thought. First, Romanides makes the accusation that the errors in Augustine's theology can be traced to his neoplatonism. Principally, Augustine's understanding of the good as *eudaemonism* is the main culprit. Additionally, Augustine's methodology, based on an intellectual approach to the understanding of theology, is problematic from an Orthodox perspective. Second, Augustine's understanding of

Anastassiadis, "Religion and Politics in Greece: The Greek Church's 'Conservative Modernization' in the 1990s," Research in Question No. 11, January 2004, available at http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org/publica/qdr.htm.

creation and its relationship with God is affected by his neoplatonism, causing either

pantheism or a radical separation of God from creation, which must be overcome by

created grace. For Romanides, this demonstrates that Augustine's essentialism prevents

him from holding the Orthodox distinction between the essence and energies of God.

Because Augustine is not able to have a real participation of the person in the Being of

God, the doctrine of deification is lost in the West. Instead of a culture of hesychasm

developing in the West as in the East, a scholasticism or intellectual theology develops

separate from the religious life, leading to the possibility of pietism with the Protestant

Reformation. While many of Romanides's views are out of date in relation to Augustine

and Augustinian studies, his critique of Augustine points out some serious theological

problems.[74]

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[74]See Glenn Gentry, *Beyond Augustine: The Ethical Structure of Community*, doctoral dissertation (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2005) for some of these problems from an Evangelical Christian standpoint. Some of his critiques resonate with those of Romanides. Believing that the philosophical and theological problems associated with the Western tradition are not to be blamed on Augustine but rather on post-Thomistic Scholasticism, the Radical Orthodox Movement has sought to recover the Augustinian tradition in the West as a challenge to secularism and pietism. See Michael Hanby, "Augustine and Descartes: An Overlooked Chapter in the Story of Modern Origins," *Modern Theology* 19 (October 2003): 455-82; Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003); John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London: Routledge, 2003); John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (London: Blackwell, 1993); John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001); John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward, ed. *Radical Orthodoxy* (London: Routledge, 1999); Tracey Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II* (London: Routledge, 2003); Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000). An Eastern Orthodox engagement with their theology would be highly profitable, for they share many of the same criticisms of the western tradition.

Romanides begins his critique of Augustine with a criticism of ancient Greek

philosophy, for he understand Augustine coming out of this philosophical tradition.[75]

Greek philosophy had understood the nature of the world to be "a natural emanation from

the essence of the One (pantheism), or a phenomenalistic or fallen reflection of an

ingenerate, true world of universals (idealism), or an unbroken unity of form and matter

in which matter is the source (αρχη) of the replication of form but without independent

existence and first fruits (απαρχη) (Aristotle)."[76] Thus, the world in such philosophical

systems does not arise from the creative will of God, but rather has a necessity to it,

either built into matter itself or in the being of God. "For philosophy, the cause and

source of the continuous, unending existence of realtiy, therefore, is not the will of God

but simply the nature of reality itself."[77] According to Romanides, having such an

understanding of the nature of creation lends to the idea that "the destiny of man is either

pleasure (hedonism) of *eudaemonia* (happiness)." Both ends are based upon the

fundamental understanding of human being as being a creature of desire. Hedonism

attempts to fulfill human desire through creation, since human nature is materialistic.

Eudaemonism, however, does not accept this premise, and instead holds that human

desire is satisfied in that which is beyond matter. "For this reason, the successful

satisfaction of human thirst is found only in ingenerate and unchangeable things in which

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[75]Did he gain this understanding from Florovsky? Florovsky had maintained that Augustine was a Hellenized Christian as opposed to a Christian Hellenist like the Cappadocians. See chapter six.

[76]Romanides, *Ancestral Sin*, 42.

[77]Ibid., 43.

the soul's unstable condition of unfulfilled quests ceases."[78]   Human desire is satisfied by

the attainment of the "highest good." The highest good must be infinitely good and

simple, for there cannot be a higher good or another good alongside it. "Salvation,

therefore, is the flight from time and corruptible matter; it is a state of attachment to

ingenerate things, or to the One, which are found outside of the material world, or are

hidden in it. The destiny of man is dispassion and motionlessness through the acquisition

of immutability. In other words, man is saved when at last he ceases to desire."[79]

Consequently, this salvation is not due to the will of the One, but due to nature. "For the

most part, the destiny of the man is attributed to fate and to a completely natural element

in man, the soul, which is by nature immortal." Salvation is thus attained either through a

recognition on the part of the human being that he has already been saved through fate

from the material world through union with the "universal soul," or it is attained "by a

transcending of the material phenomena through a recollection of ideas implanted in the

soul, ideas that were directly known in a previous existence but are now darkened

because of the soul's present embodiment."[80]

The Greek Fathers accepted some aspects of this Greek philosophical

understanding of the nature of reality. However, they made certain changes to the

philosophy based on biblical teaching. "For the Greek Fathers, God is the highest good

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[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid., 44. In chapter one of the *Confessions*, Augustine states, "For thou hast made us for thyself, and restless is our heart until it finds its rest in thee." Additionally, Augustine states how that restlessness is overcome: through the knowledge of God, which comes from invocation.

[80]Ibid., 45.

and the pinnacle of desirability, of course, but not in the likeness of man who loves

selfishly. God's love is not a necessity of the divine nature. Thus, God does not have

relations with the world in His essence but only in His energy and will with no alteration

in His essence." Accordingly, the human soul is drawn to God by necessity in order to

fulfill selfish desire. Instead, through ascetic struggle, human selfishness, a result of the

fall, is overcome, so that the person can return to God with love freely. "Therefore, the

real happiness of man does not consist of fulfilled selfishness but of freedom in the

likeness of God."[81]

In an earlier work, Romanides had equated Greek philosophy with the theology of

the West. He states, "The scholastic theologians of the West have often used the

aspirations of natural man as proof that he is instinctively seeking after the Absolute, the

possession what is the only possible state of complete happiness, i.e., a state wherein it is

impossible to desire anything more because nothing better exists."[82] Under the influence

of Plato, Augustine had employed the Greek philosophical understanding of the nature of

humanity and the nature of God. As Sopko states, "Under a heavily Platonic influence, it

was considered man's destiny to possess the *summum bonum*. With an exclusive

emphasis on the intellect of man, Augustine stressed that Adam had immediate 'vision'

of the divine essence, giving him access to all uncreated universals which meant that he

possessed knowledge of all things in their essence and source."[83] From an Orthodox

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[81]Ibid., 47.

[82]John S. Romanides, "Original Sin According to St. Paul," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 4 (1955-56): 12, quoted in Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 54.

[83]Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 54. See John S. Romanides, "Critical Examination of the Applications of Theology," in *Procès-Verbeaux du Deuxième*

perspective, such an understanding of the nature of man would make him equal to the

divine; thus, Adam was God. Aquinas, later, had to modify this position of Augustine

due to this point, for why would Adam have fallen if he was perfect and could behold the

divine essence? This understanding of man may be due to Augustine understanding that

man was created perfect; thus, he would be able to have such a vision, if one has an

essentialist understanding of the nature of reality. Romanides states,

> The destiny of man, as imagined by Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Ritschl,
> and others of the West, is self-centered *eudaemonia* attained by supposedly
> identifying the mind with the reality in the essence of God. This is
> supposed to cause a cessation of all movement of the mind and will toward
> any other person or thing since there is nothing more desirable for the
> human intellect than the divine essence. For the Greek Fathers, however,
> the idea of a vision of the divine essence is blasphemous. Such theories of
> *eudaemonia* simply project and elevate to a divine level the force that rules
> in the world, the force of necessity and self-interest called 'fate' by the
> ancients. But man was not made for the purpose of finding satisfaction of
> the supposedly natural, self-centered longings within himself and, thus, of
> becoming unmoved and dispassionate. On the contrary, he was specifically
> made so he can love God and his fellow man with the same love that God
> has for the world. Love that arises out of self-interest is alien to the nature
> of God just as it is alien to the original destiny of man.[84]

With this understanding of the destiny of humanity, it is impossible for humanity

to reach moral perfection. This is because the very structure by which sin came into the

world remains. The fall is a loss of the object of desire, - i.e., God for material creation.

The object of salvation then is returning to the correct object that satisfies human desire

(*eudaemonia*). Because the soul is directed back toward the highest good, it has no need

or room for directing its desire outside of that object of desire. It becomes impossible

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Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes (19-29 Août, 1976), ed. Savas C. Agourides
(Athens, 1978), 413-41.

[84]Romanides, *Ancestral Sin*, 106.

then to love either God or the neighbor as an act of selfless love. In each case, God or the

neighbor are a means for fulfilling human selfish desire.[85]

In addition to the philosophical presuppositions of the western tradition in regards

to the nature of reality, Romanides also criticized Augustine's methodology. He believed

that the critical epistemological difference between the Eastern and Western theological

tradition could be summed upon in three words: "*Credo ut intelligam.*" He states,

> According to Augustine one is able to know the things concerning God
> either through philosophy, especially of the Neoplatonists, or through
> revelation. Before faith is accepted the gifts or the dogmas of philosophy
> and of Holy Scripture through faith and in continuation, if one has the
> intellectual capability, he attempts to fully understand them through logic.
> This method becomes the foundation of the Franco-Latin Tradition and is
> summarized in the words of Augustine "CREDO UT INTELLIGAM",
> therefore "I believe in order to understand". This allows Augustine to
> declare: "I will not be late to search the essence of God, either through His
> Writings or through creation."[86]

Meditation or contemplation upon Scripture provides the means for the illumination of

the intellect, allowing it to receive the created grace of God.[87] Intellectual knowledge of

God becomes the means toward which the intellectual desire is satisfied, and it can only

be satisfied through the eventual contemplation of the divine essence or beatific vision.

According to Romanides the chief problem underlying the Augustinian

understanding of God is his failure to distinguish between the essence and energies of

God. This distinction protects both the transcendence of God as well as divine freedom.

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[85]Ibid., 107-08.

[86]John S. Romanides, "Introduction to the Theology and Spirituality of the
Romeosyne against the Frankish Tradition," in *Gregory Palamas Works, Romans or
Roman Fathers of the Church*, vol. 1, ed. John S. Romanides and D. D. Kontostergios
(Thessalonike: Pournara, 1984), 113-14.

[87]Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 101.

The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* was formulated on this very basis. "This dogma constitutes the whole premise of the Church's teaching on freedom."[88] This teaching is a direct refutation of the Greek philosophical understanding of creation, either of its immortality or of its necessity. This dogma also teaches that God creates not out of necessity from his essence, but out of his free will or energy.[89] If it is argued that the divine energy is the divine essence, which is maintained in the West through the understanding of God as *actus purus*, then a mediating presence must protect God's transcendence from creation. Otherwise pantheism results. According to Romanides, Aquinas (and Augustine) that there are divine ideas or archetypes in the mind of God (essence) that provide a model for creation. "Thus creation is a copy of the divine essence in that the archetypes are given a mode of being."[90] Ironically, for Aquinas God is only able to love the archetypes (Godself), not creation, for he is separated from creation by his creative energy and grace. Human beings participate in God through the *analogia entis* in the divine archetypes. However, this is always mediated by creation.[91] In order then to have knowledge of God, it becomes necessary to contemplate God through revelation and creation.

Thus, by not holding the distinction between essence and energy and adopting an essentialist understanding of God based on Greek philosophical conceptions, Western theology ends with either pantheism, if there is a real participation in the essence of God,

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[88]Romanides, *Ancestral Sin*, 51.

[89]Ibid., 53.

[90]Ibid., 54.

[91]Ibid., 63.

or in the inability to attain moral perfection and deification, because there is no real presence of God's Being in created grace. Furthermore, because essence and energy are conflated in the Being of God, God is understood to be *actus purus*, but according to Romanides, this too is problematic. First of all, it is impossible to know what the divine essence is, for it is unapproachable and unknowable by definition. Second, to argue that the divine essence is protected by understanding it as pure energy is to misunderstand the energies of God. If God is simple then how does he have multiple energies in his essence? Furthermore, Romanides argues that "the western theologians, resorting to Greek philosophical systems identified essence and energy in God and strive to avoid obvious pantheism by negating any real contact between God and the world."[92] In this system the only recourse is created grace which, from an Orthodox viewpoint, is not grace.

Furthermore, the confusion of essence and energies in western theology leads to a differing understanding of the relationship between the persons in the Godhead. The different understanding provides the possibility for the *filioque*. Because Augustine was not able to distinguish the persons from the essence (because of his philosophical presuppositions), and because he did not understand the distinction between essence and energies, Augustine identifies the Holy Spirit as "the love between the Father and the Son." According to the Greek Fathers, this love between the Father and the Son is none other than "divinity" (θεοτης), which is the common energy between the hypostases in the Godhead. By identifying the Spirit with the divine energy, from an Orthodox

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[92]John S. Romanides, *Encheiridion*, 57-58, quoted in Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 31.

perspective, the Holy Spirit loses his unique personhood and divine status. In order to defend the personhood of the Spirit, Augustine has to rely upon a double procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. However, because the Spirit is identified with the divine energy, the possibility of participation in the divine energy is removed as a possibility, thus making moot the ancient Christian understanding of deification through participation in God's energy.[93] Instead of participation in God, which would be pantheism from the western viewpoint, the person can only contemplate God or experience God vicariously through created grace, ruling out any possibility for immediate contact with the divine.

Therefore, according to Romanides, Augustine's theology is the locus by which the East and the West departed the common path of the early church. Augustine's platonic presuppositions regarding the nature of creation and of God led him to deny the foundational theology of the East, including the distinction between essence and energy in God and the possibility of actual participation in the Being of God. Additionally, failure to understand this essential aspect of God's Being created the possibility for the confusion of *hypostasis* with *energeia* in the Trinity. As a result, the Holy Spirit is equated with *theotes* or divinity and God's energy becomes his essence. God is therefore reconstrued as *actus purus*, which separates God from creation. In order to remedy this problem, the concept of created grace is developed to provide a point of contact between God and creation. But according to Romanides, this point of contact is not real, for God's Being does not come into creation. Significant in this regard is the doctrine of the Incarnation. While this analysis of Romanides's thought has not touched on this

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[93]Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 101-02.

doctrine, a comparison of Augustine's thought on the Incarnation with that of Romanides would be enlightening.

Augustine's theology provides the basis for the development of Western civilization. The ground is laid for the secularization of the world, for the emphasis on intellect and rationality, and for pietism in the individual pursuit of the knowledge of God as a satisfaction of the human quest. Yannaras will take up his critique against the West on these very issues. For Romanides, it is important to stress that his attack on Western tradition is simply for the purpose of 1) establishing the truthfulness of the Eastern tradition, which has been persecuted by the west in its history, and 2) establishing a basis for the reconstruction of Greek identity based on its Orthodox foundation. As he said in a letter to Florovsky, "But then someone had to drop a bomb here and make some noise because all they could listen to was Androutsos."[94] Romanides attack on the West allowed for the recognition of the pseudomorphosis that had taken place in Greek Orthodox thought. Only by undermining Augustine's position in the West was he able to clear the playing field in the East. In this regard, he was continuing the work of Florovsky in bringing about a return to the fathers of the church.

In place of Augustinian theology, Romanides offered the neptic theology of the Eastern tradition, especially the thought of Gregory Palamas. Following this tradition, Romanides articulates the three-stage process of spiritual development leading to deification, or as he put it, glorification. According to Romanides, glorification has been the tradition of the faith going back to the Old Testament prophets. The tradition that

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[94]John S. Romanides, to Father Florovsky, 2 Nov. 1957, Box 22, Folder 5, *Florovsky Archive*, Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton.

began with the experience of God in the Hebrew tradition continues in the church today.

"In exactly the same manner, the experience of glorification of the prophets, apostles, and

saints are expressed in linguistic forms, whose purpose is to act as a guide to the same

experience of glorification by their successors."[95] Because the aim has been

demonstrated in the lives of the saints going back to biblical times, Romanides asserts

that the East has a genuine empirical theology. By this he means,

> In the Orthodox patristic tradition, genuine spiritual experience is the
> foundation of dogmatic formulations which, in turn, are necessary guides
> for leading to glorification. Translated into the language of science, this
> would mean that verification by observation is expressed in descriptive
> symbols which, in turn, act as guides for others to repeat this same
> verification by observation. Thus, the observations of prior astronomers,
> biologists, chemists, physists, [sic] and doctors become the observations of
> their successors.[96]

He argues that the fathers of the church understood the faith to be a "positive science."

This science is tested in the recognition of the experience of grace in the lives of the

saints. The saints experienced the revelation of God in their hearts, not in the Scriptures.

He distinguishes Jesus as the Incarnate Word of God from the Scriptures, which are not

the Word of God, but are about the Word of God. Thus, contemplation of the Scriptures

does not lead to glorification; only the experience of God's deifying energy in the human

heart can bring this about. Spiritual authority in the church resides in the ecumenical

councils who under the leadership of glorified saints, formulated doctrine on the basis of

their theological, experiential, and empirical knowledge.[97]

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[95]Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism*, 39.

[96]Ibid.

[97]See John S. Romanides, "Church Synods and Civilizations," *Theologia* 63, no. 3 (1992): 423-50.

Desiring to follow this empirical science leads one to the *therapy of the soul*. Because the fall of humanity brought about the darkening of the noetic faculty of the soul, which led to a break in communion between God and humanity and between human beings. In fact, because of the darkening of this faculty of the soul, the selfishness of humanity and its utilitarianism toward God and others become the chief means of relating in a fallen world. *Eudaemonism* and *hedonism* become the means by which human beings relate.[98] In order to correct the malfunction of the noetic faculty, it must be illuminated with the deifying grace of God. For this to happen, "it is the task especially of the clergy to apply the cure of unceasing memory of God, otherwise called unceasing prayer or illumination" in therapy to the soul. Progressing through the stages of purification and illumination, the soul arrives at *theoria*, or the vision of God as unceasing remembrance of his presence. "In the state of *theoria* the noetic faculty is liberated from its enslavement to the intellect, passions, and environment, and prays unceasingly. It is influenced solely by this memory of God. Thus continual noetic prayer functions simultaneously with the normal activities of everyday life. It is when the noetic faculty is in such a state that man has become a temple of God."[99] Once *theoria* has occurred, the person is prepared for the final stage, which is also a gift from God: glorification, whereby the person receives a "vision of the glory of God." This vision is the divine light of Tabor, of which the disciples experienced at the Transfiguration of Christ.

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[98]Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism*, 47.

[99]Ibid., 49.

This therapeutic understanding of Christianity forms the basis of the hesychast method of experiencing the grace of God. According to Romanides, the theology of the West that developed after Augustine prevents such therapy from occurring. Instead of Christianity, Romanides argues that the West experiences the "sickness of religion." Instead of the real possibility for union with God leading to the glorification of the human being, which is the purpose of our creation according to Athanasius, Western man involves himself in a religion, whether it be in the various forms of Christianity or in materialism, that leads to death. The social and physical ills of Western man are because of this sickness of religion. In its place, Romanides offers the therapeutic method of the East.[100] It is this, which he offered to Greece beginning with the defense of his dissertation in 1957. His course of theology continues today in the work of his students, especially Fr. George Metallinos and Met. Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos, two clergymen associated with the neo-Orthodox movement in Greece today.

Human Rights, Religious Liberty, and Justice

The hesychast theology of Romanides influences his understanding pertaining to human rights, religious liberty, and justice. As there are three levels of the spiritual life, i.e. purification, illumination, and glorification, Romanides states that there are three

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[100]See John S. Romanides, "Religion is a neurological sickness and Orthdoxy its cure," in *Orthodoxy, Hellenism, Direction for the Third Millenium* (Holy Monastery Koutloumousiou, 1997), 663-95; "United to Modern Technology, the Sickness of Religion is Leading to Ecological Suicide, Happiness and Glorification Are Engaged in Their Primordial Combat, and the Science of Falsifying History for Controlling Others is still Quite Busy," Parts I-IV, available at http://www.romanity.org; "The Cure of the Neurological Sickness of Religion, the Hellenic Civilization of the Roman Empire, Charlemagne's Lie of 794, and His Lie Today," Parts I-IV, available at http://www.romanity.org; "The Sickness of Religion and Its Cure: A Medical Key to Church Reunion," available at http://www.romanity.org.

corresponding levels of justice and peace.[101] The first level of justice pertains to law, "whose purpose is a form of harmony in relations within families, tribes, nations, and in inter-tribal/national affairs." Such law functions as the means for preserving and protecting the relations that exist between persons and societal groupings. "Humankind as is or is supposed to be may be therein defined by religious or semi-scientific/philosophical or sociological or legal orientations to justice and peace."[102] This level of justice corresponds to an Augustinian approach to human flourishing. Law protects the people in their pursuit of happiness, including religious freedom. "Within such a framework religion is usually an extension of humankind's desire for security and happiness which becomes the main reason why a god or gods are psychologically necessary."[103] In this regard, human beings have adopted a sickness of religion. "Instead of being co-rulers with Christ in God's glory over the environment, they have become enslaved to it and use it as a thing to be exploited for whatever selfish ends they imagine are normal."[104]

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[101]John S. Romanides, "Justice and Peace in Ecclesiological Context," in *Come, Holy Spirit Renew the Whole Creation: An Orthodox Approach for the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches Canberra, Australia 6-21 February 1991*, ed. Gennadios Limouris (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1990), 234.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid. See also Ludwig Feuerbach, *Essence of Religion*, tr. Alexander Loos (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004); Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, tr. Katharine Jones (New York: Knopf Books, 1939).

[104]Romanides, "Justice and Peace in Ecclesiologial Context," 234-35. Sergius Bulgakov makes a similar point, arguing that the misuse of creation on the part of humanity demonstrates its enslavement to diabolical powers. See Sergius Bulgakov, *The Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*, tr. Catherine Evtuhov (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

The second level of justice is that of those who have been purified and illuminated. "Just human beings living in the peace of Christ are people who by reconciliation in Christ have become friends of God testified to by the gift of the Holy Spirit praying in their heart which makes them members of the body of Christ." In this state of reconciliation with God, the person does not need any ethical or legal system, for his acts are committed in selfless love toward God and neighbor. Because the heart has been purified of the passions, the person is able to love selflessly, not seeking his own end, but the end of the other. "Thus one moves from injustice to justice and from internal turbulence to peace with oneself and others."[105]

The highest level of peace and justice is the state of glorification, whereby the person experiences the vision of the glory of God.[106] In this state the passions are completely stilled, and the person is at perfect rest in God. Here the person is completely under the rule and will of God, living in perfect harmony with God and creation. Legal and ethical prescriptions are not necessary in such a society, for the people have been transformed into the very likeness of God.

While this seems like a utopian vision of society, Romanides argues that it is possible in the present time in and through the church. "Justice and peace are gifts of the Holy Spirit to the illuminated and glorified which in this life are neither guaranteed for permanence nor to be confused with baptism by water unto remission of sins."[107] Receiving these gifts heals the human being from the sickness that has corrupted his

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[105]Romanides, "Justice and Peace in Ecclesiological Context," 235.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid., 245.

being. "The medicine for this cure is the Holy Spirit's transformation of the blameful

passions into blameless passions by illumination and their abolition by glorification.

Thus from the viewpoint of the Church Fathers one can establish justice and peace in the

world by curing the inner person of all [passions]."[108] The church is the society of

people that have been transfigured by the deifying presence of Christ. This society is

able to bring about a transfiguration of the larger human society by its presence in its

midst. The church is to demonstrate the sickness of the world and provide its cure, thus

establishing peace and justice for human society.[109]

If this is the ideal state in the church, then what must the larger world, which does

not live according to the teachings of the church, do? According to Romanides,

> The idea that human rights are natural and an intrinsic part of nature in
> general, or human nature or society in particular is from a traditional
> Orthodox point of view highly unrealistic. The reason for this is that nature
> is in a continuous state of change and development. In particular, human
> nature in general is sub-normal, even though not corrupt in any Augustinian
> or Calvinistic sense. On the other hand, the normal state of human nature is
> involved in a never ending perfection so that there is no static state to serve
> as an immutable criterion of moral and legal rights and obligations.[110]

Romanides has no room for a natural right or natural law theory, for it is based upon a

philosophical understanding of God that is not shared with the Orthodox. As he states,

"Within Greek patristic thought there is no room for theories concerning *natural law* in

terms of physical, social, and moral laws being copies of eternal and immutable forms in

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[108]Ibid., 247.

[109]Ibid., 248-49.

[110]Quoted in Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, 136.

the mind of God."[111] Again, Romanides rejects the scholastic understanding of God and

the *analogia entis*. There is no similarity between God and creation. "It is impossible,

therefore, to ground physical, social, and moral forms in supposedly eternal and

immutable forms and laws, since forms belong only to the created realm of existence,

whose very nature is determined by motion and change, not because of any fall from

immutability, but because created so by God."[112]

However, if the concept of human rights is not based on nature, i.e. not on

universal philosophical archetypes rooted in the essence of God, but instead are

understood in light of human society, then Romanides has a much more positive view.

Romanides is not antinomian, rather law is needed in a pluralist society, not to protect the

person's pursuit of his selfish desires, but because of selfish desire itself, which is rooted

in the darkening of the noetic faculty of the soul. The church possesses its own internal

regulations and canons, which allow for its proper functioning apart from the state. The

state's legal structure and governance are separate from the church's internal workings.

Thus the church has no problem with the laws of the state. This separation between

church and state based upon separate governance presupposes, for Romanides, the

existence of a church in a pluralist society.[113]

Because God loves all equally regardless of social position, the church itself can

exist in a pluralist society. Romanides, therefore, is able to articulate religious freedom

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[111]John S. Romanides, "The Orthodox Churches on Church-State Relations and Religious Liberty," in *Readings on Church and State*, ed. James E. Wood, Jr. (Waco, TX: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University, 1989), 256.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy,* 137.

on the basis of the love of God. He writes, "This universal love of God together with the fact that true Christian faith is a free response to God's grace makes it imperative that Orthodox Christians not only tolerate other religious groups, but also recognize and guarantee their human rights to religious and civil liberties."[114] However, this does not mean then that the state must tolerate religious groups. "Religious liberty is no doubt a human right and a wonderful thing to have, if this be the will of God in any given situation, but martyrdom is after all one of the best and in many cases the highest expression of one's inner Christian freedom." Thus, religious freedom is not necessary for religious practice leading toward salvation.[115]

Furthermore, Romanides argues for the existential freedom of the church from the state all other human institutions. Because the church is an eschatological reality on earth, whereby people experience the deifying presence of God in and through the sacramental life, it "cannot be identified with the boundaries of nations, denominations, or the papacy. Even at the local level, the church is not simply the local society nominally connected by cultural background to the church. The gathered community *is* the church in process of becoming the church and those who gather unworthily and those who do not gather are not members of the church."[116] Because the church is not identified with any human institution, it is "not committed to any special form of political

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[114]Romanides, "The Orthodox Churches on Church-State Relations and Religious Liberty," 259.   A similar position is maintained by the hesychast saint, St Nil of Sora. See Gvosdev, *An Examination of Church-State Relations*, 34; G.P.A. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, vol. 2, *From the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1975), 265.

[115]Romanides, "The Orthodox Churches on Church-State Relations and Religious Liberty," 259.

[116]Ibid., 261.

institution, culture, or society." Her "orientation" is "toward the desert."[117] However,

finding itself in human society, it works toward its transfiguration in the glory of Christ.

Since it is not tied to any particular *ethnos*, the church "is a *universal nation* which exists

within many nations without being identified with any one or group of them. The church

has a right to be legally recognized as such, and not merely as one private association

among many."[118] Thus, for Romanides, the church is not limited by the social and

political conventions of modern society; rather, the church transcends such human

constructions by virtue of its eschatological reality as the Body of Christ on earth. In this

manner, then as the embodiment of Christ's love for humanity, the church serves human

society through providing a means of therapy for the sickness of the human soul. Only

through a radical transformation of each human being in the light of Christ is human

society transfigured. Until that time the church exists as a gathering of those who have

been transfigured by the deifying grace of Christ.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how hesychast theology informed and

influenced the thought of John Romanides. In particular, Romanides adopted hesychast

thought of the fourteenth century to challenge the philosophical presuppositions of the

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[117]Ibid. See also, Athanassios N. Papathansiou, "The Flight as Fight: The Flight into the Desert as a Paradigm for the Mission of the Church in History and Society," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43, nos. 1-4 (1998): 167-84.

[118]Ibid. Here Romanides expresses the eschatological reality of the church in its universality. This informs his understanding of Romanity, but he is forced to maintain a historical reality for it, so as not to be induced to gnosticism. It may be that Romanides's thought on this could be developed in understanding Romanity as the culture of those who have been eschatologically transfigured here on earth, something which he is very close to saying. In this regard, Romanity is very similar to monasticism, which Florovsky had articulated as the basic form of the Christian life.

theology of the dominant theology in Greece. Challenging the thought of Androutsos and Trembelas as well as the pietism that had developed around it, Romanides sought to remove the western theological influences, freeing Orthodox theology from its "pseudomorphosis" and western captivity. By articulating a traditional Orthodox theology based on the fathers of the church, Romanides believed that he was continuing the work of his theological mentor Georges Florovsky in order to bring about a theological and spiritual revival based on traditional Orthodox spirituality, especially hesychasm.

In order to remove the western influences in Orthodox theology, Romanides had to argue against the father of western theology, Augustine. Romanides believed that the problems of western society could be laid at the feet of this fourth century church father. Romanides argued that Augustine's Neoplatonic philosophical presuppositions prevented him from understanding the paramount distinction in Orthodox theology: the distinction between essence and energy in God. By failing to adopt this teaching, either out of ignorance or misunderstanding, Augustine set the stage for a theological division between Eastern and Western Christendom. The distinction between the essence and energy of God provided for the protection of God's transcendence while also allowing a real participation of creation in the Being of God. However, Augustine's essentialism prevented him from holding this distinction. As a result, the Being of God is understood as *actus purus*, or pure energy, equating the essence and the energy. Because creation cannot participate in the essence of God, a created intermediary must be posited in order to allow for the working of God in the world. This is accomplished, according to Romanides, first by positing archetypes in the mind of God by which God creates. These

universal forms allow creation to participate in the mind of God as copies of these ultimate realities. Second, the idea of created grace must be developed in order to allow for the human appropriation of God's saving act in the Person of Christ. However, from an Orthodox understanding, each of these answers to the problem of the relationship of God with creation are a diminishment from the doctrine of salvation as deification in the East. In fact, deification becomes an impossibility in the West because of the lack of distinction between the essence and energies of God.

Furthermore, Augustine's inability to make this distinction leads to the confusion in the Trinity between the energy and the hypostasis. The Holy Spirit becomes associated with the love or divinity that exists between the Father and the Son. The Spirit becomes that which unites them. With this understanding, then, of the relationship among the Persons of the Trinity, the possibility of the double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son is articulated. This becomes doctrine in the West that is then utilized to split the church for political reasons beginning in the ninth century.

Romanides then develops his Romeic Thesis, whereby the Roman people become *ethnoi*, nations. Charlemagne, desiring to be emperor of the Romans, realizes that he cannot challenge the imperial claims of the true emperor in Constantinople. In order to become emperor of the Romans, according to Romanides, Charlemage articulates the fiction that the Romans in Constantinople are not Romans, but are really Greeks, since they speak Greek and not Latin. Furthermore, because the Greeks do not hold to the *filioque* they are heretics and thus are truly Greeks. The true Romans are the Christians of the West. Eventually, this theory becomes reality in the papal excommunication of the patriarch of Constantinople in 1054.

Charlemagne's lie does not end, though, in the middle ages; it continues into the present day. The Romans of the Rum Millet, after achieving their freedom, adopted the false identity of being Hellenes, which was imposed from without by the Western Powers through philhellenism as well as the imposition of Western political and social institutions. The Romans, which included all of the Balkan peoples, lost their identity as the various nationalities that were constructed in the nineteenth century.

Romanides's Romeic Thesis is an attempt to offer an alternative vision of the identity of the Balkan peoples. He seeks their return to their authentic identity as Romans. Ironically, as he argues, the Romans were truly Greeks. Thus, Romans equals Greeks equals Orthodox Christians. This interpretation then allows for a crypto-nationalism to develop from Romanides's thought, although, as I have shown, he was very much against any idea of ethno-religious nationalism. What Romanides is articulating is the return to the universalism of the East Roman Empire in its religious understanding.

In this regard, Romanides's Romeic thesis is important because it is an attempt to formulate a modern Greek identity. This constructed identity is based upon a synthesis of Romanity with hesychasm and a removal of what he calls the "neograic" element in the identity. Romanides desires that the Romeic identity become the basis for NeoHellenism, allowing for an opening of the Greek identity to the larger Balkan nationalities through the common Orthodox (Roman) element.

The neo-Orthodox movement adopts this programmatic return to the Romeic identity. Desiring to remove all things western from their culture, the return to this identity along with its Orthodox culture reflected through hesychasm, becomes the chief

political aim of the movement. Romanides's thesis, therefore, has become the guiding force behind this movement. Together with the political hesychasm of Christos Yannaras, the neo-Orthodox have articulated an alternative Greek Orthodox identity vis-à-vis the West.

The question that Romanides's thesis raises for the modern Greeks is whether hesychasm as a political ideology can work in the modern world. The bifurcation of Greek identity has hindered, according to certain social scientists, the formation of a viable civil society in Greece. Would the adoption of the Romeic identity with its hesychast religious basis provide a means for the modernization of Greek society? Does such an alternative represent another modernity for the Greek people? I do not think so. Hesychasm as a religious worldview does not allow for the secular understanding of the world, which has fostered civil society. Hesychasm is an integral ideology that incorporates all of life into the religion. Such a worldview is radically juxtaposed to modern liberal secular society.

Furthermore, the adoption of this worldview for modern Greek identity would segregate those Greeks who are not Orthodox from being Roman. It is not possible for Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant Greeks to be Romans by definition. Only Orthodox can be Roman and Greek. This prevents, then, the possibility of a modern liberal state based on Romeic identity that allows for equality of all people under the law. In this respect, the acceptance of this ideology would entail the formation of a society similar to that of either the Byzantine Empire or the Ottoman Empire.

In this regard, while Romanides states that the ecclesiology of the church does not promote any one form of political governance, the Romeic identity, if it is to become the

identity of the modern Greek people, reflects the view of the Roman polity from which it emerged. Does Orthodox Christianity depend upon the political institution of the empire for its own self-understanding? This question is beyond the scope of this work, but it is an important question that needs to be researched.

If Orthodox Christianity expressed politically and culturally as Romanism is allowed to be one identity among many in the Greek nation-state, then the adoption of this identity by whosoever desires to do so is unproblematic. In this regard, it is equated with becoming an Orthodox Christian. Orthodox Christians can be Romans in the Republic of Greece. With the equation of Romanity with Christianity, then, this identity is one that is chosen by those who so choose to do so, much like that of the ancient Christian world or like that of contemporary monasticism. Romanity continues to live in the Orthodox churches and monasteries around the world. Do they represent a transnational political force? Not really, for the church is called to be holy, i.e. separate from the world. Romanides's understanding of religious freedom and pluralism, then, prevents the possibility of the establishment of a nation-state founded upon a religious basis. Romanity as Christianity can only exist within nation-states, although transnationally.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Political Hesychasm of Christos Yannaras

Introduction

According to all critics, the most important theologian in the neo-Orthodox

current of ideas is Emeritus Professor Christos Yannaras of the Panteion University in

Athens, Greece. Andrew Louth, professor of patristics and Orthodox theology at the

University of Durham, has stated, "Christos Yannaras . . . is without a doubt the most

important living Greek Orthodox theologian."[1] According to Vasilios Makrides,

Yannaras is the first to begin the "systematic effort to find the crucial elements

distinguishing the Greek Byzantine from the Western European philosophy and

tradition."[2] In addition, as Louth comments, Yannaras became a "public figure" in

becoming "one of the leading representatives of 'Neo-Orthodoxy.'"[3] But outside of

Orthodox theological circles, Yannaras is relatively unknown. He is widely published

with over thirty-five monographs and additional articles in several major European

journals. He is also a regular contributor to the Greek daily newspapers, *To Vima* and

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[1]Andrew Louth, "Introduction," to Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, tr. Haralambos Ventis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 1.

[2]Vasilios N. Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: the Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 146.

[3]Louth, "Introduction," 2.

Kathimerini.[4] According to Louth, the main reason why Yannaras is not known in the

West is the simple fact that his works have not been translated from the Greek.[5] Because

Yannaras has not been translated or widely read, no serious scholarship in the West has

engaged his thought. He has been critiqued and accused of the Nicolaitan heresy by the

monk Theoklitos Dionysiatos.[6] However, this accusation and attack on Yannaras and the

neo-Orthodox has not been given much credence.[7] Other criticisms of the movement by

respected theologians such as Petros Vassiliades of the University of Thessaloniki have

offered alternatives to the current of ideas put forward by Yannaras and the neo-

Orthodox.[8]

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid. This lack of translation is being remedied by the publishing of Holy Cross
Press in Boston, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press in New York, and T&T Clark in
Edinburgh, which have provided the chief translations of several of his most important
works.

[6]Theoklitos Dionysiatos, *The Heresy of the Neo-Orthodox: The Neo-Nicolaitism
of Christos Yannaras* (Athens, 1988); *The Nicolaitan Error of the Neo-Orthodox, with
Critique of Yannaras* (Athens, 1989). A similar critique has been offered by Vasilios
Voloudake, *Orthodoxy and Ch. Yannaras* (Athens: Ekdoseis Ypakoe, 1993). See also
Pere Patric, *La Doctrine des Neo-orthodoxes sur l'Amour* (Paris). This criticism is
directed chiefly against his work *The Freedom of Morality*, which articulates a personal
and ecclesial understanding of morality against any sort of legalistic interpretation.
Social and moral conservatives in the Church of Greece denounced the work
immediately. See Louth, "Introduction," 1.

[7]Yannis Spiteris acknowledges the critique but certainly does not give it much
sympathy. He notes that the Church of Greece has kept silent about the charge of heresy
regarding Yannaras. See Yannis Spiteris, *La Teologia Ortodossa Neo-Greca* (Bologna:
Edizioni Dehoniane, 1992), 316-17. According to Louth, the Ecumenical Patriarch
Bartholomew has been a supporter of Yannaras. See Louth, "Introduction," 2.

[8]Petros Vassiliadis, "Eucharistic and Therapeutic Spirituality," *The Greek
Orthodox Theological Review* 42 (nos. 1-2, 1997): 1-24.

Christos Yannaras was born in Athens in 1935. As a youth he had ardently joined the Zoe brotherhood. However, in the 1960s under the influence of the important lay Christian thinker Dimitrios Koutroumbis, he left the group due to its "moralism and pietism" which were viewed as inauthentic to Orthodoxy. From 1964-1967 he edited the journal *Synoro* while also studying in Bonn, Germany. It was in Germany that he came under the spell of Heidegger. In 1967 he began a doctoral program at the Sorbonne, which he completed in 1970 with a dissertation on St. John Climacus. The dissertation was published in 1971 under the title, *The Metaphysics of the Body*. Concurrently, he defended a doctoral dissertation at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki entitled, *The Ontological Content of the Theological Concept of the Person*, which was published in 1970. In 1967 following his studies in Bonn, he published a little book entitled *The Theology of the Absence and Unknowability of God*, which has since been translated into English with the title, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite.*[9] Louth states,

> "What Yannaras found in Heidegger was an analysis of the development of western philosophy and theology that struck deep chords with his own perception–as one steeped in the patristic tradition of philosophical theology–of the difference between the Greek East and the Latin West; a difference sealed by the Great Schism that separated Latin Christendom under the papacy from the authentic Christianity preserved by the Greek East, and only further confirmed by the divisions in western Christianity itself as a result of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.[10]

The link that he found with Heidegger was in his understanding of the concept of "being" that he had recovered from the Pre-Socratic philosopher Herakleitos. Having lost this concept of "being," according to Heidegger, the West had drifted away from ontological

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[9]Louth, "Introduction," 2-3.

[10]Ibid., 3.

truth. Yannaras concurred, for he had identified this concept of "being" with the

Orthodox theological and ascetic tradition that had inherited it from the Pre-Socratic

philosophers.[11] I will explore this development in his critique of the West later in this

chapter.

Influenced by Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky, and the Russian diaspora

theologians, Yannaras can be understood as attempting to fulfill the call that Florovsky

issued for the return of theology and the life of the church to the mind of the fathers.

Believing that the contemporary Orthodox world has experienced a pseudomorphosis that

threatens the very existence of that world, Yannaras offers a critique of the West and a

program of returning to the patristic world of Byzantium. As Louth comments, neo-

Orthodoxy as presented by Yannaras seeks "to transcend the split between 'Romaic' and

'Hellene' and create a sense of Greek identity over against the West…that [draws] both

on the Classical 'Hellenic' past and the spiritual tradition of Greek Orthodoxy, not least

as it is manifest in the monastic tradition of Mount Athos."[12] While Romanides focused

on the historical-theological method for his critique and the spiritual tradition for the

answer, Yannaras utilizes western philosophy and theology, particularly the

existentialism of Martin Heidegger, to provide an inside critique of western thought. He

then follows the spiritual patristic tradition of hesychasm, like Romanides, to offer an

alternative to the West. Yannaras offers a political hesychasm similar to that of

fourteenth-century Byzantium as the alternative to the modern, liberal, secular state of

Greece.

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[11]Ibid.

[12] Louth, "Introduction," 2.

In this chapter, I will present the political hesychasm of Christos Yannaras. Due to the prolific nature of his writing–over thirty-five books plus articles not generally available in the United States–I will limit my elucidation to a few of his chief works that will enable to present an overview of his thought. A monograph on Yannaras's thought has yet to appear. However, before presenting his positive theology, it is important to understand his critique of the West. This will focus on his use of Heidegger and his attacks on individualism, religion, and pietism. The reader should notice some of the similarities between Romanides and Yannaras, for they were associates in the recovery of the authentic Orthodox tradition in modern Greece.

The "Clash of Civilizations" and the Problem of the West

In 1993 Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington published his famous article "The Clash of Civilizations?" arguing that conflict in the post-communist world would center around cultural and civilizational differences.[13] He followed this most controversial article with the book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.[14] In both the article and the book, Huntington argued that Western civilization had been shaped by the great intellectual developments of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment deriving from the acceptance of Hellenic philosophy, Roman law, and Christianity.[15] In his book, Huntington made the controversial and audacious claim, "Those with Western Christian heritages are making progress toward economic

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[13]Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer, 1993): 22-49.

[14]Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996).

[15]Ibid., 69; Christos Yannaras, *Culture, the Central Problem of Politics* (Athens: Indiktos, 1997), 11.

development and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political

development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim

republics are bleak."[16] Furthermore, he *orientalized* the Orthodox nations, particularly

Greece, declaring them "not part of Western civilization."[17] While Islamic and Orthodox

civilizations inherited the same elements of the classical world, as the West, it was

"nowhere near to the same degree" as the West.[18]

> Yannaras takes exception to Huntington's thesis. He states,

> I would remind something to the professor of Harvard that the first books of
> Aristotle were translated into Latin not until the middle of the twelfth
> century. That Christianity in the West, which he rightly regarded it as the
> second mark of its self-identity of civilization (and of it yielded the
> development of 'sense of community' and 'sense of difference' of the West
> 'from the Turks, the Mauritanians, the Byzantines and others') is itself that
> which gave birth firstly the phenomenon of totalitarianism, together with
> the making of faith as an ideology, the authoritarian imposition and the
> unlawfulness of ethics. That westerners first and foremost the design that
> they admitted today as basically the cause of the Schism (which cut off in
> the eleventh century western Christianity from the unified up to then body
> of Christendom) the weakness of the underdevelopment in this age of
> people of the West to keep up with the level of Hellenic expression and
> practice.[19]

The West, then, while holding itself to be the most developed civilization of the modern

world, by its own admittance, has through its ideology created the ideologies that have

dominated the world. In his little book, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe,* he

argues that there indeed is a clash of civilizations, but not what Huntington believes.

Instead, the clash between East and West is a struggle between Christianity (Orthodoxy)

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[16]Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 29.

[17]Ibid., 162.

[18]Ibid., 70.

[19]Yannaras, *Culture, the Central Problem of Politcs*, 12.

and materialism (West); it is not a clash between two forms of Christianity, but between Orthodoxy and the illegitimate child of Western Christianity.[20]

Consequently, what Huntington understands as the defining characteristics of modern society is antithetical to the historical realities of the Orthodox people. These "characteristics" of modern society, pluralism, tolerance of difference, and recognition of human rights, are based on philosophical and historical realities that did not occur in the East. Yannaras states,

> It is crystal clear that Huntington employs as his criteria of cultural difference among Europe's *religious* traditions the very products of European man's *anti-religious* rebellion. All of us know that individual rights, political liberalism, utilitarian rationalism, economic development and progress are the most representative products of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, products of modern Europe's zealous insistence on naturalism (physiocracy) as a substitute for Christian ontology, cosmology and anthropology. It is for this reason that we say that Huntington employs Historical Materialism as the criterion for determining the cultural differences represented by the 'rival' religious traditions of Europe.[21]

Yannaras places the blame for the problem of historical materialism essentially in the philosophical and historical development of the Western Christian tradition following Augustine. "In my definite judgement, the crucial historical factor was the radical transformation, both demographic and cultural, of western Europe which began at the end of the fourth century and continued until the end of the sixth century." With the invasion of the barbarian Germanic tribes, a radical change in demography and philosophical orientation affects western Europe. Yannaras expresses his elitism, "But what could these thoroughly uneducated people understand of the Good News proclaimed in the ecclesial experience that during that period was expressed–through centuries-old,

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[20]Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe* (Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2003), 10-11.

[21]Ibid.

breathtaking theological elaboration–by means of the crowning achievements of the philosophical language of the Greeks?" Thus, the gospel had to be "simplified" for the masses. The church utilized the "legal-juridical tradition of conquered Rome" to express this simplification in order to control the invading hordes. "Thus, of all the giants of ecclesial theology, only the then-insignificant Augustine (who did not know Greek and, as a result, had simplistically given a legalistic interpretation to the Christian teaching) was chosen as the highest spiritual authority in the new European West."[22]

Charlemagne's court advisors knew that with the establishment of an empire, the emperor needed a religious foundation. They had been educated in the Roman texts, especially Cicero, and thus, they articulated a *Religio Imperii*.[23] The imperial religion was formulated on the basis of Augustine's political theology expressed in the *City of God*, which articulated the distinction between the two cities. Additionally, Charlemagne's advisors "found in the indigenous and purely western Augustine that differentiation of Christian teaching, which could be used as the foundation for the religious, cultural and political differentiation of an 'empire of the German nation' from the only existing imperial formation of that period, the hellenized Roman Empire of the New Rome-Constantinople." The western Augustine provided the theological distinction

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[22]Ibid., 13.

[23]Ibid., 14; Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, tr. Keith Schram (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 155. See also, Philip Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West: A Study in the Christian Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959). Sherrard demonstrates the important use of Cicero and the adoption of Roman philosophy by the philosophers of the Middle Ages. For Cicero, see Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods and On Divination*, tr. C.D. Yonge (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997). Cicero articulated the basis for the necessity of an imperial religion. This was incorporated into the political theology of the Middle Ages.

that the Germans and Franks needed to form an empire distinct from the Roman Empire of the East. They then conducted a systematic attack on the theology of the East utilizing Augustinian categories of thought. This assault is reflected in "ten known books with the common title *Contra Errores Graecorum* (*Against the Errors of the Greeks*)."[24] These attacks upon the theology of the Greeks during the Middle Ages were attempts to demonstrate politically why the Greeks were not Romans, while Charlemagne's court could declare itself to be a continuation of the Roman Empire in a new Christian sense, i.e., the Holy Roman Empire. With this political development, Christendom is divided officially in the Schism of 1054, resulting in the development of what Yannaras calls the "West."

What does Yannaras mean by this term, "West?" First, it is not a geographical term opposed to the Christian East, Middle East, or the Orient. Rather "the terms 'West' and 'Western man' represent a basic human *posture* toward the world and toward history, a posture which has developed during the last centuries, growing out of the liberal spirit of the Renaissance and the rise of the positive sciences and technology."[25] The roots of this posture can be traced to Western scholasticism, with its attempt to exhaust the knowable through the intellect and its separation of natural and supernatural realms. "In the end the boundary is set between the divine and the human nature, a consequence which neglects the unity of the two natures into one *person*, that is to say, the possibility of personal *participation* in , and not merely logical 'clarification' of, the divine truth

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[24]Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, 14.

[25]Christos Yannaras, "Orthodoxy and the West," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 17 (spring 1972): 115.

concerning God."[26] This bifurcation of reality between sacred and secular truth results in man attempting to understand his experience as an individual, not in communion with the whole of reality. Thus man becomes identified as the rational animal, albeit individualistically. Being becomes associated with substance and thus becomes the source or cause of beings. God as Being becomes the First Cause and the source of all existence. However, he is exiled into the heavens separating his existence from that of man.[27]

In order to bridge the gap between God's transcendence and the world, the West had to result to ethical systems. In Kant's system, God becomes the source of pure reason and the telos of the ethical act.[28] It is in Kant that the West saw the final development of its posture: ethical individualism. "Christianity for the most part is an individual ethic–the most perfect, of course, as compared with previous ethics–which finds its high point in the command to 'love one another,' that is to say, in the individual's obligation to show altruism, brotherhood and impeccable social relations."[29] Christianity, according to Yannaras, has become a religion of ethics. Rather than be concerned with truth and dogma, Christianity today is more concerned with social action.

The Western attitude can best be summarized as the following: "the priority of the conceptual explication of revealed truth; the dividing boundary between the transcendent and the worldly; the will to dominate nature and history; the 'banishment' of God to an

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[26]Ibid., 116.

[27]Ibid., 117.

[28]See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Allen W. Wood (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

[29]Yannaras, "Orthodoxy and the West," 119.

empirically unreachable realm; the separation of religion from life and the reduction of religion to symbols; the elimination of ontology, that is to say, dogma, and its substitution by Ethics."[30] Therefore, the West is not concerned with authentic human existence, but rather simply being a good person, regardless of truthfulness. The setting aside of metaphysics by the Western tradition has led it down the path to nihilism and the rise of Nietzsche's *der Übermensch*.[31]

In Yannaras's analysis of the Western tradition, he points to one essential development that led to modern nihilism: the loss of the relational understanding of being. Yannaras agrees with Heidegger that Nietzsche's pronouncement that "God is dead" is essentially correct. Nietzsche was simply proclaiming that "the Christian God, the God of western metaphysics, is but a dead fashioning of the mind, hardly more than a mere idea, an abstract concept." Nietzsche had recognized that God did not really matter for European life simply because he was a formal idea, not a living entity. "The place of God is empty in the West–God is an absence."[32] Nietzsche's realization then leads to the

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[30]Ibid.

[31]Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, tr. Walter Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967); *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: H. Regnery Press, 1959); *On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swenson (Indianapolis, IN: Hacket Publishing Company, 1998). See also, Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vols. 1-2, tr. David F. Krall (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); *Off the Beaten Track*, tr. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).   Paul Johnson has demonstrated this problem historically. See Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society, 1815-1830* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991); *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

[32]Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, tr. Haralambos Ventis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005), 21.

destruction of the idols that had been created by the western mind; however, he offers

nothing to replace those idols.[33]

The philosophical construct for these idols emerged in the Middle Ages in

medieval scholasticism. With the import of Aristotelian categories, God becomes

distanced from the world by becoming either the "first cause" or the foundation of

"ethics." "In both cases the existence of God is a conceptual necessity, secured by

demonstrative argument, but unrelated to historical experience and the existential

condition of human beings."[34]

Rational demonstration of the existence of God rather than the simple recognition

of his existence through human experience becomes the western scholastic method. This

methodology, however, ends with God simply being a construct of human logical

rationality, with having little if any relationship to creation. Descartes represents this

philosophical development. Yannaras writes,

> From the conceptual viewpoint of my own finite existence and intellect, I
> deduce the idea of a single perfect existence and intellect–of a single being
> that comprises all the perfections of existence and intellect. And since
> intellectual apprehension is the sole means of ascertaining the truth, we
> demonstrate the existence of God by conceiving the idea of God. With the
> intellect we conceive of God as a perfect being, consequently his existence
> is comprised in that idea in the same way as there is comprised in the idea
> of a triangle the truth that the sum of its angles equals two right angles, if
> not more evidently.[35]

For Yannaras, Descartes's methodology is simply the outgrowth of the philosophical

presuppositions of the western tradition laid down by Augustine and observed by such

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[33]Ibid., 22. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, tr. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

[34]Yannaras, *On the Absence and the Unknowability of God*, 22.

[35]Ibid., 23.

thinkers as "Campanella, Anselm of Canterbury, Hugh of Saint-Victor, Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas."[36]

This post-Augustinian philosophical tradition is based on the transformation of *logos* into *ratio*. The Greek concept of *logos* implies a relational, experiential understanding of the truth.[37] Western *ratio*, however, comes to mean the individual capability to arrive at a comprehensive exhaustive understanding of truth. This is because of the *analogia entis* where the human mind is understood as being a copy of the divine mind at a lesser level.[38] What, then, this does for the understanding of God is that God becomes an object of the mind, rather, than a personal reality. God becomes "the product or result of a cognitive self-sufficiency, guaranteed for the subject by *ratio*, outside or beyond the experience of reality or life, where everything is the experience of

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[36]Ibid. See also Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962), 46. Michael Hanby has argued that while Augustine had an important influence on Descartes, the individualism of Descartes derives from Stoicism as inherited through the monastic tradition of John Cassian and Ignatius of Loyola. According to Hanby, Augustine actually argued against this Christian Soicism. See "Augustine and Descartes: An Overlooked Chapter in the Story of Modern Origins," *Modern Theology* 19 (October 2003): 455-82; *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[37]Wlad Godzich has argued that the ancient Greek understanding of *theoria* had a social context. Truth was communal, shaped by the common experience of the *polis*. This is distinguished from *aesthesis,* which was private opinion. *Aesthesis* would at times come into conflict with *theoria*, especially if the proponent was attempting to change the *theoria*. A good example is the conflict with Socrates with the Athenians. See Wlad Godzich, "Introduction," to Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). John Breck explains the same phenomenon in regards to the experience of truth in Orthodoxy. See John Breck, *The Power of the Word: In the Worshiping Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986). Anthony Ugolnik also points to the issue comparing it with what he calls the individualistic interpretation of Scripture of the West, which he accuses Augustine of beginning. See Anthony Ugolnik, *The Illuminating Icon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 47-52.

[38]Yannaras, *On the Absence and the Unknowability of God*, 23.

relationship." Nietzsche realized what Descartes had accomplished: "logical proof for the existence of God refutes God as an objective, real presence."[39] Because the human mind is able to construct the existence of God by logic, there is no necessity for God's existence.[40] However, by positing this power on the part of the human being, he is superior to God, thus he the *Superman*.

With the further development of rationalism ("atheistic theism") in the thought of Spinoza and Leibniz, metaphysics is associated with physics. Yannaras writes, "With the significant, or rather commanding, figures of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, the so-called 'natural theology' of medieval scholasticism, that is to say, the transformation of theology into a rationalistically structured *scientia*, reaches its historical conclusion and is completed by the consolidation of rationalism as the exclusive entry to metaphysics."[41] With this emphasis on rationality as the means to establish truth, positive empiricism develops in the thought of "Hobbes, Locke and Hume, transferring the source of authority from individual intellect to individual sense-experience–captive to the same scholastic demand that all *auctoritas* be exercised subjectively."[42] With the arrival of positive empiricism, metaphysics no longer has command over knowledge of the truth,

[39]Ibid., 24.

[40]In reconstructing the ontological argument of Anselm, Kant demonstrated that "existence" was not necessary. See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). Instead, God is posited by the human mind as a necessary ground for ethics. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*.

[41]Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 26-27.

[42]Ibid., 27.

for what is truth is verifiable sense experience. Metaphysics, then, no longer serves as a means to truth, for metaphysical reality is not verifiable scientifically.

In addition to the development of scholastic theology in the West, Pietism, as a reaction against scholasticism, also led to the demise of metaphysics by the promotion of religious experience over dogmatic truth. Pietism also contributed to the emphasis on the individual in western society. Pietism was a movement that began in the Lutheran churches at the end of the eighteenth century. "Its aim was to stress 'practical piety,' as distinct from the polemical dogmatic theology to which the Reformation had initially given a certain priority."[43] Contrasting itself against the intellectualism of scholastic theology, the Pietists emphasized practical piety, that is, "good works, daily self-examination for progress in virtues according to objective criteria, daily study of the Bible and practical application of its moral teaching, intense emotionalism in prayer, a clear break with the 'world' and worldly practices (dancing, the theatre, non-religious reading); and tendencies towards separatism, with the movement holding private meetings and distinguishing itself from the 'official' Church."[44] This movement placed emphasis on the individual and his salvation understood in moral terms. "It is individual piety and the subjective process of 'appropriating salvation' made absolute and autonomous, and it transfers the possibility of man's salvation to the realm of individual moral endeavor."[45] Furthermore, by focusing on man's moral improvement, "pietism fostered a conception of religion as more 'social', marked by practical benevolent

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[43]Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, tr. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 119.

[44]Ibid., 120.

[45]Ibid., 121.

activities, and presented the Christian gospel as more like an ethical code with consequences for society."[46]

Pietism, thus, produces the Prussian philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who articulates a philosophy that essentially makes Christianity an ethical system for the moral person to follow. No longer is Christianity concerned with relationship to truth and experience of it, rather, the person now must be concerned with ethical relating to others based on the presupposition that God is the basis of morals. Of course, this cannot be proven, but God's existence must be a necessary postulate for ethical action.[47]

Kant's philosophy develops in the thought of German idealism, especially in the works of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, but also in German Romanticism in the thought of Herder and Schlegel. Yannaras argues that with Hegel religion and philosophy become one and the same, for they each have a common object: the knowledge of the Absolute.[48] "The only difference lies in the means: philosophy uses conceptual definitions, religion mythical representation. But the end sought in both cases is the 'knowledge of God', the highest level of human self-consciousness and self-

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[46]Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 32.

[47]Ibid., 32-33. See Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, tr. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper, 1960). In addition to Kant's work, it is important to mention that of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, who also articulated ethical understandings of Christianity. Yannaras does not mention these important thinkers for their understanding of Christianity in the West, but their influence, especially in America, makes their thought especially relevant to Yannaras's critique. See John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity: As Delivered in the Scriptures*, ed. George W. Ewing (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Pub., 1998); Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels: "The Philosophy of Jesus" and "The Life and Morals of Jesus"*, ed. Dickinson W. Adams (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[48]Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 37.

awareness of the Absolute. '*Gott ist es, der im Philosophen philosophiert*' ('It is God who philosophizes in the philosopher')–which means finally that it is the human mind that is raised to the dimensions of the Divine."[49] With the "Death of God" and the elevation of the human person to the divine, humanity has arrived at Modernity.[50]

<p align="center">*The Political Theology of Christos Yannaras*</p>

In a short explanatory article written in 1983, Yannaras provides the definition of what an Orthodox political theology should be: "I mean by this a political theory and action that is not limited merely to social utility or to the conventional rules of human relations–even if these are more efficient–*but has as its goal the truth of man and the authenticity of his existence*."[51] Politics and theology are inseparable, for both deal with the meaning of man and how he relates in corporate society. Indeed, "Politics can be considered a chapter of theology–a true 'political theology'–when it takes upon itself serving man according to his nature and his truth; and consequently serving the political nature of humanity–i.e., the power of love, which is at the heart of existence and which is the condition of the true communion of persons, the true city, the true πολις."[52] Because politics concerns human relations in society, it is necessarily joined with an understanding of the human person. If it is to relate to a true understanding of humanity, politics must be associated with philosophical and theological understandings of the

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[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., 45.

[51]Christos Yannaras, "A Note on Political Theology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27 (spring 1983): 54, emphasis added.

[52]Ibid.

person. The question that Yannaras raises to Western liberalism is whether the liberal model authentic to human being according to his ontology.

Yannaras's political theology, therefore, should be distinguished from that of the West. He states that in the West political theology is associated with Marxist and NeoMarxist political theories. Furthermore, such political theology is an attempt to root itself in the "pure theoretical–'epistemic' effort of [arriving at the] political hermeneutics of the biblical community." Western political theology finds in itself the "classic problem of Western Christianity: the polarization between the transcendent and the immanent, the abstract idealism of a unified ruling metaphysic and the immediate affirmation and worth of the material goods of life."[53]   Instead of offering a political theology that is based on such polarization, Yannaras "wants to array a complete knowledge or hermeneutic of this term, 'political theology', that will be able to result in the truth of the Eastern–Orthodox ecclesiastical life and Tradition."[54] He continues,

> I believe that such a complete understanding or hermeneutic presupposes
> not only the truth and the criteria of Orthodox Theology, but also an
> understanding of politics radically different from that which is established
> in the boundaries of west European civilization. I speak about a political
> theory and practice, which is not exhausted in the community, merely,
> utilized for a convenient, even efficient, regulation of human thoughts, but
> aims at the truth of humanity and the existence of the most genuine.[55]

For Yannaras such a political theology is simply a description of true ecclesial being. In and through the ecclesia the person is recognized. "The Church recognizes the truth of the human being in the Trinity of the prototype. The experience of the personal revelation of the Triune God points to the knowledge of the human as an 'icon' of God.

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[53]Christos Yannaras, *Chapters of Political Theology* (Athens: Papazese, 1976), 9.

[54]Ibid., 10.

[55]Ibid., 11.

Only this experience is able to reveal the truth of the communion of persons as ontological fact, therefore as the 'natural' way of existence."[56]

Yannaras's understanding of the human person is rooted in the fourth-century Trinitarian debates within the church.[57] In the attempts to come to a common expression of faith in God as three person, the Cappadocian fathers, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, were able to redefine the Greek philosophical term, *hypostasis*, which in Aristotelian thought was equated with the substance of a thing, to the definition of the person. This change in terminology is significant, for it enables the concept of the person to be equated with being-itself rather than being as a category for understanding a particular being. Personhood, thus, constitutes being.[58] In the Trinity, there is no essence of divinity from which the three persons derive their being; rather, the source of being in the Trinity is the person of God the Father. This move to the person enabled the defense of the uniqueness and complete freedom of the persons in the Godhead. God is not bound by any necessity of divine nature; rather, his person exists in a mode of complete ontological freedom, allowing him to determine his nature.

> "It is precisely as personal existence, as distinctiveness and freedom from any predetermination by essence or nature, that God constitutes being and is the hypostasis of being."[59]

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[56]Ibid.

[57]See Christos Yannaras, *The NeoHellenic Identity*, 3rd ed. (Athens: Gregory, 1989), 98-100.

[58]John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 39.

[59]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 17. Yannaras was greatly influenced by the personalist ontology of Vladimir Lossky. See chapter five for a discussion of Lossky's thought.

This theological excursus in Greek Trinitarian thought is necessary for Yannaras's understanding of the human person. The Christian understanding of the person is rooted in the first chapter of Genesis where it is stated that God creates man and woman in the image and likeness of himself. Since God exists in a community of persons as Trinity, each with its own personal particularity, man is created in his or her own particularity as a person as well, within the community of human being. "Created 'in the image' of God in Trinity, man himself is *one in essence* according to his nature, and *in many hypostases* according to his persons. Each man is a unique, distinct and unrepeatable person; he is an existential distinctiveness. All men have a common nature or essence, but this has no existence except as personal distinctiveness, as freedom and transcendence of their own natural predeterminations and natural necessity."[60] Thus, it is not the substance or nature or a particular aspect of the nature that is the image of God in man; rather, it is the mode of existence that is the *imago Dei*. This mode of existence is the unique hypostasis of man in community expressing his freedom.

The hypostatic mode of existence is tripartite: rationality, freedom, and dominion. In the West, these characteristics became the definition of the *imago Dei* in man. However, the East believes these to be the mode in which the image *exists* in man. These are used for man's distinction from nature, which is his otherness. "He is endowed with the possibility of the mode of divine existence, which is manifested especially in the gift of rationality, of free will, and of dominion." But it is important to note that the image is not exhausted by these modes of existence. They only demonstrate that the image of God

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[60]Ibid., 19.

is in man; they do not define it. Thus, if someone loses their mental capacity, i.e., their rationality, they do not lose the image.[61]

Along with this tripartite mode of existence, the person exists in relationship to the other in community. "Man is an existential fact of relationship and communion. He is a person, *prosopon*, which signifies, both etymologically and in practice, that he has his face (*ops*) towards (*pros*) someone or something: that he is opposite (in relation to or in connection with) someone or something."[62] This fact of the person explains his or her differentiation from the other. "Self-consciousness" and "otherness" differentiate one person from another. In comparing myself with another self, I become aware of my own uniqueness. This self-consciousness is my awareness of my own identity, which is "an absolute otherness, a unique, distinct, and unrepeatable character which defines my existence."[63] It is in and through relationship that one's identity or ego is developed. "Thus the person represents a mode of being which presupposes natural individuality, but is at the same time distinct from it. Each person is a sum of the characteristics common to all human nature, to mankind as a whole, and at the same time he transcends it inasmuch as he is an existential distinctiveness, a fact of existence which cannot be defined objectively."[64] All human beings have objective characteristics, reflected in the tripartite mode of existence of rationality, freedom, and dominion, but each person uses his or her own will in a distinct, unique matter in hypostasizing those objective

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[61]Yannaras, *Elements of Faith*, 57.

[62]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 20.

[63]Yannaras, *Elements of Faith*, 29.

[64]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 21.

characteristics. To equate humanity with those objective attributes is to denigrate

humanity in its unique differentiation instantiated in each human hypostasis, or person.

However, this differentiation of the person does not make him an autonomous

individual. Through freedom expressed in self-transcendence through relationship, the

person is able to manifest the whole of humanity in himself.[65] Drawing from Yannaras,

John Zizioulas states that "personhood implies the 'openness of being', and even more

than that, the *ek-stasis* of being, i.e. a movement towards communion which leads to a

transcendence of the boundaries of the 'self' and thus to *freedom*. At the same time, and

in contrast to the partiality of the individual which is subject to addition and combination,

the person in its ecstatic character reveals its being in a *catholic*, i.e. integral and

undivided, way, and thus in its being ecstatic it becomes *hypostatic*, i.e. the bearer of its

nature in its totality."[66] The uniqueness of the person is only revealed in and through

relationship, and as such "defines the personal existence of man, his mode of being."[67]

"Thus communion does not threaten personal particularity; it is *constitutive* of it."[68]

Contrary to the person is the individual. "The individual is the denial or neglect

of the distinctiveness of the person, the attempt to define human existence using the

objective properties of man's common nature, and quantitative comparisons and

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[65]Ibid. St. Maximus the Confessor articulates the understanding of the human person being a microcosm of the cosmos. See Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1995).

[66]John D. Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1972): 408.

[67]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 22.

[68]Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity," 409, emphasis added.

analogies."[69] By approaching the human through what is common in nature destroys

what it is that particularly defines the identity of the person: his or her relationships.[70]

The results can be quite diabolical. Yannaras writes,

> If we relate the image of God to the nature and not to the personal
> distinctiveness of man, then morality, the truth and authenticity of
> existence, is something predetermined by nature and an *essential* necessity
> for man. In that case, ethics is understood as conformity by the individual
> to objective or natural requirements, and violation of these has
> consequences which are 'destructive' to his nature: it does not simply
> distort the image of God imprinted on man's nature, but actually wipes it
> out.[71]

By making man an individual, that is equating the being of man with his nature, personal

distinctiveness is obliterated through the destruction of human freedom. The person is

determined by the characteristics of human nature, and in fact, become imprisoned by it.

He becomes subject to his objective nature. Politics and sociology are particularly to

blame for this move to the individual because each uses the leveling of the person as an

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[69]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 22.

[70]For a similar western understanding of the person, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). Anthony Ugolnik, using a Bahktinian hermeneutic also describes the self in terms of dialogic relationships. See *The Illuminating Icon*, 158-73.

[71]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 26. Sergius Bulgakov believed that this was the chief evil of Marxism, that it equated humanity with a generic nature as opposed to its particularity. Bulgakov states,

> Marx remains quite aloof from the religious problem; he is not disturbed by
> the fate of an individual but is totally obsessed by what appears to be
> *common* to all individuals, consequently, by what is *non*-individual in them.
> This *non*-individuality, though not beyond the individual, is generalized by
> Marx in an abstract formula. At the same time, he rejects with relative ease
> what is left in a personality after the non-individuality has been deducted
> from it or, with a light heart, he compares this remainder to zero.

See Sergius Bulgakov, *Karl Marx as a Religious Type: His Relation to the Religion of Anthropotheism of L. Feuerbach*, ed. Virgil R. Land, tr. Luba Barna (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979), 57.

individual. "We neutralize the human being into a social unit, bearing the characteristics, the needs and desires, which are common to all."[72]   The social sciences in their objectification of man ignore personal distinctiveness, which is the true identity of the human being created in the image and likeness of God.

The distinction that Yannaras is making is based upon his theological presupposition of the apophatic and personal nature of truth. The social sciences, having adopted the positivist essentialist understanding of human nature, which Yannaras argues goes back to Augustine's understanding of the nature of God, are based on an ontology that is radically different. As noted earlier, for the ancient Greeks, the concept of *logos* is relational knowledge. "*Logos*, for the Greeks meant primarily the form (the *eidos*) which allows the existents to show themselves, to *appear*, i.e. to *a-letheuein* (to not-be-hidden). The fact that existents *appear*, that is to show themselves, means they are 'in reference to'–*logos* had this meaning of *referentiality* which is due to the forms of existents and discloses, that is makes evident the existence of existents."[73] When applied to the human being, *logos* (reason) is the ability of the mind by which the existents are imprinted on the mind. It also allows the mind "to communicate and commune the logos of the existents." Thus, *logos*, which is virtually untranslatable, is "the reference and the reception of or the

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[72]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 22. See also John Milbank's critique of the social sciences in *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (London: Blackwell, 1990, 1993), 51-143. Yannaras, Bulgakov, and Milbank all raise the question as to whether a Christian sociology is even possible, for the presuppositions are completely foreign to theological understandings of the human person as a unique *hypostasis*, created in the image and likeness of God. Rational choice theory is particularly heinous to Christian theology, for it understands the person on the basis of his or her economic decision making. Ontological freedom is completely dismissed by this social theory.

[73]Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, 15; *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 53. It should be noted that *aletheia* (truth) is the result of the existents showing themselves (*aletheuein*).

response to the reference, which constitutes the event of communion. The entire universe, the whole of reality, is for the Greeks a communion of logical relations."[74] In this is signified that truth is experiential and referential as a communal act.

Christianity took this basic understanding of the nature of reality and truth and completed it with the gospel, the revelation of Jesus Christ as *Logos*. This revelation of the divine *Logos* enabled the Christians to understand the Trinitarian nature of God, i.e. that God was revealed in the mode of existence as Trinity. Furthermore, it also disclosed God's mode of existence as being love. "God is *trinitarian* and this means that His existence constitutes the *logos*-mode of being as a communion of love of three hypostases."[75] Because there is no logical necessity in the Being of God, i.e. that he is not predetermined by his essence, he is able to demonstrate his mode of existence freely as loving communion of persons. "He is the 'Father' of existence and of life, because 'in a timeless and loving manner' he begets the 'Son' and sends forth the 'Spirit'–he freely renders his being subsistent as fulfillment of loving erotic communion."[76] For human beings, who are created in the image of God, this means that they too can exist in an ecstatic mode of existence that is free from natural constraint.[77] This mode of being is love.

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[74]Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, 15.

[75]Ibid., 16.

[76]Ibid. For his understanding of the person existing in erotic communion, see his important work, *Person and Eros: A Theological Essay on Ontology* (Athens, 1974); *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 99-114; *The Ontological Content of the Theological Concept of the Person*, Ph.D. diss. (Athens, 1970).

[77]Zizioulas accepts this idea of the erotic aspect of the image of God in human beings. What distinguishes between biological existence and ecclesial existence, for Zizioulas, is the ability to love freely in an act of communion that transcends our

For Yannaras this mode of existence for human beings is possible in the life of the church. "For the Church is not a religion, it is not a school of spirituality, but a place where we are invited to transform our existence into *being as relationship*. We are invited to a meal, to a banquet–and a banquet is a way of practicing life as communion."[78] In the eucharistic meal, the gathered people of God are transformed into the reality of the Body of Christ. "The eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood changes individuals into members of a unified body, and individual survival into communion of life and unity of life–that unity which exists among the members of the body, and between them and the head. This unity of life in the context of personal communion is the Church."[79] In this transformative event of the heavenly banquet that the Church is invited to partake, the realization of the image of God in man takes place. As Yannaras states, "The eucharist unifies the life of persons in the community of Christ's theanthropic nature, and thus restores the image of God's 'ethos,' of the fullness of trinitarian, personal communion, to man's *being* or mode of existence–it manifests the existential and at the same time *theological* character of ethical perfection in man."[80] This contrasts with any "philosophical, social or religious ethic: because it rejects individual virtue, private attainment and individual valuation." Together those who are united into the Body of Christ become the Kingdom of God, the New Israel, here on

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biological limitations. Transfiguration of the person in the ecclesial life enables such ecstatic transcendence of the biological nature. See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49-65.

[78]Christos Yannaras, "The Church: A Mode of Being That Can Conquer Death," *Sourozh* 49 (August 1992): 24.

[79]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 81.

[80]Ibid., 82.

earth.[81] In this communal mode of existence, the person is able to live in loving

communion with God and the church. It is here that the person experiences ontological

freedom.

In that experience of communion with God, Yannaras employs the familiar

Palamite distinction of the essence and energies of God. Human beings are able to

"know" God through the experience of God in his particular mode of existence in and

through the divine energies. Knowledge of God in his essence is an impossibility. Here

Yannaras's apophaticism is displayed.[82] Apophaticism, as he understands the Dionysian

tradition, provides the answer to the problem recognized by both Nietzsche and

Heidegger. The apophatic response of the person allows for knowledge of God, not

through the rational faculty, but through experience in loving communion. He writes,

> The *mode of existence* that we know only 'by participation'–only to the
> extent that we participate–we call *personal*. God acts in a *personal* manner,
> he acts as a Person, or rather as a community of Persons, a Trinity of
> Persons. Our participation and communion in the energies of God
> acquaints us with the otherness of the three personal Hypostases. The
> energies are common to all three, as the energies of the unknowable and
> imparticipable divine 'essence', but, participated in, they reveal to the one
> who participates, indivisibly and as a whole, the otherness of each divine
> Hypostasis, and at the same time the whole Godhead, whose Hypostases are
> made known to us by the energies.[83]

The idea of participation in the divine energies is made known to us by our own

participation in the human energies of each person. This distinction in understanding

God has direct repercussions in how we understand the human person. Because the

human person is distinct from the nature, and his distinct mode of existence is distinct

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[81]Ibid., 82-83.

[82]Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 83.

[83]Ibid., 84.

from his nature–for the mode of existence is the means by which the nature is manifest–

therein lies a distinction between the essence and energies of the human person. If the

energies or modes of being of a person, i.e. rationality, freedom, and dominion are

constitutive of the essence of the human being, then there is no ontological freedom on

the part of the human being. He simply does what his nature is. The human will is

obliterated, and the person loses his distinctiveness, which is actualized in how he

expresses himself through the particular modes of being, i.e. his energies.[84]

How human beings express their being through the modes of existence, that is

personally, reflects how God expresses his being through the divine energies, that is,

personally. Yannaras states, "The divine energies reveal to us the *personal* existence and

otherness of the living God–they make the Person of God accessible to human

experience, without abolishing the inconceivable abyss of the *essential* distance that

separates us from God. God is revealed through his active will as personal relationship

and loving communion *outside* his existence, a will that 'imparts being' to the human

person–calls into *being* human personal relatedness."[85]

Called to participate in communion with him, God establishes a new creation in

the ecclesial body of Christ. In and through the life of Christ, the person is transformed

into a new being, into a new mode of life, that is Christ's. One comes to know God in

that event of communion in the body of Christ, but this knowledge does not exhaust who

God is. Rather, the experience opens the person to infinite possibility in God's Being.

Yannaras states,

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[84]Christos Yannaras, "The Distinction Between Essence and Energies and Its Importance for Theology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2001): 232-45; *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, 84-85.

[85]Ibid., 85.

> The ecclesial knowledge of God is a *common mode* of life–the knowledge is
> the act and event of participation in a new *mode* of existence. It is not
> ideological co-ordination, or moral conformity, but an existential
> transformation that is effected by the grace of the Spirit of God within the
> unrestricted limits of the free, liturgical consent of men and women . . . .
> The Church is the objective possibility of the apophatic knowledge of God,
> and the apophatic knowledge of God is the experience of the life of the
> eucharistic body, of the life effected by the life-giving Spirit of God, the
> same Spirit who 'brooded over the face of the waters' on the first day of
> creation, the author then of physical life, and always the provider of true
> life.[86]

By human freedom, Yannaras means something different from that which is the

common understanding in the West. In the West, freedom is usually associated with

choice. One has the freedom to choose one action over the other. What Yannaras means

by freedom, although he does trade on the meaning at times, entails self-transcendence.

He states, "The freedom that interests me is the one which frees us from the constraints of

the created world."[87] Freedom is about the ability to escape the confines of our nature.

True human freedom is the "ability to live our existence as a realization of love, so as to

reach the truth of the *person*."[88] By equating human identity to nature, one leaves

humanity at the tragic level of ontological necessity, unable to free himself from that

which nature dictates. But as I have demonstrated, the ontological understanding of the

person is reflected in communion. Through ecstatic expression, that is, going out beyond

himself toward the other, the person achieves personhood. Freedom allows for this

ecstatic expression of the self in relating to the other. If the person is only defined by his

nature, then he is unable to express his freedom ecstatically because he is determined or

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[86]Ibid., 96-97.

[87]Christos Yannaras, "Towards a New Ecumenism," available at
http://www.incommunion.org/Yannaris.htm.

[88]Ibid.

limited by his nature. In understanding humanity by its nature, there is no differentiation

of selves that allows for reaching-out to the other and achieving communion and personal

relatedness. Instead, there is no relationship in an ontology of homogeneous beings.

This is why God creates in order to have relationship with that which he is not. Human

beings created in the image of God are capable of having relationships of communion

because of their distinctiveness in their modes of being. Yannaras states,

> Thus freedom and distinctiveness *define* the ontological fact of communion;
> there is no communion unless participation in it is free and distinctive. And
> this is an *ethical* definition of the fact of communality: the realization of life
> as communion has an ethical dynamic indeterminacy irreconcilable with
> any definitive relation of identity, any schematic or legal predetermination
> of communion, because the fact of communality is defined by the freedom
> and distinctiveness of the members who *achieve* communion.[89]

The Political Hesychasm of Christos Yannaras

In an article written in 1993, David Koyzis called for a shift in Orthodox political

ethics from the traditional understanding of the iconic representation of the monarchy of

God on earth to a Trinitarian model, whereby the communal nature of the Trinity is

reflected in the societal structures "embodying human freedom and equality of the

other."[90] He relates that such a political ethic could be based on the work of Orthodox

theologian Vladimir Lossky. He notes that Jurgen Moltmann and Leonardo Boff have

attempted such understandings of human society, but that no Orthodox theologian has yet

to take seriously this challenge. But it seems that Koyzis is drastically uninformed on the

whole of Orthodox theology, for both Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas were highly

influenced by the personalism of Lossky. Together they with others have been a part of

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[89]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 212.

[90]David Koyzis, "Imaging God and His Kingdom: Eastern Orthodoxy's Iconic Political Ethic," *The Review of Politics* 55 (spring 1993): 285.

the return to the Fathers of Orthodox theology, returning particularly to the thought of the

Cappadocian theologians for their understanding of the Trinity and the human person.

What is important about Koyzis's article, though, is his recognition of the possibility of

the development of a unique understanding of political society along Eastern Christian

understandings of the human person. He reflects that "if human society images the

perfect intercommunion within the Trinity itself–then the foundation perhaps exists for

society's political organization along more participatory and less authoritarian lines."[91]

Yannaras's vision of political society expresses exactly what Koyzis is requesting.

In an essay written on behalf of Jurgen Moltmann's sixtieth birthday, Yannaras

proposed an apophatic approach to politics.[92] "Apophaticism means our refusal to

exhaust knowledge of the truth in its formulation."[93] Apophaticism is characterized by

the communal understandings of knowledge expressed intersubjectively. One is not

concerned about the accuracy or correctness of the sense contents; rather, one is

concerned with the confirmation of those sense contents within the communal context.

Apophaticism "is characterized . . . by the refusal to reduce the accuracy of knowledge to

the formulization of knowledge enabling the expression of opinion."[94] He continues,

"We refuse the objectification of the accuracy to a given type or code, which means, we

refuse the self-understanding of logic, its change to an authoritarian function."

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[91]Ibid., 286.

[92]Christos Yannaras, "Apophatik und politisches Handeln," in *Gottes Zukunft – Zukunft der Welt: Festschrift für Jürgen Moltmann zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hermann Deuser, Gerhard Marcel Martin, Konrad Stock, and Michael Welker (Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 374-79. For a more developed argument for apophatic reason in politics, see Christos Yannaras, *Right Reason and Social Practice* (Athens: Domos, 1990), 181-336.

[93]Yannaras, *Elements of Faith*, 17.

[94]Yannaras, "Apophatik und politisches Handeln," 375.

Since apophaticism does not allow for the exhaustion of knowledge, the person or society is not tyrannized by the set interpretation of reality according to a system of logic. He notes that such a scheme for interpreting reality poses a "risk" for politics, for the institutions of society which control social events can be drawn into question.[95] But it also demonstrates that the use of pure reason must have a purpose and an aim that it must strive toward if it is to be used as a criteria for the control of social events and political power. This purpose as apophaticism points toward is the equation of true-being with true-community.[96] Thus, apophaticism shifts the concern from the accuracy of knowledge to the "reasonableness of relation." This move "forbids every evaluating dogmatic understanding of correctness, every objectification and consequently also every authoritarian use thereby."[97]

In politics, this apophatic understanding of knowledge has two basic ramifications. First, apophaticism has the ability to provide politics with an understanding of true freedom. In the cataphatic approach to knowledge, "freedom is defined as a subjective good and at the same time as objective possibility."[98] This understanding of freedom results in subjective claims towards objective goods. Politics, then, must be about the protection of these subjective claims, such that these claims of one do not violate the claims of another. Consequently, such an understanding of freedom reduces it to "a legal possibility of practical use," which gives the highest use to

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[95]Ibid.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid., 375-76.

[98]Ibid., 376.

the election.[99] In contrast, apophaticism understands freedom "as refusal of necessity."
Necessity prevents the person from being who he is, because of the elements of life
exercising imperious control upon the self.[100]

As described above, the person is defined apophatically through his relationships
with others. The person is what the other is not. To be a person, then, is to be free "from
every universal predetermination, dependent subordination, change and falsification."[101]
Practically speaking, "The person is free, when he is himself in relationships, with whom
he realizes his being, relations of domicility, of production, of consumption, of research,
of knowledge, of community, of aesthetic sensitivities and desire, of ideological
agreement, of religious tie, and so on, not elements, rules or orders subjugated or adapted,
which make equal the subjective differences."[102] The person is free when he or she is not
classified and put into a particular place by social conventions, rules, or some
overarching scheme of society, which neutralizes the subjective distinctiveness of the
person.

This apophatic approach to society and its structures challenges the cataphatic
approach of the West, which denies the distinctive human hypostasis the exercise of true
freedom. The cataphatic use of reason produces principles and standards upon which the
subjective claims and demands are settled and systematized. What results is the duty of
the person in exercising his or her responsibility within the political scheme. The person
is coerced by the logic of the political arrangement to adapt his or her demands to the

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[99]Ibid.

[100]Three times in the Divine Liturgy the people pray to be saved from "necessity."

[101]Yannaras, "Apophatic und politisches Handeln," 376.

[102]Ibid., 377.

system, such that he or she loses the possibility of any self-determination. Criticism and doubt are met by imperialism of the logic of the system, subordinating them within the system. However, apophaticism proposes another possibility to this tyranny of cataphatic reason. The respect towards tolerating criticism, within the liberal regime, should be shifted towards the respect for human failure. "Failure means the failure or the inability of people, to attend to the realization of social relations, even yet to be a conscious experiment to undermine them. Only such a respect secures subjective freedom, the actual testing of the subjective otherness and the dynamic of relations which originate therefrom."[103] The apophatic approach to politics alone secures the possibility of such an understanding of the human person and the protection of his or her subjective freedom.

While apophaticism pays respect to human failing, cataphaticism excludes it altogether. By setting the idea towards which society must strive, i.e. the good, it establishes the structures by which each individual must respond in this societal pursuit. Thus, "every deviation" from this goal, or failure, is excluded. "Behind the rationalized affirmation by principles, programs, efforts, general visions and methods of 'democracy' appears the face of brutality in the consequence of the pursuit of the aims."[104] Personal freedom is destroyed in the face of any political organization of human society.

Respect for human failing is the "teststone" for any politics that respects freedom. Any perfectionistic society, that is, any society that moves toward some good, must answer the question as to how it will handle those who deviate from that good. A free society must be able to respect human failure, and thus be more in line with a fuller

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[103]Ibid., 378.

[104]Ibid., 378-79.

understanding of the person and human flourishing. Respecting human failure respects

human freedom, "not as a 'value' and a legal 'right,' but as man's existential truth."[105]

Yannaras warns,

> Whenever the possibilities for ethical, dynamic realization of communion
> are taken outside the sphere of the personal existence which is the
> hypostatic bearer of these possibilities, this inevitably creates types of
> communion with no substantial, hypostatic basis; imaginary and abstract
> forms of communion alien to life and its existential realization. And when
> we try to impose these forms, alien as they are to life, by convention or
> compulsion, and to 'create' communion 'from above,' setting our
> programmatic limits and rationalistic laws or using unsubstantiated canons
> of freedom or justice or other objective 'values,' then we are crippling life
> itself and tormenting mankind.[106]

Consequently, Yannaras realizes that such a respect for human failure and human

freedom may result in despotic and unjust political arrangements due to that being the

exercise of freedom. However, freedom may also bring about revolution from such

regimes. "The right and wrong in each case, the good and the evil, can be judged only by

the measure of the realization of freedom, which is sacrificial self-transcendence and a

struggle to attain communion."[107] The goodness of the act is not based upon cataphatic

logic, but upon relationship.

Political society should not be about the moral "improvement" of society or man,

but rather it should be about the securing of human freedom through the recognition of

the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each person.[108] Attempts to produce more just

societies or more virtuous citizens fail to take account the fullness of personal

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[105]Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 215.

[106]Ibid., 213.

[107]Ibid., 216-17.

[108]Ibid., 217.

distinctiveness and human failure. What is at stake is the personal truth of who man is.

Yannaras concludes,

> We live in a world where planned living is increasingly replacing the
> immediacy of life, where freedom is sought among the objective premises
> of corporate existence; a world where the individual intellect is the strongest
> weapon for survival, and individual preference the only criterion for
> happiness. In such a world, the witness of the ecclesial ethos looks like a
> kind of 'anarchist theory' to overthrow established customs, in the way it
> concentrates the universality of life once again in the sphere of personal
> freedom, and personal freedom in asceticism of bodily self-denial. Yet this
> 'anarchic' transference of the axis of life to the sphere of the truth of the
> person, is the only humane, reassuring response to our insatiable thirst for
> the immediacy of life and freedom, although it certainly does overthrow
> 'efficient' and rigid structures, and also programs for 'general
> happiness.'[109]

The modern democratic state, based on cataphatic reason with its own inherent

logic, does not support authentic human existence. Instead, "the aim of modern

'democracy' is the utilitarian strengthening of individuals' rights, assuring their quality of

life and protecting their freedom of choice."[110] In this regard, modern democracy is

simply a "utilitarian eudaemonism." Removed from western common life is the pursuit

of the "salvation of the soul." Instead, "we come to prefer the affirmation of earthly life,

the celebration of matter and the body, the strengthening of the individual, the

recognition of the equality of the natural rights of people, the opportunity for all to

advance towards a life of ease and material prosperity, the subjection of nature to

productivity as a benefit to humanity."[111] Religion does not disappear from society,

rather it is transformed and serves the eudaemonistic proclivities of the person. Religion

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[109]Ibid., 269-70.

[110]Christos Yannaras, *Postmodern Metaphysics*, tr. Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005), 13.

[111]Ibid., 12.

becomes moralism that supports the "good" life. It too is subject to consumerism, and becomes a matter of choice in such a society, where religion is consumed for enjoyment and pleasure, not ontological transformation through ascetic struggle over biological existence. Such a society dismisses the possibility for a collective attainment of human flourishing. Because the person is designated as an individual, he or she is unable to exercise their true freedom in attaining to participation in God through the life of the community, which ceases to exist as a collective of ecstatic loving relationships.

Regarding the issue of human rights, Yannaras argues that they are a product of modernity. While the concept of right began to develop in the Middle Ages, it was not until the modern world, where the concept began to be used as we know it today. "The radical innovation of modernity lies in the fact that modernity made rights 'human', that is, common to all humans, without discrimination."[112] Human rights became associated with the modern Western world, in particular, and they were seen as the hallmark of a modern "civilized society."

Yannaras raises the question, though, in what authority human rights are grounded? "Religious ethics became linked in the consciousness of people, to situations of social injustice, torture, arbitrariness, nightmarish punishments and ideological terrorism."[113] However, with the development of human rights as natural rights and the separation of God as the authority from natural right, in the twentieth century, "the

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[112]Christos Yannaras, "Human Rights and the Orthodox Church," in *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation*, ed. Emmanuel Clapsis (Geneva: WCC Publications, Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004), 83. For a complete discussion of the issue of human rights, see Christos Yannaras, *The Inhuman Character of Human Rights* (Athens: Domos, 1998).

[113]Ibid., 83-84.

complete destruction of any sense of individual human rights reached its culmination."[114] The hypocrisy of the West, heralded as the progenitor of human rights, is demonstrated in the litany of horrors of the twentieth century: "practices of genocide, ethnic cleansing, slaughter of innocent people, torture, policing and censorship, even slavery, lie on the everyday agenda of the international arena." He notes, "Suffice to recall the tragedies of the Palestinians, Kurds, Serbs, or of northern Cyprus to realize that the West usually decides which people have human rights and to which people these should by definition be denied."[115]

His response to the Western understanding of human rights is found in the ancient Greek city-state. While historians and philosophers generally discard the notion of human rights in ancient Greece, Yannaras argues that the ancient Greek understanding of the city did not necessitate the creation of human rights. "Ancient Greece's radical innovation in human history was that it transformed simple cohabitation into the achievement of a city, that it transformed necessary (for utilitarian reasons) collectiveness into an 'exercise of truth.'"[116] The Greek concept of the city was its embodiment of truth. "The imitation of the community of relations 'according to the truth' is the art and science of politics, of the way of transforming collectiveness into a city. This cannot be an individual effort or an individual aim; it is by definition a social event, a 'common exercise.'"[117] Those who participate in the communal life of the city, then, participate in

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[114]Ibid., 84.

[115]Ibid. See Yannaras, *NeoHellenic Identity*, 65-74 for the role of the West in the shaping of the modern Greek identity, particularly for political means.

[116]Yannaras, "Human Rights and the Orthodox Church," 85.

[117]Ibid.

truth. As a citizen–and only men were citizens–the person was protected by the sacred

bond of the people as citizens of the polis living in truth. Therefore, human rights were

not necessary. He argues,

> One can therefore understand that the safeguarding of 'individual rights'
> was entirely useless in the ancient Greek world–the whole idea was
> incompatible with the Greek version of politics. The honour of being a
> citizen provided many more privileges than those conventionally provided
> (through the civil code) by the protection of individual rights.[118]

Yannaras argues, then, that the Greek polis was adopted by the church in the

concept of *ecclesia*. "In the ancient Greek 'assembly of the people', Greek citizens did

not assemble primarily to discuss, judge and take decisions, but mainly to constitute,

concretize and reveal the city (the way of life 'according to the truth')." Likewise, the

church would gather not for any moral, ethical, or intellectual purpose, but in order "to

constitute, concretize and reveal, in the eucharistic dinner, the way of life 'according to

the truth' incorruptibility and immortality: not the imitation of the secular 'logic', but of

the Trinitarian Society of Persons, the society which constitutes the true existence and

life, because 'He is Life' (1 John 4:16)."[119] As a participant in such a community of

love, there is no need for human rights. All are loved equally as members of the

community.

As we began this chapter with Yannaras's discussion of Huntington's thesis, it is

proper to address the charge that he levels against Orthodox culture: that it has not

developed a regime of individual human rights. Yannaras states,

> Certainly, the Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition ignores the idea of
> collectivity as *societas*, as a 'blending together of individuals in the pursuit
> of common interests.' It ignores collectiveness as an arithmetic sum total of

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[118]Ibid.

[119]Ibid., 86.

non-differentiated individuals, it ignores human co-existence as a simple cohabitation on the basis of rational consensus, it ignores the ideal of societies of unrelated individuals. We have briefly seen the conception of the social and political event that is carried by the Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition and the infinite value of the human person that this conception entails.[120]

While Orthodoxy does recognize a concept of human rights, for "the more . . . does not invalidate or destroy the less." But in comparison to the political achievement of ancient Greece, Byzantium, and the post-Byzantine communities, "the protection of human rights is a pre-political achievement. It is an undisputable achievement, but an achievement which has not yet attained (perhaps not even understood) the primordial and fundamental meaning of politics: politics as a common exercise of life 'according to the truth', politics constituted around the axis of ontology (and not self-interested objectives.)"[121]

Human rights are based upon the modern cultural paradigm; however, in recent times, this cultural paradigm has been shaken to the point of collapse. Human rights have lost their grounding in the very civilization that produced them. As Yannaras states, "Symptoms of such a magnitude are never products of a mere moral decline; they are clear proofs of the end of a cultural 'paradigm.' The 'paradigm' of modernity was grounded on the egocentrism of 'human rights.' A communion-centred version, based on the protection of human existential truth and authenticity might bear the arrival of a new cultural 'paradigm.'"[122]

What, then, does Yannaras propose for the new paradigm? As an alternative to western secularized society, Yannaras seeks to retrieve the Byzantine autonomous

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[120]Ibid., 88.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Ibid., 89.

communities that developed toward the end of the Ottoman Empire. The life of these

communities was centered around the life of the church or monastery found in its midst.

These communities continued the ancient patristic ethos of apophatic knowing and the

accompanying cultural and social institutions that allowed for the experience of

communal truth. Furthermore, the Byzantine tradition affirmed the identity of the person

qua person, that is, not as an individual, but within the context of community.

The ecclesial life becomes the basis for human society. Particularly, the monastic

hesychast life provides the model for human society. He states,

> Monasticism will be revealed as a dynamic and real witness and reminder
> of the separation of the Church from the world, of the 'exodus' of the
> Church from the 'imposition' of the world. The ecclesiastical
> consciousness will recognize in the monastic life the lost truth of the
> charismatic union and the real confession of faith: The distinction of the
> Church from the 'world' will transpose progressively in the separation of
> the monks from the 'worldly' Christians. Finally, the entire clergy, without
> denying its obedience to the worldly-political hierarchy, will be clothed in
> the dress of the monks, enlarging the chasm and its objective difference
> from the 'popular' or 'worldly' Christians.[123]

As Vasilios Makrides remarks, "at the level of theory of knowledge, for the Hesychasts,

the person and its energies can be known in a relational, communal way. Knowledge is

seen as an erotic achievement and a self-transcending activity."[124] For Yannaras,

apophaticism allows for the full expression of the person since the person is not construed

as an object of knowledge that can be comprehended, but as a subject that can be known

through ecstasy and love. Only through a return to the ecclesial community, as a way of

life according to the truth, can authentic human existence be achieved. For Yannaras,

that community is none other than the Orthodox Church.

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[123]Yannaras, *NeoHellenic Identity*, 204.

[124]Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece," 147.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

In this work I have sought to elucidate the theological and social foundations used by John Romanides and Christos Yannaras to develop a contemporary Greek Orthodox identity rooted in fourteenth-century hesychasm. Romanides and Yannaras desire to formulate an authentic Orthodox identity for the modern world. In order to do this, they have retrieved what they assert to be authentic Orthodoxy in the thought of Gregory Palamas. In formulating this Orthodox identity, they seek to remove vestiges of Western influence in the shaping of Greek identity, particularly the Hellenic, pagan elements. With this formulation, they articulate an identity that is transnational, appealing to the universal characteristics of Orthodox Christianity and the Roman/Byzantine Empire. Therefore, while being anti-Western, it is also anti-nationalist in regards to the modern nation-state system that is based on Western political developments.

Consequently, the program developed by Romanides and Yannaras, as well as other Neo-Orthodox intellectuals, is not *sui generis*. Since the 1970s a resurgence in religion experienced worldwide. Most social scientists were unprepared to explain this worldwide social phenomenon because of their philosophical and ideological presuppositions, especially pertaining to secularization. Instead of a decline in religious participation as well as its privatization, societies throughout the world experienced a rise in religious affiliation and practice. Most notably, this occurred in the Middle East with the rise of political Islam. However, other societies, including Eastern Europe, Africa,

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Latin America, and North America have experienced notable rises in religious identification.

Social scientists have attempted to explain this rise in religiosity. Most important has been the failure of modernization in certain societies as well as the increasing globalization of Western culture, creating a homogeneous world society that puts pressure on local indigenous cultures. Furthermore, not only are cultures threatened by globalism but also the nation-state system. What has arisen in the place of the political system established by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, is a transnational global society that undermines the national identities of modern peoples. Placing national identity in flux has created anomie on a global level. In order to rectify the anomic situation, people look to identify themselves with that which is the most stable human institution: religion. People believe that religion provides a stable identification marker, enabling the society to weather the storm of globalization. Thus, with the growth of homogeneous global culture, local identification rooted in religion provides meaningful societal cohesion and affiliation. As Amin Maalouf aptly states,

> For the rest of the world's inhabitants, all those born in the failed cultures, openness to change and modernity presents itself differently. For the Chinese, Africans, Japanese, Indians and American Indians, as for Greeks, Russians, Iranians, Arabs, Jews and Turks, modernization has constantly meant the abandoning of part of themselves. Even though it has sometimes been embraced with enthusiasm, it has never been adopted without a certain bitterness, without a feeling of humiliation and defection. Without a piercing doubt about the dangers of assimilation. Without a profound identity crisis.[1]

If the Neo-Orthodox Movement of the late-twentieth century is located in this worldwide global identity crisis, then the attempt by Romanides and Yannaras to

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[1]Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, tr. Barbara Bray (London: Penguin Books, 2000, 72.

articulate an Orthodox identity makes perfect sense. As Maalouf states, "When Modernity bears the mark of "The Other" it is not surprising if some people confronting it brandish symbols of atavism to assert their difference."[2] Similarly, Benjamin Barber speaks about the spread of Western culture in the form of McWorld that triggers a local reaction in the form of jihad.[3] Peter Berger has also articulated a view of globalization based on four aspects: international business, international intellectualism, Western culture, and Evangelical Protestantism.[4] The Neo-Orthodox reaction to Western globalization mainly pertains to the spread of Western business culture and Western popular culture, sparking the desire for an authentic Orthodox culture that resists the spread of what they perceive to be the loss of their indigenous way of life.

Yet at the same time, as Maalouf, Barber, and Berger point out, the Neo-Orthodox reaction to globalization is itself part of globalization. The reaction is endemic to the nature of the late-capitalist world in which we live. Maalouf states, "The ever-increasing speed of globalization undoubtedly reinforces, by way of reaction, people's need for identity. And because of the existential anguish that accompanies such sudden changes it also strengthens their need for spirituality. But only religious allegiance meets, or at least seeks to meet, both these needs."[5] Yannaras and Romanides have sought that to meet the spiritual and societal need in the retrieval of the past identity of the Greek people: the Romeic tradition.

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[2]Ibid., 73.

[3]Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.

[4]Peter L. Berger, "Four Faces of Global Culture," *The National Interest* 47 (fall 1997): 23-29.

[5]Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, 93.

In this regard, the program of Yannaras and Romanides is itself, in sociological terms, a neo-orthodox movement. It is a reaction against failed modernization in southeastern Europe, and thus, appears to be a postmodern tribalism that attempts to provide meaning to Orthodox society. As we previously noticed, hesychasm, which provides a basis to their thought, is against secularism in all of its forms. Human society is to be transfigured in the light of the gospel; a segregation and differentiation of religion from the other spheres of society is untenable. Instead, hesychasm itself provides a basis for a Christian society, modeled on ecclesial life. Such life is antithetical to the secular materialism of late-capitalism that has invaded Eastern Europe, particularly after the fall of communism. Yannaras argues that Eastern Europe has succumbed to a greater historical materialism after communism than it experienced under the communist regime. This historical materialism has undermined the ecclesial basis of life in Orthodox Europe to the point that Eastern European man has adopted a Western materialist identity.[6] The people have lost their ecclesial identity. While Yannaras argues for the need to return to such a society, he is facing a losing battle. The masses of people have forsaken the church as a totality of life, having secularized it in their own lives. Religion has become a choice, a heretical imperative, which means that it can be denied.

Neo-Orthodoxy as a neo-orthodox movement can no longer take for granted the Orthodox cultural basis of the people. Instead, it must reconstruct it by retrieving the lost tradition of authentic Orthodoxy represented, as they argue, in the thought of Gregory Palamas and the hesychasts. But because this tradition has been lost, its taken for granted status no longer holds. People must choose to accept such an identity, knowing that it

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[6]Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2003, 21-30.

can be lost once again. Realizing the precarious nature of adopting a neo-orthodox identity implies, then, that those who choose such an identity will be particularly zealous about their newly found truth, and this zealousness is displayed publicly as an identity marker of their traditionalism. Because of this retrieval of the past that is reconstructed in the present in order to provide a basis for identity, the Neo-Orthodox Movement in Greece can best be understood as a constructivist project.

The Neo-Orthodox phenomenon also raises the question of the compatibility of Orthodoxy with Modernity. If Modernity is associated with Western secularism and political and economic development, then Orthodoxy, especially as it is expressed in the traditionalism of Neo-Orthodoxy, is not compatible with Modernity. As Yannaras argues in *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, Modernity has brought about a way of life that is antithetical and diabolical to the ecclesial basis of Orthodox society in the East. The separation of Christianity from politics has enabled the growth of a civilization that is, in Yannaras's words, "barbaric." This civilization "clashes" with the Orthodox way of life as it once was practiced in Eastern Europe. If this way of life of historical materialism is what is desired by the West for Eastern Europe, then the Orthodox ecclesial society will disappear, being replaced by ideologies of nationalism and consumerism.[7]

However, if Modernity is pluralist in nature, that is, there are "varieties" of Modernity, then it may be possible to argue that Orthodoxy is experiencing its own modernization. As the Orthodox churches engage the realities of the modern world, in order for it to compete in a pluralistic religious marketplace, it must adapt to those

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[7]Ibid.

realities, formulating strategies that will enable it to compete and serve as a viable institution in post-communist society. Whether the Orthodox churches have the resources to do so has yet to be seen, although there are signs that the church can and will adapt to the pluralist world in which it finds itself today.[8]

In responding to the problem of religious violence in the contemporary world, Maalouf argues for the need to realize the importance of overlapping identities in which a person participates.[9] In the modern world, a person's identity is not simply tied to one particular identification marker, although with the process of globalization religion becomes most important. Instead, a person's identity is shaped by a plurality of identities, some of which conflict in the life of the person. Holding to this plurality of identities enables the person to share in the life of others, and by "others" is meant those who are different from the person. Evangelical theologian Miroslav Volf has articulated a means of relating to the other that is very similar. By participating in the life of the other the person is able to make room in his own life for the other. A space is created in the life of the person that allows for the embrace of the other, leading to peace and reconciliation.[10] The Christian Gospel tells the story of God's embrace of the other

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[8]See Anastassios Anastassiadis, "Religion and Politics in Greece: The Greek Church's 'Conservative Modernization' in the 1990s," Research in Question No. 11, January 2004, available at http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org/publica/qdr.htm.

[9]Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, 9-43.

[10]Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996. See also Paul Sponheim, *Faith and the Other: A Relational Theology*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993; Metropolitan John Zizioulas, "Communion and Otherness," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 347-61; Emmanuel Clapsis, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and Identity," in *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation*, ed. Emmanuel Clapsis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004), 159-73; Emmanuel Clapsis, *Orthodoxy in*

through his self-giving on the cross. "We, the others–we, the enemies–are embraced by the divine persons who love us with the same love with which they love each other and therefore make space for us within their own eternal embrace."[11] The Gospel enables people to then separate themselves from their own cultural particularity to reach out in love to the other. The Gospel itself opens up a space in the person for the reception of the other. Volf states,

> The proper distance from a culture does not take Christians out of that culture. Christians are not the insiders who have taken flight to a new "Christian culture" and become outsiders to their own culture; rather when they have responded to the call of the Gospel they have stepped, as it were, with one foot outside their own culture while with the other remaining firmly planted in it. They are distant, and yet they belong.[12]

The question that Volf's theology, which has been shaped by Orthodox understandings of the human person, raises is whether Yannaras's theology provides a similar resource for relating in the modern world?

Yannaras's emphasis on the distinction between the essence and energies of the person is an invaluable tool for understanding interpersonal relations and the nature of human society. The unique identity of a person, i.e. her essence, remains unknown to all. This unique, unrepeatable person is a gift to human society. Being created in the image and likeness of God, this human person is precious and has an innate dignity expressed in her freedom. Drawing upon Lossky's understanding of the kenotic nature of the person, Yannaras develops a personal ontology that protects the person essentially from the diabolical forces of the world that seek to dictate to the person who she is. But

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Conversation: Orthodox Ecumenical Engagements (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000).

[11]Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 129.

[12]Ibid., 49.

Yannaras's personal ontology is not a radical individualism, whereby the person

expresses her uniqueness through exercising her claims of human rights upon society.

Rather, the person expresses her uniqueness within society through free loving acts of

communion with the other. Only by engaging the other in society is the person properly

human.[13] In this manner, she reflects the image of God by recognizing that same image

in the other. In going outside of herself in acts of communion with the other, she

expresses her humanity without violating the essential uniqueness of herself or the other.

Through participation in the energies, the modes of being, of the other, expressed in acts

of love, a perichoretic basis of society is created. The person actualizes her humanity and

her being through kenotic self-giving.

Yannaras's understanding of the human person, then, enables the articulation of a

manner of existence that necessitates a level of pluralism and difference within society.

This is because in order to love the other, the other must be different from the self. This

difference implies a different social identity than the person. However, because of the

modern situation whereby persons participate in multiple identities, an interdependent

perichoretic participation in the life of the other is enabled by the pluralistic nature of

human society. In this manner, then, the person engages in a dialogical relationship with

others, allowing participation in each person's life without violating the essential

uniqueness of each person.

If this same model is extrapolated to the level of human society and institutions,

the church itself can function in a pluralistic society through a dialogic and perichoretic

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[13]See Jean Bethke Elshtain' discussion on what it means to be a human being in *Who Are We? Critical Reflections and Hopeful Possibilities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 22-35.

relationship with other institutions. Having the mind of Christ and approaching human

society kenotically enables the church to participate in the life of the other as a servant to

the community. The church is able to offer itself, not as a moralistic institution for the

betterment of society, but as a means of protecting the essential freedom and dignity of

human persons by speaking prophetically to the injustices of late-capitalism. The church

as a transnational social body is able to challenge the authority of the state in its failure to

recognize the ontological freedom of the person in how she expresses that freedom in

community. In this manner, the church, then, is able to engage society calling it forward

with the message of the gospel in its *martyria* and *diakonia* expressed in its faithfulness

to the dignity of the human being. Rather than living a sectarian existence withdrawn

from modern society, the church can participate in the lives of modern citizens who seek

spiritual answers to the existential dilemmas of modern life. Those churches that are able

to engage the modern world in this manner will survive.[14]

Furthermore, the issue of a bifurcated identity that is raised by Yannaras and

Romanides can be reconciled in their own theology. Instead of a rejection of the Hellenic

identity based on a Western imposition of who they believed the Greeks to be, the

Hellenic identity can have a dialogical relationship with the Romeic identity. The

Romeic or Christian identity of the Greeks can embrace the Hellenic creating a synthetic

constructed identity that is pluralist in nature enabling a richer civic identity for the Greek

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[14]See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994) for how religions can have a public existence that enables their survival in the modern world. Vigen Guroian has approached this issue from a dialogical perspective. See Vigen Guroian, *Ethics After Christendom: Toward an Ecclesial Christian Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994).

people. Rejecting the Hellenic identity causes a greater schism in the historical

understanding of the people.

Anthony Ugolnick wrestles with this very issue in his work, *The Illuminating

Icon*. For him the question of identity concerns the relationship of two antithetical

political and social constructs: the American identity and the Russian Orthodox identity,

which was construed as being the enemy. However, by employing a Bahktinian

understanding of the relationship between these two identities in which he participates, he

was able to reconcile the disparate elements arriving at a synthesis that is both American

and Russian Orthodox.[15] Similarly, the Hellenic and Romeic elements can be

synthesized in the life of the Greek people. Using the experience of the fourth-century

Cappadocian fathers, who articulated a Christian Hellenism, the Hellenic and Christian

aspects of the Greek identity can be brought together.[16] This synthesis of identities also

provides a civic or cultural identity that can create a common bond for the Greek nation.

However, both Romanides and Yannaras have not explicitly articulated a political

theology that engages the modern world. Instead, they have been concerned in their

theologies with the preservation of a theological tradition that they retrieved in order to

construct an Orthodox identity. Failing to realize the constructivist nature of their

project, they violently react against the Westernization of Greek society. The question

that their theology then raises is whether it is the authentic tradition. Following

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[15]Anthony Ugolnick, *The Illuminating Icon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989). Ugolnick also uses the kenotic understanding of the church in its relationship with the world.

[16]This is in fact what the current Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens is attempting to do in his works pertaining to the Greek identity. See *Hellenism Converted: The Transformation of Hellenism from Antiquity to Christianity* (Athens: Media Ecclesiastica, 2004).

Florovsky's call to return to the patristic tradition, and particularly the patristic methodology, they developed theologies focused entirely on the thought of Gregory Palamas. Greek Orthodox theologian, Savas Agourides, speaking against this sole focus on Palamas, states,

> [With the rediscovery of the writings of Palamas] within theological circles, a kind of theological absolutism developed concerning Saint Gregory Palamas, who was thought of as a kind of perfect theological revelation; in comparison to which all previous and subsequent theological work in the Church was child talk. According to this view, great Fathers of the Church had given us only baby food; adult food was given to us by Gregory Palamas.[17]

Furthermore, Agourides comments that the emphasis on Palamism creates a mysticism that is "at odds with nature, reason, history, and culture." This mysticism is a reaction to the secularization and urbanization of the modern Greek nation since the 1960s. According to Agourides, "Personally, I believe that this new mysticism, as far as Greece is concerned, has a negative impact on the problems facing our churches in these times; it is a retreat into an unrealistic, suprahistorical and individualistic position." He notes, though, that the movement has had very little impact on the wider society because of its "elitist character," which only appeals to certain theologians.[18] Orthodoxy cannot forsake eschatology for "suprahistorical mysticism," because to do so is to misunderstand the relationship between the Gospel and history.

Agourides's criticism is well taken. Christ calls the church to be a sign or icon of the eschatological reality in which it participates in a fallen world. To forsake this call for what he calls "suprahistorical mysticism" is to commit the heresy of historical

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[17]Savas Agourides, "An Assessment of Theological Issues Today," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 38, nos. 1-4 (1993): 36.

[18]Ibid., 37.

gnosticism, which Florovsky sought to overcome in his Christian Hellenism. Christians are not called to recreate a mythological nostalgic past for the present, but rather to instantiate the gospel in the here and now, bringing the eschaton into human experience through contemporary culture. Yannaras's theology enables such an engagement. The essence of the church is protected as she participates in the life of the other kenotically through her energies. In a way, the church becomes other while also retaining her essential uniqueness.

Similarly, Greek Orthodox theologian, Petros Vassiliadis, has argued that the authentic Orthodox spirituality is not the therapeutic methodology as articulated by those who appropriate the theology of Gregory Palamas as the authentic Orthodox expression of faith.[19] Rather, he states that the liturgical/sacramental ecclesiology centered on the eucharistic event was the original Christian spirituality. Such a theology focused on the iconic representation of the Kingdom of God on earth. It brought the eschaton into the presence of the people, enabling them to participate in the heavenly banquet in the Kingdom of God. In the third and fourth centuries with the development of monasticism, the focus changed to a therapeutic methodology of the healing of the individual soul. The eschatological element of salvation disappeared. It would reappear from time to time in theological correctives to the excesses of the therapeutic tradition, but essentially eucharistic spirituality faded from the ecclesial consciousness. With the liturgical revival of the twentieth century, eucharistic spirituality came once again to the fore.

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[19]Petros Vassiliadis, "Eucharistic and Therapeutic Spirituality," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42, nos. 1-2 (1997): 1-24.

Consequently, it faced competition with a monastic revival of therapeutic spirituality centered on the rediscovery of the writings of Gregory Palamas.

While some theologians have emphasized one spirituality at the expense of the other, several have attempted to articulate a theology that is true to the eucharistic and eschatological dimensions of the thought of later hesychasm as expressed by Palamas. In particular, Abbot of Iveron Monastery, Vasilios Gontikakis has brought the ecclesial eucharistic spirituality within the practice of monasticism.[20] While Vassiliadis points out the Orthodox psychotherapy of Met. Hierotheos Vlachos as being a culprit in the revival of therapeutic spirituality, it must be noted that Met. Hierotheos has balanced the therapeutic with sacramental and ecclesial practice in some of his more recent writings.[21] The recovery of the eucharistic spirituality of the early church, made possible through the work of such theologians as John Zizioulas and Petros Vassiliadis may provide a much needed balance to the excesses of therapeutic spirituality and possibly a new synthesis in Orthodox theology and spirituality.

The thought of Romanides and Yannaras is important to the life of the Orthodox church. Their call to return to an authentic Orthodox tradition is prophetic, similar to the role that monasticism has always played in the life of the church. The call to holiness and purity is rooted in the gospel, where Christ tells his disciples that they are to be holy as their Father in Heaven is holy. Peter tells his church that they are a "holy people" consecrated and separate from the world. The call to an authentic Orthodox life helps

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[20]Archimandrite Vasileios Gontikakis, *Hymn of Entry: Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church*, tr. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998).

[21]Cf. Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, *The Feasts of the Lord*, tr. Esther Williams (Levadia, Greece: Birth of the Theotokos Monastery, 2003).

shape the church's witness in society by waking it from its slumber. The church must respond to radical calls of the gospel. Since the 1960s there has been a flowering of monasticism on the Holy Mountain and in other parts of the world.[22] This resurgence in Orthodox spirituality has created a renewal of spiritual life in the Orthodox churches throughout the world, demonstrating that the church can co-exist in a modern, pluralistic, and secular world. Yannaras and Romanides, while maintaining sectarian positions, offer a means of identification for modern Orthodox Christians who seek a deeper spirituality rooted in the thought of the ascetic-theological tradition of the church. This combined with a recovery of the eucharistic spiritual tradition enables the church to offer an alternative way of life to that of the secular materialistic world in which we live. In this manner the church serves as a hospital to those who are in spiritual sickness, as well as a beacon of hope to a fallen world.

In engaging the world kenotically and ecstatically, the church is able to bring about transformation in the lives of people, through their participation in the energies of the church. In this manner as human beings relate to the world through the expression of their ontological freedom, the church too engages the life of society, enriching it through the recognition of the ontological uniqueness of each person as a child of God. In order to do this, the church must maintain a cultural and legal distance from the state. The church too must be free from the societal institutions which seek to domesticate the Gospel to the service of legitimating authority. Thus, the church is not a "religion" but is a unique social body that witnesses to the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God,

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[22]George Mantzarides, "New Statistical Data Concerning the Monks of Mt. Athos," *Social Compass* 22, no. 1 (1975): 97-106; George Mantzarides, "Mount Athos and Today's Society," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 26 (fall 1981): 225-36.

which is not of this world. Romanides's and Yannaras's hesychast universalism addresses the necessity of religious freedom from the state and nation, yet does not go far enough in separating the church from culture. Volf's use of Orthodox theology provides a necessary reminder of the importance of maintaining a proper distance between the culture while also participating in the culture. Thus, the possibility for the development of an Orthodox understanding of religious liberty is contained in the thought of Romanides and Yannaras. The fundamental recognition of the inherent dignity of the person, who expresses her being in acts of love, may provide a theological basis for such an understanding of religious freedom rooted in the very Being and personhood of God.

APPENDIX

Permission Letter to Use Archives

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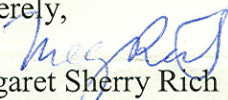
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