**Introduction**

**Advancing the Neo-Patristic Project**

Eastern Orthodox theology today grows increasingly factious over the proper reception and interpretation of the Church Fathers. The focus of this multi-faceted debate centers on what Georges Florovsky termed “neo-patristic synthesis.” Unfortunately, Florovsky devoted little effort toward developing a rigorous definition, nor did he attempt a sustained demonstration of his methodological proposal. In consequence, his immediate legacy became a reactionary rejection of modernity in favor of a “return to the Fathers.” Twentieth-century Orthodox theology became virtually synonymous with patristic theology. More recently, however, scholars have been re-thinking the neo-patristic project by emphasizing the constructive and ecumenical aspects of Florovsky’s thought. Some Orthodox are even questioning whether neo-patristic theology should not be abandoned in favor of a *post-*patristic endeavor that focuses on (re)contextualizing the writings of the Fathers.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Simply put, there are three “schools” competing for the future of Orthodox theology. The traditionalists and progressives stand in direct opposition to one another with Florovsky’s neo-patristic school occupying the ill-defined middle ground. The emergence and re-emergence of these schools is a complex and often polemicized story that is still being written. I cannot presume to provide here a complete account of Orthodox theology over the past one hundred and fifty years, but an overview of this history will provide the necessary context for the following chapters that critically engage and expand upon the work of Florovsky’s most faithful and renowned theological heir: John Zizioulas.

**The Standard Narrative**

The dominant narrative of contemporary Orthodox theology propagated throughout the latter half of the twentieth century presented Florovsky’s model of neo-patristic synthesis as a corrective to the modernizing theology of the so-called Russian Religious Renaissance, or Russian school.[[2]](#footnote-2) In particular, Florovsky condemned the so-called sophiology, expounded by Vladimir Soloviev and advanced by Sergius Bulgakov, for having more in common with modern philosophy than with the Fathers.[[3]](#footnote-3) In particular, he saw in sophiology a tendency toward monism, even pantheism, derived from the German Idealism of Hegel and especially the later Schelling.[[4]](#footnote-4) Standing against the influences of European philosophy, Florovsky proposed that Orthodox theology return to historical formulations of doctrine rather than give way to modern theological innovations. Valliere bluntly states that “Florovsky rejected the notion [that] Orthodox theology required any sort of alliance with modern philosophy. He championed tradition-based patristic Orthodoxy, not philosophical sophic Orthodoxy.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

The standard narrative pits Florovsky’s patristic defense of ontological dualism regarding God and the world against Bulgakov’s philosophically derived monism. For Florovsky, the world is created *ex nihilo,* whereas for Bulgakov the world is created by God and so ultimately comes *ex Deo.* For Bulgakov and others of the Russian school, God is unthinkable and non-existent apart from the world. Russian religious philosophy therefore belongs to the philosophical tradition extending from Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus to Kant, Hegel, and Schelling. In direct opposition to philosophical accounts of the God-world relation which denied divine transcendence, the neo-patristic school emphasized the patristic explanation of God’s immanence and transcendence by appealing to the essence/energies distinction articulated by St. Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century.[[6]](#footnote-6)

As the generation of Russian modernists began to disappear in the middle of the century, it became clear that their school, too, was not long for this world. Valliere notes that the neo-patristic school had “effectively sidelined the Russian school by the late 1940s…Almost no one in the Orthodox world talked any longer about going ‘beyond the fathers.’”[[7]](#footnote-7) By 1968, Florovsky could report: “I do not see anyone following the ‘sophianic way.’ Fr. Sergius [Bulgakov] has been nearly forgotten. Only a few follow Berdyaev. This is understandable, for there is nowhere to go.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

**The Revised Narrative**

In the twenty-first century, theologians are beginning to question the prevailing narrative that paints Florovsky as the savior of historical Orthodoxy from the threat of philosophical innovation. Instead of pitting Florovsky against Bulgakov, or the neo-patristic school against the Russian school, the trend is to reject a binary opposition in favor of a more nuanced narrative. This means, first of all, that “it does not seem fair to the thinkers of the Russian Religious Renaissance simply to accept Florovsky’s resolute condemnation of their work at its face value.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Florovsky’s program is recast as far more compatible with the Russian school than he himself would have allowed. For example: Paul Gavrilyuk argues that “the foreshadowings of Florovsky’s theological program are already discernable in the Russian Religious Renaissance;” Brandon Gallaher demonstrates that “Florovsky’s theology is also very much a development of German Idealism;” and Aristotle Papanikolaou reveals the “‘neo-patristic’ character of Sergius Bulgakov’s theology.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

There is no need to evaluate the specific arguments offered in support of this revised narrative, for there is no question that Florovsky’s program was influenced by philosophical trends. Nor is there any question that Bulgakov’s sophiology appealed to certain patristic precedents. As Matthew Baker has shown, Florovsky’s criticism of the Russian school was in no way based on a strict opposition between sacred tradition and secular philosophy: “Florovsky’s work contains a profound emphasis upon the task of theology as an ecclesial exercise in *fides quaerens intellectum*, a reasoning from the divine economy apprehended in faith and within tradition towards a cognitive apprehension of revealed Truth, constitutive of true philosophy.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

Gavrilyuk is certainly correct to point out that “the debate between the generation of Bulgakov on the one hand and the generation of Florovsky on the other was not *whether* patristic theology was foundational…but rather *how* to engage the patristic tradition this side of modernity.”[[12]](#footnote-12) However, Gavrilyuk mistakenly reasons from this observation to the assertion that “Florovsky’s program need[s] to be understood as a theological option *within* the Renaissance, not merely as a theological alternative to the Renaissance.”[[13]](#footnote-13) This revised narrative has succeeded in shedding new light on Florovsky and his interlocutors, but it seems motivated more by a desire to revive the Russian school than by an interest in historical accuracy.

**Three Schools**

The fact that we should avoid any facile depiction of the two schools—e.g. philosophers v. historians or modernists v. traditionalists—does not mean that we should infer a genuine continuity between the Renaissance and Neo-patristic schools. Florovsky himself understood the formal similarities between the Russian school and his own project, which led him to evince an ambivalence toward its leaders. In one of the first published uses of the phrase “neo-patristic synthesis,” Florovsky alternates between affinity and antipathy:

It was a noble endeavor, and a daring and courageous one…Unfortunately, this reinterpretation was unnecessarily linked with the adoption of German idealistic philosophy…There is no need to endorse their findings and speculations. But it is high time to walk in their steps…The standing legacy of this school is not their peculiar conceptions, but precisely their aim: to show and to prove that a modern man can and must persist in his loyalty to the traditional faith and to the Church of the Fathers without compromising his freedom of thought and without betraying the needs or requests of the contemporary world…We are perhaps on the eve of a new synthesis in theology—of a neo-patristic synthesis, I would suggest. Theological tradition must be reintegrated, not simply summed up or accumulated.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Here, Florovsky sets up a dichotomy between the Russian school’s aim, which is admirable, and its findingsandspeculations, which are condemnable*.* Thus, whereas the standard narrative distinguishes Florovsky from the Russian school because it identifies the latter with its conclusions rather than its aims, the revised narrative suggests that Florovsky actually belongs to the Russian school because of a common aim and in spite of very different conclusions.

Florovsky himself would seem to propose a different narrative altogether. As the above passage suggests, Florovsky imagines the neo-patristic synthesis as occupying a middle ground between two extremes. On the one hand, the Russian school begins with philosophy and reinterprets patristic doctrines to adhere to a pre-conceived system. And on the other hand, the traditionalists eschew philosophy in favor of uncritically repeating the ancient words of the Fathers. In contrast to both of these, Florovsky advocates engagement with contemporary philosophies as well as creative interpretations of the patristic tradition while remaining faithful to the Spirit of the Fathers, if not their exact words. Just as the apostle Paul speaks of having the “mind of Christ” though he rarely quotes Christ’s words, Florovsky exhorts theologians to acquire the “mind of the Fathers.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

Since it is Lossky—rather than Florovsky—who became the preeminent neo-patristic theologian of the twentieth century, the neo-patristic school garnered a decidedly conservative reputation. Lossky’s denigration of philosophical reasoning in favor of mystical *apophaticism*, derived primarily from Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory Palamas, pulled the neo-patristic school away from Florovsky’s middle ground in the direction of traditionalism. This is not to suggest, however, that Lossky’s theology merely repeats the words of the Fathers. Rather, Lossky belongs to the traditionalist school because of his narrow view of patristic tradition.

Lossky assumes a level of consistency among the Eastern Fathers that is historically untenable. Gavrilyuk rightly claims that “While it is possible to regard Lossky’s theology as a species of the neo-patristic synthesis, both in method and in content, he departed from Florovsky substantially. In his approach to patristic sources, Lossky stressed a logical connection of ideas, rather than their concrete historical genealogy.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Lossky and his heirs proceed as if a synthesized tradition were always and already driving the work of individual Fathers; as if a synthesis was objectively present in the Fathers instead of constructed by each new generation according to its own questions and concerns. In short, Lossky and the traditionalists tend to read the Fathers as if they were all disciples of Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory Palamas. Such interpretations are clearly at odds with Florovsky’s vision of neo-patristic synthesis.

The consequence of the neo-patristic school’s shift towards traditionalism is that the middle ground was left unoccupied. Florovsky’s neo-patristic program never actually developed into a “school.” Therefore, recent scholars are right to reject the standard narrative of twentieth-century Orthodox theology. However, the revised narrative offered by these critics is no less flawed. Florovsky belongs neither to the traditionalists nor to the modernists. Therefore, as Baker suggests, “a renewed assimilation of [Florovsky’s] perspective is a necessity today, overcoming both the shortcomings of the neo-patristic approach as currently received, and the temptations of liberal theology hazarded by its critics.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Christian Hellenism and Ecumenism**

In developing his vision of neo-patristic synthesis, Florovsky introduced two corresponding concepts which help clarify his mediating position between traditionalism and modernism: “Christian Hellenism,” and “pseudomorphosis.” All too often, these terms have been misunderstood as promoting a regressive traditionalism against progressive modernism. In fact, Florovsky employs these concepts in order to combat tendencies toward both traditionalism and modernism. On one hand, the affirmation of Christian Hellenism suggests a wholesale integration of dogmatic faith with intellectual culture. On the other hand, the repudiation of theological pseudomorphosis is an invitation for Orthodoxy to rediscover its own particular history and identity.

Florovsky advocated the Hellenism of the Fathers not as a particular philosophical system but as a method of applying philosophical rigor to the doctrines of the faith. Indeed, he bluntly states that “Hellenism means philosophy.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Christian Hellenism, says Florovsky, “begins with the truths of faith and finds therein the light of reason. One can say that the Christian dogma contains by way of premises the entire metaphysics…The Christian philosopher has to find, define, and explain these premises. Christian philosophy is a speculative exegesis of the Christian fact.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Christian Hellenism concerns dogma but is not itself dogmatic. It leaves a great deal of room for significant differences and disagreements among theologians; it is ecumenical. Florovsky does not hesitate to include the Latin Fathers among Christian philosophers: “Christian Hellenism is much wider than one is prepared to realize. St. Augustine and even St. Jerome were no less Hellenistic than St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Chrysostom…Pseudo-Dionysius was influential in the West no less than in the East…Thomism itself is surely Hellenistic. …Christian Hellenism was never a peculiarly Eastern phenomenon.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

Florovsky also points out, however, that certain thinkers were more Hellenic than Christian, and “some of them went astray. One would naturally think here of Origen or of Psuedo-Dionsyius.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Indeed, “Medieval Scholasticism was perhaps overburdened with unreformed philosophy. Yet what was repudiated in the Reformation was Philosophy itself. Away from philosophy and back to the Bible, as if they were radically irreconcilable…Morals and psychology were introduced instead.”[[22]](#footnote-22) For Florovsky, a long tradition of overly-Hellenized Christianity led the Reformers to adopt a de-Hellenized, or anti-philosophical, Christianity.

Protestant Europe, however, could not long sustain a total rejection of philosophy. Baker summarizes Florovsky’s reasoning, saying: “It is no coincidence that Idealism arose in the Protestant milieu: having rejected the tradition of Christian-Hellenic philosophy (albeit in the form of a debased scholasticism), Protestant thought was eventually thrown back onto pre-Christian Greek metaphysics, of which German Idealism was a kind of atavism.”[[23]](#footnote-23) Most problematically, the “infinite qualitative distinction” between God and the world was lost.[[24]](#footnote-24)

In responding to de-Christianized Hellenism, Florovsky is careful not to swing the pendulum back toward fideism. Baker explains:

Florovsky agrees with Kierkegaard and neo-orthodoxy in their critique of idealism and their emphasis upon the need for Christian thought to begin with the event of the Incarnation. However, he objects, the new rejection of philosophy reduces historical man to passivity. Alternatively, the neo-scholastic solution of an “unchanged Aristotle” is an unworthy compromise…Between the Scylla and Charybdis of Hellenized Christianity and irrationalist fideism, the only way forward lies in return to the Christianized Hellenism of the Fathers.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Christian Hellenism equally opposes the de-Christianized Hellenism of the Enlightenment and Idealism (Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Marburg Neo-Kantians) and the de-Hellenized Christianity of religious existentialism and dialectical theology (Kierkegaard, Shestov, Brunner, Bultmann, early Barth).[[26]](#footnote-26)

Of course, Florovsky was not concerned with the essentially Protestant dichotomy between faith and philosophy for its own sake. He took up this theme because he found Orthodox theologians adopting it. Eastern theology became increasingly influenced by incommensurable strands of scholasticism, fideism, idealism, and existentialism. Not that Orthodox theologians fully embraced any of these western modes of thought. Yet instead of seeking a creative synthesis of Christianity and philosophy, Eastern theologians were content to vacillate between faith and philosophy, fideism and metaphysics, without concern for coherence or consistency.[[27]](#footnote-27) Florovsky explains:

Not seldom, Western manuals were directly used in Orthodox schools, in a rather promiscuous and eclectic manner, Roman and Protestant together. One may even speak of a certain “pseudomorphosis” of Orthodox theology. And yet there was no real “encounter” with the West. Influence and imitation are not yet “encounter.” The study of the West in the East was limited to the needs of polemics and refutation. Western weapons were used to fight the West.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Eastern theology remained formally distinct from Western theologies, but the actual content of Orthodox theology had lost its unique properties.[[29]](#footnote-29) By defining itself in opposition to Western ways of theology, Orthodoxy failed to foster its own tradition. The ancient faith of the Church Fathers had become a fossil, sedentary and lifeless.

Florovsky’s program of returning to the Fathers, therefore, was aimed less at rejecting Western forms of theology and more at recovering an authentic form of Eastern theology. Indeed, the neo-patristic project belongs to the ecumenical movement insofar as a re-discovery of the unique Orthodox identity must precede any genuine rapprochement between East and West.

Still, Florovsky does not shy away from criticizing Western theologies. For even criticism can serve an ecumenical purpose: “It is not enough to refute or reject western errors or mistakes—they must be overcome and surpassed through a new creative act.”[[30]](#footnote-30) For Florovsky, East and West belong to a singular tradition but are separated due to “a disintegration of mind.” The way forward for ecumenism is therefore “not that of a *correlation* of parallel traditions, but precisely that of the *reintegration* of a distorted tradition.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Florovsky would seem to have no interest in de Regnon’s facile determination that the contrary modes of Eastern and Western Trinitarian theology should be held together in spite of (or because of) their differences. Instead, reintegration of the estranged traditions requires a “reconciliation” and a new “overarching synthesis.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

Florovsky himself never proposed a comprehensive neo-patristic synthesis of Eastern and Western Christian Hellenism. Instead, he was content to lay the historical and conceptual groundwork on which future generations could create speculative theological systems. Unfortunately, the majority of Florovsky’s heirs took a different route and directed their efforts towards expounding the fundamental superiority of Eastern Palamism over Western Thomism. Oddly enough, Florovsky agreed with this assessment and was not wary of saying so. Thus we arrive at the tension in Florovsky’s thought. On the one hand, he was convinced that East and West could be reconciled by a grand, overarching theological system. But on the other hand, his writings did very little to indicate that such a system was actually possible.[[33]](#footnote-33)

In the present project, I leave behind Florovsky’s particular thought and instead focus on his most prominent student. Like Florovsky, John Zizioulas advocates a middle way between traditionalism and modernism. Unlike Florovsky, though, Zizioulas ventures to create a theological system. The following chapters think with and beyond Zizioulas in order to fulfill Florovsky’s vision of an overarching ecumenical synthesis.

**John Zizioulas**

Known primarily for the successful yet controversial reception of a collection of essays published in English as *Being as Communion,* Metropolitan John of Pergamon has become one of the most influential theologians of the twenty-first century. Born in Greece in 1931, Zizioulas began his studies in 1952 at the universities in Thessaloniki and Athens. Then, after spending a year at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland, he traveled to the United States in 1955 to continue his studies at Harvard, where he encountered Georges Florovsky (at Harvard from 1956-1964). Except for a two-year hiatus to fulfill his mandatory service in the Greek military, Zizioulas spent the next ten years in America, working on two doctoral theses. Under the direction of Florovsky, Zizioulas submitted a dissertation on Maximus the Confessor, but this work was never published and is now lost. The other thesis, supervised by George Williams, was on the topic of patristic ecclesiology. Zizioulas eventually submitted this work to the University of Athens, instead of Harvard, in 1966.[[34]](#footnote-34)

In the late sixties, Zizioulas was involved with the Faith and Order commission of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Then in 1970 he taught patristics at the University of Edinburgh before taking up a position as Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Glasgow where he remained for fourteen years. In 1985 *Being as Communion* appeared in English and marked Zizioulas as a leading Orthodox voice.[[35]](#footnote-35) The following year he was ordained Metropolitan of Pergamon. Subsequently he has held academic positions in Thessaloniki, Geneva, King’s College London and the Gregorian University in Rome. More recently, the Metropolitan has served as the Orthodox chair on the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Now in the twilight of his theological career, Zizioulas’s influence continues to grow. Books and dissertations abound placing Zizioulas in dialogue with other notable thinkers.[[37]](#footnote-37) As a member of the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan advises Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and was instrumental in organizing and setting the agenda for the 2016 Orthodox Council in Crete. Still, Zizioulas’s theological and ecumenical positions have garnered all manner of criticism from every corner of the theological world.

Two broad criticisms in particular have been leveled persistently at Zizioulas. First, critics have claimed that Zizioulas’s theology is more philosophical than theological. And second, Zizioulas is often faulted for neglecting, if not rejecting, the ascetical and ethical aspect of the faith. The former criticism I regard as specious and already thoroughly refuted by Zizioulas himself and by others. Thus I give it only minimal attention here and do not revisit it in the following chapters. The latter criticism, however, is not without merit. It is true that Zizioulas rarely addresses ascetical or moral theology with more than a few lines. Indeed, this is the criticism that motivates the entirety of the current project. In its most basic form, my thesis is that Zizioulas’s theology, properly understood, contains a deeply ascetical dimension and provides a basis for a thoroughly and uniquely Christian account of the ethical life.

**Patristic Existentialism**

Zizioulas is often accused of imposing twentieth-century, existentialist personalism onto the Fathers. There can be no question that he is influenced by certain philosophers of that movement, nor is there any doubt that he accepts certain of their questions and problems as central to the contemporary concerns of humanity. The issue is whether Zizioulas derives his answers and solutions from these philosophers or from the Fathers. In other words, this criticism is tantamount to a traditionalist criticism of modernists. Traditionalists maintain a strict separation between philosophy and theology and therefore reject modernist methods of correlation that compromise the kerygma. But Zizioulas is no modernist. Like Florovsky, he occupies the middle ground between traditionalists and modernists. Zizioulas’s theology seeks to synthesize the tradition of the Fathers so as to create a coherent system of thought—a Christian philosophy. This means he cannot be content to repeat the Fathers, relying always and only on their exact words.

For the sake of clarity, we can distinguish three basic strands of this criticism leveled at Zizioulas, though all three are perhaps indivisible. First is the general charge that he relies on philosophy to interpret Christian doctrines and thereby distorts the canon of faith. Second, there is the more specific claim that he is an existentialist philosopher rather than a Christian theologian. And third, the most specific criticism claims that Zizioulas deliberately misinterprets the Fathers in order to substantiate his own personalist philosophy. I will address the particulars of each strand, but it should be remembered that the criticism is fundamentally a rejection of Florovsky’s neo-patristic program.

The criticism that Zizioulas relies too much on philosophy has been repeatedly employed by John Behr. Even though Behr usually avoids direct reference to Zizioulas, his allusion to the author of *Being as Communion* is perfectly clear:

The dogmatic formulae of the Church are not abstract, detachable statements which we can use to construct a metaphysical system responding to our existential or philosophical concerns. Of course, theological reflection became ever more abstract, but the point of such ongoing reflection is not to describe ultimate structures of “reality,” to elaborate a fundamental ontology, whether of “Being” or “communion” (or both), which then tends to function as if it constitutes the content of the revelation itself…The aim of such theological reflection was and is to articulate as precisely as possible, in the face of perceived aberrations, the canon of truth, so as to preserve the undisturbed image of the Christ presented in the Scriptures.[[38]](#footnote-38)

For Behr, philosophy is based on human reason and speculation, whereas theology derives from divine revelation. Abstracting from the canon of truth in order to arrive at a philosophical account of “ultimate reality” is therefore incompatible with the task of theology. Behr sees no theological need for Zizioulas’s preoccupation with ontology. Indeed, he sees it as a wholly inappropriate use of sacred theology. To extrapolate a “fundamental ontology” from Being and/or communion ultimately “reduces the Christian confession to an odd mixture of metaphysics and mythology.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

In defense of Zizioulas, Alan Brown claims that Behr belongs to a group of anglophone Orthodox patristic scholars who have broken with the neo-patristic school and instead proclaim “the consensus patristic interpretation of Anglican postliberalism to be the position of Orthodox theology *simpliciter*.”[[40]](#footnote-40) Postliberal Orthodox theologians therefore belong to the traditionalist school insofar as they prioritize the examination of individual authors and texts rather than the creation of a patristic synthesis. For Behr and others of this school, it seems that the task of Orthodox theology was completed at some point in the past. Behr concedes that the Fathers used philosophy in order to combat “perceived aberrations,” but this is, apparently, no longer necessary.

Behr’s criticism of Zizioulas suggests that constructive, philosophical theology is now obsolete because all possible heresies were refuted by the Fathers. In this light, Behr’s criticism appears untenable. The Fathers used increasingly abstract and philosophically complex concepts to combat heresies because the heresies themselves derived from philosophically sophisticated ideas. In a similar fashion, Zizioulas does not attempt to construct a “fundamental ontology” for its own sake. Such would be an exercise in de-Christianized Hellenism. But neither is Zizioulas interested in Behr’s de-Hellenized Christianity. Like Florovsky, Zizioulas advocates a neo-patristic synthesis of philosophy and theology—a Christian Hellenism.

Despite Zizioulas’s critical and restrained reception of existentialist and personalist philosophers, some have maintained that he is more existentialist than theologian.[[41]](#footnote-41) Zizioulas forcefully responds that

such criticism entirely misses the point on which patristic theology and modern existentialist philosophy fundamentally differ. For not a single one of these philosophers would draw his personalism from a source other than a study of the human being. This is exactly what I consistently refuse to do…

Both the Cappadocians, read correctly, and I myself stress that, in spite of any “deficient” analogies between human and divine persons, true personhood is only what we observe in the Trinity, not in humanity.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Zizioulas claims to derive his personalism from Trinitarian theology and not the other way around, as some would have it. This rebuttal does not satisfy critics, however, since it opens up the deeper question of the patristic provenance of Zizioulas’s Trinitarian ontology.

The Metropolitan attributes his Trinitarian ontology to the Cappadocians. He claims that they were the first to identify ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*, subsistence) with πρόσωπον (*prosopon*, person) and give these terms ontological primacy over οὐσία (*ousia*, substance, essence). Critics maintain that the Cappadocians make no such innovation in ontology. They argue that while the Cappadocians may be responsible for popularizing the use of *prosopon* as a synonym for *hypostasis*, the Fathers do not give personhood ontological priority over substance. Indeed, these critics point to texts wherein certain Fathers use *hypostasis* and *prosopon* as synonyms for individual (ἄτομον) or particular substance (ιδική οὐσία).[[43]](#footnote-43) These sorts of examples ostensibly prove that the patristic tradition wholly subscribes to substance ontology rather than any form of personalism.[[44]](#footnote-44)

In response to this claim that he purposefully misreads the Cappadocians, Zizioulas offers a two-pronged apologia. First, he addresses the specific issue. He claims that “this equation of πρόσωπον with ἄτομον, made by Gregory of Nyssa [and Maximus], was not meant to be applied to divine personhood.”[[45]](#footnote-45) And even if certain Fathers sometimes refer to the divine *hypostases* as individuals, they certainly do not mean to use these terms univocally regarding the Trinity and human beings. If the notion of individual used “in the case of human beings were to be transferred and applied to divine personhood in an unqualified way, as meaning person *tout court*, we would end up with three Gods.”[[46]](#footnote-46) Zizioulas reasons that this is why “the term ἄτομον never found its way into the official dogmatic vocabulary with regard to the holy Trinity.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

Even if the Cappadocians do not intend to distinguish person from individual in exactly the way Zizioulas suggests, neither did they intend to suggest that ontological categories can apply to God and humans in the same way. Zizioulas’s constructive reading of the Fathers suggests that the Trinity is three *hypostases* and persons but not individuals; animals are *hypostases* and individuals but not persons; and only human beings can be referents of all three terms. These helpful distinctions cannot be made using substance ontology alone. The Metropolitan is not mis-reading the Fathers; he is reading them charitably. In other words, Zizioulas does not read the Cappadocians, or the Fathers in general, as historical artifacts. Nor does he view patristic tradition as bound by the exact words used by any particular Father. It is the “mind of the Fathers” that matters.

Therefore, the second prong of Zizioulas’s apology has to do with the hermeneutical task of the theologian. He says that “dispute about words contributes only to philology and history. Theology is about fundamental matters of faith.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Despite his constant appeals to patristic sources, Zizioulas is not interested in doing patristic theology. Nor is he a historian like his teacher at Harvard. He is a neo-patristic theologian. Zizioulas does not study patristic tradition; he participates in the tradition.[[49]](#footnote-49)

**Ontology and Morality**

The central tension in Zizioulas’s oeuvre is not between philosophy and theology (reason and revelation) as is most often suggested. Rather, it is between ontology and morality (being and act). Numerous commentators have noticed a dearth of insight into the ascetical and ethical aspects of the tradition to accompany Zizioulas’s considerable contributions to Trinitarian theology, anthropology, and ecclesiology. Zizioulas ostensibly disregards moral transformation through ascetical discipline and instead focuses exclusively on the ontological transformation experienced in the Eucharist. This has led some critics to conclude that Zizioulas has little regard for moral theology. And indeed, these critics are correct if moral theology is defined in such a way as to conflate ethics and ontology as does Western theology from Augustine and Aquinas up to Rahner and Barth.

Eastern theology, says Zizioulas, takes a different path. Early on, the Greek Fathers rejected philosophy’s identification of being and activity in order to preserve God’s absolute freedom and transcendence from the world. Zizioulas does not employ this distinction to polemical effect, however. Instead, he concludes that Eastern and Western theologies are prone to different errors:

Orthodoxy is often thought of…as a vision of the future or heavenly things without an interest in history and its problems. By contrast, Western theology tends to limit ecclesiology (and actually the whole of theology) to the historical content of the faith—to the economy—and to project realities belonging to history and time into the eternal existence of God. …Orthodox theology runs the danger of historically disincarnating the Church; by contrast the West risks tying it primarily to history, either in the form of an extreme Christocentrism…lacking the essential influence of pneumatology or in the form of a social activism or moralism…[[50]](#footnote-50)

Thus the central tension between ontology and ethics in Zizioulas’s work is also a tension between Eastern and Western ways of theology. The crucial question, then, is how this tension can be resolved. Zizioulas’s answer echoes that of his teacher:

The two theologies, Eastern and Western, need to meet in depth, to recover the authentic patristic synthesis which will protect them from the above dangers. Ecclesial being must never separate itself from the absolute demands of the being of God—that is, its eschatological nature—nor from history. The…Church must always incarnate its eschatological nature without annulling the dialectic of this age and the age to come, the uncreated and the created, the being of God and that of [humanity] and the world.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Like Florovsky, Zizioulas advocates that East and West adopt a neo-patristic project that binds them together and therefore mitigates the distinct risks of their individual theological trajectories.

In *Being as Communion*, Zizioulas lays out his proposal for an overarching ecumenical system centered on the event of the Eucharist. Drawing on his early work on patristic ecclesiology, he argues that the Eucharist constitutes an absolutely unique event wherein eschatological being meets historically situated activity. In the Eucharist, ontology and ethics momentarily merge in an experience of *being as communion.* “The Eucharist, as distinct from other expressions of ecclesial life…manifests the Church not simply as something instituted, that is, historically *given*, but also as something *con-stituted*, that is constantly realized as an event of free communion, prefiguring the divine life and the Kingdom to come.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

As helpful as Zizioulas’s proposal is for merging the concepts of eschatological being and historical action, it does not solve the ultimate tension between ontology and morality. The Eucharist may be the central event of the Church, and it may even be considered an ethical act insofar as it promotes the ultimate good of human beings. But in Zizioulas’s theology, the imperative to participate in the eucharistic event seemingly supersedes all other imperatives. Zizioulas has not so much synthesized Eastern and Western theologies as subsumed the latter into the former. The Eastern emphasis on the eschatological Kingdom remains central while the Western emphasis on historical activity remains marginalized.

**Communion and Being**

The present volume is an appreciative yet critical extension of Zizioulas’s theological system. Zizioulas has constructed an ingenious synthesis of patristic and philosophical insights. Nonetheless, commentators are right to suggest that his system devalues the ascetical and ethical aspects of the Christian tradition. Consequently, his goal of bridging Eastern and Western ways of theology falls short. The fault in not in his system itself, however. In fact, the system, properly expounded, demands a robust ascetical and moral theology. The problem is that while Zizioulas sets forth an innovative framework for differentiating two separate ontologies—two different definitions of “being”—he effectively re-confuses them, building a system on an equivocal and inconsistent ontology. The following chapters offer an interpretation of Zizioulas’s theological system for the purpose of (1) providing a coherent account of his dual-ontology and (2) expounding the implicit ethical aspect of his theological system. In consequence of these two objectives, I also uncover a more nuanced way of differentiating Eastern and Western ways of theology which opens new possibilities for ecumenical encounter.

The title of this project is an obvious homage to Zizioulas’s best known work. However, I have reversed the order of the terms and changed the preposition to a conjunction. The reasons for these changes are threefold. First, the alteration expresses the simultaneously interpretive yet critical nature of the project. Second, the change rebuffs the prevalent misconception that Zizioulas intends to posit a relation of strict identity between being and communion. And third, it signals the ontological primacy of communion over being. The titles of the chapters also reflect parallel distinctions derived from communion and being.

The first chapter, “Personhood and Divine Being,” concerns Zizioulas’s Trinitarian theology, which is primarily derived from his reading of the Cappadocian Fathers. According to Zizioulas, the Cappadocians invent a new ontology of personhood in order to respond to a renewed form of the Arian heresy. In light of this heretical revival, the Cappadocians found Athanasius’s defense of the Trinity inadequate. Zizioulas argues that the Cappadocians therefore revolutionized ontology with three philosophical moves. First, they distinguished *hypostasis* from *ousia*. Second, they identified *hypostasis* with *prosopon*. And third, they gave *prosopon* ontological primacy over *ousia*.

In effect, the Cappadocians introduced an alternative ontology—not in place of substance ontology but in addition to it. In consequence of this ontological revolution, the relation between “being” and “act” became much more complex. Athanasian theology—which still prevails in both East and West because of its simplicity—identifies the immanent Trinity with the unknowable divine substance and the economic Trinity with the divine will and activities. The problematic ambiguity of this theology is evident in the tension between the Thomistic and Palamite traditions that both lay claim to the Athanasian legacy.

In contrast to Athanasius, the Cappadocians identify the immanent Trinity with the unknowable and ineffable Persons and the economic Trinity with the divine Persons who are inherently related to the created world*.* In consequence, both the divine essence and divine activities must be identified with the economic Trinity and not the immanent Trinity. I argue, therefore, that Zizioulas’s reading of the Cappadocians provides an alternative to both Thomistic and Palamite theology. Or, rather, it provides a way to synthesize the two: God may be called *actus purus* but only when we consider the economic Trinity. Likewise, we can affirm the essence-energies distinction but only if we reinterpret the doctrine to distinguish between the transcendent Persons and the immanent energies of the divine substance. In expounding this complex dual-ontology, this chapter reveals the key to understanding the whole of Zizioulas’s theology and thereby lays the groundwork for the following chapters that reveal and develop the role of ascetic morality in Zizioulas’s system.

The second chapter, “Personhood and Human Being,” examines whether and how Zizioulas’s theological personalism affects theological anthropology. Following the Christology of Athanasius reinterpreted through the lens of Cappadocian ontology, Zizioulas contends that humans are not created as persons but are granted the possibility of personhood through the work of the incarnate Son of God. The doctrine of deification, therefore, is interpreted as “personification.” For it is impious to contend that human beings should become divine in the same way that the Trinity is divine. The divine substance is beyond the reach of humanity, but personhood, i.e. ontological communion, is possible for humans who are granted to transcend their human substance just as the immanent Trinity transcends the divine substance. I argue that communion with the Trinity is possible for human beings only according to personal ontology. By contrast, substance ontology makes ontological deification impossible.

Chapter Three, “Sacraments and Ascesis,” extends the argument of Chapter Two by examining the two different ways in which the doctrine of deification is described by the Christian tradition. Virtually all of the Fathers speak of deification as both a sacramental and an ascetical endeavor. The problem is that the Fathers do not offer a synthetic account of the relation between the sacraments and ascesis. Indeed, the Fathers tend to speak of the sacraments independently of ascesis and vice versa—as if they are two separate but somehow complementary paths to deification.

Against the tradition, Zizioulas argues that deification is sacramental and only sacramental. Consequently, he has been heavily criticized for eschewing the ascetical aspects of the faith. But in defense of his position, I demonstrate that ascetical deification is not deification at all. Whereas the sacraments offer ontological communion with the Trinity, ascesis can accomplish only a moral imitation of the divine attributes.

But if ascesis does not accomplish deification, why do the Fathers speak as if it does? In the fourth chapter, “The Eucharist and Repentance,” I contend that ascesis relates to deification in the same way that the Cross relates to the Resurrection and the in the same way repentance relates to the eucharistic event. Without ascesis, the Cross, and repentance, there can be no deification, Resurrection, and Eucharist. Indeed, the Cross is an ascetic act of repentance and the Eucharist is a deifying foretaste of the Resurrection. Christ’s commands to imitate the divine attributes culminate in the command to take up our own crosses and follow after his kenotic death for the sake of others. Therefore ascesis is best understood as radical repentance, for it involves taking responsibility not only for one’s own sins but for the sins of others—even unto death.

The final chapter, “Communion and Ethics,” attempts to flesh out the ramifications of penitential ascesis for Christian ethics. Theological personalism and eucharistic ecclesiology have been employed by various other theologians in order to promote a Christian ethics based on the notion of communion. The problem is that these theologians invariably confuse and conflate ontological communion with moral communion. Consequently, the relationship between the Church *ad intra* and the Church *ad extra* is blurred or lost altogether; sacraments become moral imperatives, and moral imperatives become sacraments. Such confusion betrays a misunderstanding of the fundamental distinction driving Zizioulas’s theology. For Zizioulas, the purpose of moral actions is penitence, not pietistic perfection. Only the sacraments can bring about ontological communion that transcends morality. Without this distinction between morality and ontology, Zizioulas’s theology has little to offer to Christian ethics; indeed, without this distinction, Christian ethics has little to offer to the world.

1. In June 2010, a major Orthodox conference was held at the Volos Academy for Theological Studies on the controversial theme of “Neo-Patristic Synthesis or Post-Patristic Theology: Can Orthodox Theology be Contextual?” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Notable figures include Nicholas Berdyaev, Sergius Bulgakov, George Fedotov, Pavel Florensky, and Nicholas Lossky. See Nicolas Zernov, *The Russian Religious Reniassance of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “In elaborating a sophiology Bulgakov continues in the tradition of Soloviev and Schelling. Unwilling to accept the Neo-Kantian reduction of the transcendental subject of human culture to 'the epistemological subject,”...Bulgakov posits a super-individual ground of humanity, a human *hypostasis* in God [called World Soul, Divine Sophia, the Pleroma, demiurge]...The fluidity of the terminology, a feature also of Soloviev’s sophiology, allows Bulgakov to annex a variety of thinkers to the presumed sophiological tradition, including Plato, Plotinus, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, John Scotus Erigena, Jacob Boehme, Franz Baader, Schelling...Sophiology is not a gnostic quest for truths beyond the world but reflection on creative processes taking place within the world." Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 260–61. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Schelling’s “positive philosophy” was particularly influential. See ibid., 236, 253–78, 295–96, 356–57; See also Jennifer Newsome Martin, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Critical Appropriation of Russian Religious Thought* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 11–21, 50–54, 68, 110–12, 163; Dale M. Schlitt, *German Idealism’s Trinitarian Legacy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 71–104. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See, for example, Georges Florovsky, “St Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers,” in *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, vol. 1, The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1972), 105–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 4–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Florovsky, Letter to Iu. Ivask, November 16, 1968, Vesnik RKhD, 130 (1979), 50, cited in Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid., 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., 3; Brandon Gallaher, “‘Waiting for the Barbarians:’ Identity and Polemicism in the Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Georges Florovsky,” *Modern Theology* 27, no. 4 (2011): 679; Aristotle Papanikolaou, “Eastern Orthodox Theology,” in *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Chad Meister and James Beilby, Routledge Religion Companions (London: Routledge, 2013), 538. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Matthew Baker, “‘Theology Reasons’ – in History: Neo-Patristic Synthesis and the Renewal of Theological Rationality,” *Θεολογία* 81, no. 4 (2010): 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Georges Florovsky, “The Legacy and the Task of Orthodox Theology,” *Anglican Theological Review* 31, no. 2 (1949): 69–70; See Baker, “Theology Reasons,” 107; Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, 259–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See, for example, Florovsky, “St Gregory Palamas,” 107–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Baker, “Theology Reasons,” 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Georges Florovsky, “Ad Lectorem,” in *On the Tree of the Cross: Georges Florovsky and the Patristic Doctrine of Atonement*, ed. Matthew Baker, Seraphim Danckaert, and Nicholas Marinides (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Publications, 2016), 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Georges Florovsky, “The Idea of Creation in Christian Philosophy,” George Florovsky Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Unpublished translation/revision in Florovsky’s own hand of “L’idée de La Creation Dans La Philosophie Chrétienne,” *Logos: Revue Internationale de La Synthése Orthodoxe*, no. 1 (1928): 3–30 cited in Baker, “Theology Reasons,” 89. Baker says the manuscript is “dated 1949 but not the same as the published 1949 article of the same name.”; Cf. Georges Florovsky, “The Idea of Creation in Christian Philosophy,” *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 8, no. 3, Supplementary Issue (1949): 53–77. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Florovsky, “Ad Lectorem,” 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid., 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Baker, “Theology Reasons,” 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Florovsky, “Ad Lectorem,” 139–40. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Baker, “Theology Reasons,” 86–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The Russian Renaissance school constitutes a notable exception to this diagnosis, which again explains Florovsky’s restrained praise for Soloviev and Bulgakov. But ultimately, Florovsky judged the sophiologists to be more beholden to their philosophical systems than to the Christian tradition. We might say they were more interested in Hellenizing Christianity than Christianizing Hellenism. This is a relatively minor distinction compared to the difference between Christian Hellenism and de-Christianized Hellenism. Indeed, the “revised narrative” described above attempts to conceal any meaningful difference at all. But Florovsky certainly thought the difference significant enough to distinguish his neo-patristic project from the Russian Religious Renaissance. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Georges Florovsky, “The Problem of Ecumenical Encounter,” in *Re-Discovering Eastern Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of Dom Bede Winslow*, ed. A. H. Armstrong and E. J. B. Fry (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Pseudomorphosis is a mineralogical term indicating the process whereby one mineral (or other substance) replaces another without changing the original shape; e.g. the petrification of wood is the replacement of wood by silica. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology, Part Two*, vol. 6, The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky (Vaduz: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 301. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Georges Florovsky, “Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church,” in *Aspects of Church History*, vol. 4, The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1975), 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Georges Florovsky, review of *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, by Vladimir Lossky, *The Journal of Religion* 38, no. 3 (1958): 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. “Florovsky’s appeal to re-Hellenize Orthodox theology was provocative and potentially misleading. Those who were not familiar with his comprehensive critique of non-Christian Hellenism--particularly what he considered to be its pagan and German Idealist expressions--could mistake such an appeal for a version of Greek cultural chauvinism. While Florovsky was no Greek nationalist, his exclusive preference for Greek theological categories sent a mixed message and was often misunderstood in the Greek context. In principle, Florovsky welcomed the future creative Orthodox appropriation of western theology. But in practice, as a historian, he fiercely attacked all forms of western influences in modern Russian theology, condemning them as distortions.” Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, 269. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Published in English as *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Relatively little is known about the particulars of Zizioulas’s life. As yet, only brief biographical sketches have appeared. See Patricia A. Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 3–5; Svein Rise and Staale Johannes Kristiansen, eds., *Key Theological Thinkers: From Modern to Postmodern* (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2013), 435–37; Luke Ben Tallon, “Our Being Is in Becoming: The Nature of Human Transformation in the Theology of Karl Barth, Joseph Ratzinger, and John Zizioulas” (PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2011), 229–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Recent studies on Zizioulas include Yik-Pui Au, *The Eucharist as a Countercultural Liturgy: An Examination of the Theologies of Henri de Lubac, John Zizioulas, and Miroslav Volf* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017); Scott MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); Alan Maxym Lysack, “The Ascetic and Eucharistic Dimensions of Orthodox Spirituality: Metropolitan John Zizioulas and the Debate in Contemporary Orthodox Theology” (PhD diss., Sherbrooke University, 2016); Jason Gary DelVitto, “Encountering Eucharistic Presence within a Postmodern Context: A Dialogue among Chauvet, Schmemann and Zizioulas” (PhD diss., Duquesne University, 2013); Nicholas A. Zientarski, “The Eschatological Role of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Eucharist: The Epiclesis in Modern Liturgical Reform in Light of the Pneumatology of Yves Congar, John Zizioulas, and Robert Jenson” (STD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2015); Tallon, “Our Being Is in Becoming.” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. John Behr, “Faithfulness and Creativity,” in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 176; See also John Behr, “The Paschal Foundation of Christian Theology,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2001): 123; John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 74–75; John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2006), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Behr, The Nicene Faith, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Alan Brown, “On the Criticism of *Being as Communion* in Anglophone Orthodox Theology,” in *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See, for example, Lucian Turcescu, “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’ and Other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa,” *Modern Theology* 18, no. 4 (2002): 527–39; Nicholas Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas’ Final Theological Position,” *The Heythrop Journal* 52, no. 4 (2011): 684–699. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. John D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Turcescu focuses on Gregory of Nyssa’s treatise *Ad Graecos* in which *hypostasis* and *ousia* are used in the same way that Aristotle uses primary and secondary substances. “‘Person’ versus ‘Individual,’” 533–34; Cf. PG 45, 177; See also Johannes Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 111; Törönen points out that Maximus uses the terms in the same way. *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53–55; Cf. *Letter 15*, PG 91, 549BC. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Loudovikos adds examples from Leontius of Byzantium and Ps. Cyril of Alexandria. “Person Instead of Grace,” 689–90; Cf., PG 86, 1305C and 77, 1149B respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Zizioulas, Communion and Otherness, 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See also Brown, “On the Criticism of *Being as Communion*,” 66–67; Aristotle Papanikolaou, “Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu,” *Modern Theology* 20, no. 4 (2004): 600–608. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 19–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid., 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)