
“Traditional Orthodoxy” as a Postcolonial Movement*

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Scholarship has long since demonstrated that colonialism does more than exploit a community materially. In colonial and postcolonial settings, indigenous populations lose control of what it means to be; they are challenged by what it means to exist in a world dictated by an alien discourse. In such a setting, through complicated and overlapping responses of acquiescence, assimilation, and resistance, boundaries are renegotiated and ethical prioritizations transform. In a postcolonial setting, the naming of self and the naming of the good are recalibrated to account for the shadow of the former master. The postcolonial narration of self and other is an innovative, hybrid narration because it is defined by a shadow that once was not but now is. In such a setting, responses are disparate, with each voice longing in its own way for a return to the before. But there is no return. Polyphonic cries, some pointing back, some forward, many in multiple directions, splinter the community and the trauma of colonialism re-cycles seemingly forever.

This article argues that a phenomenon of modern Orthodox Christianity—the rise of “traditional Orthodoxy” as a category of self-definition—is best understood as a postcolonial movement.¹ Specifically, it argues that the emergence of traditional Orthodoxy as a distinctive and constitutive marker of communal identity, one that sets its adherents apart ideologically,

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¹ Maria Todorova and Milica Bakic-Hayden offer some of the most important early efforts to apply the resources of postcolonial critique to historically Orthodox communities and emphasize the “discourse” of Balkanism in Western European culture and scholarship. See, esp., Maria Todorova, “The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention,” *Slavic Review* 53 (1994): 453–82, and *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Milica Bakic-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 917–31. See also Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994); and Sally Henderson, “The Elephant in the Room: Orientalism and Russian Studies,” *Slovo* 19 (2007): 125–35. Of more recent note, see Christopher D. L. Johnson, “‘He Has Made the Dry Bones Live’: Orientalism’s Attempted Resuscitation of Eastern Christianity,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82 (2014): 1–30.

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morally, and (sometimes) sacramentally from a broader Orthodox Christian communion, should be understood as the by-product of an inner-community struggle for meaning and relevance in a the wake of centuries of theological and cultural captivity.² While the slogans “traditional” and “traditionalist” Orthodoxy were first created by fringe groups who resisted a modernization of the liturgical calendar, the catchphrases have more recently been co-opted by a broader, more loosely organized but similarly aimed subgroup within the Orthodox Church whose animating spirit is resistance to the perceived threats of a Western and/or modern contamination of Orthodox teaching and practice.

LATINS, OTTOMANS, AND COLONIAL ORTHODOXY

While some scholars continue to question the legitimacy of applying the category of colonialism to medieval societies,³ Byzantinists are increasingly describing the impact of the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent Frankish and Venetian settlements in Greece and the Aegean as one of colonization.⁴ For the purposes of this article, we do not need to define the medieval Western occupation of Byzantium as a colonial encounter per se, so much as establish that Eastern Christianity began a complicated cultural and religious dependency on Latin Christianity during the era of the Crusades and that this dependency developed into an even deeper intellectual entanglement with and subservience to the West during the Ottoman period.⁵ Even before the Crusaders seized Constantinople and established

² To be clear, I am not proposing that religious communities, such as Orthodox Christianity, are colonized independently of political and commercial enterprises. Rather, my goal is to draw upon the resources of postcolonial critique to help us to understand internal fractures within the Orthodox community that coincided with a series of political and cultural captivities of Orthodox populations.

³ To be sure, there are several factors that distinguish the Byzantine/Crusader encounter from that of the modern tri-continental experience. Perhaps the most important difference is that the Byzantines and the Crusaders shared a common Greco-Roman and Christian inheritance, even if they had appropriated those traditions distinctively. Among the more notable challengers to the use of “colonial” categories for premodern societies, see Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), esp. 15–24.

⁴ See, e.g., Averil Cameron, *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); and Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Joshua Praver was the first scholar of the Crusades to describe the endeavor as one of colonialism. See his *The Crusaders' Kingdom: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (New York: Praeger, 1972). While several of his assumptions have since been challenged, scholars have fruitfully applied the resources of postcolonial critique to the European/Middle Eastern engagement. See, esp., Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁵ John McGuckin is one of the very few scholars to employ the resources of postcolonial critique to assess the ways in which the legacy of colonialism (both political and intellectual) has framed the Orthodox view of itself. See his “Orthodoxy and Western Christianity: The Original European Culture War?,” in *Orthodoxy and Western Culture: A Collection of Essays Hon-*

the so-called Latin Empire of Byzantium in 1204, the Byzantines had come to rely on Western European military and mercantile assistance. It is one of the great paradoxes of Christian history that while Greek and Latin Christianity would enter into formal schism in this same period (a development certainly exacerbated by the Crusades), the unprecedented engagement of Christian East and West enabled by Frankish settlement in Byzantium also led to the first Greek appropriations of Latin theological ideas and methods.⁶ What is more, as Byzantine political fortunes went into steep decline after 1204, so too did the confidence of Greek theological superiority vis-à-vis Latin Christianity. Even those late-medieval Greek Christians like Gennadios Scholarios (the first Patriarch of Constantinople under the Ottomans) who opposed reunion with Western Christianity declared that Latin theological training and analysis was superior to that possessed by the Greeks.⁷

The ambivalence of Eastern Christianity’s dependence on/resistance to the Western other did not cease with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. If anything, it increased in both scope and complexity. For example, because the Ottomans largely forbade Christian printing, the majority of Orthodox theological and liturgical printing took place in Italian print shops. And because the Ottomans stymied Christian theological education, the majority of Orthodox clerics from the Ottoman zone who received formal training did so as resident aliens in Western seminaries in Padua, Pisa, Florence, Halle, Paris, and Oxford.⁸ In 1576, Pope Gregory XIII founded the College of St. Athanasius for the explicit purpose of training Greek stu-

oring Jaroslav Pelikan on his 80th Birthday, ed. Valerie Hotchkiss and Patrick Henry (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2005), 85–108.

⁶ For example, the first translation of Augustine into Greek occurred in the latter part of the thirteenth century and was explicitly commissioned by the Byzantine emperor Michael VII Palaiologos in an effort to bridge the Latin/Greek theological divide. On this topic, see Elizabeth Fisher, “Planoudes’ *De Trinitate*, the Art of Translation, and the Beholder’s Share,” in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008), 41–62. The same period witnessed a remarkable appropriation and critical reflection on the thought of Thomas Aquinas. See Markus Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Matthew Briel, “A Greek Thomist: Providence in Gennadios Scholarios” (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2015).

⁷ Gennadios Scholarios, *Œuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios*, vols. 1–8, ed. Martin Jungie, Louis Petit, and X. A. Siderides (Paris: Bonne Press, 1928–1935), esp. vol. 4, 403–10, 495–96; vol. 6, 179–80. See also Marie-Hélène Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400–vers 1472): Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparation de l’empire Byzantin* (Paris: Institut Français d’Études Byzantines, 2008), esp. 345–48.

⁸ See M.-J. le Guillou, “Aux sources des mouvements spirituelles de l’Église orthodoxe de Grèce: I. La renaissance spirituelle du XVIII siècle,” *Istina* 1 (1960): 95–128. See also Kallistos Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1964), 5–16. The lone Greek academy outside of the Ottoman Empire was the Flanginian School that operated in Venice from 1665 to 1905 but this served as a general educational school rather than a seminary.

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dents.⁹ While some Greeks were deeply suspicious of such endeavors, there is little doubt that theological education under the Ottomans was a perennial problem. As a result, several Greek bishops, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, invited Latin missionaries to preach to their flocks and even hear confessions.¹⁰

As a consequence of this dependence on Western Christianity, Orthodox theological education, both in Ottoman territory and even in Russia (albeit for different reasons), came to resemble its Western counterpart in unprecedented ways.¹¹ Whether inside the Ottoman zone or outside of it, Orthodox theological reflection underwent what Georges Florovsky called a *pseudomorphosis* by appropriating the categories, terminology, and method of argumentation then current in Western theological discourse.¹² Rather than a creative, stimulating encounter between Latin and Orthodox ideas, for Florovsky, this was a captivity of the soul of the church, a “malignant schism” between theological thought and historical practice.¹³ Perhaps the single greatest example of this Eastern Christian reliance on Western Christian theological ideas and methods was the wide-scale adoption of “manual theology” as it had been developed in the Roman Catholic world from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, as the Orthodox Church grew increasingly dependent upon the West, so too did opposition to Latin Christianity increase in certain

⁹ The eighteenth-century polemicist Eustratios Argenti claimed that the sole purpose of the College of St. Athanasius was to lure unsuspecting Orthodox students who came to the West to study and, in turn, transform them into “Papists” who would act as secret agents for the Vatican upon their return to the East. Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 53.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Roman authorities typically forbid Latin clerics from hearing the confessions of Orthodox Christians. But the practice appears to have been widespread nonetheless. Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 21–23. Ware notes that this cooperative relationship between Greek bishops and Latin religious began to deteriorate around the turn of the eighteenth century.

¹¹ Even before the Westernizing reforms of Peter the “Great,” Russian theological education had begun to appropriate models of scholastic education. See Georges Florovsky, “Encounter with the West,” in *Ways of Russian Theology*, vol. 1 (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing, 1979), 33–114. For the premier examination of Florovsky’s thought and contribution to modern Orthodoxy, see Paul Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. 158–91.

¹² Florovsky, “Encounter,” 72 and 85. See also J. M. Karmiris, *Ἐπερόδοξοι ἐπιδράσεις ἐπὶ τὰς ὁμολογίας τοῦ ἱερατοῦ* (Jerusalem, 1949).

¹³ Florovsky, “Encounter,” 85.

¹⁴ While it is true that the reliance on Western theological models of religious education did not lead the Orthodox to abandon dogmatic positions that set it in opposition to Roman Catholicism, the appropriation of neoscholastic techniques, such as manual theology, highlight the complicated dependence of the Orthodox on the West. The Romanian theologian, Dumitru Stăniloae was likely the first major Orthodox theologian to reject manual theology. See Lucian Turcescu, ed., *Dumitru Stăniloae: Tradition and Modernity in Theology* (Iasi: Center for Romanian Studies, 2002), 7; and Radu Bordeianu, “(In)Voluntary Ecumenism: Dumitru Stăniloae’s Interaction with the West as Open Sobernicity,” in *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, ed. George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 240–54.

Orthodox circles.¹⁵ In 1484, a mere thirty-one years after the Ottoman capture of Constantinople, a council of bishops forbade the distribution of the sacraments to Latin Christians for the first time in history. Significantly, that council also sought to standardize the practice by which a Latin Christian could become a member of the Orthodox faith—they were to undergo the sacramental rite of chrismation.¹⁶ By the eighteenth century, however, some Orthodox apologists had grown so hostile in their approach to Latin Christianity that they declared Catholic baptism to be wholly ineffective and insisted that converts to Orthodoxy be baptized a second time.¹⁷ This revival of anti-Latin hostility arose from a combination of factors, including Ottoman policy, the deteriorating relationship between Greeks and Venetians in Venetian controlled territory, Roman Catholic missionary activity, and a rising frustration among some Orthodox Christians toward those who were willing to intermingle and co-celebrate with Latins.¹⁸

Thus, from the eighteenth century until the twentieth, waves of Orthodox activists—notably many of them Western-educated—attempted to purge

¹⁵ There were, of course, several triggers for this. Perhaps most significantly was the rise of aggressive Latin proselytism throughout the Ottoman region and the fact that the Ottomans were quite successful in pitting Greek and Latin Christians against one another. See George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, “Orthodox Naming of the Other: A Postcolonial Approach,” 1–22; and Norman Russell, “From the ‘Shield of Orthodoxy’ to the ‘Tome of Joy’: The Anti-Western Stance of Dositheos II of Jerusalem (1641–1707),” 71–82; both in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*.

¹⁶ The Constantinopolitan Synod of 1484 was a regional council, likely influenced by the Ottomans, which officially repealed the “false” union of East and West achieved at the Council of Florence in 1438. Convened by Patriarch Symeon I, the synod for the first time articulated the precise path that Latin converts to Orthodoxy must pursue (they were to be Chrismated, not rebaptized). While it was only a regional synod, its position became the official position throughout the Orthodox world and remained as such for centuries, even though local practice in areas where Orthodox and Catholics lived in proximity were more receptive to one another. For more on where this council sits within the development of Orthodox opinion on Latin conversion in the Middle Ages, see Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, esp. 64–68; and George Dragas, “The Manner or Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church with Special Reference to the Decisions of the Synods of 1484 (Constantinople), 1755 (Constantinople), and 1667 (Moscow),” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44 (1999): 235–71.

¹⁷ While hardly straightforward or universally accepted, there had been calls within Orthodox circles for the rebaptism of Latin Christians stretching back centuries. There is a long scholarly literature on the subject, highlighted by Louis Petit, “L’entrée des catholiques dans l’Église orthodoxe,” *Échos d’Orient* 2 (1899): 129–38; Martin Jungie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalem ab Ecclesia catholica dissidentium*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1926–35), 103–25; Raymond Janin, “La Répatisation des Latins dans les Églises Orthodoxes,” *Annuaire de l’École des législations religieuses* 3 (1952): 59–66; and John Karmires, “Πῶς δεῖ δέχεσθαι τοὺς προσιόντας τῇ Ὀρθοδοξίᾳ,” *θεολογία* 25 (1954): 211–43. For a thorough bibliography up to 1999, see George Dragas, “The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church,” esp. 254–67. The most thorough study of the eighteenth-century controversy is Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, esp. 65–107.

¹⁸ The evidence of intermarriage and sacramental commingling is extensive. See Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 18–21.

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Orthodox teaching and practice from a Latin captivity.¹⁹ One of the first was Dositheos II, Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1669 to 1707, who composed a series of anti-Latin treatises.²⁰ Among other things, he identified four “beasts” hostile to the true church: Lutheranism, Calvinism, the Jesuits, and the Gregorian calendar. As we will see, the link between the new calendar and Western heresy became a dominant theme for the traditionalist movements of the twentieth century.²¹

Alongside this intellectual reliance/captivity, Eastern Christians in the Ottoman zone experienced an equally complicated relationship with the political agents of Western colonial power. Under the Ottoman *millet* system, Christians constituted a distinctive ethno-minority that conflated political and religious identity.²² When successive portions of this minority community achieved political independence from the Ottomans in the nineteenth century, the emergent nation-states of Greece, Serbia, and Romania effectively exchanged one “alien” sovereign for another. Western European colonial figures had played decisive roles in the various Balkan wars of independence, and in the aftermath of those wars they continued to exert considerable political influence in the new nation-states.²³ As just one example of the way that Balkan independence represented a form of proxy colonization by Western European powers, the new kings of Greece and Romania were actually drawn from the royal courts of Germany.²⁴ And even though a nationalist education, which had a particular Orthodox character, was a central component of the nationalist program, these countries continued to employ the Western patterns of instruction that they had relied upon during the Ottoman period. Indeed, for authors such as Photius Kontoglou, the

¹⁹ Dositheos II of Jerusalem, Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1669–1707, was one of the first such figures. In the eighteenth century, Eustratios Argenti and Patriarch Cyril V of Constantinople developed a series of polemical works attacking various aspects of Roman Catholic teaching, especially the role of the papacy.

²⁰ See Russell, “From the ‘Shield of Orthodoxy.’”

²¹ See Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 32.

²² Under the Ottomans, the Orthodox were a nation within a nation, known as the *Rum Millet* (the Roman nation), with distinctively second-class status. They endured higher rates of taxation, were forced to wear distinctive clothing, could not proselytize, and could not forge any political connections with foreign entities. Perhaps even more threatening to the community was the fact that an Ecumenical Patriarch could only be elected with the approval of the sultan. See Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 2–5.

²³ For an examination of the role of the Orthodox Church in the emergent nation states in the Balkans and of the extent to which that role was orchestrated by Western European colonial figures, see the illuminating essays in Lucian Leustean, ed., *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014). And, for a study of the ways in which Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire worked with European powers to achieve their independence (often a great expense to themselves), see Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), esp. 35–48.

²⁴ In both Greece and Romania their German kings were Roman Catholics who did not convert to Orthodoxy even though Orthodoxy was declared the official religion of their kingdoms.

“authentic tradition” of Orthodox aesthetics had survived the Ottoman period only to be corrupted by Western influence in the century after the Greek War of Independence.²⁵

At roughly the same time that emergent nation-states in the Balkans were turning West in a bid to break free of the Ottomans, a new anti-Western intellectual movement in Russia sought to return the Russian empire to the values and institutions of its early history.²⁶ Although its adherents came in many stripes and often advanced competing solutions, this Slavophile movement viewed the “Westernization as modernization” programs inaugurated by Peter I and Catherine II as the cause of social and economic unrest within the empire. Particularly problematic in the eyes of the Slavophiles was the full-scale adaptation of Western methods of education, including seminary education.²⁷ Although Orthodox Christians in Russia had accumulated Western modes of theological education under different historical circumstances than their coreligionists in the Ottoman zone, many Slavophiles saw the current state of religious education in Russia to be a full-scale corruption of the Orthodox theological tradition.²⁸ The Slavophile movement was a potent force on the Russian intellectual scene in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it was not uncontested. And it is precisely within this contested intellectual climate that the Russian émigré theologians in Paris in the 1930s and 1940s sought to make sense of an Orthodox theological tradition that simply could not escape the West.

While it is clear that the Orthodox did not suffer colonial exploitation in the same way or to the same degree as those in the tri-continental regions, it is equally clear that Orthodox Christians—whether in the Balkans, Asia Minor, the Near East, Russia, or even in the West—were tethered to Latin Christianity and Western European political forces from the fifteenth until the twentieth century in ways perceived by many to be both oppressive and in need of correction.²⁹ Thus, at roughly the same time that Roman Catholic authors of the *Nouvelle Théologie* were attempting to purge manual theology and neoscholasticism from their tradition, a handful of influential Orthodox thinkers set out to do the same. In fact, Russian émigré authors in Paris, such as Vladimir Lossky and Georges Florovsky, worked alongside

²⁵ Photius Kontoglou, “The Orthodox Tradition of Iconography,” in *Fine Arts and Tradition: A Presentation of Kontoglou’s Teaching*, ed. and trans. Constantine Cavaros (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 2004), 51–68.

²⁶ For an overview of the Slavophile movement, its ideology, and its impact on politics, religion, and culture, see Laura Englestein, *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia’s Illiberal Path* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

²⁷ See Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, “Orthodox Naming of the Other,” esp. 12–13.

²⁸ Vera Shevzov, “The Burdens of Tradition: Orthodox Constructions of the West in Russia (late 19th–20th cc.),” in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, 83–101.

²⁹ One of the more interesting aspects of this is the way in which the Orthodox entered into Protestant/Catholic theological debates by appropriating the language and categories of one in attacks against the other. The case of “Calvinist” Patriarch, Cyril Loukaris, and his subsequent condemnations is particularly illuminating. See Ware, *Eustrathios Argenti*, 8–16.

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their Roman Catholic counterparts in order return their respective traditions to the purity of the patristic sources.³⁰ But the Orthodox project of liberation by Lossky, Florovsky, and especially their Greek students (e.g., John Romanides and Christos Yannaras) was more ambitious because at one and the same time, these authors were, in part, seeking to release the Orthodox world from a Catholic captivity of imagined Babylonian proportions.³¹ As we will see, a parallel project in Orthodox aesthetics sought to cleanse Orthodox art and music from Western influence and return it to its historic Byzantine and Russian idiom.³² Like postcolonial activists elsewhere, these initiatives of reclamation were both bound and enabled by the discursive horizon that the activists sought to escape. Indeed, it is hard to comprehend this nostalgic promotion of the age of patristic teaching or the emphasis on early Christian history without recourse to then-current Western philosophical trends such as historicism and romanticism.³³

This act of intellectual and spiritual retrieval, a quest for the before, for all of its emphasis on the ancient church and its traditions, never embraced the category or emphasized the exact expression “traditional Orthodoxy.” That neologism first emerged in a very specific context as part of a targeted propaganda effort to juxtapose and resist the adoption of the “New” calendar in the Church of Greece.

THE FIRST TRADITIONALISTS

The combination of the adjective “traditional” with the nouns “Orthodox” (for a community) or “Orthodoxy” (for a set of beliefs) does not seem to occur prior to the late twentieth century.³⁴ Database searches for the combination produced zero results for patristic, Byzantine, and Ottoman-era texts.³⁵ Nor does there seem to be any evidence for its cognates in Slavic lit-

³⁰ Interestingly, authors like Lossky and Florovsky partnered with historically minded Roman Catholics in order to fend off the perceived “modernist” approaches of other Orthodox theologians such as Sergius Bulgakov. On the Orthodox/Roman Catholic parallel project, see Sarah Coakley, “Eastern ‘Mystical Theology’ or Western ‘Nouvelle Théologie’? On the Comparative Reception of Dionysius the Areopagite in Lossky and de Lubac,” in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, 125–41.

³¹ See Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, “Orthodox Naming of the Other.”

³² Léonid Ouspensky was a Russian émigré to Paris in the early twentieth century who, as both theorist and practitioner, led the revival of a Russian iconographic tradition that preceded the influence—corruption, to his mind—of Western expressions of naturalism in religious art. A friend and contemporary of his, Photius Kontoglou, was the Greek iconographer and theologian most responsible for the return of the Byzantine idiom in contemporary Greek Church painting.

³³ It is also rather revealing that the historical project relied so deeply on the resources of Roman Catholic patristic scholarship, such as the *Sources Chrétiennes*.

³⁴ In ancient and Byzantine Greek *παραδόσιμος* (-α, -ον) serves as the adjective for “traditional,” with *παραδόσις* serving as the noun for “tradition.”

³⁵ A proximity search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* with a fifteen-word gap between the two terms yielded zero results.

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erature.³⁶ The first consistent adoption of the pairing belongs to a subset of Greek “Old Calendarists,” who coined the phrase in an effort to assert the correctness of their belief in contradistinction to the errors of innovation that they asserted against the broader Orthodox world.

In 1923, at a precarious moment in Balkan-Turkish animosity, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Melitius IV, convened a Pan-Orthodox synod in Constantinople in the hopes of pushing the Orthodox Christian world to join with other Christians in the adoption of the more astronomically accurate Gregorian calendar. With several Orthodox primates absent and unable to gain consensus on the proposal, the synod instead adopted a modified Julian calendar wherein the fixed dates (Christmas, Annunciation, etc.) would align with the Gregorian calendar (moving everything thirteen days earlier), but the calculation for Easter and all of the moveable feasts associated with it (Lent, Ascension, Pentecost, etc.) would continue to follow the Julian calculation. The Synod of 1923 further decided that each of the thirteen self-governing churches (Greece, Serbia, Jerusalem, etc.) could determine for themselves whether or not they would adopt this revised Julian calendar.³⁷ Most of them did so, with the Church of Bulgaria being the most recent adopter in 1963.³⁸ As we might expect, there were dissenters within some of the self-governing churches that moved to the modified calendar. In Greece, Cyprus, and Romania especially, small communities opposed to the revised calendar broke sacramental unity with their local church.³⁹

Officially separating from the Church of Greece in 1935, the Greek branch of the Old Calendarists first adopted “True Orthodox” as the preferred adjectival self-justification for their sacramental separation from the institutional church. But despite its best rhetorical efforts, the group was marginal, and within a generation it was itself severely fractured.⁴⁰ By

³⁶ Beginning in the 1890s, Berdyaev and other like-minded Russian theologians and historians adopted the phrase “historical Orthodox” as a kind of pejorative critique against a group of school theologians in the Russian Orthodox Church who rejected the idea of doctrinal development and insisted, instead, on the permanent and unchanging nature of Orthodox teaching. My thanks to Paul Gavriluk for pointing me to this development.

³⁷ Today, there are fourteen self-governing churches in the Orthodox world. In 1923, there were thirteen. The Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia was recognized as an autocephalous church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1998.

³⁸ The only churches that have not adopted the revised Julian calendar are Jerusalem, Georgia, Serbia, and Russia. The Church of Finland has accepted the Gregorian calendar completely.

³⁹ It is important to clarify that the autocephalous churches that retained the Julian calendar in its entirety did not recognize the splinter groups within Greece and Cyprus who similarly insisted upon the old calendar. Instead, the Churches of Jerusalem and Russia remained aligned with the Churches of Greece, Cyprus, and Romania, despite the difference of calendar.

⁴⁰ The marginal and fractured reality of what survives of the Old Calendar movement was acknowledged by one of the few remaining factions (calling itself The Holy Orthodox Church in North America) in a 1998 book designed to justify its continued existence. “Preface,” in *The Struggle Against Ecumenism: The History of the True Orthodox Church of Greece from 1924 to 1994* (Boston: Holy Orthodox Church of North America, 1998). Although biased in its orientation, this volume offers the best collection of sources about the Old Calendarist movement.

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1951, on the heels of the Greek Civil War, the Church of Greece stepped up its own rhetorical pressure and, with assistance of the Greek government, seized, closed, or destroyed several buildings associated with the movement.⁴¹ During the 1950s and 1960s the Greek Old Calendarists underwent further fractures; at one point, one of the larger groups had to turn to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) for an infusion of canonically ordained bishops.⁴² Because these groups were suppressed in Greece, many of them established dependent houses in the United States where they could, ironically, take advantage of the West's principles of religious freedom that they often derided in their apologetics.

It is noteworthy that one of the smaller factions of the Old Calendarist movement has had a significant rhetorical impact on the current global Orthodox community. In 1961, Cyprian Koutsoumpas founded the Old Calendarist monastery Saints Cyprian and Justina, in Phyle, Greece. Several years later, that monastery established a dependent house, St. Gregory Palamas, in Hayesville, Ohio, which was later moved to Etna, California. In 1981, just before the Cyprian brotherhood broke with the "True Orthodox Christians of Greece," it established the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies at St. Gregory Palamas monastery.⁴³ It was this tiny faction that was the first to emphasize the slogan "traditional" and "traditionalist" Orthodoxy (Παραδοσιακή Ορθοδοξία in modern Greek) to distinguish itself from both the broader Orthodox world and ultimately from other Old Calendarist sects. Since its founding, the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies at St. Gregory Palamas has produced a steady stream of pamphlets and short monographs advancing its particular vision of Orthodox teaching.⁴⁴ And, in 1984, it started a small periodical, published three times a year, called *Orthodox Tradition*.

TRADITION BY NEGATION

From its very inception, there has been a direct link between the Old Calendarist movement's rejection of the ecumenical movement and its resis-

⁴¹ *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*, 71.

⁴² With the rise of Communism in Russia, the Russian Church itself splintered between those who tacitly agreed to work with the Kremlin and those who went into self-imposed exile (ROCOR). The latter broke communion with the former. Like the Old Calendarists of Greece, ROCOR was decidedly monarchist and anti-Western in orientation and thus a logical ally for the Old Calendarists, especially in the United States. In the heightened political context of 1960s, the Church of Greece was able to exploit the Old Calendarist-ROCOR alliance as a threat to democracy in Greece.

⁴³ The "True Orthodox Christians of Greece," as they styled themselves, are also known as the Kallistite Synod, and were one of the larger factions. The Cyprian faction formed its own "Holy Synod in Resistance" in 1986, when the Kallistite Synod rejoined with the "Florinite Synod."

⁴⁴ They have also published a great number of English-language lives of the saints.

tance to the revised calendar.⁴⁵ That connection was not based in paranoia—when Patriarch Melitius first lobbied the Orthodox world to join the Gregorian calendar in 1920, he explicitly stated his hope that it would lead to Christian unification.⁴⁶ As many Old Calendarist apologists have been quick to assert, their concern is not simply a matter of calendar but whether and to what extent the Orthodox Christian world will resist the lure of Western Christianity.⁴⁷

Even before the expression “traditional” and “traditionalist” Orthodoxy emerged as an effective slogan for the anti-ecumenists, a small group of Orthodox writers had begun an apologetical project that juxtaposed the unchangeable character of Orthodox tradition to the ever-changing and godless character of Western culture. One of the most influential was Léonid Ouspensky, who led an effort among the Russian émigrés in Paris to revive the “traditional” style of Russian iconography, purging elements of Western-inspired naturalism that had crept into Russian religious art during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁸ According to Ouspensky, iconography had lost its traditional character and had been infected by a Western individualist and secularist outlook.⁴⁹

Photios Kontoglou (1895–1965) was a prominent artist and public intellectual in Greece who was similarly dismayed by what he took to be the wholesale infection of the Orthodox artistic tradition by Western-inspired Renaissance art.⁵⁰ Kontoglou’s passion for the Byzantine artistic idiom and his acerbic

⁴⁵ The general thrust of the traditionalists’ ecclesiology is that there is one single Christian faith, enshrined during the patristic period, and that any form of engagement with the religious other that does not repudiate the errors of the other is a capitulation of Orthodox teaching, faith, and tradition. Because, as Jonathan Z. Smith observed, the proximate other is the most dangerous, the vast majority of the anti-ecumenical concern is directed toward Roman Catholics and the Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox. Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference Difference Makes,” in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 251–302.

⁴⁶ Melitius IV, “Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1920.” For an English translation of the encyclical, see *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*, 177–81.

⁴⁷ Throughout the twentieth century, one of the few things that united all of the branches of the Old Calendarist movement was the belief that Western Christians, especially Roman Catholics, are arch-heretics, and that any collaboration with them—calendar or otherwise—was a capitulation to the truth of the One, Holy, and Apostolic faith.

⁴⁸ He believed that a “true” icon involves a spiritual and visual experience that is in continuity with the living tradition of the Church. When that experience is lacking, when the link to tradition is broken, then art becomes secularized.

⁴⁹ Léonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of the Icon*, trans. G. E. H. Palmer and E. Kadloubovsky (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, 1955), esp. 49. Léonid Ouspensky’s most developed reflection on the link between theology and iconography is his two-volume *Theology of the Icon*, trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992). For a sympathetic study of his life and thought, see Patrick Doolan, *Recovering the Icon: The Life and Works of Leonid Ouspensky* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008).

⁵⁰ Kontoglou was a Greek Christian, born in Ottoman Anatolia, who like so many other Christian intellectuals of his time went to the West (Paris) for his education. He returned to Asia Minor after WWI, but with the situation for Christians there deteriorating, he soon fled to Greece

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denunciation of Western styles were key components in the eventual resurgence of Byzantine-styled painting throughout the Hellenistic Orthodox world.⁵¹ While the majority of his writing was in the realm of art, he also wrote aggressively against the “heresy” of Roman Catholic teaching, and any Orthodox Christian (including Patriarch Athenagoras) whom he believed to be infected by it.⁵²

In one particularly revealing essay published shortly before his death, Kontoglou employed the word “Papism” as a proxy for all that he believed to be wrong with Western Christianity in general (individualism, materialism, innovation) and Roman Catholicism specifically (*filioque*, purgatory, papal infallibility).⁵³ Throughout, he juxtaposes the errors of innovation to the never-changing character of the Orthodox Church’s Apostolic Tradition.⁵⁴ Tradition functions for Kontoglou as a substitute for everything that the West is not. He offers little examination of how tradition is formed, how it is maintained, or how it is employed. Tradition is simply the safeguard against the evil of innovation.

In another essay, Kontoglou employs “tradition” as a kind of stand-in for divine grace, which enlivens the souls of the faithful Orthodox. By way of contrast, the individualistic Western modernist, who turns away from tradition,

where he eventually became a prominent writer and artist. In many ways, Kontoglou and Ouspensky were allied in their effort to restore the traditional Orthodox artistic idiom. When Ouspensky published his first treatment of the icon in Paris (Léonid Ouspensky, *L'icone, vision du monde spirituel*) in the late 1940s, Kontoglou translated it into Greek. The two did not agree on all things though: Ouspensky believed that the pinnacle of the Orthodox aesthetic was achieved by the Russian artist Rublev, while Kontoglou believed it existed in the Byzantine masters.

⁵¹ Kontoglou died in Athens in 1965, before the revival took place. But by the 1980s nearly every Orthodox Church in Greece and the United States that was newly built or could afford to replace its iconography employed the Byzantine style promoted by Kontoglou. The vast majority of Kontoglou’s writings remain in Greek only. Readers looking for English translations of some of his essays about sacred art should consult Cavarnos, *Fine Arts and Tradition*.

⁵² Kontoglou did not live long enough to comment upon it after the fact, but he knew of the planned meeting between Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem in 1965. At this historic meeting, the two leaders officially lifted their churches’ mutual excommunications dating to the year 1054 CE.

⁵³ “Papism was born of men’s haughtiness and their sinful desire to rule in their own way over themselves, for which reason the religion of Christ has been disfigured by their evil desires, their having manufactured a false Church, in which everything has been altered to agree with the materialistic and worldly proclivities of these same pseudo-Christians who created this disfigured Church.” A little later, he adds, “For centuries, they have not ceased devising cunning novelties.” Photius Kontoglou, “What Orthodoxy Is and What Papism Is,” in *Orthodoxy and Papism*, by Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Etna, CA: Center for Traditional Orthodox Studies, 1983), 53–54. For a complete list of Kontoglou’s writings, see P. V. Paschou, *Kontoglou* (Athens: Ekdoseis “Armos,” 1991).

⁵⁴ The Orthodox Church “has remained unchanged, through the course of the centuries . . . and is not subject to correction or further development, either by adding to it, or taking from it, just as nothing is lacking from it, nor is anything superfluous to it.” Kontoglou, “What Orthodoxy Is and What Papism Is,” 51–52.

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forfeits his or her soul.⁵⁵ For Kontoglou, like Ouspensky, the rejection of tradition began in Western Europe, with the Renaissance, and it gradually overtook the entire world, including Orthodoxy.⁵⁶ Although they were primarily concerned with Orthodox aesthetics and a revival of what they believed to be theologically authentic motifs, they offered a significant ideological precedent for “tradition” as a theological category of evaluation, and they used adherence to tradition as a weapon against other Orthodox who failed to recognize the threat of Western corruption.⁵⁷

In 1956, the Greek American author Constantine Cavarnos (1918–2011) founded a press in Belmont, Massachusetts, that he used to publish nearly one hundred small books on Orthodox saints and Orthodox spirituality, including several works in conversation with Kontoglou.⁵⁸ With more nuance and less explicit animus than Kontoglou, Cavarnos similarly juxtaposed the truth of Orthodox tradition against the multiple errors of Western Christianity, which most explicitly endanger the Orthodox through their participation in the ecumenical movement.⁵⁹ In writings and lectures, Cavarnos recognized the ways in which cultural and political forces at work in Greece since the time of the War of Independence had opened the door to Western assimilation. Thus, for Cavarnos, the Church of Greece had become infected by Roman Catholic religious influence as a consequence of the country’s reliance on Western political support.⁶⁰

In a characteristic lecture delivered in Athens in 1970, Cavarnos attacked a series of Western “modernisms” that plagued the “New Calendarists.”⁶¹ For Cavarnos, modernism functions as a stand-in for the cultural appropri-

⁵⁵ “Tradition is good for those who experience strongly the eternity that is within themselves and which they serve with ardor and faith, as they do religion. For they exist and live within the natural rhythm of the cosmos. Tradition is a foundation and power for living souls. Neither tradition nor anything else can rescue and enliven dead souls.” Photius Kontoglou, “Free Art and Tradition,” in Cavarnos, *Fine Arts and Tradition*, 37.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 38–50.

⁵⁷ In a remarkably discerning Master’s Thesis at St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary, Eric Freeman demonstrated that the iconological writings of Ouspensky and Kontoglou (along with those of Pavel Florensky) possess deep methodological problems and, in fact, completely fail to appreciate the history of Orthodox theological aesthetics, which was never the static form that these authors wished it to be. Eric Freeman, “Redefining the Icon: The Problem of Innovation in the Writings of Florensky, Ouspensky, and Kontoglou” (Master’s thesis, St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary, 2009).

⁵⁸ He called the press the “Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies,” which should not be confused with similarly named academic programs in the United Kingdom and Germany.

⁵⁹ Among other works, see Constantine Cavarnos *The Question of Union*, trans. Patrick Barker (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1992), and *Ecumenism Examined: A Concise Analytical Discussion of the Contemporary Ecumenical Movement* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1996).

⁶⁰ “These innovations spread gradually also among the Greeks, from the Revolution of 1821 and after, when Greece, having been freed politically from Turkey, began to be enslaved spiritually to Europe.” Constantine Cavarnos, *Orthodox Tradition and Modernism*, trans. Patrick Barker (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1992), 18–19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* The lecture was originally published in Greek by Orthodox Typos in 1971.

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ation of Roman Catholic styles of music, art, and clerical dress.⁶² The antidote to these various corruptions is Orthodox “tradition,” which is presented as a timeless character of Orthodox spirituality that was not so much articulated by the great ecumenical councils or by the fathers of the church as it was preserved, unchanged, by them.

For example, according to Cavarnos, artistic style is not a matter of cultural affinity or aesthetic choice. Only one form, the authentic Christian form of Orthodox tradition, is appropriate for Christian piety. All other artistic expressions are innovative, corrosive, and lead to apostasy.⁶³ Like Ouspensky and Kontoglou, “tradition” functions for Cavarnos as a placeholder for that which opposes the innovations of Western influence.⁶⁴ In other words, tradition is not so much a specific form of music, art, or dress as it is the constitutive remainder when Western influence has been removed. Here and elsewhere, Cavarnos offers little consideration of the possibility that the expression of Orthodox Christian art and music evolved over time. But more surprising is his penchant for supporting his various positions by quoting a handful of Anglican authors who endorse (in especially Orientalized ways) various aspects of Eastern Christian music, art, and dress.⁶⁵

From its very beginning, the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies at St. Gregory Palamas monastery integrated the insights of Kontoglou and Cavarnos into its idiosyncratic vision of Orthodox teaching—the latter even served for many years as an academic advisor to the center. The center’s first publication included a translation and commentary by the center’s director of one Kontoglou’s last anti-Catholic essays.⁶⁶ In that work, Archimandrite Chrysostomos argued that the Orthodox Church (writ large) continued to suffer under the captivity of a hegemonic Western-oriented discourse that shaped its historiographic epistemology.⁶⁷ That cultural captivity enabled the passive acceptance of, rather than a passionate resistance to, ecumenical gestures from Roman Catholicism.⁶⁸

⁶² Ironically, Cavarnos’s accusation of “modernism” is borrowed from Roman Catholic controversies of the previous century.

⁶³ “The new iconography is not only unrelated to the Orthodox faith but is actually contrary to it, since its expression is carnal rather than spiritual.” Cavarnos, *Orthodox Tradition and Modernism*, 19.

⁶⁴ Kontoglou and Cavarnos were intimate associates. Following the death of the latter, the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies published the correspondence of the two authors, revealing their shared concerns about secularism, ecumenism, and the lack of traditional faith in the broader Orthodox world. *Two Modern Titans of Mind and Spirit: The Private Correspondence of Constantine Cavarnos and Photios Kontoglou* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2014).

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Cavarnos, *Orthodox Tradition and Modernism*, 14, 17, 20, and 26.

⁶⁶ Chrysostomos, *Orthodoxy and Papism*.

⁶⁷ For authors like Chrysostomos, Cyprian, and Cavarnos, the great tragedy lies in the fact that Eastern Christians have succumbed to the hegemonic discourse of the West—they have accepted Latin historiography and it is for that reason that they are so willing to compromise and to seek union with the papists.

⁶⁸ For example, in the introduction he writes, “Orthodox have not had sufficient time to make their true stand before the other Christian religions of the West. They are still struggling to rid

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To counter that domineering narrative, Chrysostomos proposed an alternative historical account, which asserted that the authentic Christian experience had been in the Hellenistic/Roman/Christian nexus of Byzantium. The Carolingian intervention in European history had been an aberration, and its desecration of the once legitimate Church of Rome a tragedy of Christian history.⁶⁹ To understand the Orthodox Church in modern times, he writes, one must “free himself from the theological suppositions which have formed the popular Western theologies. Only then can he prepare himself to grasp what the Orthodox tradition is.”⁷⁰ Because this has not happened, because the Orthodox living in the West have failed to understand their own tradition, they “find the traditional (canonical) Orthodox refusal to pray or worship with non-Orthodox ludicrous and even un-Christian.”⁷¹ If the broader Orthodox world could only understand their own tradition and escape the spiritual lethargy imposed upon it by the West, “they [would] return to the Christianity which we *traditionalist Orthodox* have preserved intact from the time of the Apostles.”⁷²

MAINSTREAMING TRADITION

Following its initial publication, the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies embarked upon a wide-ranging campaign that simultaneously defended their particular stake in the Old Calendarist quagmire and challenged the broader Orthodox public to recognize the danger presented by the ecumenical movement. The founder of the parent monastery in Greece, now a bishop for his sect, published several anti-ecumenical pamphlets both in Greece and through the center, including *The Panheresy of Ecumenism* and *The Heresy of Ecumenism and the Patristic Stand of the Orthodox*.⁷³ The center also appropriated other aspects of the anti-ecumenical effort employed elsewhere, such as the promotion of the cult of the so-called Pillars of Orthodoxy: St. Photios, St. Gregory Palamas, and St. Mark of Ephesus.⁷⁴ For Orthodox anti-

their own thinking of historiographies, theologies, and world-views imposed on them by others. Weak in this struggle, many have simply succumbed to the enticements of an ecumenical vision and have ceased witnessing the singularity of their beliefs.” Chrysostomos, *Orthodoxy and Papism*.

⁶⁹ Although not referenced in the work, Chrysostomos draws deeply in this regard from the work of another Greek-American author, John Romanides, whom I examine below.

⁷⁰ Chrysostomos, *Orthodoxy and Papism*, 29.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷³ English translations of these works were published by the center in 2004 and 1998, respectively.

⁷⁴ Among other things, the center published a short biography of St. Mark (Constantine Cavarnos, *St. Mark of Ephesus*, trans. Hieromonk Patapios [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1997]), and as recently as 2009 the center published an English translation of a prayer service dedicated to the Pillars of Orthodoxy (Cyprian of Oreoi, *The Synaxis of the Three New Great Hierarchs* [Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2009]).

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ecumenists, these three saints are thought to be especially significant because they each, in their own way, preserved the authenticity of the Orthodox tradition against Latin error at critical historical moments (in the ninth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, respectively). But in the hands of modern polemicists, the historical presentation of these figures routinely yields to a narrative of ideological consistency.⁷⁵

By the mid-1980s, the Old Calendarists' rejection of ecumenism and its conflation of ecumenism with the errors of a Western-oriented modernism had gained considerable traction outside of the narrow confines of its sectarian community, even if it had failed to convince its new allies to break sacramental unity with the institutional church. New monastic houses in the United States within the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) that were under the spiritual supervision of the controversial Elder Ephraim routinely condemned the GOA's and the Ecumenical Patriarch's involvement in the ecumenical movement.⁷⁶ In most ways, Fr. Ephraim's monasteries were ideologically aligned with the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies and actively promoted its publications even though the two communities were not in sacramental communion with one another. Fr. Ephraim's monastic network effectively offered the advocates of traditional Orthodoxy a backdoor to institutional credibility of their ideas. It also offered access to an audience exponentially larger than the traditionalists previously possessed. Not only do Fr. Ephraim's monasteries receive a large number of lay pilgrims, but the elder counts among his spiritual disciples dozens of GOA and ROCOR parish priests who have appropriated and disseminated to their parish communities a form of the traditionalist rhetoric that had until that point existed almost entirely among the Old Calendar schismatics.

Despite the rise in criticism of the ecumenical movement beyond the Old Calendarist circle, it took time for the precise slogan "traditional Orthodoxy" to gain currency even among those most hostile to Western Christianity. For example, when George Metallinos published his influential rejection of Roman Catholic and Protestant baptism in 1983, *I Confess One Baptism*, he did

⁷⁵ These are works of modern hagiography that have purposes well beyond the goal of historical objectivity. Among other deliberate oversights, these hagiographies ignore the fact that Photios was opposed by the monastic community of his day, Gregory Palamas was a moderate among his contemporaries on the issue of the *filioque*, and Mark of Ephesus was far more willing to engage the Latin Church than any of the Old Calendarist groups who celebrate him as a defender of Orthodoxy. To my knowledge, the most extensive Old Calendar promotion of the Pillars of Orthodoxy belongs to a ROCOR community, also in the American West, Holy Apostles Convent in Buena Vista, Colorado. Holy Apostles Convent, *The Lives of the Pillars of Orthodoxy* (Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent and Dormition Skete, 1990).

⁷⁶ Technically, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States is an Eparchy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and it is thus institutionally separate from the Church of Greece, which is its own self-governing church.

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not employ any variation of the phrase “παραδοσιακή Ορθοδοξία,” nor does it appear in the 1994 English translation of the same work.⁷⁷

Perhaps one of the most important reasons for the eventual mainstreaming of traditional Orthodoxy as a marker of self-identity, at least among American Orthodox, was the broadening of the category beyond its anti-ecumenical origins. In the years just prior to the founding of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, an American convert to Orthodoxy via ROCOR, Fr. Seraphim Rose (1934–82), had begun to employ the double adjectival “traditional Orthodox” as a modifier for authentic Christian piety, worship, dress, and music (e.g., “traditional Orthodox piety” or “traditional Orthodox music”). For example, in a sermon delivered in December of 1979, he argued that Orthodox Christianity in the United States was often little more than an Eastern form of Protestantism. “Modernist” Orthodox jurisdictions—by which he meant the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and the once-Russian “Orthodox Church of America”—had capitulated to a “worldly spirit” by introducing new elements into their worship (such as pews and organs) and by shortening their services “all for the sake of making money.”⁷⁸ Rose added, however:

The churches of our Russian Church Outside of Russia are usually quite different, with no pews or organs, and a more old-worldly kind of piety; and there has been a noticeable revival of traditional church iconography and other church arts. The traditional Orthodox influence is visible even in such external things as the way our clergy dress and the beards which almost all of our clergy have. Just a few decades ago almost no Orthodox clergy in America had beards or wore *rassas* [i.e., cassocks] on the street; and while this is something outward, it is still a reflection of a traditional mentality which has had many inward, spiritual results also. A few of the more conservative priests in other jurisdictions have now begun to return to more traditional Orthodox ways, but if so, it is largely under the influence of our Church, and a number of these priests have told us that they look to our Russian Church Outside of Russia as a standard and inspiration of genuine Orthodoxy.⁷⁹

Here, the promotion of traditional Orthodoxy is not so much anti-ecumenical polemic as a bulwark against the subtle trappings of modernity. In fact, Rose was generally amenable to aspects of Latin Christian teaching—he even wrote an apology for the theology of Augustine of Hippo.⁸⁰ For Rose, traditional Orthodoxy was the antidote to modern thinking and practice that had aban-

⁷⁷ George Metallinos, *Ομολογώ ἐν βάπτισμα* (Athens: Tynos, 1996), and *I Confess One Baptism*, trans. Hieromonk Seraphim (Mt. Athos: St. Paul’s Monastery, 1994).

⁷⁸ Seraphim Rose, “Orthodoxy in America: Its Historical Past and Present,” St. Xenia Orthodox Church, accessed May 22, 2017, <http://www.stxenia.org/files/history/ortham.html>.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Seraphim Rose, *The Place of the Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church* (Plantina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983).

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doned the spiritual life and the revelation of God, far more than it was a counterattack against the church's ecumenical involvement.⁸¹

Rose is an intriguing figure. A former student of Buddhism and a practicing homosexual, he converted to Orthodox Christianity in 1962 and became a monk in 1970. Although he died young, he was a prolific writer.⁸² The themes of "traditional Orthodox" and "traditional Orthodoxy" were never central components of his rhetorical strategy, nor were they key elements of his community's self-justification like they were for the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies.⁸³ But like the center, Rose possessed a deeply sectarian bent, and it is not inconsequential that at the time of his conversion to Orthodoxy he chose a community that was in open conflict with the majority of the Orthodox world. It is also worth noting that Rose is now one of the most widely read authors among Orthodox Christians in Russia who harbor nativist and/or fundamentalist tendencies.⁸⁴

Rose's less caustic promotion of traditional Orthodoxy opened a further avenue for its adoption as a marker of self-identity. Indeed, those who actively campaign for his sainthood identify him as the quintessential spokesperson for traditional Orthodoxy.⁸⁵ Like Cavarnos, Rose assigned theological significance to a set of cultural and ritualistic practices that were then juxtaposed to modernity. In his hands, traditional Orthodoxy became a marker for any Orthodox Christian who nostalgically saw the past, even a mythologized past, as superior to the present.⁸⁶

Today, "traditional Orthodoxy" is a common marker of self-identity among a wide group of Orthodox Christians. Even the most cursory of internet

⁸¹ See, for example, the hefty tome condemning evolution via early Christian commentaries on Genesis that was assembled from his various papers by Rose's disciples nearly a generation after his death. This volume continues to attract a wide readership in Orthodox circles. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation, and Early Man* (Plantina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000).

⁸² His endorsement of the so-called Toll Houses made him a controversial writer in Orthodox circles. According to Rose, all humans must pass through a series of aerial toll houses after death as part of their initial judgment by God, where they will be accused of specific sins and either permitted to advance to the next gate or be consigned to hell. Although small and unconnected aspects of the teaching do date to the premodern period, it is widely discredited. Seraphim Rose, *The Soul after Death* (repr., Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2014).

⁸³ Although Rose was not personally anti-ecumenical in spirit, the ROCOR community was and is largely anti-Western in orientation. Ironically, ROCOR's seminary for the United States in Jordonville, New York, has always employed Michael Pomazansky textbook of dogmatic theology, which applies a very Western (scholastic) approach to the explication of Orthodox teaching. Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed. (Plantina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2009). I wish to thank Gregory Tucker for this astute observation.

⁸⁴ See Irina Papkova, *The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61.

⁸⁵ There are several websites and blogs that now circulate Rose's writings and/or advocate for his sainthood. See, among others, <http://orthodoxinfo.com>, <http://classicalchristianity.com>, and <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/notherfoundation/appreciating-seraphim-rose/>.

⁸⁶ It is likely for these reasons that he has such a large following among the most conservative elements within the Russian Orthodox Church, where Russian translations of his writing circulate widely. See Papkova, *The Orthodox Church*, esp. 62.

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searches, in English, Greek, or Russian, will yield dozens of bloggers, Facebook groups, parishes, and cross-jurisdictional Orthodox affiliations that employ “traditional/ist Orthodox” and “traditional/ist Orthodoxy” as a self-designated label of religious identification, which sets them apart—implicitly or explicitly—from other Orthodox Christians.⁸⁷ Whereas that distinction once coincided with sacramental isolation, it no longer does. Indeed, one of the most fascinating evolutions that has occurred as the slogan has become more popular is that even though its adherents often assert aggressive anti-ecumenical, anti-Western, and antimodern positions, they typically do not reject sacramental unity with those Orthodox Christians they perceive as having capitulated to those forces. Perhaps this is because they have essentially elided “traditional Orthodoxy” with notions of political and cultural conservatism rather than religious isolationism.⁸⁸

The convocation of the Holy and Great Synod in June of 2016 provided the traditional Orthodox across the world with a galvanizing moment. While some heralded the council as the most significant gathering of Orthodox bishops in more than a thousand years,⁸⁹ for many self-described traditional Orthodox, the council represented a new level of institutional betrayal of the church’s tradition. The most radical among the traditionalists asserted that the council marked the coming of the Antichrist.⁹⁰ Few went that far, but even the most measured traditionalists objected to the council’s document “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the World” because it not only affirmed the Orthodox Church’s participation in the ecumenical movement, but it officially proscribed ecumenical obstructionism.⁹¹ Indeed, hundreds of self-professed traditionalists, a group that now includes canonical bishops as well as priests, monks, and laity, undertook a massive, if

⁸⁷ For example, as of December 9, 2016, the Facebook group “Traditional Orthodoxy (Canonical)” had over 13,000 members, including the president of the largest Orthodox seminary in the United States.

⁸⁸ For an impressive study of the significant overlap between theological groups within the Russian Orthodox Church and their political ideologies, see Papkova, *The Orthodox Church*. Papkova identifies three camps (liberals, traditionalists, and fundamentalists—her terms) and compellingly shows how these religious communities reflect distinctive approaches to contemporary Russian politics, particularly as they pertain to Western engagement.

⁸⁹ The complete text of the six documents confirmed by the council is available at the official website, <http://www.holycouncil.org>. For a thorough overview of the challenges and opportunities provided by the council, see John Chrysavgis, *Toward the Holy and Great Council: Retrieving a Culture of Conciliarity and Communion* (New York: Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, 2016).

⁹⁰ In Russia, fear-mongering by some activists reached such a state that the head of the Department of External Church relations, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfiev, had to issue an official statement saying that there was no reason to view the coming synod as a precursor to the Antichrist. “Russian Church Calms down the Believers Who Consider Pan-Orthodox Council ‘Anti-Christ,’” *pravoslavie.ru*, accessed May 22, 2017, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/90349.htm>.

⁹¹ “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World,” *Holy and Great Council, Pentecost 2016*, accessed May, 22, 2017, <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/rest-of-christian-world>.

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loosely coordinated, propaganda campaign to thwart all or part of the council.⁹² One of the most fascinating aspects of the transnational dissemination of traditionalist rhetoric was the role played by bilingual converts to Orthodoxy, who, for American audiences, appeared in the vanguard of the condemnation of the council on the basis of its supposed capitulation to ecumenism, modernism, and general Westernism.⁹³ In the end, the obstructionists failed in their bid to derail the council, but they did succeed in scaling back both the language of the documents and the scope of global participation.⁹⁴

What all of the modern advocates of traditional Orthodoxy fail to understand is that the shift from “Orthodox tradition” to “traditional Orthodoxy” has genuine theological significance. Whereas the noun “tradition” (stemming from the Latin *traditio*) has been understood within Christianity to mean the continuous act of handing over, from one generation to the next, the faith of the apostles, as an adjective, the word functions as a modifier for Orthodoxy—thus implying that there are multiple forms of Orthodoxy, only one of them traditional. The great irony is that the very supposition that there could be multiple forms of Orthodoxy lies in contradistinction to the confession of a singular faith that the traditional Orthodox claim to profess. In effect, traditional Orthodoxy not only implies a certain redundancy, it also contains an inherent self-contradiction.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE IMAGINED BEFORE

As noted, in each of the Balkan independence movements of the nineteenth century, revolutionaries simultaneously harnessed Orthodox Christian sentiment as a justification for seeking liberation from their Muslim overlords (i.e., the Ottomans) and allied themselves with Western European colonial figures to achieve their nationalist objective. But the turn to the West was not unambiguous, nor was it embraced by everyone. Among the Greeks, advocates of the new Hellenism, like Adamantios Koraes, articulated the means

⁹² An extreme and largely uninformed example of episcopal neotraditionalism would be that of Metropolitan Seraphim of Pireaus. See George Demacopoulos, “Innovation in the Guise of Tradition,” *Public Orthodoxy*, accessed May 22, 2017, <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2016/03/22/innovation-in-the-guise-of-tradition-anti-ecumenist-efforts-to-derail-the-great-and-holy-council/>.

⁹³ For example, Peter Heers, a convert to Orthodoxy with fundamentalist tendencies who lived in Greece in the months before the council, used social media such as the Traditional Orthodox Facebook forum to disseminate English translations of documents produced by anti-ecumenical figures in the Church of Greece as well as updates on gatherings of anti-council activists in Eastern Europe. The most comprehensive study of the phenomenon of Protestant conversions to Orthodoxy in the United States is Oliver Herbel, *Turning to Tradition: Converts and the Making of an American Orthodox Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹⁴ Both the Church of Georgia and the Church of Bulgaria yielded to the pressure and did not participate in the council. The Church of Russia also did not participate, but it did not object to the documents. Rather, it objected to the decision to move forward without Georgia and Bulgaria. The Church of Antioch also withdrew but for reasons altogether different.

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by which Greece could assert its national distinctiveness after centuries of enslavement to the Ottomans: by following the example of European Enlightenment nations, like France, which had themselves drawn so deeply from ideas of ancient Greek democracy. Others, like Konstantinos Oikonomos, argued instead that an emergent Greece should align itself with Tsarist Russia because the Russians, unlike the British, French, and Germans, had a common Orthodox heritage.⁹⁵ The possibility of a Russian alliance faded rather quickly, but the reconstitution of an Orthodox Greece, or Romania, or Serbia, independent of Latin theological corruption, became a subject of intense scrutiny and internal division for each of these fledgling nation-states.⁹⁶

It is against the backdrop of this complicated matrix of cultural, political, and religious ambiguity that the debates about Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement and the possible adoption of the Gregorian calendar first emerged. For the Old Calendarists, the issue was never about the calendar *per se*. Nor was it even exclusively about ecumenism. Rather, the issue was the extent to which the Greek state and the Greek Church could retain an authentic identity that was free of cultural exploitation and, thus, true to an imagined religious before. As we saw with authors like Kontoglou and Cavarnos, the very articulation of the essence of Orthodox tradition was the “not West.” For them, the Church of Greece, like the Greek state, had capitulated to Western political pressure and the lure of modernity. To be genuinely Orthodox did not mean a return to the Ottomans, of course, but it did mean a steadfast rejection of every form of Western innovation.

But the rejection of the West as an instrument of communal solidarity has found broad appeal in certain traditional Orthodox circles where the political situation in Greece and Balkans has little currency. In this respect, Ouspensky and Rose offer fascinating comparisons (one Russian émigré, the other American convert) in that, while they had very different political experiences from Kontoglou or Cavarnos, they similarly developed nostalgic views of an Orthodox before that predated Western corruption.

However critical the new traditionalists were in their condemnation of Western Christianity and the ecumenical movement, their audience was always an internal one; their adversaries were always those Orthodox who failed to see the danger. Thus, it became critical to construct and reinforce an East/West binary wherein the West always represented innovation and

⁹⁵ The fault lines between pro-West/pro-Russia and pro-Church of Greece/pro-Ecumenical Patriarchate did not always align. See Dimitris Stamatopoulos, “The Orthodox Church of Greece,” in Leustean, *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism*, esp. 47–52.

⁹⁶ At the end of the twentieth century, when many of the same nations were emerging from Communist regimes that imposed secularization on their societies, there was a struggle to resolve the link between national and religious identity in a way that could account for pluralistic societies. The case of the former Yugoslavia is particularly revealing. See Balkic-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms.”

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error and the East always represented tradition and authenticity. On this score, one of the most important developments in the traditionalists' eventual canon of self-understanding was the establishment of an alternative historiography, which situated a Hellenistic and Roman Byzantium (or a Russian alternative) as the normative Christian experience.

One of the most enthusiastic spokespersons for a diametrical opposition between the authentic Christian experience of Byzantium and the depraved character of a Frankish and Popish West was John Romanides.⁹⁷ A Greek-American, Romanides studied in Paris with several of the Russian émigré theologians who were themselves engaged in the act of theological retrieval.⁹⁸ But whereas Florovsky had seen continuity with many of the fathers of the Latin patristic period, and whereas Lossky had situated the error of Latin teaching squarely in the scholastic period, for Romanides the ideological separation between East and West went all the way back to the fourth century, to the figure of Augustine of Hippo. For Romanides, Augustine was responsible for introducing a theological wedge between Christian East and West from which the West could never recover.⁹⁹ By pitting a genuine Christian Byzantium against an individualistic, materialist, and philosophically errant West, Romanides offered a historical model for Orthodox countries like Greece to free themselves not only from the theological errors of papism but from the medieval menace of the Franks, who had been the crusading scourge of Christian Byzantium, and, thus, the entire Orthodox world. Romanides, of course, was not alone. Others, like Christos Yannaras, offered similarly sweeping assessments that divided Orthodox civilization from a philosophically bankrupt West.¹⁰⁰

A POSTCOLONIAL MOVEMENT

One of the most intriguing dynamics of the Orthodox postcolonial struggle (whether it was the political activists of the Balkan independence movements, the Russian émigrés of Paris, or the traditionalists within the Greek Church) is that nearly every significant advocate of an Orthodox independence was actually educated or lived in the West. Paris alone had drawn Koraes, Ouspensky, Kontoglou, Lossky, Florovsky, and Romanides, to name

⁹⁷ See John Romanides, *Ρωμανία Ρούμελη* (Thessaloniki: Rounara, 1975), and *Franks, Romans, Feudalism, and Doctrine: An Interplay between Theology and Society* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Press, 1991).

⁹⁸ Romanides studied in several places. He received a BA from Hellenic College in Brookline, MA. He also studied at Yale University before moving to Paris. He received his PhD in Athens.

⁹⁹ See George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Augustine and the Orthodox: The 'West' in the East," in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, esp. 27–33.

¹⁰⁰ On Yannaras and the West, see Pantelis Kalaitzidis, "The Image of the West in Contemporary Greek Theology," 142–60; and Basilio Petrà, "Christos Yannaras and the Idea of 'Dysis,'" 161–80; both in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*.

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only the most obvious. Other advocates of traditional Orthodoxy, including Constantine Cavarnos, Seraphim Rose, and nearly everyone associated with the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, were educated in the United States. It is thus no wonder that, even in their most deliberate efforts to shed the yoke of Western intellectual hegemony, these authors consistently imitate the methods of Roman Catholic scholarship of their contemporaries (such as historiography and the retrieval of ancient sources). In other words, for all of their claims to return to an authentic Orthodox Christian mode of thought, these authors continuously and uncritically employed the discursive and epistemological dynamics of a decidedly Western educational frame of reference.

Although they postulated multiple means to achieve their desired independence, the advocates of a distinctive “traditional” Orthodoxy never explicitly wrestled with their most fundamental challenge: the inescapability of the Western other. What Ouspensky, Kontoglou, Romanides, and Archimandrite Chrysostomos all failed to acknowledge is that there is no return to the before that does not leave a trace of the after—any articulation of Orthodox teaching that accounts for the West, or any other “other,” is always a new narrative because of the simple fact that the narrative now must account for that other. Indeed, the “presence” of Roman Catholicism is noticeable throughout their writing.

On this score, the Orthodox story is hardly unique. Many Christian communities have wrestled with the friction that often exists at the intersection between religious tradition and modernity. We have already discussed the case of the Nouvelle Théologie in the Roman Catholic Church of the mid-twentieth century. But there are other, more provocative cases that could provide further points of comparison, such as the controversy surrounding the Pueblo Indians who attempted to retain their traditional ceremonial dance despite their conversion to Roman Catholicism.¹⁰¹ Perhaps more directly relevant is the conflict that occurred when rural African Americans moved North after World War I, only to find that their Northern coreligionists found their Christian practices too primitive and in need of modernizing.¹⁰² And there are even more explicit examples of the connection between American colonial activity and Evangelical Protestantism’s effort to bring “Christian civilization” to “primitive” parts of the world.¹⁰³ Indeed, the tension between tra-

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Protestant Christians asserted that the Pueblos needed to abandon both (i.e., their native customs and their Catholic ritual) to be part of a modern America. Their story is famously examined by Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920’s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). I would like to thank John Seitz for pointing me to this connection.

¹⁰² Milton Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land: African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁰³ See, e.g., James Reed, “American Foreign Policy, the Politics and Missions of Josiah Strong, 1890–1900,” *Church History* 41 (1972): 2430–45.

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dition and modernity and the demonization of an “other” in the context of the traditional/modernist divide is hardly unique to the Orthodox community. What is unique to the Orthodox story is that it offers perhaps the lone example in Christian history where a colonized community was Christian prior to its colonization.

Today, the promotion of traditional Orthodoxy retains much of its post-colonial heritage, not only in terms of its animating focus (anti-ecumenism, antimodernism, anti-Westernism), but also with respect to ways in which it seeks to articulate a unifying narrative of authenticity that is unmoved by external forces and the simple processes of time. On the one hand, traditional Orthodoxy continues to derive much of its appeal from political alienation. For example, many in Greece feel that their nation’s integration with the West via the European Union has brought devastation, not only economically but culturally. Many bishops of the Church of Greece decry the European Union’s mandates on secularism as a form of neocolonialism that is stripping Greece of its Orthodox heritage.¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere, broader trends in secularism and secularization, including, of course, the legalization of gay marriage in most Western countries, has drawn sharp rebuke from leaders of the Orthodox Church. Some institutional bodies, like the Church of Russia, have gone so far as to question the compatibility of Enlightenment-principled human rights and Orthodox teaching.¹⁰⁵ Not only is this opening a new East/West divide reminiscent of the Cold War, pitting a traditional Orthodox East against a godless, secular West, it is also renewing old fractures within the Orthodox Church along modernist/traditionalist lines. Once again, the language of traditional Orthodoxy has become a stand-in for anti-Western and antiseccular forces perceived to have infiltrated and corrupted some corners of the church’s hierarchy and seminaries.

In all of this, we see the extent to which the Orthodox dependence on/resistance to Latin Christianity that began so many centuries ago continues to plague modern Orthodox communities. To be sure, traditional Orthodoxy is just one of many contemporary Orthodox responses to centuries of entanglement with a hegemonic Western other, but there is little denying that its animating force comes from a sharp, if contested, response to the question of Orthodox engagement with the West.

If we understand postcolonial critique to be a scholarly means to scrutinize and combat the residual effects of exploitation of colonized peoples in all of its cultural, political, and economic manifestations, then what we find in the Orthodox situation is a unique example of the processes and

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., Effie Fokas, “Religion in the Greek Public Sphere: Debating Europe’s Influence,” in Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, 181–92.

¹⁰⁵ It is worth noting, however, that the official policy of the Russian Orthodox Church is still far more receptive of the West and the role of democracy than some of its constituent members. See Papkova, *The Orthodox Church*.

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consequences of Western European intellectual hegemony: unique, not only because of the particular ways in which the Orthodox world has wrestled with modernity and the West, but because it offers perhaps the most fascinating example of what happened when a Christian community was itself colonized. In the tri-continental region to which we typically apply the resources of postcolonial critique, Christianity is an agent of, rather than a victim of, Western European colonial force. But the Eastern Christian experience—and the emergence of traditional Orthodoxy as one of its most distinctive responses—forces us to rethink our assumptions about Christianity and its others.