

“WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS”: IDENTITY AND POLEMICISM IN THE NEO-PATRISTIC SYNTHESIS OF GEORGES FLOROVSKY*

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And now what will become of us without barbarians?
Those people were some sort of a solution
Constantine P. Cavafy¹

If the greatness of a theologian is determined by his influence, Georges Florovsky (1893–1979) is undoubtedly the greatest Eastern Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century.² While largely forgotten by Western theologians, with his work heretofore only collected in a poorly edited, badly translated and now scarce edition,³ his theological programme and method of a spiritual return to, and renewal in, the Byzantine heritage—in the well-worn slogan, “‘neo-patristic synthesis’”—has become the dominant paradigm for Orthodox theology and ecumenical activity. One only has to mention his best-known students (John Meyendorff (1926–1992), John Romanides (1928–2001) and John Zizioulas (b. 1931)) as well as those he mentored (Archim. Sophrony Sakharov (1896–1993), Vladimir Lossky (1903–1958), Alexander Schmemmann (1921–1983) and Kallistos Ware (b. 1934)) and one has a short history of Orthodox theology in the last century. Lossky went so far as to call the older theologian “*le plus grand [théologien orthodoxe] peut-être de cet époque.*”⁴ Yet Florovsky’s legacy is perhaps more profound and ultimately more ambiguous than a banal appeal to Patristic tradition in theology. He has bequeathed to Orthodox theology a paradigm for being Eastern Orthodox in a modern world dominated by the cultural patrimony of the West, of whose existence Western theologians remain largely unaware. In this

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paradigm, a Pan-Orthodox Eastern identity, in the form of “Christian Hellenism”, is asserted *over against* the heterodoxy of an Other.⁵ This Other in practice often, but not always,⁶ ends up being some version of the West or “western influence” on *Eastern* Orthodox thought and life. Polemicism here is being put to positive effect in marking out what is *not* Orthodoxy and so by negation affirming what is Orthodox. However, as we shall see at the end of the study, this paradigm is ultimately unsatisfactory. It blinds the theologian to the fact that his identity is not hermetically sealed from the Other, from the heterodox “West” or errant Orthodox captive to it, but is, in fact, dependent upon it.

We shall first explore the origins and character of Florovsky’s anti-western polemicism towards the “West” in relationship to his assertion of an “Eastern” Orthodox identity (his “paradigm”). After examining the core of his neo-patristic synthesis, we shall argue that key ideas from it are actually taken not from the (Eastern) Patristic sources he lauds but from some of the very Western sources he reviles. Lastly, we shall briefly sketch a new way forward in Orthodox theology that while it goes beyond Florovsky’s paradigm still is in continuity with his neo-patristic synthesis.

I. Florovsky’s “Paradigm”—Its Anti-Bulgakovian Context

The nexus of this Orthodox “two-step”—assertion of Orthodox identity through polemic against an Other—can be found in Florovsky’s own Russian context where he attempted to articulate a theology of the “traditional” identity of Eastern Orthodoxy *against* the sophiology of the great Russian theologian Sergii Bulgakov (1871–1944). Florovsky regarded sophiology as a species of German Romanticism and Neo-Platonism (i.e. *Spätidealismus*). It was, he argued, the seductive *Western* path of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solov’ev (1853–1900) taken by both Bulgakov and his friend, the philosopher Pavel Florensky (1882–1937), and to these Florovsky usually adds Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1978).⁷ In reviewing two studies of Berdyaev, Florovsky notes that Berdyaev was a typical representative of a definite phase of Russian intellectual development that was “dominated by strong Western influences of various kinds”, notably the problematics of a Russian “tradition” rooted in Romanticism and especially German Idealism.⁸ There is little, he argues in another review, particularly “Eastern” in the thought of writers like Solov’ev, Dostoyevsky and Berdyaev,⁹ and to this list we can safely add Bulgakov and Florensky as followers of Solov’ev,¹⁰ as they stand in the Western tradition of late Idealism and “It is for that reason that these Russian thinkers were so readily accepted in the West. They were speaking the idiom of the West.”¹¹ From Solov’ev the historical-theological path led back either to a miscellany of deceptive if not outright heterodox sources purporting to be orthodox or, alternatively, in breaking with the Russian philosopher, to the “fathers and the experience of the Great Church—the Church of history,

tradition and patristics."¹² Bulgakov, Florovsky believed, took the first erroneous way and did not stand in tradition.¹³

Florovsky's theology was forged in his involvement in two controversies with Bulgakov. He first found his voice when he publicly attacked Bulgakov's Proposals for Limited Episcopally Blessed Intercommunion between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches in the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius (1933–1935).¹⁴ The intercommunion debate was followed closely by the controversy concerning Bulgakov's Sophiology (1935–1937) where the two jurisdictions opposed to that of Bulgakov's Patriarchal Exarchate of Russian Parishes under Constantinople ("Exarchate"), the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, officially accused him (respectively) of teaching "alien" to Orthodoxy and "heresy."¹⁵ When the matter was put under investigation by Bulgakov's and Florovsky's hierarchy, Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) (1868–1946), the commission split and it produced majority and minority reports¹⁶ with Florovsky (reluctantly, as he wished to avoid public controversy)¹⁷ signing the much more critical second of these. Bulgakov was finally cleared of the more serious charge of heresy by an episcopal conference of his own church in November of 1937 but, in its report, he was heavily criticized for serious doctrinal flaws in his sophiology.¹⁸ Even taking into consideration the very real theological problems of sophiology,¹⁹ it remains the case that Bulgakov's teaching was condemned by the two rival Russian jurisdictions in whose interest it was to blacken the name of the Exarchate's Institut Saint-Serge,²⁰ with the result that political factors then and now have tended to cloud the sober evaluation of his theology.

Building on our portrait of Florovsky as having a troubled relationship with Bulgakov, John Meyendorff writes that Florovsky frequently argued in his lectures at St Serge that the Fathers theologized against heretics: "'The Fathers of the Church', [Florovsky] said, 'most often theologized for the refutation of heretics. Setting out from an "unfaithful" expression of the Christian Gospel, they discovered "faithful" words, in this fashion not "establishing" the Truth—which is true only by virtue of its divine nature—but expressing and explaining it'."²¹ This Patristic approach to theology was the "fundamental psychological method of Florovsky in his critique of Russian culture" and, more particularly, the "psychological impulse which inspired Florovsky during the writing of his books was the refutation of the so-called 'sophiology' in all its forms" which, he believed, consisted of "a variety of German Idealism, a peculiar Gnosticism and generally an illegitimate utilization of philosophy for the expression of Christian dogmas."²² Florovsky opposed what he saw as the ecclesially universalist and pantheist tendencies of Bulgakov's sophiology which he thought led to a pervasive determinism and monism and were the result of what he believed to be an insufficiently Christocentric theological focus.²³ This he countered by a firm Christocentrism, a maximalist insistence on maintaining what he regarded

as traditional doctrinal and ecclesial boundaries (i.e. the Orthodox Church was the true and only Church though individual Christians existed outside its bounds), a radical distinction between the uncreated and the created, a strong emphasis on divine and human freedom to the point of indeterminacy, and the providentially Hellenistic character of Church tradition embodied in the liturgy and the Eastern Patristic corpus. Not only were the hallmarks of Florovsky's theology developed in reaction to sophiology, but its characteristic "Patristic" focus, Meyendorff contends, emerged from Florovsky's desire to refute the sophiologists' claim that both their thought and their use of philosophy had patristic (i.e. traditional) precedent (especially in the work of Palamas).²⁴ Florovsky argued that only in the vision of the Fathers, interpreted as a Christian Hellenism or a newly baptized Christian philosophy, could be found an accurate key to the relationship between secular philosophy and theology. At almost every point of his theology, Meyendorff argues, Florovsky is silently responding to the sophiology of Bulgakov, as the best-known sophiologist.²⁵

However, Florovsky's relationship with Bulgakov was far from being an unnuanced opposition. Bulgakov was not only Florovsky's academic superior at St Serge, but actively promoted Florovsky in his career by securing him the post in patrology at the new institute (though not without problems).²⁶ By Florovsky's own admission, Bulgakov was the person who initially spurred him on to turn to the Fathers.²⁷ When Bulgakov was diagnosed with throat cancer in early 1939, it was Florovsky, on his recommendation, who took his place on the continuation committee for Faith and Order.²⁸ Furthermore, for at least a brief period in Prague in the early 1920's, Bulgakov was Florovsky's confessor.²⁹ However, even during this early period when Bulgakov was actively mentoring him, Florovsky began to set himself up against the older theologian. In 1924, Florovsky established in Prague a Religious and Philosophical Circle devoted to the Fathers, which he began to see as the well-spring of Orthodoxy. This study group was set up in contrast to the Brotherhood of St Sophia³⁰ headed by Bulgakov, itself dedicated to the study and promotion of Orthodoxy, which Florovsky had quickly joined and then wanted to leave in all but a few months in protest against its sympathy with sophiology,³¹ causing Bulgakov to ask in exasperation: "Why do you have such an involuntary need to cast opposition from difference, animosity from non-affinity?"³² All things considered, Florovsky was emotionally deeply marked by his clash with Bulgakov.³³ Although he kept up good personal relations with Bulgakov until the latter's death in 1944,³⁴ many at St Serge unjustifiably blamed him for the ill-fame surrounding Bulgakov in his last years. This led to his being gradually "frozen out" of the institute from 1935 until the war. He only began teaching there again in 1946 and two short years later he left for America to head St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York City.³⁵ In a lecture from 1968, one sees something of the contradictory impulses at work in this key relationship for him when he says

that though he "respected" and "esteemed" Florensky and Bulgakov, "I would even say that I love them", he still had to acknowledge that "I disagree and I think they are wrong. [The Russian Religious Renaissance] is a blind alley or probably even an evil bed."³⁶ All things considered, Florovsky's theology, neo-patristic synthesis is, therefore, best understood as a positive assertion of Orthodox identity by means of a negative polemic against heterodoxy.

II. The "Paradigm" in Florovsky's Work—Anti-Western Polemicism and Christian Hellenism

Yet it would be a mistake to think that Florovsky's polemic was *only* directed towards Bulgakov and Russian religious philosophy insofar as it was parasitic on German Romanticism as *the* form of negative Western influence leading to heterodoxy. In fact, Florovsky's polemic against Russian religious philosophy was a species of his more general polemic against pre- and post-Great Schism Western theology. In the face of such theology, he asserted Eastern Orthodoxy as the common tradition of the undivided Church, a Christian Hellenism that embraced not only Basil and Gregory of Nyssa but also Augustine as a sort of honorary Greek Father.³⁷ However, it should be noted here that when we speak of anti-western "polemicism" in Florovsky's thought, this needs to be distinguished from the polemics of thinkers like the Greek theologian and Patristic scholar John Romanides³⁸ and the great Greek philosopher Christos Yannaras (b. 1935)³⁹ whose shrill critiques of the West and wild accusations (tracing every contemporary evil to Aquinas and Augustine) lack Florovsky's catholicity and general historical good sense. A version of our paradigm can be traced in them but, lacking Florovsky's liberal spirit, it is enacted wholly without nuance. Florovsky's more nuanced polemicism ranges from an outright rejection of the ethnic "Latinity" to a dismissal of all forms of Scholasticism to the more subtle subsuming of Western Patristic thought under a Christian Hellenism that is Eastern and Greek in character. Florovsky's later appeal to the "Byzantine-Slavic" inheritance as the wellspring of the "Russian soul" and, especially, his anti-western polemicism can be traced to his pre-theological, specifically, philosophical period, especially his alliance with the Eurasian movement in the 1920's.⁴⁰ Before his final break with the Eurasians in 1928,⁴¹ Florovsky contributed to a collection of the Eurasians entitled *Russia and Latinity* (1923)⁴² which, as Paul Gavrilyuk has recently written, "advanced a claim that for the Orthodox believer in France to be converted to Roman Catholicism was worse than to be killed by the Bolsheviks in the Communist Russia, on the grounds that the former led to the eternal perdition of the soul, whereas the latter caused only a temporal destruction of the body." When the well-known diplomat and lay churchman Prince Grigory N. Trubetskoy (1874–1930) criticized this extreme idea in the journal *Put'*, the Eurasians responded with an open letter, which

Florovsky signed, that defended the moral comparison of the repressive nature of Bolshevism and Roman Catholicism.⁴³

Our paradigm is evident early on in Florovsky's theological writings as well. Most notably, at the 1936 First Pan-Orthodox Congress of Theologians in Athens (November 29–December 6), which Bulgakov also attended, Florovsky gave two widely influential papers.⁴⁴ They were summaries of the two key aspects of the argument of his soon to be published history of Russian theology, *Puti Russkogo Bogosloviia* [*The Ways of Russian Theology*] (Paris, 1937).⁴⁵ He stresses, in this massive work, the fundamentally Greek/Hellenistic identity of Eastern Orthodoxy and its traditional cultures and the distortion of this identity by an alien foreign tradition from the post-schism West.

The first paper, given in German, was his "Western Influences in Russian Theology." Florovsky's communication was one of three papers in a panel dedicated to the determination of foreign influences (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Philosophical) on Orthodox theology after the Fall of Constantinople. The paper opens with Florovsky quoting and commenting favourably on words from the then recently deceased head of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Met. Antonii (Khrapovitskii) (1863–1936). This is clearly a direct affront to Bulgakov, who was attending the same conference, if it is remembered that Met. Antonii's jurisdiction had condemned the sophiology of Bulgakov as heretical just the year previous. Moreover, Florovsky had signed the more critical "minority" report on Bulgakov's theology only months earlier. Met. Antonii held, Florovsky wrote, that the whole development of Russian school theology since the seventeenth century was "but a dangerous borrowing from heterodox Western sources" or, as Met. Antonii put it, "'copying systems of heretical doctrines.'" "Many"—we are told, and Florovsky says that there is a "bit of truth in such assertions"—got the impression that Russian theology had been "entirely disfigured by Western influences" so that a "redirection" of theology was required in the form of a "radical return to the ignored and forgotten sources of Patristic Orthodoxy." The paper then proceeds to show in brief how there was a "forcible *pseudomorphosis* of Orthodox thought" where the Orthodox (first under a Latin then German or English captivity) were forced "to think in essentially alien categories to express themselves in foreign concepts" so that a western theology and culture were established that had no "roots in life" resulting in a "split in Orthodox consciousness."⁴⁶ In his *Puti*, this sort of polemic against the West can be seen in his description of the period when Ukraine was under the Latinizing influence of Met. Peter Mogila of Kiev (1596–1646) where, finding the Church in ruins, under his aegis "everything is suffused with a foreign, Latin spirit. . . . This was an acute Romanization of Orthodoxy, a Latin *pseudomorphosis* of Orthodoxy. A Latin and Latinizing school system is built on a deserted spot; not only ritual and language, but also theology, worldview and religious psychology

become Latinized. The very soul of the people comes to be Latinized."⁴⁷ Orthodoxy itself, however, remained unchanged, as the foreign accretion did not destroy the "authenticity of faith." What is required is a "return to the historical sources of Eastern Orthodoxy" away from "the path of scholasticism", of "alien sources." However, such a return to the origins of Orthodoxy must be both a *critical* and "*spiritual return to patristic sources and foundations.*"⁴⁸

Florovsky's second paper at the Athens Congress was given in English ("Patristics and Modern Theology") and it calls modern Orthodox theologians to return to their own Eastern tradition of the Fathers and the liturgy. This is a return not to the dead letter of their texts but a return which is a rekindling of the "creative fire of the Fathers, to restore in ourselves the patristic spirit" resulting in a "continuity of lives and minds."⁴⁹ Furthermore, making a special appeal to his mostly Greek auditors,⁵⁰ the Fathers, he claimed, forged a "canonized" "new, Christian Hellenism" such that their schemes and formulae were "through and through Hellenistic or Greek." Hellenism, Florovsky concludes in some of the most famous words in modern Orthodox theology, is a "standing category of the Christian existence." A theologian must pass through a "spiritual Hellenization [. . .] let us be more Greek to be truly catholic, to be truly Orthodox."⁵¹

This Hellenization of revelation in the Fathers, or, in a later phrase, "Hellenism under the sign of the cross",⁵² is part of the providential action of God in the mission to the Gentiles.⁵³ The Old Testament is complete and Israel did not receive the Messiah since it did not recognize him but refused and rejected him, resulting in the promise being passed to the Gentiles. The Church is above all *Ecclesia ex gentibus*; but, as the language in which revelation was given to the Church was Greek, we can say both that Greek as a language was "elected" and that the Greeks themselves as a people with their cultural patrimony were elected: "in the election of the Greeks we must discern the mysterious ways of God's will. The 'calling of the gentiles' was a blessing by God over Hellenism. Paul was sent to the Greeks and so the way of orthodox Judeo-Christianity proved to be an historical dead-end."⁵⁴ Florovsky is consciously turning on its head Harnack's allegation⁵⁵ that Patristic teaching was an "'acute Hellenization' of primitive Christianity" by asserting that "Hellenism is the common background and basis of the whole Christian civilization and culture", being "simply incorporated into our Christian existence." If Hellenism is constitutive of Christianity then, *pace* Harnack, we are "not Hellenised enough." Hellenism, however, underwent a "conversion" or as it were, was baptized and thereby "transvaluated", "dissected with the sword of Christian Revelation and was sharply polarized" so that one has now the true Christian Hellenism of Hagia Sophia and the Fathers and the pagan Hellenism of the Acropolis and Nietzsche and Goethe. Re-Hellenization not de-Hellenization, then, is needed as "the only remedy for the modern Chaos in theology," but "the move back to Greek tradition"⁵⁶

is then revealed as a decisive move back to Byzantium—a re-Byzantinization of theology.

Christian revelation, therefore, is historical and presumes certain facts that cannot be abstracted from or interpreted away; one of them is the language of Scripture in which that revelation is given. The Greek language, for Florovsky, was a sacred one insofar as the New Testament was expressed in it. Indeed, he claimed that only the New Testament in its original Greek could be said to be “inspired,” not the translations, which can be changed and interpreted. But all languages assume their own thought worlds and Greek is no exception here as it presupposes a web of Hellenistic concepts. If we apply this reasoning to the Greek writings that comprise the New Testament then we must conclude that the message of God has been articulated in Greek thought categories. Thus if one wants to learn the message of God “you must learn Greek categories, not only Greek words, because forever you have to start with a definite drafting of this message, and the draft was made in Greek.” But if one must be immersed in both the Greek language and thought-world to understand the Gospel then this is also providentially the case with the authorized interpreters of the Gospel—the Fathers.⁵⁷ Through the gracious choice of specific “eternal words, incapable of being replaced” in their dogmatic definitions, the Fathers, inspired by Christian life as a “new experience and a new faith”, forged a sacred perennial (albeit eclectic) “Christian philosophy” or “philosophy of the Holy Spirit”, which was “enclosed” within Christian dogmatics. This “true philosophy” is a “system of religious philosophy and a philosophy of Revelation” where revelation is unfolded within human thought creating an entire system of “believing confession.”⁵⁸ Florovsky argues that the Fathers adopted no particular philosophical tradition but they “attempted a new philosophical synthesis on the basis of the Revelation” linking the “Divine message” they had to deliver with the “aspiration of the Hellenic mind.” Philosophy here is then understood as “simply the vocation of the human mind to apprehend the ultimate Truth, now revealed and consummated in the incarnate Word.”⁵⁹ Above all one sees this philosophical vision in the services of the Church, especially from Lent to Pentecost, where we see the “common mind of the worshipping Church. One can best be initiated into the Spirit of the Fathers by attending the offices of the Eastern Church.”⁶⁰

Bulgakov, in contrast, believed that dogmas were truths of religious revelation that had metaphysical content. They were expressed differently depending on the language of the philosophy of the day, whether it was the Greek philosophy used by the Fathers or our own contemporary philosophy.⁶¹ In reaction to this sort of approach, Florovsky asserted that it was wholly illegitimate to express Christian teaching in any other philosophy but that forged by the Fathers. Christianity “is history by its very essence” and there exists no abstract general Christian message that can be detached from its historical context and there likewise is no eternal truth “which

could be formulated in some supra-historical propositions.⁶² The philosophy that the Fathers used in expressing Christian dogma was in fact unique and differed greatly from that of Aristotle and Plato in that the Greek thought forms of such thinkers were baptized and then redirected to Christian purposes. It was wholly "ridiculous" to attempt to reinterpret "traditional doctrine in terms of categories of a new philosophy, whatever this philosophy may be"⁶³ since that doctrine was quite simply inseparable from the renewed Greek philosophy in which it was formulated. The Christian philosophy of the Fathers is, therefore, wholly coextensive with Christian dogmatic teaching and tradition and, more precisely, Eastern Orthodoxy which, he argued, stands for the "common heritage of the Church universal" in both East and West, as "Patristic tradition."⁶⁴ Amongst the many dangers of such a position, as Bulgakov realized early on, was its temptation to illegitimately and unhistorically treat the Fathers as "dogmatically infallible" "unerring texts" smoothing over and harmonizing the different Patristic writers like the Talmud does with different rabbis ("a rabbinic approach to the writings of the Fathers as 'tradition'"). However, Bulgakov continues, and here Florovsky would have certainly agreed with him, "Orthodox theology is not the Talmud, and a real veneration of the Fathers must reverence not the letter but the spirit. The writings of the Holy Fathers must have a guiding authority, yet be applied with discernment."⁶⁵

During the early centuries when Christendom was not split, it was united, Florovsky argued, in a common theology "under the uncontested lead of the Greek Fathers and masters." Western theology up to Augustine, he argues, was "basically Greek thought in Latin dress."⁶⁶ In other words—and here this is a puzzling claim—what is ostensibly particularly Eastern, insofar as it embodies the Greek Hellenistic culture of the Eastern Empire, is actually the universal tradition of the Latin West such that we can truthfully say that Eastern Orthodoxy *is* the orthodoxy of East and West. This means that there is no independent Latin Western tradition. The common Greek tradition was "reduced or impoverished"⁶⁷ in the West during the Middle Ages: "then comes doom over the West. There was a general eclipse and decay of civilization in the West just after Augustine. The Greek language was almost completely forgotten, even by the scholars."⁶⁸ The Christian Hellenism of the Fathers became in the West mere "historical reminiscence"⁶⁹ since Western Christianity had lost the vision of the Fathers and even the East underwent an "abnormal 'pseudomorphosis' " of Orthodox theology that began with the Greek diaspora in the West being "exposed to all the devices of the Western world."⁷⁰ Although Western theology now has a different "vision" than that of Orthodoxy⁷¹ and despite the fact that there has been an extensive (but ultimately superficial) Westernization of traditional Orthodox teaching, the teaching of the Fathers is alive in the East till the present day, since it speaks the idiom of the Fathers, is

still speaking Patristic Greek, as a “living tradition [. . .] [which] gives to the East its Christian identity.”⁷²

There is ambiguity here. Florovsky is not always consistent in his identification of Christian Hellenism. In a few cases,⁷³ he will say (as for example in 1948) that “Christian Hellenism was never a particularly Eastern phenomenon. The Fathers were teachers of the Church Universal, not just of the Eastern Church.” In this same passage he counts as Hellenistic everything from Augustine and Jerome to Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom to Thomism, the Caroline Divines and the Tractarians.⁷⁴ But he also more frequently can seem to collapse all Christian tradition, Christian Hellenism, into the Eastern Fathers understood as specifically Greek. As late as 1955, he held to the very strange opinion that there was no such thing as Latin Patristics since its distinctive writers were all actually tacitly Greek: “Here I first of all offer one of my ‘heresies.’ I believe that the early period of Christian theology, sometimes described as Patristic, was purely and thoroughly Hellenic, Hellenistic, Greek; and that Latin Patristics never existed. Well, it really may seem to be too much. But actually, and this is so important, actually which names are usually given as Latin Fathers? Hilary of Poitiers—well, modern patrologists classify him under East and not under West, because, except for the Latin language, there was nothing Western in his thought at all; Augustine—well, African, neo-platonic, philosopher. That is not true—African temperament, neo-platonic philosophy. Jerome—the beautiful Latin style, but his heart was in the East always. Ambrose—yes, very Latin; unfortunately, almost all his books are translated from Philo, Basil the Great and some other Eastern writers. How much Latin Patristics is left?”⁷⁵ But ambiguity exists also elsewhere. Florovsky’s hegemonic approach to the Patristic tradition does not lead to the rejection of ecumenism. Indeed, he was a founding member of the WCC. Ecumenism for the Orthodox, he writes in 1949, is a kind of non-proselytising “missionary activity” in which the Orthodox Church witnesses to the truth of Christ as she is the guardian of the apostolic faith and Tradition in their integrity and their fullness, so being in this sense the “only true Church.”⁷⁶ However, a few years later, he writes that since the Orthodox Church is *the* Church one must say that all other Christian Churches are “deficient” so that “for me, Christian reunion is just universal conversion to Orthodoxy. I have no confessional loyalty; my loyalty belongs solely to the *Una Sancta*.”⁷⁷

The Fathers and the Church proper for Florovsky, any way you look at it, are “Greek” and indeed “Eastern” in “spirit.” Here is not the blunt polemicism against the “Latin spirit” of *Puti* but a more insidious polemicism of a universalist variety. Florovsky has collapsed the Gospel into a specific cultural expression of the truth of Christ—call it, Byzantinism—which then devours all other incarnations of that reality, since it will not abide anything as properly proclaiming the Good News but a specifically Greek voice.⁷⁸

III. *The Role of Catholic Consciousness/Patristic Vision in Neo-Patristic Synthesis*

It is at this point that we need to turn our attention to a closer analysis of Florovsky's characterization of this Patristic tradition. What is it at its core? We have already seen that he speaks, contra Bulgakov and post-schism Western theology with its use of non-Patristic sources from Aristotle to Hegel, of a Christian philosophy of the Fathers, which is a baptized canonized Hellenism. This Christian Hellenism, furthermore, is marked out for Florovsky by its emphasis on what he called "catholic" or "*sobornyi* consciousness", where the Fathers speak as witnesses from a direct personal experience of the mystery of Christ, which Florovsky deems "vision." The Church is characterized by a divine-human unity which above all reflects the unity of the Trinity in whom many become one, which Florovsky referred to as *sobornost'* or catholicity.⁷⁹ Catholicity is mediated to us through "living tradition",⁸⁰ as a creative movement of the Spirit at work in the experience of the Church from the Upper Room to the present day. The idea of the Church as *sobornost'*—completeness, integrality, conciliarity and unity in diversity—and the notion (even the phrase) of "living tradition" is largely adapted from the Slavophiles, most especially, Aleksei Khomiakov (1804–1860).⁸¹ The Slavophiles were heavily dependent on Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) of the Catholic Tübingen School. In *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (1825), an immensely important monograph for modern Orthodox theology, Möhler drew on his teacher Johann Sebastian Drey (1777–1853) as well as Neander, Schleiermacher, Hegel and Schelling.⁸² This much is uncontroversial. Indeed, it is noted by Florovsky himself who, in discussing Möhler's importance for Khomiakov and resonance with the Slavophile Ivan Kireevsky (1806–1856), describes the book, which he had earlier reviewed,⁸³ as "remarkable."⁸⁴ It is "more than merely a book, a theological tractate or philosophical synthesis", he wrote, but "It is his Confessions, an inspired account of what was disclosed to the author in and through the patristic works."⁸⁵ We shall return to the importance of Möhler for the neo-patristic synthesis shortly.

This catholicity is a completeness in the life of grace ("*sobornost'* ") in which Christians are bonded together in a union of common life and love with their fellows which reflects the Trinity. Such a grace-filled union is a call to all Christians. Christians are called, in the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21), to participate (in the émigré coinage) in the "churching" (*otserkoolenie*) of their very being. Florovsky refers to this churching of the human person using various phrases such as, "the catholic transfiguration of personality", "catholic consciousness" and "the catholic regeneration of the mind." Each Christian is commanded to freely love his neighbour as himself by rejecting, denying and even dying to himself. He sees himself so wholly in the Other in that in the Other, he is freely

responding to Christ Himself. The Christian life consists of the free cultivation in history of an ecclesial consciousness whereby in faith in Christ "we enclose the many within our own ego" imaging the Holy Trinity in whom many become one.⁸⁶ In taking on Christ through treating our brother as our life, we become incorporated into Christ and "become inheritors of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4).

As the identity of the Church as catholicity (sc. unity in Christ) is described as a form of consciousness, it is not surprising that Florovsky uses a variety of psychological imagery to discuss its internal life. Throughout his work he speaks of a primary set of terms as subjects (e.g. Church, Fathers, tradition) undergoing, being characterized by or possessing a second set of terms (e.g. "experience", "faith", "image", "vision", "witness", "memory", "freedom" and especially "mind"). This takes the form of stock phrases that reappear throughout his work, such as "the experience of the Church", "the mind of the Fathers" and "the vision of the Fathers." He will likewise combine the second set of terms within itself, treating one as a subject of another, such as the "experience of faith."⁸⁷

Florovsky's psychology of catholic consciousness, which he claimed had Patristic provenance (pointing to like notions of *phronema* and *theoria* or *noetic vision*), begins in the Church. It begins in the Church since revelation, which is experienced by the saints, is only received in and through belonging to the Body of Christ. This Body has its own experience and "mystical memory", which is "tradition." Tradition in this context is understood as the noetic aspect of the unity of the Spirit. In the Body, understood as a common bond of love, we have genuine knowledge of God in Christ by the "unity and continuity of the spiritual experience and the life of grace."⁸⁸ True knowledge of God, therefore, is founded on tradition. But tradition is not a collection of ancient opinions and teachings. It is a living movement of the Spirit in the Body, through which one participates in an inherited ecclesial experience and memory. Such traditional ecclesial knowledge of God is revealed to the individual Christian in the "silence of faith, in silent vision." This vision, the experience of silent faith, is eventually unfolded as a verbal proclamation or expression.⁸⁹ Faith, then, is understood as the silent "evidence of experience" and "vision and perception", which comprehends revelation as the Word of truth addressed to man in the Church.⁹⁰ This comprehension of the truth of Christ cannot remain silent but must be expressed noetically as a dogma or an "expressed truth."⁹¹ Dogma, therefore, "witnesses" to what has been experienced or seen by faith in a vision.⁹² However, this "vision" of faith in which truth is received appears to be a sort of indemonstrable intuition,⁹³ what the Romantics called "intellectual intuition" or "feeling", for we are told that dogma is not a discursive axiom which "is accessible to logical development" but an "intuitive truth."⁹⁴ In another place, we hear further echoes of Romanticism when he describes the self-

consciousness of "catholicity" as a "concrete oneness in thought and feeling."⁹⁵ It appears that Florovsky was transmuting the Romantic notion of creativity as a supra-rational and quasi-revelatory intuition to catholicity. In an early piece, he claims that the cultural/spiritual creativity expressed in Russian Christianity operates not by a rationally discursive and causal comprehensiveness but by supra-rational bursts of creativity, which he describes as "feeling", "mystical intuition" and the "religiously enlightened gaze."⁹⁶

What is absolutely crucial for Florovsky, as it was for Möhler before him,⁹⁷ is the continuity of the Christian today in his catholic consciousness with that of the Church of the ages. But how can one conceptualize this continuity when there has been manifest schism and disruption? One can only rightly conceptualize this unspeakable unity if one a) identifies the said consciousness with certain individual Christians who exemplify or preferably teach a certain core ethos/spirit or Christian philosophy (Christian Hellenism); and b) distinguishes those bearing the identity from those in whom it is distorted. The latter uphold a false un-Christian (Western) philosophy, for example scholasticism and Romanticism, and lack catholic consciousness. The saints, and, in particular, the Fathers, are the preeminent instances of this catholic consciousness. The Fathers have attained to such a fullness of catholicity that their faith (which as we have just seen is providentially Hellenistic), once expressed, is no mere personal profession but "precisely the testimony of the Church. They speak from the depths and fullness of its catholicity: they theologize within the element of *sobornost*."⁹⁸ By prayer and asceticism, the Fathers, who witness to the testimony of the Church and its life as tradition, are accordingly described everywhere in Florovsky not just as teachers but "guides and witnesses" to the identity of the Church whose "vision is 'of authority', not necessarily their words." The Fathers neither present to us "ready-made" answers, nor can one look to them for a simple *consensus patrum* as a binding empirical agreement of individuals.⁹⁹ The Fathers help us face the problems that are of true importance in the new age and to construct a contemporary synthesis.¹⁰⁰ We must follow the Fathers creatively and not through what Florovsky often referred to as a "theology of repetition."¹⁰¹ A "theology of repetition" is one which is addicted to archaic forms and phrases but which misses their inner living spirit. Rather, being inspired by the Patristic vision, we should be unafraid to respond to theological contexts that were unforeseen by the Fathers even if that means going beyond the initial sense of their words. We are called, then, to creatively and spiritually¹⁰² return to the sources, to follow the Fathers by acquiring their mind (*phronema*), which is a consensus reflecting the very "catholic mind" or fundamental identity of the Church.¹⁰³ "The time has arrived to en-church our own mind and to resurrect for ourselves the holy and blessed sources of ecclesial thought."¹⁰⁴

IV. *The Romantic Origins of Neo-Patristic Synthesis—Solov'ev, Kireevsky, Möhler and Schelling*

Yet just how Patristic is Florovsky's account of neo-patristic synthesis? Let us take perhaps its key idea: Patristic "vision." The Fathers do of course speak of their experience of God in Christ or "vision." However, if one wishes to find them appealing to this experience as a justification of their authority or the veracity of their particular theologies, then one will be sadly disappointed, as John Behr has recently argued.¹⁰⁵ When the Fathers do speak of vision, one is struck both by the variety of its uses and by the fact that they use it to underline the fact that the knowledge of God requires repentance and purification, mental and spiritual toil, and should in no way be taken lightly. One needs to begin at the beginning and always to remember the necessity of absolute dependence on Christ. Vision is appealed to as something that is to be attained, but of which one falls short, therefore impressing on the listener the need for God's mercy and the gift of repentance. This is the opposite of Florovsky's use of it, which is as a supra-discursive sight of the whole truth of God attained by a saint or doctor, which vision makes them an authoritative witness to divine truth. The locus classicus for *theoria* and the noetic vision in neo-patristic synthesis is found in the first two of Gregory Nazianzus' Theological Orations. Gregory, in a passage which is repeatedly cited by Romanides as an example of an appeal to experience/*theoria* in theology,¹⁰⁶ writes that theology is not for everyone "but only those who have been tested and have found a sound footing in study [*theoria*]" but even more importantly they should have undergone or "at the very least are undergoing, purification of body and soul" since for the impure to touch and hold pure things is, he says, "dangerous", just as it is not good for "weak eyes" to look at the "sun's brightness."¹⁰⁷ *Theoria* here is in no way a mental sweep of God's glory but concerted intellectual effort which in no way can be treated casually by the Christian.

In the next oration, Gregory does speak of something like a "vision of God" in its common sense when, in the language of an initiate, he talks about ascending the holy mountain like Moses, calling his listeners to follow him like Aaron in order to penetrate the cloud and see and converse with God. But what does he see? Gregory says that once he directed his gaze he "scarcely saw the averted figure of God" and this only by being sheltered in the rock. This rock is Christ, the Word incarnate by whom alone one knows the Father. So not only is Gregory—speaking dramatically as an initiate—saying he can only see God in Christ, but he only sees the "averted figure" of God, mere "indications of himself" that God has left behind and not "the nature prime, inviolate, self-apprehended." How can the vision increase? Gregory's answer is short and simple: "we must begin again", he says, knowing that to tell of God is not possible and to know Him even less possible.¹⁰⁸ Quite simply, no claim to theological authority by Gregory is

made based on the vision of God and it is doubtful that a similar case could be made from other Fathers.¹⁰⁹

We must turn, therefore, elsewhere than the Fathers¹¹⁰ for the source of "vision" in Florovsky's thought. We know already that the notions of *sobornost'* and "living tradition" are Slavophile borrowings from Möhler, but what of Florovsky's talk of Patristic "mind"/"catholic consciousness" with its concomitant "vision" of the Fathers and, to add another key notion, "Christian philosophy"? In fact, on closer analysis it appears to be just as much a result of Western (particularly, Romantic) influence as Bulgakov's sophiology.

Certainly, the notion that the Christian faith was "the only sure and useful"¹¹¹ "true philosophy" compared with the myriad different schools of the Greeks is found in the Fathers. "Christian philosophy" is "true" philosophy because it comes from a revelation of Truth Himself, the Word made flesh,¹¹² and presupposes that as a philosopher one is "truly a lover of wisdom"¹¹³ as one is a follower of the very power and Wisdom by whom and in whom all things were made.¹¹⁴ However, as we saw earlier, Florovsky's idea of Christian philosophy says much more than this and echoes the Romantics in its talk of a "philosophical synthesis" or total "system" of the Christian faith. The truth of revelation, for him, quite different than the Fathers, is unfolded in Christian dogma into "an entire system of believing confession, into a system of religious perspective—one may say, into a system of religious philosophy and a philosophy of Revelation."¹¹⁵ In particular, as has been shown recently by Matthew Baker,¹¹⁶ he was critically building on the work of Solov'ev who, Florovsky argues, attempted in his last work (albeit unsuccessfully) to vindicate the Christian faith in a philosophical "Great Synthesis" or all-embracing synthesis of theology, rational philosophy, and positive science. This was to be "a general instauration of the Christian philosophy" that would give a complete philosophical account of the "universal proclamation of the Gospel, that is, of the Divine Truth", with particular emphasis on the historical nature of revelation beginning with Christ Himself.¹¹⁷ The influence of Solov'ev on Florovsky, more interestingly, can also be seen in Solov'ev's notion of "faith" which for him was a "mystical perception" by which "the proper existence of an object, its inner undisclosed reality, can be affirmed" and therefore corresponds for him to the "religious principle."¹¹⁸ This perception was an "immediate certitude" that the object exists in itself which gave one an unconditional "mystical knowledge" of the actuality of a thing.¹¹⁹ Florovsky, in commenting on Solov'ev, says that his notion of faith was "precisely an insight into existence" akin to Bergson's "intuition" but ultimately deriving from Schelling.¹²⁰ All of the same language is, of course, used later by Florovsky to describe the "vision" of the Fathers.

Yet we find the same constellation of ideas in Kireevsky in a way that more clearly echoes Florovsky himself. In Kireevsky, Hellenism and Anti-

Western polemic (particularly, an Anti-Idealist polemic) were conjoined, just as is later the case with Florovsky. Kireevsky calls for the restoration of the "philosophy of the Holy Fathers" which, he claimed, was a transformation of classical pagan philosophy, but, more importantly, was a product of their "superior vision" or "immediate, inner experience [...] communicated to us [...] as the testimony of eyewitnesses concerning a country they have been to."¹²¹ Drawing on the terminology of Kant and Schelling, he distinguished¹²² between a discursive rationality or understanding (*Verstand = rassudok*) and the "inner root" of this rationality as reason (*Vernunft = razum*). When left to its own devices, discursive rationality one-sidedly resolves all realities according to logic, resulting in the fragmentation of the human person. Reason, in contrast, expresses an "integrality" (*tsel'nost'*) of being where "all the separate forces merge into one living and integral vision of the mind [*tselnoe zrenie uma*]."¹²³ This "vision" or "sight of the mind" (*zrenie uma*) is the common Russian interpretation in the period of "intuition" as an *a priori* form of cognition, not necessarily mystical, which Schelling called *Anschauung* or *intellektuelle Anschauung*.¹²⁴ For Kireevsky, this vision involves a direct, unmediated contemplation of the object so that one participates intimately in its reality. He seems to identify intuition with the faith of the first Christian philosophy rationally constructed by the Fathers. A philosophy that "combined the development of learning and reason into one all-embracing intuition of faith [*sozertsanie very*]."¹²⁵ This "living faith" is the "supreme reason and the essential element of cognition."¹²⁶

But where does Kireevsky get such ideas that are so crucial for Florovsky's neo-patristic synthesis? Precisely the same notions can be traced to the Western sources in which he was drenched, in particular, Möhler and Schelling, which he knew long before he studied the Fathers after his so-called "conversion."¹²⁷ We mentioned earlier the importance for Florovsky of Möhler's *Die Einheit in der Kirche*. This work is ostensibly an ecclesiology drawn entirely from the witness of the early Fathers. Indeed, Florovsky claims that Möhler really only provided commentary to the patristic corpus of the first three centuries, especially Irenaeus.¹²⁸ However, on closer inspection, it reveals itself to be, as Thomas F. O'Meara has noted, "an ecclesiology somewhat formed by insights drawn from romantic idealism which are then filled out by theologies drawn from the Church Fathers."¹²⁹ Florovsky notes Möhler's similarity to not only Khomiakov but also Kireevsky. Möhler, he argues, like Kireevsky, drew on the "experience of the Holy Fathers" and proceeds not from abstract principles but "concrete existence, from the reality of grace in the Church. He does not construct an intellectual scheme, but describes a living experience."¹³⁰ For Möhler, Florovsky contends, patristology was not archaeology since the writings of the Fathers did not speak to him "of the bygone things from the past" but a vision of the ancient Church as a living, fresh and complete Christianity since "with all his soul and will,

he was immersed in this wondrous world, in his imagination he lived in the ancient church." However, this ecclesial vision was not of a concept of the Church "revealed to him in some prophetic vision" but the very Church herself, which was revealed to him "through sympathetic communion with patristic experience."¹³¹ Yet Möhler "does not construct an intellectual scheme but begins with ecclesial experience", as Florovsky puts it, because like all concrete idealism he believed that the idea moves towards its fulfilment in concretion, whether that is the ideal philosophical community of Hegel, or the Christianity and the churches of Schelling.¹³² Therefore, like them, Möhler's system scorns the naked idea, beginning with life—the Romantic idealist cult of vitality—so that he can write that "*Christian life* she [the Church] called the true and *divine philosophy*."¹³³ This philosophy, like any philosophy, needs a first principle, a ruling idea, and Möhler begins his system with the "principle of catholicism." The "principle of catholicism", which is the origin of the Slavophile *sobornost'*, is Spirit/Unity. Unity is the life principle animating the Church through which divinity is mediated to it. Möhler traces the organic and historical development of this principle in the growth of the Christian Body as a living organism. As Florovsky observes, Möhler holds that the "Church is *sobornyi*, catholic in nature" and insofar as she has such a being, she is "an organic whole, one great body, fastened together by bonds of love and united by the power of the Holy Spirit, living and dwelling in it."¹³⁴ Here he follows Schelling's Absolute, in whom ideal and real coincide, and which in radical freedom is set forth in the realm of the real, history, as a developing ideal, Spirit, through Spirit's self-revelation of the Absolute. This self-revelation of the Absolute which attains its consummation in Jesus Christ, chronicled in Schelling's late *Lectures on Mythology and Revelation* (1841–3), is apprehended not only through the great world religions, but especially the historical experience of the churches, composed of free, fallible human beings, witnessed to in Scripture and the Church Fathers.¹³⁵

Florovsky was not unaware of the fact that Möhler "describes the grace-filled unity of the Church in the terms of Romantic idealism." However, he claims that Möhler did not draw his inspiration from the Romantics and that "more than enough separates him from the Romantics." His reasoning here is that the German theologian's theology is "not defined by abstract ideas of organic historicism, but by living experience." There is in Möhler, he claims, no "natural", and therefore "involuntary", "all-unity"; rather "natural being involves, on the contrary, disunity, disjunction and so egoism." Möhler, in other words, is sensitive to the tragedy of history, the freedom of the individual that allows for sin, in contrast to the determinism of Romanticism, since "what is 'natural' is to assert one's individuality, and this natural egoism becomes the beginning of heresies in the Christian world." In him, we see, rather, that "integrality is realized only on Pentecost in the Holy Spirit." The Church is the work of the Spirit. She has her

foundation in Him, because He has created her as His dwelling-place. Only in the Church is there possible “true love which unites” because man is not capable of it but “it is a gift and charism of the Spirit.” In this way, he argues there is “a sharp and clear distinction between Möhler and any Romantic ‘modernism’.”¹³⁶

It may be true that some Romanticism in its optimism and emphasis on the relentless march to wholeness did not emphasize how the brokenness of human nature allowed for the tragedy of sin, disunity and heresy. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the very appeal in Möhler to “experience”, “life”, “Spirit” and especially “freedom” is arguably characteristic of one stream of Romanticism that can be traced to the author of the *Freiheitsschrift* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*. In other words, the very things that Florovsky claims that distinguish Möhler from Romanticism are actually taken from it. This dependence of Möhler on Romanticism (and by extension on Florovsky) is still more extensive than we have revealed.

Möhler is elaborating a self-manifesting subjectivity where “unity” is the evolving organic identity of God in His Spirit in the Church. In order to give this reality particularity, he concretizes this subjectivity in and through a specific type of “inner spiritual life” or “inner unity of life” which he describes as “Christian consciousness”, “faithful consciousness”, “enduring consciousness of the Church” and, not unsurprisingly, if we know the work of Florovsky, “the sanctified mind from the time of the apostles” and the Patristic “Catholic consciousness.”¹³⁷ All the faithful have not only one faith, but one consciousness, which nevertheless does not negate their distinct personality, as one divine power of the Spirit forms them. A person in the Church as an individual by “*direct contemplation [. . .] is [called] to make the experience of the Church one’s own [. . .] to develop Christian knowledge in the sanctified mind.*”¹³⁸ This inner quality of Christian life, the Spirit living silently in believers, seeks to express or unfold itself, just as the Absolute of Schelling reveals itself by its Spirit in the real, in history. Since the Spirit animates the consciousness of persons in the Church, doctrine, as is the case in Florovsky, is first borne silently in individual Christian consciousnesses then proclaimed. “Tradition”—or, as it is better known from Florovsky and countless other modern Russian theologians who take the phrase from Möhler, “living tradition”—is the unfolded word of the Spirit. It is life and power infusing the Body which was “first spoken and is continually expounded in a living way in the Church” in its confessions and all those who participate in it from the apostles.¹³⁹ Tradition, for Möhler, as Florovsky observes, is “not a mechanical preservation of images of the past” or even “an external transmission via succession” but a “living continuity of spiritual being.” However, such a continuity would not be possible unless there were an ethos or vision of unity, a form of catholic consciousness seen in particular saints and doctors. This consciousness makes for a “living identity and mutual communion” between those who possess that

consciousness in all ages, resulting in the "overcoming [of] time by the one life-giving spirit" since "there is no past at all in the Church, for it does not exist for the All-Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁰

Yet the only way that this tradition, as the manifestation of the principle of the unity of the Church, can become clearer to us, Möhler argues, is if we contrast it to what is not of tradition, which is heresy. Heresy is a sort of rationalist counter-tradition with its own teachers and schools who, in their egoism, lack catholic consciousness.¹⁴¹ In short, the assertion of catholicity requires the negation of what is not catholic or what, at the very least, is a falling away from the wholeness of "catholic consciousness." Arguably, therefore, a form of the paradigm that we have contended is characteristic of the work of Florovsky is found in Möhler, that is, the assertion of a particular ecclesial identity through a polemic against all that is different and alien to that identity.

Given the remarkable similarity of Florovsky's thought to Möhler's Romantic idealist reading of the Fathers, it is not surprising that Florovsky's notion of faith is similar to that of Möhler. Möhler speaks, claiming to be simply exegeting the Fathers, of a sort of intellectual intuition ("spiritual grasp", "insight through grace", "direct knowledge", "unmediated certainty"), which characterizes the "unmediated consciousness" of the Church in its knowledge of itself as the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.¹⁴² Indeed, the notion of faith found in Möhler, Kireevsky, Solov'ev, and then Florovsky, has a firm idealist pedigree. Schelling, rethinking Kant under the influence of Spinoza, spoke early on of an absolutely free knowing, which he called intellectual intuition. It was not derived at by proofs or inferences or any aid from concepts but produced its own object in intuiting itself, so that "the *self itself* is thus a knowing that simultaneously produces itself (as object)." Schelling described intellectual intuition as the "organ" of all transcendental thinking.¹⁴³ He identified it with "creative imagination" or "intuitive vision" in which the universal and the particular are always one in the Idea and claimed that without it there could be no philosophy.¹⁴⁴ Early on, it was associated, under the inspiration of Jacobi,¹⁴⁵ with faith.¹⁴⁶ By the time of his first lectures on positive philosophy (which Kireevsky attended in Munich in 1830) he advocated a positive "philosophy of revelation." This philosophy was a sort of mystical empiricism that he alleged exceeded a negative philosophy of reason that had to be put aside if one was to perceive that which is beyond the senses. The suprasensible for him was God and the actuality, not just the possibility, of things. However, there was a way to see the unseen, to have an assurance of that which we hope for, a certitude about the imperceptible which is through the organ of "faith [*Glaube*]", which Schelling identified with intuition. Faith "maintains that the suprasensible can become an actual object of experience" as given in the "external datum" of revelation—the Gospels and the writings of Church thinkers—which is a factual historical

reality.¹⁴⁷ Schelling's faith is a state of rest of all thought. It is the most grounded thing upon which rests all knowledge. Uncertainty ceases with faith and the work of all knowledge is done; thus faith is the end of knowledge. Yet as faith is the ground of knowledge, it is not only the end of knowledge but also the beginning of all knowledge and, as such, it is total certitude by which one comes to know directly *that which is* (sc. the truly actual/God) beyond all thought. Schelling refers to it as "trust, assurance, heart, the courage to seize hold of that which one doubts only because it is that which is too transcendent for our customary concepts."¹⁴⁸

Lastly, a critic might respond that we have neglected Florovsky's well-known Christocentrism in showing the roots of neo-patristic synthesis in Romanticism, for Florovsky held that "The theology of the Church is but a chapter, and a principal chapter of Christology."¹⁴⁹ The headship of Christ of His Church, as His enhypostasized human Body or "theanthropic organism",¹⁵⁰ since He is its "ego" or "I",¹⁵¹ makes the Church into a "kind of continuation of Christ"¹⁵² into which we as Christians are incorporated which is our "unity in the Spirit."¹⁵³ Florovsky had in fact criticized Khomiakov and Möhler's treatise on the Church.¹⁵⁴ He felt that it overemphasized the pneumatological conception of the Church by not underlining that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.¹⁵⁵ It created instead a sort of "Charismatic Sociology" of ecclesiology¹⁵⁶ when, in fact, "the Church, as a whole, has her *personal centre* only in Christ, she is not an incarnation of the Holy Spirit, nor is she merely a Spirit-being community, but precisely the Body of Christ, the Incarnate Lord."¹⁵⁷ Yet while Florovsky does criticize Möhler's "great book", *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, in the next phrase he says that the right balance was obtained in Möhler's later writings, already in his *Symbolik* (1832).¹⁵⁸ And what do we find there? Christ, for Möhler, has become the ego or immanent self-consciousness of His own Body, as an organically developing reality in history, a sort of enfleshed Absolute Spirit. We find in this fashion, just as is the case in Florovsky, the Church described as an ongoing incarnation: "Thus the visible Church [. . .] is the Son of God himself everlastingly manifesting himself among men in a human form, perpetually renewed and eternally young—the enduring incarnation of the same [*die andauernde Fleischwerdung desselben*], as in Holy Scriptures, even the faithful are called the 'Body of Christ'."¹⁵⁹ But this idea of the Church as the enduring or extended incarnation is not especially Patristic. It has its origins in Schelling, whose Christian philosophy argued that God/the Absolute has eternally been becoming man from all eternity and that the "culmination of this process is Christ's assuming visible human form, and for this reason it is also its beginning; starting with Christ, it has been going on ever since—all His successors are members of one and the same body of which He is the head. History bears witness that in Christ God first became truly objective, for who before Christ revealed the infinite in this way?"¹⁶⁰

V. Conclusion. Beyond the "Paradigm"—A Re-envisioning of Neo-Patristic Synthesis?

The title of our study has been taken from a poem of the Greek poet, Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933), "Waiting for the Barbarians" (1904).¹⁶¹ In this poem, a narrator describes the capital of a Hellenistic civilization where the populace is assembled in the agora waiting for the conquering barbarians, awaiting their doom, moving sharply between inaction and preening aimed at dazzling the coming wave of marauders with the greatness of its treasure. Yet night comes and Godot has not arrived and indeed messengers come from the frontiers to say that "there are no barbarians anymore." Instead of elation, this news causes commotion and confusion since "what will become of us without barbarians?/ Those people were some sort of a solution."¹⁶² Orthodox theology after Florovsky, likewise, is in a bind, for, in its assertion of its Eastern Orthodox identity, it needs someone who can fulfil the role of barbarian. It needs someone, that is, against whom it can define itself, embodying everything that is negative. However, by affirming its difference through condemning its Western barbarians—making it a sort of Anti-God—modern Orthodox theology has not found a solution to its confusion, but has actually become ever more dependent upon the West. Its polemicism blinds it to the fact that it actually draws its identity from the Other. Likewise, Florovsky rejects post-Great Schism Western theology as having lost its catholic consciousness as Christian Hellenism, yet his very articulation of that consciousness, its structure and even content, has been taken primarily from the sources he reviles (especially Idealism). He then, ironically, claims these sources as uniquely "Patristic" or "Eastern Orthodox." Here *ressourcement* is literally a "re-sourcing" of an idea, taking it unconsciously (or perhaps tacitly) from its true "tainted" (Western) source and then finding a new origin for it in an acceptable "canonical" (Eastern/patristic) source. But this polemicism and re-sourcing has become a necessary stage for the construction of an ecclesial identity. It is a needed veil to hide from the subject his own dependence on the Other, thereby allowing him the necessary illusion that his identity is self-contained, that he is, as it were, in terms of personality, wholly *a-se* (i.e. aseity), from himself alone.

Florovsky was, despite his best efforts to the contrary, to borrow François Rouleau's description of Kireevsky, "*l'anti-idéaliste éduqué par l'idéalisme*."¹⁶³ Critics of modern Orthodox theology need to go beyond the all-too-common stereotype that while Bulgakov was beholden to idealism and sundry tainted Western sources, Florovsky's theology was a creature merely of the Fathers. As we have briefly indicated, Florovsky's theology is also very much a development of German Idealism, as is, one should add, much of the contemporary Orthodox theology built on its foundations. This should not be surprising, especially if one is aware of Florovsky's early intellectual formation, which emphasized Romanticism and post-Kantian philosophy, if it

were not for his wrapping of himself in Patristic garb and for his attack on the Romantic and Idealist heritage of the theology of his contemporaries. Nor should this be necessarily negative, as much catholic *ressourcement* theology, and through it Vatican II, drank from the same wells. What is crucial for contemporary Orthodox theology—and here it should be no different from any other theological tradition—is the acknowledgement that when reading the Fathers it always reads them within the hermeneutical horizon of its time. The present world picture is dominated by Western culture—so that sundry “foreign” sources—beginning with Idealism then going down to existentialism and finally arriving today with the vogue of hermeneutics, post-liberalism and post-structuralism—inevitably act as the spectacles through which the theologian interprets the Fathers and creatively rearticulates the mystery of their pre-modern faith for our postmodern era. Here there need be no shame, if, while remaining rooted in ecclesial Tradition, one does not continually hide one’s relative dependence upon Western thought and culture for the articulation of this apostolic deposit. What is crucial is not to hide or deny this influence, for such denial simply increases its potency by making it unconscious.

The future of Orthodox theology is presently widely discussed by Orthodox theologians in the wake of Florovsky. It would seem then that the resolution of the current discussion depends much on a frank acknowledgement that a common Christian identity for both East and West and an effective response to the various versions of modernity¹⁶⁴ cannot be constructed from a theological synthesis that retains a romantic Byzantinism and an anti-Western polemicism, for this, as we have argued, inevitably hides a secret dependence on the West. A re-envisioning of neo-patristic synthesis is then certainly needed. As it stands, it is a blind alley from which there is no escape from a theology of repetition or, worse, the degeneration of Orthodox theology into patristic archaeology. Neo-patristic theology has become a theology of repetition since it has not returned with humility to the pre *and* post-Reformation Western sources, which have helped to form its thought landscape. Quite simply, Western European thought has become Eastern Orthodoxy’s heritage.¹⁶⁵

As so much of modern Orthodox theology is concerned with its ecclesial “identity” and this study, looking at one of Orthodoxy’s central modern thinkers, has suggested that its approach to this matter is fundamentally flawed as it is founded on polemicism, it is beholden on us to sketch a possible new approach. We are in search, therefore, for a way beyond the paradigm we have traced resulting in a *re-envisioning* of neo-patristic synthesis. That such a modest proposal of a new way forward for Orthodox theology is accomplished within an ecumenical context is not by accident, for Orthodox theology if it is to survive and even flourish in the contemporary West must become truly ecumenical. It must embrace not only the rest of Christendom but the whole of the inhabited world (*oecumene*); more specifically, it

must set out on what Bulgakov called "the broad way of an ecumenical Orthodoxy, freed from provincialism."¹⁶⁶

If we are to begin anywhere, we must begin, as Florovsky and all modern Orthodox theology has insisted,¹⁶⁷ with the revealed mystery of divine-human communion in Christ crucified and risen according to the Scriptures. It is here that we might discern a hermeneutic principle for a new form of neo-patristic synthesis. In Christ we see the perfect synthesis of opposites, in that the poles of humanity and divinity perfectly co-inhere in one another in a union where the natures are unconfused and unchanged yet still indivisible and inseparable.¹⁶⁸ In the union, the poles of humanity and divinity interpenetrate in a perfectly realized tension where they imply one another, are dependent upon and exist through one another. This unity-in-tension is between a self-possessing integrity of the One that ceaselessly gives itself away in a dependent freedom and a ceaseless acceptance of this Other in a free dependence who then gives itself away in turn in dependent freedom and so on *ad infinitum*.¹⁶⁹ The end of this union is that "God is humanized to man through love for mankind, so much is man able to be deified to God through love" or through the Spirit God is inhumanized and man is divinized.¹⁷⁰ The inhumanization of God and the divinization of man are lived out in the Body of the Church as the perpetual extension of the Incarnation. But if this life in Christ, as the perfect unified tension of opposites, is the foundation of the mystery of the Church, cannot we take it as the very basis of all our relationships to others? In this fashion, I am myself in Christ only by finding myself in and through the life of my brother in union with him. And if we can see its application to human relationships, could we not see it more broadly as a hermeneutical principle that might mediate such historical and civilizational "poles" or "opposites" as "Christian East" and "West"? Let us now pursue briefly the latter suggestion in the remaining portion of our study.

What we are suggesting is that perhaps the future of Orthodoxy theology is not found in what has become a tired self-reflexive movement of grasping desperately at a purely Eastern *phronema*, somehow available hermetically sealed from the post-Great Schism West in the Fathers and the liturgical tradition (e.g. "Cappadocian ontology", "eucharistic ecclesiology" and "Patristic exegesis"), at the same time as it distinguishes itself from all that is not itself, alien, Western. Rather, ecclesial identity, from Orthodoxy to the Vineyard, might be discovered through finding out who one is in and through that which seem at first most different from or even hostile to one. In the case of Eastern Orthodoxy, it might discover its identity in and through a positive encounter with all that is Western including not only Western Christianity but also, by extension, modern philosophy, other non-Christian religious traditions and, most especially, science. Therefore, and here Orthodox theology would do well to reverse the Florovskian paradigm, one can know oneself as most Eastern, most Orthodox, precisely in the encounter with what

is not oneself as a part of and in oneself, in one's acknowledgement that to be oneself one is relatively dependent on it, and through this joint meeting-acknowledgement, I discover my heart's true home. To alter Kipling, "Oh, East is West and West is East, and ever the two shall meet";¹⁷¹ implicating one another in a ceaseless creative tension, a coincidence of opposites. To take an example from the Eastern pole, we come to know Florovsky as most Eastern a religious thinker best at the very points where he uniquely transmutes the Westerner Möhler in his reading of the Fathers. So, despite himself, Florovsky mediates Schelling to his neo-patristic synthesis and is, in this way, a sort of closet Romantic while remaining wholly Patristic. Or to use another example that highlights the central role of Palamism in Orthodox theology since the 1920's, we come to know Gregory Palamas best at the very points where he uses¹⁷² Augustine's *De Trinitate*. Furthermore, we encounter the vehemently anti-western Christos Yannaras with the full force of truth when we see how he has uniquely transmuted Heidegger and Roman Catholic personalism in light of Palamas. In this fashion, while remaining fully Palamite, Yannaras proves to be Augustinian despite himself.

Florovsky gives hints of his agreement with this sort of dialectical approach at the end of his *Puti*.¹⁷³ He writes that for Orthodox theology to return to the Fathers does not mean an abandoning of our present age, an escape from history or a quitting from the field of battle. Eastern Orthodox theology must not only preserve patristic experience, but also, he argues, discover it and bring it into life standing on its own feet. In this self-discovery, this move to independence from the non-Orthodox West, it need not become alienated from it. A break from the West gives Orthodoxy no real freedom so it must suffer its trials and temptations and not be mute in them but instead creatively examine and transform them, witnessing to something new, creating a new vision of the future of Eastern Orthodoxy, a task to be accomplished, creatively fulfilling the future. Only in this way, by the Christian East compassionately co-suffering with the West, discovering its opposite in itself, will there be a "reliable path towards the reunification of the fractured Christian world." Western errors cannot be merely refuted or rejected but they must be "overcome through a new creative act", inhabiting the western tragedy and transforming it from within.¹⁷⁴ Yet such an act can only come about if the Orthodox can see themselves as intimately implicated by the West. They must acknowledge that at their very roots they are Western without in any way negating their Eastern particularity, their free groundedness in the mind and worship of the Eastern Fathers.

What is needed in contemporary Orthodox theology, then, is not the "political hesychasm" of Yannaras and Romanides,¹⁷⁵ which, following a form of the paradigm we have traced in Florovsky, demonizes the West in new and more exotic forms. Rather, the needed "turn" in Orthodox thought might be called, remembering our Chalcedonian hermeneutic principle, "political perichoresis." Such a political perichoresis will argue that ecclesial

identity can only be properly forged through conscious proactive theological engagement with the Other from the basis of one's tradition. It would be a re-envisioning of neo-patristic methodology, grounded in an engagement with the Eastern Patristic corpus and the liturgy, for an Orthodox theology that goes "beyond the Fathers" is a contradiction in terms. But now with this new paradigm, it is called to step out beyond the *sterile* polarity of East and West. The West here is no longer viewed as an alien Other, a barbarian whom I am always already awaiting as a convenient solution for my lack of a daring of spiritual assurance. Furthermore, such a post-Florovskian Orthodox theology sees the Fathers as the well-spring of all its thinking, the source from which and to which all its vision and action is drawn without in any way locking it into a slavish parroting of words, a routine form of praxis that cannot be deviated from without falling into heresy and a forbidding of engagement and even appropriation of heterodox thought. This is freedom in dependence, a new Patristic thought for an Orthodoxy that is no longer bound to the Byzantine monuments of its own magnificence like a dying animal. Such a theology above all would meet the West as not only its brother and friend, but also its very life. It would be grasped anew as the basis of Orthodoxy's own self-exploration and self-discovery precisely as *Eastern*, through whom it arrives where it started and knows itself for the first time.

NOTES

- * This essay grew out of lectures and papers given at l'Institut Saint-Serge (Paris), Centre for Research on Religion (CREOR) (McGill University) and St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (thanks to Joost van Rossum, Torrance Kirby, Peter Bouteneff and John Behr). I owe particular thanks to the anonymous readers, Nikolaos Asproulis, Matthew Baker, Paul Fiddes, Paul Gavrielyuk, Pantelis Kalaitzides, Alexey Kostyanovsky, Paul Ladouceur, Aristotle Papanikolaou, Marcus Plested, Kristina Stoeckl, Met. Kallistos (Ware) and Roman Zaviysky. I have published by permission extracts of documents from the Georges Florovsky Papers, Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
- 1 C. P. Cavafy, "Waiting for the Barbarians" in *The Collected Poems*, trans. Evangelos Sachperoglou, Ed Gk text, Anthony Hirst, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 15–17 at p. 17.
- 2 See Andrew Blane, ed., *Georges Florovsky—Russian Intellectual and Orthodox Churchman [= GF]* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993) (bibliography: pp. 341–436) and Matthew Baker and Nikolaos Asproulis, "Secondary Bibliography of Scholarly Literature and Conferences on Florovsky", *Theologia*, Vol. 81 no.4 (October–December 2010), pp. 357–396 (this whole issue is on Florovsky with Greek and English articles).
- 3 *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* [Hereafter CW, I, CW, II etc.], Gen. Ed. Richard Haugh, (Vaduz, LI/Belmont, MA.: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1974–89); A Florovsky Reader is forthcoming in 2013 from Continuum/T & T Clark edited by Paul Ladouceur and Brandon Gallaher with a foreword by Met. Kallistos (Ware).
- 4 Transcripts of Lectures of Lossky, 13/12/56, p.10 as cited in Rowan Williams, *The Theology of Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky*, D. Phil. Thesis, University Of Oxford, 1975, p. 281 (their relationship: pp. 267–283).
- 5 See Pantelis Kalaitzidis, *Hellenicity and Anti-Westernism in the Greek "theology of the '60's"*, PhD dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2008 (in Greek).

- 6 Orthodox theologians exist whose work, though inspired by neo-patristic synthesis, runs counter to the prevailing paradigm we shall trace in Florovsky (e.g. Olivier Clément and Kallistos Ware). They point to the fact that resources exist in the movement and Florovsky's own theology for "renewal", as I will suggest in my conclusion.
- 7 *Puti Russkogo Bogoslovii* [= P], second edition, (Paris: YMCA Press, 1981 [1937]), pp. 462, 469, 492 [*Ways of Russian Theology*, II, CW, VI, pp. 243, 251, 276] and Review of Matthew Spinka's *Christian Thought from Erasmus to Berdyaev* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), *Church History*, Vol. 31 no. 4 (December, 1964), pp. 470–471.
- 8 Review of O. Fielding Clarke's *Introduction to Berdyaev* (London: G. Bles, 1950) and Matthew Spinka's *Nicholas Berdyaev: Captive of Freedom* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1950), *Church History*, Vol. 19 no. 4 (December, 1950), pp. 305–306.
- 9 Review of Matthew Spinka's *Christian Thought from Erasmus to Berdyaev* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), *Church History*, Vol. 31 no. 4 (December, 1962), p. 470.
- 10 See P, p. 492 [*Ibid.*, II, p. 275] and "The Renewal of Orthodox Theology—Florensky, Bulgakov and the Others: On the Way to a Christian Philosophy", pp. 2, 8–9, Georges Florovsky Papers, Box 5, f.6. Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library [= *GFPrim.*] (unpublished lecture March 1968).
- 11 Review of Spinka's *Christian Thought*, p. 470.
- 12 P, p. 493 [*Ibid.*, II, p. 276].
- 13 *GF*, pp. 63, 66.
- 14 See Bryn Geffert, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), Chap. 11, Sergei V. Nikolaev, "Spiritual Unity: The Role of Religious Authority in the Disputes Between Sergii Bulgakov and Georges Florovsky Concerning Intercommunion", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* [= *SVTQ*], Vol. 49 no. 1–2 (2005), pp. 101–123, Brandon Gallaher, "Bulgakov and intercommunion", *Sobornost incorporating Eastern Churches Review*, Vol. 24 no. 2 (2002), pp. 9–28 (sequel to "Bulgakov's Ecumenical Thought", *Sobornost*, Vol. 24 no. 1 (2002), pp. 24–55) and *Catholic Action: Ecclesiology, the Eucharist and the Question of Intercommunion in the Ecumenism of Sergii Bulgakov*, MDiv Thesis, St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 2003.
- 15 See N. T. Eneeva, *Spor o sofologii v russkom zarubezh'e 1920–1930 godov* (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 2001) (including condemnations); Geffert, "The Charges of Heresy Against Sergii Bulgakov: The Majority and Minority Reports of Evlogii's Commission and the Final Report of the Bishops' Conference", *SVTQ*, Vol. 49 no. 1–2 (2005), pp. 47–66 and Alexei Klimoff, "Georges Florovsky and the Sophiological Controversy" [= *GFSC*], *SVTQ*, Vol. 49 no. 1–2 (2005), pp. 67–100.
- 16 See *GFSC*, pp. 87 ff. and Geffert, "Charges", pp. 48 ff.
- 17 See *GFSC*, p. 86 but there were "lapses" as in his caustic words after a speech of Bulgakov at Faith and Order (Edinburgh 1937): Leonard Hodgson, ed., *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order* (New York, NY: Macmillan Company, 1938), pp. 74–75 and Metropolitan Euloge, *Le Chemin de Ma Vie: Mémoires du Métropolitain Euloge*, trans. Pierre Chesnakoff, (Paris: Presses Saint-Serge—Institut de Théologie Orthodoxie, 2005 [1947]), pp. 489–490 (See *GFSC*, p. 95).
- 18 See *GFSC*, pp. 93–94 and Geffert, "Charges", pp. 52–54.
- 19 See Brandon Gallaher, "Graced Creatureliness: Ontological Tension in the Uncreated/Created Distinction in the Sophiologies of Solov'ev, Bulgakov and Milbank", *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, Vol. 47 no. 1–2 (2006), pp. 163–190, "The Christological Focus of Vladimir Solov'ev's Sophiology", *Modern Theology*, Vol. 25 no. 4 (October, 2009), pp. 617–646; Review of Bulgakov's *The Lamb of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), *Logos*, Vol. 50 no. 3–4 (December, 2009), pp. 543–548 and *There is Freedom: The Dialectic of Freedom and Necessity in the Trinitarian Theologies of Sergii Bulgakov, Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Oxford Theological Monographs Series, Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2014, Part I.
- 20 See Euloge, *Le Chemin de Ma Vie*, p. 528.
- 21 John Meyendorff, "Predislovie" in P, pp. v–x at p. vi.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. vi–vii.
- 23 See Florovsky, "Renewal", pp. 5ff. and *GFSC*, pp. 72ff. and 96ff.
- 24 See Meyendorff, p. vii; See Joost van Rossum, "Palamisme et Sophiologie", *Contacts, Revue française d'orthodoxie*, Vol.N^o. 222 (2008), pp. 133–145 and especially Roman Zaviysky,

- Shaping Modern Russian Orthodox Trinitarian Theology: A Critical Study of Sergii Bulgakov with Reference to Vladimir Lossky and Georgii Florovsky*, D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2011, especially Chapters. 2–4.
- 25 Meyendorff, p. vii (See *GFSC*, pp. 76ff., Miguel de Salis Amaral, *Dos visões ortodoxas de la Iglesia: Bulgakov y Florovsky*, Colección teológica 111 (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2003), Ross J. Sauvé, *Georges V. Florovsky and Vladimir N. Lossky: An Exploration, Comparison and Demonstration of their Unique Approaches to the Neopatristic Synthesis*, PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2010 and Paul Ladouceur, "'Aimons-nous les uns les autres': Serge Bulgakov et Georges Florovsky", Forthcoming 2011 in *Contacts*).
 - 26 Vasili Zenkovsky, "Moi vstrechi s vydaiushchimisia liud'mi", [3–52] "Otets Georgii Florovskii" [50–2], *Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the U.S.A.*, No. 27 (1995), p. 51 and Bulgakov, "Pis'ma k G. V. Florovskomu (1923–38)", Letter of 18/31 August 1924, ed. Ekaterina Evtukhova, *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi mysli, Ezhegodnik 2001/2002*, ed. M. A. Kolerov (Moscow: Tri Kvadrata, 2002), pp. 175–226 at p. 197.
 - 27 *GF*, pp. 49 and 182.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
 - 29 Bulgakov writes in his diary on 29 September 1923: "I had a large (written) confession of G. V. Fl<orovsky>, I accepted him into my heart as a spiritual father. Glory to God!" (Alekssei Kozyrev and Natal'ia Golubkova, "Prot. S. Bulgakov. Iz pamiati serdtsa. Praga (1923–1924)", *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi mysli. Ezhegodnik za 1998* (Moscow: O. G. I., 1998), p. 156).
 - 30 See *Bratstvo Sviatoi Sofii: Materialy i Dokumenty 1923–1939*, ed. N. A. Struve, (Paris: YMCA Press, 2000) (See Jonathan Seiling, "Exiled Russian Orthodox Leaders in Paris and the Struggle to Establish a Home Away From Home (1925–1944)" in *Historical Papers 2005: Canadian Society of Church History*, Annual Conference: University of Western Ontario, 29–31 May 2005, Eds. Brian Gobbett et al., pp. 69–82 at pp. 71ff.).
 - 31 Zenkovsky, p. 51 and *GFSC*, p. 71.
 - 32 Bulgakov, "Pis'ma k G. V. Florovskomu (1923–38)", Letter of 18/31 August 1924, IPIRM, p. 197.
 - 33 *GF*, pp. 60, 112.
 - 34 *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 68 and *GFSC*, pp. 98–99.
 - 35 *GF*, pp. 67–68, 77, 81–82, 85.
 - 36 Florovsky, "Renewal", p. 4.
 - 37 See E. L. Mascall, *Obituary of Florovsky, Sobornost*, Vol. 2 no. 1 (1980), pp. 69–70 (On the influence of Augustine see Christoph Künkel, *Totus Christus: Die Theologie Georges V. Florovskys* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1991)).
 - 38 e.g. John Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism, and Doctrine* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1981). Also see: <<http://www.romanity.org/index.htm>> (Last accessed 5 July 2011).
 - 39 e.g. Christos Yannaras, "Orthodoxy and the West", *Eastern Churches Review*, Vol. 3 No. 3 (Spring, 1971), pp. 286–300 and *Orthodoxy and the West*, translated by Peter Chamberas and Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007) (See my critical review of the latter at *Logos*, Vol. 50 no. 3–4 (December, 2009), pp. 537–542 but more positively see Andrew Louth, "Some Recent Works by Christos Yannaras in English Translation", *Modern Theology*, Vol. 25 no. 2 (April, 2009), pp. 329–340). More recently see Yannaras' address at Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology: <<http://www.hchc.edu/hellenic/about/news/1548.html>> (Last accessed 5 July 2011).
 - 40 See Florovsky, "The Cunning of Reason" and "About Non-historical Peoples", *Exodus to the East*, eds. Ilya Vinkovetsky and Charles Schlacks, Jr. (Idyllwild, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr. Pub., 1996 [1921]), pp. 30–40 at p. 38 and pp. 52–68 at pp. 64–66 (On Eurasianism: *Russia Between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism*, ed. Dmitry Shlapentokh (Leiden: Brill, 2007)).
 - 41 "Evraziiskii soblazn [The Eurasian Seduction]", *Sovreminnia zapiski*, No. 34 (1928), pp. 312–346.
 - 42 "Dva Zaveta [Two Covenants]", *Rossia i Latinstvo* (Berlin: Logos, 1923), pp. 152–176.
 - 43 See Paul Gavriilyuk, "Florovsky's Neopatristic Synthesis and the Future Ways of Orthodox Theology" in George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds., *Orthodox*

- Constructions of the West* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, forthcoming). (I am indebted to this invaluable paper).
- 44 See *Procès-Verbaux du premier congrès de théologie orthodoxe à Athènes. 29 Novembre—6 Décembre 1936*, ed. Hamilcar S. Alivisatos (Athens: Pysros, 1939), pp. 212–231, 238–242 (*GF*, pp. 71–2, n.86, 186).
- 45 See F. J. Thomson: “Peter Mogila’s Ecclesiastical Reforms and the Ukrainian Contribution to Russian Culture: A Critique of Georges Florovsky’s Theory of the *Pseudomorphosis of Orthodoxy*”, *Slavica Gandensia*, No. 20 (1993), pp. 67–119.
- 46 Florovsky, “Western Influences in Russian Theology [1939]”, *CW*, IV, pp. 157–182, 297–299 at pp. 157–158, 170, 172, 168 and 178.
- 47 *P*, p. 49 [and see the periphrastic *Ibid.*, I, *CW*, V, p. 72] as cited in Gavrilyuk, “Florovsky’s Neopatristic Synthesis [etc.]” (slightly adapted).
- 48 “Western”, pp. 179, 174 and 181.
- 49 “Patristics and Modern Theology” [1939], *Diakonia*, Vol. 4 no. 3 (1969), pp. 227–232 at pp. 229–230. Compare to *P*, pp. 506ff. [*Ibid.*, II, pp. 294ff.].
- 50 *GF*, p. 71, n.86, 186.
- 51 “Patristics”, p. 232.
- 52 “The Christian Hellenism”, *Orthodox Observer*, No. 442 (January, 1957), pp. 9–10 at p. 9.
- 53 “Revelation, Philosophy and Theology” [= R] [1931], *CW*, III, pp. 21–40 at p. 32 (given at Barth’s seminar in Bonn).
- 54 “Bogoslovskie Otryvki [Theological Fragments]”, *Put’*, No. 31 (December, 1931), pp. 3–29 at p. 14 and compare the more muted *R*, p. 32.
- 55 See Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, second edition, Trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (London and Oxford/New York, NY: Williams and Norgate/G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1901), p. 205 (See Gavrilyuk, “Florovsky’s Neopatristic Synthesis [etc.]”).
- 56 Florovsky, Revised version of preface to “In Ligno Crucis: The Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement” (1948), *GFPrin.*, Bx. 3. F. 4, pp. 2–3.
- 57 Revised Version of “Quest for Christian Unity: The Challenge of Disunity” (1955), *GFPrin.*, Bx. 3. F. 11, pp. 26–7.
- 58 *R*, pp. 33–35, 26–27.
- 59 Rev. pref. “In Ligno Crucis”, p. 3 and Unrevised version of preface to “In Ligno Crucis: The Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement” (1948), *GFPrin.*, Bx. 2. F. 1, p. 4.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 61 See Bulgakov, “Dogma and Dogmatic Theology” [1937], Trans. Peter Bouteneff, *Tradition Alive*, ed. Michael Plekon (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2003), pp. 67–80. [“Dogmat i dogmatica” in *Zhivoe Predanie: Pravoslavie v sovremennosti* (Paris: YMCA, 1937), pp. 9–24. (*Pravoslavnaia mysl’* v.3)].
- 62 Florovsky, “The Eastern Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement” [= *OCEM*], *Theology Today*, Vol. 7 no. 1 (April, 1950), pp. 68–79 at p. 75.
- 63 “Patristics”, p. 231.
- 64 *OCEM*, p. 72.
- 65 Bulgakov, “Dogma”, pp. 70–71; The “rabbinic” remark of Bulgakov may be a tacit swipe at Florovsky since a similar statement was made by V. N. Il’in some few years previously about an essay of Florovsky on the Patristic teaching on the atonement (Florovsky, “O smerti krestnoi”, *Pravoslavnaia mysl’*, No. 2 (1930), pp. 148–187): “The brilliant essay of Prof. G. V. Florovsky is dedicated to the Patristic teaching on the death on the cross. A greatly erudite and talented author, who one might say, put on a straightjacket of the Patristic literature, as if drowning in it and not having saved anything of his own. However, the thought of G. F. [sic] Florovsky feels at ease in this heavy armour. One might say, that in the likeness of the ancient talmudists, the author erected around this Gospel theme a gigantic defensive wall from patristic literature. It is curious that so interesting an essay is obtained thanks to (not in spite of but precisely thanks to) its exclusively negative task—the maximum possible proscription of gnosis. But—*le roi est mort, vive le roi*—both the ponderous erudition and the rigorous orthodoxy [*ortodoksal’nost’*] of the author wakes up one’s mind in the direction of developing an Orthodox gnosis; his every line is a wake-up call, so rich is its content. This is one amongst the principal merits of the essay” (Review of *Pravoslavnaia Mysl’—Trudy Pravoslavnago Bogoslovskago Instituta v Parizhe*), II (Paris: St

- Sergius Institute, 1930), *Put'*, No. 30 (October, 1931), pp. 86–89 at p. 89; Here see Williams, *The Theology of Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky*, pp. 282–283).
- 66 "The Legacy and the Task of Orthodox Theology", *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 31 no. 2 (April, 1949), pp. 65–71 at pp. 66–67.
- 67 OCEM, p. 72.
- 68 "Legacy", p. 67.
- 69 OCEM, p. 72.
- 70 "Legacy", p. 68.
- 71 "The Christological Dogma and Its Terminology" in *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?*, Eds. Paulos Gregorios et al. (Geneva: WCC, [1968] 1981), pp. 121–126 at pp. 123–124.
- 72 OCEM, pp. 72–73.
- 73 e.g. Review of Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1957), *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 38 no. 3 (July, 1958), pp. 207–208 and Review of *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity* (NY, 1963), *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 1 no. 1 (Winter, 1964), pp. 117–118.
- 74 Rev. pref. "In Ligno Crucis", p. 2.
- 75 "Quest for Christian Unity", p. 29; Compare Review of L.A. Zander, *Vision and Action* (London, 1952), *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, Vol. 1 no. 2 (Winter, 1953), pp. 28–34 at pp. 32–33.
- 76 "Une vue sur l'Assemblée d'Amsterdam", *Irénikon*, Vol. 22 no. 1 (1949), pp. 5–25 at pp. 9–10.
- 77 "Confessional Loyalty in the Ecumenical Movement" in *Intercommunion*, Eds. Donald Baillie and John Marsh (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Pub., 1952), pp. 196–205 at p. 204.
- 78 In contrast: Matthew Baker, "*Neo-Patristic Synthesis*": *An Examination of a Key Hermeneutical Paradigm in the Thought of Georges V. Florovsky*, ThM. Thesis, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Brookline, MA), 2010, Chapter 4.
- 79 "The Catholicity of the Church" [1934], *CW*, I, pp. 37–55, 121–122 at p. 39.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 46; See "The Ever-Virgin Mother of God" [1949], *CW*, III, pp. 171–88 at p. 186, OCEM, p. 72, "St Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers" [1960], *CW*, I, pp. 105–120, 127 at p. 106 (citing Irenaeus), "Obedience and Witness", *The Sufficiency of God*, eds. Robert C. Mackie and Charles C. West (London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 58–70 at p. 67 and "The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church" [1964], *CW*, I, pp. 73–92, 123–125 at pp. 79 and 82.
- 81 e.g. Aleksei Khomiakov, "The Church is One", *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader*, trans. and ed. Boris Jakim and Robert Bird (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), pp. 31–53 at p. 36 and see pp. 33ff.
- 82 See Johann Adam Möhler, *Unity in the Church or The Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries* [= U], trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 166–205, 117ff. [*Die Einheit in der Kirche; oder das Prinzip des Katholicismus, dargestellt im geiste der kirchenväter der drei ersten jahrhunderte*, Ed. Rupert Geiselmann (Köln/Olten: Hegner, [1825] 1957)] (See Yves Congar, "La pensée de Möhler et l'Écclésiologie orthodoxe", *Irénikon*, Vol. 12 no. 4 (Juillet-Août, 1935), pp. 320–329 and Serge Bolshakoff, *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Church in the Works of Khomyakov and Moehler* (London: SPCK, 1946), pp. 217–262 and especially p. 232).
- 83 Florovsky, Review of Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (Mainz, 1925), "Kniga Melera o tserkvi" [= K], *Put'*, No. 7 (April, 1927), pp. 128–130.
- 84 *P*, pp. 278–279 [*Ibid.*, II, pp. 46–47].
- 85 *K*, p. 128.
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