

# Orthodoxy and the Western Rite

## The Question of Necessity

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Necessity is the mother of invention, or so the saying goes. Directly stated, one's creativity is pressed into service out of serious need or duress, and in moments of struggle one can be eminently imaginative in devising a solution the present quandary. More abstractly the old maxim could be understood as meaning one does not invent something new unless one has a want. In discussions on the validity of Western Rite Orthodoxy, it is commonly asked whether the Orthodox Church needs a Western rite, for any number of purposes, including effective evangelization of non-Orthodox Christians, demonstration of Orthodoxy's catholicity, and demonstration of a living Western memory, among other possibilities.<sup>1</sup> In other words, is the Western rite necessary? If did not exist, would we wind up inventing it?

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<sup>1</sup> There are varieties of Western Rite Orthodoxy, but the most common form is found in the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, which used modified versions of the Tridentine rite or *The Anglican Missal* (which is itself based on the 1928 US *Book of Common Prayer*). The most common changes are introducing the epiclesis from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, removing reference to the Pope or the *filioque*, and strengthening petitions to the saints and references to the eucharistic sacrifice in liturgies derived from Anglican sources. Western rite parishes and monasteries Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia use similar liturgies to those just described, in addition to reconstructions of the Sarum use. Furthermore, the Orthodox Church of France, formerly part of the Romanian Orthodox Church, used a reconstructed version of the Gallican rite. The present article addresses criticisms laid against all forms of Western Rite Orthodoxy, since many critics of the Western rite do not take into account the supposed antiquity or source of the liturgy use, considering all form of the Western rite to be invalid.

The response that Orthodoxy does not need a Western rite is obvious enough at first since it is categorically true: Orthodoxy does not need a Western rite because she simply does not. The problem is not so much in the statement itself, which is indeed so obvious as to be a truism, but in the underlying assumption that are left unspoken, and that is where the deep significance of this objections lies. We can identify at least three unspoken predications to the statement: because the Eastern rite is innately superior to the Western rite in transmitting Orthodoxy; because the West is heretical and therefore the Western rite is automatically heretical; and because the ethos of the West is opposed to Orthodoxy. Each of these rationales have their own underlying assumptions about the nature of Orthodoxy, the West, and the role of culture in the Church. What brings all three elements together under a single heading is that they share a common feature, what Andrew Sopko refers to as “psychological negativism, an unhealthy by-product of the cultural superiority which Byzantium did indeed once possess over the West for many centuries but eventually lost.”<sup>2</sup>

The “otherness” of the Eastern rite to Western Christians has been cited previously as a justification for the existence of a Western rite.<sup>3</sup> The argument posits that, because the Eastern rite represents a culture which is entirely beyond the cultural experience of most Westerners, it is likely to be a barrier to a conversion rather than an aid. In this regard, critics of the Western rite argue that those who prefer a Western rite should be content with an Eastern rite because

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Sopko, ‘Western Rite Orthodoxy: A Case Study and Reappraisal,’ *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., John Rossner, ‘Orthodoxy and the Future of Western Christianity,’ *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* Vol. 14, No. 3, 1970, pp. 134-5; Winfield S. Mott, ‘Some Perspectives on the Western Rite – I,’ *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* Vol. 26, No. 2, 1982, pp. 124-5; and Alexy Young “An Introduction,” in Michael Trigg, ed. *An Introduction to Western Rite Orthodoxy* (Ben Lomond: Conciliar Press, 1993), pp. 5-6.

the nature of the Church itself is Eastern rather than Western. Chrysostomos Stratman is representative when he states that “[the Orthodox Church’s] Oriental spirit, or Gospel spirit, to use an equivalent expression, is not a development. It was there all the time. It was in the East that the Gospel of truth arose...and it is the same East which has always been the source of its true traditions and spirit.”<sup>4</sup> This itself is little more than a vestigial manifestation of the assumed cultural superiority of Greek culture over and against Latin culture, one which itself not only contributed to the Great Schism, but further served as a barrier to reconciliation between the two sides historically, and this in addition to the very real dogmatic disagreements which are, themselves, the product of two alienated cultures. The claim that Western Christians should be satisfied with the Eastern rite because Christianity is Eastern, because Jesus and his Apostles were Eastern, is itself a confusion of the issue brought about by woolly-headed thinking. In one sense, these critics are correct in that, from the perspective of the Rome at the time of the Early Church, Jesus and his Apostles and his teachings were Eastern because they originated in a cultural milieu of the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire. The same basic truth can be said of the liturgy of the Churches of the Eastern portion of the former Roman Empire.

But there is a problem in assuming that there is any such thing as a monolithic “Eastern” context. Certainly, the Eastern rite is “Eastern,” but to be more precise, it is Greek and to be even more specific, it is Byzantine rather than Attic. Attic Greek culture, the culture of ancient Athens, is the culture of Socrates and Plato which imparts its influence to all of Europe, East and West, including the Byzantine Empire. However, while Byzantine culture absorbs Greco-Attic culture, it is nevertheless distinct from it, for it is a specific synthesis of the Greco-Attic with a reinterpretation of Roman culture

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<sup>4</sup> Chrysostomos Stratman, “The Roman Rite in Orthodoxy,” p. 9.

and Chalcedonian Christology. This is the cultural context of the Eastern rite, and thus it is properly the Eastern rite, because it is specifically born of the cultural synthesis that took place in Constantinople rather than Athens. By contrast, "the West" is the result of a synthesis of Roman and Germano-Frankish. The Roman culture would consist of the elements found in the Italian peninsula and transmitted in Latin while the Germano-Frankish element is an adaptation of the Roman elements with learning that occurs during the Carolingian renaissance. For those who would contend that Socrates is just as much the cultural inheritance of the West as it is of the East, it is worthwhile to remember that Greek culture was largely lost to the West until the Renaissance, when it was rediscovered and celebrated by humanists in their mistaken belief that this was the true cultural foundation of European civilization.

While it is true that Jesus and his Apostles are Eastern in the same basic sense of Greek civilization, in that it lies east of Rome, that is hardly the most specific description. A more specific description would be that Jesus and his Apostles are Semitic in culture, and to be more precise, are of the Palestinian Jewish variety of Western Semitic culture. There is a distinction between Palestinian Jewishness and Greco-Attic or even Byzantine culture. This distinction is addressed in the fact that there was conflict between Hellenistic Jews (those who had absorbed elements of Greco-Attic culture) and Palestinian Jews, and this is a conflict which is made itself manifest in the very first years of the Church, as the biblical material attests in Acts 3. Thus, the Christian message of the Gospel, which arises in the Palestinian Jewish culture of Jesus and the Twelve (not to mention the majority of the scriptures that constitute the Old Testament), needs to be "translated" into something comprehensible to the prevailing Greek and Latin cultures of the era. This is a process we can see going on even in the time of the Apostle Paul and his attempts to harmonize the Hellenistic and Jewish factions within early Christianity. It seems to be

something very obvious, but which has nevertheless been ignored or forgotten. To be direct, fifteen hundred years of dressing Jesus in Greek robes in the sacred art of East *and* West has made us forget that Jesus was never actually Greek at all.

This assumption that the Orthodox Church and the culture the Gospel arose from are Eastern and therefore the same thing also has enormous implications for the current objection. The underlying premise is that if the Western Orthodox accept the "Eastern" Jesus without complaint or desire to Westernize him, they should therefore be willing to accept the liturgy of the East without any need for a westernization of it, either. But the truth is that neither the West nor the "East" has accepted Jesus or the Gospel without any sort of acculturation, as has been apparent by the imposition of Greek philosophical vocabulary on to the Gospel, a process which no Orthodox Christian would regard as illegitimate.<sup>5</sup> So even the Eastern Church has engaged in its own sort of acculturation and accommodation to the Gospel, which detractors to the Western rite have nevertheless decried as illegitimate for Christianity in the West.

We can sometimes detect an air of superiority regarding the Eastern rite from the Western rite's most ardent detractors.

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that the Greek context of early Christianity is irrelevant or unimportant. Greek culture provided a vehicle for interpreting the Hebrew scriptures, and the Christian faith to the non-Jewish world. Furthermore, Christianity has historically claimed that Greek and Latin culture were being divinely prepared to receive the revelation of the Gospel, the philosophical quests coming to their own natural conclusion at precisely the correct time for the audience to be receptive. In that sense, one can agree with Georges Florovsky's assessment that "we are all Greek" (theologically speaking). Simultaneously, this must be qualified to some degree as the Latin tradition has contributed to the common theological heritage, so there remains a subtle danger in Florovsky's statement. Furthermore, the difference between Greek and Jewish culture cannot be overstated in this case, precisely because many Western rite critics, in saying we are all eastern, does not seem intend as merely theologically, but culturally as well. In this case, consistent repetition of the historical context of Jesus is important because the implication in stating Jesus' easternness without further specificity is a deceptive straw-man.

Sometimes these observations are quite sophisticated and have a distinct theological underpinning, as we see in the case of Alexander Schmemmann; more often, they are in reality the sort of gross subjectivism that is typified in Stratman, who finds the character of the Roman rite to be one of

Imperialism, regimentation, coldness of spirit, materialistic efficiency, legalism: these are some of the Roman-Latin traits which distorted Western Christianity into the travesty of a Church which for almost a thousand years has been the most dangerous and insidious enemy of Christ and His Immaculate Bride. Observe the Latin Mass critically and behold the Manifestation of every one of these traits!<sup>6</sup>

But such a criticism of the Western Church is highly subjective and, taken with the balance of Stratman's thoughts on the subject, may best be described as xenophobic. What is more, most of his criticism about the Roman rite could easily be made of the Eastern rite by individuals approaching the Eastern rite from a different perspective.<sup>7</sup> But Stratman goes on for several more pages denigrating everything Western from a highly subjective standpoint, oblivious to the possibility that the same criticism can be turned back on the Eastern rite in many instances, precisely because of their subjective nature. Such subjective accusations are hardly new, and they have been present within Christianity since at least the seventh century.

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<sup>6</sup> Stratman, "The Roman Rite in Orthodoxy," p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> My own anecdotal experience in the opposite direction (non-Orthodox reflecting on the Divine Liturgy) is perhaps illustrative in this regard. Among non-Orthodox associates, there are varying perspectives on the Divine Liturgy after the first time they see it celebrated. Many are awe-struck by the liturgy, but just as many, if not more in some instances, find themselves turned off to the liturgy, describing it with the same adjectives that Stratman uses, to also include "pompous," "ostentatious," "unintelligible," "confusing," and "meaningless." This serves to underscore the point that subjective approach to the liturgy is simply that: subjective. Long-term admirers (Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike) would be want to use the same descriptors, but these, too, are subjective judgements, so they can only say something about what is or is not right for *me* as an individual, and thus are to be avoided categorically.

Stephenson summarizes the attitude of the era as one of questioning "if customs differ, how (they ask) is discipline to be preserved? If they differ obstinately, what is this but schism? How can there be unity of men will not renounce their differences?"<sup>8</sup> Though such attitudes are old, they are hardly helpful.

Schmemmann's critique is certainly more nuanced and is made comprehensible by his methodology of *lex orandi, lex credendi*: "this criticism itself is rooted primarily in my deep conviction that the Eastern liturgical tradition is *alone* today in having preserved, in spite of all historical 'deficiencies,' the fullness of the Church's *lex orandi*."<sup>9</sup> However, it is precisely that methodology that leads him to a false conclusion, that is, because the West ultimately came into a state of schism and heresy, there must be some defect in the rite because the rite is the source of the heretical theology. Consequently, no other rite aside from the Eastern rite can and perhaps never could adequately convey the fullness of Orthodoxy. And yet, he is not averse to stating in other places that the source of the West's troubles was its having severed theology from its true source and ultimate arbiter in the form of the liturgy, a process he sees taking place in the Orthodox Church and is quick to decry.<sup>10</sup> The later scenario, obviously, is the case for the history of the West, namely that the liturgy ceased to be a source of theology and ultimately became one of its many subjects. In that regard, we should meet Schmemmann's methodological assumption, that the Church only believes what it prays, and its ensuing critique, with an equally robust criticism: sometimes people believe more than

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "Some Reflections Upon 'A Case Study,'" *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, p. 268, emphasis original.

<sup>10</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (London: Faith Press, Ltd., 1963), pp. 16-21. See also Schmemmann, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America II: The Liturgical Problem," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 8, No. 4, 1964, pp. 164-85.

what they pray and sometimes they pray what they don't believe for appearance sake.

However, it must also be remembered that Schememann specifically regards the Eastern rite as having preserved the *lex orandi* of early Christianity,<sup>11</sup> regarding such elements as the Paschal canon of St John of Damascus as closer to the common Catholic heritage as anything else within the Christian tradition.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, despite his critique of Western Rite Orthodoxy on the basis of its liturgy, it is clear that Schememann is arguably more concerned with the people who make up the Western Rite, whether they have sufficiently absorbed an Orthodox ethos or are merely attempting to find a safe shelter beyond their former ecclesiological home where they can continue their previous life, dogmatically and liturgically, without interference.<sup>13</sup> This is certainly a valid pastoral concern, but it is also highly individualistic and, in a certain sense, a subjective judgement. It is a question that needs to be investigated more thoroughly with regards to Western Rite Orthodoxy as it is practiced, but does not, in this author's opinion, address the Western rite's legitimacy *in abstracto* as a legitimate expression of the Orthodox faith, and thus not germane to the present question.

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<sup>11</sup> Schememann, "Some Reflections Upon 'A Case Study,'" *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, p. 268

<sup>12</sup> Schememann, "Notes and Comments: The Western Rite," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 2, No. 4, 1958, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> This is brought out, for example, in Schememann's comment that making a Western liturgy Orthodox involves more than textual changes ("Some Reflections Upon 'A Case Study,'" *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, p. 268), but is directly stated in his previous comments that jurisdictional belongings, minimal assent to specific doctrinal and liturgical points, or "mechanical" understanding of Apostolic Succession are "a very real danger to Orthodoxy" and "the replacement of Orthodoxy of 'content' by an Orthodoxy of 'form'" ("Notes and Comments: The Western Rite," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 2, No. 4, 1958, p. 30). Of course, the very same criticism could have been made of convert parishes which use the Eastern rite, so there is not necessarily anything specific to Western Rite Orthodoxy, though Schememann would doubtless argue the danger created is even greater within the Western rite than in if the converts are formed in the Byzantine rite.



Schmemmann's critique, while established by his methodology, probably would strike a chord with the average Orthodox believer. Stratman's comment, while at the extreme end of Orthodoxy in America, nevertheless is representative of powerful feelings of antagonism towards the West and things Western. We might expect that it comes from a "less enlightened time," but if this is so, such enlightenment has only come about very recently. We are thereby left to question if Orthodoxy in the West really gotten over its "psychological negativism" as has been protested by Schmemmann and Dye, individually or, as is implied, collectively? Certainly Johnson believes that Orthodoxy has done so through its receptivity towards the saints of the pre-schism and their commemoration within the Eastern rite:

If we can picture Overbeck in 19th century England we might realize why he felt an Orthodoxy using a "western rite" was absolutely essential if the Church was to have a viable mission in the West. Overbeck would have only been able to experience the worship of Orthodoxy as done among recent immigrants, using not English, but the languages of their mother countries. No wonder he might reach the conclusion that only an Orthodoxy with a different rite, that had a western memory, could ever again be the church of the venerable Bede....Orthodoxy doesn't have to have a "western rite" to have a western memory. With this in mind, let us suppose Overbeck's experience of the Church had been quite different. Suppose he had attended the celebration of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom on the feast of the venerable Bede and there in the narthex was a beautiful icon of this saint for veneration by the faithful. Suppose, too that the Liturgy had been conducted entirely in English. What could he find missing to celebrate the feast of this great saint of the early Christian west? True, the Liturgy would not be served in exactly the same way as Bede himself would have done (but

then, neither - by a long shot - would the "western rite" liturgies of St Tikhon or St Gregory be the same as done by the venerable Bede).<sup>14</sup>

Though it would be impossible to gauge the extent of the veneration of Western saints within Orthodoxy (and indeed, what precisely could be defined as a "Western" saint in the first place since many individuals are venerated with equal zeal in both calendars, St Nicholas of Myra being perhaps the most significant instance), perhaps an anecdotal and admittedly arbitrary guess can be hazarded. Orthodoxy in North America has seen significant growth in the past century, with the founding of several new congregations. Judging by patronal names alone, and excluding those which could be understood as referencing individuals who could be either Eastern or Western (such as St Gregory, who could be Gregory Dialogus or Gregory the Theologian if no modifier is included) or one of the Apostles, we find that parishes dedicated to Western saints, with the exception of a few Western rite parishes, are almost non-existent. Among the three largest jurisdictions in North America (The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Antiochian Archdiocese, and the Orthodox Church in America), there are only five parishes that can be described as having distinctly Western patronal names. There are none in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and four in the Orthodox Church in America: St Aidan of Lindisfarne Mission, Cranbrook, BC; St Benedict of Nursia, Montreal, QC; St Ambrose of Milan Mission, Roanoke, VA; and St Cyprian of Carthage Mission, Richmond, VA. Within the Antiochian Archdiocese, aside from the Western rite parishes, only one is named for a Western

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Johnson, "The "Western Rite": Is it Right for Orthodoxy," *The Priest* Vol. 5, May 1995, <http://www.holy-trinity.org/modern/western-rite/johnson.html>. However, Johnson is off the mark in his assumption that Overbeck would have found that nothing could be lacking in the English Celebration of the Eastern rite. Timotheos Hatherly advocated for the Eastern rite in English, yet his objective was bitterly opposed by Overbeck as insufficient. See Jack Turner, *Cum Illa Graeci Sint, Nos Latini: Western Rite Orthodoxy and the Eastern Orthodox Church* (PhD thesis: University of Wales, 2010), pp. 33-4.

saint: St Vincent of Lerins in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; that leaves five Eastern rite parishes out of nearly 1,000 which bear the name of a distinctively Western saint.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly, such a note is simultaneously idiosyncratic and anecdotal, but it does serve to point out that while the Western rite is not required for a Western memory, without a Western rite there is little in the way of that Western memory. While it can be pointed out that important Western saints such as Patrick of Ireland have begun reappearing on the calendars of Orthodox churches in the West, we are left wanting for any effectual evidence that those saints are even commemorated. The point of parish names goes at least so far as to demonstrate that these Western saints would be commemorated in at least these places if for no other reason than the occasion of a patronal festival. It also leaves untouched the question of how these same saints are received in traditionally Orthodox places, whether Patrick of Ireland makes it into the calendar of, for example, the Church of Georgia or not, without mentioning if he is actually commemorated.<sup>16</sup> The primary fallacy in Johnson's argument is the assumption that inclusion on the calendar, or even commemoration in the liturgy, is evidence of a "Western memory." To turn the point on its head, John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nazianzos all appear in the Roman calendar though I doubt very seriously that Johnson would thereby admit that the Roman Catholic Church has an "Eastern memory."

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<sup>15</sup> Anecdotally, the most common parish name is Sts Peter and Paul in the OCA and Holy Trinity in the Antiochian and Greek Orthodox Archdioceses. If we account for the various festal titles, the Theotokos and derivative titles have a solid majority in all three jurisdictions.

<sup>16</sup> Of course, in all fairness, one would undoubtedly require an extensive memory, and Orthodox cannot be faulted for preferring the familiar over the "other," no matter how ancient or venerable. There are encouraging signs, notably in the Moscow Patriarchate's 2007 decision allowing the third Sunday after Pentecost to be celebrated as All Saints of Britain and Ireland.

For the Orthodox Church to have something of a Western memory, it would seem logical that the East, without exception would be able to see in the West something familiar and evocative of the memory. While there are instances of this positive reception, most often it is a presumed or idealized conception of the West rather than the West as it actually was in the first millennium.<sup>17</sup> Simultaneously, there are many examples, historically and presently, of those who regard the West as something alien and wholly foreign, not only to the East, but to Christianity in general. The latter is certainly the position that Stratman takes in saying "from the point of view either of justice or logic, their position is no different from that of converted African savages....Logically, the situation is no different than if there never been any Western Rite."<sup>18</sup> Even more bothersome is his directly claim that "the true Gospel spirit [is] Eastern in the sense that it is anti-Western."<sup>19</sup> While Stratman's view is somewhat extreme, the practical result is the same even in more moderated views: Western converts should adopt the Eastern rite because the Eastern rite is Orthodox. This leads to the question of precisely where the categorical rejection of the West came from. Sopko points to "an unhealthy by-product of the cultural superiority which Byzantium did indeed once possess over the West for many centuries but eventually lost."<sup>20</sup> Certainly, there are replete examples of this presumed cultural superiority by Easterners, most notably Theophylakt of Ochrid, who assumed that all Westerners as uneducated savages and assumed Latin to be an impoverished

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<sup>17</sup> One example involves an Orthodox priest, related to me by an associate: the priest insisted that there was no Western rite because the Western rite was invented after 1054. When pressed to identify the liturgy used before the Schism, the priest stated that it was the John Chrysostom liturgy, which was used faithfully up to 1053. When further pressed for where the priest had acquired this knowledge, he this was told to him in seminary. Clearly, this is an extreme example, but it is by no means an isolated one.

<sup>18</sup> Stratman, "The Roman Rite in Orthodoxy," p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Sopko, "Western Rite Orthodoxy: A Case Study," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, p. 255.

language incapable of theological expression.<sup>21</sup> And certainly, as we have seen, animosity was present between the two sides for a long period of time.

The categorical rejection of the West and all things Western is therefore not new, but it is hardly a relic of the past. Among Greek theologians, the neo-patristic school, commonly identified with the theologies of John Romanides, Christos Yannaras, and, to a lesser extent, John Zizioulas, makes a determined rejection of the West and all things Western as foreign to Orthodoxy.<sup>22</sup> Romanides is particularly firm in his rejection of the West via his rejection of Augustinian theology, which he views as the origin of scholasticism and consequently of every divergence of the West from the East.<sup>23</sup> And Romanides is not alone in his conclusions, with Yannaras succinctly stating at the outset that "Augustine's theology was decisive, offering an ideal basis for a differentiated Western Christianity."<sup>24</sup> While Augustine is not the sole genesis of theology in the West despite conclusions to the contrary by some Orthodox theologians, he is in some way symbolic of that theology, and thus an explicit rejection of

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<sup>21</sup> Tia M. Kolbaba "The Orthodoxy of the Latins in the Twelfth Century," in Andrew Louth and Augustine Cassidy, eds. *Byzantine Orthodoxies* (London: SPCK, 2006), p. 201.

<sup>22</sup> George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Augustine and the Orthodox," in Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos, eds. *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), pp. 30-6.

<sup>23</sup> These were not, of course, the first to decry Western influence in the Orthodox Church. St Nichodemus the Athonite in his collection of canons of the Orthodox Church is particularly antagonistic towards the Latins, writing in a time of particular anti-Latin popular sentiment. Nicodemus directed his antagonism against the Latins in regards to the validity of their sacraments, particularly baptism in his commentaries on various baptismal canons of the ecumenical councils, most notably Canon 8 – Nicaea, 325; Canon 7 – Constantinople, 381; and Canon 95 – Pentetheke, 691. His commentary goes to great lengths to justify leniency in the admission of Arians, Nestorians, and Monophysites, but in regards to Latins he is unequivocally adamant, stating that all are to be re-baptized, and in conformity with the policy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

<sup>24</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), p. 16.

Augustine is a rejection of Western Christianity.<sup>25</sup> That Romanides traces the theological separation of East and West to such an early period would mean that the tree is cut from the root long before anything approaching the Western rite (at least in any extant form) could arise.

Certainly, we can disagree with Romanides' conclusions about Augustine and his role in the creation of Western Christianity,<sup>26</sup> but again to those theologians who oppose "the West" and particularly Western influence in Orthodoxy the symbolism Augustine provides is a tempting target.

It is illuminating that the unequivocal condemnation of Augustine by Orthodox theologians first appears in early nineteenth-century Russia in its Slavophile form and then reappears in the late 1950s among Greek theologians. In both situations, the anti-Augustine sentiment emerges together with a reaction against what is perceived to be western influences that are incompatible with the intellectual and spiritual tradition in Russia and Greece. The move toward a restoration of a more authentic, national, intellectual, and spiritual identity in these Orthodox countries was based on a construction of a particular set of categories, namely "the West" and "the East," and an understanding of these categories in terms of diametrical opposition.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This could be qualified in the case of Romanides since he rejects Frankish Christianity rather than what he would identify as authentic West Roman Christianity, though the practical result is the same regardless of the phrasing.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, "Augustine and the Orthodox," in Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos, eds. *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), pp. 11-40 and Peter Galadza, "The Liturgical Commemoration of Augustine in the Orthodox Church: An Ambiguous *Lex Orandi* for an Ambiguous *Lex Credendi*," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol. 52, No. 1, 2008, pp. 111-130.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

This brings us back to the question of “psychological negativism” that Sopko identified, which both Schmemmann and Johnson deny has any effect on their estimation of the Western rite’s orthodoxy. Johnson’s objection is the more flawed than Schmemmann’s, but the conclusion he reaches is more damaging. His conclusion that providing the Eastern rite in modern English and commemorating important Western saints is sufficient demonstration of a Western memory or overcomes Sopko’s psychological negativism is simple, yet it draws an irrelevant conclusion: one may speak English as one’s native language and yet be hostile towards the West and all things Western. Insofar as Romanides and other theologians working within the neo-Patristic synthesis exhibit this negativism, Romanides takes it to an extreme level which “[interprets] the ‘West’ as diametrically opposed to the ‘East,’ both theologically and in terms of its cultural ethos.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the West is no longer simply something that went astray and could be brought back into conformity with Orthodoxy, but is now to be seen as something which Orthodoxy must reject as unorthodox, at least from Augustine forward.

Romanides approaches the separation of East and West not as a consequence of a growing separate ecclesial life, but the domination, even genocide, of the “West Romans” by an external force in the Frankish kingdoms. In Romanides’ view, far from there being a “Latin Church” and a “Greek Church,” there was a “Roman Church” composed primarily of the Byzantines and inhabitants Italy and a “Frankish Church” which developed apart from direct continuity with Roman Christianity.<sup>29</sup> However, such a dichotomy ignores the general

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>29</sup> John S. Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism, and Doctrine: An Interplay Between Theology and Society* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1981), p. 60.

evidence from history,<sup>30</sup> especially the fact that “so far from wanting to remake the Western Roman Empire in their own image, and so rupturing its links with the East, [The Franks] were only too glad to accept whatever of its patrimony...the Greco-Roman world at large could offer them.”<sup>31</sup> A more accurate assessment might be to see a Greek Christianity in the hellenized centers of the East, a Latin Church exemplified by Rome and the Latin-speaking regions of Italy, and a Frankish Church in Gaul, northern Italy and Germania, drawing from a common theological heritage in the first six ecumenical councils but developing it along distinct lines. The Frankish line comes out of the Latin, but the two are eventually reintegrated in the tenth and eleventh centuries. To put the matter simply, Romanides’ historical theory rests on a base that is ultimately fantasy. However, despite the peculiarity of his historical reconstruction, Romanides’ influence should not be understated, particularly his impact on Orthodox living in the West and even on non-Orthodox scholars.<sup>32</sup>

Considering the origins of the Slavophile movement and its influence on the neo-Patristic school, both with their rejection of all things Western, it is interesting to note a parallel timeline within Western Rite Orthodoxy. Khomiakov began his theological work on *sobornost* and Slavophilism in the 1830’s and developing coherence in the 1850’s while Overbeck makes his initial approach to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1864. Both Slavophilia and neo-Patristic thought would lead to Orthodoxy down a road where not only

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<sup>30</sup> Though Romanides would say that this “evidence” is flawed because it is buys in to the Frankish mythology that the Franks and the West Romans shared a theological lineage distinct from the Byzantine East (see Romanides, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 69).

<sup>31</sup> Aiden Nichols, *Light From the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1995), pp. 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, “Augustine and the Orthodox,” in Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos, eds. *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press), p. 5 n.75.



was the West forgotten, it was often rejected outright as something alien to Orthodoxy or, where the West was accepted in whole or part, it was often reinterpreted to the point that Western fathers are devout hellenists who are misunderstood by unworthy successors, especially in Romanides' skewed vision. So we may confidently conclude that Johnson is mistaken when he states Orthodoxy has a Western memory: English and icons of the Bede do not make a Western memory if they are detached from the historical context and proper perspective.

There is another type of psychological negativism which permeates the Eastern rite, and that is the negativism that comes from converts. In responding to Sopko, Dye finds himself free of the psychological negativism that permeates Eastern Rite Orthodoxy,<sup>33</sup> but there is an existing negativism which comes from being disillusioned with one's former Church and habits of life which is, in some ways, common of all converts regardless of when or how long ago they converted. Many within the Western Rite Orthodox display this sort of negativism as well, though unlike Dye they do not abjure their former habits of worship. Such hostility is perhaps understandable since many who leave one church in favour of another do so because of some deficiency, real or perceived, in the former group. Sometimes, this hostility can fade but just as frequently it can remain seething beneath the surface until it is released in open attack on former associations; this is especially true when the one leaving the group feels that they are being forced out in some way or have been betrayed by the group itself, either because of changes to demographics, purpose, or beliefs of the group. While not the same as the ethnically based "psychological negativism" that Sopko describes, it can not only be every bit as blinding to the affected individual, it can also be used to

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<sup>33</sup> Gregory H. M. Dye, "Notes and Comments: Some Perspectives on the Western Rite – II," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* Vol.26 No. 2, 1982, p. 125.

feed the assumptions and ideas of those who possess Sopko's negativism. However, despite Dye's protestations to the contrary, not having been Orthodox all of one's life does not free one from psychological negativism; rather, it merely makes them susceptible to different varieties of negativism with a pseudo-legitimate air about them on the assumption that converts must have some special insider knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, the best response to the assertion that Orthodoxy does not need a Western rite is not to argue the point of necessity; from the standpoint of the Orthodox, the Church does not need anything that has not already been provided to her and if something was abandoned along the way, it is because it was not necessary. The real question: how is the Orthodox Church supposed to approach Western Christianity, especially if there is an eventual reunion between East and West? While criticisms of Western Rite Orthodoxy are abundant, most that have been put forward are largely superficial, and it is this superficiality that Sopko is attempting to get at, however ineptly; it is also the same lack of depth that Johnson attempts to rebut while simultaneously succumbing to the same. While criticizing the Western rite on a superficial basis, few critics go so far as to offer alternatives to Western Rite Orthodoxy or to take a larger perspective and consider how their unspoken assumptions would affect larger Western groups seeking union with the Orthodox Church; to put it another way, if reunion took place tomorrow between Constantinople

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<sup>34</sup> For further critique of converts and the unique challenges they bring to churches which they convert to, see, Joseph D. Honeycutt, *One Flew Over the Onion Dome: American Orthodox Converts, Retreads, and Reverts* (Salisbury, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 2006). The negativism that converts can bring when discussing their former memberships is not to be overlooked. Particularly for those converts coming to Western Rite Orthodoxy, there is frequently a sense of betrayal and not a little bit of bitterness against their former churches. Many convert parishes and clergy came to Orthodoxy from Anglicanism after The Episcopal Church's decision to ordain women in 1977. It may also be borne in mind that Stratman was himself a convert to the Orthodox Church.

and Rome, what liturgy would Roman Catholics use? For his part, Schmemmann is certainly correct that there are more significant issues to be raised in regards to Western Rite Orthodoxy, even though he himself does not approach them with the necessary depth in writing on the subject, than to focus on whether or not Orthodoxy needs a Western rite and what that says about Orthodox Christianity. Certainly, some are likely to have such an immediate and uncritical reaction, but those are hardly individuals who are likely to take opportunity to critique the Byzantine tradition to the same degree that Schmemmann does in other places.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Schmemmann's three part series in *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* on the problems of Orthodoxy in America: "Problems of Orthodoxy in America I: The Canonical Problem," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 8 No.2, 1964, pp. 67-85; "Problems of Orthodoxy in America II: The Liturgical Problem," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 8 No. 4, 1964, pp. 164-185; and "Problems of Orthodoxy in America III: The Spiritual Problem," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* (NS) Vol. 9. No. 4, 1965, pp. 171-194.