

Ontology and History

International Conference
at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi

29-31 May 2015

Conference Booklet

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(Prof. Yannaras’ paper will be read in Greek, but is available in English in
part 4 of this booklet.)

International Conference at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi
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Ontology and History

A Challenging and Auspicious Dialogue for Philosophy and Theology

This conference will attempt to explore the relationship between ontology and history in the context of both philosophical enquiry and Christian theology. Ontology is the study of being qua being, a field that is typically viewed as distinguishable from—if not also antithetical to—history. However, while the study of being (insofar as it exists) and history may seem unrelated, there is either an explicit or implicit interaction between the two in a number of philosophical traditions; when not explicitly articulated, this implicit interaction emerges as a philosophical problem. And while this is particularly true for various forms of philosophical idealism (e.g. German idealism) and the historicisation of idealism, it emerges as a core problem in the context of Christian theology and its eschatological promise. If the true state of being and beings resides in an eschatological future, not in the present or a distant past (as masterfully expounded by Maximus the Confessor), and if this true state of being and beings is yet to be witnessed, then temporality in general and history in particular become a vital part of ontology proper. This bears immense implications for the philosophical enquiry into ecclesial witness.

Apart from this, a reoccurring challenge within Christianity concerns how we are to make past events present. Christ died and rose again two thousand years ago, but how does that touch the present? Rudolf Bultmann tried to make sense of this by elevating word over event. In so doing he formulated an ‘existentialised’ eschatology in which the focus is on the immediate. In both Catholicism and Orthodoxy there are various construals of anamnesis in which the historical event is made present as a kingdom event through the liturgical experience of the Eucharist. In current biblical studies (e.g. N.T. Wright) there is strong emphasis on making sense of the resurrection through history, and history is given priority over confession. As a result the ecumenical creeds are denigrated and metaphysical clarification risks being perceived as anti-biblical. In line with the desire to understand the relationship of the ‘once’ and the ‘always’, there is the challenge of making sense of the particular and the universal. Rahner conflates them: the particular is the universal. Or stepping back in time with Origen, there is the temptation to universalise the particular with salvation. More recently, the development of political theology as a unique field of inquiry, straddling philosophy and theology, raises the joint concern of how our social histories are legitimated by moral and theological insights about the nature and destiny of human being. Another

potential area of investigation brought into view here concerns the relationship between the continuity of salvation history and the radical or interruptive newness of Christ. This raises numerous questions for liturgy, ethics, and theological anthropology, and it also highlights the wide-ranging philosophical and theological implications of this topic.

A Conference Dedicated to the Memory of Fr. Matthew Baker

As many of us eagerly anticipated the plenary sessions at the “Ontology and History” conference, there was also excitement about meeting a most promising scholar and brilliant theologian, whose reputation preceded him even among our (European) circles: Fr. Matthew Baker.

Already before completing his PhD, Fr. Baker had established a reputation for having a profound breadth and depth of knowledge in theology, philosophy, and literature. He has published a number of articles on T.F. Torrance and Georges Florovsky, and his work on hermeneutics has even excited Metropolitan John Zizioulas. In a recent announcement Zizioulas said, “*Matthew Baker sometimes somehow enters into the deepest of my intentions ... Most of the other people just don't.*”

Tragically, at the age of 37, Fr. Baker was killed in a car accident on March 1st as he travelled home from celebrating evening prayer at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Norwich, Connecticut. His most untimely death has come as a source of great sorrow to us. In honour of Fr. Matthew Baker, we would like to dedicate this conference to the celebration of his memory and call for further engagement with his scholarly and theological contributions.

Organised by:

Dr Sotiris Mitralaxis (Bogazici University, Istanbul)

Andrew TJ Kaethler (University of St Andrews)

The organisers are deeply thankful to the Director of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi, Prof. Athanasios Markopoulos (University of Athens) for his cooperation, and to Dr Alexis Torrance (University of Notre Dame) for reconstructing Fr. Matthew Baker's paper.

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Programme

[Note: Each short paper slot is comprised of a 20 min. presentation and a 10 min. discussion. Plenary sessions consist of a 30–35 min. presentation for each plenary speaker and a 30 min. discussion.]

DAY 1: Friday, 29 May 2015

09.00-12.30: Bus transfer from Athens to Delphi

12.30-14.30: Hotel check-in & free time for lunch

14.30-16.00: Parallel Sessions 1

Room DIONYSOS Workshop (Session 1/3): <i>Human and divine personhood: how does the ontological fit with the historical?</i> Chair: Pui Him Ip (University of Cambridge)	Room GAITIS Chair: Fr Demetrios Harper (PhD, University of Winchester)	Library Chair: Dr Chryssoula Gitsoulis (CCNY)
<i>Incarnation and Personhood</i> Dr Ryan Mullins, University of Cambridge	<i>“To Apprehend the Point of Intersection of the Timeless with Time”: Problems of Personhood and Intermediate Time</i> Dr Beata Toth, Sapientia College of Theology	<i>The Imago Dei, Aristotelian Hylomorphism & Causation, and the Techne of Man</i> Marc Cole, University of Leeds
<i>The Historical and Ontological Significance of “Person” and “Subject” in Christology and Trinitarian Theology</i> Dr Anne H. King,	<i>Between Eschaton and Concept</i> Dan Sgarta, Independent Researcher, Timisoara	<i>Health of the Soul in Plato and Christian Thought: Similarities and Differences</i> Dr Chryssoula Gitsoulis, City College of New York
	<i>The common paths of Ontology and History: Orthodoxy and Theology of Liberation in dialogue</i> Aggelos Gounopoulos,	<i>Primary Philosophy and Potency in Aristotle</i>

University of St
Thomas

Aristotle University of
Thessaloniki

and Aquinas
Dino Jakušić,
University of
Warwick

Δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ:
The Ontology of
Personhood in
Gregory Palamas and
its Biblical and
Aristotelian Structure
Raffaele Guerra,
University of Salerno

16.00-16.45: PLENARY SESSION

Truth and Reality: An Eschatological Approach to
History

The Metropolitan of Pergamon **JOHN**
ZIZIOULAS
(Academy of Athens)

16.45-17.10 Coffee Break

17.10-18.40: Parallel Sessions 2

Room DIONYSOS

Workshop (Session
2/3):

Human and divine
personhood: how does
the ontological fit with
the historical?

Chair: Dr Andrew TJ
Kaethler (Univ. of St
Andrews)

Joseph Ratzinger's
Imago Dei

Room GAITIS

Chair: Dionysios Skliris
(Paris IV-Sorbonne)

Rechristianising
Heidegger: Eberhard
Jüngel's ontology in the
light of the cross

Deborah Casewell,
University of Edinburgh

Re-Contextualising Time
within Topos: A Critique
of Time using the later

Library

Chair: Dr Luke Ben
Tallon, Le Tourneau
University

'Whoever is dead is
justified from sin':
Methodius of
Olympus on
Ontological
Salvation and the
Stain of History

Thomas D.
McGlothlin, Duke

***Anthropology as a
Means for the
Inclusion of History in
Ontology***

Isabel Troconis,
Pontifical University of
the Holy Cross, Rome

***Joseph Ratzinger and
the Immortality of the
Soul: An Ontological
Necessity for Historical
Existence***

Dr Andrew T.J.
Kaethler, University of
St Andrews

***Berdyaeu's Solution:
Redeeming Persons in
Historical Love***

Dr Daniel S. Robinson,
Graduate Theological
Union

***Heidegger and Maximus
Confessor***

Dr Cullan Joyce, Catholic
Theological College,
University of Melbourne

***Historicity and Christian
Life Experience by the
Early Heidegger***

Dr Anna Varga-Jani,
Catholic Pázmány Péter
University (*in absentia*)

University

***History and
Ontology In
Collingwood:
Implications to
Theology***

Penelope Voutsina,
University of
Sheffield

***Ontology as a
Guide to Ethics
(Appearances to the
Contrary)***

Haralambos Ventis,
Boston University

18.45-19.30: PLENARY SESSION

***The Priest of History and our Deliverance from
the Socratic***

Prof. ALAN J. TORRANCE

(University of St Andrews)

19.30: Dinner at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi

DAY 2: Saturday, 30 May, 2015

09.30-11.00: Parallel Sessions 3

Room DIONYSOS

Workshop (Session 3/3):

Human and divine personhood: how does the ontological fit with the historical?

Chair: Pui Him Ip
(University of Cambridge)

What is a Human Person? A Unified Approach to the Question from Cognitive Neuroscience, Philosophy, and Theology

Dr Daniel D. De Haan,
University of Cambridge

Communion Fulfilled: Personhood and Kinship, in the Relationship between Moral Theology and Social Anthropology
David Torrance,
University of Cambridge

Nothing new under the sun? Personhood and the question of technology in the Byzantine Tradition
Dr Alexis Torrance,
University of Notre Dame

Room GAITIS

Chair: Dr Andrew TJ
Kaethler (Univ. of St
Andrews)

Analogy and history: Erich Przywara, G.W.F. Hegel and the principle of non-contradiction
Ragnar Mogård Bergem,
University of Cambridge

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Gustave Thils' Theology of History Balancing Between Ontology and History
Dries Bosschaert,
Katholieke Universiteit
Leuven

Myth as Mediating Ontology and History in the Religious Theory of Mircea Eliade
David Baird, University
of St Andrews

Library

Chair: Dr Cullan
Joyce (Catholic
Theological
College, University
of Melbourne)

Asceticism and Creative Destruction: On Ontology and Economic History
Dylan Pahman,
Acton Institute

Calvin on History in Genesis
Rebekah Earnshaw,
University of St
Andrews

The Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Economy of Salvation: A Liturgical Perspective
Joshy Parokkaran,
Katholieke
Universiteit Leuven

11.00-11.45: PLENARY SESSION

Person and Eros: Towards a Relational Ontology

Prof. em. **CHRISTOS YANNARAS**

(Panteion University, Athens)

11.45-12.15: Coffee Break

12.15-13.45: Parallel Sessions 4

Room DIONYSOS Workshop: <i>Times of Eternity: The Time of Pure Forms, The Time of Christ, The Time of Visio Beatifica</i> Chair: Marcin Podbielski, Akademia Ignatianum	Room GAITIS Chair: Dr Smilen Markov (Veliko Tarnovo University) <i>Topology of Time. The Development of the Concept of Time in the Philosophy of the Early Byzantine Period</i> Dr Smilen Markov, Veliko Tarnovo University	Library Workshop: <i>Ontology and History between German Idealism and Maximus the Confessor</i> Chair: Dr Sotiris Mitralexis (FUB, BOUN)
<i>Plato's Parmenides: Time and Continuity in Pure Forms</i> Dr Marcin Podbielski, Akademia Ignatianum	<i>History as the Ontology of Time</i> Dr Vasil Penchev, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Philosophical Research	<i>German Idealism and Maximus the Confessor: Introductory Remarks to a Welcome Anachronism</i> Dr Sotiris Mitralexis, Freie Universität Berlin & Bogazici University
<i>Cyril of Alexandria on the Only Begotten and First Born: Philosophical Underpinnings and Contents of the Deductions of the Properties of Coming- to-be older and younger than Self / Other</i> Dr Sergey	<i>Ontology, History and Relation (schesis): Gregory of Nyssa's Epektasis</i> Prof. Giulio Maspero, Pontifical	<i>The Concept of History within an Eschatological Model of Cosmology: Logoi and Tropos as Synthesis of Ethical Absolutism and Ontological Contingency</i> Miroslav Griško, University of Ljubljana

Trostyanskiy, Union
Theological Seminary,
New York

***Deification in Aquinas:
Atemporal Completion
of a Personal Temporal
History***

Dr Anna Zhyrkova,
Akademia Ignatianum

University of the
Holy Cross, Rome

***Maximus' vision of
'Logos-in-many-logoi'
and Hegel's progressive
'consciousness':
Understanding the
'real' through
consciousness, history,
and human will***
Rev Dr Chrysostomos
Gr. Tympas, University
of Essex (*in absentia*)

13.45-15.15: **Lunch** at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi

15.15-16.45: Parallel Sessions 5

Room DIONYSOS
Chair: Dr Sotiris
Mitralexis

***The Hermeneutics of
the Resurrection***

Bishop Maxim
Vasiljevic of Western
America,
Professor of Theology,
University of Belgrade

***A Synodical Ontology:
Maximus the
Confessor's proposition
for an ontology within
History and in the
Eschaton***

Dionysios Skliris, Paris
IV-Sorbonne

***The Orthodox icon and
the dialectics between
ontology and history***
Dr Uros T. Todorovic,

Room GAITIS
Chair: Dr Luke Ben
Tallon, Le Tourneau
University

***Eucharistic Ecclesiology
and Political Theology:
John Zizioulas, William
Cavanaugh, and the End
of Repentance***

Dan Wright, University
of Virginia

***Ontological
Remembrance in the
Eschaton***

Andrew Marin,
University of St Andrews

***The Holy Spirit in
History***

Dr Will Cohen,
University of Scranton

Library
Chair: Dr Andrew
TJ Kaethler (Univ.
of St Andrews)

***A Vicarious
Ontology: the
History of Jesus
and Creaturely
Identity***

Jonathan Lett,
University of St
Andrews

***History as an
Ontological
Experience***
Dr Adam G.
Cooper, John Paul II
Institute, Melbourne
(*in absentia*)

***The Incarnation as
a saturated
phenomenon:***

16.45-17.30: PLENARY SESSION

*Time Matters: A Phenomenological Ontology of
Temporality and Corporeality*

The Very Rev. Prof. **JOHN PANTELEIMON
MANOUSSAKIS**

(College of the Holy Cross, Worcester MA)

17.30-17.50: Coffee Break

17.50-19.40: Parallel Sessions 6

Room DIONYSOS
Workshop:
*Modern Philosophy,
Psychoanalysis, and
the Question of
Christian Eschatology*
Chair: Rev. Prof.
Nicholas Loudovikos
(UEATH, IOCS)

*Ecstatic or Reciprocal
Meaningfulness?
Theological
eschatology between
Philosophy and
Psychoanalysis*
Rev. Prof. Nikolaos
Loudovikos, University
Ecclesiastical Academy
of Thessaloniki, IOCS
Cambridge

The Kantian 'Two

Room GAITIS
Workshop:
*Politics and Theology
at 'the End of History'*
Chair: Jared
Schumacher, KU
Leuven

*The Political Necessity
of Ontology*
Jared Schumacher,
Katholieke Universiteit
Leuven

*Symphonia in a
(Post)Secular Age?*
Dr Chris Durante, New
York University

*A New Interpretation
of the Katechon:
Liquidation or Renewal
of the Political*

Library
Workshop:
*History and
Ontology
'Performed': A
Liturgical
Perspective*
Chair: Vika Lebzyak
(KU Leuven)

*The Ontological
Transformation of
the Human Person:
Schmemmann on
Liturgical
Deification*
Victoria Lebzyak,
Katholieke
Universiteit Leuven

*'Liturgical' Ontology
in the Reformation?
The Case of Peter*

***Images' Problem and
its Lesson for Christian
Eschatology***

Rev Dr Demetrios
Harper, University of
Winchester

***From Ontology to
ontologies to Trans-
Ontology: The
postmodern narrative
of history***

Dr Anthony L.
Smyrnaio, University
of Thessaly

Theology?

Prof. Panagiotis
Christias, University of
Cyprus

***How Realistic are
Christian Politics? A
Case for***

Eschatological Realism
Logan (Mehl-Laituri)
Isaac, University of St
Andrews

Martyr Vermigli

Silvianne Bürki,
University of
Cambridge

***Praying and
Presence:***

***Kierkegaard on the
salutary prolepsis of
the Self***

Dr Chris Doude Van
Troostwijk,
Luxemburg School
for Religion and
Society and
Protestant Faculty of
the University of
Strasbourg

***Liturgical Ontology
and History in Saint***

***Maximus the
Confessor's
Mystagogia***

Dr Michail
Mantzanas,
Ecclesiastical
Academy of Athens

DAY 3: Sunday, 31 May, 2015

07.30-11.00: Liturgy: The Feast of Pentecost (optional)

11.00-17.00: Free time.

You can visit the archaeological site of Delphi and eat lunch in the village. These activities will not be organised by the conference; they are up to each participant's wishes and schedule.

17.00-20.00: Bus transfer from Delphi to Athens.

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Myth as Mediating Ontology and History in the Religious Theory of Mircea Eliade

David Baird

‘Whatever belongs to the sphere of the profane does not participate in being’. With these words, twentieth century Romanian historian of religion Mircea Eliade develops his philosophical treatment of mankind as homo religiosus. Invariably desiring to participate in the sacred -- the absolute reality that transcends the experienced world yet can also be located within it -- religious man, according to Eliade, seeks ‘by every means at his disposal . . . to reside at the very source of primordial reality, when the world was in statu nascendi’. This primordial state of reality that homo religiosus recounts in his myths is most intensely commemorated during festival times wherein ‘the sacred dimension of life is recovered’ through symbolic activity. Thus, ‘through the reactualization of his myths, religious man attempts to . . . participate in being; the imitation of paradigmatic models expresses at once his desire for sanctity and his ontological nostalgia’. These are only the basic contours of Eliade’s religious theory, a powerful paradigm for conceptualizing the human drive for practical participation in a stable reality beyond the flux of history. This paper consolidates Eliade’s dispersed thinking on history and ontology, illustrates it with concrete examples drawn from pre- and post-Christian societies, and evaluates the extent to which ‘it falls to the primordial myth to preserve true history . . . [since] it is in the myth that the principles and paradigms for all conduct must be sought and recovered’.

Zizioulas and Heidegger: "Eschatological Ontology" and Hermeneutics

Fr. Matthew Baker

Recent criticisms of neopatristic theology the neopatristic movement and its chief inspirer, Georges Florovsky, claim that theology as such is responsible for an insensitivity to the historicity and contextuality of theology and for closing down the dialogue with modern philosophy opened by earlier figures such as Solovyov and Bulgakov. Those criticizing the

neopatristic model have called for a new attention to modern and postmodern hermeneutics and to contextual theologies. In these criticisms, no attention has been given to Florovsky's own engagement with Western historicism and with a number of thinkers having crucial connection to philosophical hermeneutics: Wilhelm Dilthey, Josiah Royce, and R.G. Collingwood.

Florovsky's core insights and questions concerning the nature of historical understanding and activity were not developed by the subsequent generations of Orthodox theologians. The conversation with historicism and philosophical hermeneutics suggested by certain elements in Florovsky's work has not come to be characteristic of neopatristic theology as broadly developed and received. Some critics of neopatristic theology invoke the name of Hans-Georg Gadamer, calling for Orthodox appropriation of his thought. In histories of modern philosophical hermeneutics, a line is typically drawn from Dilthey to Heidegger to Gadamer, the first two names being major interlocutors in Gadamer's hermeneutics. Yet if the significance of Florovsky's dialogue with Dilthey and Collingwood remains largely unnoticed, it is well known that the early work of Martin Heidegger has played a crucial influence on the thought of Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas. Yet the interest of these two Greek thinkers in Heidegger, however, is ontology, not hermeneutics. The crucial importance of Heidegger's study of Dilthey and his engagement with debates about the crisis of historicism and the humane sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) does not appear at all to be recognized in the work of either Yannaras or Zizioulas. These elements, and the hermeneutic character of Heidegger's early ontological investigations – so crucial for Gadamer – are covered over and obscured, and the “existentialist” interpretation of *Being and Time* (so influential among theologians but eschewed by Heidegger himself) exercises a considerable influence, especially in the work of Zizioulas.

In this paper, I will expose the specifically hermeneutical character of key concepts from *Being and Time* appropriated by John Zizioulas in his own offerings to the program of neopatristic synthesis sketched by Florovsky: *ekstasis*, authenticity, and *being-unto-death*. As will be shown, although not explored by Zizioulas, these concepts are inextricable from Heidegger's critique of historicism and his account of historiography, tradition, and the uses of the past. Further, Heidegger's figuration of these ontological concepts bear a quasi-eschatological character, drawing from Heidegger's early study of Pauline eschatology. In response to historicism and its crisis of values, Heidegger suggests an eschatological approach to

tradition – albeit a secularized and individualized eschatology, an eschatology of death.

Further, this paper will consider Zizioulas' use of the concepts of ekstasis, authenticity and being-unto-death, and the eucharistic-eschatological ontology which Zizioulas poses over against Heidegger's eschatological ontology of death. The interest here, however, remains in hermeneutics. Consideration will be given to Zizioulas' repeated (if undeveloped) criticisms of "historicism" in theology and the affinity of this critique with that of Heidegger. Having laid bare the hermeneutical shape of the Heideggerian concepts employed by Zizioulas, an attempt will be made to draw out the implications of Zizioulas' handling of them for theological hermeneutics, an area to which Zizioulas himself has devoted little concentrated attention.

Analogy and history: Erich Przywara, G.W.F. Hegel and the principle of non-contradiction

Ragnar Mogård Bergem

It is a common assumption that some forms of modern philosophy, such as Hegel's dialectical philosophy, is more attentive to our finite existence in history than pre-modern Christian metaphysics, whether they come in a broadly Aristotelian or Platonic shape. In the work of the Catholic theologian Erich Przywara we find resources to challenge that assumption.

In his magnum opus *Analogia Entis*, Przywara argues that only a metaphysics of participation, which thinks of being as analogous and creation as suspended between *ipsum esse* and nothing, can account for the finite nature of thinking in history. Accentuating the participation of creatures in the divine being is therefore not a flight from or devaluation of history, but rather the only way of staying true to the constraints put on our thinking by our historical existence.

In this paper I will expound and extend Przywara's argument, which is centred on the principle of non-contradiction as the foundation for thought, by bringing it to bear on Hegel's philosophy. Using Przywara's terminology, we can see more clearly the tendency in Hegel's thought to transgress the finitude proper to creaturely thought as such. In light of this I show, with Przywara, how a participatory ontology is actually more modest and attentive to the limits of our historical existence than what we find in some interpretations of Hegel's philosophy.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea Gustave Thils’ Theology of History Balancing Between Ontology and History

Dries Bosschaert

In 1949 Gustave Thils published the book *Théologie de l’histoire*, thus taking position in the emerging field of ‘theology of history’. Sixteen years later his work was praised as “one of the most fundamental and articulate presentations of a theology of history ever written by a contemporary Catholic theologian” (Connolly, 1965). In its time, however, it was strongly criticized for being overly optimistic in its appraisal of the positive ontological value of history, preferring, according to his critics, the incarnation to eschatology. Nonetheless, in this contribution I will argue that, in these years, Thils attempted to balance numerous tensions in his theological views and strived to avoid going to extremes. In light of this conference, three fields of tension are of particular importance. First, I will indicate that his theology emerged between the inspiration of Eastern theology and the incompleteness of Western philosophies of history, such as idealism and Marxism. Second, I will describe how he tried to make theological truth claims on the ontological nature and direction of history, keeping the middle between the incarnation and the eschaton as a point of reference. Moreover, I will point out the divergence of views with French theologians (esp. some members of the *nouvelle théologie*). Third, his theology wished to serve the development of a Christian anthropology promoting both contemplation and action. In sum, this paper will present Thils’ *Théologie de l’histoire* as balancing between ontologically contemplating and transforming the nature of history and humanity.

‘Liturgical’ Ontology in the Reformation? The Case of Peter Martyr Vermigli

Silvianne Bürki

In my paper, I will analyze the complex position held by Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562) regarding the ontological construal of the relationship and interaction between God and creatures. While the main focus of the panel will be the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, I will present a Protestant reformer, who – as I will argue – does not fit neatly into the often-held picture of the Reformation as having an exclusively nominalist

ontology which precludes the liturgical encounter and interaction between God and humans.

To situate Peter Martyr Vermigli's position, I will initially consider the ontological shifts in the late Middle Ages as described by recent scholars (Corbin, de Libera, Boulnois, etc.), namely the gradual and intermittent disintegration of traditional participatory (or 'liturgical') ontology, and the concomitant rise of nominalism and voluntarism. I will then present Vermigli's thought on the Eucharist, thereby particularly focussing on the way he frames the nature of God's action in the world, and the status of human action. I will first argue that, ontologically speaking, his position is very much in flux between the traditional participatory frame, on the one hand, and nominalist and voluntarist innovations on the other. As is typical for a 16th century Reformer, Vermigli's treatment of the Eucharist (such as for example in his Oxford Treatise from 1549) bears a largely polemical character. I will argue, secondly, that not only can this polemic be understood as refusing non-traditional developments in Late Medieval Catholicism, but also that the ontological structures Vermigli operates in could have led him to a more participatory, and therefore more properly liturgical understanding of the Eucharist.

"Rechristianising Heidegger: Eberhard Jüngel's ontology in the light of the cross".

Deborah Casewell

Heidegger is seen to have taken aspects of Christian thought on being, from Augustine to Kierkegaard, and stripped them of the sense of dependence on God, instead finding human action to be rooted in itself, for itself, in its response to others. Despite this lack of divinity in Heidegger's work, his ontology was taken up by a number of theologians such as Fuchs and Bultmann, who in their turn influenced Jüngel. However whilst Jüngel acknowledges his debts to Heidegger in the area of human ontology, Jüngel also seeks to incorporate the history of God into human ontology, where the history of God as Trinity is defined by the passivity of Christ on the cross. Like Moltmann and Sölle, Jüngel uses the cross to define the being of God in order to find a God after the Holocaust, and Jüngel then uses the being of God to define humanity, where God's history on the cross becomes human history. I aim to show that Jüngel's account of ontology via the cross is a vital example of how history in particular can become a vital part of ontology proper. However, this construction is not without tension, not least in how Jüngel subverts the individuation in Heidegger's ontology to recast it

as dependence on the divine. Can Heidegger be Christianised, and does Jünger's approach create other issues for personhood with the sacrifice of human individuation in favour of dependence on God?

A New Interpretation of the Katechon: Liquidation or Renewal of the Political Theology?

Panagiotis Christias

Christian scholars, political philosophers, and fathers of the Church have debated for over twenty centuries about the identity of the katechon, the key notion in the understanding of political theology. Their answers were prolific, contradictory and, in all cases, inadequate. The compromise of the Roman State, and then of course of its legitimate heir, the Roman Catholic Church and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, is what finally prevailed in the spirits of scholars and theologians. In a new interpretation of the 2 Thessaloniens 2,1-12, I have argued that Paul's katechon can only be Plato's class of philosophers (cf., *Platon et Paul au bord de l'abîme. Pour une politique katéchontique*, Paris, Vrin, 2014). This interpretation of the katechon actually demolishes Schmitt's idea of political philosophy: the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire is not the one who, with the help of God and the Church, keeps human political society from Evil, that is disorder and chaos. Philosophers are! And, may I add, they are not necessarily Christians. In their case, being Christian can only be a circumstantial property that does not define them as such. They constitute the intermediary class of earthly good, between God's absolute good and the evil of the Son of lawlessness. In fact, this interpretation of Paul's katechon legitimizes the secular philosophical State, and calls Christians to live under it. If we only see political theology in God's direction of human affairs, what becomes of it in the context of the platonic interpretation of the katechon? What becomes of it in the modern era? Can political theology survive modernity? To put it in Donoso's words, can catholic culture survive the era of philosophical culture?

The Holy Spirit in History

Will Cohen

Orthodox pray to the Holy Spirit as "everywhere present and fill[ing] all things". Justin Martyr's Logos Spermatikos emphasizes in another way the presence of God throughout history, as does Sergius Bulgakov's insight

that the Spirit's movement over the earth at creation "is already the first Pentecost" (Comforter, 157). According to Peruvian Catholic Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Since the Incarnation, humanity, every human being, history, is the living temple of God. The 'pro-fane' . . . no longer exists." (Theology of Liberation, 110) Georges Florovsky observes that God's complete self-revelation in the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, far from having rendered all subsequent history superfluous, has meant that "[h]istory has become sacred in its full dimension" ("Predicament of the Christian Historian," 164).

Yet history's sacredness, its metaphysical or ontological character, cannot be taken to mean that all movements of history between Incarnation and Parousia are movements of God's Spirit. For there is, as Florovsky observes, "an ultimate, eschatological conflict" in view of which "[n]o historian can be indifferent to the cleavage between 'Good' and 'Evil'." The temporal is not the true per se. The "hand of Providence" is, says Florovsky, "emphatically hidden," not only in history generally but even in the history of the church. Nevertheless "it would be blasphemous," Florovsky concludes, "to deny that this Hand does exist or that God is truly the Lord of History." (166)

My paper explores how the church lives out her collective task of discerning where in unfolding history the "hand of Providence" (i.e., the Holy Spirit, as what Irenaeus called one of the two hands of God) is at work and where it is being resisted. Florovsky notes about the individual Christian historian that "in the last resort [he or she] cannot avoid the ultimate discrimination between 'yes' and 'no'." (157) Implicitly, an ontology of history is always at work, a "yes" or "no" always given, even in so-called secular society, as when the call to be "on the right side of history" in regard to an emergent social-ethical issue is voiced in western democracies. The church must not fail, herself, to take up the task of making an ultimate discrimination between competing interpretations of new historical developments, though neither can she be rushed in this task, nor presume to carry it out except in prayerful humility. Finally, her "yes" or "no" can be expressed with authority only under the condition of ecclesial unity.

The Imago Dei, Aristotelian Hylomorphism & Causation, and the Techne of Man

Marc Cole

I wish to explore a particular kind of hylomorphism combined with the theology of the Imago Dei. I want to ascertain whether many of the puzzles this conference is addressing could be given a framework within which to be solved.

The first stream I have in mind is the kind of hylomorphism based on David Charles' reading of Aristotle. The basic idea is that the subject of statements like "I think," "I feel," "I desire," is an inextricably and essentially psycho-physical substance (Charles, 2009, p. 4). For example, the statement: "I am angry." Anger is, thinks Aristotle, a "boiling of the blood around the heart, for the sake of revenge" (Charles, 2009, p. 6). It is impossible to define anger without reference to the boiling of the blood around the heart; it is impossible to define anger without reference to the teleological cause, desire for revenge. This is what 'inextricably' means above. On such a view, Charles (2009 & 2012) argues that it is impossible to have a purely psychological category and a purely physical category when defining animals and their states.

The second stream I have in mind is the truth that mankind is made in the image and likeness of God. Our nature, then, *inter alia*, reflects the Holy Trinity. So much so that Henri de Lubac (1988) says that we could not have spoken of billions of people anymore than we can speak of three gods (pp. 28-30). However, simultaneously, each member of the Trinity is a distinct person, as is each one of us. This is indeed a great mystery. At the fall, continues de Lubac (1988), an individuation process occurred by which the one being that is man, was shattered like glass (pp. 28-30). William Cavanaugh (2002) says that "the effect of sin is the very creation of individuals as such, that is, the creation of an ontological distinction between individual and group" (p. 13). Christ, de Lubac (1988) says, quoting St. Augustine, melted the shards of glass, reuniting and re-stamping the Imago Dei and returned the primal unity (pp. 28-30).

One contact point between these two streams is efficient causation (there are others). As the techne of housebuilding is an efficient cause of a house, so Jesus Christ is the efficient cause of the human 'house.' Also, just as the builder of the house is also an efficient cause of the house, so the Holy Trinity is the efficient cause of man. Through this, an interesting

metaphysics of personhood and praxis emerge that could aid in solving many of the puzzles discussed at this conference. In particular, I would apply the findings to the tension of the eschaton and the here and now, the tension between the universal and particular, the puzzle of making past events present, and essentiality of embodied liturgy and praxis.

History as an Ontological Experience

Adam G. Cooper

In many dogmatic and especially apologetic works of theology, the treatise *De Deo* seems to describe an ontology of God without reference to history, or God as he would be even if the world didn't exist, even if he had never created. But is it possible to propose an ontology of God that brackets out the history of God - that is, God creating, God judging, God redeeming? According to Sergius Bulgakov, such an ontology would be at best an abstraction, at worst demonic. Taking up Bulgakov's line of conviction, this paper explores similar insights by Xavier Zubiri, Eric Voegelin, Frederick Wilhelmsen, and Joseph Ratzinger, especially in their insistence on the priority of *esse* over *essentia* and of *actio* over *verbum*. On the other hand, it proposes a corrective to all-out historicism by proposing a Christological ontology, drawn especially from Maximus the Confessor. In Christ there can be no separation of ontology from history, no dualism of ontology and history, for the being of Christ is simultaneously the world's actualitas. In this light Maximus's metaphysics of the Logos turns out to be a metaphysics of love, arrived at through the light given by faith in the God-Man Jesus Christ, whose person and action illuminate and indeed, ground and transfigure, the whole of reality, right to its ontological depths. By this faith human persons are inserted into God's own history, the only concrete and accessible pathway to our total ontological transformation, by which not just persons, but the whole creation, without ever ceasing to be itself, is enabled to become God.

What is a Human Person? A Unified Approach to the Question from Cognitive Neuroscience, Philosophy, and Theology

Daniel D. De Haan

If we ask: 'what is it to be a human person?' the most readily available lines of inquiry are provided by our own particular historical context. Clearly some contexts are rich and others are poor with respect to the scope

of inquiries available for approaching the question of the Psalmist: *quid est homo?* Most historical settings stress or focus exclusively on the modes of inquiry into the ontology of human persons that are employed by theology, or philosophy, or psychology, or cognitive neuroscience, and so forth. But to focus on one approach over the others occludes a more comprehensive perspective on the ontology of human persons. In this paper I will outline a set of initial questions into the nature of the human person that anticipate a unified set of answers drawn from such diverse disciplines as theology, philosophy, and cognitive neuroscience. I do this in three parts. I begin with the exigency for starting where we are, with what is more known with respect to us. Next, I indicate the need for acknowledging the historical dimensions of all inquiries into the ontology of personhood. Here I point out the distinction, and yet compatibility of historical and ontological approaches to human persons. Finally, I sketch a set of questions concerning the nature of human persons that is drawn from neuroscience, philosophy, and theology that anticipate complementary answers. I aim to show how questions from cognitive neuroscience led to questions that can only be resolved by philosophy, and how philosophical queries about mankind inevitably leads us to consider theological accounts of human persons.

Symphonia in a (Post-)Secular Age?

Chris Durante

Charles Taylor has claimed that a secular age is one in which there is a presumption of unbelief coupled with a plurality of options regarding one's ideological orientation and way of life. Such an age entails a societal shift whereby religious beliefs are understood as being one option amongst many and epistemic diversity is the norm. Yet, as many sociologists have observed, global society has experienced a widespread resurgence of religion in the public sphere. To borrow Habermas' phrase, ours is arguably a post-secular age, and as such entails not simply a presumption of unbelief but rather an inability to presume the type of religious or ideological beliefs another holds. An era of post-secularity is one of uncertainty of belief coupled with an unprecedented form of pluralism. Ultimately, coming to terms with pluralism is arguably the primary challenge of living in "a post-secular age."

How might the Orthodox Christian tradition make sense of its place within this post-secular era? I would like to propose that the Byzantine religio-political ideal of *symphonia* might be able to speak to such issues. In

Byzantium, symphonia was enacted as a basic model of Church-State relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Emperor and was never fully developed as the basis of a robust political theology that could provide guidance for the social issues the Orthodox Church faces today. Grounded in the notion of “One Empire, One Emperor, One Faith,” symphonia came to embody a diaphonic understanding of the social world in which only the religious and the political were represented. Yet, symphonia need not be restricted to the binary model implemented by the Byzantines.

As an ethico-political ideal grounded in the pursuit of social harmony and concordance amongst distinct voices, symphonia can be re-conceptualized as implying a more robust and polyphonic understanding of its purview, whereby it would seek to foster a concordance amongst a variety of ethnic, linguistic, religious, ecclesial and political identities and perspectives as it seeks to ensure peaceability and solidarity in society. To reduce symphonia to a diaphonic paradigm is to strip this concept of its full ethico-political potential. Symphonia has the potential to serve as the basis of a robust Orthodox social ethic capable of addressing a host of issues including: Church-State relations, interfaith relations and multiculturalism. Consequently, this paper is an attempt to recover the notion of symphonia by constructing a conceptual framework of the underdeveloped aspects of this religio- political concept and demonstrating its applicability to contemporary social issues.

Calvin on History in Genesis

Rebekah Earnshaw

This paper portrays Calvin’s view of history as he deals with the text of Genesis in commentary and sermons. Here Calvin affirms time’s goodness. Historical process does not negate goodness. Time and history unfold according to God’s purposes. History is complex here with many layers dynamically interacting. These layers include salvation history in the Genesis narrative, Moses’ receipt and transmission of tradition, the Mediator’s fulfilment of history and Calvin’s own time. Finally, time elevates creatures into their heavenly contemplation of God. So eternity and the eschaton silently encompass Calvin’s views of time. Calvin’s treatment of Genesis shows again that the triune God is Creator and Lord of all history.

This paper heeds a call to examine Calvin more broadly as biblical theologian as well as author of *The Institutes*. As a theologian reading Scripture in a pastoral context this is an interesting example of theology, tradition and “the present” coming together. Moreover, Calvin’s view of history explored here is relevant to the reformed tradition’s conception of creaturely reality, particularly time, and its goodness. Ansell (‘It’s about time’: CTJ, 2012), in conversation with Bavinck and Moltmann, argues the reformation tradition should conceive time as both moving forward and arriving. He pleads that this is in line with ‘reformational identity’ as well as opening engagement with other theological traditions. This paper considers how Calvin’s voice might speak into this conversation affirming the goodness of creaturely time in a particular way.

Health of the Soul in Plato and Christian Thought: Similarities and Differences

Chryssoula Gitsoulis

In the *Republic*, Plato divides the soul into three parts: reason, spirit/will, and appetite/desire. Harmony in the soul results when reason has learnt to enlist spirit/will to subdue or reign over appetite/desire. In a harmoniously ordered soul, appetite is the servant and not the master, and order wins over disorder. When our desires fail to obey reason, we develop conflict and discord in our soul, since reason pulls us in one direction and desire in another. However, when our desires obey reason, we develop order and harmony in our soul. This harmonious ordering of the soul is what justice consists in. Justice is a virtue that belongs not to any particular part of the soul, but rather to the soul as a whole. In a just man, the rational element, supported by spirit/will, governs the appetites. In a just man, the parts of the soul acquire their corresponding virtues: reason acquires wisdom, spirit/will acquires courage, and appetite/desire acquires moderation/temperance. Who could deny, Socrates asks, that men who are wise, courageous, and temperate, are also just? Who could deny that such men are both the best citizens and the best governors? Plato argues that among all the virtues that a person may have, justice is the most important, especially because it brings about eudaimonia (commonly trans. as “happiness”). Justice is the health and beauty and well-being of the soul; injustice the disease and weakness and deformity of the soul. (Rep 444d) Injustice destroys the health of soul, just as disease destroys bodily health. (Rep 444c) In just persons, reason, emotion, and desire function harmoniously; unjust people, by contrast, are beset by inner “rebellion.”

(Rep 444b) The just man “will not allow himself to be dazzled by the foolish applause of the world, and heap up riches to his own infinite harm.” (Rep Bk X) He will look at “the city which is within him, and take heed that no disorder occur in it.” (Rep Bk X) He will “gladly accept and enjoy such honors as he deems likely will make him a better man, but those ... which are likely to disorder his life he will avoid.” (Rep Bk X) In my paper, I will compare and contrast these Platonic ideas on health of the soul with those of Christian thought / Christianity. Here is a summary of some of the key points that will be developed at much greater length in my paper. In Christianity, we find, as we do in Plato, the idea of a “higher” and a “lower” self. Plato associates the higher self with reason, and the lower self with desire/appetite. In Christianity, the higher self is not associated with a part of the soul, but with the soul as a whole, and the lower self is associated with the physical body: the evil desires and thoughts in human beings come from the “flesh”. The image of the soul is one of a “divine spark” trapped within the body: everyone carries within himself a share of God (Absolutely Goodness) which at death escapes the body and returns to its point of origin in the One -- God. Evil is any action, thought or attitude that is contrary to the character or will of God. In both Platonic and Christian thought, the “higher self” aspires after perfection. In Christian thought, perfection is realized only in God, and so man struggles to achieve union with God. The “lower self” is associated with physical needs and desires, which obstruct the higher self from reaching its goal. In Plato, the highest perfection is realized in the “Form of the Good,” which the “higher self” (i.e., reason) aspires to grasp in its journey out of the “Cave” (the realm of sights and sounds). In Plato, the primary aim is to develop self-mastery, to minimize the grip that the appetites have on reason. In Christian thought, the primary aim is salvation, which can only be achieved by minimizing or renouncing the body, so that the One can retrieve that small “portion” of itself which is trapped in the natural world. In Christianity, the struggle between the higher and the lower self is understood, not as a struggle between reason and desire, having its locus in the soul, but as a struggle between God and Satan, which manifests itself as a struggle between the soul and the body. Satan is portrayed as God’s demonic antagonist, the rival or enemy of God. He is the evil one, the tempter, the snake, the misanthrōpos (hater of humanity) and misokalos (hater of beauty and goodness), who has staged a never ending battle with God to gain control over the hearts and minds of man. In punishment for his rebellion – his efforts to thwart God’s plan for salvation -- he was “cast from heaven together with his mutinous entourage, which were transformed into demons.” As “ruler over the fallen angels” he “continues the struggle against the Kingdom of God by seeking to seduce humans into sin ... so as to reduce the number of those chosen for the

Kingdom of God.” In Plato, the source of evil (which is equated with injustice) is not traceable to some supernatural being external to man, but to man himself, and his failure to allow reason to take control of his life. All of these ideas will be developed at much greater length in my paper.

The common paths of Ontology and History: Orthodoxy and Theology of Liberation in dialogue

Aggelos Gounopoulos

Georges Florovsky was saying that we have a tendency to underline that «eternal life is far away from the ‘secular’ to such an extent that the human personality to be in danger of division», and Gustavo Gutierrez was adding that «the natural and the supernatural order are deeply united». The man of faith lives in the limits of the historical time, the time/no time of freedom of Christ’s love. The Christian Ontology and Metaphysics make no reference to knowledge of a substance or a causal principle, but they refer to truth of freedom of love as the latter acts in human relationships with God. In the Orthodox tradition and in the Latin American Theology of Liberation we meet a deep connection of the secularism and the eschaton in the history of incarnation.

The Concept of History within an Eschatological Model of Cosmology: Logoi and Tropos as Synthesis of Ethical Absolutism and Ontological Contingency

Miroslav Griško

Nihilism may be abstracted as the metaphysical commitment to exceptionless ontological contingency. Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism and the attempt to “overcome” it through a new axiology homologous with ontological contingency intends to rehabilitate a general concept of meaning. Yet the coherency of this transition remains the fundamental and now familiar problem of nihilism – i.e., the various impasses of the relativism of truth and ethics, a re-emergent mythical vitalism, an archaic anthropocentrism, etc. Nihilism yields two major options: either some type of affirmation of life consistent with the logic of chance becoming (e.g., Deleuze) or the straightforward and intuitive elimination of imputed

anthropocentric concepts such as meaning according to nihilism's basic metaphysical claim. (e.g., Brassier)

Orthodox theology both anticipates and confronts nihilism, not by rejecting ontological contingency, but by reconciling it on a fundamental metaphysical level with meaning as ethics. The contingency of being is repeated throughout Orthodox doctrine. Apophaticism: the nothingness of God means that the absolute cannot be conflated with any ontological concept. *Creatio ex nihilo*: the world is created out of nothing, no primordial matter or idea exists alongside God. Eschatology: there is no necessity to the fallen world, it will end. The person: the openness of human freedom. At once, Orthodoxy maintains the meaning of the creation in terms of a clear ethical project – the transformation of the world away from its fallen state. In St. Maximus the Confessor, ethical absolutism and ontological contingency are synthesised in the related concepts of *logoi* and *tropos*. Whereas the *logoi* indicate the “fundamental meaning” (Louth, 65) of the creation, *tropos* denotes the radically contingent status of existence, which, as contingent, is always susceptible to an “adjustment...in how things are.” (Zizioulas, 24) Ontological contingency invokes meaning and vice versa through the ethical commitment to the overturning of the contingent fallen state. *Logoi* and *tropos* are the fundamental coordinates of Maximus' eschatological cosmology.

History becomes a conceptual analogue for eschatological cosmology, insofar as history also entails a synthesis of ontological contingency and meaning qua ethics. As Löwith and Schmitt have argued, history is inseparable from meaning; yet history only appears in an eschatological model of cosmology where the whole of creation is directed towards end. *Prima facie* the placement of history at the centre of ontology suggests an anthropocentric move which is subject to the same critiques which afflict attempts to overcome nihilism. Yet the realism of eschatological history lies in the injustice of this world, since eschatology takes as axiomatic the world's end; eschatological world-end namely implies an ethical absolutist position opposed to the fallen “reality” of suffering and death. For Orthodoxy, the central ontological role of man entails his obligation to transform the entire creation according to the universal scope of this ethical absolutism, a type of total cosmic deontology prosecuted on the basis of the Logos. The Incarnation of the Logos as the immanent historical communication of the transcendent *logoi* to man crystallises the ethical mission of eschatological and soteriological theosis in terms of the re-appropriation of the *tropos* at the heart of being so as to transform the fallen

creation into that which, as fallen, it is not, yet which in the last instance is its foundational and absolute truth.

Δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ: The Ontology of Personhood in Gregory Palamas and its Biblical and Aristotelian Structure

Raffaele Guerra

Starting from the 24th chapter of the *Κεφάλαια εκατόν πενήκοντα* of Gregory Palamas, the paper shows how God's act of creation places a genetic ontological difference inside of the human being. The rational soul (λογική ψυχή) is by nature hyper-cosmic, while the body is from the cosmos and constitutes the animality of the person (ὕπoστασις). A real ontological speech on the person is therefore possible only at the level of his corporeity. On the other hand, the rational soul constitutes the κατ'εἰκόνα Θεοῦ, the personhood (hypostaticity) which is the hyper-ontological foundation of the person, his being-hypostasis in the likeness of the Holy Trinity, what roots anthropology in Triadology. While the body is material potentiality for the actuality of the soul-form, the rational soul is the unifying and enlivening principle of the corporeal matter, and the two are linked so that only physical violence can separate them. The Aristotelian anthropology also acquires in Palamas an ethical dimension. The δύναμις of the body is the central ethical articulation of the human nature, i.e. the place of a decision which occurs in the soul but comes to the act in the body. The Theanthropology of Gregory Palamas will be put in relation with Aristotle's anthropology and psychology. In the end, it is illustrated how in the *Κεφάλαια* Aristotelian philosophical structures are rooted in a biblical and Christological perspective.

The Kantian 'Two Images Problem', its Lesson for Christian Eschatology, and the path of Maximian Analogy

Demetrios Harper

This essay will briefly discuss Immanuel Kant's philosophy of history in light of the enduring antinomy in his thought between metaphysical subjectivity and natural forces, an antinomy that leads to a strongly forward-looking view of history. As Kant's third and final Critique affirms, natural forces are detached from rational human ends and, though the human

subject must behave as though there is an ultimate purpose to nature that somehow relates to him or her, it is ultimately through moral self-legislation and the actualization of the transcendental self that human purposes are realized. His belief in the inherent tendency of natural desires to drive humankind to irrationality leads Kant to conclude that the only hope for harmony lies at the end of the historical process, when human subjects have successfully mastered the capability to self-legislate beyond the demands of nature, achieving what we might refer to as a 'transcendental utopia'. This post-Enlightenment view of history will then be briefly compared and contrasted with the eschatological perspective of Maximus the Confessor.

The Incarnation as a saturated phenomenon: ontology, phenomenology and theology

Daniel Isai

The present approach represents a phenomenological outlook on the historical event of the Incarnation considered as a saturated phenomenon. We will take into consideration the relationship between intention and intuition, between appearance and things as they appear to us. The saturated phenomenon is replete with intuition. The role of intuition intervenes where the concept stops being sufficient. What is given disqualifies any concept – J.L. Marion tells us. God remains incomprehensible without an adequate concept, but he is not imperceptible. The giving intuition renders God perceptible to us even if, on the concept level, we cannot comprehend the whole reality revealed. The Incarnation is one of those saturated phenomena deprived of objective constitution. The incarnate Logos is a reversal of our intentionality through His counter-intentionality. The phenomenon that occurs to us reverses the order of visibility in that God was the First one to love us. When man seeks to understand, to get to know the reality of God, there is the risk of being blocked into the concept and of idol appearance. Therefore, the intention to know God is likely to avoid excessive conceptualization in order to be pervaded by the giving intuition. In this game of intentionality and counter-intentionality, the ontological role of the Son of Man intervenes. A Man came among people, the One who removes the boundaries of the human condition and opens it towards a personal relationship with God the Father.

The phrase Son of Man intrinsically contains a divine and human ontology that is also given by the historical dimension of the event of the Incarnation.

“How Realistic are Christian Politics? A Case for Eschatological Realism”

Logan (Mehl-Laituri) Isaac

Long before Oxford ethicist and Christian Realist Nigel Biggar reacted against the “wishful thinking” of pacifism in his 2013 monograph, *In Defence of War*, Mennonite theologian John Yoder lampooned just warriors as “pie in the sky” for their failure to articulate an eschatologically realistic account of secular political claims upon Christians. Realism was conceived by Reinhold Niebuhr, who reacted against what he saw as the heretically optimistic Social Gospel movement of the late 19th century, which sought to change the world for the better through good Christian deeds.

Though Yoder used the phrase “Biblical realism” primarily as a jab against Niebuhr, (calling him unrealistic insofar as his ethic was not shaped by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ), there are theological points to be made by insisting upon Scripture as ontologically determinative. After all, means without an end can rationalize any evil by attaching method to poorly defined and inadequately shared common goods, like justice. Indeed, a central criticism by pacifists is the realist impulse to control history through political violence.

If created by the God revealed in Scripture, then to what “end” is the world oriented (and what is humanity’s responsibility in accomplishing said end)? Furthermore, to what extent is human captivity to (and observations of and through) time ontologically credible? Being realistic about eschatology gives Christians a glimpse at their temporal, ethical, and chronological distance from God precisely so that they make apparent to the world its own absolute inability to discover its own being apart from the Church. As Yoder’s disciple Stanley Hauerwas phrases it, “the first task of the Church is to make the world the world, not to make the world more just.”

In this paper, I explore the way “realism” is employed by Yoder and Niebuhr for debates on pacifism and just war, using the specificity of political theology as an entry point to discuss realism as it attaches to eschatology. After exploring how Biblical realism must relate to the exemplary revelation of Christ’s life and death, I will advance the notion of

eschatological realism as it derives from its Scriptural equivalent and as it relates to Christ's resurrection and ascension. I will argue that the distinct political calling of the Church is to live 'now' into the 'not yet' eschatological vision as portrayed by constructs of the 'New Jerusalem' in Biblical apocalypses.

Primary Philosophy and Potency in Aristotle and Aquinas (22)

Dino Jakušić

Through providing a basic account of the metaphysical thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, this talk aims to explain the historical shift in the understanding of potency and its relation to beings, the shift which occurred in the period when philosophy stopped speaking Greek and started expressing itself in Latin. The aim of this explanation is to show how the application of the concept of first or primary philosophy changes within the thought of the two thinkers and the influence this shift had to subsequent development of ontology and metaphysics.

The talk will start with a short comparison of Aristotle and Aquinas on the role and nature of (primary) philosophy, the nature and conception of substance and actuality, and ultimately the extension of the concept of potentiality. The results of the comparison will then be used in order to problematize the introduction of the concept of existence into the context of ontology, i.e. into the study of beings qua beings. Finally, it will try to show how the introduction of existence, through the Thomist notion of *esse*, in the primary philosophy and ontology on the one hand necessitated the removal of ontology from the position of primary philosophy and, on the other hand, enabled a development of certain important post-Scholastic metaphysical laws.

Re-Contextualising Time within Topos: A Critique of Time using the later Heidegger and Maximus Confessor

Cullan Joyce

This paper evaluates how Heidegger's discussion of *topos* impacts ideas important to intentionality in the work of Maximus the Confessor. In *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, Heidegger uses *topos* to describe the gathering of the four-fold as transcendental to experience. The paper surveys the problem of the four-fold, examining Heidegger's argument for

the equi-primordially of transcendental structures. It discusses how a moment of determinate experience reveals that transcendental conditions arise or gather (*gestell*) equi-primordially with each other and what this means for a theory of time. Using an example from Maximus' discussion of the difference between simple and compound thought in relation to passion and temptation (found in *Centuries on Love II*. 84), I show there is a topological structure similar to that found in the four-fold. Maximus' investigates a nominally moral problem (passion/temptation) using categories that are broader than moral: quality and quantity. He identifies a simple thought (*logismos haplos*) as a thought that knows its object without any artifice conjoining other ideas to it; it possesses fewer parts than another. A compounded (*logismos synthetos*) thought is a thought that has ideas added to the simple thought. The moment of temptation (occurring within *logismos synthetos*) is therefore moral, qualitative, quantitative (and likely others) any of which could be used to bring the subject into contact with the phenomenon. Consciousness and temptation are co-operations (*gestell*) of several conditions, each possible determinate arises equi-primordially in the appearance of the system. This topographic character shows how problematic it is to use a single predominant determination when referring to an active system. If topological gathering is something found commonly in Maximus, then philosophical or theological claims that place determinations such as time or history first might decontextualize the concepts from the grounds of their emergence. On this basis, the study argues that placing temporality, or perhaps any single determinate concept, as the primary form of world, may misrepresent an important structure in Maximus' idea of consciousness and therefore misunderstand some of the conditions under which Maximus sees a determination occurring within thinking. It suggests further investigation is required into how the equi-primordial (topographic) relationships between conditions affect notions of temporality, or other determinations, when they are employed within a theology or philosophy.

Joseph Ratzinger and the Immortality of the Soul: An Ontological Necessity for Historical Existence

Andrew TJ Kaethler

Joseph Ratzinger maintains that reality is fundamentally relational, and history, as a result of this relationality, is imbued with meaning and importance. Yet, Ratzinger's relational ontology extends beyond the personalist framework of the I-Thou to an I-Thou-We. As a result of the 'we', temporality does not absolutely end for the deceased. In other words,

the relational fabric of God's world, a world held together in love, necessitates a web of history that continues into the hereafter. According to Ratzinger, the notion of the immortality of the soul preserves this relational account and safeguards the import of temporality. Following Ratzinger's logic I will argue that accounts of human personhood that occlude ontology—and with it the immortality of the soul—for the sake of prioritizing the historical person actually undermine historicity and along with it relationality.

The Historical and Ontological Significance of “Person” and “Subject” in Christology and Trinitarian Theology.

Anne H. King

This paper seeks to focus on the ontological significance and historical impact of the creedal formulations of the Christian Church as perceived through a modern lens. This focus will be divided into three sections:

1) The importance of ontology and the study of being and of beings; this section intends to delineate and to overcome the chasm that appears to have widened between the study of being and the experience of history, especially after Hegel in the Western tradition.

2) The modern crisis in terminology surrounding “person” and “subject” which tend to be conflated in contemporary discussions; the meaning of “person” and “subject” precisely as terms which must not be collapsed into one another, for each holds important distinctions for Trinitarian theology, for theological anthropology, for Christology in which God and humanity can be linked.

3) A comparison of the Trinitarian theologies of Karl Rahner and Jürgen Moltmann with a view to highlighting their unique insights in such a way as to provide a richer grasp of the essential link and difference between ontology per se and the historical Jesus who is the Risen Christ. Rahner's commitment to philosophical ontology and Moltmann's commitment to concrete history seemingly are in direct contradiction: yet each is concerned to make Jesus Christ the pivotal event in which being and becoming are united.

The conclusion draws these discussions together in such a way to demonstrate that Jesus as “God with us” is key to interpreting the indispensable link between ontology and history.

A Vicarious Ontology: the History of Jesus and Creaturely Identity

Jonathan Lett

Karl Barth's decision to re-describe traditional ontological categories of Christology in terms of the history of Jesus Christ ripples across Barth's anthropology. He suggests that the nature of creaturely reality is determined by the history of Jesus. As the "firstborn of every creature," Jesus is the original bearer of our human nature—his life as God's true counterpart ontologically determines humanity. Insofar as God's relating to humanity through Jesus determines human nature, what human beings are corresponds to who they are. This raises the question this paper shall investigate: if, by the Incarnation, the life of Jesus vicariously structures human ontology, then how should we understand human identity? What is the relationship between Jesus' life and our own, between his history and our being?

David Kelsey has recently argued that human identity is eccentric; it depends on God's prior action rather than our own sense of ourselves. In Christ, human identities are structurally defined by the pattern of Jesus' life. Kelsey imagines that Jesus' identity is intrinsic to human identities because his responses to God are paradigmatic for our responses to God within our particular social, behavioral, mental, moral, and communal space. But what makes Jesus' life ontologically significant for what we are? At the end of the day, is who we are in Christ simply a linguistic description—how does the history of Jesus make contact with our creaturely being? To answer this question, this paper shall compare Kelsey's account with T.F. Torrance's understanding of the vicarious humanity of Christ. This juxtaposition sheds light on how different notions of Incarnation relate the history of Jesus to our creaturely being.

The Ontological Transformation of the Human Person: Schmemmann on Liturgical Deification

Victoria Lebzyak

Schmemmann's liturgical theology approaches the ontology of humans from a Eucharistic perspective. The primordial calling of humankind is to recognize divine creation as a gift and to offer it back to God in gratitude.

This perfect communion was damaged at the Fall as humanity had chosen to “live a non-eucharistic life in a non-eucharistic world.” Schmemmann argues that the way to revive and redeem broken “eucharistic beings” is found in the liturgy. In liturgical worship, the human person is “lifted up to heaven, sanctified, deified,” and is thus ontologically transformed. He enters the space and time of renewed creation and, by his active participation in the Church’s liturgical practices, is being molded into a eucharistic creature. What is important is that this ontological transformation happens alongside the transformation of one’s apprehension of history and the world. Schmemmann insists that liturgical deification necessarily involves developing of the ability of perceiving the world as a place for the sacramental encounter between God and creation. The aim of my presentation is to advance Schmemmann’s liturgical theology as a valuable resource for the discourse on deification and to establish that a sacramental vision of history is a prerequisite for Eucharistic life.

Ecstatic or Reciprocal Meaningfulness? Theological Eschatology between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis

Nikolaos Loudovikos

This paper seeks to evaluate the status of modern Orthodox eschatological ontology. Towards this end, it compares Origen’s eschatology with that of Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas, using as a *tertium comparationis* Thomas Aquinas, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, on the one hand, and Freudian hermeneutics, on the other. Theological eschatology can say something truly new, only if it manages to overcome all tendencies towards ecstatic meaningfulness, which is common to a significant portion of western theological and philosophical ways of thinking. In light of this assertion, the paper examines convergences and divergences between the author’s understanding of eschatological ontology and those of Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas.

Liturgical Ontology and History in Saint Maximus the Confessor’s *Mystagogia*

Michail Mantzanas

In this paper, I will focus on the dialectical relationship between Ontology and History having Maximus the Confessor's liturgical masterpiece, his *Mystagogia*, as my guide. In ancient Greek philosophy, one can find a synthesis of ontology, cosmology and a certain kind of pantheism; therein, the notions of the opportune time, *kairos* and temporality are the ingredients of history. According to Plutarch, history is identified with time and movement. Heraclitus identifies history with change, identity, unity and *logos*. And if the relationship between ontology and history, according to John Rawls, cannot distance itself from the concept of fate, in the antithesis of Alexander Pope, what *is*, is right, it's there for a reason and, from a certain perspective, it is God's work. The study of Maximus answers the question whether randomness and luck, determinism, intelligence or persons and personalities are shaping history—through his examination of the *event* and *space* of the liturgy.

Ontological Remembrance in the Eschaton

Andrew Marin

This paper will explore the existence and nature of memory in the eschaton; both in the Divine and the new creation. The first part of the paper will focus on the ontology of God's knowledge. Though Miroslav Volf and Margaret Paton, among others, have argued for God's eschatological forgetfulness, I will make a case for Divine Remembrance as a core attribute to God's eschatological existence. The second part of the paper will explore humanity's temporal memory. In order to build a case for the new creation's eschatological memory of temporal experiences, I will argue how the ontology of memory inherent in humanity's temporal existence is central to understanding the new creation's eschatological knowledge. Here I will focus on the Cruciform as grounding for the continuation of temporal-to-eschatological remembrance. And further, only through the new creation's eschatological remembrance can the fullness of God's love be completely revealed. I will then conclude the paper by situating the Divine and humanity/new creation's necessity for remembrance into a brief sketch of ontological remembrance in the eschaton.

Topology of Time. The Development of the Concept of Time in the Philosophy of the Early Byzantine Period

Smilen Markov

The Byzantine concept of time elaborates two characteristics, completely alien to the mentality of Antiquity: time is created and time is historical. This paper compares the strategies through which authors from Basil the Great to Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople articulate different models of time, corresponding to the criteria of Christian faith. Whereas for Basil the Great 'time' is the measure of movement, its beginning having an extra-temporal determinant, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* depicts 'time' as a dynamic participation of all created beings in the eternal peace of God. Through Christ's Church and its sacramental life this dynamic is manifested in historical events, instigated by man. These two models are in chains of conceptual continuity, going back to the concepts of Plato and Aristotle. However, the reception of these positions in Byzantine theology is only a philosophical tool for constructing genuine models. Thus for Maximus the Confessor time is not merely a projection of eternity, as Plato and Plotinus claim; it is a 'law of movement', i.e. a trajectory, realizing the non-linear duration of created being (αιών). The principle of this law is Christ himself: the Christological event is the historical center of time. Time is neither a projection of eternity, nor a mere vector of movement: it is a journey from one state of existence to another. Thus topological intuitions enter the speculation and this tendency culminates in the philosophical oeuvre of John Damascene and Theodor Abu Qurra. The latter interprets 'time' as an existential dynamic of the single hypostasis, whose identity is guaranteed by the category 'place'. The transition from linear to topological interpretation of time provides a philosophical tool for answering the concern about the unexpectedness of the end of human life. As Germanos of Constantinople explains, the boundary of this dynamic is not a not a linear end, but an opportunity (καιρός) for authentic existence of the human hypostasis in communion with God. Therefore, the temporal end of life is not a forced interruption of the journey of life, which God imposes on the single person, but the point of greatest approximation to the καιρός of divine communion. The omniscient God determines the end of life, because He wants to perpetuate the moment of virtuous and authentic human existence.

Ontology, History and Relation (schesis): Gregory of Nyssa's Epektasis

Guilio Maspero

Gregory of Nyssa's theology is very rich from the perspective of our postmodern thought. Jean Daniélou wrote that he "was obsessed by the mystery of time, more than by any other problem." (The Lord of History, 153). Gregory developed an original conception of the relation between being and history, based on the reshaping of some key elements of classical metaphysics and a resemantization of the relative terms. The core of this work seems to be the ontological understanding of relation, that ceases to be considered a mere accident and gains a new status in the immanence of ousia. This makes possible to conceive both being and history as non contradictory. Epektasis is a clear manifestation of the new ontological conception developed by Gregory, because it connects Being and history, as well as time and eternity, in a relational way. Movement is no more an effect only of potentiality, but can be a manifestation of perfection, as perfection itself for the human person is an eterna, movement towards and into the triune God.

‘Whoever is dead is justified from sin’: Methodius of Olympus on Ontological Salvation and the Stain of History

Thomas D. McGlothlin

In *On the Resurrection*, Methodius of Olympus arrives at an odd conclusion: Eschatologically, God returns all to a perfectly good and flawless state by completely removing the formerly entrenched power of sin. God then, however, punishes forever a subset of these flawless humans because they failed to attempt the impossible task of removing this entrenched power of sin during their lives. In essence, Methodius faithfully follows Paul in integrating resurrection into the Spirit's transforming work that removes the power of Sin from the human being. But because he emphasizes the generality of death and resurrection, he is forced to extend this ontological salvation to all people (summarized in his idiosyncratically literalistic reading of Rom. 6:7: all physically dead people are justified from sin). Yet although God heals what one is, God does not overlook what one has done, and it is the latter that lands one in hell. Methodius's position highlights the challenges facing the Christian theologian who takes

seriously both the ontological implications of the particularly Pauline integration of death and resurrection into the economy of salvation and Scripture's affirmation elsewhere that some, having been resurrected, will face torment. Once alerted to this issue by Methodius's odd views, it becomes easier to see the effects of this tension in previous thinkers like Irenaeus (whose faithfulness to the Pauline emphasis gives him no account of eschatological punishment, which he nevertheless affirms) or Tertullian (who avoids the Pauline emphasis because of his commitment to eschatological punishments).

Incarnation and Personhood

Ryan Mullins

The so-called contemporary concept of personhood says that a person is a center of consciousness—a thinking thing with free will. It is often claimed today that the contemporary concept of a person is quite different from the ancient understanding. This is often associated with the claim that the contemporary concept of a person is inadequate for reconstructing a proper Christology. I shall argue that both of these claims are false. In section one of this paper I shall argue that one cannot understand the positions and arguments of the heretics without the so-called contemporary concept of a person. The contemporary concept is actually quite old. To illustrate this point, I shall examine a late Arian argument against Nestorianism/Chalcedonianism. In section two, I shall argue that this so-called contemporary concept of personhood can be employed to successfully explain the anhypostasia and enhypostasia distinction developed around the 5th Ecumenical Council. I shall sketch a Christological model that can maintain this distinction, and explain why the Chalcedonian two-minds view cannot.

Asceticism and Creative Destruction: On Ontology and Economic History

Dylan Pahman

For Fr. Georges Florovsky, Christianity is essentially historical, and history is essentially human. Thus, while Ortega y Gasset may go too far in declaring, "Man ... has no nature; what he has is—history," certainly human existence and personality are essentially historical, even if they cannot be

reduced to this one aspect. And for the Christian, whose confession is wed to a specific interpretation of singular historical events—viz. the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—and whose life is liturgically and ascetically oriented to daily embodying these realities, inquiry into the basic ontological foundations of one’s spiritual practice ought to undergird, and be informed by, the study of history as well, including economic history. Accordingly, this paper consists of three parts: (1) Drawing upon the Church fathers, Vladimir Soloviev, Fr. Pavel Florensky, and Christos Yannaris, et al., I outline the ontological foundations of Christian asceticism, such as the pluriformity and mutability of the world and personal identity, human mortality, and the potential for growth as well as decay, i.e. for resurrection unto life or to second death, not only at the parousia but daily. The practice of *memento moria* is highlighted as one primary ascetic means of transfiguring the present reality of our corruption into resurrected life in the Spirit. (2) I bring this ontology into dialogue with Florovsky, Foucault, Nietzsche, and Acton et al., to develop an uniquely ascetic historical perspective. (3) I bring this historical vision to bear on the question of economic history, examining Marx and Engels, Schumpeter, Rothbard, et al., to develop from that history non-predictive policy, analogous to the *memento moria* and other ascetic practices, adapted to the reality of creative destruction and what Nassim Taleb calls

The Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Economy of Salvation: A Liturgical Perspective

Joshy Parokkaran

The people of Israel were constituted as a covenantal people, consecrated to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests in the service of God (Ex19:6; Lev20:26). However, within the people of Israel, God further chose the tribe of Levi and set them apart for liturgical services (Num3:12). It was consecrated and appointed through a rite of ordination to act on behalf of people in relation to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. The priests represented the entire community and were the mediators who communicated God’s revelation to the people.

The liturgy of the Church considers the priesthood and the service of the Levites as prefigurations of the ordained ministry of the New Testament. The Church continues to emphasize that the redemptive sacrifice of Christ is made present through the ministerial priesthood without reducing the

uniqueness of the priesthood of Christ. In other words, the sacred ordination obliges the priest to live in this world as an instrument of Christ the eternal priest, to act in the name and in the person of Christ himself and, in addition, to witness in a fundamental way the message of the Gospel (John Paul II-1992).

The aforementioned understanding is well expressed and concretely conveyed in the liturgy for the rite of ordination of a priest. Looking at the Sacrament of Holy Orders from the perspective of a liturgical event enables us to discover the profound symbolic richness and meaning of this Sacrament. The underlying hypothesis of the present paper is that the 'economy of salvation' (Vagaggini-1976) is the key concept to interpret the link between the biblical prefigurations and the liturgical shape of the rite of ordination. Hence my contribution in this paper is divided into three segments. First, I make a cursory survey to trace out the elements of ordination existed and practiced in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Second, I look into the liturgical books that are presently used for the rite of ordination of a priest in different liturgical traditions which are in communion with the Catholic Church. The discussion of the liturgical books of the rite of ordination of a priest will enable eventually to argue and interpret how God's redemptive work is still continued through the ordained ministry in the Church.

History as the Ontology of Time

Vasil Penchev

This paper evaluates how Heidegger's discussion of topos impacts ideas important to intentionality in the work of Maximus the Confessor. In *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, Heidegger uses topos to describe the gathering of the four-fold as transcendental to experience. The paper surveys the problem of the four-fold, examining Heidegger's argument for the equi-primordially of transcendental structures. It discusses how a moment of determinate experience reveals that transcendental conditions arise or gather (gestell) equi-primordially with each other and what this means for a theory of time. Using an example from Maximus' discussion of the difference between simple and compound thought in relation to passion and temptation (found in *Centuries on Love II*, 84), I show there is a topological structure similar to that found in the four-fold. Maximus' investigates a nominally moral problem (passion/temptation) using categories that are broader than moral: quality and quantity. He identifies a simple thought (logismos haplos) as a thought that knows its object without

any artifice conjoining other ideas to it; it possesses fewer parts than another. A compounded (logismos synthetos) thought is a thought that has ideas added to the simple thought. The moment of temptation (occurring within logismos synthetos) is therefore moral, qualitative, quantitative (and likely others) any of which could be used to bring the subject into contact with the phenomenon. Consciousness and temptation are co-operations (gestell) of several conditions, each possible determinate arises equi-primordially in the appearance of the system. This topographic character shows how problematic it is to use a single predominant determination when referring to an active system. If topological gathering is something found commonly in Maximus, then philosophical or theological claims that place determinations such as time or history first might decontextualize the concepts from the grounds of their emergence. On this basis, the study argues that placing temporality, or perhaps any single determinate concept, as the primary form of world, may misrepresent an important structure in Maximus' idea of consciousness and therefore misunderstand some of the conditions under which Maximus sees a determination occurring within thinking. It suggests further investigation is required into how the equi-primordial (topographic) relationships between conditions affect notions of temporality, or other determinations, when they are employed within a theology or philosophy.

Plato's Parmenides: Time and Continuity in Pure Forms

Marcin Podbielski

This paper examines the definition of time offered by the main speaker of Plato's Parmenides in the first hypothesis of the dialogue's second part. The definition is shown as a kind of apparently purely formal structure, built out of simpler Forms that are bound by participation of one Form in another. Structural eternity and circular infinity are embedded, according to this definition, within the formal fabric of time. This approach to time appears to be applied in the Timaeus, where time gives change its structure and continuity. Yet, this view seems to be contradicted by a different approach to time already in the last argument of the same first hypothesis. There, the temporalized usage of the verb "to be," referred to purely formal relations, involves participation of forms in temporality.

This double approach to time just within the first hypothesis of the dialogue reveals the inner triplicity of time, which presents itself as a structure, pure continuity, and a modality of being. More importantly, it shows how time binds together the two sides of formality. On the one hand,

we give, since Plato, the name of Forms to purely abstract structures, no matter what kind of existence or subsistence is assigned to them. Such Forms, in various Platonic standpoints, are attributed the feature of eternity. On the other hand, those Forms can hardly be dissociated from the physical reality which they shape. The infinite loop within the apparently purely formal time of Plato's Parmenides and a temporalized view of participation make the formal reality inseparable from the contingent world, even if our mind detaches the former from the latter and plays various conceptual games about Forms. Time emerges as the most omnipresent and invisible order within the world of change. As such, it fulfills the criteria of being a Form. Through its inner infinity, however, it is close also to the inner dyadic character of Plato's Receptacle.

Berdyaev's Solution: Redeeming Persons in Historical Love

Daniel S. Robinson

Contemporary Orthodox discourse on personhood owes a great deal to the work of Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948), such a prolific writer and influential thinker among the Russian émigrés of the early twentieth century. In his book, *Slavery and Freedom* (1939), an unofficial capstone of his "philosophy of personalism," Berdyaev addressed the several ways human persons are enslaved to conceptual constructs, notably to the god of Being and of World Order. I propose an adaptation of Berdyaev's astute distinction between the abstract God of deduction and the empirical God revealed in Christ, as a solution to the problem of history. In Berdyaev's discussion, the problem of history is the problem of theodicy. The experience of evil which permeates all historical awareness is the chief indication that the abstract god of deduction is a false god. And so paradoxically, the unfolding of history reveals to us not only the depth and breadth of human viciousness, but also the personal, empirical God precisely through our experience of this evil. As Berdyaev argued, it is the personal incarnation of God who suffers, forgives, and heals evil that alone solves the problem of history by transferring human worship from the unjust god of deduction to the loving God of personal involvement. For Berdyaev, God is not the unilateral cause of the totalitarian world order, crushing human value under its cosmic hegemony. Rather, the revelation of Christ informs us that God is the participant in historical change, the sufferer of mutability, and the lover of persons. Ultimately, if history is to have any meaning and the notion of God to be at all vindicated, the passionless passion of Christ as a person must be the foundation of historical and theological reasoning. Fundamentally, both divine and human

persons exist to love historically, and only this historical love enacted through the sufferings of history can liberate human persons from their slavery to the abstract god of Being divorced from historical reality.

The Political Necessity of Ontology

Jared Schumacher

This paper proposes an investigation of so-called “Radical Political Theology” with an eye to its historical and ontological relevance. On the one hand, it will place the movement within its own post-secular, post-modern historical context, while also tracing its own highly ideological account of “history”. On the other, it will argue that to read history in this way requires eyes sensitive to a hidden ontology, an order of being which thematizes Radical Political Theology (RPT) as a political ideology, but which RPT as a postmodern movement ceremoniously rejects. This argument will be, in a certain sense, to read RPT against its own grain, given its explicit disavowal of any metaphysics. Our argument will be, rather, that all political theology (but especially RPT), in its attempt to appropriate the insights and rhetoric of theology for the purposes of political organization and legitimation, not only must give a formal account of history (both to make sense of itself and to legitimate some claims to sovereignty against others), but in so doing operates necessarily in an ontological register, that is, with an embedded ontology which functions as its principle of order, its organizational schematic. In so doing, we hope to suggest that even secular politics has a secreted ontology, one determinatively hidden from view. While common conceptions of secular politics hold as essential to its nature metaphysical neutrality to ultimate ends, our observation of the embedded ontology of political theology helps to prove the impossibility of secular politics as a coherent ideology on its own terms, and brings the political conversation back into the domain of theology proper, allowing for a theological critique of the political on its own terms.

Between Eschaton and Concept

Dan Sgarta

If only eschatological truth brings me the whole truth and I am the one who confesses it, in a certain way the eschatological truth should be

contained in the present of my confession, and so a primary deep affinity between the end of time and the continuous present of my being, generally between time and me, should exist. That is why the time of Eschaton as well as the way to it should find a place in the ontological structure of the ego. The concept of ego and time cannot be separated. How the ego can suppress the linear exteriority of time by synthesizing it in a moment (configuration, property) of self-consciousness is a philosophical matter. Formally, Christian theology faces the same matter in its attempt of gathering past or future events in the same universal unit of self-consciousness.

How do all these occur? Which is the binder, the agent, the “construction” that unites past, present and future in a homogeneous ontological structure that transcends them, while neutralizing time in the favor of a timeless continuous present and a modality of being? What conditions should the ego fill to go beyond itself in a region of freedom which consecrates its genuine sovereign role both in philosophy – from the finite, subjective ego to the absolute one, and in theology – from the individual deceptively armoured in psychological certainties to the person open to one’s true face through self-devotion and self-transcending?

From Ontology to ontologies to Trans-Ontology: The postmodern narrative of history

Anthony L. Smyrnaiois

This paper focuses on the implications concerning the transition from Ontology as the fundamental metaphysical logos, to ontologies as the postmodern historical applications of it, and, finally, to Trans-Ontology, as the ultimate futuristic innovation of Transhumanism. The main norm in that evolution is essentially the loss of the Father, as the universal principia, which seems to release gradually its contents historicizing its existence in the course of time. If modernity should be considered as the key shift in our living and understanding of the world since the dawn of history, postmodernism seems to be the record of a transition from the absolute Great Narratives of modernity to the polycentric, multifaceted and equally justified narratives, namely, from the Essence, which is considered as absolutist and unworkable, to the multiple essences with fragmented, ‘bricolage’ structures of expression. It is substantial to note that the ultimate

metaphors of such a world are the play and the game. The first is committed to the absolutely ludico-esthetic human being who is programmed to play hedonistically with itself, the society, and the world. The second suggests a mathematically scheduled playfulness for the contemporary magician's apprentices, who are currently the powerful decision- and myth-makers. Thus, the historical failure of the old Ontology, in the form of monarchy and political absolutism, monotheistic religions, Eurocentrism, nationalism and their various messianic incarnations, can be acknowledged as a deterministic emanationism to a more and more workable historical environment. In order to undermine the old totalitarian singularity postmodern historiography has legitimated the plurality of approaches, the multiplicity of historical fields, and therefore the diversity of the flexible transformations of ontologies. Yet, such an allegedly liberating evolution, due to its inexorable pleasure/innovation hunting, encountered on route the also postmodern trans-humanist impulse aiming at enhancing and completely transforming the traditional human essence by means of an actually theurgist technology. Its goal is to normalize the arrival of a paradoxically innovative universe, where trans-human beings will, at last, correct the diachronic historical errors, re-build the world, and finally re-essentialize it. This historically "cathartic" advancement from the ontological birthplace to the trans-ontological "homeland", from utopia to heterotopias to the ultimate trans-utopia, seems to make a complete, psychodynamic, cosmological circle, and it is obvious in the rhetoric of politics, economy as well as various sciences, which precisely try to unify the intractable humanity and its world into a transformed fully integrated entity.

The Orthodox icon and the dialectics between ontology and history

Uros T. Todorovic

My paper will address the question of how ontology and history are encompassed within the eschatological aesthetics of the Byzantine icon. For this purpose, icon will be approached as a visualised theological experience rooted in theology far broader than that of the Iconoclast period. Approached through the prism of broader Orthodox theology, the

phenomenon of the icon has a lot to reveal about ontology and history. For example, according to the theological experience of the Holy Fathers, Creation does not actually start to exist in the realm of time, because, within the realm of God's volition, which does not have a beginning, Creation has always existed, and therefore it is timeless and endless. Thus, the manifestation of Creation within the realm of time is simply understood as the manifestation of God's volition in history – without that meaning that His volition ever underwent a point of changing. In other words, although we experience the process of changing throughout the course of history, in the realm of God's volition, things always were and are the same. Because of this, according to Orthodox theology, since not only God but Creation too is timeless, the term “timeless” remains as simply one of the many inadequate attributes that man ascribes to God. In fact, to say that God exists as infinite or timeless, conditions His existence by the notions of space and time. Saint Gregory of Nyssa thus points out the difference between the notion of beginningless and the notion of endless, and he emphasises that while all things are endless, the term beginningless can only be ascribed to the being which exists “without the cause” – that is, it can only be ascribed to the uncreated Creator. In the context of this theological discourse, by adhering to a slide presentation, I will firstly aim at demonstrating how Byzantine icon depicts both that which is changeable and that which is unchangeable. The elaboration on this hypothesis will lead to a discussion of how that which is simultaneously changeable and unchangeable is that which is eschatological. I note that the present abstract is submitted for a non-thematic session.

Nothing new under the sun? Personhood and the question of technology in the Byzantine Tradition

Alexis Torrance

Within the vast theological and philosophical discussion of personhood is a faint but discernable thread of interest in connecting the theology of the person with the technological revolution. At one end of the spectrum, a growing number of theorists reduce the notion of personhood to a piece of technology: the person on this reading becomes an ultimately extractable and replicable sequence of information. At the other end, modern technology is conceived as the irrevocable enemy of personhood: a crushing, menacing evil that has as its sole aim the eradication of the personal in man and creation. There thus arises a critical need to evaluate what underlying role modern forms of technology might play in establishing or negating the theological ideal of persons in communion. The

technological arena is a forum in which the tension between the ontological and the historical is brought into sharp focus: what light might this topic shed on the relationship between being and progress, tradition and innovation, eternity and time? Drawing on both the concept of *technē* (“technology/art”) and *kainotomia* (“innovation”) in the Byzantine theological tradition as well as modern theological and philosophical discussions of technology, this paper will suggest a number of ways in which Byzantine theology can contribute to the much-needed dialogue over not only the possibilities and pitfalls of modern technology, but more importantly its proper (and subordinate) place within a larger framework of the struggle to attain likeness to the person of Christ.

Communion Fulfilled: Personhood and Kinship, in the Relationship between Moral Theology and Social Anthropology

David Torrance

This paper will examine the relationship between ontology and history from the perspective of engagement with the relationship between personhood and kinship. Specifically, if a Christologically grounded theological anthropology endorses the idea that persons are properly constituted in communion, what is the nature of this communion and what is its relationship with present practices of kinship? The paper will contend that the affirmation that personhood is fulfilled only where human persons are in full communion with one another is likely to end up being as critical of various kinship practices as it is affirming. In making this contention, the paper will introduce social anthropology as a fitting dialogue partner for theological anthropology, both because of a surprising similarity between the disciplines’ aims and results, and also because, while theology must provide the descriptive content of a Christian ethical account of the person, social anthropology is oftentimes better at raising the right kinds of questions with which the theologian ought to engage.

“To Apprehend the Point of Intersection of the Timeless with Time”: Problems of Personhood and Intermediate Time

Beata Toth

The eschatological site of intermediate time (between one’s death and the resurrection) can be seen as a traditionally conceived transition zone between history/time and eternity/ontology where questions concerning the

nature and continuity of personhood forcefully arise. Over against accounts which aim to eliminate this problematic notion from a modern understanding of eschatological events (such as the theory of “resurrection in death” which claims to resolve the problem of the “separated soul” and that of intermediate time), some theologians have argued (in the wake of Josef Ratzinger) for the importance of the traditional doctrine which — in their view — safeguards against an a-historical concept of the self and a too hasty shift between history and eternity. This paper seeks to explore the issue of the temporality and historicity of the self within intermediate time as a limit case which puts inherent assumptions concerning personhood to the test. In this regard, an interesting conversation can be established between Ratzinger’s conception of the temporality and the identity of selfhood based on Saint Augustine’s notion of “memoria-time” (in Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book X.), Jean-Luc Marion’s recent construction of a non-metaphysical self in his re-reading of Augustine’s *Confessions* (Marion: *In the Self’s Place*) and Augustine himself. Ultimately, what is at stake is the relationship of the creation and the Creator, at — what T. S. Eliot has termed — “the point of intersection of the timeless with time” (*Four Quartets*).

Joseph Ratzinger’s Imago Dei Anthropology as a Means for the Inclusion of History in Ontology

Isabel Troconis

It is well known that one of Joseph Ratzinger’s main theological concerns has always been the clarification of history’s true role in Christian faith. This is because of its great implications both for the theological methodology and for Ecumenism. His reflections on this matter are an answer to Luther’s account of salvation as a discontinuous event in regard to the human essence. Ratzinger provides an alternative to Luther’s interpretation of Christ as the eschatological Adam. To the reformer of Leipzig there is no space for continuity between man’s actual (sinful) existence and his saved condition. For Ratzinger, instead, Christ is the eschatological Adam in a continuous fashion, for He represents not only a new Humanity but also its fulfillment. Actually, Ratzinger usually describes salvation as man’s return to himself [zu sich selbe kommen]¹ or also as man’s full unity with himself [die völlige Einheit mit sich selbst]². Though this description of the salvific event may appear to be exclusively ontological, it is not so because for Ratzinger man’s essence is not closed or auto-referential but open and relational. Following Augustine’s and Bonaventure’s understanding of man as imago Dei he manages to create a

relational and dynamic anthropology that allows for a continuity in man's essence along his path from sin to salvation. This paper will explore Ratzinger's reasons for an inclusion of history in ontology in the context of his anthropology.

**Cyril of Alexandria on the Only Begotten and First Born:
Philosophical Underpinnings and Contents of the Deductions of
the Properties of Coming-to-be older and younger than
Self / Other**

Sergey Trostyanskiy

The paper revisits the themes of qualified and unqualified coming-to-be of the Word of God in Cyril of Alexandria. While the first type of coming-to-be of God the Word is depicted by Cyril as being removed from any temporal associations (i.e. the subject of his eternal begetting), the second type of coming-to-be, i.e. coming-to-be in human conditions (i.e. of the Incarnation), attributes temporal predicates to the Word. The issue of conflicting properties (atemporal vs. temporal) and conflicting names (i.e. Only-Begotten vs. First Born) associated with diverging points of reference of scriptural affirmations (i.e. those of *theologia* and *oikonomia*) is an interesting one in this context. Cyril's *Scholia* offers a set of deductions of both atemporal and temporal properties predicated of the Word and qualified by the terms of "according to nature" and "according to the Incarnation" or in relation to self and other. In his presentation, the author will critically re-evaluate Cyril's philosophical underpinnings and readmit some late Platonist speculations (in particular emphasizing the creative input of Iamblichus) to early Christian thought. Here I will focus on the subject of the second hypothesis of the Parmenides as far as the properties of coming-to-be older and younger than self/other and of being of the same age with self/other are concerned. The author will argue that Cyril's discourse incorporated certain aspects of late Platonism into his theological and oikonomical speculations.

Maximus' vision of 'Logos-in-many-logoi' and Hegel's progressive 'consciousness': Understanding the 'real' through consciousness, history, and human will

Chrysostomos Gr. Tympas

Modernity has witnessed a prevalence of phenomenological approaches to the question regarding essence and potential of beings (versus the antiquated ontological theories), which opened the path for philosophical currents (e.g. existentialism) and psychoanalytic theories (e.g. Freud's reductive method 'back to personal history', Jung's theory of parental complexes/ archetypes). Hegel's analysis of historical facts, on the basis that 'world/spirit' or Reason operative in history is a supra-human reason – somewhat akin to divine providence, strongly emphasises the social and the cultural elements (sciences, arts, religion) – is found at the heart of his Phenomenology of Spirit. On the other side, Maximus the Confessor's theory of the logoi of beings, the eternal purposes and vocations of all creatures that comprise unity within Logos the Christ, in an eschatological perspective, challenges Hegel's approach on a: the definition of the intra-cosmic World-spirit (versus the metaphysical Logos as a Person-Hypostasis), and b: the fact that historical occurrences are not always seen as concordant to the logoi-as-virtues, the manifestations of Logos' vocations to the beings, which man is able to fully experience only on the condition of the synergy between his/her will and the divine will.

The paper explores the two approaches in a comparative approach by juxtaposing elements of Maximus' logoi-in-communion through the ascetic and sacramental path, with Hegel's theory of progressive consciousness/knowledge in stages towards the Absolute. Hegel's progressive consciousness is the locum within which the world-spirit, Reason, finds its manifestation and ultimate assimilation always within cosmic dimensions. The paper focuses on the degree to which both systems of thought engage the temporal and the spacial (the history, and by extension the social and cultural dynamics) in the progression of knowledge as a result of human choice or not. Maximus, although grounds the experience of the reality-in-logoi in one's conscious experience, does not provide the clear socio-cultural impediment that Hegelian Social spirit counterparts do, by assimilating knowledge from socio-cultural level: it is because Maximus does not exemplify in which ways the logoi work within more complex than individuals constructs (e.g. the socio-political, or economic context) – thus mainly remaining within an ascetic context; however, he challenges Hegel's Absolute on the factor of human choice,

which remains the defining crucial parameter towards knowledge of the reality-in-logoi.

Praying and Presence: Kierkegaard on the salutary prolepsis of the Self

Chris Doude Van Troostwijk

Of all religious phenomena, prayer most intensively shows the tension between ontology and historicity. Therefore, Kierkegaard was able to speak about the “impossibility of prayer”. If God is God, he knows my needs in advance; if I want to change His eternal course through prayer, I touch upon the truth of His eternity. Nonetheless, the Danish thinker left us some beautiful personal prayers, one of which was put to music by Samuel Barber and opens as follows: “O Thou who are unchangeable, may we find rest and remain at rest in Thee unchanging.” But, prayer being a performative of longing, Kierkegaard feels prompted to modify this all too austere ontological notion of the Divine. “Thou art moved and moved in infinite love by all things”, he continues, “the need of a sparrow even this moves Thee.” Praying presupposes the paradox of God’s unchangeable movability, of His “passionate impassibility”, for philosophers a logical skandalon, for theologians an enigma of revelation. Kierkegaard, however, recognizes in this paradox the essence of the human soul. In his programmatic *Sickness unto Death*, he is thus able to suggest that the reconciliation of time and being in God serves as an eschatological salutary landmark for the believer, as a sign of the “possibility of the impossible”. But more than that: the very act of praying in spite of its impossibility, enacts in se what has proleptically been promised with regard to the reconciliation of the human Self.

Historicity and Christian Life Experience by the Early Heidegger

Anna Varga-Jani

In his early Freiburg lectures about the phenomenology of religious life (See: HGA 60, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*) Heidegger investigated the interpretation of the Christian life phenomenologically, if Christianity is historically defined. The first part of the lecture (“Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion”) aims to theoretically define the different meanings of ‘historical’. On the one hand, the cultural phenomenon

is characterized 'historically' as a closed object, which is always re-interpreted by the subjectivity. On the other hand, 'historicity' is realized as the part of human being that is imprinted in the factual life. In this second way is historical phenomena the primal phenomena of human being in Heideggerian sense, which pre-theoretically determines all our experiences. According to Heidegger, every philosophical question originates from the factual life, and the tradition of the early Christianity is living in our factual life, so our factual life is pre-theoretically a religious life, which raises the question as to how to grasp phenomenologically the historical phenomena by the factual religious life. This theoretical investigation of the first part of the lectures is followed in the second part ("Phenomenological Explication of real religious phenomena according to Paul's Letters") by the practical investigation of specific historical phenomena in Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Thessalonian of the New Testament.

Heidegger's investigation of the 'historical' is apparently divided among the problem of the phenomenological method and the question of the early Christianity. On the second level of this topic investigated Heidegger the method of theology in his Marburg lecture *Phenomenology and Theology* (HGA 9), and asked the question, whether it is possible in sense of Bultmann to talk about a Christian Philosophy.

The Hermeneutics of the Resurrection

Maxim Vasiljevic

The Resurrection of Christ Event is the foundation of all dogmas, and no dogma can be understood or explained in itself, outside this event and its relation to it. Christology (and theology in general) is existentially irrelevant if death, as the basic problem of the creation, is not overcome. Thus, "every Christology must lead to Soteriology, and both must be firmly rooted in Palestine of the first century" (M. Barker). Those who accept the "logic" of the Resurrection are obliged, to paraphrase the words of Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, to follow the argument wherever it leads. The Resurrection means everything the Holy Scripture says about it: that God the Father raised His eternal Son by the Holy Spirit; precisely by this event the ontology of the world and matter has experienced a radical change. The existential-logical premise of the Christology of the Resurrection means that only the Life-creating Trinity can restore the original foundation of the person, that is, redeem the existence. All other dogmas (truths) of Christianity are only reflections or expressions of the dogma of the Resurrection, and from then onward we can understand the overall mystery

of existence only in retrospect (through the unfolding of the future in time), as St. Maximus the Confessor emphatically claimed. Not even a vision of the Transfigured Lord was sufficient to fathom the mystery of Christ, and that is why the Evangelist wrote: “And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean” (Mark 9:9-10). The Apostles had not yet become aware of the true problem. Only in the light of the Resurrection—which is the solution to the eternal life of creation—they could see the true problem of the created world. However, the whole problem of ontology lies in hermeneutics: we need a future event to give substance to the past and present. It is the *kairos*, i.e., the end, that “justifies”, i.e., gives meaning to the past; all Christian hermeneutics depend on this *kairological* perspective. The testimony of the Apostles about the Resurrected Christ is the first dogmatic “formulation” and verification of the truth about God: there is a God Who is powerful enough to conquer death. For the Apostles, the Resurrection of Jesus was proof that He was the eschatological Messiah, the true *ἄνθρωπος*, Who, contrary to the first Adam, took the world in His hands with thanksgiving and carried it back to God, freeing the creation from bondages of sin/death, thus setting not only the end but also the beginning (*ἀρχή*) of the world.

Ontology as a Guide to Ethics (Appearances to the Contrary)

Haralambos Ventis

History and Ontology In Collingwood: Implications to Theology

Penelope Voutsina

In this paper an attempt will be made, to examine Collingwood’s philosophy of history, the relationship in which it stands to his metaphysics and the implications for the current theological discourse.

In the first, I explain Collingwood’s descriptive metaphysics in order to delineate the presuppositions of historical inquiry. Collingwood on his account of the relationship between the metaphysics and the philosophy of history, the philosophy of history presupposes the notion of philosophical

method that Collingwood outlines in his general writings on the task and subject matter of philosophical analysis. Collingwood's task is not to provide historians with a method for the acquisition of knowledge about the past, but to delineate the domain of inquiry of history by providing an answer to conceptual questions such "what is history?".

Secondly, I expose the application of that methodology to the sphere of theological discourse by showing a reconstruction of what the subject matter of history is and by examining the a priori principles that guide historians in their understanding of the domain of human affairs and make a certain form of experience or knowledge possible.

Finally, I argue that on this account of the relationship between the metaphysics and the philosophy of history, metaphysics does not collapse into history and history cannot be reduced to metaphysics and ontological accounts.

Eucharistic Ecclesiology and Political Theology: John Zizioulas, William Cavanaugh, and the End of Repentance

Dan Wright

The last century saw Eucharistic ecclesiology and political theology rise to prominence, yet the relationship between the two areas remains largely undeveloped. The key issue in discerning the political implications of the Eucharist concerns the relationship between human history and eschatological ontology. John Zizioulas seems to suggest that since the Eucharist offers a foretaste of eschatological existence that is not effected by historical processes, history is ultimately inconsequential. On the other hand, William Cavanaugh seems to suggest that since the Eucharist is an historical event that overflows the bounds of the liturgy in seeking to reconcile the world to God, eschatological existence remains a distant hope. However, despite this significant difference, Zizioulas and Cavanaugh agree that the best human efforts to imitate Christ and His Kingdom will ever be limited by finitude and sin and thus that the Christian life is marked by repentance. Indeed, this paper will argue that Zizioulas and Cavanaugh share an implicit understanding of the relationship between history and eschatological ontology which identifies repentance as the necessary, historical precondition for receiving the Eucharistic foretaste of eschatological existence. In other words, history has no hope of eliminating evil and bringing about the eschaton, yet neither will anyone experience the eschaton without first taking responsibility for the evil in the world. Thus,

Eucharistic ecclesiology seems to suggest an understanding of politics as penitence whereby political action is always a matter of assuming responsibility rather than imposing power.

Deification in Aquinas: Atemporal Completion of a Personal Temporal History

Anna Zhyrkova

This paper intends to show that the proper place to look for Aquinas' philosophical view of time is his theological anthropology in general, and his idea of deification in particular.

It is frequently assumed in current scholarship that Aquinas' philosophical views can be discussed in abstraction from the theology he builds and from the inner structure of theological thinking. Hence, for instance, his views on time are shown as a philosophical conception in its own right. They may be discussed as a cyclical conception of history, criticized as confusion between A- and B-theory of time, or explored through opposition of a linear view of human time and non-linear eternity. The author believes that these approaches commit, in various ways, the same methodological error of absolutizing Aquinas' claims that serve, in actuality, a theological purpose and have to be treated as organic elements of a theologically inspired anthropology.

In Aquinas, time as well as eternity are conditions of human ontological realization. The author proposes to scrutinize Aquinas' vision of time, considering it, primarily, as road to a fulfillment of a human's personal and temporal history. This road brings human to an essentially different level of ontological existence, which is a-temporal, yet constitutes the pivotal fulfillment of what is temporal. This is because human fulfillment, paradoxically, has to be strived for, but cannot be achieved in human temporal life. It is reached only in *visio beatifica* that amounts, as the author will argue, to deification of human nature granted by Divine grace.

Workshop abstracts

Human and divine personhood: how does the ontological fit with the historical?

Chair: Pui Him Ip (University of Cambridge)

This panel seeks to explore models of personhood that take into account both the ontological dimension of the notion and the importance of its situatedness within history. It has two core aims: (a) to explore different ways in which the ontological and the historical dimension of personhood fit together, (b) to discover the tensions or issues that arise when one tries to construct such an account. Constructive accounts of personhood, engagement with particular theologians/philosophers and proposals in relation to Christology and/or Trinitarian theology are most welcome. Proposals that put philosophical and theological discussions of personhood into dialogue are particularly encouraged.

Modern Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and the Question of Christian Eschatology

**Chair: Revd Prof. Nikolaos Loudovikos (University
Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki)**

The workshop seeks to investigate two initial questions: 1) to what extent have philosophical and psychological modes of thought influenced the articulation of Christian eschatology and 2) under what circumstances does Christian eschatology have something ontologically new to say. A third question is also evaluated, which naturally follows from the two above and which concerns the possible engagement of Christian eschatology with post-modern narratives of history. These narratives also draw their hidden metaphysics from the dissolution of classical metaphysics, which, nevertheless, post-modern proponents would like to deny. In light of the engagement of these fundamental questions, a re-evaluation of modern theological eschatology is attempted.

Ontology and History between German Idealism and Maximus the Confessor

Chair: Dr Sotiris Mitralaxis (Bogazici University, Istanbul)

Hans Urs von Balthasar was the first to note, in his seminal monograph *Kosmische Liturgie*, that the Maximian synthesis can be seen as a predecessor to German Idealism and Modernity. It is Maximus' turn from the common Platonic and Neoplatonic 'objective' idealism to his distinct 'subjective', or rather relational, idealism that forms the basis for this. Maximus does not trace the truth of beings in impersonal ideas residing beyond the sensible world but in the logoi, i.e. the wills, intentions and utterances of a personal being (a subject) residing beyond createdness, within the relationship with which the contemplation of these logoi by the human person is possible. However, the emergence of created beings in the horizon of history not merely as logoi, but also as distinct modes of existence (tropoi) and always towards an eschatological end (telos) that ultimately discloses their truth stresses the historicity of this ontological process in an unprecedented manner. This historical process of dialectical relationship and antithesis between the logoi and the tropoi, along with Maximus' famous and numerous hermeneutic antithetical triads (e.g. being, well being, ever being etc), can be fruitfully approached with reference, e.g., to Hegel. In this workshop, we will attempt to compare German Idealism and Maximus the Confessor (as well as related Church Fathers) on the philosophical problems arising from the interplay between ontology and history.

Politics and Theology at ‘the End of History’

Chair: Jared Schumacher (KU Leuven)

What is the relationship between metaphysics and ontology, on the one hand, and history and politics on the other? Do all political systems require a legitimation that only ontology can provide (i.e. an ideal(ised) account of how things are or should be as a map for social construction), or is “sovereignty” merely historical detritus, the wreckage of failed religious-political regimes dashed against the rock of secular democracy? Is all attempt at political justification utopian, or is political thought merely a veil for ‘the will to power’? Taking a conceptual set back, do cities even “exist” or are they merely cultural constructs (mental/actual)? Are humans truly

‘political animals’ or are they meta-political? What role does human “belief/faith” play in the operation of politics, or history for that matter? Is it the same or different from religious belief? Relatedly, what role should theology play in ‘the political’? Does (salvation) history challenge political narratives or license them? The burgeoning revival of interest in Carl Schmitt’s conception of “political theology” and its retrieval for use in philosophy and theology call for intense scrutiny. Given that we live in what Charles Taylor has called ‘a secular age’, the so-called ‘return of religion’ to political discourse seems to violate the metaphysical neutrality imaged by modern democratic systems; yet, Taylor himself calls for a religious secularism of sorts. Is this a contradiction, a pragmatic compromise, or an ontologically principled political strategy which challenges (or else supports?) modern conventions? How do the Orthodox conceptions of “sobornost” or “symphonia” aid in addressing these questions? This panel will focus on issues related to how ontology and history interact in a complex way at the intersection of politics and theology. We encourage papers on the concept of political theology, political ontology, faith in the context of (post-)secularity, the history of political philosophy as it relates to ontology or theology, and related topics.

History and Ontology 'Performed': A Liturgical Perspective

Chair: Vika Lebzyak (KU Leuven)

In the Christian tradition (Catholic and Orthodox especially), the liturgical celebration is a privileged space for the encounter and interaction between human history and divine reality. Liturgy weaves together in practice what is envisioned as the unity of history and ontology in theological theory. The ecclesial assembly, gathered on a particular day of the week, enters into the dimension of the eternal Kingdom hence sanctifying, not escaping, their particular time and history. The eschatological promise of the “new creation” becomes an ontological reality at the moment the Church participates in the sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist. The liturgy makes the past (and ongoing) event of salvation present by means of rites, prayers, and sacraments. Human history and temporality are thus fundamental and indeed “required” for the actualization of the soteriological presence of Christ in the world. In light of these statements, this panel invites reflections on the relationship among liturgy, history, and ontology within the Christian tradition. The following questions provide the thematic direction this panel envisions to undertake. How does the liturgy account for human ontology and historicity within its eschatological profile? How does liturgical

celebration elucidate the connection between the particularity of the present moment and the universality of the history of salvation? Does the liturgy possess the resources to acknowledge and affirm the ongoing character of Revelation? What does the anamnestic nature of the Eucharist have to offer to the discussion on the relationship between the Christ event of the past and its presence in the here and now? If history and ontology are interrelated liturgically, what does such a conclusion entail for systematic theology and theological anthropology?

Times of Eternity: The Time of Pure Forms, The Time of Christ, The Time of Visio Beatifica

Chair: Dr Marcin Podbielski (Ignatianum Academy, Krakow)

The panel proposes three papers which tackle different aspects of time, if viewed from the perspective of eternity. They lead the listener through a circle, from creation of time, through its being reconnected with its source in Christ, who can be ontologically described as the frontier of time and the eternal, to the term and purpose of time, which is deification of nature in every particular human. The papers present, therefore, a theological perspective on the philosophy of time, which seems to be incomplete if the arrow of the irreversible structure of events does not find its end.

Thus the three proposals show, in various ways, how, on the one hand, it is impossible to reduce time to an abstract dimension of events or objects. The papers emphasize the reality of changes that we experience as humans, the true indecisiveness of future, and true continuous identity of the present, which is—always—not past any more, yet will always be past. On the other hand, this view of time, if perceived from the perspective of the eternity and the Divine, either conceptualized as the world of Forms, or described so as Christian theology describes God and His Incarnation, does not amount to presentism or growing-block theory of time. This is because the ever-changing present is grounded ontologically and teleologically in the eternal. The first paper focuses on time viewed in Plato's Parmenides as an ontological framework constructed in order to make change and, hence, the non-eternal world, possible. Such time unites, within its structure, formality and indeterminateness, and makes even participation of Forms temporalized. The second paper shows, through the approach of Cyril of Alexandria, how temporality and eternity are both present, still not confused, in Incarnation of Christ, and how His being born in time as a human is related to Him being eternally Begotten from the Father. Incarnation, described in this terms, makes it possible for the never fulfilled reality of temporal being to

aspire for and be granted fulfillment. The third paper discusses, through an analysis of Aquinas' doctrine of *Visio Beatifica*, how a personal history of a human, living and changing in time, is fulfilled and receives the ultimate ontological grounding in what is not merely a realization of human aspiration to complete happiness, but, above all, transformation and deification of human nature. Viewed in this way, time, as a true and continuous transformation of the present, finds its purpose and the ultimate boundless present in the eternity of the divinely transformed nature.

The Ontology of the Person

an outline

Prof. em. Christos Yannaras

I. COMMON PLACES (in the manner of Wittgenstein)

- The limits of my language are the limits of my world.

- That which cannot be put into words (the ineffable) certainly exists. It is that which is only experienced and shown – the experiential element.

- The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does. *Within* the world there are no values; and if there were, they would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside everything that happens and is the case. For everything that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did, it would itself be accidental.

It must lie outside the world.

- What we call the “sense” of the world, that is, the “sense” of existence and of existents, is their *cause* and their *end*. We understand cause and end only as relational givens. Irrationality cannot constitute the *sense* of what exists.

II. THE PLATONIC PROPOSITION

- The sense of the world (the cause and end of existents) is realized in (unexplained given) *ideas*. The ideas (the models, the *logoi*-modes-blueprints of existents) pre-exist, are given, and have no causal explanation. They constitute the primary starting-point and final end of existents. The existence of every existent presupposes its *idea* and refers to its *idea*.
- The word “idea” is derived from the verb *orō* (“I see,” - second aorist *eidon* from *idein*) and indicates the cognitive result of a particular sensory experience, that of *seeing* (*orān*).
- The Platonic *ideas* are not products of the intellectual capacity of human beings. We do not recognize *ideas* thanks to our power of reasoning, or by ways of mysticism and ek-stasis. We recognize them by the sensory experience of vision, as a vision-*contemplation* of the real – as the *recollection* (*anamnesis*) of the vision-*contemplation* which has been granted to us as a result of the “pre-existence” of our souls.
- The value and significance of Platonic ontology is not to be located in its hermeneutic adequacy. Its hermeneutic adequacy is limited by the a priori assumptions which it presupposes. The most important thing about Platonic ontology is its reliance on the experiential starting-

point of the *knowledge* of the *sense* (cause and end) of existents in *recollection*.

- The empiricism of *recollection* (*anamnesis*) is probably Plato's chief contribution to ontology. After Plato it was Christian Hellenism's philosophical discourse that was to rely consistently on the empirical clarification of ontological questions. When the post-Roman West began to be capable of articulating philosophical questions (chiefly from the twelfth century onwards), trapped as it was in the individualistic character of the Augustinian paradigm it was also to imprison ontological argumentation in "correct" reasoning (in an autonomous intellectualism) or in "mystical" investigations that were by definition incommunicable.
- Two and a half thousand years after Plato comes Heidegger, who was to venture to pose the problem of existence in terms of, and in accordance with the requirements of, empirical assertions.

III. THE HEIDEGGERIAN PROPOSITION

- The existence of existents is their phenomenicity. They *are* what they appear to be and *because* they appear to be such. Nothing else.
- Phenomenicity, identified with existence, is an empirical given. It is the experience of time; we experience the appearing of existents as time. Time is the empirical horizon of the rising up of existents into disclosure.
- Without time there is no *Being* and without *Being* there is no time. Existents exist as a result of their property of "persisting in time,"

that is, of being manifested by constituting time, of being phenomena in time.

- Human beings are the only existents that not only have the passive property of “persisting in time” but also have the awareness-cognition of doing so. They are aware of temporality as a rising up of existents into phenomenicity.

- We recognize existents as phenomena in time. That is to say, we recognize the essence (the *ousia* – the mode of participation in Being) of existents either as presence (*par-ousia* – temporal phenomenicity) or as absence (*ap-ousia* – the nullifying of manifestation). We recognize Being (*einai*) either as being-present (*par-einai*) or as being-absent (*ap-einai*). Being-absent (nothingness) is contained within Being, constituting one of the two empirical confirmations of Being.

- Presence as phenomenicity (a rising up into temporality, in relation to absence, that is, to nothingness) is the empirical knowledge of that which exists. That which exists is known in relation to nothingness, not through a hermeneutic intellectual analysis, but through experience – experience of the anxiety (Angst) of existence as ephemerally “thrown down” in the world, experience of care (Sorge) for the “fall” into temporal “with-one-anotherness” (Miteinandersein) as an awareness of finite “being-thereness” (Dasein), as an experience of the given mortality of inexorably approaching death (Sein zum Tode).

IV. THE PROPOSITION OF THE “ONTOLOGY OF THE PERSON”

1. The existence of existents is an active *how*, not a phenomenal *what*. The existence of every existent is in a state of activity, a state of becoming. The becoming of existence constitutes *relations*; it is the reality of relations.
2. The “world” (the totality of existents) is a reality of active relations, not a totality of given (perfected) entities. Even the smallest unit (atom) of any material element is constituted by the relations of specific tiny active quanta – of electric charges, impulses, etc. The initial givens of matter are energy. They constitute an existential event because they are correlated (because they are-in-relation). The confirmation of their existence (observation) is also a function of relation. If observation ascertains “position,” then what is observed behaves (is manifested) as a *particle*. If observation ascertains “motion” (velocity), then it behaves as a *wave*. What is observed constitutes a particle or a wave according to the relation which observation seeks to establish (wave-particle duality).
- 2.1 An isolated atom of any material element can not by itself realize and manifest the specific difference of matter, its existential alterity. Only the coexistence of more than one atom (a different number for each material element) realizes and manifests the specific difference of each material. The specific difference arises both from the particularity of relations of active quanta in each atom and from the particularity of relations between the atoms of each material element.
3. A human being is the only existent which is not only constituted as an individual existence by active units of perfected relations (bio-particles) – relations between primordial active givens, structured constituents of the cell – but also has the power, as an active individual totality, to *establish* relations with other (opposite) active totalities.
- 3.1 To “establish” relations means to bring about new unforeseen relations not predetermined by natural-biological necessity, the necessity that is constitutive of the relations by which existents operate.

- 3.2 The ability of human beings to establish relations, to participate in an unforeseen and undetermined manner in active relations with what is opposite them, we call a rational capacity, a capacity of reason. “Reason” is what we call an active event of disclosure, of becoming apparent, of coming *into the light*. Such a disclosure is always a referential event; it presupposes a “horizon,” a *where*, a recipient of the disclosure. We confirm as the horizon of the disclosure of existents (the presupposition for them to be existential *phenomena*) the *rational* capacity that human beings possess, their capacity to “apprehend mentally,” (*noein*), to receive into the mind (*en no[i]*) the images (ideas, from *idein*) of beings and to make them concepts (*ennoies*).
- 3.2.1 We call *nous* (noetic energy-capacity, usually rendered in English as “mind”) the exclusively human capacity to put together or synthesize the information (in Greek *eidēseis*, from *eidon*, “I saw”) that is offered by the phenomenicity of phenomena. The mind assembles information (*syn-eidēsis*, or “shared knowledge”) about existents: the interconnection, correlation and correspondences of whatever information is conveyed to the mind by the senses.
- 3.2.2 The rational capacity of human beings (the mind) is the power to receive information (*eidēseis* – images, ideas) regarding existents *consciously*, that is to say, correlating each item of information not simply with the quantitative totality of sensible things but chiefly with the *modes* (the *how*) of coming together, the coordinates of form, size, dimensions, distances, temporality, causality and purpose. The conscious (*en-syn-eidētē*) apprehension of the reality of existents is a work of the human mind (*nous*) and constitutes the event of apprehension (*kata-noēsis* – mental perception) of reality, which means: in accordance with reason (*kata-logon*), with an active *relation* or engagement.
- 3.3 The power of human beings to realize their *relation* with existents as an event of mental *perception* of existents – the apprehension of forms-ideas (of the phenomenicity of existents) as mental images, as concepts – is a rational capacity. Also rational is the power of the

mind to “make symbols” of concepts, to connect-identify optical images with “acoustic images” (images acoustiques – Saussure) so that by the production of vocal sounds it (the same mind, but also the mind of all who share in the same phonetic code, in the same “language”) recalls the same concepts, and consequently accomplishes a common mental perception (*kata-noēsis*) of reality.

- 3.3.1 Phonetic signifiers refer to what is *signified* mentally, to the sensory-empirical *relation* of the rational subject to the existents and processes of becoming that are opposite it, a relation that is formulated in the mind.
 4. Also empirical is the relation that arouses and coordinates the cognitive powers of human beings, the infinite parts of the soul (Aristotle, *On the Soul* III, 9, 432a24) – sensation, intellection, imagination, judgement, perception, memory, discrimination – in the confirmation, recognition and notation of sensible representations of the existent and the real.
 - 4.1 Irrational animals also apprehend sensible images, *but* without the capacity to turn them into concepts and symbols. They recognize the same image when it is repeated. They have the same reflexive responses on the recognition of repeated images (Pavlovian conditioning). They distinguish between pleasant and unpleasant images. But they are unable to assemble a *relation* that coordinates more elements than sensation and memory: they have no cognitive powers.
 - 4.2 Human beings are the only existents that have the power to establish rational relations not subject to the necessity of relations that constitutes the reality of the natural world, both animate and inanimate. (The *uncertainty principle* and the *theory of relativity* refer to the mode by which human beings recognize the reality of the natural world, not to a power of matter-energy to choose behaviors.) The power of human beings to establish relations or to reject a relation, to realize or to avoid relations by judging the result to be either positive or negative, to submit to or to resist relations that are

dictated by natural necessity – all these are a mark that is exclusively human. And we signify this mark by the word *freedom*.

5. Freedom is the power of human beings to resist natural necessities (laws of nature), to create relations that are not subject to predeterminations, to choose and decide about what they do by their individual thought and judgement.
- 5.1 Human beings gain knowledge-awareness of the reality of existents and of events in virtue of having the power-freedom to bring about a relation with what belongs to their environment, that is, to recognize their uniqueness (existential otherness) with regard to beings and events opposite them, to recognize it in a manner that is unique, dissimilar and unrepeatable for every human being. The cognitive relation is the event of realizing and manifesting the inner principle (*logos*), the otherness, of the knowing subject and the known objects.
 - 5.1.1 Every existent possesses a morphic otherness as a given or as something that has come about. Only human beings also possess an *active* otherness-power to bring about or establish *relations* that realize and manifest the existential otherness of both terms of the *relation*. Through the articulated word (*logos*) and the multiformity of the language of the arts, human beings realize and manifest this double alterity.
 - 5.1.2 A Beethoven sonata or a painting by Van Gogh establish a *relation* between the hearer or beholder and the specific work of the composer or artist, a relation cognizant of the existential otherness of the creator and his work. We say: this music *is* Beethoven; this painting *is* Van Gogh.
6. We characterize human beings as *personal* existences so as to indicate that human beings are and are known only as events of *relation*. The Greek word *pros-ōpon* (“person”) is constructed from the preposition *pros* (“towards”) and the noun *ōps* (*ōpos* in the genitive), which means: I have my face turned towards someone or something. I am opposite, I am known only as the term of a relation, as an experience of relation.

- 6.1 We say in everyday speech, “Do know so-and-so? – No, I’ve heard about him – So you don’t know him,” because knowledge consists only of the experience of direct relation, of personal encounter, not of information passed on.
- 6.2 The experience of an interpersonal relation is knowledge that is actualized dynamically. It is accomplished continuously, without ever being accomplished fully and definitively. A collaboration, a cohabitation, a friendship, a love affair confirm this ever more perfect but never fully accomplished knowledge of the other, along with the dynamics of self-knowledge that are generated by the relation.
- 6.3 The cognitive dynamics of a relation are an expression of the degree of freedom which each term of the relation achieves. Relation means: the other interests me; I wish to know this person. The primordial desire is usually instinctive need, a product of the necessities which govern my natural hypostasis. The other is useful to me, is necessary to me – for the services which they can furnish me with, for their agility of mind which delights me, for the pleasure which they can probably supply, for the protection which perhaps they can grant me.
- 6.4 In all these cases the desire for relation is tied to the law of natural necessity. It is a non-free dependence, an egocentric quest, not a relation. A relation comes about when the other interests me for that which they are, without ulterior motives. Consequently, knowledge of the other presupposes my own withdrawal from the necessities of my self-centered urges; it presupposes an acquired freedom from impersonal instinct. The more I free myself from the demands of nature, which are impersonal, the more fully (without ties of submission to self-interest) I can recognize the otherness of the other.
- 6.4.1 At the summit of freedom from subjection to the necessities of nature is love, eros. Eros is an ek-static event: people who fall in love “stand out” (*exo-istantai*) from themselves; they stand outside their egoistic self-centeredness, outside their imprisonment in instinctive self-interest. The other interests them more than their very selves do.

Erotic love is the only possible experience of freedom from nature's inexorable necessity for self-centeredness and self-interest.

- 6.4.2 The knowledge of the other, freed from the subjection of their image to self-interested motives, is increasingly nearer to that which really *is*. And because this liberation is accomplished within the bounds of nature, it is realized as a continuous dynamic becoming. We know the person we love in a continuous manner, without ever arriving at perfected knowledge, at knowledge possessed as a "thing" that has been acquired, the acquisition having annulled the adventure of relation.
7. The chief question of ontology, the central issue of every philosophical question, concerns the *causal principle* of what exists: What is it that makes beings be? Heidegger rejected the specific formulation of the question, the logic of its construction, with the observation that it binds us to the "ontification" of the causal principle, to conceiving of it as a being. With this question we presuppose the causal principle of Being as an individual entity ("that" which makes beings be), as "something," as a transcendent entity, a *supreme, divine and most venerable class of being*. Heidegger himself based his empirically coherent nihilistic ontology on posing a question not about the *relation* between beings and Being but about their *difference*. Beings *are disclosed*; they are phenomena. Being *loves to hide* (Heraclitus), to conceal itself in the presence/absence of beings, in their phenomenicity/nothingness.
- 7.1 Heidegger did not suspect that the definitive (with a definition) location of the causal principle ("*what* it is that makes beings be") may reveal not an ontic *what* but a modal *how*, that the causal principle of existence and of existents can be a mode of existing, that the mode *hypostasizes* the existence (constitutes it as a *hypostasis*, as an existent fact) and not that the existent entity defines the *mode*.
- 7.2 From the first moment that the ecclesial event appeared on the historical scene, it referred to the Causal Principle of what exists not by the word *God* but by the word *Father*. The word "God" defines a *what*, an existent whose onticity (his existential identity) is given-

predetermined as a result of his *essence* (the divine essence, his *Godhead*). He can not *be* or *become* anything other than that which the *logos* (the rational blueprint) of his essence prescribes-determines. Thus it is the *logos* of his essence, an a priori necessity not existential freedom, that is the causal principle of existence and of what exists. If the Causal First Principle of all things is a God predetermined by his essence, there is no existential room for alterity, for the unexpected, for the new, for history.

7.2.1 The word “Father” reveals an existence which draws its identity from the freedom of *relation*, not from the necessity of *being* and *cause*. The word “Father” refers not to an individual entity (as the names Zeus, Apollo and Poseidon do) but to an existence that exists *as-towards*, that exists *in-relation* – its hypostatic alterity is realized and manifested thanks to relations which it forms existentially: “begetting” the Son and causing the Spirit to “proceed.”

7.2.2 This is the only way in our language, limited as it is by the boundaries of the given and the *caused*, that we can “say” the reality of the *cause* identified with freedom. The Father exists as cause-in-itself: the cause of existence and of everything that exists. He exists because he freely wills to exist, and he wills to exist because he loves. His love is not simply a fact of volition or behavior. It is the mode by which he exists: he “begets” the Son and causes the Spirit to “proceed” – he hypostasizes his *being* (makes it a hypostatic reality) as freedom of personal-existences, which exist because they will to exist, and they will to exist because they love. The only definition of the Causal Principle of all things, within the context of the experience of the ecclesial event, is that it “is love.” It is the “real eros,” the triumph of freedom.

Christos Yannaras

Zizioulas and Heidegger: Eschatological Ontology—and Hermeneutics

Revd Dr Matthew Baker¹

Editor: Dr Alexis Torrance²

Recent criticisms of neopatristic theology have called for an Orthodox engagement of “contextual theologies” and have held the neopatristic movement and its chief inspirer, Georges Florovsky, responsible for an insensitivity to the historicity and contextuality of theology and for closing down the dialogue with modern philosophy opened by earlier figures such as Solovyov and Bulgakov. Those criticizing the neopatristic model have called for a new attention to modern and postmodern hermeneutics. In the midst of these criticisms, however, no attention has been given to Florovsky’s own engagements with Western

¹ Due to his untimely passing, Fr Matthew Baker (1977–2015), much beloved husband, father, priest, and scholar was unable to complete the paper he was preparing for this conference. It has fallen to some of his friends to put together (however imperfectly) the paper that follows, compiled chiefly from his dissertation chapter on the figures of Heidegger and Zizioulas. While his dissertation remained unfinished at the time of his death, Fordham University has since posthumously awarded Fr Matthew Baker with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. May the memory of the Revd Dr Matthew Baker be eternal! – Editor’s Note.

² The conference organisers are truly grateful to Dr Alexis Torrance for reconstructing Revd Dr Matthew Baker’s paper. – Sotiris Mitralaxis & Andrew Kaethler

historicism and a number of thinkers connected in crucial ways to philosophical hermeneutics: Wilhelm Dilthey, Josiah Royce, and R.G. Collingwood. It is the purpose of my dissertation to uncover these connections and their significance for understanding and further refining and developing Florovsky's program of neopatristic synthesis in response to present-day questions.³

Florovsky's core insights and questions concerning the nature of historical understanding and activity were not developed by the subsequent generations of Orthodox theologians impacted by Florovsky. The conversation with historicism and philosophical hermeneutics suggested by certain elements in Florovsky's work has not come to be characteristic of neopatristic theology as broadly developed and received. Some critics of neopatristic theology invoke the name of Hans-Georg Gadamer, calling for Orthodox appropriation of his thought. In histories of modern philosophical hermeneutics, a line is typically drawn from Dilthey to Heidegger to Gadamer, the first two names being major interlocutors in Gadamer's hermeneutics. If the significance of Florovsky's dialogue with Dilthey and Collingwood remains largely unnoticed, it is well known that the early work of Martin Heidegger has had a crucial influence on the thought of Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas. The interest of these two Greek thinkers in Heidegger, however, is ontology, not hermeneutics. The crucial background of Heidegger's *Being and Time* in his study of Dilthey and his engagement with debates about the crisis of historicism and the humane sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) does not appear in the work of either Yannaras or Zizioulas. These elements, and the hermeneutic character of Heidegger's early ontological investigations – so crucial for

³ This preamble is important to understand what follows: Fr Matthew Baker's work on Heidegger and Zizioulas was eventually intended to be read in the context of his larger project on the intricate philosophical underpinnings of Georges Florovsky's theological program and its relationship both to movements in philosophy and theology contemporaneous with Florovsky as well as to those of subsequent generations (especially with regard to hermeneutics). The draft chapter from which this paper is derived deals with part of this latter concern – Editor's Note.

Gadamer – are covered over and obscured, and the “existentialist” interpretation of *Being and Time* (so influential among theologians but eschewed by Heidegger himself) exercises a considerable influence, especially in the work of Zizioulas.

There are two parts to this paper. In the first, I will expose the specifically hermeneutical character of key concepts from *Being and Time* appropriated by John Zizioulas in his own offerings to the program of neopatristic synthesis sketched by Florovsky: *ekstasis*, authenticity, and being-unto-death. As will be shown, although not explored by Zizioulas, these concepts are inextricable from Heidegger’s critique of historicism and his account of historiography, tradition, and the uses of the past. Further, Heidegger’s figuration of these ontological concepts bears a quasi-eschatological character, drawing from Heidegger’s early study of Pauline eschatology. In response to historicism and its crisis of values, Heidegger suggests an eschatological approach to tradition – albeit a secularized and individualized eschatology, an eschatology of death.

In the second portion of the paper, I will consider Zizioulas’ use of the concepts of *ekstasis*, authenticity and being-unto-death, and the eucharistic-eschatological ontology which Zizioulas poses over against Heidegger’s eschatological ontology of death. My interest here, however, remains in hermeneutics. Consideration will be given to Zizioulas’ repeated (if undeveloped) criticisms of “historicism” in theology and the affinity of this critique with that of Heidegger. Having laid bare the hermeneutical shape of the Heideggerian concepts employed by Zizioulas, attempt will be made to draw out the implications of Zizioulas’ handling of them for theological hermeneutics, a theme to which Zizioulas himself has given little concentrated attention.

Hermeneutics in Heidegger

Heidegger's posthumously published 1923 lectures *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* give us a glimpse into the hermeneutics that led to *Being and Time*, submerged somewhat in that latter work in favour of other concerns. Heidegger developed his "hermeneutics of facticity" in the years 1919-1923 at Freiburg, shaped by early studies of Scotus, Aristotle, Luther, Kierkegaard, Dilthey and Emil Lask. *Faktizität* – a term first employed by Fichte, and reappearing in debates among post-Hegelian theologians concerning the historicity of the resurrection – denotes in Heidegger's usage historical existence in its utmost individuality.⁴ Here Dilthey's concern with "life" and its expression (*Ausdruck*) is radicalized: "If we take 'life' to be a mode of being, then 'factual life' means: our own Dasein⁵ which is there for us in one expression or another of the character of its being, and this expression, too, is in the manner of being."⁶ Thus, Heidegger argues, the matter under concern here can never be an "object."

For Heidegger, hermeneutics indicates "the unified manner of the engaging, approaching, accessing, interrogating, and explicating of facticity."⁷ The decisive epochs for hermeneutics were "the Patristic period and Luther." Heidegger is critical of the development from the 17th century to Schleiermacher, in which hermeneutics no longer meant interpretation itself but a formal methodology – a "disastrous limitation" even Dilthey was unable to overcome.⁸ He seeks a return to what he

⁴ On Fichte's usage, see Theodore Kisiel, "On the Genesis of Heidegger's Formally Indicative Hermeneutics of Facticity," in Francois Raffoul and Eric Sean Nelson, *Re-thinking Facticity* (State University of New York, 2008), 41-69, at 61-64. More generally, see Scott M. Campbell, *The Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life: Facticity, Being, and Language* (Fordham University Press, 2012).

⁵ Dasein ("there-being" or "to be there") is Heidegger's deliberately ambiguous term for the kind of being human beings are. Heidegger avoids any ready equation of Dasein with human being to resist association with humanism or an "ontically" understood definition of human nature (as "rational animal," etc).

⁶ *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, 5.

⁷ *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, 5-6

⁸ *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, 6-11.

takes to be the “original” significance of *hermeneuein*: not a doctrine about interpretation, but the unity of interpreting factual life itself. This presupposes not only that Dasein is a being capable of being interpreted, but also “that to be in some state of having-been-interpreted belongs to its being.”⁹

Heidegger names two prejudices at work in contemporary philosophy and historical sciences that are obstacles to this “right path of looking at things”: the subject-object schema, and the demand for presupposition-free observation. Both obscure the character of Dasein as temporal-historical being-in-the-world. He objects to the view of Dilthey’s student Edouard Spranger that the authentic tendency unifying contemporary philosophy (Rickert, phenomenology, Dilthey) is to be found in the struggle for the timeless in or beyond the historical, and a value-theory of objective “validity.” This desire to free philosophy of history is but “a Platonism of barbarians,” and does not represent Dilthey’s best insight. The entire framework underwriting such discussions – finite vs. infinite, subject vs. object, nature vs. value – is a construct that must be questioned. Even the natural sciences are cultural products, having their starting-point within culture.

Thus, for Heidegger, the quest for a kind of dispassionate meta-historical objectivity is illusory: “If the term is to say anything at all, ‘*freedom from standpoints*’ is nothing other than an explicit *appropriation of our position of looking*. This position is itself something historical, i.e. bound up with Dasein (responsibility, how Dasein stands regarding itself), and not a chimerical in-itself outside of time.”¹⁰ Both historical and philosophical disciplines are modes of interpreting grounded in Dasein’s own factual being as (already) having-been-interpreted.

Hermeneutics as a major concern for Heidegger needs to be emphasized as we turn to his magnum opus, *Being and Time*. In

⁹ *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, 64.

Division II of this work, the portion most associated with later existentialism, we find the core Heideggerian themes discussed by Zizioulas – being-unto-death, authenticity, *ekstasis*, and horizon. For our purposes, we must see how, quite apart from their popular existentialist interpretation, Heidegger’s treatment of these themes extend his concept of hermeneutics sketched above.

In introducing his analysis of being-unto-death, Heidegger takes a lead from Dilthey: in order to understand historical life, we must understand its totality, and this requires viewing the whole from the perspective of its *end*. In the individual Dasein’s case, this end is death. Yet I cannot access my own death phenomenologically, in *actuality*: being-at-an-end (*Zu-Ende-sein*) is never an actual vantage point. The “whole” must then be accessed by anticipation (*Vorlaufen*), as being-towards the end (*Sein zum Ende*), being-unto-death (*Sein zum Tode*). This is an orientation towards a *possibility* constitutive for Dasein – the *ultimate* possibility, incapable of being outstripped. This “not yet” is constitutive of the being Dasein is; when it ceases to be, Dasein ceases to be. Death as possibility brings Dasein face-to-face with its own being – as *finite* – and therefore with its freedom and its responsibility.

In spite of Heidegger’s desire to present his fundamental ontology as a-theological, his analysis of being-unto-death has theological roots. Judith Wolfe has shown how Heidegger drew from his early study of Pauline eschatology (1918-1921) as well as such themes as time, suffering, sin, and affliction in Augustine, the young Luther, and Kierkegaard, in order to develop in the years 1921-1923 “an eschatological phenomenology without hope of salvation,”¹¹ in which “death and not eternal life becomes the authentic object of eschatology.”¹² Heidegger’s concept of anticipation (*Vorlaufen*) owes

¹¹ Judith Wolfe, *Heidegger’s Eschatology: Theological Horizons in Martin Heidegger’s Early Work* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75.

¹² Wolfe, *Heidegger’s Eschatology*, 72. Luther scholar Edmund Schlink early on claimed that Heidegger’s existential analytic of Dasein was a radical secularization of Luther’s anthropology.

something to his analysis of the Pauline sense of Christian existence as eschatological expectation and wakefulness. This early “eschatology without eschaton” found its culmination in *Being and Time* in its analysis of being-unto-death. As Wolfe argues, while its religious sources have been obscured, “Heidegger’s account of human existence in *Being and Time* is ‘eschatological’ because it envisions the possibility of authentic existence as dependent on a certain (existential) relation to one’s future.”¹³

Heidegger’s notion of *authenticity* is closely tied to this “eschatology” of being-unto-death, as well as to freedom. Authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) concerns that which is one’s own (*eigentlich*). Death individualizes. In inauthentic, “everyday” consciousness, one “falls” into being consumed with immediate concerns, loses oneself in the crowd, forgets one’s own finitude, and fails to seize one’s own ultimate possibility. Authenticity consists in winning oneself back in the seizure of this possibility, facing one’s own death in anticipation (*Vorlaufen*), existing with “resoluteness” in the projection of one’s finitude. This anticipatory resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) attends the disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*) of Dasein’s own being, *as finite anticipation itself*. Authentic understanding understands itself as finite, and as possibility.

As projection, understanding is fundamentally future-oriented. In authenticity, Dasein has by anticipation an understanding of its existence as a whole through an apprehension of the possibility of its death. Only because of this fore-having of the whole can we inquire about what it means *to be*. There is thus an essential relationship between the eschatological ontology of *being-unto-death* and the “taking-as” structure of *interpretation* characteristic of all our

¹³ Wolfe, *Heidegger’s Eschatology*, 118. Commenting on his own early theological studies, Heidegger remarked: “Without this theological background I should never have come upon the path of thinking. But origin [Herkunft] always comes to meet us from the future [Zukunft].” “Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer,” *On the Way to Language*,

involvements in the world. Interpretation is a constitutive feature of our existence because we are finite. An infinite being would understand without need of interpretation; as finite “being-there,” we require the mediation of hermeneutics – taking *as* – to understand the world, others, and ourselves.¹⁴

This finite being takes the form of time. The taking-as structure of interpretation has its ground in *temporality*, as the *a priori* condition of intelligibility. This is similar to Kant’s idea of time as the form of inner sense and the purest schema of understanding.¹⁵ Heidegger, however, is concerned to avoid the “ordinary” idea of time as a linear sequence of past-present-future. Rather, Dasein itself is *ekstatic* temporality, a “standing out” or going out “towards.” Temporality is a unified structure from which three ekstases “stand out,” each toward their distinct “horizon”: future, past as having-been, and present. “Horizon” indicates a finite vantage point within which beings are disclosed, and thus also an openness to being. Understanding and interpretation, with its as-structure, are grounded in this ecstatic-horizonal unity of temporality.¹⁶

Of the three ekstases or horizons, Heidegger asserts that the futural is the most determinative. Yet the possibility of being futural, or “existing,” depends also upon facticity, or having-been.¹⁷ As he notes, death marks only *one* of the “ends” of Dasein’s totality. The wholeness

¹⁴ For this interpretation, see Thomas Sheehan, “A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research,” *Continental Philosophy Review*, 2001: 32(2), 1–20.

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 136.

¹⁶ See *BT* sections 65 and 69 for this whole discussion.

¹⁷ “Understanding is grounded primarily in the future ... All the same, understanding is in every case a present which ‘is in the process of having been’. ... Temporalizing does not signify that ecstasies come in a ‘succession’. The future is *not later* than having been, and having been is not earlier than the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as a future which makes present in the process of having been.” *BT*, section 68, MacQuarrie and Robinson translation, page 401.

of Dasein is a “stretching out” between birth and death. Recognition of futural being-toward-death is therefore one-sided without consideration of being-toward-the-beginning, relation to what has been. Heidegger is concerned to resist a “vulgar” linear interpretation of the constancy of self amidst always changing experiences, whether as a sum of successive moments appearing and disappearing or a framework existing somehow independently of these. Being-born is never simply past, dying never simply future; rather, both *are* as long as Dasein is. Self-constancy is grounded in Dasein’s specific temporalizing of itself.

Heidegger seeks to draw from this analysis of authentic temporality an ontological understanding of historicity. Heidegger argues (again with a nod to Dilthey) that the presupposition for the possibility of “the foundation of the historical world in the humane sciences” lies in making explicit the interpretedness that belongs already essentially to historical being. At its most primordial level, history is not an object, but a past that is handed down, *überlieferte* – “traditioned” – whether explicitly or inexplicitly, and still having its effect (*Wirkung*). That is: not so much the past itself, as a “derivation” from the past – a heritage (*Herkunft*).¹⁸ Earlier in *Being and Time*, tradition seemed to be associated mostly with “fallenness” and inauthentic being-with-others, losing oneself in the vulgar understanding of the crowd. But now Heidegger suggests that historicity at its most primordial, and the *a priori* condition of historical knowledge, lies precisely in tradition, with its inherited fore-structure of understandings – prior to any “critical” or “scientific” historiography.

¹⁸ Heidegger questions the priority given to simple pastness (*Vergangenheit*) in the common understanding of the historical, as distinct from the sense of having-been (*Gewesenheit*) characteristic of Dasein’s ecstatic temporality. It is Dasein that is primarily historical, other entities only secondarily so. Museum pieces have the character of pastness because they originate in a world of a Dasein that has been. Yet the vulgar concept of history, Heidegger alleges, results from taking this secondary historicity as definitive.

Further, history as the derivation or heritage (*Herkunft*) of what is handed down has a fundamental relation to the future (*Zukunft*) – a relation that is *productive*:

Whatever ‘has a history’ is in the nexus of becoming . . . [and] in this way can, at the same time, ‘make’ history. ‘Epoch making,’ it determines a ‘future’ [*Zukunft*] ‘in the present’. Here history means ‘an event nexus that is a ‘productive nexus’ that moves through the ‘past,’ the ‘present,’ and the ‘future.’¹⁹

Here Heidegger has introduced a concept of history of effects or productive history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), which will later be crucial for hermeneutics as developed by Gadamer. Earlier, Heidegger suggested that authentic understanding takes the form of Dasein’s confrontation with its own death – through anticipatory resoluteness – in order to seize its own existence and resolve upon the projection of its finite possibilities. Now, he clarifies: these possibilities of authentic self-projection, which death itself does not provide, are to be drawn precisely from the *heritage* into which Dasein is always thrown:

The authentic existentiell understanding is so far from extricating itself from the way of interpreting Dasein which has come down to us, that in each case it is in terms of this interpretation, against it, and yet again for it, that any possibility one has chosen is seized upon in one’s resolution. The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*. . . . If everything ‘good’ is a heritage, and the character of ‘goodness’ lies in making authentic existence possible, then the handing down of a heritage constitutes itself in resoluteness.²⁰

¹⁹ *BT*, section 73, Macquarrie and Robinson, page 430, revised with reference to the translation by Joan Stambough of Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 361.

²⁰ *BT*, section 74, Macquarrie and Robinson, page 435.

In projecting on the future, authentic understanding grasps its possibilities from among the concrete cultural-historical determinations inherited by Dasein in its thrownness, freely appropriating these as its own. Authentic futurity depends upon this relation to tradition. Conversely, tradition depends upon resolute *appropriation* in view of future possibility.²¹ Finally, it is this specific mode of temporalizing future and past that makes possible an authentic *present*:

*Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially **futural** so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual 'there' by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of **having-been**, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be **in the moment of vision** for 'its time.'*²²

Heidegger calls this authentic appropriation of the past *Wiederholung* – “repetition,” or “retrieval.”²³ In *Wiederholung*, Dasein “fetches back” from its heritage possibilities for its existence and

²¹ At this point Heidegger invokes the concepts of freedom, fate (*Schicksals*), and destiny (*Geschick*). Confrontation with death and the finitude of one’s existence “snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities ... and brings Dasein to the simplicity of its fate. This is how we designate Dasein's primordial historicizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen,” *BT* 74, MacQuarrie and Robinson, page 435. This authentic temporalizing occurs not simply as individual fate but, in keeping with Dasein’s being-with others, is always the destiny (*Geschick*) of a culture and a generation.

²² *BT*, section 74, Macquarrie and Robinson 437.

²³ “Repetition” recalls to English-speaking readers the work of Kierkegaard, a key background here. Yet the sense of Heidegger’s meaning is better captured as “retrieval,” following *wieder holen*, “to fetch again.” Kierkegaard’s work *Repetition* (*Gjentagelse*, 1843) was translated into German in 1909 under the title *Wiederholung*, a translation Heidegger certainly knew. For discussion of Heidegger’s *Wiederholung* in relation to Kierkegaard, see John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Indiana University Press, 1988).

projects them onto its future. Heidegger associates this with “choosing a hero” to follow and repeat in faithfulness. *Wiederholung* is no simple re-actualization of the past, nor abandonment to it, but rather an act of *freedom* towards the past, insofar as its simple pastness is *renounced* and *Wiederholung* constitutes a *productive response* to previously unrealized *possibilities* inherent in what has been – an approach amply demonstrated in Heidegger’s own reading of the tradition. It is precisely *Dasein*’s *futurity* that throws anticipatory resoluteness back on its factual thrownness and gives the past its historical priority. Here being-toward-death provides the ground of authentic historicity, making the retrieval of heritage possible. Self-constancy, or cultural continuity, is not a linear diachronic succession of objectively graspable moments, but rather a “stretching along” and “handing down” between temporal horizons, by way of *Wiederholung*.

As can now be seen, the existential-ontological themes appropriated by Zizioulas from Heidegger – being-unto-death, authenticity, *ekstasis* – are, in context, *hermeneutical* in shape, having their function within a broadly encompassing account of history, understanding, and interpretation. When read in light of its theological sources, Heidegger’s account of these themes suggests finally the idea of an *eschatological approach to tradition*. This eschatologically oriented return to heritage, which retrieves and productively appropriates an inheritance in view of its previously undisclosed possibilities, determines also the authentic relation to the *present* – a relation marked by *freedom*. In his 1924 lectures on *The Concept of Time*, Heidegger underscores this eschatological access to history as the very “first principle of all hermeneutics”:

The present generation thinks that it has found history and is even overburdened by it. It moans about historicism – *lucus a non lucendo*. It gives the name ‘history’ to something that is not history at all . . . The common interpretation of *Dasein* is threatened by the danger of relativism; but the anxiety concerning relativism is anxiety in the face of *Dasein*. The past as authentic history is retrievable in ‘how’ one exists.

*The possibility of access to history is grounded in the possibility (according to which it understands the present as temporally particular) to be futural. This is the first principle of all hermeneutics.*²⁴

Heidegger's suggestive eschatological-hermeneutical ontology²⁵ was offered in response to the "crisis of historicism" and its attendant anxieties regarding relativism. In his view, the debates surrounding historicism regarding whether historiography should be concerned with unique events or laws of development are meaningless, and a clear sign of alienation from authentic historicity; talk of "universal validity" in humane sciences is likewise out of place. The proper theme of authentic historiography is neither singular facts nor universals, but rather the thematization and retrieval from the past of *possibilities* that have become factually existent – and this retrieval, *contra* Rickert, is *already* a making-manifest of what is "universal" in the unique. Such possibilities are not grasped by imposing a supratemporal pattern, in anxious search for historical certainty or validity in escape from relativism, but are rather disclosed in time *in light of the future*.²⁶ It must be noted finally, however, that – as the readings of past texts in Heidegger's later work abundantly demonstrates – such creative

²⁴ Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit*, 25.

²⁵ Later, in an essay published in the 1950 volume *Holzwege*, "Anaximander's Saying," Heidegger counterposes "the eschatology of being" explicitly against "historicism" which, he says, has not only not been overcome, but has entered into a new phase of domination through technology. Heidegger states that "being itself is eschatological," meaning "the eschatology of being in the sense in which the phenomenology of Spirit is to be thought, i.e., from within the history of being." Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 246-247.

²⁶ It is precisely *because* of this pregnant character of heritage, and the fundamentally *concerned* interest of the historian, Heidegger argues, that relentless concern with facts is demanded of historiography. And, on the other hand, scientific access to facts is accessed always in the context of traditions of interpretation, pre-scientific and having a history of their own. Access to the past inevitably entails some kind of critical, appropriative, and productive relation to tradition.

retrieval of tradition in Heidegger's view requires an element of *Destruktion* of the tradition, and a "violent" interpretation.²⁷

By his own admission, Heidegger's intent in *Being and Time* was to further certain basic hermeneutical-historiographical insights of Dilthey.²⁸ My larger project shows how Florovsky's engagement with Dilthey lay near to the conception of his neopatristic program. Thus, it is of particular interest to note the engagement with Heidegger on the part of Florovsky's student, John Zizioulas, who has stated his intent to continue Florovsky's program. Zizioulas takes no note of the specifically *hermeneutical* shape and framework of the concepts he borrows from *Being and Time*, nor of their context and background in the debates about historicism and the methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften* involving Dilthey and the Neo-Kantians. Yet Zizioulas also suggests an eschatological approach to tradition, and employs his own eschatological ontology in critique of what he calls "historicism." Like Heidegger, he associates this term both with a hopeless dialectic between relativism and the search for historical validity or security, and with the linear conception of history Heidegger saw issuing from the "vulgar" conception of time having its beginning with Aristotle and its last and greatest conceptualization in Hegel. Against this "historicism," Zizioulas poses an account of the Eucharist as an eschatologically mediated access to history, an *anamnesis* bearing some comparison with Heidegger's *Wiederholung*. Finally, a more substantial connection of Zizioulas' eschatological ontology with the debates concerning historicism and hermeneutics *à la* Dilthey can be established via Zizioulas' dialogue with the thought of Wolfhart

²⁷ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (Yale University Press, 2000), 173: "The authentic interpretation must show what does not stand there in the words and which is nevertheless said. For this the interpretation must necessarily use violence. What is authentic is to be sought where nothing further can be found by scientific exegesis, which brands as unscientific everything that exceeds its domain."

²⁸ Heidegger's discussion of the correspondence between Dilthey and Count Graf von Yorck, found in section 77, was begun as a book review in 1924 and formed one of the first drafts of *BT*: see Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 315-361.

Pannenberg, who engages directly with Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer on these questions.

Hermeneutics and the Eschatological Ontology of Zizioulas

The importance of hermeneutics is expressed but remains philosophically underdeveloped in Zizioulas' oeuvre. It emerges, for instance, in discussions of neo-patristic synthesis, which he understands as a *hermeneutical* enterprise.²⁹ Theological hermeneutics he defines as "the task of re-stating Scripture and Christian doctrine." "All theology is a matter of hermeneutics, that is, of deciding how to receive and re-state the teaching of Scripture for the Church and the world."³⁰ This is a work of "interpretation." Christian doctrine should be "approached as a tradition that comes to us from the past but which is *interpreted* in a way that answers the needs of human beings in our own time, particularly in the context of Western culture."³¹

For the process of interpretation and understanding, Zizioulas highlights the crucial role of *presuppositions*, as distinguished from sources or concrete theses.³² Interpretation must lay bare these presuppositions: "terms such as 'event' or 'institution' or even 'Church' can mean totally different things, depending on the theological presuppositions that lie behind them. After a rather long experience in ecumenical discussions, I have therefore come to the conclusion that instead of trying to agree on concrete theological theses we should try to

²⁹ J. D. Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics* (T&T Clark, 2008) [hereafter *LCD*], x.

³⁰ *LCD*, 3.

³¹ *LCD*, x.

³² *Ibid.*, 136: "When it comes to the Orthodox/non-Orthodox dialogue within the ecumenical debate, the important thing is always the *theological presuppositions*, not the concrete theses. The latter are only logical developments of the former." In view of Florovsky's critique of logical theories of doctrinal development, with which Zizioulas seems to concur, one questions the choice of the term "logical" here.

agree on theological principles.”³³ Though Zizioulas makes no reference here to philosophical sources, his idea of the primacy of presuppositions over concrete theses calls to mind Heidegger’s fore-structure of understanding and its determinative role in interpretation, where truth-propositions occupy a strictly “derivative” place.³⁴ His concern to lay bare the hidden presuppositions driving interpretation likewise finds parallels in Heidegger and Gadamer’s hermeneutics. The general insight of both into tradition as conditioning all thought is heard here too, justifying a historical approach to theology and ecumenical dialogue along the lines of Florovsky’s “ecumenism in time.”³⁵

Most fundamentally, the question of hermeneutics is built in to Zizioulas’ controlling concern: the Eucharist. In his dissertation on ecclesial unity in the pre-Nicene Church, Zizioulas stated his intent to work upward from “facts” to perennial principles.³⁶ In keeping with his own later expressed views, however, *choice* of facts would itself inevitably be predetermined by founding *presuppositions*. Here the key presupposition is not hard to pinpoint: it is the event of the Eucharist. As constitutive of the Church, “*the ecclesiological presuppositions of the Eucharist cannot be found outside the Eucharist*. It is by studying the nature of the Eucharist that we can understand the nature of the Church that conditions the Eucharist.”³⁷ The Divine Liturgy, as celebrated by

³³ Ibid., 137. Among such principles, he mentions, as characteristic of the Orthodox, the following: (1) ecclesiology situated within Trinitarian theology; (2) pneumatological Christology; (3) eschatological ecclesiology; (4) the cosmic dimension of ecclesiology.

³⁴ This point is developed in different ways in the work of both Bultmann and Gadamer (*Vorverständnis*).

³⁵ J. D. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many* (Sebastian Press, 2010) [hereafter *OAM*], 128: “The tendency in most people in the ecumenical movement is to approach the existential problems of the Church today with no reference whatsoever to the inherited tradition of the Church. This is, in fact, an illusion, for none of us in the ecumenical movement, no Church whatsoever thinks, decides, and acts with regard to actual issues without being conditioned by some kind of tradition.”

³⁶ See J. D. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001) [hereafter *EBC*], 19-21.

³⁷ *OAM*, 69

the Orthodox Church, provides the hermeneutic framework out of which Zizioulas aims to draw the principles according to which other concrete doctrinal theses are to be interpreted.³⁸

If this is so, then a major lacuna must be marked in Zizioulas' account of the two contexts of interpretation, past and present. For distinctive of Zizioulas' treatment of the Liturgy is his stress on its *eschatological* character. Reflecting critically on his own early work, *The Two Horizons*,³⁹ Anthony Thistleton, a leading British evangelical authority on theological hermeneutics, has commented on the need for hermeneutical theory "to move beyond the notion of 'Two Horizons,' to take account of the three horizons of 'past, present, and future', and thereby to ground hermeneutics more adequately in ontology and eschatology."⁴⁰ This remark is appropriate to Zizioulas. For while his *account* of interpretation above reflects only two horizons, past and present, in his own actual interpretive work, there is a "third horizon" – that of eschatology – that is in fact the most crucial in Zizioulas' theology and interpretive practice.⁴¹ For Zizioulas, it is eschatology, imaged in the Eucharist, that determines the true identity of the Church

³⁸ This priority of the public liturgy explains in part also Zizioulas' singling out of Fathers who were heads of Eucharistic communities (Ignatius, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Cappadocians) in his intellectual genealogy of patristic thought, as opposed to lay intellectuals (Justin, Clement): see J. D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985) [hereafter *BAC*], 72-89.

³⁹ See Anthony Thistleton, *The Two Horizons*, especially 10-16.

⁴⁰ Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992), pg 337. Thistleton refers approvingly to a 1987 dissertation of James McHann, *Three Horizons: A Study in Biblical Hermeneutics with reference to Wolfhart Pannenberg*, for this insight.

⁴¹ Luke Ben Tallon hints at the suggestiveness of this eschatological element for hermeneutics: "Particularly interesting, if rather undeveloped, are the implications that Zizioulas' navigation of the difference-in-continuity between the historical events and the Church's *remembrance* might have for biblical interpretation beyond the accounts of the Last Supper. Even more interesting (and unremarked) are the implications of Zizioulas's account of *eschatological causality* for the study of scripture (and church history), given that such study generally assumes *protological causality*." Luke Ben Tallon, "Introduction," in Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (T&T Clark, 2011) [hereafter *ECW*], ix; *ECW*.

and of the person, and stands as the ultimate determination of the truth of interpretation.

We have already noted the difficulties with speaking of eschatology in terms of horizon.⁴² Understood as “pure presence,” the eschaton would seem to spell an end to the ceaseless hermeneutics of historical experience,⁴³ thus placing a limit to the universality of the hermeneutic problem, and suggesting perhaps the possibility of a finality of certain interpretations already within history. Here again, eschatology serves to counter the threat of relativism issuing from the historicist search for certainty.

In his stress on cultural correlation and response to “existential” questions, Zizioulas reflects not only Florovsky, but equally another teacher from his Harvard years, Paul Tillich. This influence is suggested by other Zizioulian motifs as well: his critique of *auctoritas* (Tillich’s “heteronomy”), insistence on ontology as the root question involved in all theological questioning, concern with finitude, and reliance on modern existentialism as voicing the problems of the age.⁴⁴ Apart its own intrinsic significance, Tillich’s influence forms one of multiple tacit links connecting Zizioulas to Heidegger.⁴⁵ Similar elements may have come from Zizioulas’ reading of John Macquarrie.⁴⁶

⁴² For Gadamer, horizon signifies a *finite* vantage point: “Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of ‘situation’ by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of ‘horizon.’ The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.” Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 269.

⁴³ On this point, see James K.A. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic* (Intervarsity Press, 2000).

⁴⁴ On all these themes, see Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

⁴⁵ See Martin Woessner, *Heidegger in America* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 103. While Florovsky’s affinities were decisively more with Barth than with Tillich, comments sprinkled throughout Zizioulas’ work suggest little sympathy with Barth.

A basic difficulty in the theological appropriation of Heidegger concerns the question of whether the existence-structures analyzed in *Being and Time* ought to be understood as a phenomenology of man's fallen existence under sin (as Macquarrie argued), or whether it should be read as describing created existence proper (the view of Tillich). Zizioulas seems to take the latter view, in agreement with Tillich – thus inviting the criticism that he has confused creation and fall. Hermeneutically speaking, for Zizioulas as for Tillich, this meant taking Heidegger's analysis as stating the predicament of the creature, as a question which theology must then answer.

However, the form of the question has a way of determining the shape of the answer. Thus, in his apologetic use of Heidegger, Zizioulas establishes an equation of human "nature" with being-unto-death, which is then projected into his synthesis of Greek patristic theology, without sufficient revision by way of Christocentric correction or attention to the Fathers' own treatment of nature. This retention of a phenomenological conception of nature as being-towards-death results in a dualism between "nature" and "person," replicated on every level of Zizioulas' theology.

Here Zizioulas could have been more consistent in maintaining his commitment to the resurrection of Christ as a hermeneutical starting point for Christology and therefore also anthropology,⁴⁷ revealing the authentic *telos* not only of person, but of human *nature*. In spite of protests to the contrary,

Where Zizioulas speaks of the need for new terms and to re-interpret the tradition "in light of" the present, Florovsky tended to stress rather the necessity for moderns to learn the language of the Fathers, and to interpret the present cultural situation "in light of" the unchanging kerygma.

⁴⁶ See BAC, 102n; J. D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (T&T Clark, 2007) [hereafter *CO*], 228.

⁴⁷ BAC 55, fn 49: "All things in Christology are judged in the light of the resurrection. . . . This is the way in which Christology in the New Testament has developed – from the resurrection to the incarnation, not the other way around – and patristic theology has never lost this eschatological approach to Christology."

Zizioulas' recent "clarification" on the concept of *physis* constitutes a real about-face and self-correction which, while needed, also puts into question important dimensions of his earlier work, not only on person and nature but also his methodology and its implications for hermeneutics.⁴⁸ Here we hit up against the real problems in an adoption by Orthodox theology of Tillich's correlational model of doctrine.⁴⁹

Zizioulas' straightforward reflections on interpretation and neopatristic synthesis are far from compassing all the contributions to hermeneutics suggested by his work. Crucial aspects of his own working "hermeneutic," significant for the theory of interpretation, are missing from his account of "hermeneutics."⁵⁰ To assess more fully Zizioulas' contribution to theological hermeneutics, his response to historicism and relation to philosophical hermeneutics after Heidegger, we must now turn to his treatment of Eucharist and eschatology.

Florovsky named historical revelation and Church experience as the two key foundations of theology. The contrast in the opening to Zizioulas' dogmatics lectures is notable: "Theology starts in the worship

⁴⁸ J. D. Zizioulas, "Person and Nature in the Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor," in Bishop Maxim Vasiljević (ed.), *Knowing the Purpose of Creation Through the Resurrection* (Sebastian Press, 2013), 85–113.

⁴⁹ On this point, we need not be "Barthians" to take a wise caution from Karl Barth, here quoting his brother Heinrich Barth (speaking of Bultmann): "That theology should begin with a definition of existence, or man . . . is at root a piece of Liberalism": K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1.1 (T&T Clark, 1975), p. 37. Likewise, Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1.2 (T&T Clark, 1956), 793, "The Word of God is not the Word of God unless it precedes this question of man's existence, unless it is its origin even before it becomes its answer. And theology has ill understood its task unless it regards this question as one which . . . in the first instance is put by the Word of God itself."

⁵⁰ Following other authors, I distinguish here between the singular sense of "hermeneutic," as the actual frame of reference of an interpretation or its working practice, and the plural "hermeneutics," referring to the science, theory or philosophy of interpretation. See e.g., John Robinson and John Cobb, *New Frontiers in Theology: The New Hermeneutic* (New York: Harper, 1964), ix-x.

of God and in the Church's experience of communion with God."⁵¹ Zizioulas is critical of theologies that prioritize the concept of historical revelation. Conversely, while Florovsky stressed the need to root theology in liturgical experience, and also considered the Church as a mode of revelation, he gave little attention to the actual forms of the liturgy for their dogmatic significance. A nascent eucharistic ecclesiology is detectable in Florovsky, and he does suggest an understanding of the Eucharist as an eschatological event expressive of a theology of history. Only in Zizioulas, however, do these insights become foundational and pursued with systematic thoroughness. Zizioulas thus returns us to the tradition of patristic liturgical mystagogy – in the markedly philosophical mode of a Dionysius or a Maximus – as the very wellspring of systematic theology. Tellingly, he criticizes the tendency of systematic theologians to show no interest in the liturgical *typikon*.

“The sacraments witness to the indivisible and inexhaustible mystery of Christ, and cannot therefore be regarded as an individual topic, but rather as the hermeneutic by which we can approach ecclesiology as a whole.”⁵² It is out of this sacramental – and specifically eucharistic – “hermeneutic” that Zizioulas further attempts “to relate the theology of the Church to its philosophical and ontological implications.”⁵³ Key here is his notion of the Church as a eucharistic “mode of being” – terminology we have already encountered in Heidegger, but with linguistic precedent in the patristic concept of *tropos hyparxeos*.⁵⁴ Heidegger’s “ontology of understanding” took

⁵¹ *LCD*, 2.

⁵² *LCD*, 137 – see further on 138 regarding eucharist.

⁵³ *BAC*, 23. Anglophone reception of Zizioulas’ work has tended to neglect Zizioulas’ treatment of history and eschatology. Far more than the doctrine of the person or Trinitarian theology proper, however, it is this twofold theme, built out of his consideration of the Eucharist, that predominates in structuring Zizioulas’ seminal work in the period up to the publication of *Being as Communion* (1985).

⁵⁴ Yannaras credits the 1963 dissertation of Georgios Mantzaridis on Gregory Palamas for reintroducing this concept into modern Greek theology: Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006), 279-

Verstehen as a founding “mode” of Dasein’s being, and the self-interpreting being of Dasein as the “site” of its investigations into the truth of being. For Zizioulas, the Eucharist reveals the truth about “the being of man,” “the being of the world,” and “the being of God.”⁵⁵

Earlier we observed how Heidegger drew on theological resources in articulating his “eschatological” ontology of being-unto-death, a concept to which Zizioulas frequently makes reference, as expressing an accurate philosophical picture of the world “as it is.” Thus, it is especially notable to find Zizioulas explicitly counterposing his own eschatological vision of the Eucharist against Heidegger’s being-unto-death: “As an image of the Kingdom, the Eucharist makes us appreciate more deeply the contrast between the world as it is, and the world as it will be in the last times. What the Eucharist destroys is the ‘being-unto-death’ of existentialism, the ontological coupling of being and non-being, life and death, a coupling which leads either to despair or to indifference concerning the transfiguration of the world.”⁵⁶ Having exposed the hermeneutical dimensions of being-unto-death as it relates to Heidegger’s account of understanding, interpretation and tradition, we are led to inquire what might be the corresponding dimensions of the eucharistic eschatology Zizioulas counters to it.

80; see Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man: St Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984). Hans Urs von Balthasar had earlier drawn attention to this concept in his 1941 study of Maximus the Confessor, *Kosmische Liturgie*, a work cited by Florovsky and surely known to Zizioulas during the period of his Harvard studies.

⁵⁵ *BAC*, 15. Reflecting on his own development, Zizioulas has recently commented: “Personally, I saw the Divine Eucharist as the key to understanding the early structure and ministries of the Church and then anthropology (with the concept of the person as communion and otherness), and, finally, the very mystery of the Triune God as essence and persons, communion and otherness.” Zizioulas, “Orthodox Theology and the Challenges of the 21st Century,” Address Delivered at the Reception of the Metropolitan of Pergamon as “Fellow” of the Volos Academy of Theological Studies, Volos, October 29, 2011, unpublished, 3-4.

⁵⁶ *ECW*, 80.

Like Heidegger, Zizioulas critiques historicism on the basis of eschatology, though to a far different end.⁵⁷ This eschatology, or rather synthesis of eschatology and history, is worked out chiefly through his interpretation of the Eucharist:

The Eucharist is not a repetition or continuation of the past, or just one event amongst others, but it is the penetration of the future into time. The Eucharist is entirely live, and utterly new; there is no element of the past about it. The Eucharist is the incarnation live, the crucifixion live, the resurrection live, the ascension live, the Lord's coming again and the day of judgment, live. ... 'Now is the judgment of the world' (John 12.31). This 'now' of the Fourth Gospel refers to the Eucharist, in which all these events represent themselves immediately to us, without any gaps of history between them. ... the eschaton means the end of all separate, disconnected times, the reconnection and reconciliation of our separate histories and the arrival of the future and fulfilment. All the continuity of our histories come from outside them, from the end times, so there cannot be any final reckoning of our history apart from the eschaton which gives it its coherence and future.⁵⁸

Like Dilthey and Heidegger, Zizioulas regards the unity of historical interpretation as requiring eschatological perspective. This perspective, he holds, is granted in the Eucharist, as a penetration of the eschaton and thus also a gathering up of all time. "Christianity is founded on historical fact, and the Church Fathers were those Christians of their era who thought most along historical lines," he says. "Nevertheless,"

history understood in light of Eucharistic experience is not the same as history as normally understood; it is conditioned by the *anamnetic* and *epicletic* character of the eucharist which, out of distance and decay, transfigures time into communion and life. Thus history ceases to be a

⁵⁷ This is somewhat in contrast to Florovsky, who drew his critique of evolutionary historicism primarily from his vision of contingency and of human freedom, marked by his apocalyptic sense of history.

⁵⁸ *LCD*, 155.

succession of events moving from past to present linearly, but acquires the dimension of the future, which is also a *vertical* dimension transforming history into charismatic-pentecostal events.⁵⁹

The Eucharist, as eschatological event, challenges the linear historicism in which time is broken up into the sequence of past-present-future, the “vulgar” conception of time which Heidegger regarded as characteristic of the Western tradition of metaphysics from Aristotle to Hegel. Key here are the *anamnetic* and *epicletic* dimensions of the Eucharist.

Just as Heidegger called for hermeneutics to shake off the historicist drive for certainty and method, so too Zizioulas:

In an epicletical context, history ceases to be in itself a guarantee for security. The *epiclesis* means ecclesiologically that the Church *asks to receive from God what she has already received historically in Christ as if she had not received it at all*, i.e., as if history did not count in itself. ... Just as in the eucharist the words of institution cannot be a guarantee in themselves without the Spirit, although what the Spirit does is nothing but prove true the words of Christ. ... The epicletic life of the Church shows one thing: That there is no security for her to be found in any historical guarantee as such – be it ministry or word or sacrament or even the historical Christ himself. Her constant reliance on the Spirit proves that her history is to be constantly eschatological. At the same time the fact that the Spirit points to Christ shows equally well that history is not to be denied.⁶⁰

Heidegger identified the “essence of truth” with freedom, and freedom with letting beings be. Zizioulas equally identifies truth with freedom, but the freedom of communion.⁶¹ In the Eucharist, moreover, events and

⁵⁹ *BAC*, 115-116.

⁶⁰ *BAC*, 185-186.

⁶¹ *BAC*, 122: “Man is free only in communion. If the Church wishes to be the place of freedom, she must continually place all the ‘objects’ she possesses, whatever they

persons of the past and present are brought before God's remembrance, and draw their substance from the future Kingdom. The future is shown to be logically and ontologically prior, as the *cause* of these events. Not unlike the later Heidegger, Zizioulas associates protological ontology founded upon substance as productive of "metaphysics," whereas eschatological ontology, he argues, escapes this.⁶²

On the grounds of an identification of the truth of being with eschatological communion, Zizioulas questions a chiefly epistemological conception of correspondence truth.⁶³ This is a move also evident in Heidegger, who questioned the notion of correspondence truth (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*) on the grounds that intelligibility presupposes a prior framework of readiness to hand, which further presupposes Dasein, as the transcendental condition to which the uncovering of being is related. As with Heidegger, this critique informs Zizioulas' view of propositional statements in doctrine. In the Eucharist, the Church's most perfect experience of truth, the Word of God comes as flesh and as communion – *as* a community. The truth of doctrinal formulations is determined by this context: dogmas are primarily soteriological and doxological statements, meant to free the icon of Christ from distortions, and have their truth only as received within communion. Likewise with Scripture itself, which Zizioulas conceives as a Word given from the future.⁶⁴ "Through its apocalyptic roots,

may be (Scripture, sacraments, ministries, etc.) within the communion-event to make them 'true' and to make her members free in regard to them as objects, as well as in them and through them as channels of communion. Christians must learn not to lean on objective 'truths' as securities for truth, but to live in an *epicletic* way, i.e. leaning on the communion-event in which the structure of the Church involves them. Truth liberates by placing beings in communion."

⁶² Zizioulas, "Towards an Eschatological Ontology." Paper delivered at King's College, London [published on resourcesforchristiantheology.com, accessed May 16th 2015 – Ed.].

⁶³ *BAC*, 103.

⁶⁴ *BAC*, 187-88, 89: "In the New Testament itself we can find an idea of *paradosis* or *logia* which are historically transmitted from place to place and time to time. And yet, it is the Spirit that vivifies the words, and it is only in the Spirit that the kerygma of Christ can make sense . . . The spoken or written Word of God, as it is historically

iconological language liberates truth from our ‘conception,’ ‘definition,’ ‘comprehension,’ of it and protects it from being manipulated and objectified.”⁶⁵ Like the Eucharist itself, they indicate an “*acceptance, sanctification, and also transcendence* of history and culture,” in which certain historical-cultural elements become signs and instruments of communion and thus acquire permanence within the communion-event effected by the Spirit.⁶⁶

As image of the *eschata*, the Eucharist is not only unity and communion, but also *judgment*.⁶⁷ Ecclesiastical structures, ministries and doctrinal formulations are to be assessed in terms of whether they reflect or else distort the image of the Kingdom.⁶⁸ All the fundamental elements which constitute the Church’s historical existence must pass through the Eucharistic gathering to be “sure” and “true.”⁶⁹ As such, it is a hermeneutic criterion. Eschatology both guarantees the ultimate unity of interpretation *and* serves as a critical function by which to judge all historical formulations in theology, ministries and so forth.⁷⁰ Here we see Zizioulas developing the theme of reception, as highlighted especially by Congar: reception takes place in the Spirit, in an event of communion, and concerns primarily the love of God, persons, churches,

formulated and transmitted, becomes life and divine presence only in the context of the eschatological community of the eucharist.”

⁶⁵ *BAC*, 100-101.

⁶⁶ *BAC*, 116-118

⁶⁷ *ECW*, 29-31, 36-37.

⁶⁸ *BAC*, 207: “The Church relates to the apostles in and through the presence of the eschatological community in history. This is not a denial of history, for it is through historical forms that this presence takes place. But the ultimate criterion for unity is to be found in the question to what extent the actual form of the Church’s ministry and message today—or at any given time—reflect the presence of this eschatological community.” Cf. also *ECW*, 71.

⁶⁹ *BAC*, 21.

⁷⁰ *BAC*, 207: “The historical heritage of the past – on which the Churches have insisted for so long – as well as the historical needs of the present (concern with social problems, etc.) – which seem to preoccupy the ecumenical movement in our days – will both have to be judged by this ultimate, *final judgment* provided by the vision of the *eschata*, without which no real unity of the Church can exist.”

and the facts of salvation history; dogmatic formulations are received only as they existentially relate to these.⁷¹

Admitting this ultimacy of the eschatological, the relationship between history and eschatology still bears a clearly *circular* character. Zizioulas concedes that it is only from history – and indeed, from historical tradition – that the Church derives her image of the *eschata*. The Church, grounded in the Eucharist, looks both forward to the eschaton and backward to her historical past in order to maintain the integrity of truth, the person of Christ, present as the eucharistic synaxis, being the unifying horizon of all time. However, priority is given to eschatology, not as a future temporal moment, within an immanent frame, but the end of time itself. Zizioulas’ eschatological ontology thus places a critical limit to historical hermeneutics, which, he says, “has been of little help in avoiding the danger of subjecting the eschaton to history.”⁷²

Zizioulas’ eschatological account of tradition bears certain parallels with Heidegger’s *Wiederholung*, a retrieval of past heritage in light of futurity. Yet, as we saw earlier, Zizioulas rejects Heidegger’s radical temporalization of being. Further, in Heidegger’s account, the end is never given as *presence*, but only as being-*towards*; arrival of the end would mean the annihilation of time, not its healing. The productive futurity of the past in Heidegger’s account lies in its *possibility*; in Zizioulas, in contrast, it is the *actuality* of the future Kingdom that determines the meaning of the past.

Zizioulas thus more successfully overcomes “linear historicism” than either Heidegger or, for that matter, Gadamer. For Heidegger, priority is given to the futural possibility of the past existing in the present; for Gadamer, temporal distance as a medium of truth is likewise primary. Zizioulas admits that we require temporal distance in order to recognize things as distinct.⁷³ However, it is not temporal

⁷¹ *OAM*, 118-25; *LCD*, 161-164. See also *BAC*, 241-242.

⁷² *OAM*, 132

⁷³ *LCD*, 17.

distance and its finite horizons which determine even temporal being, but the eschatological communion of all times:

The Church is not an entity living outside time. Communion is not only a matter of the relatedness of each local Church with the rest of the Churches in space or with the rest of the world at a given time, but of *koinonia* with the communities of the past as well as of the future. As far as the past is concerned, the Church needs *Tradition* to exist as *koinonia*. When Tradition is itself affected and conditioned by communion, it ceases to be a formal transmission of teaching and life and becomes a re-interpreted and re-received reality in the light of the particular context in which it is transmitted. This makes Tradition acquire the form of *traditions* ... in this way diversity becomes part of the picture. ... In an ecclesiology of communion, time is not broken into past, present, and future. The end of time is *time redeemed* from this kind of brokenness through the intervention of the Kingdom between the past and the present. The true criterion of Tradition is, therefore, to be found in the revelation of what the world will be like in the Kingdom.⁷⁴

It is their communion with the living Jesus Christ, and our communion with them, in the future Kingdom of God that finally makes any enclosure of the apostles or Fathers in the past, as implied by the proposal of a “post-patristic” theology, impossible. “If Christ is the eschatological man and our continuity with him is not determined by the time sequence which implies distance, but by a concept of time determined by an event of communion, the apostles themselves cannot be enclosed in a self-defined event, in a closed past.”⁷⁵ As has been frequently remarked, the priority of tradition in both Heidegger and Gadamer provides little ground for criteria beyond particular cultures, and could underwrite simply a conservative affirmation of cultural tradition; reason remains regional, the framework radically immanentist,

⁷⁴ *OAM*, 58.

⁷⁵ *BAC*, 183

and in that sense, still “historicist.”⁷⁶ Zizioulas’ account reminds us that the tradition that matters to the Church is more than that: it is conditioned by the freedom of God, who is never imprisoned in history.

This fundamentally theocentric and epicletic vision of tradition and its reception is crucial to Zizioulas’ contribution to theological hermeneutics. Florovsky also understood tradition as “the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church” and the “continual speech of God, apprehended in faith.” Zizioulas gives this understanding a deeper grounding in the Liturgy and in his pneumatological Christology. Florovsky, however, also laid stress on the role of human subjects and their acts of interpretation. Zizioulas’ account of tradition, in contrast, gives almost no account for the role of the subject and of human freedom in interpretation. For Florovsky, following Collingwood, events – among which he includes also interpretation – are fundamentally *actions* of free subjects. Zizioulas here resembles more Gadamer, for whom tradition and interpretation are fundamentally event or happening (*Geschehen*), only secondarily act (*Tathandlung*). As Zizioulas puts it: in the Eucharist, “the primary and decisive thing is the future event, not our actions.”⁷⁷ Nevertheless, while Gadamer also de-centralizes the role of the reflective subject and insists on the finitude of human thought, he does not neglect the role of consciousness, or of becoming.

These differences relate to creation and eschatology. While for Florovsky, creation *ex nihilo* means fundamentally contingency and the openness of history to new events, in Zizioulas’ emphasis creation spells more the possibility of corruption, and history as necessity. Likewise, for Florovsky, eschatology serves to underwrite the permanent significance of human historical action – history determining eschatology. For Zizioulas, in contrast, the accent falls on the

⁷⁶ See Carl Page, *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy* (Pennsylvania State University, 1995); David Roberts, *Nothing But History: Reconstruction and Extremity after Metaphysics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁷⁷ *OAM*, 133.

decisiveness of the end in determining and judging historical action, or freeing the creature from history. It is tempting, but perhaps unfair, to apply here to Zizioulas Florovsky's critique of a "realized eschatology" in which "meaning is shifted from the realm of history to the realm of sacramental experience, in which the *Eschaton* is present and re-enacted," with the implication that "*there is nothing else to be accomplished in history.*"⁷⁸

Yet in fact Zizioulas shows exceeding little interest in historical becoming. The "as" in "being *as* communion" is effected by eschatology, understood as *state*, not orientation; being-*toward* occupies only a negative place, as being-toward-*death*.⁷⁹ In spite of his stress on an "existential" theology, this inattentiveness to human becoming in fact *weakens* the "existential" character of his thought. Human freedom, as decision and growth, is left out of the account. Here Zizioulas may be contrasted not only with the ascetic tradition, but also with other modern theologians impacted by Heidegger, who stress precisely the temporal dynamism of human becoming on the way to union with God. Zizioulas' critic and former disciple Nikolaos Loudovikos speaks of Maximus the Confessor's understanding of being as "being as a dialogical event of becoming-in-communion."⁸⁰ This theme of dialogue, as developed by Loudovikos as well as by Staniloae, holds much potential for a conversation with philosophical hermeneutics.

It would be remiss of us to proceed to a conclusion on eschatology, ontology, and hermeneutics in Heidegger and Zizioulas without touching on a key figure linking the two: Wolfhart Pannenberg. Similar to both Heidegger and Zizioulas, Pannenberg finds in eschatology a way out of relativism, providing that Heidegger's limitation of wholeness to individual being-*unto-death* is set aside:

⁷⁸ Florovsky, "Predicament," *Christianity and Culture*, 61.

⁷⁹ Here we may contrast Bonhoeffer's account, in *Act and Being*, of Christian life as martyric being-toward-death in Christ.

⁸⁰ N. Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity* (Holy Cross Press, 2010), 205.

eschatological truth, the presence of the whole, enters into the midst of historical relativity.⁸¹ Precisely here, however, Pannenberg also differs from Zizioulas: in his emphasis, anticipation is only *mere* anticipation, not the whole itself. As he argues, “The category of fore-conception [*Vorgriff*] makes it possible to conceive the history of mankind as ordered toward a final destination without skipping over the unfinished character of the factual course of events.”⁸²

As we saw earlier, Zizioulas too makes a distinction between historical “image” and eschatological “truth.” However, in his account of the Eucharist, stress falls much more on the identity of the two and the finality of what is given *already*. This difference is noted by Zizioulas himself in his distinction between Pannenberg’s eschatology of orientation and his own eschatology of state. The result is that Zizioulas shows far less interest in the open-ended contingencies of historical events than Pannenberg, or for that matter, Florovsky, both of whom stress the unfinished character of history and its significance for epistemology, and understand eschatology as a culmination of contingent historical *process*.

Zizioulas derived a key inspiration from Pannenberg’s notion of an eschatological approach to Church ministry, and more broadly, his idea of an eschatological ontology. Pannenberg’s open debt to Heidegger on this point establishes a further connection between Zizioulas and Heidegger on the priority of eschatology. However, as we have seen, we find a very different development of this idea in Pannenberg’s eschatology of process and orientation. In some ways, Pannenberg is closer to Florovsky, insofar as he sets much greater store by historical activity and its unfinished character, as well as the rational character of theology, than Zizioulas. Unique to Pannenberg, however, is the stress on the relationship of historical revelation to universal

⁸¹ W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology* (Westminster Press, 1969) [hereafter *BQT*], 171.

⁸² *BQT*, 170.

reason, and therefore its openness to probabilistic historiographical verification.

Pannenberg's claims for apologetic theological reasoning may be more robust than most modern theologians would find comfortably convincing, yet his eschatology is employed toward a *critical* historical realism – next to which the eschatological hermeneutics of Zizioulas may seem somewhat like a retreat from history and from reason. In any case, however, a common lesson may be gathered from Pannenberg and Zizioulas alike, as from Florovsky, in their dealings with hermeneutics: the hermeneutical problem, and discussion of contextuality, must find their ultimate reference point and limit with reference to eschatology, or the final *telos* of history, which is somehow already apprehended in Jesus Christ and in his Church.

Conclusion

As this paper has shown, the conversation between Orthodox theology and modern historicism that lay at the roots of Florovsky's program of neopatristic synthesis is continued in the work of Zizioulas, albeit in far more tacit mode. The developments from Florovsky to Zizioulas keep pace with the movement from Dilthey and the "crisis of historicism" to Heidegger's radicalization of Dilthey and his ontological-eschatological deconstruction of historicism. For both theologians, the relationship with secular philosophy is that of a critical *ad hoc* appropriation.

Aside from his borrowing of certain concepts (*ekstasis*, etc), Zizioulas is a debtor to Heidegger more generally, insofar as Heidegger restored questions of *being* and *truth*, rather than knowledge and method, to the center of philosophy. Heidegger's influence in putting eschatology at the very heart of twentieth-century theology is also key to Zizioulas' development of Florovsky's neopatristic program. Both Heidegger and Florovsky stressed immersion in history in their different ways, but questioned the priority of the past in historiographical interpretation. Florovsky criticized a "theology of repetition," and spoke of loyalty to tradition as

“not only concord with the past, but, in a certain sense, freedom from the past, as from some outward formal criterion.” Drawing from the Liturgy and St Maximus, but also in dialogue with Heidegger both directly and indirectly via Pannenberg, Zizioulas provides a clearer eschatological-ontological framework for this understanding, an approach to history characterized by freedom *towards* the past (always within the communion of the Church and in the one Spirit), thus placing a question mark beside any strict *limitation* of the truth of tradition to authorially intended meaning of texts, to be recovered naked from the past by way of historical-critical method. Equally challenged here is a triumphalist ecclesiastical conservatism that would take confuse fidelity to the Church with a comforting repetition of formulas or mere maintenance of established forms.

Notwithstanding important critical questions regarding the status of nature, historical activity, and the correlational method in his thought, Zizioulas remains the most successful and compelling of all Orthodox theologians in carrying out the program of neopatristic synthesis suggested by Florovsky and demonstrating its broad potential for future theology. In keeping with our own reading, Zizioulas accurately recognizes the hermeneutical character of this program and its twofold orientation of ecumenical conversation with the Christian West and dialogue with philosophical culture, as conceived by Florovsky. Further, Zizioulas has placed the neopatristic program on a firmer foundation of liturgy and Church structures, crucial for Orthodox theological hermeneutics. Heidegger spoke of “interpretation in the ‘Today’.” For Orthodox Christians, this “today” determinative for interpretation remains the σήμερον of the festal Liturgy, in which the events of salvation history are made present. In his limited dialogue with modern hermeneutical philosophy, Zizioulas also marks certain clear limits where Orthodox theology must differ critically. The eschatological finality of Jesus Christ and his presence in the Church marks a limit to the universality of the hermeneutic problem as conceived by philosophical hermeneutics, with its radical temporality and endless interpretation without *telos*.

Notes

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