Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds.)

Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2014), xii + 367 pp., ISBN 978-1-137-37738-8/ e-ISBN 978-1-137-37738-8, \$100/ \$79.99.

This volume is a collection of essays evolving from the eighth World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES). There is a wide array of contributions by scholars from 'the West' (North America and Germany) and from 'the East' (predominantly Orthodox countries). The articles treat a wide spectrum of Orthodox Churches in Europe: Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Serbia. There is also a great diversity of approaches, from theology and inter-religious dialogue to history and political science. As with any volume of this scope (20 articles plus an introduction), some contributions are stronger than others, but the volume as a whole makes a very significant contribution to the study of contemporary Orthodox Christianity in Europe. Because of its extensive scope, however, this review must necessarily be selective.

The Eastern Orthodox world of Europe has undergone a profound transformation in the past quarter century. With the exception of Greece, the predominantly Orthodox countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have been confronted, virtually overnight, with social developments that took place over the course of centuries in the West: democratic governmental structures, secular societies, separation of church and state, religious pluralism, and tolerance of diverse lifestyles. Although these societies sought to embrace the Western model in the 1990s, and some continued on that path to the point of joining the EU, the Orthodox churches have had an ambivalent attitude toward Western values, which in many ways has been increasing in recent years. One of the common themes in many of these articles is an analysis of Eastern stereotypes of the West. Such stereotypes often rely on a 'clash of civilizations' model that posits a fundamental, even essential, difference between the West, which is viewed as individualistic, hyper-rationalistic, consumerist, utilitarian, and hedonistic, and the East, which is presented as having preserved true Christianity in its spiritual fullness, with societies that uphold communitarian, traditional values. Vasilios Makrides, for example, masterfully deconstructs the anti-Western philosophy of the prominent Greek philosopher Christos Yannaras, while Julia Anna Lis critiques the anti-Western discourse in both Greek and Serbian theology.

Several articles place contemporary issues in a broader historical context. Alfons Brüning, for example, provides a nuanced reading of Russian Orthodox discourse about the West and morality into historical perspective, particularly

stemming from the post-War Soviet period, when the Church was already championing patriotism and a sense of social and moral values that ought to be placed above individual desires. Daniela Kalkandjieva traces how Orthodoxy's claim to be an inherent aspect of Bulgarian identity is the product of particular historical developments, especially from the late Ottoman period and after.

Two articles focus on Ukraine, and are particularly important given developments that erupted since the book was completed. Natalia Kochan challenges Huntington's description of Ukraine as a "fault line" between Eastern and Western "civilizations," associating Eastern-rite Catholicism with Western civilization. On the contrary, she argues, there are different currents within the Greek Catholic Church—some see the Catholic component as the primary one and seek to draw it closer to the Roman Catholic Church, while others see the Eastern component as more important and seek to draw it closer to Orthodoxy. In both cases, its identity as a Ukrainian national church is paramount. Andrii Krawchuk contributes an article on the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, which since 1998 has successfully served as a forum for inter-religious dialogue among the majority of Ukraine's religious bodies—not only the three competing Orthodox jurisdictions together with the Greek Catholic Church, but also Muslims and Jews. In such a context, there is naturally no discussion of unity on doctrinal matters, but rather a focus on social issues of common concern. Krawchuk contributed another important piece on Orthodox-Muslim relations in Russia. Although there is some discourse among Russian Orthodox that pits it against Islam, the dominant trend is to view the Orthodox and Islam in Russia as working together in opposition to the influences of the "liberal and secular" West. There are tensions within the Muslim community; traditional Russian Islam advocates loyalty to and cooperation with the Russian state, but is also concerned that the Russian Orthodox Church is cultivating privileged relations with the state that place Islam in a secondary position.

One particularly noteworthy contribution is that of Matthew Baker (1978–2015), a brilliant young American Orthodox theologian whose life was tragically cut short not long after this volume appeared. His article remains one of his most significant publications suggesting his great potential. Baker examines the theology of Georges Florovsky and challenges the argument recently put forth by others that Florovsky's thought is anti-Western. Baker argues that Florovsky's idea of "neo-patristic synthesis" (which was meant to include Latin as well as Greek Church Fathers) was developed in the context of his ecumenical work as a means by which modern Western and Orthodox theologians could engage in modern problems from a common foundation.

Thomas Bremer's article is the one contribution that analyzes Western (Roman Catholic) perceptions of Orthodoxy, rather than the reverse. Contrasting views of the Orthodox tradition are brought to bear on debating opposite sides of internal Catholic issues such as clerical celibacy and models of Church governance—so that Orthodoxy is commonly viewed through the lens of issues that divide Catholics about their own Church.

Because the volume is focused on deconstructing Orthodox tropes about the West, and individual articles do so quite skillfully, the overall impression may serve to reinforce Western tropes about Orthodoxy. The dominant view of Orthodoxy today—especially in Western academic circles—is to view it as hostile to the developments of the modern West that include secularism, pluralism, and tolerance of different viewpoints and lifestyles. Perhaps a similar volume of materials deconstructing Western stereotypes of Orthodoxy would be a fitting project for the future. Aside from this reservation, however, the volume significantly advances our understanding of Orthodoxy in modern Europe and will be of interest to a wide range of students and scholars from various disciplines who are interested in Orthodoxy and religion in contemporary Europe.

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