PART TWO

READINGS
Georgii Petrovich Fedotov (1886–1951) began studying history in exile. In 1906, he was expelled from Russia for a two-year period as a result of his social-democratic activities. During the following years he actively participated in seminars and lectures on philosophy and history at the universities of Berlin and Jena.¹ In 1908, he returned to St Petersburg, where he studied under the historians Nikolai Kareev (1850–1931) and Ivan Greve (1860–1941). In particular the latter’s courses on the cultural history of late antiquity and the Middle Ages are believed to have had a decisive impact on Fedotov as well as on his fellow students and later fellow émigrés, including Petr Bitsilli (1879–1953) and Lev Karsavin (1882–1952).² Fedotov specialised not in Russian, but in West European medieval history, although he is far better known today for his studies of early Russian culture. In 1911 he published an article on Augustine, on whom he had written an examination thesis the previous year entitled “St Augustine’s Confessions as an Historical Source” (unpublished). Having received his master’s degree in 1914, he began work on a dissertation about the Merovingian period. The work remained unfinished. Later publications in the same field before his emigration included a monograph on Abelard (1924).

During the First World War and especially after the revolutions of 1917 Fedotov embarked on an intellectual and religious reorientation, without abandoning, however, his socialist orientation. Important in
