

THE 19TH CANONICAL ANSWER OF TIMOTHY OF ALEXANDRIA: ON THE HISTORY OF SACRAMENTAL OIKONOMIA

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By “sacramental *oikonomia*” I understand the following teaching: all non-Orthodox Christians who are seeking to enter the Orthodox Church need to be baptized, inasmuch as all mysteries outside the Orthodox Church are void of grace. However, when circumstances have not allowed the reception of converts through baptism, the Orthodox Church has received them through another form, and in the act of reception the empty form of the heterodox mystery was filled with grace. It was essential, however, that the previous baptism of those converts have been performed in accordance with the praxis of the Orthodox Church. We shall see how this teaching is consistent with the Orthodox canonical tradition, reviewing in chronological order an array of texts and authorities ranging from late antiquity to the first half of the twentieth century.

It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the teaching of the Orthodox Church on the validity of the mysteries performed outside her canonical boundaries other than in connection with reception into the Orthodox Church.

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The Canons of St Basil

The explanation above poses a question: What did the episcopal authors of canons² understand when they received certain heterodox into the Church through chrismation or repentance? The first canon of St Basil, a part of his First Canonical Letter, touches most directly upon this issue. Basil wrote his First Canonical Letter to Amphilochius in 374,³ sometime after the Council of Nicea, which, in its eighth canon, authorized the reception of Cathars through chrismation. Basil exposes the rationale for the tradition regarding the reception of Church dissidents to communion, answering a question posed to him by Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, the text of which has not survived:

Still, however, it seemed best to the ancients—I refer to Cyprian⁴ and our own Firmilianus—to subject all these—Cathari, and Encratites and Hydroparatae—to one vote of condemnation, because the beginning of this separation arose through the schism, and those who had broken away from the Church no longer had in them the grace of the Holy Spirit; for the imparting of it failed because of severance of continuity. For those who separated first had ordination from the fathers, and through the imposition of their hands possessed the spiritual gifts; but those who had been cut off, becoming laymen, possessed the power neither of baptizing nor of ordaining, being able no longer to impart to others the grace of the Holy Spirit from which they themselves had fallen away.⁵

2 I Nicea 8, Laodicea 7, I Constantinople 7, 68 Carthage (numeration from *Книга правил*), Trullo 95, Basil 1.

3 *Ibid.* 5, n. 5.

4 Cyprian proceeds from the understanding that there is only one Church; that schismatics, being outside her canonical boundaries, do not have any power to confer the grace of the Holy Spirit; and that their baptism therefore does not wash away sins (Eps. 69.3.1; 70.3.1–3.3; 73.2.2, 7.2 *Ancient Christian Writers*, ed. Walter J. Burghardt, tr. G. W. Clarke 47.4 (New York: Newman Press, 1989), 4. 34, 47–48, 55, 58).

5 Letter CLXXXVIII, 15, 17. *The Letters*, tr. Roy J. Deferrari, 3 (Loeb Classical Li-

It is necessary to recognize that this explanation does not come from Basil himself, but from St Cyprian and St Firmilianus, by which they received the schismatic *Katharoi* into the Church through baptism.⁶

Basil is not classifying all Church dissidents uniformly. When, in his First Canonical Letter, Basil considers the baptism of the Montanists, he regrets that Dionysius of Alexandria accepted their baptism. As far as Basil is concerned, their baptism has no sanction since the “ancients decided to accept the baptism that in no wise deviates from the faith”⁷—in other words, the baptism had to be exactly correct in order to be valid. Basil provides the explanation, underlining the importance of the proper baptismal formula: “What reason is there in our having sanctioned (ἐγκριθῆναι) the baptism of those who baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of Montanus and Priscilla?”⁸ Basil proposes a classification of those who have separated from the Church. Heretics need to be baptized, as they are “completely broken off.”⁹ This was the case with the Encratites, another Gnostic group. Schismatics, by contrast, have sinned against disciplinary norms. Regarding the acceptance of their baptism, Basil again points to the “ancients” who “accordingly, decided to reject completely the baptism of heretics, but to accept that of schismatics on the ground that they were still of the Church (ἐκ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας).”¹⁰ The Cathars are placed in the category of schismatics.

Basil himself considers that Encratites should be received through baptism, but if this would prevent people from joining the

brary 243, Harvard University Press, 1962 rpr. of 1930), 2–21. All letters of Basil are cited from this edition.

6 Metropolitan Sergii Stragorodskii provides this reading of the passage (“Отношение Церкви Христовой к отделившимся от нее обществам,” *Журнал Московской Патриархии* 4 [1931].) Cited from *Журнал Московской Патриархии 1931–1935 годы* (Moscow, 2001), 55.

7 Letter CLXXXVIII, 9.

8 *Ibid.*, 14–15.

9 *Ibid.*, 9.

10 *Ibid.*, 12–13.

Church, Basil suggests following those fathers who allowed the acceptance of the dissidents' baptism.¹¹

In his Second Canonical Letter to Amphilochius¹² written in 375, Basil touches again upon the differences in traditions of reception:

We, however, for one and the same reason rebaptize such [Encratites—A.P.]. But if among yourselves rebaptism is prohibited, just as it is among the Romans,¹³ because of some consideration (*οἰκονομίας τινὸς ἔνεκα*), nevertheless let our reason have force. For, inasmuch as their heresy is an offshoot of the Marcionists, who feel a loathing for marriage, and turn away from wine, and say that the creature of God is defiled, we do not receive them into the Church unless they are baptized in accordance with our baptism. For let them not say, who in emulation of Marcion and the other heretics suppose God to be the maker of evil, that we have rebaptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.¹⁴

From these letters it follows that St Basil allowed different grades of reception corresponding to the proximity of the particular group to the Church in its *fide et ordo*.¹⁵ While accepting the prior baptism of those whom he personally would prefer to have baptized *de*

11 Ibid., 19.

12 The segment of this document numbered as Canon 47 of St. Basil. The absence of *οὐχ* in the very first sentence of the other version of this letter, published in the Pedalion, allowed an opposite reading of this canon—i.e., that Novatians come under same rule as Encratites (Priestmonk Agapios and Monk Nikodemus, *Πηδάλιον* [Athens, 1957 repr. of 1864], 617). It was probably the presence of such variants that let Archbishop Peter L'Huillier to the following conclusion: "The wording of the canon is not crystal clear; moreover it is not certain that in the form the text has been handed down it comes directly from St. Basil" ("The Making of Written Law in the Church," *Studia Canonica* 31 [1997]:126–27).

13 The well-known position of St Stephen, Bishop of Rome, an adversary of St Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, was that the baptism of schismatics is valid, but lacks "fruitful grace" (F. J. Thomson, "Economy: An Examination of the Various Theories of Economy Held within the Orthodox Church, with Special Reference to the Economical Recognition of the Validity of Non-Orthodox Sacraments," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 16 [1965]: 401–3).

14 Letter CXCIX, 133.

15 The same logic follows from the 7th canon of the First Council in Constantinople and the 95th canon of the Council in Trullo, which elaborates on the 7th canon.

novo, Basil was guided by the benefit to the Church and in this point agrees with one of the aspects of sacramental *oikonomia*. I do not have evidence to support a conclusion that in accepting imperfect baptisms Basil had in mind that grace fills the empty form of the heterodox mystery.

Basil's "relativism" toward the reception of non-Orthodox baptism requires further study. Apparently, at the foundation of his approach, Basil was not relying on legalistic logic; rather, he was influenced by pastoral concerns¹⁶ and by his sense of the mysteriological life of the Church; in the end he chose not to foist on others what he considered the right thing for himself.¹⁷

*Canon 68 of the Council of Carthage*¹⁸

This canon of the Council of 419 is the only canon that I was able to find in the *corpus canonum*, other than those mentioned above, that provides a rationale for the reception into the Orthodox Church of those who had separated from her.

The canon prescribes that those baptized by Donatists in their childhood be admitted to communion with the Church without re-baptism; because of their sincerity they venerated the genuine Church and received true baptism, despite the incorrect teaching that was preserved in this schism.¹⁹

It should be noted that in codifying points of Church Law, the

16 Due to this factor, Basil for a long time did not preach explicitly on the divinity of the Holy Spirit (Paul J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea* [Toronto, 1979], 72).

17 Most likely Basil preserved his approach on the legitimacy of maintaining the diversity of views until the end of his life. Although Basil wrote to the presbyters of Nicopolis three years before his death that he could not consider as a bishop a certain opportunistic person, he nevertheless leaves room for another decision: "But if you take counsel by yourselves, each is responsible for his own opinion, and we are guiltless of this blood" (Letter CCXL, 427). On Basil's usage of the term *oikonomia* see Pierre L'Huillier, "L'Économie dans la tradition de l'Église Orthodoxe," *Kanon 6* (Vienna, 1983):30.

18 I follow the numeration in *Книга правил*. The canon is numbered 57(61) in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2 ser., ed. P. Schaff, 14 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956 repr. of n.d.), 471–72 (hereafter cited as *NPNF*).

19 The canon reads: For in coming to faith they thought the true Church to be their

Council in Trullo included the ruling of Cyprian's Council of 256 which required the baptism of schismatics; yet Trullo defined the local, rather than the universal, significance of the decree:

We confirm also all the other sacred canons which have been set forth by the holy and blessed Fathers [...] and also the canon set forth by Cyprian, formerly archbishop and martyr of the land of the Africans, and by the council under him, which canon has remained in force only in the regions of aforesaid bishops, in accordance with the custom handed down to them.²⁰

On the basis of the 68th canon, included in the *corpus canonum*, it can be concluded that, with respect to the recognition of the mysteries performed outside her boundaries, the Orthodox Church (like the African Church), adhered to the position of Blessed Augustine²¹ rather than that of St Cyprian.²²

own and there [i.e., in the Donatist Church—A.P.] they believed in Christ, and received the sacraments of the Trinity. And that all these sacraments are altogether true and holy and divine is most certain, and in them the whole hope of the soul is placed, although the presumptuous audacity of heretics, taking to itself the name of the truth, dares to administer them. They are but one after all, as the blessed Apostle tells us, saying: "One God, one faith, one baptism," and it is not lawful to reiterate what once only ought to be administrated (*ibid.*, 471).

20 *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, eds. G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone, *Kanonika* 6 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 66, 68. According to John Erickson, "[I]n Byzantium the text enjoyed only very limited diffusion and was largely ignored; in the few manuscripts in which it appears, it is usually incorporated near the end of the 'canons of the holy fathers'" ("On the Cusp of Modernity: The Canonical Hermeneutic of St Nikodemos the Haghiorite [1748–1809]," *SVTQ* 42/1 [1998]:59).

21 According to Augustine, the baptism of Christ exists in schism, but it belongs to the Church—not to the schism itself ("On Baptism, Against the Donatists," *NPNF* 1 ser. 4, 1.11.17, 419; 1.12.19, 420); however, the animosity of the schismatics does not allow them to be cleansed of sin. Baptism begins to act fully for salvation only when the sin of schism is cured by joining the Church (*ibid.*, 1.9.12, 417; 1.12.18, 419).

22 From the 68th canon: "[Those therefore who have been so baptized] having anathematized their error may be received by the imposition of the hand into the one Church [...] where all these Sacraments are received unto salvation and everlasting life; even the same sacraments which obtain for those persevering in heresy the heavy penalty of damnation" (*NPNF* 14, 471).

The 19th Canonical Answer of Timothy of Alexandria in the East

As far as I know, this is the only canonical monument that is comprehensive in its treatment of sacramental oikonomia:

Ἐρώτ. ιθ'. Διὰ τί ἐπιστρέφοντας τοὺς αἰρετικούς ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ οὐκ ἀναβαπτίζομεν αὐτούς.

Ἀπόκρ. Ἐὰν τοῦτο ἐγένετο, οὐ ταχέως ἄνθρωπος ἐξ αἵρέσεως ἐπέατρεψεν, τὸ ἀναβαπτισθῆναι αἰσχυνόμενος, πλὴν ὅτι καὶ διὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ ἱερέως δι' εὐχῆς ἴδεν ἐπιφοιτᾶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καθὼς μαρτύρουσιν αἱ πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων.

Question 19: Why do we not re-baptize heretics who turn to the Catholic Church?

Answer: If that were so, a man shamed by the rebaptism would not be quick in his turn from heresy. Furthermore, it is known that the Holy Spirit descends by the imposition of the presbyter's hands and by prayer, as the Acts of the Apostles bear witness.²³

The fifteen canonical answers of Timothy²⁴ became a part of the Orthodox canonical tradition.²⁵ This collection differs from all

23 My translation from the Greek text published by J. B. Pitra in *Iuris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia et monumenta* 1 (Rome, 1963 repr. of 1864), 634.

24 Timothy succeeded his brother Peter in the Alexandrian see (c. 380–85); he was a disciple of St Athanasius. At the Constantinopolitan Council of 381, he recognized neither its decision to place “new Rome” above Alexandria in the diptychs, nor the ruling against the ordination of Maximus the Cynic. Timothy is venerated as a saint by the Copts, but not by the Orthodox Church, because of his role in removing St Gregory of Nazianzus from the Constantinopolitan see (*Правила Православной Церкви с толкованиями Никодима епископа Далматинско-Истрийского* 1 [Moscow, 1994, repr. of 1911], 38; Archbishop Peter L’Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* [Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2000], 109; John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: the Church 450–680 AD* [Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1989], 114; Aziz S. Atiya, “Timothy I, Saint,” *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya 7 [New York, 1991], 2203).

25 2 Trullo.

others included in the *corpus canonum*²⁶ in that a number of answers²⁷ are dedicated to the perplexing questions of baptismal practice.

Answers 16 to 38 were published for the first time in the scholarly collection of Pitra.²⁸ He published two groups of canons attributed to Timothy, referred to hereafter as Pitra I and Pitra II. Pitra I has 38 canons²⁹ including the above 19th Answer.³⁰

Périclès-Pierre Joannou, in his critical edition of Timothy's canons,³¹ based the publication of the 19th Answer on *Manuscript N° 1981* of the Vatican Library,³² and on the eleventh-century manuscript in Oxford.³³ The twelfth-century manuscript *Laurentianus*³⁴ was the prototype against which Joannou considered the source of the two manuscripts that he used in preparing his variorum edition.³⁵

Joannou indicates in a note to the 19th Answer that canons 15 to 18 in his sources were published as belonging to Athanasius (τοῦ Ἀθανασίου [Archbishop of Alexandria]), and that there is no indi-

26 I consider *Книга правил*, the latest codex of Canon Law promulgated by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1839, to be the most recent representation of the *corpus canonum*.

27 In *Книга правил*: 1, 2, 4, 6. Answer 3 concerns the giving of communion to a possessed person.

28 *Iuris ecclesiastici*, 630–38.

29 These canons were copied by Pitra from *Coislin MS 364* (Ibid.644). XIII century (Robert Devereese, *Bibliothèque nationale; Département des Manuscrits; Catalogue des manuscrits grecs: Le fonds Coislin*, 2[Paris,1945]:345).

30 *Iuris ecclesiastici* 634.

31 *Discipline générale antique (IVe–Xe c.) Les canons des pères grecs 2* (Grottaferrata: Pontificia Commissione per la redazione del codice di diritto canonico orientale. Fonti Fasc. 9, 1963), 240–58 (hereafter cited as *DGA*).

32 Pitra observes that this codex has an eleventh-century note (*Iuris ecclesiastici*, 644). According to Beneshevich, this manuscript belongs to the end of the tenth century (*Канонический сборник XIV титулов со второй четверти VII века до 883 г.* [repr. n.d., n.p. of St Petersburg 1905], 288). Joannou dates the manuscript to the twelfth century (*DGA*, xxxiii).

33 Охон. Laud 38 (coxe 519). *DGA*, 252.

34 X 1 chart. Ibid., xxii, xxxiii.

35 Ibid., xviii.

cation of the author of what follows the 18th canon.³⁶ According to Joannou, canons 16–29 (which do not occur in most of the manuscripts³⁷) are similar in subject to those included in the *corpus canonum*.³⁸

It is notable that the contents of Questions 20–38, which follow the 19th Answer in Pitra I, include such themes as: Will a person lose his merits if he sins? (22); Which sins result in a prayer's not being heard by God? (23); Which deeds deliver forgiveness from all sins? (25); Why do dreams often come true? (28); If someone fasts twice as much, will his reward be correspondingly greater? (30). The character of these questions demonstrates that they are of rather late Byzantine origin and do not belong to the time of Timothy.

Pitra II³⁹ was published from manuscript *Vindobensis juridicus IX*⁴⁰ in the National Library in Vienna and contains twenty-four canonical answers. Ten of them were dedicated to various practical questions relating to baptism. The 19th Answer is not found in this collection.

I am inclined to agree with Alessandro Bausi that the first fifteen answers of Timothy are part of the ancient canonical corpus of the Church of Alexandria, which was shaped no later than the fifth century. The rest of the canons are of middle or late Byzantine origin: it is clear that their origin is no earlier than the eighth century, since these canons would most likely be found in the Arabic and Ge'ez collections if they had been adopted in Byzantium during the seventh century.⁴¹

36 *Ibid.*, 252.

37 *Ibid.*, 239. These canons are taken from both Pitra I and from Pitra II.

38 Eg., Timothy 23 with 1st canon of Theophilus. *Ibid.*

39 *Iuris ecclesiastici*, 1, 638–43.

40 Ff. 265, 268. *Iuris ecclesiastici*, 644.

41 Bausi pers. comm. The nomocanons of the Coptic Church were composed in Arabic and the earliest belong to the eleventh century. In the sixteenth century the Coptic nomocanon was adopted by the Church of Ethiopia (René-Georges Couqin, "Canon Law," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 2 [New York, 1991], 450–51; Pi-

The Armenian Church does not know the canons of Timothy.⁴² In the Georgian Church, Arseni of Ikalto translated the *Nomocanon in 14 Titles* into Georgian at the end of the eleventh century. This collection received the name *Didi sjuliskanoni* (Great Nomocanon). Various texts were subsequently added to this translation, some written before the eleventh century and some later. This is the only canonical collection adopted by the Georgian Church, and this collection does not contain more than 15 canons of Timothy.

Joannou assumed that Timothy even in his lifetime was known as a famous canonist, and that the bishops of the Council in 381 had asked him to explain obscure passages of Church law.⁴³

Pseudoepigraphic compilations were common in the first millennium of Church history, as Archbishop Peter notes: "In many occurrences, the authors of treatises bearing on Church order intended to convey what they genuinely believed to represent the thought of primeval Christianity."⁴⁴ The questions 21–29 published by Joannou are found in Pitra II. Joannou explained that he chose to publish them because they seemed to represent the preoccupations in Timothy's time even if they are not his own answers, and thus he would consider Archbishop Peter's comment to be fair.⁴⁵ In this I cannot agree with Joannou's assessment, but since the evaluation of the contents of other answers published by him lay outside the scope of this study, I will just note that the studied material does not support the view that the 19th Answer reflects the sacramental conscience of the fourth-century Church. On the contrary, one might suppose that it illustrates late Byzantine theological thinking. Be that as it may, the fifteen canons of Timothy of Alexandria contain the only discussion in the *corpus canonum* of the various alternative applications of baptismal practices; thus it

erre de Chersonese, "The Canonical Traditions of the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Churches," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 1–2 [1971]: 171).

42 Based on the very exhaustive indices of a critical edition of the Armenian Canon Law: *Kanonagirk'Hayoc'*, ed. Vazgen Habokyan, 2 (Erevan, 1971).

43 *DGA*, 238.

44 "The Making of Written Law in the Church," 120.

45 *DGA*, 239.

would be logical for “Pseudo-Timothy” to append the 19th Answer precisely here.

Developments during the Late Byzantine and Turkokratia Periods

As we have seen, the earliest traces of the sacramental *oikonomia* theory date from the eighth to the eleventh century. To my knowledge, the next Greek source that contains elements of a theory of sacramental *oikonomia* is *An Alphabetical Collection by Thessalonian hieromonk Matthew Blastares*, dated 1335.⁴⁶ This collection has only fifteen canons by Timothy. It is worth noting that Blastares considers Basil’s refusal to follow the practice of Cyprian of Carthage in baptizing schismatics to be an example of *oikonomia*, since the circumstances of Basil’s time were much different from Cyprian’s.⁴⁷

The same understanding of *oikonomia* was adopted by the *Pedalion* (*Πηδάλιον*),⁴⁸ published in 1800 by hieromonk Agapios and St Nikodemus the Hagiorite. This edition of canonical texts takes as its starting-point concerning non-Orthodox Christians the position of Cyprian⁴⁹ and the decision of 1755 Council of Constantinople that required the [re]baptism of Roman Catholics,

46 *Σύνταγμα κατὰ στοιχεῖον τῶν ἐμπεριειλημμένων ἀπασῶν ὑποθέσεων τοῖς ἱεροῖς καὶ θείοις κανόσι* (Victor Alexandrov, “The Slavic Destiny of the Syntagma of Matthew Blastares: Dissemination and Use of the Code from the Fourteen to Seventeenth Century,” [PhD Dissertation in Medieval Studies, Central European University, 2004], 20, 26).

47 *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* 6 [Athens, repr. 1966 of 1859], 18. Cited from Patrick Viscuso, “A Late Byzantine Theology of Canon Law,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 3 [1989], 207.

48 The *Pedalion* enjoys a venerable reputation within the Orthodox Church. G. Rhalles and M. Potles, the editors of the collection of canonical texts which is considered the standard, explain in their preface that they tried not to stray from the text of canons in the *Pedalion* (*Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* 1,15). Just as the *Pedalion*, this collection contains only eighteen canons of Timothy (4, 331–41).

49 Scholia to the canon of 255 in Carthage. From the English translation of the *Pedalion: The Rudder of the Metaphorical Ship of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox, That is to Say, All the Sacred and Divine Canons*, tr. D. Cummings, (n.p., repr. 1983 of Chicago 1957), 487.

Protestants, and Armenians. Although they do not mention the 19th Answer of Timothy, the editors of the *Pedalion* nonetheless concur with its conditional basis for the acceptance of non-Orthodox baptism:

[T]he two ecumenical councils employed economy and accepted the baptism of Arians and Macedonians and of others, but refused to recognize that of the Eunomians and of still others. This is because in the time especially of the Second Council the Arians and Macedonians were at the height of their influence, and were not only very numerous but also very powerful (...) Therefore, both in order to attract them to Orthodoxy and correct them the easier and also in order to avoid the risk of infuriating them still more against the Church and the Christians and aggravating the evil, those divine fathers thus managed the matter economically and condescended to accept their baptism.⁵⁰

This understanding of sacramental *oikonomia* was shared by other prominent representatives of the *Kollyvades*: hierodeacon Neophytos the Kavsokalyvitis and St Athanasios Parios.⁵¹ In the nineteenth century, the outstanding Greek theologian Constantine Oikonomos, responding to a query from Russia on the William Palmer affair, researched the issue of the reception of non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church and agreed with the *Pedalion's* position.⁵² It is worth noting that these Greek authors considered the teaching that chrismation fulfilled the deficiencies

50 Scholia to 47th canon of the Apostles. *Ibid.*, 70. Translation, corrected on the basis of the Greek text, is taken from Erickson, *On the Cusp*, 60.

51 Protopresbyter George D. Metallinos, *I Confess One Baptism...* (Holy Mountain: St Paul Monastery, 1994), 19–20, 28.

52 *Ibid.*, 21–22. The following response to this conclusion by St Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, expressed the Augustinian attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church toward non-Orthodox baptism at that moment: "If Palmer were not a reliable witness it would be difficult to believe that the learned Ikonomon considers Western Baptism at the same time both valid and invalid, depending upon the will of the Church that the affused person be baptized or unbaptized. Surely the efficacy of Baptism is in the name of the Trinity and in the sacramental grace given to it by the action of its founder, Christ the Lord. Surely human will, even though it were the will of the Church, cannot make Baptism to be a simple laver, or a simple laver to be

of non-Orthodox baptism to be an erroneous teaching.⁵³ In the twentieth century the *Pedalion's* position on sacramental *oikonomia* was shared by the Greek theologians Chrestos Androustos⁵⁴ and Konstantinos Dyovouniotis.⁵⁵

Patriarch Joseph's Kormchaia and Indreptarea legii

The first occurrence of the sacramental *oikonomia* theory in Slavic lands is found in the *Kormchaia* of Patriarch Joseph, printed in Moscow in 1650.⁵⁶ Chapter 61 contains the “Canonical Answers of the Most Holy Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria” (*Ответы правильныя Тимофея Святейшаго Архиепископа Александрийскаго*). This chapter is opened by the 19th Answer. The Slavonic translation is the exact reflection of the Greek text published in Pitra I, with the following exceptions: 1. the word *ἀναβαπτίζομεν* is translated as “we are baptizing” (*покрещаем*); 2. *τῇ καθολικῇ [ἐκκλησίᾳ]*, in accordance with the Slavonic rendering of Niceo-Constantinopolitan creed, is translated not as the Catholic Church, but as the Conciliar (*соборная*) Church. Maia Momina, based on the language of the Slavonic translation of the 19th Answer, concludes that it belongs to the sixteenth century⁵⁷ and Kirill Maksimovich as of fourteenth or even a later century.⁵⁸

Of the ten canonical answers in this chapter, five are found in Pitra I. Only Answer Three is taken from Pitra II and it is possible

Baptism” (*Митрополита Московского к А.Н.М. 1832–1867* [Kiev, 1869], 368. Cited from: F. J. Thomson, “Economy,” 372)

53 Metallinos, I Confess, 75.

54 *The Validity of English Ordinations from an Orthodox Point of View*, tr. F. W. Groves Campbell (London, 1909), 9, 11.

55 *Τὰ Μυστήρια τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐξ Ἀπόψεως δογματικῆς* (Athens, 1913). As quoted by J.A. Douglas, *The Relations of the Anglican Churches with the Eastern Orthodox: Especially in Regard to Anglican Orders* (London, 1921), 60.

56 *Кормчая (Номоканон): отпечатана с подлинника Патриарха Иосифа* (St Petersburg, 1997 repr. of 1913), 1327–28.

57 Pers. comm.

58 Ibid.

that this answer belongs to St Patriarch Nicephorus.⁵⁹ Neither of Pitra's texts has Answer 6; however, Joannou published it as N° 20. Question 8 and two subsequent ones are attributed to St Barsonophius the Great, who lived at the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries.

The *Kormchaia* of Patriarch Joseph was prepared for publication by a commission which used the *Nomocanon* of St Savva⁶⁰ as the basis of the project, adding materials from Russian and Byzantine sources.⁶¹ At that time, in 1649, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Paisios was in Moscow; he was interested in the correction of the Russian Church books according to contemporary Greek ecclesiastical books. Paisius had lived in Walachia,⁶² where the nomocanon *Indreptarea legii*⁶³ was printed in the Cyrillic almost simultaneously with Patriarch Joseph's *Kormchaia*; this nomocanon also contains the 19th Answer of Timothy, translated from Byzantine sources and numbered as 26 in this collection. *Indreptarea legii* contains 25 canons from Pitra II along with two from Pitra I, including the 19th Answer.⁶⁴ Paisius brought with him to Moscow

59 A. Pavlov, *Номоканон при Большом требнике* (Москва, 1897), 303.

60 The Russian copy of *Serbian Nomocanon*, described by scholars as the Novo-Ierusalimskaia No.53 of the Riazan group of *Kormchaia*, became the main prototype (Ivan Žužek, *Kormčaja Kniga: Studies on the Chief Code of Russian Canon Law*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 168 [Rome, 1964], 28-29). It is called Riazan since it was copied there from the original of the *Serbian Nomocanon* belonging to the office of the Kievian Metropolitan (Ibid., 28), as an almost exact version of *Serbian Nomocanon* (Ibid., 53). Savva finished the composition of his *Nomocanon* by 1219 and it appeared in Russia in 1261. His *Nomocanon* (Законоправило или Номоканон Светога Саве: Иловички препис 1262 година, ed. Miodrag M. Petrovic [Gornji Milanovac rpr. of 1991]) was mostly based on the *Σύνοψις* collection (Synopsis Canonum, sixth c. Žužek, *Kormčaja*, 32) with Alexios Aristin's commentaries which contain only fifteen answers of Timothy.

61 Ibid., 53.

62 A.V. Kartashev, *Очерки по истории Русской Церкви* 2 (Paris, 1959), 148-149.

63 *Indreptarea legii*, 1652 (Bucharest, 1962).

64 Ibid., 559.

a certain Greek nomocanon, which he apparently took with him when he left Russia.⁶⁵

It seems reasonable to guess that the appearance of the 19th Answer in Moscovy was due to Patriarch Paisios, who would have acquired it from the edition of the nomocanon that became the official canonical collection of the Romanian Orthodox Church until the translation of the *Pedalion* into Romanian in 1844.⁶⁶

Subsequent to the edition of the *Kormchaia* prepared under Patriarch Joseph's auspices, the 19th Answer of Timothy appeared in the *Kormchaia* based on Patriarch Joseph's edition, namely, Patriarch Nikon's of 1653, and consequently in the Synodal editions: 1787, 1804, 1810, 1816, and 1834.⁶⁷ Thus the 19th Answer was included in the main law book of the Russian Church which, after the establishment of the Most Holy Synod in 1721, was challenged by the Ecclesiastical Statute (*Духовный регламент*). Although the *Kormchaia* was never officially replaced as the main legal source of the Russian Church, the *Kniga Pravil* (*Книга Правил*, or *The Book of Canons*), published in 1839, in fact took over that position. The commission for the publication of *Kniga Pravil* compared the Slavonic translations of *Kormchaia* to the Greek texts, taking as their model the newly published *Pedalion*.⁶⁸ Clearly this is why the *Kniga Pravil*, like the *Pedalion*, contains eighteen, rather than fifteen, canons of Timothy.⁶⁹

65 V. L. Fonkich, *Греческие рукописи и документы в России в XIV–начале XVIII в.* (Moscow: Indrik, 2003), 152.

66 John Torok, "The Collection of Canons in Rumania," *The Sources of Canon Law of the Eastern Orthodox Church* (manuscript in the library of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, n.p., n.d.), 2.

67 Žužek, *Kormčaja*, 96.

68 *Ibid.*, 269. St Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, in his letter to Murav'ev of Apr. 25, 1839 informing him that Timothy's designation as the "Most Holy" was taken from *Pedalion* (*Письма Митрополита Московского Филарета к А.Н.М.*, 63).

69 Nevertheless, the Society of Lovers of Religious Instruction in Moscow published in 1884 *Правила святых отец с толкованиями* (n.d. repr.), 535–36. To the canons of Timothy were added answers not included in *Книга Правил* and among them the 19th Answer. The parallel Greek text was taken from *Pitra I* and *Pitra II*.

Sacramental Oikonomia in the Russian Theological Thoughts of the 19th and 20th Centuries

Although the *Kormchaia* of Patriarch Joseph was published, only a few copies made it outside the walls of the print shop.⁷⁰ Those copies, having been printed before the Nikonian reforms, were regarded as especially authoritative among Old Believers. This explains why the theory of the sacramental *oikonomia*, influenced by the 19th Answer, was adopted by the priestly Old Believers. Monk Pavel Velikodvorskii, one of the mentors of the Old Believers under the Belokrinitsey Hierarchy, wrote in the middle of the nineteenth century that the grace of the Holy Spirit has descended upon the priest of the Orthodox Church received by the Old Believers in that moment when the priest, or hierarch, anoints him with the holy chrism and lays his hand upon him.⁷¹ According to A. Pankratov,

This theory had many adherents among the polemicists of Belokrinitsey hierarchy and dominated in the ideology of this trend before the beginning 1880s, when Bishop Arsenii (Shvetsov), while developing Pavel's ideas, offered a new teaching on the mysteries. The traces of that theory are found more than fifty years later in the report of the First Congress of the Brotherhoods of Russia, where an answer was given to the question as to whether the grace of the Holy Spirit descends upon the ordination and baptism of heretics: "He descends [...] upon their entering in communion with the Church."⁷²

As far as I know, Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov (1804–1860) had no relations with Old Believers, and I do not know whether the

70 Practically speaking, it started to circulate after it was reprinted by Patriarch Nikon in 1653 (*Кормчая*, 3–4).

71 "Десять посланий к беспоповцам" [1852–1854]. Moscow, Manuscript Collection of the State Library of Russia (fond 247) MSS 225, 531, 857. Cited in A.V. Pankratov, "Белокриницкая иерархия," *Православная энциклопедия* 4 (Moscow: Pravoslavnaia Entsiklopedia, 2002), 544.

72 Moscow, Library of the Academy of Sciences of Russia. Department of manuscripts and rare books (fond 75), MS 198, ff. 4r–4v. Cited in "Белокриницкая," 544.

Kormchaia was in his library; however, he became the first modern Russian theologian to present sacramental *oikonomia* as the teaching of the Orthodox Church. In a letter to William Palmer, Khomiakov writes:

All Sacraments are completed only in the bosom of the true Church, and it matters not whether they are completed [...] in one form or another. Reconciliation renovates the Sacraments or completes them, giving a full and Orthodox meaning to the rite that before was either insufficient or heterodox, and the repetition of the preceding Sacraments is virtually contained in the rite or fact of reconciliation. Therefore the visible repetition of Baptism or Confirmation, though unnecessary, cannot be considered as erroneous, and establishes only a ritual difference without any difference of opinion. You will understand my meaning more clearly still by a comparison with another fact in ecclesiastical history. The Church considers Marriage as a Sacrament, and yet admits married heathens into her community without re-marrying them. The conversion itself gives the sacramental quality to the preceding union without any repetition of the rite. This you must admit, unless you admit an impossibility, viz., that the Sacrament of Marriage was by itself complete in the lawful union of the heathen couple.⁷³

In the same way as Khomiakov, Metropolitan Antonii Khrapovitskii (*b.* 1863), considered his own theological views to be a return to the genuine teaching of the Orthodox Church. Antonii became the next notable representative of the teaching on sacramental *oikonomia* among Russian theologians after Khomiakov.

73 "Mr. Khomiakoff's Third Letter to Mr Palmer [1846]," *Russia and the English Church: Containing a Correspondence between Mr. William Palmer, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and M. Khomiakoff in the Years 1844–1854*, ed. W. J. Birkbeck, (London, 1917), 62–63. Khomiakov's letters were written in English. Khomiakov did not take into account that the ancient Church had an understanding of Roman law, and that the matrimonial contract is a foundation of marriage entered upon by two free people whose joint participation in the Eucharist was, as it were, the seal of their marriage. Cf. John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1984), 17, 21.

Antonii also sympathized with the Old Believers' canonical practice.⁷⁴

In a letter to Robert S. Gardiner of the Episcopal Church in the United States regarding participation in the conference on Faith and Order,⁷⁵ Antonii responds:

Please note, likewise, that the Latin priest received by the Orthodox Church may function liturgically without re-ordination only if the mystery of repentance was performed upon him by a bishop who, as a result, grants him the mystery of the priesthood. However if he was received by a priest, then the former Catholic priest may enter the Church only as a layman.⁷⁶

Antonii's only explanation for reception other than through baptism is that a person who had been previously baptized in his own denomination would be embarrassed to be placed on the same level as pagans. However, this would be possible only if the former denomination of the convert performed baptism in accordance with the practice of the Orthodox Church.⁷⁷

The letter of the New Hieromartyr Ilarion Troitskii to Mr. Gardiner became the last pre-revolutionary expression in favor of sacramental *oikonomia*. Archimandrite Ilarion was a disciple of Archbishop Antonii and considered his views on the absence of grace beyond the canonical boundaries to be the only Orthodox position.⁷⁸ It is not surprising that Antonii encouraged him to continue

74 Archimandrite Kiprian Kern, "Reminiscences of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)," tr. Alexander Lisenko, *Divine Ascent* 9 (2004): 140.

75 Of which Gardiner was secretary.

76 "Ответ на третее письмо секретаря Всемирной Конференции Епископальной Церкви в Америке, Вера и Разум 8–9 (August–September 1916): 885. Clearly a Roman Catholic priest is received by an Orthodox priest when canonical obstacles to the retention of his priesthood are found. See the rite for the reception of a Roman Catholic priest composed by the Metropolitan Filaret (Konstantin Nikol'skii, *Пособие к изучению устава Православной Церкви* [1960, n.p., repr. of St Petersburg 1900], 685).

77 "Ответ," 887. In the last point Antonii agrees with the Kollyvodes and the decree of 1755.

78 *The Unity of the Church and the World Conference of Christian Communities: A Letter*

his correspondence with Gardiner. After citing the above quoted passage from Khomiakov's letter, Ilarion comments on it:

As you can see, A. S. Khomiakov expresses almost the same thing which was, in my opinion, the constant mind of the Church; many are prevented from understanding this thought by the Medieval Latin doctrine of the sacraments, according to which sacraments can be performed even outside the one Body of Christ, outside the one Church.⁷⁹

Ilarion, based on canon 79 of the 419 Council of Carthage⁸⁰ regarding the reception of Donatists into their ranks, considers it possible to accept into communion with the Orthodox Church the entire hierarchy of the Anglican Church, without any academic investigations.⁸¹

The reinforcement of the teaching on sacramental *oikonomia* within the Russian Church diaspora is largely due to Iuri Pavlovich Grabbe (1902–1995), Khomiakov's great-grandson. Grabbe was close to Metropolitan Antonii Khrapovitskii, especially from the late 1920s until the latter's death in Serbia in 1936.⁸²

In his critique⁸³ of Nicolas Zernov's article, "St Cyprian of

to Mr. Robert Gardiner, Secretary of the Commission to Arrange a World Conference of Christian Communities, tr. Margaret Jerinec (Montreal, 1975) 10–11; originally, this letter was published as "Единство Церкви и всемирная конференция христианства," *Богословский вестник* 1(1917): 3–60.

79 *Ibid.*, 69.

80 Numeration from *Kniga Pravil*.

81 *The Unity*, 71.

82 From 1933 until 1985 he was in charge of the chancellery of the Synod of the Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad; he later became a protopresbyter and a bishop. Grabbe himself tells about the formation of his ecclesiology: "My view on the baptism of heretics was nourished in me by Khomiakov, Metropolitan Antonii and through the treatment of his disciple Arch. Ilarion" (Stanford University Library. Department of Special Collections, The Bishop Grigorii Papers [M0964], Box 1, Folder 6, Letter to Archbishop Antonii of Geneva. February 24/March 9, 1975).

83 "Совершил ли св. Киприан Карфагенский переворот в учении Церкви," *Церковная жизнь* 11 (November 1, 1934): 170–75. The English citations are taken from "Did St Cyprian Change the Doctrine of the Church?" *Synaxis* 3 (1978): 67–73.

Carthage and the Unity of the Ecumenical Church,"⁸⁴ Grabbe assumes that the Holy Fathers taught that all confessions except the Orthodox Church were deprived of salvific grace. The Orthodox Church, depending on external relations with those churches, treats them strictly or favorably.⁸⁵ To illustrate the logic of the canons on the reception of non-Orthodox through chrismation or through repentance, Grabbe turns to the authority of Timothy of Alexandria, who participated in the Council of Constantinople in 381. Grabbe believes that Timothy's 19th Answer, taken from the 61st chapter of *Kormchaia*, explains what the Church meant when it decreed, in the seventh canon of that Council, that certain dissidents could be received without baptism.⁸⁶ In addition to all that I have already observed apropos of the 19th Answer of Timothy, there is one further weakness in this argument: the text on which it depends, the so-called "seventh canon" of the Second Ecumenical Council, actually is not a product of that council but a part of the canonical collection of the church of Ephesus, dated 428, and placed along with the canons of this council as a complementary statement to Canon 1.⁸⁷

Theological Implications and Conclusion

Baptism is directly instituted by Christ: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5, RSV). The only exception is the baptism through martyrdom, in which case there is baptism by blood. *Baptisma sanguinis* was established by the teaching on baptism as an analogy of death; if the confessor survived, baptism was completed by the regular baptismal rite.⁸⁸

84 "Св. Киприан Карфагенский и единство вселенской церкви," *Путь* 39 (July 1933): 18–40.

85 "Did St Cyprian ...," 68. Note that in this point Grabbe agrees with St Nikodemus the Hagiorite.

86 *Ibid.*, 69.

87 Archbishop Peter, *The Church of the Ancient Councils*, 111, 131–32.

88 Protopresbyter Nicolas Afanasieff, *Служение мирян в церкви* (Moscow, 1995), 26.

According to one of its many definitions, *oikonomia* is “good management.”⁸⁹ Accordingly, it must benefit the Church, and preserve her dogmas, rather than supercede them. The words of the Alexandrian Patriarch Eulogius (581–607) illustrate this point:

Then the right rationale behind *oikonomia* is for something to be managed so that the dogma of true faith is not endangered. For if that dogma remains pure and unadulterated, *oikonomia* is found to be realized in the area outside and around [the dogma—A.P.].⁹⁰

Clearly *oikonomia* is not a mystery of the Church, but one of her instruments: it can be applied only to something that exists, and does not have the magic power to create *ex nihilo*. Thus it cannot transform an unbaptized person into a baptized one. This understanding of *oikonomia* is nicely summarized by Ladislav Orsy: “Every need for *oikonomia* arises out of an individual situation; each use of it is unique. It cannot and must not serve as a precedent for future actions.”⁹¹ Hence *oikonomia* as an exception from the norms for the reception of the non-Orthodox cannot serve as an explanation of the steps adopted by the Council for permanent application.

To understand the Orthodox canonical tradition one needs to take into account that baptism, in the ancient Church, was not a private event, but was understood as “an act which has relation not only to some members, but to the entire Church in her fullness, as an act of great significance, without which the Church cannot exist.”⁹² Therefore it is impossible to imagine that an act of such importance would take a place under the cover of another mystery. Regarding such a fundamental act as baptism the Church cannot introduce any “consideration for special circumstances” (another

89 G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Dictionary* (Oxford, 1997), 941.

90 Codex 227 of Patriarch Photios library cited from Steven G. Strikis, *The Theology and Ecclesiology of Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria: a Study and Translation* (M.Div. Thesis, St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1981), 14.

91 “Meaning of *Oikonomia*,” *Theological Studies* 2 (June 1982): 314.

92 Protopresbyter Nicolas Afanasiëff, “Таинства и тайнодействия: *Sacramenta et Sacramentalia*,” *Православная мысль* 8 (1951): 26.

meaning of *oikonomia*);⁹³ on the contrary, the Church demands, under pain of severe sanctions, the baptism of the unbaptized and forbids the rebaptism of anyone who has been baptized.⁹⁴ In sum, baptism outside the Orthodox Church is either accepted as an entry into some kind of Christian life, one that requires a further rite of reconciliation with the Church, or it is not recognized at all, in which case the one seeking to join the Orthodox Church would be received by baptism.

In the ancient Church, baptism and chrismation were not perceived as two separate mysteries; rather, they completed the one mystery for the reception into the Church. According to Erickson:

[A]t least until well into the fourth century: anointing and hand-imposition either preceded or were simultaneous with the water-bath, and emphasis lay on the closeness of the relationship of Son and Spirit, on their reciprocal work in creation and redemption—and baptism—so that the anointing itself was not simply a misplaced confirmation/chrismation, the sacrament of the Spirit as distinct from that of the Son. Rather, throughout the one sacrament of Christian initiation the Spirit was seen as present and active, pointing to the Son, making Him present, refashioning men and women into Him.⁹⁵

We should take into consideration the difference between the consciences of the ancient Church and the modern. It would be improper to understand the reception into the Church in the same way as we understand post-baptismal anointing with holy myrrh.⁹⁶ Although it is still unclear what the ancient Church meant by the

93 Lampe, *Patristic Dictionary*, 942. Cf. with cited above St Basil's words from his Second Canonical Letter.

94 Cf. 47th Apostolic Canon.

95 John H. Erickson, "Reception of Non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church," *Diakonia* 1–3 (1984–85): 77.

96 Cf., [St Filaret of Moscow—A.P.] *Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic, Eastern Church examined and approved by the Most Holy Governing Synod* (n.p., n.d. repr. by St Tikhon's Religious Center), 57. Regarding the ambiguity of post-baptismal chrismation as applied to converts, see: John H. Erickson, "The Reception of Non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church: Contemporary Practice," *SVTQ* 41/1 (1997):12–13.

imposition of hands, or chrismation,⁹⁷ a proper understanding of this gesture at reception into the Church would be that a person is receiving forgiveness from God and reconciliation with the Church.⁹⁸

Although “according to canons the steps of reception depend on the degree of remoteness from the Church of the community in question, the canons do not use the term ‘heretic’ in agreement with St Basil’s classification. For instance, in the above-mentioned seventh canon of the Council of Constantinople, Novatians are called heretics in the same way as Arians and Macedonians. Therefore in each particular case one needs to take note of who is being categorized as a “heretic.”

My research leads me to the following conclusions: although in the practical aspect of reception the Church rather follows Augustine’s understanding than that of Cyprian, nonetheless Cyprian’s ecclesiology, that there are no mysteries outside the Church, was never refuted by the Orthodox Church.⁹⁹ The attempt to reconcile this ecclesiology with existing grades of reception into the Church, as expressed by sacramental *oikonomia*, was only partially attended to by the Church Fathers (St Basil the Great, Blasteres, St Nikodemus). I was not able to find evidence that any of the Fathers who composed the canons held the position that in the reception of baptism performed outside the Orthodox Church, only the external form was accepted, and that this form might be filled by grace at the moment of reception. Regarding this point of sacramental *oikonomia*, I agree with Fr Georges Florovsky

97 See John Erickson’s speculation on this matter in “Divergencies in Pastoral Practice in the Reception of Converts,” *Orthodox Perspectives on Pastoral Praxis*, ed. Theodore Stylianopoulos (Boston, 1998), 154–55.

98 Cf., service for the Reception of Latins into the Orthodox Church, adopted by the 1484 Synod. Fr. George Dragas, “The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church with Special Reference to the Decisions of the Synods of 1484 (Constantinople), 1755 (Constantinople) and 1667 (Moscow),” *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 1–4 (1999): 238–41.

99 Cf. Bishop Peter L’Huillier, “The Reception of Roman Catholics into Orthodoxy: Historical Variations and Norms” *SVTQ* 34/2 [1980]: 76.

that the 'economical' interpretation is not the teaching of the Church. It is only a private 'theological opinion,' very late and very controversial, having arisen in a period of theological confusion and decadence in a hasty endeavor to dissociate oneself as sharply as possible from Roman theology."¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless this theory enjoyed a place within the main body of Church law of the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Churches and was shared by noted authorities of Orthodox theology.

100 "The Limits of the Church," *The Church Quarterly Review* 117 (October 1933), 125.