

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SOLID ICONOSTASIS IN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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I. Introduction

It would not be an exaggeration to say that to date there are no conclusive studies on the development of the iconostasis in Russia. This study, while not claiming to solve the problem, does seek to offer questions, comments, and some analysis on historical and theological data that might help further the discussion surrounding one of the most prominent features of Russian Orthodox liturgical art and architecture.

For the student of Russian history and culture, the appearance of the developed iconostasis in Russia marks an important development in church art and architecture. Though this study does not compare the development of the relatively low Byzantine iconostasis with its Slavic counterpart,¹ the first set of questions to be raised is why did such a prominent, and at times overwhelming, structure develop in Russia? Is it a cultural phenomenon brought about by the abundance of wood located in and around Moscow, Novgorod, and Vladimir?² Did the high wooden icono-

¹ On the development of the Byzantine iconostasis see *Thresholds of the Sacred*.

² See Lazarev, *Russian Icon*.

stasis compensate for the lack of plastered and masonry walls in Russian churches?³ Was it a “spontaneous” phenomenon?⁴ Can the solid iconostasis be traced to Athonite influences, including the *Diataxis* of Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople?⁵ Or was the solid and multi-tiered iconostasis developed from a combination of cultural and theological factors that led to an understanding of liturgical worship that parted from its Byzantine fore-runner?

For the historian, the development of the Russian iconostasis could point to the shift of political and religious responsibility from Constantinople to Moscow. As the iconostasis began its vertical ascent in 15th-century Russia, Byzantium was in the last phases of political decline. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Byzantium’s missionary responsibility to convert the world ended. Was the appearance of the multi-tiered Russian iconostasis a political/religious statement, in which the community of saints, who are gathered around the enthroned Savior, reflected the “first fruits of [Christ’s] universal reign” and which were now to be augmented by the grand princes and tsars of Moscow?⁶ While these questions have been raised, the answers have not been altogether convincing.

Attention has already been drawn to hesychasm and its association with the development of the Russian iconostasis.⁷ This study seeks to examine hesychasm from the perspective of an inner tension that created a polarity between unceasing prayer and the reception of the sacraments. On the surface, hesychasm, as it spread from Byzantium to the Balkans and finally into Russia, has often been perceived as a monolithic movement. Yet, like all spiritual movements, it was not without its variations.⁸ Questions raised in this study will focus on the conflict within the hesychast

³ Consideration is given to this idea by Majeska, “Ikonostas.”

⁴ Ouspensky, “Problem,” 186.

⁵ The *Diataxis* is a rubrical book for celebrating the Divine Liturgy. Lidov (“Ikonostasis,” 717) proposes that the *Diataxis* of Philotheos was a channel by which hesychasm influenced the structure of the iconostasis to the extent that it became a “wall of icons concealing the sacrament and at the same time giving it a new mystical image.” There is no mention of the solid iconostasis in the *Diataxis*. See *Hai treis leitourgiai*.

⁶ Labrecque-Pervouchine, *L’Iconostase*, 52.

⁷ See Cheremeteff, “Transformation,” 107–140.

⁸ See for example Bushkovitch, “Hesychasm” for a discussion of the 14th- and 15th-century transmission and manifestation of hesychasm in Russia.

movement that may have played a role in the emergence of the solid and vertically developed iconostasis.

The dearth of both archeological and written sources renders particularly challenging the tracing of the historical development of the iconostasis for there are no contemporary treatises of Byzantine or Russian vintage on the subject. Archeological evidence has been helpful, but it has not eliminated conjectures regarding the height and transparency of early partitions separating the altar area and nave. Consequently, discussion of this topic can lead to waves of frustration. Yet, unless scholars continue to ask questions and display a willingness to search for and to interpret new sources or to re-examine familiar sources previously seen as unrelated to Russian religious art and architecture, the development of the iconostasis will remain an enigma, leaving both the historian and the liturgical theologian with a severe handicap for interpreting one of the most imposing features to shape Orthodox worship and, dare I say, local Orthodox culture and life.

II. Architecture and Worship

A brief review of Christian architecture and worship will provide the historical context for the emergence of the Russian iconostasis.

The Christian edifice emerged out of Jewish and pagan antecedents. The synagogues, particularly those influenced by Greek art and the pagan basilica, contributed to the creation and organization of space needed to properly accommodate the development of Christian worship.⁹ In addition to Jewish and pagan influences, the house church and catacombs also contributed to the formation and use of liturgical space.¹⁰

Prior to the Constantinian era, architecture and liturgy had been joined in an indissoluble bond. From the earliest times, space, movement (including processions), the chanting and exposition of scripture, hymnody, liturgical symbols, and iconography had created a liturgical symphony or liturgical synthesis¹¹

⁹ See Millburn, *Early Christian Art*, 9–56.

¹⁰ Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 16ff.

¹¹ The concept of liturgy as the synthesis of art was used by Florensky, “La liturgie comme synthèse des arts,” 54–62. Russian text in Florenskii, *Sobranie sochineniia*, 1: 41–56. Though Florensky wrote his article in 1918, his insights into the relationship of worship and art should not be perceived as a modern contrivance or imposition on the thought of the

necessary to convey the message of the Gospel culminating with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The earliest organization of Christian liturgical space can be traced back to Roman house churches of the pagan empire. Extant archeological evidence shows that house churches were arranged to accommodate the rites and functions of the local Christian community.¹² Delineated spaces for baptisms, catechetical instruction, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper were the precursors to the division of space in what became the established Christian building made up of narthex, nave, and sanctuary.¹³

The practical and therefore intentional division of liturgical space leading to the separation of the nave and the sanctuary played a significant role in the understanding of liturgy and architecture. If one carefully approaches the relationship between worship and space and if *lex orandi est lex credendi* ("the rule of prayer is the rule of belief"), then architecture, including the chancel partition and its subsequent development into the solid iconostasis, expresses a theology or theologies either consistent with, or divergent from, an orthodox understanding of prayer and sacramental life. This is not to imply that culture and politics had no influence in the process leading to the appearance of the solid iconostasis. Culture and politics, however, are components of a complex process that does not preclude the need to discern the role theology holds in the development of the iconostasis.¹⁴ Though the need to include theology in the discussion may seem obvious, it is often overlooked. Archeology, culture, and politics joined to historical commentary are linked to movements and symptoms that may be the results of theological and spiritual dispositions.

past. This particular work of Florensky's should be read as an attempt to articulate the inherent dynamic between art and worship.

¹² See Pace, "Nuova ipotesi," 198–201.

¹³ These three areas are the remnants of the Christian building today. It should be stressed that by the sixth century, the urban church complex consisted of more than one building, including the church proper, with attached sacristies and separate structures for baptisms. This complex of buildings also applies to the urban monasteries, which, in addition to being centers of prayer and study, were also centers for caring for the poor and infirm. See Ruggieri, *Byzantine Religious Architecture*, esp. 135–186.

¹⁴ See for example Constas, "Symeon of Thessalonike," 163–183.

III. History, Eschatology, and Maximus the Confessor

Though this study does not intend to provide a detailed analysis of the historical and eschatological dimensions of Byzantine worship, the interplay of time and eternity as revealed in the organization of liturgical space informs the discussion of the Russian iconostasis. One of the earliest texts of the New Testament that shows the interrelationship of history and eschatology in a liturgical context comes from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (written ca. 55). This letter, which contains some of the earliest references to a local celebration of the Lord's Supper, ends with the liturgical exclamation *Marana Tha* ("Come Lord," 16:22). Linguistic analysis of this Aramaic phrase shows that within the context of the Lord's Supper, there is the strong sense that Christ's coming again is an event to be anticipated and a present reality. This concept of inaugurated eschatology is also expressed in the Gospel of St. Luke, where the disciples know the resurrected Lord in the (liturgical) breaking of bread (24:35). The Apocalypse of St. John (22:20) also preserves the grammatical imperative of *Marana Tha* in Greek form (*Erchou Kyrie Iesou!*).¹⁵

The vision of history and eschatology in Christian worship provides a useful lens through which to examine the development of the iconostasis in Russia. The Lord, who is to come again and is already present in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, is a fundamental feature of Christian worship and preaching. In the context of worship all things are being made new (see Rev. 21:1ff.). Given this liturgical and biblical affirmation, the question as to whether the iconostasis in Russia might have obscured the relationship between history and eschatology arises. In other words, does the iconostasis as a solid partition enhance the understanding and experience of the interpenetration of time and eternity or does it convey another liturgical vision that divides and even polarizes matter and spirit, man and God, mind and body, earth and heaven, male and female, prayer and sacraments?

Saint Maximus the Confessor (580–662) in his *Mystagogia* (*Mystagogy*),¹⁶ offers one of the most stimulating theological

¹⁵ Related and diverging opinions on *Marana Tha* can be gleaned from Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary*, 300–301. See also Caird, *Revelation of St. John*, 288.

¹⁶ Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy*. The *Mystagogy* can be found in vol. 91 of J. P. Migne's *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, Refe-

expositions of Christian worship and liturgical space. More than the other well-known liturgical commentators coming from Byzantium,¹⁷ Maximus stresses to his audience the inseparable relationship of history and eschatology and its articulation in liturgical space.

At this point the historian may rightly question the use of the *Mystagogy* of Maximus in a study of the Russian iconostasis, since there appears to be no evidence that the *Mystagogia* was known in 15th-century Russia. Two responses can be given to the astute historian. The first has already been made—that is, Maximus wrote about liturgical space in relationship to history and eschatology. Secondly, if we can trust the *spirit* of the account of Russia's conversion to Orthodox Christianity as described in the *Primary Chronicle*, it appears that more than any other conduit, Byzantine worship influenced the culture that would ensue from Vladimir's conversion.¹⁸ Maximus is important because he articulates for the contemporary reader a vision of liturgical worship—a vision of the historical and eschatological—that was simply and eloquently expressed by those perceptive emissaries who most likely stood in the nave of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy: "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth."¹⁹

For Maximus, liturgical space and choreography, or liturgical movement, show how time and eternity interpenetrate. Here the importance of open and delineated space cannot be overlooked, since it is the organization of space that enables liturgical movement to express the ascent of the material world into the world to come.²⁰ Space and its accompanying liturgy *represent*

rences to the *Mystagogy* in this article refer the reader to Berthold's translation in the *Selected Writings* (see Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy* in the "Works Cited" at the end of this article).

¹⁷ In contrast, see also St. Dionysius the Areopagite (fifth c., "Pseudo-Dionysius"), "Ecclesiastical Hierarchies"; St. Germanus of Constantinople (eighth c.), "Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation," in his *On the Divine Liturgy*; St. Nicholas Cabasilas (14th c.), *On the Divine Liturgy*; and St. Symeon of Thessalonika (15th c.), "On the Sacred Liturgy" and "Explanation of the Divine Temple."

¹⁸ See *Russian Primary Chronicle*, 110–111.

¹⁹ *Russian Primary Chronicle*, 111.

²⁰ "Thus the holy Church [building]...is the figure and image of God inasmuch as through it he effects in his infinite power and wisdom an unconfused unity from the various essences of beings, attaching them to him-

the dimensions of history and eschatology, which, while being distinct, are one and inseparable.

The *Mystagogia* describes the church building as an expression of diversity in unity and unity in diversity. As a Constantinopolitan, Maximus knew Justinian's Great Church and the older churches that utilized space to reveal rather than conceal the age to come. One can sense Maximus' turning to the Council of Chalcedon and its defense of the divine and human natures of Christ being united in one person yet "without confusion, without change, without division and without separation." This basic definition of Chalcedon, together with the council's incorporation of the Tome of Pope Leo, which maintained the uniqueness and interpenetration (*perichoresis*) of each nature, is an important key to understanding the *Mystagogia*.²¹ It allowed St. Maximus to speak about the uniqueness of altar and nave as well as their mutual interpenetration or exchange of properties. Unity and diversity co-exist in the context of the renewed and transfigured cosmos. Maximus stresses this reality by stating that the church,

while ... one house in its construction ... admits of a certain diversity in the disposition of its plan by being divided into an area exclusively assigned to priests and ministers, which we call a sanctuary, and one accessible to all the faithful, which we call a nave. Still, it is one in its basic reality without being divided into its parts by reason of the differences between them, but rather by²² their relationship to the unity it frees these parts from the difference arising from their names. It shows to each other in turn what each one is for itself. Thus, the nave is the sanctuary in potency by being consecrated by the relationship of the sacrament [i.e. *mystagogia*] toward its end, and in turn the sanctuary is the nave in act by possessing the principle of its own sacrament, which remains one and the same in its two parts.²³

self as a creator at their highest point, and this operates according to the grace of faith for the faithful, joining them all to each other in one form according to a single grace and calling of faith, the active virtuous ones in a single identity of will the contemplative and Gnostic ones in an unbroken and undivided concord as well. It is a figure of both the spiritual and sensible world, with the sanctuary as symbol of the intelligible world and the nave as symbol of the world of sense." Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy*, Chapter 24, 208.

²¹ See Grdzeldidze, "Liturgical Space," 499–504.

²² See Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogy*, 217n33.

²³ Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogy*, Chapter 2.

Quoting the anonymous elder to whom he is writing, Maximus refers to the church building as both imprint (*typos*) and image (*eikon*) of God.²⁴ Thus, entering the church (Chapter 9), the reading of the Gospel, the kiss of peace, and the dismissal of the catechumens with the closing of the doors separating the nave from the narthex (Chapters 13–15) are all joined to what Maximus elsewhere refers to as the “new mystery” (*To kainon mysterion*), which is the celebration of the Eucharist.²⁵ The celebration of the Eucharist actualizes the economy of salvation in time and space. For Maximus, this historical actualization fulfilled in the “new mystery” constitutes the re-ordering and deification of the cosmos.

The transfiguration and therefore the sacredness of all creation culminate in the distribution and reception of the Eucharist. In the context of this mystery, the communicant becomes one with the divine without mixture or confusion. By extension, the unity between God and humanity includes history and eschatology:

The confession, which is made by all the people at the end of the sacred celebration (*mystike hierourgia*) “One is holy,” and what follows, manifest the reassembling and union, which, being beyond reason and intelligence, will come about in the mysterious unity of the divine simplicity of those who were led by God to perfection by a mysterious wisdom...[After this confession] comes the communion of the mystery (i.e. the Eucharist) which transforms by grace and participation those who will be judged worthy of taking part to appear similar to the original.... The participants become God by grace. Nothing will remain empty of his presence.²⁶

IV. The Templon

The significance of the *Mystagogia* lies in its attempt to describe the relationship of architecture and liturgy in light of history and eschatology. It is this relationship that facilitates the contemplative and physical ascent of the faithful into the mystery of the Lord’s Supper, which, from earliest times, was an historical and eschatological event. An integral feature of liturgical architecture aiding

²⁴ Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogy*, Chapter 1. See also Dalmais, “Mystère liturgique,” 59–60.

²⁵ Dalmais, “Mystère liturgique,” 56 is quoting from *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 90, cols. 665B and 713B.

²⁶ Chapter 21 of the *Mystagogia* as quoted by Dalmais, “Place de la *Mystagogie*,” 287 [translation by RA].

this ascent was the templon. This structure, separating as well as joining sanctuary and nave, generated a liturgical dynamism that drew the attention of both clergy and laity to the altar table.

The templon existed before the appearance of the solid iconostasis and before the long, complex reorganization of liturgical space. Along with the ambon, then a prominent separate raised platform in the center of the nave connected by a raised walkway to the sanctuary, the templon helped to maintain the dynamism between history and eschatology. Thus, from the ambon, the word of God announced the Incarnation as both fulfillment and a turning point in history. Receiving this “good news” was a *sine qua non* for the liturgical participation in the banquet of the world to come.

The templon, with interspersed columns capped with an architrave, is both frame and base for what became the solid iconostasis. It served as the frame for the lower Byzantine-type iconostasis, where icons eventually filled the open spaces between columns, including the side entryways. The templon also became the foundation for what developed into the multi-tiered Russian style of barrier. By examining the templon we can begin to establish three stages in the development of Byzantine worship that point to the emergence of the solid Russian iconostasis.

The first stage began with the templon itself. Its origin can be traced to the waist-high partition that helped to “set off” and protect the emperor and his retinue from the surrounding crowds. Excellent examples of the imperial templon can be seen in the *bas relief* on the base of the obelisk of Theodosius in the Hippodrome in Istanbul.²⁷ This protective structure was eventually incorporated into the partition that would occupy a prominent place in the churches of Constantinople, including Justinian’s Hagia Sophia.²⁸

²⁷ See Cheremeteff, “Transformation,” 108.

²⁸ See Taft, “Decline of Communion,” 27–50. Recalling an unpublished lecture by Cyril Mango, Taft stresses the practical purpose of the templon in Byzantine liturgical worship: “Rather than hiding the ritual, the templon merely controlled the audience in the ‘catholic churches’.... So the chancel barrier originates from the concern for decorum and security in late antiquity, when church congregations were sometimes little better than an unruly mob” (ibid., 38).

Two examples predating Justinian's Great Church are the Church of St. John the Baptist, often referred to as Studios,²⁹ and the Church of the Mother of God in Chalkoprateia. The latter became renowned for keeping what was believed to be the zonē (sash or belt) of the Virgin. This garment, brought to Constantinople from Palestine around the fifth century, was among the city's most important relics. By the ninth century all Marian liturgical celebrations either began or ended at the Chalkoprateia. Both churches date back to the fifth century but, without question, Studios is the older and better preserved.³⁰ From 1907 to 1909 the Russian Archaeological Institute conducted a survey of Studios. The expedition was responsible for uncovering the marble pavement and the excavation of a cruciform crypt under the altar. The crypt probably held the relics of the monastery. Thanks to the work of archaeologists and architects, the existing fragments of the sanctuary have provided us with the earliest known sanctuary plan in Constantinople. This means that prior to the building of Justinian's Hagia Sophia the π -shaped altar partition was in use in what became one of the great monastic centers of Eastern Christendom.

At the dedication of Justinian's greatest basilica, Hagia Sophia, Paul Silentarius (sixth c.) described the chancel partition as a structure of twelve interspersed columns, joined by an architrave on top, with connecting templons on the bottom. Silentarius is our primary source for information on the arrangement of space and liturgy in Justinian's Hagia Sophia. His *Ekphrasis*, a poem of some 1,027 lines written in iambic hexameter,³¹ helps our imaginations to enter the sacred space of Hagia Sophia:

There is a separate space for the bloodless sacrifice, not of ivory or portions of cut stones or appointed copper, but this space is entirely surrounded by quarried silver and in this space covered by silver are the initiate distinguished from the harmonious voices of the crowd. Naked silver is also cast upon the floor, and the pillars also are entirely of silver, twice six these pillars are ablaze giving light to those afar.³²

²⁹ Studios was a senator who had the church of St. John built ca. 463. By the ninth century the Studite monastery, under the guidance of Abbot St. Theodore, had become a major center of monastic and liturgical reform. See Taft, *Byzantine Rite*, 52–56.

³⁰ For an introduction to the architecture of these two churches see Mathews, *Early Churches*, 11–41.

³¹ See Macrides and Magdalino, "Architecture of Ekphrasis," 47–82.

³² *Descriptio ecclesiae Sanctae Sophiae et Ambonis*, lines 682–715 and 871–883; Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 80–96; Mainstone, *Hagia*

In his *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*, St. Germanus of Constantinople (d. 733) speaks of railings (*kagkella*) separating the altar area from the nave.³³ No mention of height is given for these partitions, but the term *railings* points to a series of low (perhaps waist-high) structures connecting interspersed columns at the bottom. This reference complements the description of Silentarius, the depiction on the Hippodrome obelisk, and the reconstructed partition of Studios. The prominence of Hagia Sophia influenced the arrangement of liturgical space in and outside Constantinople, even though it cannot be assumed that the templon design of this basilica was universally adopted in the Byzantine Empire.

Though Hagia Sophia and churches similar in scale and spatial arrangement possessed a three-sided π -shaped partition extending from the apse, with appropriate entryways in the west, north, and south sides, not all chancel partitions maintained this three-sided configuration.³⁴ But whether the partition was three-sided or a simple one-sided horizontal structure connecting opposite sides of the apse, transparency remained a consistent feature. Thus, by the middle Byzantine period (8th to 13th centuries), the first stage of development had reached a certain level of consistency. Despite the paucity of evidence, A. W. Epstein suggests that the Constantinopolitan templon of this period could be conceived as “a colonnade closed at the bottom by ornamental parapet slabs and supporting an epistyle decorated with a figural programme, which often included a central Deesis.”³⁵

Though Justinian’s Hagia Sophia did not provide the blueprint for subsequent ground plans of all Byzantine churches, S. G. Xydīs stresses that the influence of the Great Church should not be minimized. Those areas of the empire that remained faithful to the Council of Chalcedon, and by extension to Justinian, had

Sophia, 219; Mathews, *Early Churches*, 169; and Majeska, “Notes,” 299–308. Still useful is Xydīs, “Chancel Barrier,” 1–24. Translation from Silentarius adapted by the author from Mango’s version.

³³ See Greek text next to Paul Meyendorff’s translation in Germanus of Constantinople, St., *On the Divine Liturgy*, 62. Unfortunately, Meyendorff translates *kagkella* as “barriers.”

³⁴ For example, the monolithic churches of Cappadocia.

³⁵ Epstein, “Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier,” 15–16. See also p. 6, with descriptions of partitions by Theophanes Continuatus and Michael Attalates.

churches that followed the basic plan of Hagia Sophia, including its altar partition. This can be seen in the churches of Asia Minor, the Crimea, and Bulgaria.³⁶

The second stage leading to the solid iconostasis was characterized by the liturgical activity within the altar area. The dating of this stage is difficult to determine, since there seems to be some overlap with the middle Byzantine period. During this period there are significant developments in the use of liturgical space. With the renaissance of iconography, which began in the ninth century, and the ever increasing influence of the monks of Studios in Constantinople and St. Sabbas in Palestine, liturgical worship and piety began a new phase. At this time, the apse became the place where the concentration of liturgical movement and appointments were found. The sacristy, or *skeuophylakion*, having had its own separate space, began to disappear. The table of oblation, where the bread and wine to be consecrated at the liturgy are prepared, was now found in the apse. With the concentration of liturgical activity becoming increasingly confined to the altar or sanctuary area, the royal doors, which opened into the nave, eventually became located in the central opening of the chancel partition. The episcopal throne and *synthronon* (bench or semicircular tiered benches behind the altar table, where the bishops and presbyters sat during parts of the liturgical services) disappeared from the back of the apse, as did the ambon as a separate structure in the center of the nave.³⁷

Changes to the location of structures and rituals around the altar area that coincided with the period of post-iconoclastic Byzantium should not be associated with the introduction of the solid iconostasis. The victory of the icon can be discounted as a primary contributing factor, since transparent partitions separating altar from nave continued to be an important feature of liturgical architecture after the ninth century. The same caution must be applied when trying to connect the practice of infrequent reception of the Eucharist with the solid barrier. Even if one were to factor in Thomas Mathews' observation that by the time of the Council in Trullo (692) infrequent communion was the rule,³⁸ the chancel partition, as an established structure, nevertheless remained transparent.

³⁶ See Xydis, "Chancel Barrier," 18.

³⁷ See Taft, *Byzantine Rite*, for a well-outlined history of these liturgical changes.

³⁸ Mathews, *Early Churches*, 173.

However, the work of S. Gerstel shows that by the 11th century the curtain began to emerge as a fixture of the chancel partition. The purpose of the curtain was to separate and hide the clergy's activities from the eyes of the faithful during parts of the liturgy. A letter of a certain Niketas, an official of Hagia Sophia, to Niketas Stethatos, abbot of Studios, discusses the use of the curtain, presumably in and around Constantinople:

In other places I have seen with my own eyes even a curtain hung around the holy bema [the raised portion of an Orthodox church where the altar rests—ed.] at the time of the mysteries. It is spread and conceals, so that not even the priests themselves are seen by those outside. This is what the Lord Eustathios (1019–1025), most blessed among the patriarchs, did.³⁹

The pervasiveness of the use of the curtain in Byzantine churches is hard to determine. Nor can it be determined if the use of the curtain remained a permanent feature of worship in any particular church structure. Nevertheless, changes to the altar partition were beginning to appear.

While the templon during this second stage continued to be transparent, a new feature of the chancel partition began to make its appearance. In the 12th-century Pantocrator ('All-Sovereign') Monastery in Constantinople, a range of images was fixed to the top of the architrave.⁴⁰ It is difficult to determine how widespread this development was for both churches of major metropolitan centers and churches in the provinces.

During the second stage, in which changes occurred around the altar, iconography corresponding to the evolving festal cycle of the Orthodox Church also began to appear. According to Epstein, the templon in the Pantocrator Monastery displayed scenes from Christ's life, including Palm Sunday, the Crucifixion, Anastasis

³⁹ Niketas Stethatos, *Opusculs et letters*, ed. Jean Darrouzes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 232–234, quoted in Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 8. Unlike scholars such as Epstein ("Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier"), who date the solid iconostasis after the 12th century, Gerstel suggests that the solid altar partition began to appear in Byzantium at this time.

⁴⁰ The Pantocrator Monastery, founded by Empress Irene (1118–1124), was completed by her husband, John II, after her death. See Epstein, "Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier," 2–10.

(Resurrection), Ascension, and Pentecost.⁴¹ The earliest mention of a (possible) festal icon being made available for veneration in liturgical celebration comes from the *typikon* of the Monastery of Keharitomenis in Constantinople, founded by Irene, wife of Alexis Comnenus (d. 1118).⁴² There is also the *menologion* (menology) of Basil II (d. 1025), which contains the codification of the liturgical calendar, including the festal icons and their respective celebrations.⁴³ In addition to scenes from the life of Christ, there were other chancel partitions of this second stage of development that displayed the deisis icons. From the *diataxis* of the Monastery of Christ the All Merciful (Paniktirmos, ca. 1078) we know that the “templon has in the middle of the Deesis and (on either side?) the narrative of the honorable and holy Forerunner [John the Baptist].”⁴⁴ At the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos, an inventory list dating to ca. 1142 refers to 90 icons,⁴⁵ including a deisis and 12 festal icons. By the 15th century the deisis and the festal icons would become fixed tiers of the solid iconostasis in Russia.

The 15th century marks the beginning of the third stage of development for the iconostasis, a stage in which the most dramatic changes leading to the solid and vertically developed iconostasis in Russia occur. It is also the most difficult stage to outline.

Coinciding with the metamorphosis of the transparent chancel barrier into a multi-tiered solid structure is the 14th-century hesychast controversy in Constantinople. The remaining sections of this study will suggest that the development of the Russian iconostasis might be linked to the clash that occurred within hesychasm, between the sectarian dualists who upheld unceasing prayer while rejecting or minimizing the sacraments, on the one

⁴¹ Epstein believes that these and other icons from the Pantocrator now make up the “uppermost enamel plaques of the Pala d’Oro of San Marco in Venice.” Epstein, “Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier,” 5.

⁴² It should be stressed that other than references to the icon of the Mother of God, which was accessible for veneration during the Feast of the Dormition, there is no mention of venerating icons corresponding to the other feasts. However, since the Dormition is the first and most detailed of the feasts listed in the *typikon*, one can surmise that it is the model for the others. See Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, 2: 696–697.

⁴³ See Labrecque-Pervouchine, *L’iconostase*, 39.

⁴⁴ Epstein, “Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier,” 6.

⁴⁵ Labrecque-Pervouchine, *L’iconostase*, 39.

hand, and those who sought to maintain a balance between prayer and sacramental participation, on the other.

V. Hesychasm and Sectarian Dualism

By the time of the Palamite controversy in 14th-century Constantinople, hesychasts—those practicing silent prayer or prayer of the heart—were being accused by their opponents, specifically Barlaam of Calabria (ca. 1290–1348), of practicing a form of Messalianism.⁴⁶ Generally speaking, the Messalians favored continuous prayer over participation in the church’s sacramental life. Though Palamas had contacts with Messalian monks, he strongly stressed the importance of sacraments to his flock in Thessalonika.⁴⁷ In addition to his sermons, the *Tomos Hagioriticus*—a kind of hesychast manifesto also composed by Palamas in defense of the monks on Mt. Athos—distanced itself from Messalianism by condemning it.⁴⁸

It is possible to suggest that consideration be given to the idea that movements within (and without) mainstream hesychasm may have helped to create the spiritual and therefore theological climate for the development of the solid multi-tiered iconostasis. The roots of some of these movements extend as far back as the fourth century and the emergence of the monastic movement. Usually when these movements are categorized, they fall under the heading of *dualism*. But as Father John Meyendorff has rightly stressed, there is a “vagueness” that accompanies the term.⁴⁹

Often *dualism* has been associated with the incompatibility of matter and spirit. While this was the case in some movements, including Messalianism, there is also a broader usage that serves our purposes. While dualistic movements varied in practice and

⁴⁶ The best study on St. Gregory Palamas and the hesychast controversies is Meyendorff’s *Introduction*. For a history of the Jesus Prayer see Hausherr, *Name of Jesus*.

⁴⁷ See e.g. Homilies 8, 15, 20, translated by Veniamin, *Homilies*; also Homily LVI, ed. Oikonomos, Athens, 1863, translated by Jérôme Cler, in *Grégoire Palamas: Homélie*s. A separate study is needed to compare and contrast Palamas’ teachings on unceasing prayer and sacramental life vis-à-vis his monastic and parochial audiences.

⁴⁸ Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, vol. 150, col. 1229A ff.

⁴⁹ Meyendorff, “St. Basil,” 227.

manifestation, they shared a common trait, which was the emphasis of continuous prayer over sacramental life. This certainly was the case with Messalianism (see section VI); hence its association with hesychasm by those who perceived the prayer of the heart as dualistic and sectarian. Characterized by ascetical effort and unceasing prayer, sectarian dualism sought to supplant liturgical worship and sacramental life. By the time of Palamas, *dualism* had developed into a movement that focused more on the polarization of prayer and sacraments than that of matter and spirit. Given this emphasis, sectarian dualism may provide an important theological perspective from which to see how the iconostasis in its completed form obscured not only the relationship between prayer and sacraments, but also the relationship of history and eschatology. Of course, these notions are contingent on whether it can be shown that sectarian dualism existed in 15th-century Russia.

Dimitri Obolensky is the scholar who showed that Messalianism, or sectarian dualism, spread from Byzantium to the Balkans.⁵⁰ Did it also spread to Russia? Unfortunately, there are few written sources to guide us. But Obolensky does offer some “scattered hints” that may support the idea that “individual Bogomils,” the Balkan counterpart to Byzantine Messalians, “may have proselytized in Russia between the 11th and the 15th centuries.”⁵¹ Even if sectarian proselytizing was unorganized and intermittent, four hundred years seem to be enough time to create local movements that could generate enough energy to form a liturgical and social ethos at odds with the balanced spirituality of Palamite hesychasm.

The dualism coming into the Balkans and Russia sought to reform both culture and Orthodox Christianity. During the 14th and 15th centuries, the Strigoľniki and Judaizers made inroads into northwestern Rus'. The Strigoľniki stressed moral purity and ascetic rigor. They refused to recognize the established church hierarchy and rejected the sacraments.⁵² How widespread the Strigoľniki movement was cannot be accurately ascertained. But that it

⁵⁰ Obolensky, *Bogomils*. Also see his *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 121.

⁵¹ Obolensky, *Bogomils*, 277.

⁵² Speransky, *Istoriia drevnei russkoi literatury*, 2: 51–53. Obolensky, *Bogomils*, 279.

had become a movement of considerable influence may be deduced from its penetration into Moscow and its subsequent condemnation by the Council of 1490. In addition to the Strigofniki, Judaizers were also numbered among the Novgorodian heretics. In a letter dated 25 February 1489 to Ioasaf, archbishop of Rostov and Yaroslavl', Gennadii, archbishop of Novgorod, identifies the Judaizers with the Messalians. Joseph of Volokolamsk (d. 1515) also listed the Judaizers as Messalians.⁵³

Moving southeast to Moscow from Novgorod, sectarian dualism had a local social appeal. According to Obolensky, dualism infused Slavic society with a renewed thirst for "personal righteousness, a desire for social justice, and pity for innocent suffering."⁵⁴ Given the social appeal of these sects, coupled with their rejection of the sacraments, is it possible that they could have had an impact on Orthodox worship, including the use of liturgical space?

Strictly speaking, these sectarian dualist movements cannot be directly traced to hesychasm. However, one should not be too hasty in assuming that there is an unbridgeable chasm between Russian dualism and those who practiced *hesychia* ('quietude' or 'stillness,' referring to the unceasing prayer of the heart or what is more commonly known as the Jesus Prayer). That St. Gregory Palamas had to defend the hesychasts from being accused of Messalianism might also suggest there was some truth to the accusations. Given the theological refinement of Palamas and his articulation of the distinction between the divine essence and energies, it is quite possible that some hesychasts were unable to keep abreast of his teachings and polemics. Consequently, the historian and theologian can venture to assume that the official hesychasm of the Orthodox Church as it was defended by Palamas may not have been universally accepted by the hesychasts themselves. Such a situation would also imply that, as with any spiritual or theological movement, the spread of hesychasm also included its aberrations, particularly those disregarding the place of sacraments in Christian life. A re-examination of Palamas's writings may show that a battle with two fronts was being waged about the practice of hesychasm. On one front, Palamas sought to demonstrate that the opponents of hesychasm were not only

⁵³ Obolensky, *Bogomils*, 280.

⁵⁴ Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 121.

arguing against an established practice of Orthodox spirituality, but also were opposing Orthodoxy itself. On the other, Palamas sought to articulate, especially in his sermons, the importance of sacramental life and to correct the extremes of sectarian dualism.

VI. Hesychasm and the Russian Iconostasis

In order to appreciate hesychasm as a spiritual movement that played a role in the formation of culture—both Byzantine and Slavic—one first must liberate it from the confines of the monastic cloister. Certainly, hesychasm was a movement that originated among monks. But by the 12th and 13th centuries, it had become associated with, and was even considered a driving force behind, the Palaeologan renaissance. This burst of spiritual and artistic creativity breached the walls of the monastery and extended into the Balkans and Russia.

Seen from this broader perspective, hesychasm permeated Byzantine and Slavic culture to the extent that it helped to create the basis for what can be termed Orthodox Christian humanism. Unlike the humanism of the West, the Christian humanism of the East focused on the transfiguration or deification of the person, enabled by participation in the uncreated light of God. The transfiguration of Christ before his disciples described in the synoptic Gospels became, for the hesychasts, the biblical affirmation par excellence of human participation in the life of God.⁵⁵

With and apart from its dualistic tendencies, hesychasm in 14th-century Russia was to become a driving force behind a developing spirituality. As in Byzantium, hesychasm in Russia was becoming a cultural phenomenon with spiritual/theological, artistic, and political dimensions. In part this can be attributed to the role of the hesychast patriarchs of Constantinople. From 1350 to the beginning of the 15th century, six of the seven patriarchs of Constantinople were hesychasts.⁵⁶ Even though the political waning of the Byzantine Empire was already advanced, the patriarchs of Constantinople still wielded, on behalf of the emperor, political

⁵⁵ See Mark 9:2 and parallels.

⁵⁶ Callistos I (1350–1354/1355–1363); Philotheos Kokkinos (1354–1355/1368–1376); Macarios, a non-hesychast (1376–1379/1390–1391); Neilos (1379–1388); Antonios (1389–1390/1391–1397); Callistos Xanthopoulos (1397); Matthew I (1397–1410).

influence that helped to hold the commonwealth together.⁵⁷ Orthodox Christianity, including hesychasm, was a political adhesive that helped to maintain Byzantine religious hegemony over Russia in the 14th century, which also aided hesychasm's penetration into Russia.

The relationship between Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos of Constantinople—a friend, disciple, and biographer of Palamas—and Cyprian of Kiev and Moscow exemplifies the political and ecclesiastical bonds forged between Byzantium and Russia. By the time Cyprian became Metropolitan of Kiev and Moscow (1390–1406), maintaining unity with Constantinople was a primary concern, due to the political and ecclesiastical climate that had previously threatened to draw Kiev and Moscow into the sphere of Lithuania. Given the tension among Constantinople, Lithuania, and the Metropolitanate of Kiev and Moscow, political and ecclesiastical stability was the concern of the day.

As a sign of his political and ecclesiastical fidelity to Constantinople, Metropolitan Cyprian sought to introduce Russia to the expanded version of the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*. Read on the first Sunday of Great Lent, the *Synodikon* affirms the teachings of Orthodoxy while listing and anathematizing its opponents. Originally the expanded *Synodikon* marked the final defeat of iconoclasm in Constantinople in 843.

Coinciding with the first Sunday of Great Lent, the celebration marking the end of the second wave of iconoclasm was both a political and an ecclesiastical event. By seeking to use the expanded *Synodikon* of Constantinople, Cyprian's fidelity to New Rome sought not only to maintain the political bond between Byzantium and Russia, but also to ensure theological continuity with the mother church. This unity and continuity of faith included the acceptance and defense of an integrated hesychasm, since the expanded version of the *Synodikon* upheld the teachings of Palamas and condemned his opponents. Hence, rather than being an

⁵⁷ See Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 2: "With characteristic semantic ambiguity, the Byzantines applied the terms used to describe their own state—*basileia* (empire), *oikoumene* (the inhabited universe), *politeuma* (government, community)—to group the nations over which they claimed sovereignty. The word 'commonwealth', likewise ambiguous is used ... as a rough equivalent of at least the last of these Greek terms. No precise constitutional significance should be ascribed to it, nor is its purpose to suggest any modern parallel."

exercise associated with the mental and bodily techniques practiced in the monastic cell, hesychasm, as taught and defended by Palamas, was a fundamental component of Orthodoxy to be embraced, at least theoretically, by all the faithful.

For Cyprian, the *Synodikon* was a standard of theological and political solidarity with Byzantium. Writing to the clergy of Pskov in 1395, Cyprian states with some irritation the need to adhere to the Orthodoxy of Constantinople: "I sent you the correct text of the *Synodikon* of Constantinople, which we also follow here [in Moscow] in commemorating [the Orthodox] and cursing the heretics! You should also conform yourself to it."⁵⁸ Was Cyprian's letter prompted by a political or theological breaking of ranks on the part of the Pskov clergy? In any case, we are given the impression that Russian conformity to Byzantine Orthodoxy was not universally established. A lack of uniformity in practice and teaching would have made possible the existence and development of a type of hesychasm that deviated from Palamas and Orthodoxy in general.

Since the *Synodikon* was perceived by Cyprian as a means to secure a stronger theological and political bond between Constantinople and Moscow/Kiev, is it possible that he was using the updated *Synodikon* to address the problem of sectarian dualists? The question is raised for two reasons. First, given the various strata and recensions of the *Synodikon* added over the course of three Byzantine dynasties,⁵⁹ sectarian dualism appears as a recurring heresy. What had been condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431 persisted and spread. And second, as the *Synodikon* maintains, dualists—in particular Messalians and Bogomils—are associated with the detractors of hesychasm and of Gregory Palamas. Among the six anathemas hurled at the opponents of hesychasm, the Messalians were included in the company of Barlaam and Akindynos, who maintained that the divine essence is visible.⁶⁰ The heretical idea that the divine essence is visible lends itself to the theologically incorrect idea that it may be apprehended intellectually and physically.⁶¹ Because detractors of hesychasm

⁵⁸ *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka* 6 (1880): col. 241, trans. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 260n119.

⁵⁹ The three dynasties are: Macedonian (867–1056); Comnenan (1081–1185) and Palaeologan (1259–1453).

⁶⁰ *Le Synodikon de L'Orthodoxie*, 81, lines 579–580.

⁶¹ Gouillard in *Le Synodikon de L'Orthodoxie*, 240n10.

considered the divine essence knowable, and their goal was to apprehend the essence of God, one has the impression that by the 14th century the core of dualism no longer adhered to the strict ontological polarity of matter and spirit, created and uncreated.⁶² Is the *Synodikon*, in its defense of hesychasm and Palamas, referring to some other polarity?

According to the manuscript tradition of the *Synodikon*, sometime between the 10th and 11th centuries sectarian dualists were implicitly tied to a clandestine movement. Converts, including clergy, from Orthodoxy to sectarian dualism were more or less able to remain undercover, since they feigned membership in the official church. According to the *Synodikon*, such converts continued to participate “in a hypocritical way” in the church’s sacramental life. Thus, they would accept the Eucharist not as the “precious body and blood of the Savior,” but as “mere bread and wine.”⁶³

Given the tenacity of sectarian dualism to survive and spread, can we detect in Cyprian’s desire to have the Russian Church follow the updated *Synodikon* of Constantinople a need to confront dualism on his own turf? As a clandestine movement with no visible parallel institution, sectarian dualism, ironically, would find its breeding ground in the Orthodox Church. By the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th centuries, can we find in Russia a type of sectarian dualism that was in a new stage of development, where the core belief stressed the polarity between prayer and the sacraments?

These issues bring us to two iconographers, the monastic Saints Feofan (Theophanes) Grek (ca. 1340–ca. 1410) and Andrei Rublev (ca. 1360–1430?). But before their work can be placed within the conflict between balanced and dualistic hesychasm, the question to be raised is whether they were hesychasts themselves, and, if not, whether they were influenced by the hesychast movement?

As noted above, Byzantine hesychasm was a movement not confined to the monastery. In the case of Feofan, even if he had not been trained as a hesychast monk, one cannot easily dismiss

⁶² The polarization of matter and spirit/created and uncreated have Gnostic antecedents to which Messalianism was attached. See, Runciman, *Medieval Manichee*, 5–25.

⁶³ *Le Synodikon de L’Orthodoxie*, 69, lines 367ff. in Gouillard, 237; and Meyendorff, *Introduction*, 55–57.

the fact that he must have been aware of the hesychast controversy in Constantinople and that he also knew and studied the iconography of the Paleologan renaissance that filled the churches of the Byzantine capital and neighboring areas. The words of Father John Meyendorff concisely outline the career and contributions of Feofan:

By far the most famous Byzantine master working in Russian is undoubtedly Theophanes “the Greek.” His career is known to us from the chronicles, but also, quite interestingly, from a letter written around 1415 by Epiphanius the Wise, author of the *Lives* of St. Sergius and St. Stephen of Perm, to the abbot Cyril of Tver. Having first worked in Constantinople, Chalcedon, Galata and Caffa, Theophanes came to Novgorod and decorated, in 1378, the Church of the Transfiguration, and other monuments. He also worked in Nizhnii Novgorod and, finally in Moscow, particularly in the Church of the Annunciation and the Archangel Michael in the Kremlin.⁶⁴

The vibrant colors used by Theophan and his ability to depict the inner movement of the human person towards God point to his personal genius as an iconographer and his familiarity with hesychasm. In addition, his accents of bold white strokes in the faces and vestments painted in the Church of the Transfiguration and the colors of the deisis row in the Moscow Kremlin’s Annunciation Cathedral attempt to represent the eternal dynamism into the divine life.

Little is known about Rublev. Nevertheless, his relationship with Feofan and the form of Russian monasticism influenced by St. Sergii of Radonezh (d. 1394) no doubt added to Rublev’s knowledge of the life and thought of hesychasm. That Rublev spent time in the lavra founded by St. Sergii also attests to his familiarity with Sergii’s monastic rule.

Perhaps the best source that helps to establish a hesychast context for Rublev is the *Life of St. Sergii* by Epiphanii the Wise. Though the text makes no mention of hesychasm as a movement, there are strong signs pointing to St. Sergii’s connection with balanced hesychasm. According to Epiphanii, it is Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople who instructs Sergii to form his monks into a cenobitic community in which everything was to be held in common. Cenobitic monasticism also extended community life beyond

⁶⁴ Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 140–141.

the cell and refectory, so that the rhythm of prayer and work was regulated for all. The *Life* by Epiphaniï also highlighted the centrality of liturgical and sacramental life. References to the daily celebration of the Eucharist and the appearance of light surrounding St. Sergii even at the time of his death are more than minor traces of hesychastic overtones. “The saint’s face, unlike that of other dead, glowed with the life of the living...”⁶⁵ The *Life of St. Sergii* calls for further investigation into the liturgical and theological influences of Byzantine hesychasm on subsequent hagiographies in both Greek and Slavonic.⁶⁶

Given the above, it seems unlikely that Feofan and Rublev were oblivious to or unaffected by the hesychast movement. Could it be that the unusually large panels of the deisis row⁶⁷ on the iconostasis of the Annunciation Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin were an attempt by Feofan and his assistants to defend a balanced hesychasm—that is, a hesychasm in which there was no polarity between prayer and the sacraments? The size of the panels, the posture of prayer assumed by the figures and their placement above the main entrance to the altar table where the Eucharist is celebrated point to a collective statement stressing the balance of prayer and sacramental life.

The same question can be raised regarding Rublev’s “Trinity” icon, which stresses the centrality of Eucharistic life. Was this icon an attempt to balance and clarify the understanding of Byzantine hesychasm as it was expressed in the *Synodikon*, within the walls of the monastery founded by St. Sergii and dedicated to the Trinity? More than any of the other masterpieces of Rublev, his Trinity icon literally places the Eucharist in the center of its composition. One can easily notice how the inner outline of the angels on the left and right of the image form a chalice. Contained within this chalice is the Eucharistic chalice which rests on the altar.

Can we see a joint effort on the part of these two artists to articulate through their iconography a hesychast response to sectarian dualism? Is it more than a coincidence that Moscow’s Palatine Chapel, with its imposing deisis, and the Troitse-Sergievo Monastery, one of the great centers of Russian spirituality, with its engaging Trinity icon, were formulating through iconography a balanced

⁶⁵ Translated in Fedotov, *A Treasury*, 54–84.

⁶⁶ See Tachaios, “Le Mouvement,” 114.

⁶⁷ Each panel measures six by three feet.

hesychasm of prayer and the Eucharist? Can we detect an alliance between the Russian Church and its grand princes to establish a balanced hesychasm that would maintain political and theological unity with Byzantium?

If we venture to offer affirmative answers to the above questions, then we can begin to see two theological movements in conflict [with each other] within the same church. It seems that we cannot separate the results of this conflict from the transformation of the transparent templon into the multi-tiered solid iconostasis. As icon panels began to fill the spaces of the templon, the solid iconostasis continued its structural ascent, so that by the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries the solid iconostasis basically consisted of six tiers. In descending order, these tiers are 1) Forefathers, 2) Patriarchs, 3) Prophets, 4) Feasts, 5) Deisis, and 6) Icons for local, accessible veneration.⁶⁸

During this transformation, the place of the Eucharist in Orthodox worship becomes visually obscured. As for the frequency of receiving the Eucharist, we know that by the 14th and 15th centuries the chalice was rarely approached by the laity. Based on the *Izmaragd (The Emerald)* manuscripts dating back to the 14th century, it seems that liturgical life became the context for moral exhortation. Penance and ascetical discipline presented in these texts resonated with the moral rigor of the sectarian dualists. Coinciding with the enclosure of the altar from the nave, can the ethical displacement of the Eucharist also be seen as a contributing factor to the development of the solid iconostasis?⁶⁹ If so, then moral improvement and perfection became the goals of the Christian. The panoply of saints depicted on the iconostasis showed them as model Christians and not as disciples of Christ who, by engaging in spiritual warfare whether inside or outside the monastic cloister, were nourished by prayer and the reception of the Eucharist.

Given the appearance of the solid iconostasis and what Fedotov called the “decrease of interest in the Eucharistic significance of the Liturgy,”⁷⁰ what changes occurred in the semiotics of both liturgy and icon? Can we detect a shift in the understanding of the

⁶⁸ See Labrecque-Pervouchine, *L'Iconostase*, 89. See also Zhuravieva, “Forefathers Tier” 490ff, English summary, 737–738 and Bobrik, “Last Supper Icon,” 525 ff., English summary, 739–741.

⁶⁹ See Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind*, 2: 108–112.

⁷⁰ Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind*, 2: 357.

function and purpose of liturgical worship? Answers to these questions require a separate study. To conclude, however, it is possible to say that the solid iconostasis helped to create a vision of liturgy and icon that had little, if anything, to do with the interpenetration of history and eschatology.⁷¹

The transformation of liturgical space into one new and deified reality held within the mystery of the Eucharist was blurred. The divine/human synergy necessary for the *reformation* and *transfiguration* of the cosmos became obstructed. The emphasis on Christ's second coming as both an inaugurated and anticipated reality slipped into the background of liturgical worship. The quest for individual perfection displaced *Marana Tha*. The accent on unceasing prayer, participation in the essence of God, and ethics re-conceived the icon as the depiction of a moral person deified by his participation in the uncreated light of God, which precluded participation in the deified bread and wine of the Eucharist. The world as sacrament and therefore the *perichoresis* of matter and spirit, divinity and humanity, became obscured. The solid iconostasis disrupted the balanced hesychasm of Palamas articulated and seen through the iconography of Feofan Grek, Andrei Rublev, and their disciples. From available materials it appears that another theology/spirituality continued to develop that would be manifested in the tensions, struggles, and schisms that ensued over the course of Russian ecclesiastical history.

⁷¹ For an opposing view see Conostas, "Symeon of Thessalonike," 179–183. Concluding his defense of the iconostasis with the insights of Fr. Pavel Florensky's *Iconostasis*, the author overlooks the fact that the solid altar partition did not in any way contribute to the recovery of Eucharistic life for either the Byzantines or Slavs.

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