Introduction: Tradition, Transition and Change in Greek Orthodoxy at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century

Vasilios N. Makrides and Victor Roudometof

The interdisciplinary study of Orthodox Christianity in various local/national contexts is presently conducted more systematically than in the past and attracts wider attention worldwide. This is due not least to the radical changes in the former Eastern Bloc countries after 1989–1991, including the consequent wars in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. In most of these countries Orthodox Christianity has traditionally had firm footholds and was the majority religion. Thus, since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Orthodox Christianity has become a major focus of social science research (Borowik 1999; Borowik and Tomka 2001; Roudometof, Agadjanian and Pankhurst 2005; Byrnes and Katzenstein 2006, part III; Naumescu 2007; Révay and Tomka 2007), although this is not uniform across all social sciences (Hann 2007: 403–4). Yet, when combining the experience of communism in the former USSR, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia with the cultural heritage of Orthodox Christianity in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, it is not always easy to discern the impact of Orthodox Christianity *as such* on the contemporary political and cultural developments in the region. While statistics show considerable religious revival in the predominantly Orthodox countries of the region, researchers have expressed doubt as to whether this rise in statistics reflects a new reality (Borowik 2002; Agadjanian and Roudometof 2005). In this instance, as well as in other cases, the intertwining of communist legacy and religious tradition has often become detrimental to the researchers' efforts. Most importantly, serious reservations exist with regard to the extent that Orthodox Christianity deviates from Western standards of religiosity and therefore warrants the development of different interpretative tools for its study. The inevitable question is subsequently raised about whether Orthodox countries possess a religiosity congruent with West European values – an issue strongly coloured by political partisanship, for it is tied up with the question of how far Orthodox countries should be viewed as legitimate members in the family of nations belonging to the European Union.

With its historically predominant and strong Orthodox Church, Greece emerges as an important testing ground with regard to the aforementioned and related issues. In the everlasting and renewed debate on the relationship between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Western (Catholic and Protestant) Christianity,

it is a country uniquely situated to allow for a disentanglement of the relationship between communist legacy and Orthodox tradition. This is because it is the only continental Eastern European country that was never part of the communist bloc. In contrast, up until recently (2004/2007) it was the only Orthodox country that was a member-state of the European Union, while its history manifests a strong engagement with West European culture and politics.

By offering evidence of the manner in which Orthodoxy is shaping the domains of culture, society, ethnicity and politics, our goal is to allow scholars and researchers to use the Greek experience as a means for fleshing out some of the institutional characteristics and cultural attributes clearly identified with the Eastern Orthodox tradition. In this respect, this volume does not intend to examine the Greek case in isolation from broader European and/or global trends. On the contrary, the goal is to place the Greek case in the context of contemporary social scientific and cultural-historical studies on the relations between religion, globalization and European modernity. Greece's religious trajectory provides a template upon which to examine the extent to which Orthodox religious norms and institutions can successfully adopt European Union conventions, demands, political directives and social norms. Given the European Union's relatively recent expansion into additional Orthodox countries (Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania), the Greek experience might also provide some insight with regard to the institutional and societal challenges that European Union membership will pose to the broader family of Orthodox nations.

Scholarly and interdisciplinary interest in Greece's Orthodox Christianity has certainly existed in previous decades, yielding significant results (Hann 2007: 387–8, 392, regarding social anthropological studies). Yet the event that ignited a renewed recent interest in the study of Greek Orthodoxy was the ascendancy to the Archbishopric of Athens and All Greece of Christodoulos Paraskevaidis, a charismatic person who played a critically important role in publicizing a variety of issues within the broader Greek society and abroad. Without doubt, his period in office (1998–2008) marked an important phase in the development of Greek Orthodoxy that was controversially evaluated, both in Greece and abroad. For some, Christodoulos was a radical transformer of Greek Orthodoxy with the purpose of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. For others, Christodoulos represented a dangerous, but covert, traditionalism and nationalism, unable to understand the spirit of modern times and promoting an outdated vision of church and society. Leaving aside the often-heated arguments of both sides, one thing is sure: Christodoulos' era acted as a catalyst for a more systematic dealing with Greek Orthodoxy, particularly for scholars beyond the narrow theological domain who earlier had usually shown minimal interest in Orthodoxy and religious issues generally. This is evident, for example, in the number of scholars from diverse backgrounds who dealt from their own particular perspective with the serious controversy between church and state in 2000 over the inclusion of data regarding religious affiliation on personal identity cards of Greek citizens. Among others, Vasilios N. Makrides and Lina Molokotos-Liederman (2004) have organized

and edited a special issue of the journal *Social Compass* focusing on religious controversies in contemporary Greece.

Yet, despite the numerous and, in many cases, heated discussions surrounding several areas pertaining to the current relationship between Orthodox Christianity, culture, society, identity and politics at large in Greece, many of these discussions still suffer from either old-fashioned anti-religious biases or both covert and open apologetic tendencies in favour of the church. The result is a polarization of the discourse between anti-church polemics and pro-church dithyrambs (often uncritically praising the hierarchs or the church). This is due to many reasons. As far as Greece is concerned, religious matters had been considered until recently to be the exclusive domain of theologians and church people. This was the outcome of the strong polarization between the Orthodox church and a significant portion of the intellectuals in the country throughout the twentieth century. Non-theological research on religious phenomena has thus been long neglected. The specific research field of religious history has been almost non-existent in Greece; it was mostly absorbed by the dominant and confessionally oriented church history (Makrides 2004). It is also no wonder that there is still no separate, autonomous department of religious studies in a Greek university. Only in the last three decades has there been a greater interest in religious phenomena in Greece from a non-theological perspective. Yet in many cases the related research still remains bound to older and mostly outdated perspectives, although there have certainly been quite distanced and balanced approaches as well (Karagiannis 2008).

In light of this enhanced awareness of the wide significance of Orthodox Christianity in contemporary Greece, there is a clearly defined necessity in the literature, but also in the broader public debate, for a more balanced treatment of the vortex of relationships between Orthodoxy, culture, state and society at large. This need becomes even more pressing, as Greece has undergone radical transformations in the last decades, from an underdeveloped country in the 1950s to a modern member-state of the European Union (since 1981), entering the twenty-first century in the context of enhanced globalization. This entire, long-term process has affected, among other things, the Orthodox Church itself, which has also been subjected to inexorable laws of socio-historical change. The changes within Greece's religious landscape, albeit slow and patent in many cases, need serious consideration and might offer clues with regard to broader regional trends concerning the evolution of Orthodox Christianity in the twenty-first century and its place in the post-1989 'New Europe'.

With this broader contention in mind, this volume assumes the task of examining various aspects of Orthodox Christianity's evolution in Greece in the post-Cold War era, with a particular focus on the period of Archbishop Christodoulos. The volume's chapters combine a variety of research methods ranging from qualitative and quantitative analyses to comparative cultural-historical approaches. All studies employ a flexible frame of reference and therefore do not attribute fixed characteristics to Orthodox Christianity; more importantly, they offer a balanced treatment of the various issues selected without anti-religious or confessional

undertones and thus do not engage in idle polemics. To anticipate conclusions, it is the editors' and the authors' conviction that the observed changes within Greece's religious landscape, no matter how they appear at first glance, may be regarded as promising signs towards a new Orthodox Church that will emerge in the course of the twenty-first century.

The most crucial and perhaps trickiest issue in dealing with Orthodox Christianity in Greece (and beyond that) is how to adequately assess, on the one hand, its boundedness to tradition, and on the other, the various changes in the course of history and particularly in eras of transition. Such an era was certainly the one initiated by the late Archbishop Christodoulos, yet the evaluations of this period are quite divergent and at times quite contradictory. Was Christodoulos a true modernizer of the Church and Greece's Orthodoxy? Or was he a pure and militant traditionalist hiding under the guise of an allegedly modernizing discourse? This constitutes the crux of the whole matter.

To elucidate this complex matter, let us mention some characteristic examples. How is one to evaluate, for example, the 'ID crisis' of 2000? The images of Greek bishops and believers protesting against the Greek government's effort to institute new ID cards that would exclude an entry for religious affiliation were widely circulated among the European public (for various analyses, see Molokotos-Liederman 2003, 2007a, 2007b; Stavrakakis 2003; Makrides 2005; Roudometof 2005). This episode marked not only a new era of church–state relations but also a turning point in the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Greek public. Outside Greece, the ID card crisis also contributed greatly to the proliferation of a negative image of the Orthodox Church. The church's image was that of an anti-modern institution set against the forces of modernization and Europeanization. To sceptics, it offered additional evidence about the incompatibility of Orthodoxy and modernity and for excluding Orthodox countries from the European Union. To more knowledgeable specialists, the entire affair indicated that Greece is not isolated from the nearly worldwide religious revival and the de-privatization of religion observed in most developed or still-developing countries (Casanova 1994; Hanes 1998). Related research has suggested that Western Europe remains an 'exceptional case' compared to worldwide de-secularization trends (Davie 2002), thereby increasing the visibility of the Greek Orthodox case vis-à-vis the more 'sceptical' West Europeans.

It is important to note, then, that the ID card crisis was one of a broader range of topics that have marked the forceful appearance of the church in public life in a new form under the aegis of Archbishop Christodoulos. The Orthodox Church has found itself in a new and evolving social and cultural landscape. The influx of close to a million legal and illegal immigrants into Greece since 1989 has seriously affected the traditional fabric of Greek society by producing serious challenges due to religious plurality and multicultural coexistence and conditions on the ground as part of the very reality of everyday life. Simultaneously, the European Union and various Europeanization projects spearheaded by the state and other supranational institutions sought to provide a legal and institutional framework for

registering this new situation into state legislature and administrative practice. To the above, it is necessary to add the cultural influx of new mass media that have further added to the impression of a siege upon traditional 'local' institutions like the church – a siege allegedly waged by broader 'global' forces.

The Orthodox Church reacted to these multiple challenges by re-entering the public domain forcefully in order to reassert its traditional privileged legal, social and cultural status. Its efforts have been variously referred to as 'politicization' of the church or 'de-privatization' of Orthodoxy (Alivizatos 1999; Stavrakakis 2003; Roudometof 2005). The politicization of Orthodoxy has been expressed in a variety of issues raised in the context of church–state relations: cremation, catechism in Greek public schools, the status of civil versus church weddings, the church's role in providing welfare for ethnic Greeks alone, the construction of a mosque in Athens, the status of the oath in public ceremonies and the rights of non-Orthodox religious minorities – all are topics of great concern that involve the state and its relationship to the Orthodox Church. But the de-privatization of religion has also been expressed in a tapestry of topics pertaining to the relationship between Orthodox Christianity and the broader Greek society and culture; for example, the church's newfound role in welfare, the use of popular music to convey religious messages and the efforts to come to terms with the role of women in the church are all examples of a refashioning of the relationship between Orthodoxy and modern Greek society and culture.

Needless to say, the late Archbishop Christodoulos has been a key figure in this new chapter in the history of Orthodox Christianity in Greece, earning ardent supporters as well as vehement critics. His reform programme has met with mixed results, rendering the examination of this period a sine qua non for understanding the role of Orthodox Christianity in twenty-first-century Greece. His public reception within Greek society has been marked by strong and unusual polarization of views. Certainly, the Left has seen in him an epigone of the mentality of the nationalists, the ultra-right wing faction of the Right and other anti-communist forces. But even neo-liberal thinkers – such as former minister and free market promoter Andreas Andrianopoulos (2001) – have expressed reservations about the strong advocacy of the church–nation link asserted in Christodoulos' discourse and the siege mentality often evoked in his speeches and other forms of public communication. Still, the assertion of the church–nation link is less unusual than it might seem at first glance. In an analysis of the encyclicals of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Greece for the period between 1833 and 2000 Papageorgiou (2000) finds that this assertion has always informed the self-image of the church hierarchy. That is,

> the ecclesiology of the sender [that is, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Greece] is expressing a church that identifies with and walks among the Greek nation. The Church is always described as a national force. It holds the historical title of the national Church, and it is in this capacity that it faces contemporary

> problems and signals its presence in modern Greek society. (Papageorgiou 2000: 279–80, translation by the authors)

In the eyes of the hierarchy, religion, family and homeland are thus the cornerstones of Greek society. Consequently, Papageorgiou (2000: 284) concludes that the church's image is that of traditionalism and the past, 'a closed system that is connected to the values of the past without attempting openings towards … the present and the future'. In fact, the encyclicals reveal the synod's identification of itself with the church as an institution thereby excluding the laity from being active members in the workings of the institution. In conjunction with the legal ethics that prevail in the texts, the church's self-image is that of a bureaucracy that exists in collaboration with the state and often acts as an extension of public authority in a hierarchical manner ('top down') vis-à-vis its members. Subsequently, despite innovations, Christodoulos was far less exceptional in the substance of his approach and thinking than critics often assume. The Archbishop's unique charisma lay, among other things, in his unparalleled ability to express opinions and views openly and directly in a manner highly effective for his audience. But the church's stance vis-à-vis various legislative efforts of the state has basically been to declare secularizing initiatives as inherently 'anti-Christian' and aimed at the religious de-colouring of Orthodox Greece, only to find itself recapitulating on these fronts as time went on (see Nikolopoulos 2005 for a review of various cases).

Bearing these early considerations in mind, it is evident that issues such as the controversial era of Archbishop Christodoulos should be treated preferably with caution, avoiding the usual polarizations between tradition and modernity and considering it from different yet complementary perspectives on the basis of various cases and examples. In this introductory chapter, we aim to accomplish this task initially, not only by pointing to the main characteristics that have shaped the history and the transition of Greek Orthodoxy into the twenty-first century, but also by highlighting the main themes treated in this volume by reference to the individual chapters. The structure of the volume reflects the dual nature of the engagement between Greek Orthodoxy, the state/politics and society/culture at large. Consequently, the volume is organized into two thematically closely related parts. Part I examines various issues in the relationship between Orthodoxy, Greek ethnicity and politics by referring specifically to recent debates and attempts to reconfigure church–state relations and renegotiate church–state boundaries (for example the impact of globalization on the Orthodox Church as a 'public religion', the legal status of non-Orthodox religious minorities, institutional innovations in the church due to non-Orthodox challenges, the internal problems in the church organization and its modernization through state support). Part II examines the shifting boundaries between Orthodox tradition and change in light of Greece's ongoing cultural and social modernization, which has also triggered significant debates. Material drawn from contemporary cases will show here the hybridization of the Greek Orthodox tradition as it responds creatively to the challenges of late

modernity or postmodernity (for example the church's renewed active involvement with contemporary social problems at a local level, the different constituencies, including the official church, involved in the debate over the construction of the Athens mosque, the oscillation between tradition and modernity regarding women's issues, Greek religious life compared with the broader European standards and unusual phenomena such as a rock group of Orthodox monks conveying religious messages).

In dealing with these issues in both parts of this volume, the following considerations should be borne in mind. First, it is vital to avoid seeing Greek Orthodoxy as a monolithic bloc represented solely by the official Church of Greece and its hierarchy. In fact, there exist many independent and even contradictory voices within Greek Orthodoxy, which is anything but a homogeneous and static entity. By taking a closer look at the various Orthodox organizations at the grass-roots level, the numerous independent Orthodox thinkers or theological circles, the different rigorist milieux or the broader monastic domain, the internal differentiation of Greek Orthodoxy becomes far more evident. This means that plurality and variations in orientation, attitudes and practices can be observed at various levels and with varying intensity throughout Greek Orthodoxy.

Eleni Sotiriu's chapter, for example, shows that many traditional views against the ordination of women have been called into question by several contemporary Orthodox circles, that the official church has proceeded to the revival of the old ecclesiastical office of the deaconesses and that Greek women, although still considering themselves Orthodox, do not follow the directives of the church in bioethical matters (contraception, abortion) but, rather, follow their own individual dictates and preferences. Lina Molokotos-Liederman's chapter about the Free Monks, a rock band of Orthodox monks, also deals with a highly innovative phenomenon within Greek Orthodoxy, aimed at reaching young people and disseminating as well as rejuvenating the Orthodox Christian message. No doubt, this initiative challenged the Orthodox establishment by actively reaching out towards young Greeks and putting a spin on the idea of being Orthodox. Yet it remained a rather unique and unprecedented phenomenon that did not enjoy the endorsement of the official church or of the broader Orthodox body. In his chapter on the Athens mosque from a social anthropological/ethnographic perspective, Dimitris Antoniou additionally illuminates the multiplicity of voices within Greece's Orthodox communities of activists, including the militant Old Calendarists, the church and the broader society. While outsiders often view the church's response as unified, this chapter shows that the principal voices against the mosque come from a community where right-wing politics and religious conservatism (in the form of adherence to the Old Calendar) are often intertwined to construct self-images of cultural warriors fighting to protect the Greek nation and the Orthodox faith from outside corruption. In contrast, the official church often engages in doubletalk and keeps a far more open and nuanced stance in an effort to continue ongoing processes of negotiation and debate with all constituencies, ranging from those in favour of the mosque to those dead set against it. All these

examples make it clear that we are dealing with a highly diversified and complex Orthodox landscape in Greece that cannot be simply subsumed under one common, all-encompassing denominator.

Second, it is more than true that tradition remains a most vital and crucial issue in the Orthodox world as a whole, including that of Greek Orthodoxy. In such a context, traditionalism, in both orientation and practice, is thus not out of the ordinary, with far-reaching consequences (Ramet 2006). Generally speaking, Orthodox Christianity appears to be a more traditional form of Christianity than Roman Catholicism and, particularly, Protestantism. The respective socio-historical evolution of these churches attests to this. Yet this hardly means that changes and reforms do not occur at all in Orthodox Christianity, a recurrent topic and demand in recent theological discussions (Kalaïtzidis 2008a). Aside from those that can be openly observed, some changes, while they have effected the church, [they] are still covered in official discourse under the veil of tradition. This makes them to appear 'traditional', thus avoiding potential reactions from Orthodox hardliners. Thus a flexible approach can enable one to discern developments within Greek Orthodoxy that do not show a strict and blind attachment to tradition. This is true in many respects for the period of Archbishop Christodoulos as well. For example, in September 2004, with the approval of the Holy Synod, he started a pilot scheme in Athenian churches regarding the Gospel readings during the Divine Liturgy. The Greek original (Hellenistic Koine) was to be followed by a translation in Modern Greek in order for believers to understand fully the meaning of the text. This was decided mainly because of pastoral concern. Although this change was later abandoned for several practical and other reasons, it did show a church ready to experiment in quite sensitive areas such as the Liturgy. No doubt, tradition-boundedness clearly predominates throughout most domains of the church. A proposal to introduce Modern Greek into the whole Divine Liturgy was rejected in 2002, for example.

Sotiriu's chapter in this volume clearly shows that the church's views on most women's issues are still informed by traditionalist, patriarchal and pre-modern mentalities that have little actual bearing on recent developments. Tradition is also the main reason for the exclusion of women from Mount Athos. Even the observed 'feminization' of the church in recent years has not been brought about by open challenge of the male hierarchy but, rather, through a complete submission to tradition. But, in general terms, many issues are no longer considered taboo and thus are open to reflection and discussion, while necessary adjustments are not out of the question in the future. The church is ready to undertake innovations, even if only in its own way, in addressing contemporary problems and modern challenges (for example the creation of a special church committee on bioethics).

Innovations came also from the broader Orthodox domain, as Molokotos-Liederman's chapter on the Free Monks clearly shows. This is a case hardly indicative of an Orthodox milieu fully immersed in the darkness of traditionalism. Further, Effie Fokas's chapter, based on extensive fieldwork in the Diocese of Thiva and Livadeia, analyses recent innovations in the role of the Orthodox

Church in providing welfare at a local level, where most of the welfare is actually played out – not at the national level, where the entanglements between church and state are much stronger. Activity at the local level is thought to provide a much-needed revival in the church, which is particularly significant in light of the crisis of the welfare state. The church thereby assumed a new role as an independent provider of diverse welfare services to the population, not just in complementing the welfare activities of the state and working under its tutelage. With regard to the offered services, for example regarding drug-addicted prisoners, this development can be evaluated as a modernizing step for the church.

Third, talking about religion and modernity in the overall Orthodox (see Buss 2003) and, more specifically, in the Greek Orthodox context must necessarily take into consideration the specificities of this religious culture. In other words, one should not forget that Orthodox Christianity was never part of the Western European project of modernity, to which both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, each of course in a different way, have historically contributed. More importantly, Western Christianity and churches, despite earlier serious tensions and conflicts, have today come to terms with the basic tenets of modernity and accepted its legitimacy. They actually grew together with it and experienced its ups and downs, thus becoming an inseparable part of the today's modern Western European establishment. Needless to say, for several reasons (historical, cultural and so on) this has never been the case with Orthodox Christianity in general, including Greek Orthodoxy. This has quite a number of consequences. Among other things, it is not unusual to find Orthodox clerics and thinkers who outspokenly reject or harshly criticize Western European modernity and its achievements such as the Enlightenment, while proposing allegedly better alternatives from the Orthodox world (Makrides 2008). In addition, the Orthodox Church in general still uses a lot of pre-modern arguments and modes of thought in addressing modern challenges, a strategy that Western churches typically abandoned long ago. Yet, this should not turn into an accusation of the Orthodox Church being an anti-modern one. It was simply an unavoidable historical development for a church that was found outside the geographical, political and cultural area that generated Western European modernity. The same holds true for other religions, such as Islam, which have had an equally painful encounter with this form of modernity. Given this situation, it is not paradoxical that the Orthodox Church of Greece has reacted against certain modernizing – that is secularizing – attempts that, since the 1970s, have been initiated by the state (including the ID card crisis). Many politicians, intellectuals and social analysts falsely interpreted the fact that such reforms triggered considerable conflicts between church and state as an indication of Greek Orthodoxy's fundamental incompatibility with modernity. Yet by historically contextualizing these reactions, it becomes clear that they were absolutely expected and justified from the perspective of the Orthodox Church, one that has never experienced Western European modernity as an endogenous phenomenon. After all, Western churches, in particular Roman Catholicism, have had quite serious problems and difficulties adapting themselves to modernity, and

this took quite a long time to be achieved (for the Catholics, mainly after the Second Vatican Council, 1962–1965).

Victor Roudometof's opening chapter in this volume attempts to explain some of these Orthodox Christian particularities in the context of world historical globalization. It features an overview of the historical evolution of Greek Orthodoxy over the last five centuries, thereby placing the contemporary de-secularization trends into the context of the long-term socio-historical developments. In the course of the nineteenth century, a radical socio-cultural transformation took place, whereby Orthodox Christianity was cast into a new role suitable for the age of nations and nationalism. Orthodox Christianity thus experienced an unavoidable transformation from a universal church into a national religion. In this period one also witnessed the emergence of a new church–nation and church–state synthesis that finally turned Orthodoxy into an indispensable component of Greek national identity. In the post-1945 period, this synthesis has been greatly challenged by the currents of contemporary globalization, the growing imperative of conforming state policy to European Union directives and the secularization brought by post-1945 urbanization and modernization. The church's reaction to a whole host of issues is therefore often a response to the necessity to reassert this traditional synthesis in the face of contemporary challenges, a step that under these circumstances becomes quite understandable (see also Roudometof 2008).

Other chapters in this volume highlight a rather creative tension between Orthodox Christianity and modernity and oppose the strict bifurcation between tradition and modernity. Focusing on a sociological organizational analysis of the church and not on its public discourse, Anastassios Anastassiadis' chapter explores in an intriguing way what he calls the 'conservative modernization' of the church by looking at the institutional innovations propagated by the church's necessity to respond to the challenges of religious pluralism, as this is manifested by the operation of non-Orthodox or non-Christian religions in Greek territory. Inter-denominational controversies have been historically crucial for the church's modernization, as evidenced by the Orthodox–Roman Catholic antagonism in the areas of charity and education. Past experience – from the 1920s – suggests certain specific motifs that determine the church's reactions and responses to social changes and shifts in its institutional context. This new attitude became possible thanks to a shift of the church's focus from theological discussions, which had dominated during the Ottoman period and the nineteenth century, to social action (that is, charity/welfare) as a way of adapting to a new 'competitive-liberal' world. But for this shift to occur, it had to veil itself in a 'traditional' discourse. The 1920s experience, then, provides empirical material to support the thesis that an aggressive traditional discourse might not be a sign of ideological sclerosis, but a sign of conservative modernization instead. In this respect, the past might provide clues about understanding the current situation and explaining how the church is responding to social change and its apparently contradictory actions (for example, both anti-Western critique and alignment with Western churches for common purposes).

Furthermore, in characterizing Greek Orthodox women as 'the traditional modern' Sotiriu's chapter insinuates that tradition and modernity are variously and ambiguously intertwined in the Greek Orthodox context, a fact that defies simplistic categorizations or bifurcations. This is because Greek women appear to be special: they practise Orthodoxy and remain modern in their own way, simultaneously exhibiting a particular Greek stance and also challenging the male-dominated domains of the church. Molokotos-Liederman's chapter also brings to the surface again the hybridization of religious culture exemplified by the rock group of Orthodox monks, particularly the significance of their attempt to make their religious beliefs co-exist with the (post)modern world and globalization.

However, one caveat should be mentioned in this context: modernity is understood today in quite flexible and open ways, a fact that theoretically allows for many different, locally determined modernization processes and forms. After all, the discourse on 'multiple modernities' or 'global modernities' is quite in vogue today, yet it is vital not to define 'modernity' according to the principle of 'anything goes'. In other words, if every possible developmental trajectory in a certain country belongs to some kind of modernity, then the term will lose its analytical usefulness, particularly for comparative purposes. As regards the Greek Orthodox context, the church often claimed during the Christodoulos era that it possessed a modernizing potential of its own, which was not identical to the rather secular modernization programme of the state. Yet it is not always clear what exactly is meant in church circles by this kind of modernization. For example, the church exhibits many deficiencies in the area of civil society (Fokas 2008: 29–35) that can lead to serious complications with other institutions yet it does not always appear ready to remedy them by proceeding to the necessary changes. Several structural problems in the church organization became quite evident in the deep and multifarious crisis that erupted suddenly in 2005, when the church's deficiencies became the target of strong and systematic criticism. Vasilios Makrides' chapter deals with the background to this crisis, its significance for church–state relations and its repercussions. In the end, despite its temporary negative effects on the church's social profile, this crisis acted as a catalyst for some changes within the church organization and its modernization, albeit with the assistance of the state.

Fourth, the Greek Orthodox specificities become evident when looking at the notorious issues of religious intolerance and anti-pluralism in contemporary Greece, which have made headlines in recent decades, both in Greece and abroad (Anderson 2002; Groen 2003; Danopoulos 2004). Some scholars (Pollis 1993) have even argued that the Orthodox Christian system (due to its claim of exclusive religious truth and so on) is by nature nearly incompatible with modern pluralistic ideals and the idea of human rights. The fact that several Greek Orthodox thinkers (for example Christos Yannaras) have exerted serious critique on human rights and liberalism has also been adduced to prove the existing gap between Orthodox culture and modern democratic ideals. There is no need to deny the discrepancies between Orthodox and Western churches in this area, which can be observed nowadays throughout Eastern Orthodox Europe (Tomka and Yurash

2006). But as with the case of modernity, the Orthodox specificities in this domain can find plausible explanation. In other words, Western Christians and churches have become more pluralistic and have accepted religious dissidence after a long period of intolerance and concomitant conflicts. Both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have learned from this situation and finally come to terms with a state-induced regulation of religious affairs, a situation of peaceful inter-religious coexistence, as well as free competition and circulation of religious ideas. This is exactly what was lacking in the Orthodox world historically, where the Orthodox Churches, always aided and variously supported by the state, used to enjoy unique privileges in society, a fact that put obstacles in the way of religious equality between different faiths and the religious neutrality of the state. This also explains why Orthodox Churches are reluctant to share the 'religious market' with other pretenders of religious truth, Christian and otherwise, and to compete with them on equal terms. This also applies to the historically predominant Orthodox Church in Greece, a country that has been particularly challenged by the issue of multiculturalism in the last decades due to the influx of numerous immigrants. As was to be expected, the situation was far from satisfactory regarding the religious minorities in the country and their rights, as Prodromos Yannas' chapter shows. This refers to a wide spectrum of issues, such as the aforementioned conflict over identity cards, religious education, proselytism, the erection of places of worship for non-Orthodox minorities, as well as alternative military service and cremation. Members of such minorities, especially Jehovah's Witnesses, have won several court cases against Greece in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Yet in recent years there have been various legal and regulatory changes that have modernized Greek legislation, further secularized the Greek state and made Greek society more tolerant and respectful of differences. The main challenge remains a viable coping with the exigencies of a multicultural society and world, an unavoidable development nowadays, which even the church shows signs of slowly acknowledging.

The same holds true for the long-standing issue of constructing a mosque in Athens, which many critics have seen as marking Orthodox intolerance vis-à-vis other faiths (Muslims in particular). Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas, in Chapter 4, place the mosque issue within a broader canvas. Their chapter focuses on the mobilization of and political controversy surrounding the establishment of this mosque, in which not just the Orthodox Church of Greece was actively engaged. The chapter relates the mosque issue to the presence of a new Muslim immigration in the greater Athens area. It explores how the 'new' Islam is represented and recognized in relation to bequeathed structures and principles that govern the historically symbiotic interaction between church and state in Greece, which in the last two decades has been transformed de facto into a multicultural society. Such structures and principles have framed, and frequently constrained, the ways in which Muslim immigrants have been able to organize themselves in order to practise their faith, as well as the ways in which Greek state institutions have so far addressed these religious needs. By reviewing parliamentary proceedings and

material from the press, the chapter's empirical sections examine the changing stances of the church on this issue and the political debates that took place in the Greek parliament. It becomes obvious, in the end, that the first steps towards further domesticating Islam in Greece have already been made, not only by the political and public spheres, but by the church as well.

Historically speaking, the state's favouritism towards the Orthodox Church is clearly the corollary of an unavoidable historical development, namely the gradual nationalization of Orthodox Christianity. This is why church officials, including Archbishop Christodoulos, many politicians and other intellectuals kept supporting the privileges of the Orthodox Church, claiming that a greater secularization and the religious neutrality of the state would be nationally catastrophic. Let one not forget here that the intertwining of ethnic/national identity, on the one hand, and Orthodox identity, on the other hand, has become an established mark of Orthodox Christianity during the modern era of nations and nationalism (Roudometof 2001). Nationalization was, after all, the way to modernity that many predominantly Orthodox nation-states had chosen to adopt in the nineteenth century. It is from within this association that the relationship between the church, the state and non-Orthodox minorities becomes a highly complex and deeply problematic relationship for most of the nation-states of South Eastern Europe.

Roudometof's chapter reminds us again that the Orthodox world experienced a twofold transformation from a universal church into a national religion: its structural transformation entailed the establishment of national churches, while its cultural transformation entailed the redeployment of religious affiliation as a facet of national identity. This pertains to the specific Greek case too. The ID card crisis of 2000 is thus not an isolated case but part of a longer and fierce conflict over the cultural identity of Greek Orthodoxy. The 2004 conflict between the Church of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the latter's jurisdiction over Northern Greece is a further continuation of the same conflict between traditional Eastern Orthodox universalism and Greek-centred nationalist particularism (Roudometof 2008). Yet it is futile to deny the pervasive influence of this nationalization process upon the Orthodox Church in Greece today. It is certainly illusory to hope for a return to a pre-national, ecumenical period. Therefore, it seems more pertinent to look for ways of combining the traditional Orthodox ecumenicity with the exigencies of a contemporary 'national church' and reconfigurating the church's future agenda, which is without doubt a difficult, but not entirely unrealistic, task.

Fifth, it is important not to forget that in the Orthodox world, and more specifically in the Greek Orthodox context, most of the above-mentioned debates have been historically – and still are in many respects – conducted along the crucial divide between Orthodox East and Latin West. The need either to differentiate itself from the West or to mirror Western developments has been a decisive challenge for the Greek Orthodox world throughout the modern period up to today and has generated innumerable debates and conflicts. One still cannot argue that the Greek Orthodox world, aside from a few exceptions, has managed to find a healthy and

productive relationship with the West. The whole issue relates to the traditional Orthodox anti-Westernism, a virulent and quite influential current that still leaves its imprint on many contemporary debates (Makrides and Uffelmann 2003). Suffice it to remember the massive Greek Orthodox reactions to the one-day visit of Pope John Paul II to Athens back in 2001 (Seraïdari 2002). In this context, the West with all its material and intellectual products is mostly demonized and finally rejected as useless and even dangerous for the Orthodox East. The course that the West has taken from the Middle Ages onwards and throughout the modern period is negatively evaluated as a deviation from the authentic Orthodox Christian heritage. Yet the main question arising in this context is as follows: Is there still a way for the Greek Orthodox world to profit from Western developments, ranging from those in theological research up to the numerous achievements of modernity (tolerance, pluralism, human rights)? Many of the chapters in this volume point to ongoing changes taking place within the wider Greek Orthodox body under the positive influence – or challenge, if you want – of related developments in Western Christianity. Molokotos-Liederman's chapter thus places the Free Monks within the international world of faith-based music, including Christian contemporary music, but also music inspired by other religious faiths. After all, this Orthodox rock group certainly constitutes an innovation far more associated with US-based Protestant movements than with a traditional religion like Greek Orthodoxy. Further, Sotiriu's chapter makes clear that the women's issues and in particular female participation in ordained ministry have been addressed in the Greek Orthodox context under the pressure of related developments in Western Christianity, including feminist theology. Even if the ordination of women is officially rejected as a dangerous innovation stemming from the West and as an absolute impossibility, it is still obvious that individual Orthodox thinkers variously reflect upon the developments in Western Christianity today in a more constructive way. Needless to say, such attempts are proliferating in contemporary Greece as a new generation of Orthodox thinkers takes a critical stance towards the strong and tenacious anti-Westernism that has dominated Greek Orthodoxy in the second half of the twentieth century (Kalaitzidis 2008b; Kalaitzidis, Papathanassiou and Ambatzidis 2009).

Finally, we should say something about the specific Greek Orthodox religious life and practice. Should it be considered as exceptional in comparison to the rest of Europe, in particular with regard to Western Christianity? Fortunately, it has been possible recently to obtain comparative data on religious convictions and practices from most European countries on the basis of various cross-national statistical researches (for example the European Values Survey and the European Social Survey). The particular issue of Orthodox Christianity in such surveys has gained attention recently because sociologist Miklós Tomka (2006) has argued for using a special social scientific methodology to study and understand its otherness. This suggestion has been criticized, however, by other scholars as misleading, because statistical data do not reveal such an Orthodox otherness and extreme variations in religious practices between Eastern and Western Europe (see Flere

2008 with regard to Serbia). This notwithstanding, one should not overlook any existing differences between them that may call for a valid interpretation. One suggestion would be to avoid considering the Greek Orthodox case as an exceptional one, which it is not indeed. Rather, it would be helpful to take into consideration the various socio-historical specificities and other particularities of the Greek Orthodox milieu, which are still evident in many domains and which can help in the interpretation of statistical data.

Theoni Stathopoulou's chapter in this volume tries to make such a comparison with this perspective in mind. Analysing data from various successive rounds of the European Social Survey with regard to Greece and the rest of Europe, it provides concrete quantitative evidence with respect to the extent to which religious behaviour in Greece ought to be considered a deviation from broader European standards. Greece stands out in this survey for two reasons: its levels of religious practice (including church attendance and more subjective indices of religiosity) as well as trust in supranational institutions were shown to be higher in comparison to the other surveyed countries. Yet these trends are not exhaustive and do not mark out Greece as an exceptional case. Rather, they highlight changing patterns in the European landscape, which is, after all, quite heterogeneous, diverse and pluralistic throughout. This chapter attempts to consider Greek specificities through the prism of the historical and socio-cultural conditions that have shaped the religious, national and cultural identity of Greece, with a special emphasis on the intertwined nature of church and state.

To conclude, we hope that this volume offers a fresh glimpse of the various facets of contemporary Greek Orthodoxy and its ongoing efforts to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century. The broadening of the research agenda followed here provides for a more even-handed treatment of the church and avoids reducing the broader social topics into simply legal issues (such as the ID card crisis or state legislation about specific matters). Only in this fashion can the full, varied and ambivalent relationship between Orthodox Christianity and the broader Greek society be rendered visible and accountable in all its complexity. As the final outcome of this transition period cannot be ascertained in advance, the volume offers only tentative suggestions as to the future course of Greek Orthodoxy. Yet one thing remains certain: since Greek Orthodoxy lives in a constantly changing world, it does change and adapt itself to new exigencies, even if this happens in its own particular way and even if such changes are not always evident at first glance. The same holds true for the low-profile successor of Christodoulos, Archbishop Ieronymos, whose first year in office has been positively evaluated from many sides as a step forward in the modernization of the church (Fokas 2008: 24–9; Konidaris 2009).

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