

The Enlightenment and Religion in Europe

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter on Enlightenment and religion in Europe brings together the evidence relating to an understanding of the relationship seen in broader terms. Manichean interpretations arguing for the total incompatibility of Enlightenment and religion are no longer tenable. Evidence from the history of Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Judaism is discussed in order to illustrate how reflection on ideas of natural religion, natural law, and the interplay of reason and revelation, by thinkers firmly grounded in traditions of religious faith, allowed a broadening of mutual understanding between the Enlightenment and European religious traditions and contributed to the growth of ideas of toleration.

Keywords: Enlightenment, natural religion, natural law, revelation, toleration, Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Judaism

THE interplay between the Enlightenment and religion in European cultural history is complex and can be observed and examined on many levels. In what follows an attempt will be made to consider the subject from two points of view. First attention will be directed to the interaction between the Enlightenment, that is the secular ideologies and value systems of modernity, and the various forms of organized religion in European society. Secondly—and more briefly—the substantive relation between the Enlightenment and religion will be considered as it surfaces in European philosophy and social thought.

The chronological frame of reference for the discussion of the two issues will be the long eighteenth century, from the period of the ‘crisis of European conscience’, to use the classic formulation of Paul Hazard (Hazard, 1963), to the ferment on the eve of the French Revolution. In the debates, confrontations, and intellectual power struggles over religion and its place in civilized society that emerged in European culture in a period of just over a hundred years (1680–1789), all the fundamental, indeed existential, questions about faith and reason, the content of spiritual life and the spiritual foundations of society were raised and re-examined. Thus, it becomes obvious that the Enlightenment as an ‘age’ in the cultural history of Europe has not been a period exclusively dominated by scepticism and crusades against religion; rather it involved serious engagements with the question

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of religion, its multiple meanings, and significance for humanity. It is equally evident that earlier understandings of the relation between religion and Enlightenment have been revised to a considerable extent. A rather more complex picture has been established by recent research, a point of view which presents a different relationship between the religious traditions of Europe and the culture of the Enlightenment. The new picture, moreover, calls for serious questioning and the qualification of earlier views, that is, those that argued for an embattled relationship and unconditional hostility between religion in its multiple expressions and the ideas of the Enlightenment.

(p. 119) The revisionist view will be put forward in this chapter. This will also involve an expansion of the geographical horizon. Besides the conventional appraisal of the interactions of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious traditions with the manifestations of the Enlightenment, the evidence of corresponding phenomena in the Orthodox world in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe will be taken into account, in order to construct a more complete, and nuanced picture of the overall phenomenon, which was—without doubt—one of the mechanisms that set in motion the advent of European modernity.

The Enlightenment and organized religion

A conventional view, which is still heard today, tends to regard the main forms of organized religion in Europe, that is the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as representing systems of belief and values that confronted the intellectual changes produced by the Enlightenment with unconditional hostility. And at least some of the Enlightenment's most vocal public engagements, such as Voltaire's campaign 'Écrasez l'infâme', generated by the Calas affair (Lauriol, 2006), together with the philosophical outlook of the movement's most radical expressions, do appear to confirm the incompatibility between Enlightenment and religion. The picture, however, is both richer and more nuanced than these clear-cut binaries and Manichean interpretations indicate.

The historical record suggests that such interpretations represent a retrospective reading coloured by the reactions of the churches to the French Revolution, reactions which were indeed hostile and deeply polemical, and were motivated by the anti-religious policies and rituals of the Revolution itself. Up to 1789 things were different: here the evidence indicates that the churches showed considerable willingness to re-examine their pastoral strategies and to take initiatives consonant with the spirit of the 'age of reason'. It is equally clear that the strategies of the churches over a range of issues depended to a considerable extent on the intellectual make-up of individual ecclesiastical leaders, popes, and patriarchs, at the head of either the Roman Catholic or the Orthodox Church. Although this did not always guarantee continuity in the policies of these churches, it did indicate that the older churches had not remained hermetically closed to the challenges of the age of Enlightenment.

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church entered the eighteenth century seriously preoccupied with the question of Jansenism. The radical Augustinian spirituality of the Jansenist (p. 120) movement had, since its emergence in the mid-seventeenth century, presented a serious challenge to Roman Catholicism and to the formalism and rigidity of the Counter-Reformation as represented primarily by the baroque religious outlook of the Jesuits. The Jesuits won the struggle and under Pope Clement XI (1700–21), Jansenism was twice condemned, especially in the papal bull *Unigenitus* in 1713. Despite the official condemnation, Jansenism as a spiritual option survived and remained a factor of dissension within the Roman Catholic Church, interlocking, especially in France, with other forms of dissent and criticism that eventually contributed to the advent of the French Revolution.

The need for the Church to find ways to come to terms with the challenges of an age of criticism and moral questioning was voiced by the most important thinker in the ranks of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the period of Early Enlightenment, François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai (1695–1715). Fénelon was primarily known as a tutor to the French *dauphin*, crown prince, in the closing years of the reign of Louis XIV. In his historical novel, *Les aventures de Télémaque*, written for the instruction of his royal tutee, he painted the image of the ideal ruler as an executor of the law as against the bearer of absolute power. In outlining the model of a virtuous and competent king, Fénelon also argued for a recovery of humanism and the civic virtues in a society based on the fraternity of human beings. Christian society should be shaped on this model, not on the hypocrisy of excessive expressions of piety or a false and inhuman asceticism. The unstated targets of Fénelon's criticism were both the Jansenists and the Jesuits, whose excesses he detested and judged incompatible with the authentic evangelical teaching of Christianity (Im Hof, 1994: 174–80). Fénelon's criticism could appear convincing, on account of his impeccable credentials, secured by his important writings in defence of the faith, primarily the *Démonstration de l'existence de Dieu* (1713), in which he had presented a serious refutation of atheism, which avoided resorting to polemics or to unreasonable attacks against theological opponents (Israel, 2001: 494–5).

It was the kind of thinking represented by Fénelon that hinted at a new religious and moral strategy for the Church, away from the ossification of the faith behind the pomposity of Counter-Reformation religiosity as projected most militantly by the Jesuits. One pope at least in the mid-eighteenth century seemed to hear the message. Benedict XIV (1740–58), born Prosper Lambertini, an erudite and open-minded man, moved cautiously to take the Church into the Age of Enlightenment. He initiated pastoral policies which very obviously constituted reactions to and breaks in the disciplinarian heritage of the Counter-Reformation: he encouraged readings of the Bible by the faithful under the guidance of parish priests; he limited the excessive number of ecclesiastical holidays which disrupted normal economic activity; and he relaxed church censorship. Although the *Index librorum prohibitorum* was maintained, it was used with greater restraint. That said, important works of the Enlightenment, including in 1751 Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, were placed on it, suggesting the limits of even the supreme pontiff's freedom of action. The

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pope also initiated a process in order to revoke the ban on the major sources on the heliocentric theory of the universe, including the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Benedict even felt appreciation for the literary (p. 121) writings of Voltaire, with whom he maintained a civil correspondence and accepted the dedication of Voltaire's play *Mahomet* to him in 1750, commenting that he had read it with 'great pleasure' (Besterman, 1969: 250-1).

Benedict XIV's pastoral policies coincided with the philosophical strivings of the leading lights of the Roman Catholic Enlightenment, Lodovico Antonio Muratori in Modena and Antonio Genovesi (1713-69) in Naples, to achieve a reconciliation of faith and reason and build an intellectual and moral renewal of the Church on this foundation. However, the further radicalization of the secular philosophy of the Enlightenment undermined such attempts and provided arguments and reasons for an anti-Enlightenment reaction within the Church. Thus, under Benedict's successor, Clement XIII (1759-69), major works of the Enlightenment, including the *Encyclopédie* in 1759, and also works which were openly materialistic such as Claude Adrien Helvétius' *De l'Esprit*, were placed on the *Index*. Under subsequent pontificates the trend continued with the condemnation not only of the materialistic publications of Baron d'Holbach and Julien Offray de La Mettrie, but also of works by Denis Diderot and Voltaire.

The Church and the papacy also found itself under serious pressure from the secular states, which in a period of centralizing absolutism wanted to exercise more effective control over their territorial domains. This in fact meant that the states demanded of the papacy the termination of the tutelage it traditionally attempted to exercise over secular authorities in Roman Catholic countries and especially the abolition of one of the most effective tentacles whereby this was done: the Jesuit order. The role of the Jesuits elicited widespread antipathy and hatred and generated pressures on the Church to withdraw the order from the several countries of Catholic Europe. The first such initiative came from the reformist prime minister of Portugal, First Marquis of Pombal, who expelled the order from the kingdom and its overseas empire in 1759. This set off a chain reaction in all Catholic kingdoms in Europe. In 1764, following a decision of the *Parlement* (Supreme Court) of Paris, the Jesuit order was expelled from France and two years later, in 1766, they were expelled from Spain. The actions of the two greatest Roman Catholic sovereigns in Europe were soon followed by the minor Catholic powers, Naples, Parma, and the Knights of Malta. Eventually a new pope, Clement XIV (1769-74), issued the bull *Dominus ac Redemptor* abolishing the order altogether in 1773.

The dissolution of the Jesuits was hailed at the time as a great victory of the Enlightenment. In an anonymous pamphlet, entitled *Sur la destruction des Jésuits en France*, published in 1765, immediately after the expulsion of the order from France, the editor of the *Encyclopédie*, Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert, celebrated the prospects for the improvement of national education in France made possible by its liberation from Jesuit control (Venturi, 1976: 30-43). The whole affair of course illustrated in multiple ways the ironies with which history is often replete. The Jesuits were expelled from Roman Catholic countries but they were received and given roles in national education in non-

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Catholic states, in Lutheran Prussia under King Frederick the Great (r. 1740–86) and in Orthodox Russia under Empress Catherine II the Great (r. 1762–96), both of whom in welcoming the Jesuits wished to advertise their commitment to religious toleration.

(p. 122) Substantively the hostility elicited by the Jesuits on the part of the representatives of the Enlightenment involved another irony. The Jesuits formed the one branch of Roman Catholicism that was actively engaged in scientific research and in practical programmes of educational and social improvement, especially in their overseas missionary activities. They could, therefore, under conditions of mutual toleration, provide a bridge between the Church and the Enlightenment in a partnership in the service of humanity and knowledge. The passions of fanaticism on both sides and a failure in understanding precluded at the heyday of the Enlightenment such a possibility from materializing.

The unconditional capitulation of the Roman Church on the Jesuit question was a dramatic indication of its weakness in the face of the increasing power of secular states. This was also formally illustrated by a series of agreements and concordats, concluded by the Holy See with Roman Catholic kingdoms around Europe, surrendering to them the papacy's rights over episcopal appointments, control of education, and other issues of concern to the Church. Such concordats were concluded with Spain (1737 and 1753), Portugal (1740), Sardinia, and Naples (1741), generalizing the policy of 'Gallicanism' consistently followed by the 'Most Christian' monarchs of France since the seventeenth century (Anderson, 1961: 314–35).

The papacy's relations went through serious strain with another Catholic power as well: the Habsburg Empire. In this case the papacy found itself embarrassed and irritated at the reformist policies followed originally by Empress Maria Theresa (r. 1745–65) but especially by her son and successor Joseph II (r. 1765–90) in the 1780s. Joseph was a devout Catholic but also an enlightened and reform-minded monarch determined to bring progress to his domains through a policy of improved education, toleration for the multiple religious communities, and reform of the Church. This caused tensions with the Holy See but an eventual conflict was forestalled by the coming of the French Revolution and the broader realignment of political forces and policies it brought all over Europe. Reactions to reform projects like Josephism, which were perceived as threats to the Church, prepared the ground for a wholesale retraction of Roman Catholicism from the reformist spirit of the Age of Enlightenment (Krieger, 1970: 286–90).

The coming of Revolution marked the end of whatever willingness had been shown by the Church to go part of the way in the direction urged by Enlightened Catholicism earlier in the century. The Revolution caused alarm and provoked an active campaign of opposition to novelty and change, including a condemnation of French revolutionary principles and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1791 by Pope Pius VI (1775–99), followed by a new condemnation of Jansenism in 1794. The Church became increasingly identified with the doctrine and ideologies of the Counter-Revolution expressed by reactionary ideologues like Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, both of whom appealed to Christian tradition as a counterweight against the rising tide of revolutionary change and Enlightenment in

European society. The circumstantial alliance with the Counter-Revolution earned the Roman Catholic Church the rather simplistic and considerably distorted reputation of the irreconcilable opponent of the Enlightenment that has lingered in the literature for much too long.

(p. 123) The Orthodox Church

The Russian world

In the Orthodox regions of Europe in the east and south-east of the continent, a rather different encounter of organized religion with the Enlightenment took place in the course of the eighteenth century. In the Russian Empire this was an age of reform, which meant modernization on the West European model and centralization of power. The period of change was initiated under Emperor Peter I the Great (r. 1682–1725). Peter's reforms brought about important changes in the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church. The eighteenth century opened with the death of Patriarch Adrian of Moscow (c.1626–1700, patriarch 1690–1700). Peter determined that the office of the patriarch and the power it secured to its holder was an impediment to the total control of the Church by the state. He left the position vacant and eventually, in 1718, he abolished the patriarchal dignity in the Orthodox Church of Russia.

The emperor issued a *Spiritual Regulation*, drafted by his confidant in ecclesiastical affairs, Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich (d. 1736), who considered the role of the monarch of critical significance in the affairs of the Church. This view was consonant with the Protestant ecclesiological ideas that Peter had heard about during an early visit to England in 1698, when he consulted with Bishop Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715). This was the background to the establishment, in 1721, of the 'Most Holy Governing Synod' as the highest authority in the Church of Russia.

Thus the Holy Synod replaced the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia as the highest Russian ecclesiastical authority and was recognized as such by the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias III (1716–26, 1733) and the heads of the other Orthodox churches (Delikanis, 1905: 231–6). It was composed of eleven members drawn from all three hieratic grades in the Church, with the Metropolitans of Kyiv, Moscow, and St. Petersburg as permanent members. Its seat was moved to St. Petersburg and it was presided over by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. To be valid, its actions and decisions required the approval of the imperial procurator, the 'eye of the Czar', whose countersignature was necessary on all documents.

The Church of Russia remained under the Holy Synod until the end of imperial Russia. The patriarchate was re-established on 5 November 1917, just a few days after the communist revolution of October of that year. The intention of Peter's reforms was to bring the Church under effective state control in order not only to modernize it but to turn it into an agency of change in Russian culture and society. This ambitious programme was ob-

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viously a challenging, indeed almost impossible, task in the Russian context. The aspirations of ecclesiastical reform included the improvement of education and the training of clergy in order to combat superstition which was a very serious feature in peasant society.

(p. 124) The Enlightenment programme in the Orthodox Church of Russia took years to acquire substance and to produce results. Peter forcefully imposed the administrative changes and state control, but substantive measures of modernization of ecclesiastical life and practices of faith had to wait for later reigns. Under his daughter and successor Empress Elizabeth (r. 1741–61), a more active campaign of religious instruction of the peasant masses was put in place in the hope of containing and rooting out the more extreme forms of popular superstition. The Holy Synod attempted to ensure the success of its policies through tighter control of diocesan administration.

The moment of greatest influence of Enlightenment ideas on Russian Orthodoxy came during the reign of Catherine II the Great. The Empress' ambition to be one of the great rulers in the service of *Lumières* and reason, brought about important further reforms in the Church and encouraged remarkable intellectual developments in the direction of an Orthodox Enlightenment in Russia. In the context of her modernization policies Catherine introduced a number of secularization measures: declaring the religious neutrality of the state, limiting the independence of ecclesiastical courts and seminaries, reducing the number of monasteries, and confiscating a significant part of ecclesiastical and monastic lands. To apply her policies, she sought the collaboration of ecclesiastical personalities and scholars who shared her views on the need to bring the Russian Church into the age of reason. Two leading theological scholars, Platon Levshin (d. 1812) and Gabriel Petrov (d. 1801), assisted the Empress in her effort to bring the Enlightenment into Russian Orthodoxy by assuming top ecclesiastical positions: Platon as Metropolitan of Moscow and Gabriel as Metropolitan of Novgorod. They both employed the language of reason and moral reconstruction in support of purifying the Church of superstition and disorder caused by unruly vagrant priests and monks. Control of the Church and supervision of the reforms and their application was secured through the appointment of 'upholders of good orders', who were charged with the task of overseeing the operation of local dioceses (Dixon, 1999).

Platon's major achievement came in the field of religious education. He presided over the establishment of an empire-wide network of theological seminaries, which contributed hugely to the improvement of the education of priests. Religious training in these establishments was conducted in Latin and the material of instruction bore considerable Western influence, both from Protestant theology emanating from German universities, primarily Halle, and from Jesuit formalism brought by the exiled Jesuits who were welcomed by Catherine II after the dissolution of the order.

These Western affinities of Russian religious education in the Age of Enlightenment motivated to a considerable extent the Orthodox revival that emerged after the turn of the nineteenth century and reshaped not only theological thought and religious practice but

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also, to a considerable extent, Russian culture as a whole. Toleration was an important principle of the Enlightenment, to which the Russian reform movement paid appropriate respect—at least in theory. As noted, Catherine II proclaimed the neutrality of the state in questions of religion and made toleration one of the principles of her policies. In practice, however, things were more complex, less satisfactory, and less ideologically clear cut.

(p. 125) In the early part of the eighteenth century, following the reforms of Peter I, considerable pressure was put on the schismatic communities of Old Believers to conform to the officially established Church. And during the reign of Elizabeth, church and state closed ranks in trying to convert non-Christian groups in the central Volga region. This policy brought about half a million people into the Orthodox Church. Evangelization and mission, however, did not constitute a peaceful or painless process and considerable violence was employed by zealots on the ground in forcing Christian faith on the new converts.

Under Catherine II toleration was taken more seriously. The Empress admitted in her correspondence with Diderot that toleration served the interests of the state better than persecution. Accordingly, exiled Old Believers were encouraged to return from Poland where they had been driven by persecution. Their communities were relocated in the new territories brought into the Russian Empire in the areas north of the Black Sea. Various forms of discrimination at their expense were lifted, despite the resistance of churchmen, especially from among the episcopate, who feared that the Old Believers might corrupt the faith with their erroneous beliefs. The Muslim population of the same regions were also spared forced conversion (Dixon, 2006: 326–30).

In the task of incorporating the newly acquired territories of 'New Russia' into the empire, Catherine enlisted the services of two distinguished Greek clergymen scholars, both of them born in the island of Corfu, Evgenios Voulgaris (1716–1806) and Nikiphoros Theotokis (1731–1800). Although ordained celibate priests from an early age, both had acquired renown as scholars of the Enlightenment. Voulgaris had been a proponent of modern philosophy and saw no incompatibility between faith and reason, following the German philosopher Christian Wolff (1679–1754). He had in fact written a treatise on religious toleration in which he attempted to modify some of Voltaire's more uncompromising positions. Theotokis was the leading authority on Newtonian physics in South-Eastern Europe. They were called upon by Catherine to serve the empire in New Russia by assuming episcopal positions. Evgenios at Poltava became Archbishop of Kherson and Slaviansk, a post at which he was succeeded by Nikiphoros, who subsequently served the empire further east as Archbishop of Astrakhan and Stavropol (Batalden, 1982; Bruess, 1997). The cases of the two Greek prelates illustrate how Enlightenment and religion could converge, not simply in the service of the Orthodox empire but also in the service of what was conceived as the expansion Christian civilization into backward and unenlightened regions.

The Greek East

In the Greek East, the four ancient patriarchates of the Orthodox Church (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem) had been under Ottoman rule: Constantinople since the fall of the city in 1453, and the three Middle Eastern churches since the conquest of their territories by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century. The conquest transformed the conditions of existence of the four Orthodox (p. 126) patriarchates in drastic ways. Whereas under the Eastern Roman Empire until 1453 the Ecumenical Patriarchate had been an imperial Church, a guarantor of political legitimacy in domestic order and a critical factor in the external affairs of the empire, in the non-Christian empire the Church was recognized only as a 'supervisor of the erroneous religious beliefs' of the infidel subjects. The main task of the Church became to safeguard the survival of the faith and of its Christian flock: on the one hand from the many pressures coming from the wielders of power, not least the temptation of conversion to the ruling faith, and on the other from the proselytizing activities of Western religious confessions. The Patriarch of Constantinople assumed the role of the representative of all Orthodox alongside the Ottoman authorities, and gradually the other patriarchs, especially Alexandria and Jerusalem (although canonically independent of Constantinople) moved their residence to Istanbul in order to attend to the affairs of their churches through the good offices of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The Church attempted to cope with the conditions and the vagaries of subjection by strengthening the faith and sustaining Christian society both spiritually and materially. Early on, in the course of the sixteenth century, the Church's strategy of survival was expressed primarily through a sustained effort of reviving monasticism: first as an organizing mechanism that might contribute to the material sustenance especially of the rural masses among the faithful, and second as a support to the faith of the people at a time of multiple pressures to convert. Thus, during the sixteenth century the great monastic complexes at Mount Athos and Meteora went through a period of renewal and reconstruction, while important new foundations sprang up throughout the countryside in continental Greece, from Macedonia to the Peloponnese, and the islands.

In the following century, the Patriarchate of Constantinople under Patriarch Cyril I Loukaris (1612; 1620–3; 1623–33; 1633–4; 1634–5; 1637–8) went through a dramatic but abortive phase of attempted reforms on many fronts, which brought the Orthodox Church into close contact with Western Protestantism, especially Genevan Calvinism. This was Orthodoxy's defence against Roman Catholic pressures exercised through the activities of monastic orders upon the Church and the faithful. The Jesuits in Istanbul and other major cities at the centre of the empire, and the Franciscans in Palestine, were threatening the integrity and the traditional rights of the Orthodox Church in those regions. Patriarch Cyril eventually failed in his heroic reform project and was martyred by the Ottomans on the accusations of the Jesuits, who described him as a foreign agent on account of his relations with Protestant powers. Thus, the project of the reform of the Church was aborted

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and a period of defensiveness, inwardness, and anti-Protestant polemics followed for the rest of the seventeenth century (Kitromilides, 2006).

The next stage in the Church's strategy for the defence of the faith and the safeguarding of the Orthodox people from conversion was undertaken in the eighteenth century through measured openings towards the Enlightenment. A conventional view of the history of the Orthodox Church, as expressed for instance in authoritative sources such as Steven Runciman's *The Great Church in Captivity*, or Gerald R. Cragg's *The Church in the Age of Reason*, would totally exclude any affinity between Orthodoxy and Enlightenment (Runciman, 1968; Cragg, 1972). Yet a careful reading of the sources and (p. 127) evidence from eighteenth-century Orthodox ecclesiastical history would reveal a more complex and very much richer picture. Relevant evidence points to the fact that in the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century, the Patriarchate of Constantinople under particular patriarchs showed remarkable openness to the Enlightenment and its exponents in Greek culture.

The foremost example of this was the enlistment at mid-century of the services of already mentioned Evgenios Voulgaris, the Enlightenment's leading spokesman in Greek culture at the time, in a major project of educational renewal under the aegis of the Church. This was the project of the Athonite Academy, a college of higher learning set up on Mount Athos with the intention of training clergymen and scholars to serve the Church in its administrative, pastoral, and educational activities. Voulgaris was called upon in 1753 to take over the school originally founded by the Vatopedi Monastery in 1749 and to bring it up to date 'by means of changes and reforms', as it was explicitly stated in the official patriarchal and synodal *sigillium* of Patriarch Cyril V, charging him with the task.

Voulgaris took the charge with great enthusiasm, as testified in a letter he wrote to a former student, Kyprianos the Cypriot, urging him to join him on the teaching staff of the Academy. From the letter we hear a very lyrical description of the natural environment of the school and we also get an outline of the curriculum, which besides the classics (Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Demosthenes) also included the 'systems of modern philosophy', French, German, and English. Surviving manuscripts of Voulgaris's lecture notes help clarify this information: the systems of the moderns included works by Descartes, Christian Wolff, and Locke's *Essay*. We are also informed that Voulgaris was trying to bring a professor of Latin from the University of Halle to teach at Athos (Kitromilides, 2007: Study VII).

Despite the auspicious beginnings of the project, dissension among the students motivated by rival traditionalist teachers on the staff who resented Voulgaris' innovative teaching, eventually led to his resignation in 1759. The Academy continued its operation under another scholar, Nikolaos Zerzoulis, who was known as a proponent of Newtonian physics. Voulgaris himself, after a few months of waiting, was given a new charge by Patriarch Seraphim II (1757–61) to reform the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople itself, a task which he carried out for two years before leaving for Leipzig where he published his major works, his treatise on *Logic* and his writings on toleration. It is clear that his

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presence at the Athonite Academy, though short, left an important intellectual legacy which lingered until the early nineteenth century.

The openings to the Enlightenment by the leadership of the Orthodox Church were motivated by a deep awareness of the need to build up the defences of the faith by strengthening the education of the faithful at a time marked by the extensive incidence of conversions to Islam in traditionally Orthodox regions of the Western Balkans. At the same time, however, a sense of urgency about upgrading the training of future ecclesiastical leaders and teachers at Orthodox schools, in order to enable the Church to respond to these challenges, stimulated a similar readiness to accept new ideas. That said, it is important to notice in this connection that despite conflicts in the ranks of (p. 128) scholars and teachers between innovators and traditionalists, who felt threatened by the better training and qualifications of the followers of the Enlightenment and often accused them of heretical views, the ecclesiastical leadership (until 1789) for the most part kept its distance from such disputes. It should also be pointed out that at a time when the Inquisition and the *Index* were still in operation in the Western church, in the Orthodox Church in the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century there was only one condemnation of a scholar for his philosophical views. This was the story of Methodios Anthrakitis in the 1720s. Methodios, a teacher at Ioannina, was accused of heresy by his opponents for teaching modern philosophy. This led to his condemnation by the Church in 1723, which forced him to retract and burn his philosophical notebooks. He was eventually exonerated and allowed to teach but only Aristotelian philosophy. The burning of his manuscripts, nevertheless, has destroyed all evidence of the content of his original teaching, which included elements of contemporary Western philosophy, probably Malebranche and Descartes.

Things changed radically after 1789 and especially after the regicide of 1793, which was interpreted in the Orthodox East, as it had been in the Latin West, as the political consequence of the new philosophy. Following that dramatic climax, the Orthodox Church reconsidered its attitude toward the Enlightenment and in the 1790s a campaign against modern philosophy and science got under way, reaching a peak in the fateful year of 1798, in the climate of panic generated by Napoleons's campaign in Egypt. It was in this period of ideological polarization and conflict that the second condemnation of an Enlightenment philosopher also took place. That was the case of Christodoulos Pamblekis, a former student of Voulgaris at the Athonite Academy, who was posthumously condemned in 1793 by the Patriarchate of Constantinople for the philosophical views expressed in a pamphlet entitled *Of theocracy*, published earlier that year at Leipzig. This was the most radical source of religious criticism in Greek Enlightenment literature as a whole and was inspired by Spinozist ideas. Although Spinoza's name is nowhere mentioned in the text, the pamphlet is an outstanding example of the subterranean circulation of the ideas of the radical Enlightenment in European culture in the eighteenth century (Kitromilides, 2013: 251–3). Subsequently, the attitude of the Orthodox Church towards secular learning and liberal ideas hardened considerably, especially during the three patriarchates of Gregory V (1797–8, 1806–8, 1818–21) (Kitromilides, 2013: 291–315).

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The eventual retraction of the Church from its former conditional openness to the Enlightenment, and the active campaign against modern ideas during the three decades between the French and the Greek Revolutions (1789–1821), has coloured retrospectively the interpretation of a much more complex and nuanced attitude. Nevertheless, awareness that the Enlightenment heritage and modern learning could be useful to the Church's pastoral and educational work remained a viable option, one which was exercised even in the period of ideological conflict between the official Church and the Enlightenment. This transpired on the occasion of yet one more initiative of reform of the Patriarchal Academy in the early nineteenth century, when the school was moved to the suburb of Kuruçeşme on the Bosphorus and opened up once again to the scholars of (p. 129) the Enlightenment during the patriarchates of Kallinikos V (1801–6; 1808–9) and Cyril VI (1813–8) (Kitromilides, 2019: 12–24).

The Protestant denominations

Of all the Christian traditions in early modern Europe, the various branches of the Reformed churches or communities were most readily open and susceptible to the ideas of the Enlightenment. This does not mean of course that there had been no reservations or concerns on the minds of Protestant ecclesiastical leaders or scholars vis-à-vis the Enlightenment's more radical tendencies and positions in questions of religion, but the interface of revelation and natural religion in the Protestant world was generally handled with greater maturity and discernment than in other Christian environments. This was to some extent due to the fact that the encounter of Protestant Christianity with the Enlightenment was carried out on a truly remarkable philosophical basis, elaborated by the contributions of leading thinkers such as John Locke and Pierre Bayle on the question of toleration and on the possibilities of reconciling reason or 'reasonableness' with revelation and Christian faith (Zurbuchen, 2006).

A specific spiritual movement within Lutheranism which prepared the ground for openings to the Enlightenment was Pietism, initiated by Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) and appealing to a revival of the faith and ecclesiastical life through personal piety and spiritual exertion against dogmatic ossification, which was perceived to have dominated the heritage of the Reformation. Pietism by no means adopted rationalism, but the critique of Protestant orthodoxy opened the way for a new understanding of religious knowledge. This was the background to the important synthesis of Christian rationalism which emanated from German Protestant universities and reached its mature expression in the work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), Christian Thomasius (1655–1728), and Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Their effort to reconcile reason with revelation and to show that Christianity was not incompatible with modern scientific knowledge laid the foundations for a religious Enlightenment, which is now recognized as an important constituent of the broader movement of intellectual change in European culture.

The philosophy of Christian rationalism had two important consequences for Lutheranism. First it made possible the emergence of an Enlightened theology, whose

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philosophical foundation was Wolffianism and was articulated as a distinct form of Protestant *Aufklärung* under the name of 'Neologism'. The Neologists introduced historical criticism in the study of the Bible, stressed the moral teaching of Christ rather than doctrinal issues and shared with the secular Enlightenment a strong commitment to toleration (Gerrish, 2006). The second consequence of Christian philosophical rationalism was connected with its general respect for and acceptance of the established Lutheran Church. This attitude enabled in turn Lutheran pastors to engage actively in Enlightenment-inspired projects of social reform and improvement. In Frederick (p. 130) the Great's Prussia these were mostly state-sponsored projects and the involvement of pastors in them confirmed the Protestant model of the integration of ecclesiastical institutions into the overall state administration. Later critics have connected this joining of church and state with the cultivation of conformist traditions in German society that contributed to the politics of cultural despair and the eventual German catastrophe in the first part of the twentieth century.

Anglicanism entered the Age of Enlightenment at a time when it was trying to overcome the bitter experience of religious strife and civil war in the previous century. That experience provided a strong motivation in favour of toleration and of the reduction of scriptural interpretation to moral teaching, rather than doctrinal disputes. In this case, too, the quest for a rational Christianity became a primary trend in both religious thought and ecclesiastical practice. The philosophical and theological foundation was provided by John Locke with his courageous defence of toleration and his claim that Christianity was 'reasonable': in other words, that it could be understood to conform to the requirements of human reason. This was a daring claim that did not go unchallenged, but it nevertheless set the terms of debate on religion's relation to reason and politics.

English religious thought was dominated by the debate over natural versus revealed religion. The origins of the debate went back to the period of the 'crisis of European conscience' and to the substantive philosophical issues raised by the emergence of deism as an aspect of the Enlightenment. The early arguments on natural religion put forward by Anthony Collins (1676–1729) and John Toland (1670–1722) were further explored by Matthew Tindal (1657–1733) and Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), who nevertheless criticized the deists and invited them to accept revelation. To the rising current of rationalism and deism the main philosophical response came from two bishops of the Anglican Church, George Berkeley (1685–1753) and Joseph Butler (1692–1752), both of whom pointed to the limits of reason and its powers. The terms of the debate on religion and reason, however, were eventually reshaped not by intra-Anglican controversies but by a new and powerful—not least in its own self-doubt—current of scepticism emanating from Scotland. This was the contribution of David Hume (1711–76), whose famous essay on miracles, the *Natural History of Religion* and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* subjected religious belief to searching analysis but avoided either a categorical deist or an atheist position (Stewart, 2006).

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The consequences of these intellectual attitudes and debates for the Church of England involved on the one hand a reorientation towards a practical understanding of faith and religious practice, and on the other the adoption of a broad pastoral and theological attitude, known as latitudinarianism—that is a liberal and tolerant interpretation of the faith. Over the years this approach exposed Anglicanism to the criticism of more spiritually inclined groups whose members sought a more substantial religious experience. Such groups in England represented a parallel to the German Pietists and they included the Baptists, the Quakers, and eventually the Methodists of John Wesley (1703–91), who brought about an evangelical revival with important appeal in the New World as well. Thus, it appeared that Enlightenment culture and the embrace of the principle (p. 131) of toleration made possible a religious pluralism that in many respects went beyond the requirements of reason (Plumb, 1963: 42–5, 91–7).

The Enlightenment had an important impact on other branches of Protestantism as well. Genevan Calvinism had since 1675 been under the strict religious regime of *Formula Consensus*, which was a firm doctrinal statement, stressing human depravity and hopeless corruption. The rigours of this approach made Calvinist orthodoxy sound increasingly irrelevant at a time of Enlightenment. The recognition of this condition led to a serious rethinking of the prospects of Calvinism in a changing Europe and motivated a quest for the reformulation of the ‘pure doctrine of Christ’. The task was discharged by Jean-Alphonse Turretini (1671–1737), a Genevan pastor who argued that Christ’s teaching could not contradict reason, but it surpassed it at certain points of belief. Under his guidance the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and original sin were toned down and the moral aspects of Christianity were given greater prominence. The *Formula Consensus* was eventually abandoned, Calvinist liturgical books were revised, and the reasonableness of Christianity increasingly stressed (Pitassi, 1992). Thus, a new Calvinism was produced under the impact of the Enlightenment, which among many other sources found expression in the ‘profession de foi du vicaire Savoyard’, which Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) included in *Emile* as part of the training of an enlightened moral personality.

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The Enlightenment was associated with a multiplicity of positions on the question of religion: from atheism and scepticism, through deism and ‘natural religion’, to a commitment to a ‘religious Enlightenment’ that preserved the fundamentals of the faith without rejecting the intellectual conquests of the new culture of rationalism. The appropriate conclusion of this chapter should, then, be a brief look at the intellectual and moral significance of ‘religious Enlightenment’. The term itself is a neologism, a declaration in fact of a new understanding of the complexity of the Enlightenment itself. Specifically, the recognition of a religious Enlightenment—that is of an understanding of religious issues through the lens of the Enlightenment—suggests that beyond the radical and moderate versions of the

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Enlightenment a religious component exists, completing the cultural spectrum of Europe in the age of reason.

The religious Enlightenment essentially meant that faith should be tempered through a dialogue with knowledge and reason in order to avoid the excesses of dissension, intolerance, dogmatism, and irrational enthusiasm. The movement, nevertheless, stayed within the bounds set by doctrine, respected the authority of organized religion and its institutions, and distrusted the possibility of unfettered reason to engender morality. The ideal of religious Enlightenment was a balance between reason (p. 132) and faith, a balance which meant the incorporation of natural religion into the broader framework of revealed religion. The synthesis of reason and revelation was expected to provide a safe foundation to true belief and morality. The proponents of the religious Enlightenment stayed clear of radical alternatives in questions of church and state and the public role of religion. They acted as defenders of the faith against unbelievers, deists, and detractors of religion and the Church. They did not advocate the separation of church and state but expected the state to promote moderate reform in the service of religious Enlightenment, toleration, education, and the moral cultivation of the faithful. Through such means and the appeal to the values of natural law they also hoped that established religion might be regenerated and reformed, without compromising its defining doctrines.

The canon of the religious Enlightenment has been recently established by David Sorkin in an important work that discusses the cases of representative thinkers from three traditions, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism in its Anglican, Lutheran and Calvinist branches, and Judaism. The thinkers discussed are William Warburton (1698–1779), Jacob Vernet (1698–1789), Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten (1706–57), Joseph Valentin Eybel (1741–1805), Antoine-Adrien Lamourette (1742–94), and Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86) (Sorkin, 2008). The prosopographical purview of the religious Enlightenment could be significantly extended by adding to the canon first and foremost the two Italian pioneers already mentioned in this chapter, the Modenese Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) and the Neapolitan Antonio Genovesi. Muratori was a great master of historical scholarship and paleography and thought that historical criticism of the Scripture could both purify and strengthen the faith. In his judgement what was needed for the improvement of the Roman Catholic faith was the moral education of society and he produced a treatise of moral philosophy which proved of great significance for the propagation of the ideas of the religious Enlightenment not only in the Roman Catholic world but in the broader European periphery through its Greek translation by Iosipos Moisioudax (1725–1800) in 1761, from which a further Romanian translation was produced by Vasile Vârnav (d. 1827). Muratori clearly suggests that through moral re-education the faithful could be liberated from ‘excessive devotion’ and reach the ideal of a ‘Happy Christianity’, which he projects in one of his best-known works (Venturi, 1969: 138–86; Rosa and Al Kalak, 2018).

Antonio Genovesi also contributed decisively to the religious Enlightenment first by elaborating in his early writings an imposing and inclusive system of metaphysics, which provided a philosophical foundation for the coexistence of reason and revelation, scientific knowledge and faith, in a logically coherent arrangement of the subject matter of meta-

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physics. Genovesi of course did not stop at this early synthesis but proceeded in later works to the development of a concept of the utility of religion in nurturing civil society (Pii, 1984: 131–63). Such ideas made his work attractive in other cultural environments in which the religious Enlightenment was in fact clearing the ground for modern philosophy and science to take root. A case in point is the extensive use and eventual Greek translation of Genovesi's *Elements of metaphysics* by Evgenios Voulgaris as a textbook in his own Enlightenment project.

(p. 133) A further extension of the religious Enlightenment would draw into the gallery two of the greatest scholars of the Orthodox tradition in the eighteenth century, Evgenios Voulgaris, whom we have encountered repeatedly in this survey, and Platon Levshin. The two Orthodox prelates represent the essence of the religious Enlightenment, replete with all the tensions that inevitably arise from a truly valiant effort to bring together natural reason and natural law with the resources of the Orthodox tradition in the hope of nurturing a morally re-educated new society. The characterization of Metropolitan Platon as 'more *philosophe* than priest' by Joseph II could also be applied to Voulgaris as translator of Voltaire and a proponent of toleration, but it would be misleading to view these exponents of Orthodox Enlightenment exclusively in these terms. Their openness to the Enlightenment was combined with a deep consciousness of the significance of the Orthodox heritage as the repository of truth, which they felt could be enhanced and safeguarded through the intellectual and moral resources of modernity (Carras, 2016).

The two Orthodox prelates were the closest parallel that could be identified to the case of the most famous representative of religious Enlightenment in European culture: Moses Mendelssohn (Brunschwig, 1974: 256–66). The 'Socrates of Berlin', as he was known on account of his German paraphrase of Plato's *Phaido*, was of course an intellectual presence on a much grander scale than the two Orthodox scholars. His writings were imposing contributions to the mainstream of Enlightenment thought. The two Orthodox scholars shared with him the Wolffian substratum of reflection on philosophical and religious questions and especially the attitude of arguing the case for the Enlightenment from within the religious tradition to which they belonged and which they tried to serve by renewing and enhancing it. Mendelssohn and the *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment, in which he was the foremost protagonist, was at many levels Judaism's response to Spinoza (1632–77), suggesting that there were other ways and possibilities immanent in the Jewish spiritual tradition to handle questions of faith, knowledge, and criticism than radical doubt and rejection. Mendelssohn's recognition in the German Enlightenment by thinkers like Lessing and others was also an indication that the emancipation of the Jewish population of Europe could be pursued effectively by renewing rather than rejecting a venerable religious heritage. Mendelssohn led the religious Enlightenment as far as it could reach. In short the inner tensions and limits of the *Haskalah* put in sharper relief the challenges with which the religious Enlightenment had to cope in its intellectual and moral strivings (Sorkin, 2008: 167–213).

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested that the progress of research in intellectual history associated with an extensive reappraisal of the significance of religion in cultural change, has made possible a new, more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the relationship between Enlightenment and religion in European history. The revisionist effect can be further sustained by a geographically expanded perspective on the Enlightenment's interplay (p. 134) with religious traditions that has drawn Eastern and South-Eastern Europe into critical reflection on the subject. On the basis of the broadened evidence of source material and of the case studies examined in this chapter it can be argued: (a) that in the Roman Catholic world there was considerably more receptivity and willingness to converse with Enlightenment ideas by at least one supreme pontiff, Benedict XIV, and by a number of important scholars and intellectuals who remained firmly within the faith but also recognized the value of reason in social and religious thought; (b) that even a summary of the historical record makes it clear that the relationship and interaction between Orthodoxy and Enlightenment was marked by affinity, osmosis, and coexistence to a much greater degree than the often uninformed 'Whig interpretation' of pertinent intellectual phenomena has tended to suggest; and (c) that the Protestant denominations showed a remarkable openness to reflection on ideas of natural religion and reasonableness, an openness that made possible a creative conversation on the value of religion and its social mission and the meaning of personal spirituality. The new understanding of the Enlightenment and religion nexus can also project a more inclusive concept of European civilization and its multiple intellectual legacies.

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