

important for historians of the Greek language. One distinctive feature is particularly worth noting: on pp. 372 and 412 (and elsewhere too) we find “τοαποτοῦδε” and “εἰστοεξῆς”, examples of crasis which are quite unexpected in 14th-century patriarchal literature. All that remains for us now is to wait and hope that it will not be long before the Viennese Byzantinists complete this splendid project, which makes a monumental contribution to the study not only of the history of the Oecumenical Patriarchate and other Orthodox churches in southern and eastern Europe, but of other disciplines too.

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James W. Cunningham, *The Gates of Hell: The Great Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1918*, edited by Keith and Grace Dyrud, introduction by Keith Dyrud. A *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* supplement (Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs IX), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 2002, pp. xxx+524.

This weighty and elegantly printed volume is the posthumously published work of J. W. Cunningham (1937-1994), who worked under the guidance of a well-known specialist in Russian history, Professor Theofanis Stavrou, who also wrote the foreword. Cunningham devoted years of his life to the study of the history of the Russian Church in the period before and during the Communist Revolution. He read thousands of pages of Russian records, a considerable proportion of which he translated into English. The fruit of this study was to be a trilogy, of which, however, he managed to produce only two parts: *A Vanquished Hope: The Movement for Church Renewal in Russia, 1905-1906*, Crestwood, NY 1981 (also published in Russian translation as *S Nadezhdoj na Sobor*, Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd., London 1990), and the present volume, which, as its title indicates, concerns the preparations for, and the proceedings of, the great Council of the Russian Church, which was tremendously important for that Church and took place in a troubled political and ecclesiastical atmosphere.

In his introduction (pp. xxiii-xxx), Keith P. Dyrud gives a brief outline of Cunningham's text, which comprises eighteen chapters. It begins with the period before the Tsar was deposed, when considerable ferment was going on within the Church and there were calls for change, but the Tsar, who was essentially the head of the Church, was resisting it. Things did change when, on 2 February 1917, the Tsar was forced off the throne and the Church found

itself liberated from the yoke of tsarist authority. Thus the Great Sobor of the Russian hierarchy was convened on 15 August 1917, preceded by consultations and reports by preliminary committees. One important step was the removal of the Tsar's delegate on the council, V. N. Lvov, who had treated the hierarchs disgracefully, and the institution of a Ministry of Religions, which was assigned to the ecclesiastical historian A. V. Kartashev. Cunningham examines the further development of the issue on the basis of the twelve-volume edition of the proceedings and abundant material in Russian archives. He begins with the discussions and deliberations regarding the restoration of the Russian Patriarchate, which had been abolished by Peter the Great. The proceedings of the Sobor were overshadowed by the Communist Revolution, which abruptly changed the political stage on which the Church had to operate. Despite the unfavourable conditions, the proceedings continued and it remained only to carry out the decision to re-instate the Russian Patriarchate—which did eventually happen. On 5 November 1917, the Sobor elected the Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna, Tikhon Belavin, patriarch. The new patriarch and the synod now had to face up to the new communist government, as also the new, anti-religious, political situation, which brought with it many fresh problems for the Church. Naturally, this also led to differences of opinion within the hierarchy as to how they should be dealt with. Already the situation posed a challenge to the Church to come to terms with the new regime. Cunningham assesses the situation very well and identifies the difficulties inherent in a compromise between a centuries-old ecclesiastical tradition and a situation that rejected historical factors that had operated hitherto. During the Sobor's debate on these issues, the recommendations made by Professor S. N. Bulgakov and the Public Prosecutor N. D. Kuznetsov carried particular weight. The discussions that followed, lengthy and detailed, focused on the relations between Church and State with regard to public life, and, once again, it was clear that the representatives of the Church were not yet fully aware of what the future held under the new conditions that had arisen. The Sobor met again in January 1918, but the number of its members was so greatly reduced that there were doubts as to whether it achieved a quorum. Patriarch Tikhon issued an encyclical in which he vigorously denounced the communists' actions and outrages and defended the rights of the Church. Cunningham aptly titles this chapter "A Bitter January", for the situation was now frightful: clergy and laity were being persecuted because they were loyal members of the Church, monasteries and church property in the towns and cities were being expropriated, church vessels were being confiscated, the mysteries of the Church were described as acts of witchcraft,

and those who celebrated them were being persecuted. The Church was now confronting the situation in all its tragic reality and the earlier debates about the relations between Church and State had lost all meaning. The tragic events were already demanding that the situation be viewed realistically and all hopeful prospects be relinquished. Cunningham describes the situation with a rare elegance and paints such a vivid picture of the tragedy that the reader is moved. The Church was now living without the protection of the State, which had habituated it not only to obeying its laws but also to acting within the rationale of those laws. The Sobor now had to re-assess a whole host of principles which had held good for centuries and to get used to living with a not merely atheist but utterly hostile regime, which was not averse to committing all manner of crimes against the clergy or encouraging and tolerating unbridled criminal activity. The hierarchy and the clergy in general, like the faithful masses, desperately tried to resist the developing situation, either passively or actively. In the latter case, the reprisals inflicted by the regime were pitiless. The outcome of this situation was the creation of the Living Church, which came to terms with the new regime and indeed unfrocked Patriarch Tikhon, who was already under house arrest. Eventually Tikhon recognized the regime and the activity of the Living Church was thus curtailed, while the Church proper reached a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet regime. Cunningham concludes his study with a very useful list of brief biographies of 575 individuals who took part in the Great Sobor of the Russian Church, which restored the patriarchate and at the same time faced up to the new Soviet authority. Regrettably the index contains the names of only the people who spoke during the Sobor; nor is there a bibliography, presumably because Cunningham died before completing his project. However, he did manage to present his subject fully and thoroughly in an authoritative and objective manner, pointing out relevant details and making correct appraisals of the situations, revealing a profound and thorough knowledge of the subject he was treating. It is truly sad that he did not live to complete his trilogy.

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