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ERFURTER STUDIEN
ZUR KULTURGESCHICHTE
DES ORTHODOXEN CHRISTENTUMS

Sebastian Rimestad

The Challenges of Modernity to the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia (1917-1940)

PETER LANG
Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

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Herausgegeben von Vasilios N. Makrides

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Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ascension
Parish of Riga, 1929. Sitting in the middle
is Archbishop Jānis (Pommers),
left of him, Archpriest Kirils Zaics,
and on the far right, Archpriest Jānis Jansons.
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Table of Contents

Preface.. 9
Notes on Terminology.. 11
Introduction.. 13

1. Modernity and Orthodox Christianity... 23
  1.1. Modernity... 23
    1.1.1. The Challenges of Modernity 24
    1.1.2. Modernity, Ideology, and Identity... 27
  1.2. Orthodox Christianity Encounters Modernity............................ 34
    1.2.1. The Orthodox Church in the Balkans and Modernity 37
    1.2.2. The Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire and Modernity........... 42
    1.2.3. The Orthodox Church in the Aftermath of the First World War........ 46
    1.2.4. The Orthodox Church and Modernity: the Legal Dimension............ 50
  1.3. Discourse Analysis and Mass Media... 52

2. Orthodox Church Structures.. 57
  2.1. Orthodoxy and the Baltic Region 57
    2.1.1. The Baltic Provinces in the Mid-Nineteenth Century 57
    2.1.2. The Orthodox Church in the Baltic Provinces until 1917 61
    2.1.3. Institutional Context in the Interwar Years........................... 65
    2.1.4. Demographics of the Baltic States.. 69
  2.2. Creating New Orthodox Churches – the 1920s............................ 73
    2.2.1. Leading up to Fundamental Change – 1917 73
    2.2.2. Estonia: the Road towards Autocephaly................................ 84
    2.2.3. Estonia: the Russian Question 96
    2.2.4. Estonia: Church and State... 104
    2.2.5. Latvia: Rebuilding the Church – 1917-1921 113
    2.2.6. Latvia: under the Leadership of Archbishop Jānis – 1921-1925...... 121

2.2.7. Latvia: an Archbishop in Parliament – 1926-1934 131
2.2.8. The 1920s Compared 141
2.3. From Crisis to Crisis: the Structures of the Orthodox Church in the 1930s 144
2.3.1. Crisis in Estonia: the *Setu* in Petserimaa and the ‘Monastery War’ 145
2.3.2. Crisis in Latvia: an Assassination and its Consequences 155
2.3.3. The Orthodox Church and the Authoritarian Regimes 163
2.3.4. The 1930s Compared 176

3. Orthodox Baltic Identity: Language and Tradition 181
3.1. The Internal Dimension 181
3.1.1. The Language of the Liturgy 183
3.1.2. Song and Music 187
3.1.3. The Calendar Issue 194
3.2. The External Dimension 200
3.2.1. Orthodoxy and the Discourse of Ecumenicalism 200
3.2.2. The Orthodox Church and Lutheranism 206
3.2.3. Baltic Orthodoxy and Secular Society 217

4. Orthodox Baltic Historiography 229
4.1. The Hegemonic Historiographic Narratives of the Baltic Region 229
4.1.1. The Historiographies of the Baltic Provinces 230
4.1.2. The Baltic Historiographies and the Orthodox Church 235
4.1.3. Interwar Professional Historiography on the Orthodox Church 239
4.2. The Orthodox Church in Popular Historiography 244
4.2.1. Popular Historiography on the Orthodox Church 245
4.2.2. Popular Historiography by the Orthodox Church 253

5. Concluding Remarks 267

6. Appendixes.... 275
6.1. Maps 275
6.1.1. Map of the Baltic Provinces in 1888. 275
6.1.2. Map of Estonia and Latvia, 1920-1940. 276
6.2. Timeline 277
6.3. Archbishop Jānis’ Speech at the Ecclesiastic *Saeima*, 30.10.1923 281
6.4. Brief Biographies of the Main Actors 290

7. Bibliography... 297
7.1. Archival Sources 297
7.2. Periodicals 297
7.3. Unpublished Sources 300
7.4. Published Sources 301

Index of Places 329
Index of Names... 331

Preface

This book, which is a slightly modified version of my PhD dissertation at the University of Erfurt, came about as a result of the attempt to combine three of my main interests. Ever since adolescence, I have had a vivid interest in the Baltic states, languages, and societies. During my undergraduate studies, I developed an interest in the Christian tradition of Eastern Europe; the Orthodox Church. My third interest encompasses various theories and conceptions of modernity and the modern condition. The present work thus attempts to assess the impact of the modern condition on the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia.

My master's thesis considered Orthodox Christianity as a factor in the rise of Estonian national consciousness. My thesis ended at the beginning of Estonian independence after the First World War, because the entire context of Estonian society changed. Instead of acting as the local part of the state-sanctioned Orthodox Church, the Estonian Orthodox leadership had to readjust to a minority status in a secular state. The present study scrutinises the subsequent period. It begins with the Russian revolution in 1917, which opened up the possibility of independent existence for the local Orthodox Church, and ends with the first Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in 1940, when the Moscow Patriarchate forcefully reintegrated the 'schismatics.' I extended the scope beyond Estonia to include its southern neighbour Latvia, since there were similar developments and struggles in these two Baltic States.

I would like to thank all those who have helped me over the last five years to the completion of my dissertation. Firstly, the *Interdisziplinäres Forum Religion* of the University of Erfurt deserves great thanks for its funding over most of this time period. Also the *Graduiertenschule "Religion in Modernisierungsprozessen"* (University of Erfurt) and the *SOCRATES Teacher Mobility programme* of the European Union have helped fund several of my research stays in the Baltic States. However, funding without supervision is not really enough, and I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Vasilios Makrides, as well as all the other academic staff at the University of Erfurt, with whom I have had the pleasure of discussing aspects of my dissertation. Furthermore, the staff of the numerous libraries I have visited in Erfurt, Jena, Göttingen, Würzburg, Erlangen, Marburg, Lüneburg, Riga, Tartu, Tallinn, and Helsinki have also greatly helped me arrive at this point. Individual scholars, such as Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas, Dr. Andrei Sõtšov, Dr. Inese Runce, Prof. Dr. Aleksandr Gavrilin, Prof. Dr. Karsten Brüggemann, Dr. Bradley Woodworth, Toomas Schvak, and a host of others, equally deserve thanks not only for their guidance and nice company, but also for the opportunities they have given me to improve my language skills. Special thanks go to Archpriest Jānis Kalninš, who kindly provided an illustration for the front cover from his private archive and Demetria Worley, who thoroughly proofread the manuscript of the book. It would not have had the same clarity and style without her. The errors, omissions, and stylistic discrepancies that remain are entirely mine. Last but not least, my lovely wife Claudia and our two sons, Christian and Simon, both of which were born while I was working on this dissertation are responsible for innumerable unforgettable moments and for pushing me to finish this text in the end.

Notes on Terminology

In the northern Baltic Region, numerous languages were in use over the twentieth century. While most of the nobility were Baltic Germans, who communicated predominantly in German, the political leadership of the region until 1917, and then again from 1940/1944, was Russian-speaking. The local population consisted of Estonians and Latvians, who preferred to speak and write in Estonian and Latvian. When the Soviet Union occupied the two states in 1940, many Estonians and Latvians emigrated, predominantly to Finland, Sweden, Germany, and the Anglophone World, where they published partly in the local languages. Finally, many sources pertaining to diplomatic affairs and to the affairs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople are written in French.

In this study, all these languages are cited only in English translation for the sake of convenience. All the translations are my own, except where otherwise stated. In some cases, where translations between different languages give room for interpretation, this is noted. This is especially the case with the different forms of the designation 'Orthodox' in the various languages. The Estonian 'õigeusk' and the Latvian 'pareizticība' are direct translations from the German 'rechtgläubig' – 'of the correct faith.' To what extent the use of other synonyms, such as 'Orthodox' or 'Greek Catholic'[1] reflects a conscious decision on the part of the authors is often difficult to ascertain. Therefore, I am certain that a number of ambiguous formulations have escaped my attention and could have been mentioned. However, it is not my aim to do a linguistic analysis, but to analyse the discourse surrounding Orthodoxy in the two countries. For example, I call the administrative entity of a bishop an *Eparchy*, regardless of the distinct terms that exist in the various languages.

Both Estonian and Latvian underwent creeping orthographic reforms in the 1920s and 1930s. Although this has no impact on the citations in this book, it means that the place names in the region as well as personal names are differently written in different sources. Moreover, the place names in the region usually have at least three names – a German one, a Russian one, and a local Estonian or Latvian one. This plethora of names is sometimes important in the course of the dissertation, but usually I use the place names current today, occasionally noting the varieties of that name. Moreover, I use the modern Estonian or Latvian spelling of personal names, except for ethnic Russians who never published in these languages. Thus, what in English would be Bishop John appears in five forms in this thesis: the Latvian *Jānis* is the same as the Estonian

---

[1] 'Ortodoksne' and 'kreeka-katolik' in Estonian and 'ortodoksu' and 'grieķu-katoļi' in Latvian.

Joann and the Russian *Ioann*, transliterated using the standard German system. One article about Bishop Joann, moreover, used the German form *Johannes* and another one the Polish form *Iwan*. A similar problem occurs with some names with inconsistent spelling. I have tried to remain consistent in the text. I have moreover tried to keep ethnic Latvian names orthographically Latvian (with an -s at the end) and ethnic Russian ones transliterated.

Several words remain in the original languages throughout the thesis. These include the Estonian *täiskogu* and *Riigikogu* and the Latvian *saeima*. The *Riigikogu* and the *Saeima* (with a capital S) are the Estonian and Latvian parliaments, respectively. A *täiskogu* or an ecclesiastic *saeima* is a delegates' meeting, the highest administrative structure in the two Orthodox Churches, as is the *sobor* of the Russian Orthodox Church, which will also remain in the original.

Introduction

This work analyses the struggle of a specific section of the Estonian and Latvian nations, Orthodox Christians, to come to grips with modernity in the early twentieth century. After the end of the Russian Empire in 1917, the newly independent nation states were exposed to a very different kind of nationalisation than before. Instead of the imperial attempts to bind all citizens to the Russian State and its autocratic ruler, each of the new governments had to devise a way of channelling national sentiment to a new entity. Moreover, while the Russian Empire had kept strict regulations on confessional affiliation, independent Estonia and Latvia held a secular outlook and left faith to the churches and religious groups. The former Orthodox Church of the Russian Empire could not neatly fit into the new nation-state ideologies. The new national elite wanted to retain as few links as possible to the former 'oppressors,' as the Russians were henceforth officially called, and Orthodox Christianity was often considered a sign of Russianness.

Thus, the Orthodox faithful were doubly challenged. They could no longer count on the support of a powerful state church but had to construct an identity as a minority group. At the same time, they had to defend this new identity in a hostile political and social environment. This was not easy, since the canonical head of the Orthodox Church in Latvia and Estonia remained the Patriarch of Moscow, and most of the Russian minority in both countries was part of the local Orthodox community. The national movements, which had begun in the middle of the nineteenth century, could only take full effect in an independent state, with an institutionalised national history, language, and political culture. For most Latvians and Estonians, Orthodox Christianity was not, and could not be, an integral part of these efforts. In short, this work analyses the discourse on Orthodox Christianity as it related to the Estonian and Latvian nation building processes in the 1920s and 1930s. The analysis is based on published opinions or works on Latvian and Estonian Orthodoxy of the period from 1917 to 1940 and thus provides a variegated array of voices, which all contribute to a picture of the situation of Orthodox Estonians and Latvians between the World Wars.

The study forms part of the relatively recent research field of 'Orthodox Studies.' Similar to the various 'Area Studies' that have arisen as interdisciplinary research fields enjoying increasing popularity in academic institutions, also 'Orthodox Studies' pursue an interdisciplinary approach, endeavouring to analyse Orthodox Christian societies and issues from multiple angles. For the purpose of this particular study, insights from religious studies, political science, sociology, history, communications studies, and theology are combined to paint a comprehensive picture of the situation of Orthodox Estonians and Latvians in the interwar period. The entire study is informed by the assumption that the published word conveys an accurate depiction of the social and political context in which it appeared. Therefore, its main sources are the various Orthodox journals published in Estonia and Latvia, together with a number of other published references to the Orthodox Church in the Estonian and Latvian press. On the basis of this source material, the empirical parts analyse the way Orthodox Christianity was perceived in Estonian and Latvian society and how Orthodox Estonians and Latvians reconciled conflicting identities. Various theoretical approaches from different disciplines each form the backbone of a particular section in the empirical study and are, therefore, more thoroughly introduced as they become relevant.

A study on the Orthodox Church in interwar Estonia and Latvia is necessary, for there are, in my opinion, no unbiased and historically sound treatments of the developments in either Estonia or Latvia available.[1] All existing studies lack important developments and/or include clear errors. Interestingly, the interwar years of the other Orthodox Churches in the Baltic region have received extensive academic treatment. In the case of the Orthodox Church in Lithuania, two academically ambitious publications have recently appeared, covering the inner and outer life of this church.[2] Also the case of Poland has been extensively researched and covered in academic literature.[3] Numerous academic treatments concerning the Orthodox Church in the northern neighbour, Finland, have been published over the years.[4] Only the Latvian and Estonian cases have not been well researched. What research exists on these two cases, moreover, is not very objective.

The first comprehensive treatments of the Orthodox Church in the Baltic States appeared during the interwar period. In Latvia, the historian Antonijs Pommers, the brother of the first Latvian Bishop Jānis (Pommers), published a '*History of Latvian Orthodoxy*' in 1931.[5] This historical sketch of 88 pages starts with the first (not very well documented) beginnings of the Church in the Middle Ages and only the last ten pages are devoted to the interwar period. Moreover, these last pages are heavily tainted by the author's personal involvement in the Latvian Orthodox Church. No similar monograph appeared in Estonia, although at least two Estonian historians devoted much attention to the conversion movements of the nineteenth century.[6] The Estonians, however, invited European scholars to the Petseri Monastery in 1937 to become acquainted with the Estonian Orthodox Church. One of these scholars was Helmut Risch, who later published a comprehensive 30-page overview in a German journal of church history.[7] This article provides surprisingly unbiased and detailed insights into the inner workings of the Estonian Orthodox Church from a perspective informed by political science. A similar article on the Latvian Orthodox Church from 1940 was much shorter and not the result of field research.[8] It mainly repeats the developments mentioned by Pommers in the afore-mentioned historical overview and brings no new information.

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[1] Toomas Schvak is currently working on a PhD on the Estonian Interwar Orthodox Church, which might bridge this gap in the Estonian case.

[2] Laukaitytė, 2003; Marcinkevicius and Kaubrys, 2005.

[3] Papierzyńska-Turek, 1989; Mironowicz, 2005; Mironowicz et al., 2005.

[4] Heyer, 1958; Setälä, U.V.J., 1966; Pispala, 1978; Hotz, 1979; Koukkunen, 1982; Purmonen, 1984; John, 1988; Frilander, 1995; Frilander, 1997; Raivo, 1997; Riikonen, 2007; Nokelainen, 2010.

[5] Pommers, 1931a. See also chapter 4.1.3.

After the Second World War, there was no significant publication concerning the Baltic Orthodox Churches until the 1950s, when the Latvian and Estonian emigrant communities began publishing. Here, the Estonians were clearly more active, publishing three books and one article on the Estonian Orthodox Church before 1966.[9] These works consist mainly of memories from a peaceful past and injustices suffered during the Soviet occupation. On the Latvian side, only one article concerning the Latvian Orthodox Church appeared in 1954,[10] until the administrator of the Latvian Orthodox Church in Exile, Alexander Cherney, published an overview book in London in 1985.[11] This work is written with the injustices suffered by the Orthodox Church in the Baltic Region clearly in mind and brings historical details only in order to justify its argument. The other treatments from the émigré community were apologetic in nature. Their authors glorified the independence period and condemned the Soviet takeover.

The Baltic German community in exile also started to publish in the 1950s. Its output included an edited volume on Baltic church history.[12] There are passing references to the Orthodox Churches in the volume, and it relishes memories of a glorious past, when the Baltic Germans and the Lutheran Church were the unchallenged masters of the Baltic Provinces. Only three contributions were devoted to the interwar period and they cover mostly developments within the German minority.

Next to such self-interested treatises, several academics in the West showed an interest in the Orthodox Church of the Baltic Region. The German Wilhelm

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[6] Kruus, 1930; Rebane, 1932; Rebane, 1933. See also chapters 2.1.2. and 4.1.4.

[7] Risch, 1937; “Igaunijas Pečoru klosterī Eiropas zinatnieki izdara pētīšanas darbus” [European researchers carried out research work in the Estonian Petseri Monastery] in *TuD*, 13/16, 1937, p. 256. See also chapter 4.2.1.

[8] Schubart, 1940.

[9] *Apostlik õigeusk*, 1951; Fridolin, 1953; Juhkam, 1961; Laatsi, 1966.

[10] Starcs, 1954.

[11] Cherney, 1985. In the 1990s, this book was translated and published in Latvian.

[12] Wittram, Reinhard, 1956.

Kahle, after having spent a year in Estonia in 1938, wrote a monumental work on the relationship between Orthodoxy and Lutheranism in the Baltic Area, which was published in 1959.[13] However, his focus on *Russian* Orthodoxy and *Baltic German* Lutheranism disregarded the developments of national churches. After noting that the interaction suddenly dwindled following the First World War, he concludes that "the direct relationship between Russian Orthodoxy and Baltic Protestantism ended with the *Umsiedlung* of 1939."[14] A second Western scholar, the Finnish political scientist U.V.J. Setälä wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Finnish State's relations with the Orthodox Church 1917-1923. It contains numerous references to developments in Estonia, which are further elaborated in separate articles by the same scholar.[15] In the USA, Wassilij Alexeev wrote his doctoral thesis and several articles on the Baltic Orthodox Church under German occupation during the Second World War.[16] In Germany, there appeared an article on the so-called 'mission of Pskov' during the occupation.[17] However, since the developments before and after 1940 differ so immensely, these works on the German occupation hardly provide any new insights into the interwar period. The treatment of '*Religion in the Soviet Union*' by Walter Kolarz deserves mention, because it includes short historical sketches of almost all religious communities in the entire Soviet Union, including the Orthodox Churches in the Baltic region.[18]

Within the Soviet Union, there were no significant academic works concerning the Estonian Orthodox Church.[19] In Latvia, on the other hand, the Marxist historian Zigmunds Balevics devoted much attention to church issues in the interwar period. However, his Soviet schooling and communist theory makes his works difficult to use as unbiased sources. His 1962 book on '*The Orthodox Clergy in Bourgeois Latvia*' was written in order to "help the believers judge the falseness and two-sidedness of religious morality for themselves."[20] His 1964 assessment of the relationship between church and state in bourgeois Latvia is interspersed with references to communist theory and refers to the churches as nothing but puppets in the hands of the fascists in government.[21] His small 1987 overview book on the history of the Latvian Orthodox Church is less ideologically tainted, but remains less than credible at times. Its designated task was "to gather existing research and provide the reader with an overview of the history of the Orthodox Church in Latvia."[22] However, this work does not represent a change of style, as significant parts are taken directly from the 1964 book. Nonetheless, Balevics had access to the original sources and his treatments are historically valuable.

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[13] Kahle, 1959.

[14] Kahle, 1959, p. 279. For the *Umsiedlung*, see also von Hehn, 1984; chapter 2.3.4.

[15] Setälä, U.V.J., 1962; Setälä, U.V.J., 1966; Setälä, U.V.J., 1972.

[16] Alexeev, 1957; Alexeev, 1974; Alexeev and Stavrou, 1976..

[17] Treulieb, 1965. This mission, organised by Moscow-subordinate Metropolitan Sergej Voskresenskij of Vilnius, consisted in sending missionaries from the Baltic area to the Soviet regions occupied by German forces to re-Christianise the Russians. It was very successful. See Oboznyj, 2008.

[18] Kolarz, 1962, p. 118-123.

[19] Excepting the doctoral dissertation of the Metropolitan of Tallinn, later Patriarch of Moscow Aleksij II (Ridiger), which he completed in 1984. It was, however, published only in 1999, after serious revision. Aleksij, 1999, p. 6-7.

[20] Balevics and Kadiķis, 1962, p. 3.

Meanwhile, in a little volume from 1984, dedicated to Latvian Agrarian History, two other Soviet Latvian historians showed interest in the Orthodox Church. Heinrihs Strods and Aleksandr Gavrilin both contributed articles on the Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century.[23] In the years leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Aleksandr Gavrilin published several articles on Latvian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century, and he has continued his publishing activity in the post-Soviet period.[24] The work of Gavrilin cannot be overrated, especially when it comes to extrapolating the original sources of the nineteenth century history of Baltic Orthodoxy. However, he remains somewhat caught within the traditional discourse of Orthodox Church history, which is mostly concerned with the number of faithful, of churches and monasteries, and who heads what Eparchy when. This becomes obvious in a contribution to a recent French volume on the Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe during the twentieth century.[25] The section on the interwar period is lacking in analytical detail. It seems more important to mention numbers and names than to put them in historical context. Gavrilin's most recent monograph, dedicated to the life and work of the Latvian Bishop Jānis Garklāvs moves slightly away from this tendency, turning more to the discourses of and long-term developments within Latvian Orthodoxy.[26] The nine volumes of '*Orthodoxy in Latvia*' edited by Gavrilin between 1993 and 2010 contain a number of interesting contributions. The largely statistical treatment of the 1920s by K. Ozoliņš and the analysis of the autocephaly discussions of the 1930s by Andris Kūla merit special mention.[27] The latter has also published an extensive article on the situation of the Latvian Orthodox Church during the Second World War.[28]

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[21] Balevics, 1964.

[22] Balevics, 1987, p. 3-4.

[23] Strods, 1984; Gavrilin, 1984.

[24] See all his works in the bibliography.

[25] Gavrilin and Pazāne, 2009.

[26] Garklāvs was consecrated Bishop of Riga under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate during the German occupation in 1943. Gavrilin, 2009, p. 176.

[27] Kulis, 1993; Ozoliņš, 1997.

[28] Kūla, 2007.

Other post-Soviet Latvian academic treatments include the works of Archpriest Jānis Kalniņš, who has published a source compendium on Archbishop Jānis (Pommers),[29] a biography of the Archbishop,[30] and a historical commentary on the Orthodox Church of Latvia.[31] While the source compendium is very useful and the biography of Bishop Jānis contains much important information, the historical commentary does not stand up to scrutiny. It is clearly written as a polemic against some particular interpretation of history, although it is not entirely clear which interpretation.[32] As an appendix to the second edition of Kalniņš' autobiography from 2005, several archival documents and parish histories also exist in published form.[33]

Another biography of Bishop Jānis from 2004 does not contain any new information and the way it exalts Jānis' achievements beyond measure reminds the reader of medieval hagiographies.[34] Heinrihs Strods has published an important biographical volume on Metropolitan Augustīns (Pētersons), who headed the Latvian Orthodox Church from 1936 to his death in 1955.[35] This work is detailed and analytical; however, critics claim that since it was paid for by the family of Metropolitan Augustīns, it lacks some critical distance and independence.[36] Jurij Sidjakov has published numerous letters and documents from Archbishop Jānis' archive, which have proved very useful for this study.[37] The official view of history – as presented in a recent volume on Post-Soviet developments in the Latvian Orthodox Church – is less useful, with sweeping generalisations and a pro-Russian bias.[38] Finally, the 2008 dissertation of Inese Runce on the Latvian church-state relationship 1906-1940 must be mentioned.[39] This work has given me a thorough understanding of the legal and political framework in which religions operated in interwar Latvia.

The Estonian Orthodox Church has received much attention in the academic world, especially since the clash between the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople over the jurisdiction of Estonian territory.[40] However, most of this attention has been very biased and one-sided. As the most comprehensive volume of this genre, the monumental monograph on '*The Orthodox in Estonia*' by late Moscow Patriarch Aleksij II, himself born and raised in interwar Estonia, should be mentioned.[41] However, it remains more concerned with names and numbers than with context and analysis. On the other side, there are the works written under the auspices of Archimandrite Grigorios Papathomas, an Orthodox canon law specialist, who has taken an interest in the fate of Estonian Orthodoxy.[42] These works are clearly apologetic; they do everything possible in order to exclude certain interpretations of the history of the Estonian Orthodox Church. Corresponding works from the side of the Moscow Patriarchate display similar flaws.[43]

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[29] Kalniņš I, 1993; Kalniņš II, 1993.

[30] Kalniņš, Jānis, 2001.

[31] Kalniņš, Jānis, 2007.

[32] See the review by Strods, 2008.

[33] Kalniņš, Jānis, 2005a.

[34] Požidaev, 2004. See also *Žitie*, 2008.

[35] Strods, 2005.

[36] See the review by Kalniņš, Jānis, 2005b.

[37] Sidjakov I, 2008; Sidjakov II, 2009; Sidjakov III, 2011. Much of Sidjakov's work is also published on the internet.

[38] *Latvijas Pareizticīgā Baznīca*, 2009.

[39] Runce, 2008.

[40] See Rimestad, *forthcoming*, 2013a; Rimestad, *forthcoming*, 2013b.

At the same time, a number of more neutral young academics have written on the Estonian Orthodox Church, including Andrei Sõtšov, who wrote his BA thesis on the Church during the Second World War, continued with its history under Stalin (1945-1953) in his MA thesis, and dedicated his PhD dissertation to the Khrushchev era (1954-1964).[44] Anu Raudsepp wrote a useful MA thesis on the influence of the Riga Orthodox Seminary on Estonian society, and Urmas Klaas wrote on the structure of the Orthodox Church in South Estonia until 1917, both in 1998.[45] Toomas Schvak is currently writing his PhD dissertation on the Estonian Orthodox Church history of the interwar period. The Lutheran church historian Riho Saard has devoted some effort to the Orthodox Church. In 2008, for example, he published an historical sketch of the first years of the Estonian Orthodox Church after the First World War.[46]

With only a few exceptions, most of the above-mentioned works were written in Estonian, Latvian, or Russian. Moreover, they are either concerned only with historical data or are trying to justify a certain view of history. In addition, many are written in a traditional church history style, detailing which bishop collected how much money for the construction of which church. Very few concern the inner life of the Estonian and Latvian Orthodox Churches beyond the legal, canonical, and statistical frameworks. Notable exceptions are the numerous treatments of the Second World War as well as the works of individual authors.[47] The most important exception is Jeffers Engelhardt, an American who became interested in Estonian Orthodoxy and wrote a dissertation at the University of Chicago in 2005 on the musical practices of the Estonian Orthodox Church.[48]

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[41] Aleksij, 1999. A shortened version of the thesis, extended until the present, was published in 2010 together with over 200 reproduced documents. However, this book is not for sale on the free market. *Pravoslavie*, 2010.

[42] Papathomas and Palli, 2002; *Istina,* 2004; Kala, 2007.

[43] Prekup, 1998.

[44] See all his works in the bibliography.

[45] Raudsepp, 1998a; Klaas, 1998. Raudsepp also published a short version of her thesis in German as Raudsepp, 1998b.

[46] Saard, 2008.

[47] Especially Riho Saard and Mikko Ketola. See their works in the bibliography.

I conceptualise my book as a contribution at three different levels to these largely divergent strains of research on the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia. On the descriptive level, I attempt to provide a comprehensive treatment of the development of this little known part of the Orthodox Church in a Western language. Second, I evaluate the various existing, seemingly incompatible, narratives of this development. Third, I attempt a genuine analysis of the discourse surrounding Orthodox Christianity in interwar Estonia and Latvia, something that is completely missing from the existing treatments.

This is accomplished in four main parts. The first part considers general questions concerning the notoriously elusive concept of modernity and, more specifically, Orthodox Christianity coming to terms with modern changes. The three remaining parts each look into a specific challenge of modernity, as defined in the beginning of the first part. The second, and most substantial, part analyses the way the Orthodox Churches of Estonia and Latvia severed the link to the Russian Empire that made them inferior in the eyes of many national activists and the opposition they faced in doing so. It consists of a concise historical outline of the development of the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia from 1917 to 1940 in conjunction with an analysis of the discussions within each of the communities concerning the inner and outer structure of the Church, following a largely chronological order. It asks how the modernising political setting of the new nation states of Estonia and Latvia challenged the organisation of the Orthodox Church. Which power struggles concerning church structures and organisation occurred within the Orthodox Church or between the Church and the secular authorities? How did Orthodox elites try to mobilise their constituencies to adjust to the new context?

This last question connects parts two and three. However, part three does not address organisational adjustment but rather concerns all kinds of non-structural issues. Once the structures of the Church had been reformed to emancipate the local Orthodox Church from Russian leadership, Orthodox Estonians and Latvians began to adapt the activities and service of the Church. They widely discussed issues such as congregational singing and the Church calendar and argued that the language and liturgy of the Church should become more 'indigenous.' At the same time as Orthodox Latvians and Estonians worked to create a more modern Orthodox Church, they were often perceived by the predominantly Lutheran society as remainders of the Russian Empire, as less developed, as less devoted Estonians and Latvians. Of importance here is how the Orthodox press reacted to such accusations and attempted to change the conception of normality.

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[48] Engelhardt, 2005.

Part four analyses the accusation that the dominant national historiography did not adequately distance itself from the biased historical accounts of previous periods when it came to the Orthodox Church. Baltic German platitudes concerning the arrival of Orthodox Christianity to the Baltic shores were perpetuated in history schoolbooks and professional historiography. The part answers the question of which arguments Orthodox spokesmen used to justify their views and how they attempted to transform the historical conception of the overall population.

A final section sums up the findings and arrives at a general conclusion. There are four appendixes (chapter 6.), including maps of Estonia and Latvia, both before and after 1917 (chapter 6.1.) and a timeline listing the most important developments in the two churches (chapter 6.2.). A paradigmatic speech, held by Archbishop Jānis (Pommers) of Riga in 1923 is reproduced as chapter 6.3., and chapter 6.4. lists the most important actors with brief biographies.

1. Modernity and Orthodox Christianity

This first part considers general issues that ought to be clarified before turning to the discourse on Orthodox Christianity in the specific cases of interwar Estonia and Latvia. It will do so in three main steps. First, a chapter is devoted to my understanding of the concept of modernity and the challenges it poses, especially to the Orthodox Church in interwar Estonia and Latvia. The second chapter then considers the way Orthodox Christianity in general and the Russian Orthodox Church in particular have been perceived to encounter modernity. Finally, the third chapter involves a closer look at discourse analysis and the mass media, which form the source basis of the study. This chapter also includes an historical sketch of the Orthodox press history in Latvia and Estonia, a history full of mudslinging and intrigues.

1.1. Modernity

Since the height of the post-modernity-debate in the social sciences of the late 1980s, the characterisations of the term 'modernity' abound in an amazing number. To attempt an overview is a dead end. This chapter, therefore, only sketches out my understanding of the concept of modernity without going into details of the history of the concept. My understanding is based on the assumption that modernity should not be understood as a historical epoch but rather, as "a complex set of interpretive practices."[1] The concept does not refer to any objectively identifiable type of society or social construct, but rather to internalised and abstract interpretive practices, in other words, the way one relates to the world.[2] Instead of conceptualising modernisation as a process with a teleological endpoint, as has often been the case, especially in Anglo-Saxon social theory,[3] modernisation implies coming to terms with the mental configurations of modernity.

These mental configurations are threefold. First, there is the exclusive emphasis on rationality as the way to knowledge. Max Weber famously defined the modern mind as displaying "the knowledge, or rather the belief, that, if one *desires* to understand something, one *can*. In other words, no mysterious unpredictable powers influencing the world exist as such; rather, everything is – in principle – *controllable* through *calculation*."[4] The second characteristic of modernity is an emphasis on opposites and dualisms. For every modern concept, there exists a counter-concept, filled with everything the former concept is not. Conceptual pairs such as modern – traditional, Western – Oriental, liberal – oppressive and individual – collective are very important to the modern mind, and one half of the pair is always much more positively connotated than the other one.

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[1] George, 1994, p. 42.

[2] This understanding of modernity has been shaped by the lecture of political scientists and social theorists such as Max Weber, Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, Richard Ashley and Jim George. A good introduction to this kind of modernity conceptualisation can be found in George, 1994.

[3] See Knöbl, 2001 for a critical assessment of the modernisation theories of the 1950s and 1960s.

Finally, the third mental configuration of modernity is an emphasis on progress. This progress is always conceptualised as moving towards the more positive half of a conceptual pair. A society may be modernising, Westernising, liberalising, or individualising, and this would be progress. If it was traditionalising, Orientalising, becoming more oppressive, or collectivising, then this would imply that it was hopelessly trapped in regression. At this point, I ought to mention the two major alternative conceptions of modernity that arose in the nineteenth century, communism and fascism. Both of these political ideologies were thoroughly modern, in all three respects, but they emphasised some dualisms differently from the dominant Western modernity. In the case of communism, it was the dualism individual – collective that was reversed. Fascism reversed the dualism universal – particular.

These three aspects of the modern mental condition are obviously highly simplified, and no phenomenon or society anywhere has ever been completely modern. In fact, following the poststructuralist school of thought, modernity cannot be substantially defined; its characteristics can only be identified in various discourses. For the remainder of this study, I am not interested in enumerating the elements of some specific modernity, but simply in analysing the reaction of a particular social and religious community to the propagation of the discourse of modernity. I am not aiming to assess the modernity of the Orthodox Church in the Baltic States as such, but rather its reaction to the modernising context which confronted it in the interwar years.

1.1.1. The Challenges of Modernity

In this understanding, the challenges of modernity pertain more to the need to discursively reposition oneself than to substantial threats. In the particular case of the Orthodox Church in Estonia and Latvia, these challenges arose primarily from the political upheavals of 1917, when both nation-states gained independence for the first time in their history. This is not to say that these challenges were completely non-existent before then, nor is it an attempt to construe the previous periods as pre-modern. However, there are several aspects of the Baltic context which make the demarcation of 1917 tenable.

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[4] Weber, Max, 1919, p. 594 (Emphasis in original).

First, the discourse of modernity was not prevalent in the Russian Empire of the nineteenth century. Primarily, the continued existence of a strict separation between the estates hindered the rise of universal discourse. Moreover, the political system had not embraced nationalism, either as the criteria for adherence to the polity or as a construct to encompass all current citizens. When the discourse participation grew towards the end of the century, one can see the challenges of modernity pressing the tsars to modernise the polity, especially following the 1905 revolution.[5] Certain fundamentally non-modern traits remained, however, such as privileged classes and religious confessions[6] and very uneven levels of integration. Reactions to the challenges posed by modernity, although already long present in the Russian Empire, were in no way exhausted at the time of the 1917 revolution.

A second aspect is the special context of emerging nation states. Whereas ethnic Estonians and Latvians had been the unprivileged population of the Empire's three 'German' provinces until 1917, the revolutions entailed, on the one hand, a restructuring of the administrative boundaries along roughly ethnic lines and, on the other, a complete shift in political power constellations, with ethnic Germans being forced out of power positions.[7] The new political elites were in a very different position than their predecessors and were intent on making the newly proclaimed states more modern than the Russian Empire, exposing its citizens (and churches) more directly to modernity. Third, the newly established Estonian and Latvian polities both insisted on the secular nature of the state. The Orthodox Church, which had heretofore been a part of the powerful state church of the Russian Empire, was now thrown into a secular environment where it had to completely redefine its identity and role. Moreover, not only was the political environment secular, but what religious culture remained was majority Lutheran. This required the Orthodox Church to rethink its former disdainful official view of Lutheranism.

These challenges arose on different levels and with different contents. First, there was the challenge of coming to terms with a changing political, social, and legal context. This challenge has been aptly described by Zygmunt Bauman, who characterised the modern condition as "conscious of its own historicity."[8] One consequence of this historicity is the insight that the modern state "had to impose a unified order on vast territories heretofore regulated by a variety of local traditions, […] make the creation and maintenance of social order a matter of deliberation, conscious design, monitoring, and daily management, rather than limit itself to the observance of traditional customs and privileges."[9] Bauman's likening of the pre-modern state to a gamekeeper and the modern one to a gardener highlights these aspects. While the gamekeeper only has to see to it that there is food in the food trough and a fence to guard the game from outside danger, the gardener has to fertilise the soil, plant seeds, water the sprouts, and weed the garden. It is relatively straight-forward to analyse this change in the Baltic States, since they were exposed to the discourse of modernity quite suddenly after 1917.

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[5] For the modernisation of the Russian Empire, see Hildermeier 2000; Baberowski, 2007, p. 60-66.

[6] See Tuchtenhagen, 1995.

[7] See also chapter 2.1.3.

[8] Bauman, 1993, p. 164.

The shift in the design and role of the political structures pose a challenge to religious organisations in three ways. First, the former take over some of the functions that the latter traditionally attended to, such as social and political organisation and education. Second, the interaction between churches and political structures multiplies with the modern omnipresence of the state. Religious organisations are forced to rethink their relationship with a state that no longer defines and legitimates itself religiously.[10] A third aspect of the political challenge of modernity is the advent of modern secular ideologies, in the present case, mainly nationalism and socialism. These ideologies, which are no longer grounded in a religious understanding of the world, challenge the monopoly of religion on the construction of meaning. They will be elaborated in the next section.

A second challenge of modernity lies in the birth of the subject and its individual identity as a result of the emphasis on rationality. This challenge is most clearly described by the poststructuralist school, especially Michel Foucault. In Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish' from 1975, the emergence of the modern prison in France around the turn of the nineteenth century is taken as a marker of the more fundamental shift from the 'representative regime' to the 'disciplinary society.'[11] The former, where the ruler punished by demonstrating his powers, was slowly replaced by the latter, where punishment served to discipline delinquents and make them conform to the norm. According to Foucault, this notion of rationally forcing normalisation of the individual subject did not only apply to prisons; in all social institutions – schools, hospitals, military – a new emphasis on making the individual conform to societal norms, regardless of his or her social standing and powers, took hold.

This idea that 'subjects' were self-governing entities in need of institutional control, on the one hand, made knowledge about society possible and, on the other, made individual identity something to be shaped, moulded, and formed in the course of one's lifetime.[12] The second challenge is thus characterised by a novel emphasis on identity issues and identity politics. It was no longer enough for religious organisations to refer to their many centuries of tradition. The need arose to justify their identities and facilitate their reproduction through reforms and adaptations.

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[9] Bauman, 1993, p. 165.

[10] For this aspect, see Crone, 2003, p. 123-143, 188-197.

[11] Foucault, 1975.

The third challenge of modernity is the recasting of the role of history. According to the sociologist Gerard Delanty, modernity is "a particular kind of time consciousness which defines the present in relation to the past, which must be continuously recreated."[13] For the discourse of modernity, history is not written for the sake of providing practical examples from the past, but rather in order to legitimise the present in relation to a projected future.[14] Generally, this *telos* often references the frame of nationalism or socialism. Socialism projects a perfect society at the end of history. In the case of nationalism, "history became a weapon against inner and outer enemies, intended to legitimise the actions carried out for the national identity."[15] This modern conception of history poses a challenge to religious organisations first because their versions of history and their *telos*, salvation of the soul, is accorded only secondary importance. Second, church historians were not immune to the 'modern regime of historicity' dominating secular history and occasionally sought to introduce the nationalist, or even socialist, *telos* into theology.[16]

1.1.2. Modernity, Ideology, and Identity

Among the main challenges of modernity are those posed by modern ideologies. These ideologies – the '-isms' – each emphasise a particular modern dualism, where most usually the positively connotated half is the name of the ideology. Liberalism emphasises the liberal as opposed to the oppressive, secularism emphasises the secular over the religious, and nationalism stresses the national over the cosmopolitan. These challenges can at times amount to concrete threats, especially for minority groups. This especially happens when the ideology becomes dominant in national political culture, such as nationalism in most of interwar Europe. In the course of this study, two of these ideologies – socialism and nationalism – are repeatedly mentioned, and as such deserve a closer look.

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[12] See Foucault, 1975, p. 262; Reckwitz, 2008, p. 236.

[13] Delanty, 2007, p. 3070.

[14] See Berger and Lorenz, 2008, p. 13.

[15] Krzoska and Maner, 2005, p. 7.

[16] For the case of nationalism, see e.g. Suttner, 1997, passim; Lehmann, 2002, p. 25. The most well-known case of the socialist *telos* introduced into theology is the liberation theology of South America, but also the 'Living Church' movement in the 1920s in Russia displayed these features. See Pospielovsky, 1984, p. 43-92 or the two contributions to the movement in Emhardt, 1929, p. 70-88.

Socialism, the idea that the world is moving towards a globally egalitarian society, is closely linked to anti-individualist theories of the early nineteenth century and especially to their re-appropriation later in the century by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.[17] Socialist ideas became prevalent in continental Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, trickling into the Russian Empire, and leading to the failed revolution of 1905 and the successful October Revolution of 1917. Radical Marxism-Leninism was successful only in the Soviet Union, whereas the rest of Europe embraced, to a greater or lesser extent, a more moderate social democracy. This included the Baltic States, where the Social Democrats remained an important political force throughout the interwar period.[18] While socialism was not a direct challenge to the Baltic Orthodox Church(es), as it was for the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, the developments in the Soviet Union were observed with deep anxiety by Orthodox circles, who were eager to oppose socialism *in toto*.

Nationalism more directly impacted the political culture of interwar Estonia and Latvia. The idea of nationalism is, however, almost as elusive as that of modernity. Ernest Gellner provides a classical definition: nationalism is primarily "a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."[19] Secondarily, Gellner maintains that nationalism is the *sentiment* aroused by the violation of this principle and finally the *movement* accentuated by this principle. It is difficult to disagree with this formal definition, but it is not as easy to define its elements. The contested meaning of *national unit* is at the core of many theories of nationalism. For Anthony D. Smith, the champion of the *ethno-symbolist* approach, the national unit is the modern articulation of an existing ethnic community.[20] In other words, a group of human beings sharing some fundamental linguistic, historical, and/or cultural characteristics 'enters' modernity and demands political rights for the group as a group.

In Eastern Europe, this process occurred over the course of the nineteenth century, when various nationalist movements petitioned the multi-national Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires for more political rights as particular nations. When these empires crumbled during and after the First World War, a number of new nation-states emerged all over Eastern Europe, taking nationalism to the next stage, so to speak. The national elites, who previously asserted their rights in the face of imperial governance, could now engage in nation- and state-building.[21]

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[17] See Cox, 2007.

[18] See chapter 2.1.3. for the political situation in the interwar Baltic States.

[19] Gellner, 1983, p. 1.

[20] See Smith, Anthony D., 1998 for a good introduction to his theory.

This project, unlike the earlier nationalist one, not only posited the rights of 'the nation' as the highest goal, but also strove to achieve complete political and social integration within a given national territory.[22] No one should be excluded from the government of the nation-state, except possibly non-nationals. As 'the nation' was unlikely to be entirely integrated by the nationalist project, dissenting opinions continued to be voiced. To speak in Bauman's gardener metaphor, the attempt by the nation-state gardener to turn all vegetables in the garden into turnips is unlikely to succeed easily. As a result, in many European states, national dictatorships emerged, the best known in Italy and Germany, but equally present in Estonia and Latvia.[23]

An important element of the discourse of modernity is the impact it has on individual identity. Many theories on identity, which appear under the assumptions of the modern discourse conceive of it in essentialist terms as the *real* person *behind* the appearance. I am interested, instead, in a 'social constructionist' approach, which "examines people's own understandings of identity and how the notion of inner/outer selves is used rhetorically, to accomplish social action."[24] From this perspective, individual identities are not unitary but must be constructed anew in different social and institutional contexts. In the following, I analyse some ways of framing modern identities. The discussion focuses on three types of collective identity: religious identity, national identity and historical identity.

The German sociologist Bernhard Giesen distinguishes between three different types of collective identities: primordial ones, where boundaries are natural and unchangeable, traditional ones, where boundaries are implicit and bound to group dynamics, and finally, universalist identities, which in principle are available to all human beings who understand and accept their foundations.[25] Religious identities are prime examples of the last type. They often imply that non-members are of less value until they have been converted. However, it is important to keep in mind that such universalist identities are thoroughly modern. The average medieval European was "religious in a taken-for-granted manner now difficult to imagine."[26] His entire life was structured by the church through its calendar, the importance accorded to its dignitaries, and the way most art, music, and literature as well as education was religious.[27]

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[21] Kitromilides, 1989; Timmermann, 1998, p. 13-15.

[22] See Crone, 2003, p. 188.

[23] Timmermann, 1998, p. 14. See also chapters 2.1.3. and 2.3.3.

[24] Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 4.

[25] Giesen, 1999, p. 13-43.

[26] Bruce, 2002, p. 140.

[27] Bruce, 2002, p. 56.

Secularisation changed this picture. According to Steve Bruce, “the basic proposition [of the secularisation thesis] is that modernization creates problems for religion.”[28] Avoiding the pitfalls of many other secularisation theorists, Bruce defines secularisation as the process whereby “religion diminishes in social significance, becomes increasingly privatized, and loses personal salience *except where it finds work to do other than relating individuals to the supernatural*.”[29] By ‘other work,’ Bruce means cultural defence or cultural transition, i.e. when religion provides a bulwark in hostile or rapidly changing contexts. Europeans are no longer religious in the way that characterised medieval Europe. Modernity thus changed notions of religious identity, as adherence to a religious organisation no longer was an integral part of human life but became one of several avenues of identity affirmation.[30] The main thrust of secularisation did not arrive in the Russian Empire until the end of the nineteenth century, when socialist ideology appeared alongside traditional religious offers for the construction of meaning. According to the socialists, class identity had much greater potential to provide meaning and a more progressive outlook than the Orthodox Christian identity, propagated by the Slavophiles throughout the nineteenth century.[31]

In continental Europe, Protestant denominations since the Reformation had demanded of their adherents a much stricter observance of individual piety than had been the case in the medieval Catholic Church. The counter-Reformation introduced a similar requirement of adherence into the Roman Catholic Church. This hardening of fronts between denominations has been called confessionalisation, defined as the “formation of state, society, and culture as a result of the formation of a denomination in the sense of the construction of a dogmatic system of doctrine.”[32] In other words, differences of confession were construed as more fundamental differences. Although this concept was worked out with special reference to Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is possible to extend it, not only geographically, but temporally, into the nineteenth century. Olaf Blaschke has called the long nineteenth century (1830s-1960s) the ‘second age of confessionalism.’ According to Blaschke, this period was characterised by improved education of the clergy, centralisation of power, institutionalisation of denominational differences, and clerical attempts at social control.[33] Moreover, denominational distinction became an important marker of social antagonism. The Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches were increasingly perceived as two monolithic entities or two poles of radical difference, and these differences were reproduced and emphasised in political and academic discourse. Ernst Christoph Suttner has demonstrated how confessionalisation also governed relations between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches from the early eighteenth century onwards.[34] The emphasis on finding common ground for reconciliation between the two churches gave way to an accentuation of their irreconcilable differences. Union was henceforth only considered possible through renouncing former allegiances and starting from scratch.[35]

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[28] Bruce, 2002, p. 2.

[29] Bruce, 2002, p. 30.

[30] Bruce, 2002, p. 14.

[31] Buss, 2003, p. 172-173.

[32] Klueting, 2007, p. 391.

[33] Blaschke, 2000, p. 61-63.

However, the modernisation of religious identity, which we can grasp with the concepts of secularisation and confessionalisation, is only one side of the coin. The American philosopher and theologian Adam Seligman has proposed an entirely different way of framing modernity, namely as 'the wager of authority.'[36] He distinguishes between the traditionally dominant idea of radically externalised moral authority and the modern insistence on internalised morality. For Seligman, externalised authority is something that has been completely lost in modernity. The ideals propagated by the discourse of modernity are for Seligman a wager, "that an internalized authority in the form of morality governed by […] reasonable rules is sufficient to constitute the self and sacrality."[37] According to Seligman, what I have called 'religious identity' above is only a 'civil identity'; it posits an 'instrumental self' that maximises utility founded on internalised moral authority. Truly religious identities, those that externalise moral authority and thereby make it nonnegotiable have, however, not disappeared, and provide a complex additional dimension to any analysis of religious phenomena. It is not enough to analyse religious communities as interacting communities, but the heteronomous moral authority, the 'complete other' needs to be taken into account. Membership in a church is often more than a mere choice of preference; it touches core concepts of selfhood.[38]

Nationalism has already been mentioned as an ideology of modernity. This ideology provided a novel framework for the constitution of modern identity. Over the course of the nineteenth century, national identity became an increasingly important part of individual identity, especially in Eastern Europe. In Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism, emphasis is placed on the parallel existence of vertically differentiated territories, each one of which is, or at least aspires to be, educationally self-sufficient. Where previously, a relatively homogeneous international *high culture* had existed *above* the unorganised agricultural masses, which were deemed *low culture*, the principle of nationalism re-evaluates the latter at the expense of the universality of the former. Unwittingly, nationalism thereby universalises a new *high culture* within the putative nation, while rhetorically claiming to stand for traditional *folk culture*.[39] In other words, the previous distinction between a 'high' and a 'low' culture, i.e. horizontal stratification, is replaced by a parallel re-evaluation of various national *high cultures* within homogeneous, clearly defined national territories.

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[34] Suttner, 1999, p. 186-202.

[35] Suttner, 1999, p. 199. This situation endured until the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965, which is outside the scope of this study.

[36] Seligman, 1999.

[37] Seligman, 1999, p. 66.

[38] Seligman, 1999, p. 76.

According to Gellner, thus, national identity is based on the re-evaluation of folk culture as the paramount identity. In Giesen's typology, such national identities would belong to primordial or traditional collective identities: They are either ethnic (unchangeable) or based on traditions, specific language use, and religious affiliation. Benedict Anderson has famously called this the 'imagined community.'[40] National identities must be propagated by influential individuals before they can gain hold within a population. They are not given and eternal, although their propagators often purport them to be. Thus, national identities are thoroughly modern constructs, although they are most often based on primordial and traditional characteristics.

Seligman also notes the almost necessary connection of primordially defined selves to modernity's own project.[41] Through rejecting transcendent moral authority in favour of rational morality, modernity caused many people to turn to a third spring of moral authority, the primordial, the ascribed, and the tribal. Thus, for Seligman national identities are the result of the failure of rationality. From the state perspective, we can recall Zygmunt Bauman's view that the impetus of rationally ordering a territory made the state embrace and propagate national identities. By taking Seligman together with Bauman we can conclude that the state, unable to sufficiently legitimise the desired order rationally and unable to use transcendent arguments, had to turn to the 'nation.'

National identities are thus at once modern and primordial. They are modern in their evolution and exploitation but primordial in their constitution and foundation. This tension makes national identification exceedingly complex and elusive. On the one hand, most differences between nationalities are straightforward for an outsider or analyst to recognise. On the other hand, however, novel differences can easily be fabricated, or differences can be politicised to take on a significance they did not have in the first place. National identity, therefore, has a fundamentally political and constructed nature while its adherents often perceive it as a natural characteristic. This politically absolutised tension is important to keep in mind when analysing discourses of national identification.

Finally, historical identity is closely connected with the third challenge of modernity. If modernity defines the present in relation to the past, then obviously identity is not exempted. Historical identity is the idea that one's identity is shaped by the historical development of the entity of which one is part. This is thus a wrapping up of the discussion of identity, for history is “the store room for understanding one’s proper identity.”[42] National historiography, especially for the smaller nations of Eastern Europe, which had heretofore not had much experience of political power, was of paramount importance for the shaping of a national identity. This historiography was meant to infuse the nation with pride in its origin and accomplishments, usually starting from nothing and ending a fully-fledged nation. It is difficult to over-estimate the role played by historians in the “great nineteenth-century process of the nationalisation of the European mental landscape.”[43]

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[39] Gellner, 1983, p. 57

[40] Anderson, 1998.

[41] Seligman, 1999, p. 53.

However, historical identity is a double-edged sword in many cases. The hegemonic national historiography, embodied in the “general historical knowledge of a society that is repeatedly echoed in the work of historians, political scientists and journalists” often de-legitimises differing narratives.[44] The ‘master narrative’ perpetuated by these multiple historical practices helps shape a desirable historical identity and exclude certain groups from participating in that identity, stressing the incompatibility of their version of history. Importantly, the ‘official’ historical identity is perpetuated through diverse historical practices, including the curricula of educational establishments.[45] This is a highly effective way of ensuring that the young members of the nation receive the ‘correct’ historical identity.

The relationship between historical and religious identity has been analysed by James Kennedy, who distinguishes between three types of relations in European historiographies: supersession, sacralisation, and conflict.[46] The first type, national history attempting to supersede religious affiliations, was most common in Protestant regions, where the dominant church could smoothly be subordinated to the nation state. In this reading, religion might have played its part in the past, but only as part of the national narrative. At the turn of the twentieth century, with the professionalisation of historical studies, religiously-minded historians were increasingly regarded as second class and religious history was relegated to an unimportant sub-field of the discipline.[47] Moreover, the profession of history increasingly left national and religious narratives to non-professionals.[48]

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[42] Lorenz, 1997, p. 400.

[43] Leerssen, 2008, p. 85.

[44] Thijs, 2008, p. 72.

[45] Leerssen, 2008, p. 86. See also chapter 4. for the Baltic case.

[46] Kennedy, 2008, p. 104-108.

[47] Kennedy, 2008, p. 114.

[48] Kennedy, 2008, p. 117.

The sacralisation strategy implied a magnification of the importance of religious identity as substantive of national identity. This strategy was pursued particularly where "a dominant confessional identity became nearly co-extensive with a single confession, itself effectuating the ethnicisation of religion."[49] This was the case in most of early twentieth-century Orthodox Europe, as the following chapter explains. Where no one confession was dominant enough to take on the role of a national church, some attempts were carried out to create a new 'national' religion. However, in many cases, neither strategy managed to establish hegemony, and historiography was characterised by conflict – between denominations, within them, or between religious and anti-clerical historians. These conflicts over the place religion should be accorded in the national historical identity – if any at all – show how "confessions did not constitute monoliths from which a nation's past was constructed, though the parameters of belief clearly delimited what vision of the national past were available."[50]

1.2. Orthodox Christianity Encounters Modernity

The perception of Orthodox Christianity in the West was historically often a gloomy one. The Baltic German church historian Adolf von Harnack, whose characterisation of 'the Greek church' started with the call to step back several centuries, represents the rule rather than an exception.[51] In the second half of the nineteenth century, while interest in the Orthodox Church grew markedly, especially among Protestant theologians, this interest was influenced by the 'modern regime of historicity': "the foreign confession was no longer regarded exclusively as having a dogmatically different theology but as an entity, historically shaped by the elements of the Gospels and the church of the first centuries."[52] In consequence, the nineteenth century preoccupation with Orthodox Christianity was often more of a projection of the Early Church into the present than the analysis of a contemporary entity.

This fallacy was present in von Harnack's overly negative characterisation of the Orthodox Church from around the turn of the twentieth century. Precisely this inaccurate conception had an immense impact on the opinions of "the entirety of European and Anglo-Saxon Christianity and even found its way with adequate modifications, into the Roman Catholic public to an extent that it is still dominating the public opinion."[53] The above statement from 1952 is some-

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[49] Kennedy, 2008, p. 123.

[50] Kennedy, 2008, p. 132. See also chapter 4. for the Baltic case.

[51] von Harnack, 1901, p. 135-136.

[52] Benz, 1952, p. 193.

[53] Benz, 1952, p. 230.