

CAPPADOCIAN LEGACY

A Critical Appraisal

Edited by

Doru Costache and Philip Kariatlis

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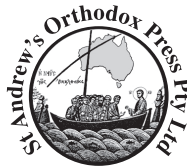
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Contents

PREFACE	5
1. THE CAPPADOCIANS WITHIN TRADITION	
The Cappadocian Fathers as Founders of Byzantine Thought <i>David Bradshaw</i>	11
Were the Fathers Proponents of a Familial <i>Imago Trinitatis</i> ? <i>Adam G. Cooper</i>	23
2. THE LEGACY OF ST BASIL THE GREAT	
St Basil the Great's Exposition of Nicene Orthodoxy <i>John Anthony McGuckin</i>	47
Why Didn't St Basil Write in New Testament Greek? <i>John A. L. Lee</i>	61
Light (φῶς/φᾶσις) and its Liturgical Foundation in the Teaching of St Basil the Great <i>Adrian Marinescu</i>	77
Christian Worldview: Understandings from St Basil the Great <i>Doru Costache</i>	97
St Basil's Trinitarian Doctrine: A Harmonious Synthesis of Greek <i>Paideia</i> and the Scriptural Worldview <i>Philip Kariatlis</i>	127
The Recapitulation of History and the "Eighth Day": Aspects of St Basil the Great's Eschatological Vision <i>Mario Baghos</i>	151
St Basil the Great as Educator: Implications from the Address to Youth <i>Dimitri Kepreotes</i>	169
3. THE LEGACY OF ST GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN	
The Teachings of Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity <i>Archbishop Stylianos of Australia</i>	187
Self-Knowledge and Knowledge of God according to St Gregory the Theologian <i>Georgios Mantzarides</i>	203

Gregory the Theologian – A Spiritual Portrait <i>Archbishop Stylianos of Australia</i>	215
Seeking Out the Antecedents of the Maximian Theory of Everything: St Gregory the Theologian’s <i>Oration 28</i> . <i>Doru Costache</i>	225
“What then? Is the Spirit God? Certainly!” St Gregory’s Teaching on the Holy Spirit as the Basis of the World’s Salvation <i>Philip Kariatlis</i>	243
Scripture in the Works of St Gregory the Theologian <i>Margaret Beirne</i>	261
St Gregory the Theologian’s Existential Metanarrative of History <i>Mario Baghos</i>	275
Features of the Theandric Mystery of Christ in the Christology of St Gregory the Theologian <i>Anthony Papantoniou</i>	299

4. THE LEGACY OF ST GREGORY OF NYSSA

Divine Providence and Free Will in Gregory of Nyssa and his Theological Milieu <i>Bronwen Neil</i>	315
“Dazzling Darkness” The Mystical or Theophanic Theology of St Gregory of Nyssa <i>Philip Kariatlis</i>	329
Approaching <i>An Apology for the Hexaemeron</i> : Its Aims, Method and Discourse <i>Doru Costache</i>	349
Spiritual Enrichment through Exegesis: St Gregory of Nyssa and the Scriptures <i>Margaret Beirne</i>	373
Reconsidering <i>Apokatastasis</i> in St Gregory of Nyssa’s <i>On The Soul and Resurrection</i> and the <i>Catechetical Oration</i> <i>Mario Baghos</i>	387
INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS	417

Preface

There is a story to this collective volume, and behind it a dream, or rather an ideal. St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College represents the first serious attempt of the Orthodox Commonwealth in the southern hemisphere to provide tertiary education and solid theological scholarship. The contributions gathered here are a tribute to both this ideal and the inordinate efforts that led to its fruition. Now, in the twenty-eighth year of its existence, the Faculty of St Andrew's confirms its maturity, determination and commitment to the ideal that motivated the establishment of the College in 1986. This is, indeed, the first collective outcome of our efforts, which are supported by some illustrious friends of the College who are also genuinely in love with the Church fathers, and especially the Cappadocians.

The story of this volume began in 2009, with the preparation for publication of the proceedings from the first ever St Andrew's Patristic Symposium, dedicated to St Basil the Great. A group of articles that resulted from that symposium was published in the academic journal of our Faculty, *Phronema*, in its 25th edition (2010). The successful publication of these contributions boosted our enthusiasm and courage. We replicated further this experience for the next two symposia, dedicated to St Gregory the Theologian and St Gregory of Nyssa, proceedings from which have been published in *Phronema* 26:2 (2011) and *Phronema* 27:2 (2012). Thus, with the blessing of the College's leadership and the broad support of the Faculty, the conveners of the symposia – who likewise sign this preface – launched the challenge of bringing together in one volume the written outcomes of the first three St Andrew's Patristic Symposia. This is how the present collective work was born. It gathers the articles previously published in various editions of *Phronema* by the keynote speakers and other contributors at the symposia, to which it adds seven new articles, respectively by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos (our College Dean), The Revd Professor John Anthony McGuckin (Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, New York, USA), Professor David Bradshaw (University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky USA), Dr Adam G. Cooper (John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne VIC), Professor Adrian Marinescu (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Ausbildungseinrichtung für Orthodoxe Theologie, München, Deutschland) and our colleagues Dimitri Kepreotes and Anthony Papandoniou. The four external scholars have not

participated in our first 'Cappadocian' symposia yet helped us immensely with the review process of our papers.

Indeed, the contributions already published in editions of *Phronema* have been peer and blind reviewed by a number of local and international scholars, whose competent input led to great improvements. In the respective issues of the journal, the editors of this volume expressed due gratitude for the gracious efforts of these scholars; our respect and appreciation are undiminished. In fact, as a sign of our appreciation we invited the reviewers to contribute articles to the present volume; some of them did, and we are overwhelmed by this endorsement of our undertakings. The editors have internally reviewed the contributions never published before in the College's journal. The articles that have been previously published in *Phronema* are now presented in revised versions, of which four are largely rewritten and expanded (namely, the contributions by Mario Baghos and Doru Costache on St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian). All articles published here are accompanied by descriptive abstracts, a reason for which we will not further burden this preface with our comments.

Another point should be made here, regarding the trajectory of the symposia and their published outcomes. The Faculty of St Andrew's and the conveners of the symposia are interested to explore mainly witnesses of the Byzantine tradition, which constitute the most treasured legacy of the Orthodox Christian faith and experience. We cannot become what we are if we ignore what our ancestors lived and died for. The goal of the St Andrew's Patristic Symposia is therefore to contribute to the rediscovery of a genuine Orthodoxy, both faithful to the apostolic tradition and creative in the various circumstances of its journey through history. As His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos observes,

...tradition is not so much a treasury of structures and forms but rather a living current of life, a way of existing, thinking and feeling [...]. [...] tradition is not just a way of handling matters of major or minor importance, but rather the spirit which leaves its creative traces through all possible expressions.¹

Indeed, we cannot bear a traditional mindset without thoroughly exploring tradition. Aiming at uncovering and reassessing the Byzantine roots of contemporary Orthodoxy, our symposia began by exploring the heritage of the Cappadocian Fathers, whose vision of the ecclesial life left an indelible

¹ 'The Place of Tradition in the Christian Faith' *Phronema* 1 (1986): 7-17, at 13 & 16.

mark upon Byzantine tradition. The articles reunited here refer to a wide range of topics pertaining to the Cappadocian saints – from their contributions to theology and spirituality, Christian education and exegesis, to their views on the cosmos and history. These contributions are considered through the lens of their respective works, their place within the broader patristic tradition, and in the light of contemporary scholarship. These by no means exhaust the Cappadocian legacy. We are certain that we will discover more traces of the Cappadocian saints in our advancement through the centuries of Christian Byzantium. Also certainly, these discoveries will help us better understand the discrete processes by which the Byzantines assimilated contributions from the past into their own spiritual, intellectual and material culture; these discoveries, in turn, will form an inestimable know-how for Orthodox theory and practice in this very day and age.

Another aspect, which we should address here, refers to the beautiful icon of the Cappadocian saints featuring on the front cover of our volume. By its very existence, this icon exemplifies the spirit of our undertaking. As the reader may know, there was no traditional icon of the Cappadocians in Byzantium, given that the notion of a specifically Cappadocian tradition remained foreign to the Byzantines themselves.² This became a challenge for the editors, who intended to assimilate this newer approach – namely, to speak of the Cappadocian fathers as a group – in the most ecclesial and traditional way possible, by embodying it into an icon. We could find none, and in the rush of time no local iconographer could take up the task of ‘writing’ one for us. In turn, helped by various friends, we collected a great number of photos, with individual representations of the three saints, aiming to collating them into a new composition. We decided eventually to use reproductions of the famous 16th century mural icons from the Athonite monastery of Stavronikita. Ion Nedelcu, a gifted and multi-talent freelance artist, theologically educated in Bucharest, graciously offered his competent services; as a matter of fact, he genially remastered the three icons of the Cappadocian saints in a new representation. Based on traditional Byzantine depictions, the composition consecrates, as it were, the newer notion of a Cappadocian tradition. The idea behind this icon belongs to us. We intended to present a complex message, truthful to the legacy of the Cappadocian saints, and Nedelcu managed to accomplish just that; we are deeply grateful. The icon shows the three holy theologians focused on Scripture, with its two Testaments, represented by their most celebrated verses (Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1,14) and which constitute the foundation

² Cf. Andrew Louth, ‘The Cappadocians,’ in Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, reprinted 2006), 289-301, here 289.

of the most important theological achievements of the Cappadocians. Incidentally, the presence of the three verses in this composition highlights the idea of the unity of Scripture, as interpreted by the holy fathers. A ray of the transcendent light illustrates the hermeneutical, unbreakable bridge between text and interpretation, bathing in the apophatic radiance of divine and deifying glory both book and interpreters. This corresponds to one of the most characteristic traits of patristic Byzantine tradition, namely, a hermeneutical theology profoundly rooted in the scriptural tradition and the mystical experience of the Church. We hope that the readers will embrace our suggestion and see this icon as representing the first stage of the Eucharistic banquet of the Divine Liturgy, the eating and drinking from the chalice of divine wisdom as revealed through the Scriptures and preached by the holy fathers.

A last word is in order, regarding the editorial work on this volume. We both read the papers included here and provided the authors with our respective views and suggestions. This has been a privilege and an enriching experience, which was further intensified – at various stages – by the co-operation of the *Phronema* reviewers. We are grateful for all their assistance. We also express our warm thanks to our colleagues and friends, Anastasios Kalogerakis and Mario Baghos, for reading the manuscript before going to the printers and making valuable suggestions. Their patient and competent support inspired us, confirming that this volume is first and foremost the fruit of a spirit, the *phronema* of our College. Last but not least, our gratitude goes to our publisher for their support and encouragement.

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