

Many books and articles attempting to understand the role of the church in Orthodox countries focus on polarizations between tradition and modernity, and many Orthodox discourses follow the same approach. The authors of *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece* (Ashgate, \$99.95), edited by Victor Roudometof and Vasilios N. Makrides, have taken a different path and examine what the editors describe as "the hybridization of the Greek Orthodox tradition as it responds creatively to the challenges of late modernity and postmodernity." Indeed, the Greek Orthodox Church is not fixed in the past, but the innate Orthodox respect for

tradition means that tradition needs to be invoked even for legitimizing modernization and changes, since being branded an "innovator" is the reformer's worst nightmare. Anastassios Anastassiadis shows this in the case of the late Archbishop Christodoulos (1939-2008), who—according to Anastassiadis' understanding—developed an aggressive "nationalist" discourse as a counterweight to his transformation of the church. The Orthodox Church "uses a lot of pre-modern arguments and modes of thought," but this does not mean that Orthodoxy is incompatible with modernity, argue the editors, reminding their readers about the difficulties the Roman Catholic Church experienced with similar processes. Tradition and modernity are intertwined.

Eleni Sotiriou's chapter on the position of women in Greek Orthodoxy makes it especially clear how Orthodoxy approaches modernity on its own terms. Sotiriou describes women as "traditional modern," while discussing Greek Orthodox attempts to reactivate the female deaconate. A striking instance of contradictory trends at work in the Greek Church today are the "Free Monks," a Greek rock band of black-robed Orthodox monks, studied by Lina Molokotos-Liederman (see RW, September 2003). Their purpose is to actively engage Greek youth. Beside recordings, a website (<http://www.freemonks.gr>) and video clips, there are summer camps, books and two magazines for young people. The message is anti-globalization, anti-drugs and anti-materialism, with anti-Western undertones. They are strong defenders of Greek identity. They promote a rather conservative agenda "by using progressive and contemporary means," while they convey an anti-globalization message through global means and the use of "key compo-

nents of Western modernity and globalization." Molokotos-Liederman see the Free Monks as an illustrative case of selective modernity "that takes on tradition and modernity."

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An important element to be taken into consideration, which is emphasized in Victor Roudometof's chapter, is the synthesis that emerged in the 19th century, making Orthodoxy an integral element of Greek identity; at the same time, by showing how the Orthodox Church in Greece is the product of 18th and 19th centuries developments, he makes it clear that it is not "the relic of an immutable tradition." Archbishop Christodoulos, Makrides writes, supported a new public role for the church, aspiring to make church and state equal partners and advocating church intervention in public debates and affairs, something that politicians resented, although they could not ignore the Orthodox factor in Greek society and political culture. But demographically, Greece is becoming less of an Orthodox country these days. This is not because many Greeks are leaving the church, even if they are non-practicing, but is due to growing immigration, with immigrants now making up about 10 percent of the country's resident population, report Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas. Both state and church have become aware of the need to make adjustments to a multicultural society. One of the merits of the book is to underline the internal diversity of Greek Orthodoxy: there are many Greek Orthodox voices. It also offers strong evidence for a "multiple modernities" approach. It will prove to be a useful tool for any reader

wanting to understand Greek Orthodoxy beyond clichés.