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Grigorii Konisski was born in 1717 in Nizhyn, in today's Ukraine. He was tutored at home and at the age of 11, he was sent to the Kiev-Mohyla Academy where he studied for 15 years. In 1744, he became a monk and assumed the name of Georgii. In 1745, he himself taught poetry in the Kiev Academy also writing poetry in several languages and some plays. In 1747, he became a prefect of the Academy and started teaching philosophy. In 1751, he became the rector of the Academy and a professor of theology. In 1755, he was consecrated by the Synod as a bishop of Belarus, which was confirmed in 1755 by Polish king August III and in 1765 by king Stanisław August Poniatowski. In 1757, he established a seminary in Mogilev. He established a printing press in the house of the archpriest. In 1783, Catherine II made him an archbishop and included him in the Synod. After a prolonged illness, he died in 1795[1]. In 1993, he was canonized by the Synod of the Belorussian Orthodox church. His canonization was recognized in 2011 by the Ukrainian church.

Konisski was a preacher of some repute[2], and a few dozens of his sermons and speeches have been published. He authored an instruction book for

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[1] W.A. Serczyk, Georgij (Jerzy) Konisski (Koniński), *Polski słownik biograficzny*, Wrocław 1967-1968, vol. 13, pp 534–536.

[2] М.Г. Павлович, *Критико-библиографический обзор слов и речей Георгия Конисского*, Христианское Чтение 1873, no. 7, p. 406, although Pavlovich himself did not find in Konisski's sermons "any traces of oratorial greatness or oratorial delight" (pp. 406, 423–424) since, he, "man of reason and deed" (p. 407), was preoccupied with other concerns and "did not have any opportunity to take care of oratorial beauty" of his semons (p. 408).

priests, *On duties of parish presbyters* (1776) which had at least 28 editions in Russia (D 4)[3]. In his capacity as a faculty member of the Kiev Academy, Konisski taught a class on philosophy and a manuscript of his lecture notes, *Philosophia juxta numerum quatuor facultatum quadripartita, complectens Logicam Ethicam Physicam et Metaphysicam* (1749), has been preserved and published in the Ukrainian translation in 1990. This four-partite philosophy presentation is a grand tour not only through logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics, but also through the science of the time that includes geography, geology, astronomy, agriculture, etc. The scope of subjects is very impressive as is the amount of philosophical and scholarly references. Konisski was well-informed about recent developments in the subjects he presented[4]. However, in all this he was first and foremost an Orthodox ecclesiastic who viewed everything through the lens of the Orthodox theology. Therefore, although the section on metaphysics that touches on theology is fairly short, theology appears all throughout his lectures and its presence is particularly strong in the discussion of physics. This physics is unmistakably peripatetic with added Orthodox coloring.

Peripatetic physics

There are two principles of all natural bodies: prime matter and form, and in the process of generation there are three principles: matter, form, and depravation/absence [of form] (F 2.28). Prime matter in inaccessible to the senses (33). It is the first subject of each body since it is common to all bodies. Bodies come from it and turn into it (34). Prime matter cannot be born nor destroyed; it does not grow nor gets smaller; unlike for Aristotle, who considered prime matter (and the entire world, for that matter) to exist from eternity, Konisski's prime matter was created by God at the beginning of the world and its quantity does not change and will not change in the future (35). Prime matter desires

[3] References are made to the following works of Konisski:

D – *О должностях пресвитеров приходских*, Санкт-Петербург: Москва: Сретенский монастырь 2004 [1776]; an English translation in: *The doctrine of the Russian Church, being the primer or spelling book* [by F. Prokopovich], *The shorter and longer catechisms* [by Filaret], *and A treatise on the duty of parish priests* [by Konisski], Aberdeen: A. Brown and Co. 1845; reprinted: *The duty of parish priests in the Orthodox Church*, Willits: Eastern Orthodox Books.

F – *Філософські твори*, Київ 1990 [1749], vols. 1–2.

S – *Собрание сочинений*, Санкт-Петербург 1861 [1835], vols. 1–2.

[4] With a somewhat overwrought praise it was stated that in his philosophical and theological systems Konisski "undoubtedly surpassed all his predecessors and successors," because of how they were prepared and because of scholarly references, Макарий Булгаков, *История Киевской Академии*, Санкт-Петербург 1843, p. 163.

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form, which is its natural tendency, i.e., it is capable of accepting a form and retaining it for which reason God created it (37). No prime matter exists without a form; God created everything for a purpose and prime matter was created to accept forms (39); thus, matter without form would be pointless. However, theoretically, God could separate matter from forms. Since matter is the store for forms, it, by nature, exists before forms and can exist without them by the power of the omnipotent God (40). New forms perish and are born, but how? They are not hidden in matter (46), but new ones are produced (47). Forms are produced inside matter and then they are united with it, but do they come from nothing in matter? (49) Forms no doubt come from something, not from nothing and there is some force given to things by God, but it is not known from where this force takes new forms (53)[5].

A cause is what incites the existence of a thing (F 2.79) and Konisski accepted the existence of the four peripatetic kinds of causes: material, formal, efficient, and final (81). The Aristotelian God, the Unmoved Mover, is only the final cause; according to Konisski, God is the first efficient cause, and whatever comes into being, comes into being by the will of God (90). God acts through the means of causes; He does not move Himself or move something, and secondary causes are active only by His will (91). The final cause is not only a cause but the most important among causes as to the beginning and honor (94). The motion of final cause is metaphorical among motions (95).

Aristotle did not allow the infinitely large in the world and opted for potential infinity. As to nature, Konisski followed that contention and claimed that there cannot be nor can arise through natural forces anything actually infinite. An infinite body could not move, so there is no such body since each natural body is in motion (F 2.111-112). However, God is able to create infinity (115). There is no limit to the size of what God can know and can create (118). God's omnipotence cannot be limited unless by something absurd or contradictory (119). That is, the finitude of the world would be a self-imposed limitation that could be lifted at any time by the will of God.

Konisski went beyond peripatetic physics when he stated that God can cause that two bodies can interpenetrate, that is, exist in the same space at the same time (this was possible in the Stoic world) as exemplified by Christ coming through the closed door or the Eucharist (F 2.180). Also, by God's power, the same body can be in two different places at the same time. Consider the body of Christ in the Eucharist in many places (184).

[5] In his lectures given in the Kiev Academy at the beginning of the century, Prokopovich was also puzzled by the problem of the origin of forms and also left it unresolved, Ф. Прокопович, *Філософські твори*, vol. 2, Київ 1979–1981, pp. 135, 142.

Konisski accepted the existence of the four Empedoclean elements (simple bodies): earth, water, fire, and air, to which he added heaven (F 2.213), by which he may have meant aether[6]. He also used the concept of the world soul, but for him the world soul was not a form of the world, but an order by which things are united in the best way and in respect to one goal (214); that is, it was more of a metaphoric use of the concept than the use which would agree with the ancient understanding of the world soul as something animating the world the way the human soul animates the human body.

The world was created in six days as described in the Biblical creation account (F 2.222, although God could have created the world before eternity (224)) resulting in one world: if there were two, or more, worlds we would have to know about inhabitants of these worlds and they about us since this would increase the glory of God (F 2.246). There are seven planets moving on their orbits and there is also the eighth sphere, the sphere of stars which very likely moves with them (283). However, there is also a division in three theologically important realms: the first heaven is the sublunar sphere; the second heaven includes all the spheres above it; and the empyrean is the third heaven mentioned by the apostle Paul (256). If heaven moves, it moves by itself (250, 256), apparently with motion imparted to it by God at creation. In the Aristotelian cosmos, God was introduced to be the final cause of the motion of the first sphere (the first heaven) which is transferred to other spheres. Konisski did assume that the heaven has an influence on earthly things; e.g., the sun causes four seasons and thus different agricultural seasons (259). The empyrean also influences earth. Heaven influences earth through light and motion (260). If any heavenly motion that influences earthly motion stops, the latter also stops, but not all earthly events depend of heavenly motion (262). Galileo's observation of spots on the sun (270, 278) indicates that heaven and earth are divisible and perishable bodies (268–269), although it is very likely that heaven is not fully perishable; it only undergoes changes. Then the biblical words about the destruction of heaven should be taken as referring to changes in haven or to the transition from one substance to a better substance or, for the same substance, to a better kind (273).

It seems that the earth is in the center of the universe and does not move since all stars are seen without their changing size and there are always visible six Zodiac signs (and six on the antipodes) (F 2.304-305). Copernicans say that it is simpler to assume that the earth moves and heaven is immobile, but this would mean that God has to act by what appears to us to be easier and simpler

[6] Cf. Прокопович, *Філософські твори*, vol. 2, p. 284.

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(306). This criticism, however, is a departure from the principle of simplicity that Konisski ascribed to God when saying that the matter of the heavens differs little from matter of the earth since God applied a simple way by using the same matter for heaven and earth, whereby heaven is also a subject of change and will pass away as the Scriptures say (250-251). In any event, Konisski presented the Copernican system in a rather neutral fashion without rejecting it outright, deflecting the discussion of its veracity by the statement that he did not want to enter the quarrel between astronomers (219).

God

God occupies a rather marginal position in the peripatetic universe. Consigned to the outskirts of the universe, the Aristotelian God does not even know that the world exists since such knowledge would compromise the divine perfection. Thus, God only ponders upon Himself[7]. It was thus relatively easy to replace this God in the Christian worldview by the God of the Bible and connect this understanding with the peripatetic physics as done by the scholastics as largely mimicked by Orthodox authors.

In his theological struggles with the concept of the Trinity, Konisski stated that in God there is one nature and divinity and three hypostases or subsistences, three *supposita* or persons that are located in one and the same nature: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and two natures in Christ: divine and human. Human nature – the soul and body – was united with the hypostasis or personality. Attributes of human and divine natures go through one another, are predicating about one another so that in Christ, man is God and God is man, man is omniscient, and in the finite, God is mortal and finite (F 2.527-528). Christ's humanity is not a person, because this humanity is indivisibly united with His divinity (528-529).

It is possible to prove the existence of God by natural reason. 1. All that exists is the accident of being or nonbeing; but not all can be accidental since things cannot have existence from themselves since they are imperfect (F 2.533). This argument is akin to the contention that an ability is necessary from which nothing can be greater – and it is found only in God (F 2.32). Both these statements basically amount to the ontological argument. 2. Causality is observed in nature: man causes birth of man, lion of lion, but without some supporting cause a man could not cause the existence of another man. This

[7] A. Drozdek, *Greek philosophers as theologians*, Aldershot 2007, ch. 14.

causality is backed up by another causality. Because there is no motion from infinity, since there would be no first cause in such infinity and thus there would be no effect, thus, God exists. This is basically the first *via* from the set of the five proofs of existence of God presented by Aquinas. 3. Everything is kept in some constant, stable limits which can be due only to some rational guidance. This was a common argument used also in the Bible (535). Also, "if someone investigating God's creation comes to the conclusion that God exists and He is omnipotent, rational, knowing the future, then he thinks correctly and under the guidance of philosophy he will come to the knowledge of God" (F 1.54). Who watching the heavens would not admit that it was created by a Creator; who reading Homer's epic poem would say that it is a result of a random configuration of letters (F 1.402, 2.23), to use Cicero's example. This is an argument from design (teleological argument), the centerpiece of physico-theology, frequently invoked by Russian authors. 4. There is an instinct to reach to heaven in moments of woe or misfortune "as to the fortress of the misfortunate" (F 2.536). This argument, however, relies already on the existence of a perfect God who created an instinct that directs human attention toward heaven in the moment of grief, and since God creates nothing in vain, this instinct is directed toward true God.

From God's perfection follows that He is one, necessary, eternal, immeasurable, simple, immutable, rational, most free, omnipotent. The most important attribute of God is existence from Himself (F 2.538), that is, *a se*, as the scholastics phrased it. God is the most perfect being and such a being can be only one (540). God is simple: all compound beings are dependent on their components and God is not dependent on anything. As the most perfect being, God is immutable; He would be imperfect if He were lacking something; He would become imperfect if He would lose something (542). Only God exists on account of Himself and everything else exists on His account (240). God is the ultimate goal of the world, while man is the ultimate goal within nature (242). The almighty God is also omnipresent, all-wise, and all-good (D 4.1.55).

Providence and theodicy

Having created the world, God constantly maintains this grand machine and directs its workings (S 1.240). God is the nearest guarding cause of all things since He maintains and preserves everything (F 2.85). Nature is preserved by God; its forces are insufficient to preserve it since preservation is in a way a continuation of the act of creation (87). God preserves natural laws and

miracles are not results of suspension of these laws, but results of "clarifying" them (88), which may mean that efficient causes remain always the same, but their workings can be influenced by other types of causes (cf. 2.110).

God also maintains, that is, preserves, substances (1.88). However, it is not true that such maintenance means constant recreation (89), which is the way Descartes envisioned God's support of the existence of the world. This, of course, has a direct impact on human lives, the lives of those for whom the world was created. However, God is not a mere mechanical force that guides nature, but this guidance is influenced by human behavior. Nature thus is not driven by pure physical forces, but its workings are influenced by human morality.

God's blessing or curse, plenty or scarcity, winds and rains depend on us, on our obedience to God and on keeping His commandments (S 1.242). "When we see that one thing is born of another, we ascribe action to this thing, not to God; and thus when we see something opposed to us, we hide from a simple thing, not from God" (S 2.71). We should see the image of God in all things; after all, they were created by God. We should see His image in a normal, regular change of events: spring after winter, sunny weather after rain, wind after silence, etc. since it is God who is present in winds, breathes lovingly (72); covered by clouds, He sends rain. If there is an unusual event in nature, it means that the face of God changed from benevolence to anger: it is God who sends drought, flood, etc. (73). When the crop is eaten by insects (74), "we will think that these insects appeared accidentally, not by the will of God." By thinking so, "we do not see an image of God in creation, we do not feel His change." If we do not see God in it and "do not repent, then we will be affected by insects that can eat us, not just our goods" (75).

Everything thus happens for a reason and every Christian truly believing in the Word of God, does not – and should not – doubt in His providence; God not only knows people's deeds, but also directs them, big and small (S 2.120). God helps people to do good works through natural events and through special grace given through baptized believers in Christ. Without this grace nothing can be done, which is the Orthodox dogma: God cares for us, perfects us (F 1.429).

God helps people, but He does not sin since an action is not a sin but an action done with some inclination is a sin and God does not incline the sinner; He wants that people have free will and helps them in their actions since without it, they would be unable to do anything and would be neither free nor human (F 2.93).

It is thus clear that Konisski did not shrink from the view that just as God directs good events, so does He direct harmful happenings. Disasters, illness, or death happen according to the will of God in order to purify people (S 1.52).

Misfortunes are also an opportunity provided for people to try their courage. However, events such as a cold summer, hot winter, flood, earthquake, etc. are not without reason, although the reason can be obscure to us. That is, trust in God should be exercised with an expectation that there will be a positive outcome of all that is currently bad. Also, God created everything for a reason, such as poison, tiny insects, although the usefulness of such things has not yet been discovered (F 1.404-405). Even the apparently premature death of innocent children should not be mourned since their death preserved this innocence and so, the Biblical flood was a blessing for the young since they did not manage to sin[8].

Eschatology

God created the world for man, but this worldly existence is just the beginning of the true existence, the life after death. Therefore, "Twice blind is who does not pay attention to death; / Twice stupid is who thinks he won't arise after death"[9]. The earthly life should concentrate on this issue.

It is clear for Konisski that the life after death exists. 1. There is in humans an insatiable desire for happiness, always wanting more than people already have. God creates nothing without reason, so the desire for happiness would be without reason if it could not be fulfilled (F 1.414). 2. The fact that people are afraid of dying testifies that they have been created for eternal life (S 1.94). 3. Angels are immortal since they are simple beings, i.e., have no parts, although, of course, God could annihilate them should He will it (F 2.546). Since the rational soul (unlike vegetative and sensory souls (436)) is also simple (435, 500), so the human soul can live after the death of the body to be finally united with the resurrected body (S 2.161), since the soul is designed to make with the body the whole man (F 2.501). 4. The soul is a spiritual substance – whereby it is immortal – since the acts of the intellect in the soul refer not only to material entities but also concern thing that have nothing to do with material beings: God, beauty, eternity, laws of argumentation, and the like (F 2.499).

Eternal life, "the greatest and perfect gift", is in God Himself (S 1.19) and is given only in Christ. "His most holy blood is the price of our salvation, His blood is the victory over our death" (20). Christ died for us so that our death could become a transition to eternal life (102). He only requires of us true

[8] Г. Конисский, *Письмо г-на Волтера к учителям Церкви и богословам*, Домашняя беседа 1867, p. 1125.

[9] Idem, *Воскресение мертвых*, Летописи русской литературы и древности 3 (1861), ch. 3, p. 41.

repentance and turning to God (103) and thus who wants to be like Christ in resurrection, he has to be like Him in this life (S 2.61).

There is no repentance in the afterlife (S 2.29). Thus, the unrepented end up on the wrong side of the afterlife condemned to unending suffering. The harshness of this suffering is due not so much to its intensity, but to its duration since even the slightest suffering is harsh if it is eternal (S 1.38). However, "God does not rejoice when someone perishes, / Thus He delays His righteous anger. / He is not used to rewarding the righteous right away; / For great suffering great / Glory He wants to give"[10].

In heaven, there will be different levels of glory for the blessed according to their deeds, but the vision of the face of God and the union with Him will be common to all elected (S 1.206). A person after resurrection will be like Christ: "you, dung and mud, will have wings and will surpass light shadow with [your] tenuity" (S 2.54).

Reason and faith

All the knowledge about the realms of the divine and the worldly is due to reason and faith. Konisski, man of the Enlightenment era burgeoning in Western Europe and somewhat timidly present in Russia, ascribed a very high position to reason and rational cognition. He was also a man of the cloth and not for one moment was the ecclesiastical emphasis on the role of faith absent from his mind.

Konisski accepted John of Damascus' definition of philosophy as the knowledge of things the way they are (F 1.44), i.e., knowing their origin, structure, and what they are for. Philosophy is an investigation of causes of things. Philosophy is divided into rational, related to the workings of reason; moral, concerning the will; and natural that investigates nature and is, in turn, divided into physics, mathematics, and metaphysics (it relates to immaterial spirits and God) (45). Adam was the first philosopher wanting to be equal to God, knew nature of all things since he named all animals: he did not do that randomly, but according to their nature, how else could he properly fulfill God's command to name them? This knowledge was transmitted through Noah to Chaldeans and Jews, from them to Egyptians, from them to the Greeks, from them to Romans and was known to the philosophers of old – druids in ancient Gaul, priests in Egypt, magi in Persia, Brahmans in India (47-48). Apostle Paul did not prohibit

[10] Ibidem, p. 47.

the study of sophist philosophy since knowing it allows for escaping its snares. "Philosophy does not provide laws for theology, but takes [them] from it and should serve it" (54). Philosophy should bring people the light through logic, it should shape habits through ethics, and through physics should lead to investigation of God's creation to worship God. Such philosophy brings humility since it provides better and better recognition of power and wisdom of God and thereby of the weakness of human nature and thus leads to self-knowledge (56-57). Basil wrote that just like there is healing power in venom, so in pagan teachings there is something useful (60). Logic (Aristotle) or dialectics (Plato) "directs operations of reason for correct reflection" (62). Simply speaking, philosophy is a handmaid of theology, and reason is a servant of faith; all areas of science should be in the service of religion, and they should be rational means to better know God and His presence in the universe.

God says that what is written in the Old and New Testament and what should be believed as most certain. People who deny that should be considered unreasonable (F 1.173). The veracity of the Word of God that distinguishes it from other writings is based on fulfilled prophecies and miracles (S 1.97). This is because "no other books than these two, the Old and New Testaments, we should hold as Divine Scripture nor call the Word of God" because these Testaments teach so and so do the church and the teachers/fathers of the church. "The things put in writing in these Testaments surpass any [human] mind/reason" such as creation of the world, miracles, Christ's life and death and are the testimony of "the almighty power and unsearchable wisdom of God. Thus, both the writing and the things written there, and the events prophesied, strongly assure us and unshakably confirm that the two Testaments are indeed the Word of God" (D 2.1.12). "Let us submit our mind to be obedient to Faith even if it stated something we cannot understand: since our mind is so limited by bodily senses that we cannot adequately understand some dogmas of the Christian Orthodox Faith, particularly concerning Tri-hypostatic God and Christ our Savior becoming a man" (S 1.229). Biblical faith as expounded by the Orthodox church is for Konisski the starting point of cognition and by enriching faith by the efforts of reason also the ending point.

Those who reject the priority of faith were severely scorned by Konisski. Naturalists, Voltairians, masons were "rapacious ravens from gehenna […] sitting at the way and picking up and devouring the seeds of the word of God" (S 2.184). "Today, the devil does not control a serpent: we know that serpents do not speak like people. Instead of a serpent, he takes today control over some Voltaire and through his mouth he blasphemes God and we, children of Eve, in the spell put on our mind and will, do not see the nasty image of the tempter"

(192). In the curse of the fig tree as described in the Gospels, since Christ knew perfectly that the tree did not bear fruit, He cursed it (1.108), thereby cursing not a fruitless tree but Voltairians and others like them, their fruitlessness, their vice (116). By relying on human reason alone, rationalists mock what cannot be explained in the rationalist framework. They cannot accept that the fact that Christ, the dying God, was also a man and died only as a man. These deists and naturalists cannot get in their "damned heads" that God wanted to become man and die (123). In the end, they do not appear to be committed to their beliefs. As Konisski rhetorically asked, is there at least one among today's atheists and naturalists in France and England who would suffer for their godlessness or naturalism? (2.176).

The church

The Scriptures are the words of God Himself recorded by inspired authors, they are "a gentle voice of the merciful Creator to His creation" (S 1.16). How should these words be understood? Not necessarily literally and the example of the interpretation of the cursing of the fig tree indicates that at least in some cases metaphorical interpretation is needed. But Konisski himself understood this event in two different, although not irreconcilable, ways: the tree represents Voltairians and others like them (S 1.116), but also the hypocrisy of Jews and Christians (1.117, 2.38) including some Orthodox priests (2.40). However, leaves and no fruit may very well refer to women that cannot have children; such a reference is all the more possible that according to the apostle Paul, motherhood has salvific dimension (1 Tim. 2:15). Who decides that such an interpretation should be ruled out? Where can the proper understanding of Scriptures be found? In the church and Konisski had no doubt that this is the Orthodox church[11]. With a flourish, he urged listeners of his sermon to be grateful to be born in the nation and amongst the people of God that shine to the entire world with orthodoxy and piety (S 1.138-139). On the other hand, he stated in a speech before the Polish king that our Christian faith "is in perfect agreement with Roman-Catholic in what concerns the foundation of salvation." Differences concern "what is unimportant/indifferent (*adiaphora*) or is based

[11] At least on one occasion Konisski ventured on his own with an interpretation: blood is not alive, he stated (F 2.437); however, the Bible speaks about life being in the blood, but these are metaphysically two natures and although one is subjected to the other, they are materially/physically of the same nature (439), which is an explanation that hardly sheds any light on the problem.

on human opinions" (S 2.132), but even this would not matter if the voice of conscience were followed. "This separation, of such little importance, could easily be removed by Christian love" (133). The Western church used to be one with the Eastern church and although the Western church is separated, this is not because of the main Christian dogmas. However, the separation is the Western church's fault (112). The Western church modified (even "corrupted," D 3.10) the Nicene creed concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit and argued incorrectly that the Holy Spirit proceeds fully from the Son and from the Father (S 2.113; F 2.106). Also, it is a sin to consider Peter to be the head of the church (S 2.113). Sin – thus the issue is not so unimportant and Konisski was not quite forthcoming about his true sentiments regarding the Catholic church when speaking to Poniatowski. Although the differences are supposedly unimportant, Konisski did not quite view it that way. Historically, his resentment was justified. He witnessed firsthand a mistreatment of the Orthodox believers when he presided over the Belorussian church. There was cultural and political discrimination of the Orthodox believers and Konisski put a lot of effort to at least partially rectify the problem[12]. To Poland's misfortune, such a discrimination and mistreatment was a factor in its demise: "one of the nails to the coffin of the Republic was the problem of [religious] dissidents"[13].

The mistreatment of the Orthodox believers made Konisski a strong supporter of pro-Russian policies against Poland that culminated in the partition of Poland. Konisski's praise of the tsarist policies concerning the church sometimes bordered on the ridiculous. In his view, Peter I "established valiant Rule of the Church" (S 1.231) although Peter abolished the position of the patriarch and made the Orthodox church basically a department of the government whereby he presided over the church; hardly a valiant rule of the church. Catherine II, in Konisski's view, in her aggressive policy against Poland that resulted in three partitions that wiped out Poland as an independent country from the European map, was not motivated by self-interest but by her piety and love for all men (S 1.166). Catherine II admired Voltaire (with whom she frequently corresponded) and her support of Belorussian Orthodox believers was motivated purely by political reasons in her designs to swallow up parts of Poland[14]. And yet,

[12] S 1.154-159; E. Likowski, *Dzieje kościoła unickiego na Litwie i Rusi w XVIII i XIX w.*, Poznań 1880, pp. 79–81, 233–238; J. Woliński, *Polska i Kościół prawosławny*, Lwów 1936, p. 118; A. Mironowicz, *Diecezja białoruska w XVII i XVIII wieku*, Białystok 2008, pp. 242–243, 247.

[13] Szymon Askenazy's opinion quoted in M.C. Łubieńska, *Sprawa dysydencka 1764–1766,* Kraków 1911, p. VII.

[14] Therefore, she did not quite want equality for the Orthodox believers in Poland since this would make the Orthodox believes be too closely associated with Poland, A. Mironowicz, *Diecezja białoruska*, pp. 248–249.

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Konisski extolled her as the second Moses (S 1.289, 2.222)[15], the second Constantine (1.165) and, the second Vladimir (2.222), the savior (290), and "the light of heavenly wisdom" who cares not only about her subjects but also about other nations (2.109), chosen by God in the womb of her mother to become the empress to save through her His people, not only the Russians, but also the Belorussian believers (1.149).

Konisski's Russofile sentiments were primarily motivated by his ecclesiastical concerns. As a devoted pastor of his flock, he saw a better future of the Belorussian Orthodox believers in Russia rather than in the Polish kingdom. He saw Russia as the seat of true faith continuing the traditional view of Moscow as the Third Rome. Polish unfortunate policies did not mollify Konisski's attachment to Russia.

As a philosopher, Konisski was a peripatetic through and through accepting all the major tenets of the Aristotelian system: he accepted matter and form; the four types of causes; rejection of atomism (F 2.26); the idea of the soul being a form (F 2.58); three types of the soul: vegetative (nutritive), sensory (animal), and rational; rejection of actual infinity (F 2.426); rejection of the void in nature (F 2.26,192)[16]. He made modifications only when forced by the Orthodox theology: the world was created and will have its end; God is the major efficient cause, not only the final cause. In this, Konisski followed the spirit of the Kiev Academy which was established in 1632 using Western, that is, Catholic models. In teaching rhetoric and philosophy, scholastic models have been used, that is, Aristotle was the major philosophical authority. This changed shortly after Konisski had his lectures, when the Academy made Friedrich Christian Baumeister the main philosophical authority, a philosopher who followed the tradition of Christian Wolff and thus of Leibniz[17].

[15] Comparison of Catherine to Moses in Bulgakov's opinion distinguishes itself by its "monumental character and grandeur", Михаил Булгаков, *Преосвященный Георгий Конисский, архиепископ Могилевский*, Минск 2000, p. 480.

[16] Surprisingly, we can read that "He was the first from the Kievian professors who undermined the authority of the classical Aristotelian philosophy, the first representative of the new direction in presenting this teaching". In his lectures, he followed Aristotle only in rhetoric and dialectic. In ethics, physics, and metaphysics he is independent and original, М. Булгаков, op. cit., pp. 75–76. This statement can only be explained by the fact that Bulgakov never consulted Konisski's lectures and simply assumed his departure from peripatetic philosophy, probably because there are no references to this philosophy in any other writings of Konisski. Also, it is rather puzzling how a claim can be made that "the philosophical course of G. Konisski put an end of the perennial rule of Aristotle's teaching in the walls of Kiev-Mogilev Academy", Ю.Т. Рождественський, *Психологічна антропологія Георгія Кониського (1717–1795)*, Науковий вісник Миколаївського державного університету імені В.О. Сухомлинського 2011, vol. 2, pt. 6: Психологічні науки, p. 244.

[17] According to Bulgakov, "in year 1752 the reign of scholastic Philosophy in the K[iev] Academy was ended", when Baumeister's paradigm was introduced in the Academy, Макарий Булгаков, op.cit., p. 146; cf. A. Jabłonowski, *Akademia Kijowsko-Mohylańska*, Kraków 1899–1900, p. 236. Bulgakov may

Although Konisski remained a peripatetic philosopher, his theology remained traditional with no attempts to modify anything or to explain if there were areas not clearly delineated by Orthodoxy. Konisski stressed very strongly the spiritual aspect of theology and the necessity of manifesting this theology through one's spiritual life. This spiritual aspect was emphasized to the extent that some traditional Orthodox religious issues are completely absent from Konisski's sermons: the problem of the veneration of icons, of the relics of the saints, ways of performing rituals (e.g., crossing oneself), all the issues that were the main subjects of such tomes as Iavorskii's *The rock of faith*. Orthodox theology was for him an inviolable foundation that should be accepted without questioning and his role as a pastor was to imbue people with reverence of this theology and urge them to make it the way of their temporary spiritual journey through this world heading to the eternity in the afterlife.

Appendix: Kashuba on Konisski

In 1979, Maria Kashuba published in Russian a slim book on Konisski which was reissued with only small changes in 1999 in Ukrainian[18]. The book is remarkable for its misrepresentations of Konisski's views. In her view, Konisski showed in his lectures to be a progressive professor with his "tendency to free human thought from ecclesiastical and scholastic authorities" with only a small softening in the second edition by dropping the phrase "ecclesiastical and scholastic" (33/45, 88/101)[19]. If anything, he wanted to show how much human thought should be bounded to ecclesiastical thinking and to his version of scholasticism. She claimed that Konisski clearly separated science from theology and there is a ring of the existence of two truths, theological and scientific. In logic, ethics, and natural philosophy he limited himself to earthly, natural problems (33/45). However, when reading Konisski's lectures, it is often difficult to separate the physical from the theological and, arguably most of his theological discussions are in the lectures devoted to physics rather than in purely theological lectures, which are very few. In her view, Konisski's views

mean lectures given in 1752 by Georgii Shcherbatskii in which he taught Cartesianism apparently taken from the Leibnizian-Wolffian school, Я.М. Стратий, В.Д. Литвинов, В.А. Андрушко, *Описание курсов философии и риторики профессоров Киево-Могилянской Академии*, Киев 1982, p. 313.

[18] М.В. Кашуба, *Георгий Конисский*, Москва 1979; eadem, *Георгій Кониський – світогляд та віхи життя*, Київ 1999.

[19] The first number is the page number from the first edition of the book, the number after the slash – from the second edition.

"evolve in the direction of increase in them of separate elements of materialism, getting closer to experiential philosophy of nature, to strengthening of rationalistic tendencies," which is a statement which even Kashuba herself considered to be too mendacious since the paragraph was dropped from the second edition (36/48). In his historical work, Konisski showed that Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians have common religion, similar spiritual culture, and language and should be united under one Russian government. The statement appeared to be too much for the Ukrainian audience and in the new edition, Kashuba claimed in a volte-face conclusion of his historical views that he presented preservation of independence as a natural process (41/52). In Kashuba's rendering, Konisski, following Descartes, moved God beyond material nature and limited to the minimum His role in the universe and that he was not far from identifying God and nature (53/71), in which she managed to falsify views of both Descartes and Konisski. In her view, all of Russian philosophy of the 18th century is deistic, which was boosted to all of European philosophy in the second edition (68/84), which can only be charitably explained by Kashuba's lack of acquaintance with Russian and European philosophy of the 18th century. To put it very briefly, not all philosophers of the time followed the line of Voltaire and Diderot. Konisski himself strongly berated the Enlightenment as a cover to depart from the law of God (S 1.222, 2.105-106). In her view, Konisski considered proofs of science to be superior to the dogmas of the Bible (77/91) and he separated science from religion and promoted priority of experience over divine revelation (125/132) regardless of his constant insistence that faith has priority over reason. All this cannot be simply explained away by the fact that the book first appeared in the Soviet era and promotion of materialism was the call of the day. In an article from this era it was stated, although grudgingly, that according to Konisski, theology "is the main and indispensable source of knowledge and all other sciences, which Konisski called philosophy, should 'serve theology' and 'receive laws from it'"; also, "when evaluating the views of Konisski, it is correct to see isolated moments of progressive character of his teaching in the context of overall supremacy of the religious worldview"[20].

[20] В.И. Протасевич, *Социально-политические и философские взгляды Конисского*, in: В.А. Сербент (ed.), *Из истории философской и общественно-политической мысли Белоруссии: Избранные произведения XVI-начала XIX в.*, Минск 1962, pp. 344, 346.

KONISSKI I PERYPATETYCZNE PRAWOSŁAWIE

(STRESZCZENIE)

Jerzy Konisski – prawosławny arcybiskup białoruski, kanonizowany przez Synod białoruskiego Kościoła prawosławnego – był wykładowcą w Akademii Kijowskiej, jego wykłady zachowały się do dziś. Jako filozof był perypatetykiem akceptującym zasadnicze elementy systemu Arystotelesa: istnienie materii i form; cztery rodzaje przyczynowości; odrzucenie atomizmu; dusza jako forma ciała; trzy typy duszy: wegetatywna (nutrytywna), zmysłowa (zwierzęca) i myśląca; odrzucenie aktualnej nieskończoności; odrzucenie próżni w przyrodzie. Konisski wprowadził modyfikacje do tego systemu, sięgając do zasad teologii chrześcijańskiej: świat został stworzony i nie będzie trwał bez końca; Bóg jest zasadniczą przyczyną sprawczą. Teologia Konisskiego miała wymiar tradycyjny – nie podejmował się on wyjaśnienia tematów nie dość wyraźnie zarysowanych w teologii prawosławnej. Konisski mocno podkreślał duchowy aspekt teologii i konieczność manifestowania go przez własne życie duchowe. Teologia prawosławna była dla niego nienaruszalną podstawą i jego rola jako osoby duchownej polegała na przekonaniu ludzi do żywej akceptacji tej teologii.

KONISSKI AND PERIPATETIC ORTHODOX

(SUMMARY)

Georgii Konisski, an Orthodox archbishop of Belarus canonized by the Synod of the Belorussian Orthodox church, was at first a lecturer in the Kiev Academy and his philosophy lectures have been preserved. As a philosopher, he was a peripatetic through and through accepting all the major tenets of the Aristotelian system: he accepted matter and form; the four types of causes; rejection of atomism; the idea of the soul being a form; three types of the soul: vegetative (nutritive), sensory (animal), and rational; rejection of actual infinity; rejection of the void in nature. He made modifications only when forced by the Christian theology: the world was created and will have its end; God is the major efficient cause, not only the final cause. His theology remained traditional with no attempts to modify anything or to explain if there were areas not clearly delineated by Orthodoxy. Konisski stressed very strongly the spiritual aspect of theology and the necessity of manifesting this theology through one's spiritual life. Orthodox theology was for him an inviolable foundation that should be accepted without questioning and his role as a pastor was to imbue people with reverence of this theology and urge them to make it the way of their temporary spiritual journey through this world heading to the eternity in the afterlife.

KONISSKI UND PERIPATETISCHE ORTHODOXIE

(ZUSAMMENFASSUNG)

Georg Konisski, ein orthodoxer Erzbischof von Weißrussland, von der Synode der weißrussischen orthodoxen Kirche heiliggesprochen, war zuerst Dozent an der Kiew-Mohyla-Akademie und seine philosophischen Vorträge sind erhalten geblieben. Als Philosoph war er durch und durch Peripatetiker und akzeptierte alle wichtigen Grundsätze des aristotelischen System: die Existenz von Materie und Form; die vier Arten von Ursachen; die Ablehnung des Atomismus; Seele als Form des Körpers, die drei Arten von Seele: vegetative (nutritive), sensitive (tierische), und intellektuelle; Ablehnung der aktuellen Unendlichkeit, Ablehnung der Leere in der Natur. Er machte Änderungen nur dann, wenn er von der christlichen Theologie gezwungen war: die Welt wurde geschaffen und wird sein Ende haben;

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Gott ist die erste wirkende Ursache, nicht nur die Zweckursache. Seine Theologie blieb traditionell ohne Versuche etwas zu ändern oder die Bereiche zu erklären, die nicht ganz klar durch die Orthodoxie beschrieben worden sind. Konisski betonte sehr stark den spirituellen Aspekt der Theologie und die Notwendigkeit, diese Theologie durch ein spirituelles Leben zu manifestieren. Orthodoxe Theologie war für ihn ein unantastbares Fundament, die ohne zu fragen angenommen werden sollte und Konisskis Rolle als Pastor war es, Menschen Ehrfurcht vor dieser Theologie zu verleihen, so dass diese Theologie sie in ihrer zeitlichen spirituelle Reise durch diese Welt in die Ewigkeit führen könnte.