

## The overview of the patristic studies in Serbia<sup>1</sup>

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The growing appeal to patristic tradition is one of the most distinctive marks of the Serbian historical and theological scholarship as well as spirituality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I intend first to list the main tenets of the Serbian patristic scholarship and then to elaborate further on their historical origins and eventual consequences. There are three main features that characterize current Serbian patristic thought. The first feature is continuity of the patristic period, as it is usually perceived by the Roman-Catholic and Protestant scholarship, with subsequent periods in the history of the Church until nowadays. The second feature is a large discrepancy between the study of the Eastern and Western Church Fathers, at the expense of the latter. The third feature of the Serbian patristic scholarship is that purpose of the study of the Church Fathers is not solely of academic provenance, but it usually acquires a devotional character. By elaborating further on these issues I also intend to follow three distinct approaches to the Fathers in Serbian patristic thought: philosophico-theological, historical and philological.

The first feature of Serbian patristic scholarship is that there is no clear line drawn between the period of Church Fathers and the subsequent periods. The age of the Church Fathers in Serbian scholarship is not constrained to the period of early Church. Serbian patristic schol-

1 The content of this report is largely based on my previous studies on this subject: V.Cvetković, 'Patristic Studies in Serbia', *Adamantius* 15 (2009) 357-64, and 'The Serbian tradition', in A. Casiday (ed.), *The Orthodox Christian World*, Routledge Int., 2012, 129-139.

arship, following the Orthodox tradition, equally applies patristic authority to ancient Fathers as well as to modern teachers of the Church.

Fr Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), also known as the founder of the Neopatristic synthesis, has explained the reasons of continuation of the patristic era to the modern day. In his attempt to define the Church, Florovsky claims that the Church is not only 'Apostolic', but also 'Patristic', and equally committed to the *kerygma* of Apostles and to the *dogmata* of the Fathers.<sup>2</sup> Thus, he refers to the binding authority of the Church Fathers in defining the *criteria* of right belief. By stating that the reference to the Fathers should not be less authoritative than the reference to the Holy Scripture, Florovsky does not introduce something new, intrinsically different from the previous Orthodox tradition. His intention is to rehabilitate, what he labels as 'the mind of the Fathers', so present in the Early Christian and Byzantine era. By equating the authority of the Holy Scripture with the authority of the Holy Tradition, namely the Fathers and the Councils, Florovsky just follows the teaching of the Fathers which stipulates that Christ had instituted not only the apostles and prophets but also the teachers and councils in the Church.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Florovsky rejects both the Protestant and the Roman-Catholic *formulae*, which restrict the age of the Fathers to a certain period in Church history. While the former limit the age of the Fathers to the first five centuries, the latter extend this period up to the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Florovsky

2 G. Florovsky, 'Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church,' in the *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, vol. 4, *Aspects of Church History*, Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company 1975, 16.

3 Maximus the Confessor, *Relatio motionis* 9 (PG 90, 124). The English translation of the Record of Trial in P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and his companions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 64-5. See also J. Pelikan, 'Council or Fathers or Scripture. The Concept of Authority in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor,' in: D. Neiman and M. Schatkin (eds.), *The Heritage of the Early Church, Essays in honor of Georges Vasilevich Florovsky*, Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium 1973, 277-87.

agrees with the statement that the theology of the first five centuries is more impressive than the theology of later periods, but this does not mean for him that the age of the Fathers has passed away. Therefore, Florovsky claims that the tradition of the Fathers has never been interrupted,<sup>4</sup> because the Holy Spirit has equally breathed in the Fathers of first centuries like He breathes in those of modern times.

In similar vein, the founding father of Serbian patristic scholarship, St Justin Popović (1894-1979) argues that the lives of the Saints are nothing else but a certain kind of continuation of the “Acts of the Apostles.” Moreover, for Popović, the Holy Tradition, as constituted by life-creating divine energies in the Church, is uninterrupted continuation of the life of grace in all Christians, in whom through the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, Jesus Christ lives by His Grace.<sup>5</sup>

Popović’s approach to the Church Fathers was not a form of a ‘return’, as it was in the case of Florovsky, but rather a form of ‘continuation.’ Therefore, Popović did not make a radical break with previous Russian religious tradition in order to return to the Fathers as Florovsky did. By relying on Russian religious thought,<sup>6</sup> and specifically the neo-philocalic spirituality of Seraphim of Sarov, Paisius Velichkovsky, Theophanes the Recluse and the holy Fathers of the Optina Hermitage,<sup>7</sup> who also inspired his great role model Dostoyevsky, Popović searched for the foundation of his theological ideas in the works of the Church Fathers. Popović approached the Church Fathers as contemporaries, searching in their teaching for the solution to the existential and philosophical problems of his time such as those of

4 Florovsky, ‘Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church,’ 21.

5 Introduction to the Lives of the Saints, in: *Orthodox Faith and life in Christ*, 32-50: 39-40. Translated from Justin Popović, *Žitija Svetih*, Valjevo: Manastir Čelije, 1972, 11.

6 Bogdan Lubardić, *Justin Popović i Rusija: putevi recepcije ruske filozofije*, Novi Sad: Beseda, 2009.

7 Lubardić, *Justin Popović i Rusija*, 109.

humanism, rationalism and individualism. By maintaining that the remedy for these European 'maladies' is in the culture of Dostoyevsky or the Orthodox culture, Popović transforms the Russian ideas of theo-humanism (Godmanhood), integral knowledge and all-unity by means of apostolic and patristic teachings, into genuinely Christian principles, claiming that, it is precisely these Christian principles that undergird the intellectual unity of Europe. By combining philosophical reflection on Europe with the insights from the Church Fathers, Popović revived the interest for the study of the Fathers in interwar Yugoslavia. He did this as both the editor of the theological journal *Christian life* ('*Hrišćanski život*'), published between 1922 and 1927 in Sremski Karlovci and Prizren, where he at that time taught at theological seminaries and as a lecturer in comparative theology from 1934 until beginning of the WWII at the Theological Faculty of the University of Belgrade.

Nevertheless, in spite of the attitude that the Holy Spirit equally inspires modern as ancient Fathers, there is a certain tendency within modern Serbian scholarship to consider the date of the fall of Constantinople (1453) or in national terms the fall of the medieval Serbian state under Ottoman rule (1459) as an end of the genuine Patristic era. Thus, in the curriculum of Patrology at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade<sup>8</sup> the last Fathers of the great patristic era are St Gregory Palamas and St Nicholas Cabasilas.

8 Apart from a compulsory two-year course in Patrology (*Patrology* 1 and *Patrology* 2) and a course in Latin Patristics at undergraduate level, there are other four optional courses in Patristics on Master level: *Hagiology*, *Latin Patristics*, *Patristic themes and problems* and *The contemporary theological thought*, which deals mainly with the reception of patristic themes in modern Orthodox theology. The lecturers in Patristics are Professors Fr Vladan Perišić and Maksim Vasiljević, the bishop of Western American Diocese of Serbian Orthodox Church. Many references to the Fathers could also be found in the courses of Dogmatics offered by Professor Ignatije Midić, the bishop of Požarevac.

Apart from practical reasons, there are a couple of substantial reasons for these decisions. As students in Athens during 1960's three of Popović's spiritual children, hieromonk Atanasije Jevtić (retired bishop of Hercegovina),<sup>9</sup> hieromonk Amfilohije Radović (currently the Metropolitan of Montenegro) and hieromonk Irinej Bulović (currently the Bishop of Novi Sad and Bačka), acquainted themselves with Greek and Byzantine heritage and took an active part in the Palamite renaissance. After returning to Yugoslavia and occupying various academic positions at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, they continue to propagate the idea that the decline of Orthodox theological learning is caused by the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the penetration of western theological ideas in Orthodox tradition.

The second reason is more formal and is connected with the status of the theological learning in the Communist era. By the decision made by the Communist authorities in 1952, the Faculty of Theology of the University of Belgrade, founded in 1905, is excluded from the university. Thus, it continued to work as an institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church,<sup>10</sup> with a limited effect on the further development of the patristic studies in Yugoslavia.

In spite of the efforts of the Yugoslav Communist regime to undermine every kind of religious studies in public institutions, significant research on Church Fathers took place at the Institute of Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts. The Institute was founded in 1948 with the support of the Serbian Government and the first director of the institute was the renowned scholar in Byzantine studies and professor of the University of Belgrade, Georgije Ostrogorski (1902-1976). At its beginning, the institute launched the

9 Atanasije Jevtić had occupied the chair of Patrology for more than twenty years until the beginning of the nineties of the last century when he was elected bishop of Vršac first and then bishop of Hercegovina.

10 By the decree of the Government of the Republic of Serbia issued in December 2004 the Faculty of Theology became again part of the University of Belgrade.

project of the translation of the Church Fathers. The result of this is the five volumes publication *Byzantine Sources for the History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia*, so far printed in two editions. The Institute has also launched the journal *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* (*The Collected Studies of the Institute for Byzantine Studies*), which is one of the most referred journal in the area of Byzantine and patristic studies. Thus, for these reasons the study of the Church Fathers is entangled with the study of Byzantine history and spirituality.

The second feature regarding the great discrepancy between the study of the Eastern and the Western Fathers is partly due to these two aforementioned tendencies. However, the Eastern and the Western Fathers should not be easily equated with the Greek and the Latin Fathers, as it was usually the case. Interestingly enough, Popović's early interest is more directed toward Syriac than toward Greek tradition. Thus, in his BLitt thesis *The Philosophy and Religion of F.M. Dostoevsky* from the University of Oxford, Popović often refers to Abba Dorotheos of Gaza and the *Spiritual Homilies* ascribed to Macarios of Egypt. He further pursued his research on Pseudo-Macarios in his doctoral thesis *The Problem of Personality and Cognition according to St. Macarius of Egypt* defended at the University of Athens in 1926. Just a year later he produced the study *The Theory of Knowledge according to Isaak the Syrian*. Thus, the early Serbian patristic scholarship, especially in the work of Justin Popović is marked not so much by the interest in the Greek Fathers, as by the tendency to explore the Syriac spiritual and monastic tradition. However, at the beginning of the thirties of the last century another interest prevailed in the thought of Justin Popović.

The criticism of western culture led Popović to reevaluate Serbian history not according to the humanist values, but in the light of previous Orthodox Tradition. It led him back to Saint Sava (1169-1236), the founder of the Serbian Church, whose heritage Justin Popović has revitalized and conceptualized in the theological idea of *Svetosavlje*. According to Popović the authority of Saint Sava as a churchman and

theologian is rooted in the uninterrupted tradition of the Apostles and the Fathers. Thus, the return to the authority of the Fathers in Serbian theology may be also seen as an attempt to conceptualize the national ideology. The concept of *Svetosavlje* was formulated as a meeting point for all Serbs who lived in different parts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It also served to draw together the Serbian clergy and laity and the Serbian intellectuals under one national ideology.<sup>11</sup> In spite of the fact that the contemporary historians see the concept of *Svetosavlje* primarily as a national ideological paradigm, it had unquestionable theological significance in reestablishing the authority of the Fathers in the Serbian cultural and theological circles.

Since the Slavophile ideas of pan-Slavism contributed to the unification of the southern Slavs (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) in the kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918 the other tendency in the inter-war Yugoslavia was the development of Slavonic studies. This included the study of the very reach medieval Slavonic tradition informed by a philological approach to the Church Fathers in the Slavonic translations. The younger generations of scholars in the interwar period continued the work on the Slavonic medieval manuscripts begun by Vatroslav Jagić (1838–1923), a member of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Science in Zagreb, but probably the lasting contribution to that field is made during the Socialist Yugoslavia. Two very important figures in the field of cataloguing and translating medieval Cyrillic manuscript originating from the Balkans are Dimitrije Bogdanović (1930–1986) and Djordje Trifunović (born 1934). They are known for their studies on the Slavonic translations of John Climacus and Corpus Dionysiacum, respectively.

Due to ideological restrictions during the communist years, most of the endeavors to develop Patristic studies in public institutions

11 Radmila Radić, 'Serbian Christianity,' in: K. Parry (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, (Blackwell companions to religion), Blackwell 2007, 238.

were pursued through a form of either historiographical or philological investigation. However, the individual initiatives of some scholars have partially filled the gaps in Patristic scholarship. It is worthy to mention Justin Popović's translations and studies of predominantly Greek, but also Syriac and Slavonic sources gathered in the publication the *Lives of the Saints*. This is still the largest collection of texts and translation of Holy Fathers published in Serbian and it consists of twelve volumes, each dedicated to every month in a year. The fact that the majority of the Saints in the Orthodox calendar are of Greek origin partially explains this discrepancies between the study of the Eastern and the Western Fathers. For example Popović describes Augustine vaguely as 'an influential writer but with certain unapproved extremes in his teaching.'<sup>12</sup> The reasons for this disproportion in research interests between Greek and Latin tradition, in Popović, but also in many other Serbian Orthodox Scholars, are also due to the traditional rivalry between Greek East and Latin West or in modern terms between the Orthodox Church on one side and the Roman-Catholic and Protestant on the other side. Therefore, the Serbian scholarship naturally has tended toward an investigation of the Greek tradition from its beginning, but this tendency was especially manifest during the Palamite renaissance of the 60' ties of the last century. Many Orthodox theologians in Serbia, and particularly the aforementioned disciples of Justin Popovic, then professors at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, attempted to liberate Eastern theology from 'the Babylonian captivity' of the western theological patterns, mainly shaped by Roman Scholasticism of Post-Tridentine times and various theologies of the Reformation, by returning to the authority of Eastern, mainly Greek Fathers.<sup>13</sup>

12 J. Popović , *Žitija Svetih za mesec august*, Beograd & Valjevo: Manastir Ćelije 1975, 400.

13 Florovsky, 'Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church,' 20.



However, this does not mean that the Latin tradition remained unknown to Serbian patristic scholars. The translations and the studies of the Latin Fathers mainly pursued by Roman-Catholic theologians in Croatia were a part of the Yugoslav patristic scholarship and they had been used by Serbian scholars too.

The third feature of Serbian patristic scholarship is an attempt to study Fathers not only for academic, but also for devotional purposes. The motto of the founders of Neopatristic synthesis, fully adopted by Serbian scholars, is to acquire the mind of the Fathers and not to use them as occasional references. Therefore, it is rare to find in the Serbian scholarship that Fathers are taken out of their ecclesial and spiritual context and that sociological, psychological and other methodological approaches become dominant in evaluating their contributions. This does not mean that the scholarly apparatus is not applied to the Fathers and that systematical and critical research lacks. On the contrary, many Serbian scholars take critical and scientific approach to Fathers, but they also try to rely on the same source of divine inspiration like Fathers had, in order to decode apostolic or patristic writings. A better way to put this is that the approach to Fathers is both academic and devotional and one who studies the Fathers also prays to them.

All these characteristics point out that the patristic scholarship in Serbia has been predominantly shaped by the Orthodox tradition. The institutions of religious education, including the theological faculties were run by the Serbian Orthodox Church during the second half of the twentieth century and they have defined at great length the approach to Church Fathers as devotional.

The devotional approach to the Church Fathers caused the revival of the interest in Patristic studies that begun to flourish at the beginning of the nineties of the last century. There are several reasons for such an emergence. Firstly, the democratic reforms of the Yugoslavian and Serbian society concluded all the ideological restrictions imposed by the Communist authorities. One of the obtained liber-

ties was to practice religion freely. Therefore, the Serbian Orthodox Church gained more rights than it had in the past, particularly in the field of Christian mission. Many bishoprics launched their journals or opened their publishing houses. The Christian literature with many references to Church Fathers, which could be found only in specialized Church shops in the past, suddenly emerged in bookstores all around the country and it found its way towards a wider audience. The democratic reforms have also created a good climate for the establishment of professional societies. The aims of these societies were either to explore Christianity with the purpose of popularization or to pursue a serious scholarly investigation of Christian theology.

Secondly, the collapse of the large state publishing companies with inherited ideological agendas has given rise to many small independent publishing houses. The collapse of the state publishing companies coincided with the introduction of modern IT facilities in preparing scripts. The drop of printing costs caused by the new technology gave rise to many independent publishing houses. The publishing houses dedicated to the popularization of the works of Church Fathers are founded mainly by the Orthodox Eparchies or Parishes, some historically important monasteries such as Hilandar in Mount Athos, Ostrog in Montenegro, or Tvrdoš in Hercegovina, or by non-governmental centres and societies for the research of Church Fathers. The most important publishing houses founded by Orthodox Eparchies of the Serbian Church bear the same names as the journals published by them: 'Beseda' (Orations),<sup>14</sup>

14 'Beseda' (Oration) from Novi Sad is the publishing house of the Eparchy of Bačka and Novi Sad founded by Bishop Irinej Bulović. This publishing house has published so far translations of the Church Fathers such as St Athanasius the Great, St Basil the Great, St Nikolas Cabasilas and translations of the modern Greek theologians such as John Zizioulas, Christos Yannaras, Nikos Matsukas. The journal *Beseda (Oration)* was launched in 1989 as a journal of the Eparchy of Novi Sad and Bačka.

‘Svetigora’ (Holy Mountain),<sup>15</sup> ‘Sveti Knez Lazar’ (Saint Prince Lazar),<sup>16</sup> ‘Istina’ (Truth),<sup>17</sup> ‘Srpski Sion’ (Serbian Sion).<sup>18</sup>

The most productive publishers in the field of the translations of Church Fathers in Belgrade are the Orthodox Missionary School of the St Alexander Nevsky Church (‘Pravoslavna misionarska škola pri hramu svetog Aleksandra Nevskog’),<sup>19</sup> the Literary Society ‘Istočnik’<sup>20</sup>

15 Svetigora from Cetinje is the publishing house of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro. Translators and editors of this house are Matej Arsenijević and Vesna Nikčević and among the translators, can be mentioned Mladen Stanković and Ksenija Koncarević. So far, Svetigora has published many collections of the translations of the Church Fathers. In 1992 was initiated the publication of the eparchial journal Svetigora which is published in by the same publishing house in Cetinje.

16 Saint Knez Lazar is the publishing house of the Eparchy of Raška and Kosovo, established by the former Bishop Artemije Radosavljević. They have occasional editions, which are the reprints of the works already published in the journal of the same name. These were mainly the translations of the works of St Maximus the Confessor and the patrological studies of Bishop Artemije and other Serbian patristic authors.

17 The Eparchy of Dalmatia in Šibenik (Croatia) owns the publishing house ‘Istina’ (Truth) and the editor is Slobodan Prodić. The new translations of Gregory Palamas *The Triads*, works of Palladius of Helenopolis and other Church Fathers appeared so far from this publisher. The first number of the journal of the Eparchy of Dalmacija *Istina (Truth)* appeared in 2000.

18 ‘Srpski Sion’ is the publishing house of the Eparchy of Srem in Sremski Karlovci and it has published so far the works of St Basil the Great and various canonical works of the Fathers.

19 The editor of many patristic translations was J. Srbulj and among a large group of translators are Antonina Pantelić, Mladen Stanković, Vesna Nikčević. This publisher has published translations of the works of St Ephraim the Syrian, St John Chrysostom, St Athanasius the Great, St Antony the Great, St Gregory of Nyssa, Justin the Martyr, St Simeon the New Theologian, St Isaac The Syrian, St Irenaeus of Lyon into Serbian.

20 The Literary Society ‘Istočnik’, the group gathered around the journal of the same name. The editors and the translators of this publishing house among others are Petar and Vesna Jevremović.

and 'Jasen'.<sup>21</sup> The Serbian Monastery Hilandar on the Mount Athos is a very important publisher in the field of the Church Fathers, known for its publication of *Dobrotoljublje*, the Serbian translation of *Philokalia*, and the translations of Gregory of Nyssa, John Climacus and other Church Fathers. It is worthy to mention two publishers from Vrnjačka Banja, 'Prolog' (Prologue)<sup>22</sup> and 'Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi'<sup>23</sup> and the publishing house of the Centre of Church Studies from Nis.<sup>24</sup>

The revival of the interest in the Church Fathers led to launching or re-launching many theological journals. The journal of Archbishopric of Belgrade and Karlovci, *Theological views (Teološki pogledi)*, launched in 1968 was among the first contemporary journals where

- 21 'Jasen' is a publishing house established first in Nikšić (Montenegro), and then moved to Belgrade. The editor of the philosophical and patristic works published by this house is Bogoljub Šijaković. 'Jasen' has published so far S. Jaksić's Serbian translations of St John Damascene's *Fountain of Knowledge* and the translations of the Apostolic Fathers, as well as the patrological works of bishops Amfilohije Radović and Atanasije Jevtić.
- 22 The main editor of the patristic publication in the publishing house 'Prolog' (Prologue), is Dejan Lučić, who was the former editor of the journal '*Otačnik*' where the translations of Evagrius Ponticus, St Maximus the Confessor and Dionysius the Areopagite and the patristic studies of many modern patristic authors, such as John Meyendorff and Cyprian Kern, have appeared.
- 23 The publishing house 'Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi' from Vrnjačka Banja is an almost two decades old publisher dedicated to the popularization of the Church Fathers. It has published the patrological works of Fr George Florovsky. Recently this publisher has started cooperation with the publishing house of the monastery of Tvrdoš, in Hercegovina and they have published together translations of the Fathers and modern patristic studies, especially the works of Bishop Atanasije Jevtić.
- 24 It is the only publishing house, which seeks to publish rather scholarly studies of Serbian authors in Patristics than translations of the Church Fathers. The editors of this publishing house are Prof. Dragisa Bojović and Dr Vladimir Cvetković. The Centre of Church Studies gathers mainly scholars from the University of Niš and it publishes books in a few series and the journal *Crkvene Studije (Church Studies)*.

articles on the Church Fathers have appeared. Apart from already mentioned eparchial journals launched in the nineties such as *Beseda (Oration)*, *Saint Prince Lazar (Sveti Knez Lazar)*, *Svetigora, Istina (Truth)*, there are important journals launched at the beginning of 2000's such as *Vidoslov*,<sup>25</sup> *Sabornost (Catholicity)*,<sup>26</sup> and *Crkvene studije (Church Studies)*.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that religious education, including Patristic studies was excluded from public educational institutions such as universities explains all the academic weaknesses and shortcomings of Patristics as academic discipline during the communist era. However, the rise of the devotional interest in the Church Fathers led to a certain extent to re-establishment of Patristic studies in Serbian higher education curricula.

The studies of the Church Fathers in connection with medieval Serbian literature are continued at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade,<sup>28</sup> and introduced in the courses on Medieval Serbian Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy University of Niš and at the University of Kosovska Mitrovica (Former University of Priština now situated in Kosovska Mitrovica, north Kosovo).<sup>29</sup> The patristic

25 The journal '*Vidoslov*' was also launched in 1993 in Trebinje (Bosnia and Hercegovina) by Bishop Atanasije Jevtić of Hercegovina and a great number of his and the articles of other renowned patristic scholars appeared there.

26 The journal of the Eparchy of Braničevo was launched in Požarevac in 1995 by Bishop Ignatije Midić and many translations of St Maximus are published in it.

27 The journal '*Crkvene studije*' (Church Studies) issued by the Centre for church studies was launched in 2004 in Niš. It is an international annual journal dedicated to the study of Church from an interdisciplinary perspective. It publishes mainly scholarly articles in the main international languages and in regional languages and the editor-in-chief is Professor Dragisa Bojovic.

28 The former professor of this faculty, above mentioned, Lazar Trifinović left a distinctive mark on the studies of Patristics in Serbia.

29 The courses in Medieval Serbian Literature at both universities are held by Professor Dragisa Bojović.

themes were also included in the *curricula* of history of ancient or medieval philosophy of the Faculties of Philosophy at the Universities of Belgrade and Niš.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, a few philosophical and sociological journals such as ‘*Filozofske studije*’ (Philosophical studies) or *Filozofija u društvo* (*Philosophy and Society*)<sup>31</sup> became open for patristic themes. This academic tendency to study the Fathers also gave impetus to the Faculty of theology of the University of Belgrade to launch and re-launch three journals: *Bogoslovlje* (*Theology*), *Philotheos* and *Logos*.<sup>32</sup>

This devotional interest in the Church Fathers is not restricted only to the Greek or Serbian Fathers, but by including the Latin Fathers, it compensates the scholarly injustice committed toward them. The special interest has been shown in research of the Fathers who lived in the territory of the Balkans and who wrote in Latin, such as Nicetas of Remesiana, whose entire work is translated into Serbian.

I intent to conclude this short report by pointing to some shortcomings in the patristic studies in Serbia. The most crucial problem with which Patristic scholars in Serbia are confronted today is the lack of primary sources, such as critical editions of the Fathers and

30 The former professor of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade Slobodan Žunjić offered a series of courses in history of Ancient and Byzantine philosophy, which dealt with Patristics, while Professor Sladjana Ristić Gorgiev offers courses in Greek and Latin Patristics as a part of the module the History of Medieval Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš.

31 *Filozofske studije* is the journal of the Institute of Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, while *Filozofija i društvo* is the journal of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory.

32 *Bogoslovlje* (*Theology*) is a theological scholarly journal for the first time launched in 1926 and restored 1957. The editor is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the same Faculty Bogdan Lubardić. *Philotheos* is an international scholarly journal, hosting articles written in foreign languages and its first volume appeared in 2001. The editor of ‘*Philotheos*’ is Professor Bogoljub Šijaković, professor of Philosophy of the Faculty of Theology. *Logos* is the journal of the students of theology launched in 2001.