they were not given a thorough philological, historical and theological examination until this present study by Matthias Binder (B.). B. concentrates primarily on the eschatological section of Shubhalmaran's writings, which include also an ascetical and a canonical treatise, though not leaving out of examination the other two components. His main goal is to place that eschatological discourse in its proper historical and literary contexts: Firstly, to give it an approximate date, to trace connections between its vision of the end of times on the one hand and contemporary events in Shubhalmaran's life, in the East Syriac Church and in Sasanian-Byzantine conflicts on the other; and secondly, to define the place of Shubhalmaran's eschatological treatise within the great stream of Syro-Antiochian and East Syriac apocalyptic traditions – i.e., to pin down the narrative elements that Shubhalmaran's treatise has in common with either the entire (mainstream of) early Christian apocalyptic tradition, or with the mainstream of Syriac apocalyptic tradition, or, more specifically, with East Syriac traditions of his times.

As regards the first point, the question of the historical context, the author maintains convincingly that Shubhalmaran wrote this eschatological treatise after he was exiled by Chosro II in the wake of the critical Miaphysite-East Syriac dispute of 612-3, and also after the Shah's subsequent campaign against Byzantium, the capture of Jerusalem (614) and the seizure of the Holy Cross. B. points at places of Shubhalmaran's treatise that clearly reflect the crisis plaguing the East Syriac Church of his times – the decades-long sede vacant, imposed by the Shah, of the Catholicosate, the overall pressure (the author prefers not to speak of "persecution") exerted anew on the Christians after long years of relative calm, the new martyrdoms, not least Chosro's seizure of the Holy Cross – that appears triumphant in the sky at the end of Shubhalmaran's eschatological narrative. It was under the impression of these events, according to B.'s well-argued thesis, that Shubhalmaran wrote his eschatological treatise around the year 615. B. seems rather unwilling, on good grounds, to see close connections between this eschatological treatise of Shubhalmaran and the new wave of Syriac apocalyptic literature that was widely spread later on in the 7th century as a reaction to the grand geopolitical convolutions – mainly the conquest of Byzantine Near East first by Chosro II and then by the Arabs. Perhaps a study by L. Greisiger (*Messias-Endkaiser-Antichrist*), published after B.' book, and indicating that these new Syriac apocalyptic visions first emerged very early in the 7th century, as a reaction to Sasanian conquest (and not after Arab expansion), and are thus roughly contemporary to Shubhalmaran's eschatological tract, could give occasion for further discussion concerning this issue.

Regarding the second major point of this study, the literary contexts of Shubhalmaran's treatise, B. has managed by way of an extraordinarily laborious comparison with all major apocalypses of the Early Church, and especially with those extant in Syriac, to compile particularly useful lists of parallels for almost every point of Shubhalmaran's eschatological narrative, and also to isolate such narrative elements that could be unique to Shubhalmaran and therefore could come from a distinctly East Syriac stream of apocalyptic imaginings. Beside these major topics of his research, B. gives for the first time a comprehensive, in-detail analysis of the source evidence on Shubhalmaran's biography, shedding light on basic points of Shubhalaran's chronology, ecclesiastical career etc.

The author undertakes numerous digressions that, without losing contact with the actual object of his research, penetrate into largely understudied areas. It is barely possible to do justice in this place to all these soundings; just by random choice, be it mentioned that B. found a clear parallel between Shubhalmaran's treatise and a place

of the *Testamentum Domini*, which is supposed to have been translated into Syriac many decades after Shubhalmaran – a finding of some relevance concerning the question of date and origin of the Syriac *Testamentum Domini*; or that B. points at close parallels between prophet Elias' protagonistic role in Shubhalmaran's treatise, where Elias disputes with the Antichrist and defeats him, and the liturgical veneration of Elias in the East Syriac Church – parallels that help to better understand the massive convolute of Near Eastern prophet Elias-traditions.

B.'s book is based, beyond Shubhalmaran's own writings, on a thorough use of a variety of contemporary or otherwise relevant sources, some of which are as yet unedited. His research is remarkably circumspect, always presenting, beside his own thesis, other possible options, whether these were maintained in previous scholarship or are suggested by the sources. Only very few points, of secondary relevance for the book's subject, appear reviewable: For example, the question if Chosro II was neutral vis-à-vis the Miaphysite-East Syriac contest in his Empire, which the author answers in the affirmative, seems to require much further research before it can be given a satisfactory answer. But such minor points of criticism – practically inevitable for an original research on an uncharted field like Shubhalmaran's writings – leave completely unaffected the major overall achievement of B.'s research that not only gives for the first time Shubhalmaran, the churchman and writer, a historical physiognomy, but also sheds new light on the ideological, cultural and ecclesiastical history of Northern Mesopotamia on the eve of the Arab conquest.

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Sergij Bulgakov, *Philosophie der Wirtschaft; die Welt als Wirtschaftsgeschehen* [*Werke*, Band 1]. Edited by Barbara Hallensleben and Regula M. Zwahlen; translated from the Russian by Katharina A. Breckner and Anita Schlüchter; commentary by Regula M. Zwahlen, assisted by Ksenija Babkova, Barbara Hallensleben, Elke Kirsten (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2014). 350 pp. [abbreviated as PW in this review]

Barbara Hallensleben and Regula Zwahlen (eds.), *Sergij Bulgakovs Philosophie der Wirtschaft im interdisziplinären Gespräch.* Begleitband zu: Sergij Bulgakov, *Werke*, Band 1: Philosophie der Wirtschaft (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2014). 106 pp. [abbreviated as BB] ISBN: 978-3-402-12030-9 € 54.00 (the two books together)

The German translation of one of Sergei (father Sergij) Bulgakov's key works, along with a collection of scholarly comments in a *Begleitband*, is a major event, which starts an 18-volume edition of his works in German. Of course, the text itself was not unknown: recent French [1987] and English [2000] translations have made it accessible to non-Russian reading audiences before, and specialists will probably read it in the original anyway. But the text itself invites to a renewed engagement with Bulgakov: few people would argue today that the relevance of Bulgakov is merely historical, offering insights into Russian thought during the Silver Age, the early Soviet period, and the emigration. It does offer these insights, but there is a lot more. Not only have political changes in Russia begun to reconnect Russian and Western scholarship, but the recent economic crises have also put the "economic question" high on everybody's agenda.

Additionally, this edition also concludes an interesting piece of intellectual history in the German-speaking part of the world: Bulgakov himself offered the text for publication in German in 1911, even prior to its appearance in Russian (1912); in spite of a recommendation by Max Weber –which arrived too late–, Paul Siebeck decided not to publish it in German [PW, p. 296f], and only fragments appeared in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1913. This, then, is the first full German translation of a major text both in Russian history of ideas and in the philosophy of economy.

Political economy is not only – like political theology – a contested notion in its own right every since Antiquity (it marks a fundamental opposition between Platonists and Aristotelians, in which Bulgakov is on the Platonic side, ultimately not distinguishing *polis* and *oikos* [BB, p. 84]), but it is also once again a main issue in academic debate, with post- and neo-Marxist, neo-Keynesian (Thomas Piketty), and (post- and neo-)Christian (Giorgio Agamben, John Milbank) as well as (post- and neo-)Islamic positions (Tariq Ramadan) entering the arena. Bulgakov's text can play a role in those debates, provided it is properly introduced and "transposed" from its early 21st religious-philosophical context. First of all, the "Sophianic" and sophiological dimension of Bulgakov's approach is not so easy to translate. It is difficult to understand in its own right, i.e. as part of the system of integral knowledge of Vladimir Solov'ëv and the religious-philosophical societies of Moscow and St. Petersburg inspired by him. The discourse of the time, more generally, is not easily accessed today by others than those very few who are already familiar with sophiology and who try, like Barbara Hallensleben or Rowan Williams, to give it a place in present-day debates. Also, the dominance of Marxist and / or revolutionary positions among the Russian intelligentsia of the time reinforces, on the one hand, the significance of Bulgakov's intellectual career when it comes to understanding the philosophical culture of the Silver Age, but it also may distract from a proper assessment of Bulgakov's position *sub specie aeternitatis*. Finally, the obvious Christian religious and theological overtones in the works of a man who started as a Marxist, teaching political economy at Russian universities, and ended as an Orthodox priest who saw his Sophianic views officially disqualified by the Orthodox Church in emigration, again can pose a formidable barrier for a present-day appreciation.

To facilitate such an appreciation is one of the tasks set by the accompanying volume [*Begleitband*]. Next to the beautiful and voluminous hardback *Philosophie der Wirtschaft*, the accompanying slim paperback volume may look a bit bleak, but it is no less important. At the same time, this perhaps puts things into proper perspective: Bulgakov's text is crystal clear and feels "fresh" – none of the obscurity of contemporaries and friends like Pavel Florenskii, but also none of the complexity of some of his other, more directly religious-philosophical writings. By and large, this book can be read without assistance, when it comes to understanding *what* he is saying. At the same time, however, this clarity may easily mislead. In fact, this is a text which raises as many questions as it seeks to answer, due to its position between economic and religious, political and ecological discourse, and due also to the fact that the author is rather parsimonious in his explicit references. As one of the commentators, Anne Reichold, states, the reader is easily confused by Bulgakov's 'eigenwillige Verbindung von marxistischer Analyse des Lebens als Wirtschaftsgeschehen und religiöser Fundierung dieser Vorgänge' [BB p. 52]. For this reason alone, i.e. to find orientation in this confusing text (however clear the text in itself may be), the accompanying volume is indispensable. This usefulness is further enhanced

by the fact that each of the contributions focuses on one chapter alone and is written by a competent specialist (theologian, economist, philosopher, ethicist): the accompanying volume thus, rather than being a collection of comments and interpretations, is a true guide for the potentially perplexed, to be read in parallel fashion. This, I think, considerably increases the value of this dual publication for educational purposes, too.

There are at least three angles from which to read Bulgakov's economic philosophy, and each of them yields interesting results. The first of these is economic theory more strictly speaking: if Bulgakov started out as a Marxist, like so many of his contemporaries, he was an academic Marxist, not a political one. He taught political economy at Russian universities for two decades [PW, p. XIII; BB, p. 3], and although he clearly rejected the "economic materialism" or "economism" of Orthodox Marxism, the question is justified how much of the Marxian paradigm is still at work in his own theory. The companion volume pushes this question with the comments, by economists Hans G. Nutzinger and Alexander Lorch, on the first and last chapter of the book, both of which focus on Bulgakov's critique of "economic materialism". Arguably, Bulgakov's text can be included in the reassessment of Marxism that is under way now, some 25 years after the breakdown of a major socio-economic system that claimed to be based on it. Of course, in addressing Bulgakov's relation to Marxism, we need to take into account that unpublished key texts by Marx, like the *Philosophisch-Ökonomische Manuskripte* and the *Grundrisse*, could not be known to him.

A second perspective is the more strictly theological and religious one. Bulgakov can be – and already has been – invoked within the framework of attempts at rehabilitation of a primarily theological paradigm in what might turn out to be a post-secular or post-sociological constellation. The attempt, by Bulgakov and his predecessors and contemporaries, to develop an overarching (Orthodox-) Christian worldview which includes an economic theory as one of its many applications, cannot fail to impress in this context. We may be skeptical about the chances of such an endeavour, or even about its desirability, but its relevance is beyond dispute. The publication at hand certainly facilitates this endeavour for the German-reading world. (Because of lack of competence, I leave aside the purely theological issues and the possible future role and place of sophiology.)

The third angle, finally, is that of current affairs in Russia at the time, but also today. From a bird's eye's view, Bulgakov's text appears as one out of innumerable attempts to criticize and, if possible, curb the rise of materialism, individualism, and economism. At the time, Russia was a quickly developing capitalist economy, and Bulgakov was not alone in noting the "materialism" common to both liberalism-cum-capitalism and its apparent opponent, socialism-cum-Marxism. For Bulgakov, social science ultimately is at the service of *Sozialpolitik* [PW, p. 208], i.e. social policies, including economic policies: it provides, as a *tekhnè*, the *means* for different, even opposed, social policies, including socialist ones, but it does not, itself, imply any such policy or any social *end*, which remain a matter of *will*, not historical determinism [BB, p. 83]. After seven decades of state- & party-led, allegedly "scientific" socialism, post-Soviet Russia went through a period of "wild" capitalism, justified by the "dictates" of neo-liberal, allegedly scientific economics. Nor is it difficult to transpose this perspective to the "Western" world, where economic policies are equally justified by the findings of economic science [cf. Makaševa, in PW, p. XXIV]. In Bulgakov's Silver Age, Russian, German, French, and to a lesser extent Anglosaxon philosophy, were in permanent interaction, and his work was an

integral part of social philosophy [PW, p. V]. Today, we again find ourselves in such a situation, at least potentially. As Makaševa puts it: "The considerable distance in time allows us to discover something in Bulgakov's work which neither his critics at the time nor he himself could note: a premonition of the sore spots in the future world of the economy and in the discipline that researches that economic world" [PW, p. XIV; translation mine, EvdZ].

This points, arguably, to the relevance of Bulgakov's economic philosophy today. We find ourselves in a strange situation: a combination of neo-liberal late global-capitalist reality, massive depoliticization, ecological catastrophe, post-secularity, and an increasing sentiment that democracy and good governance are mutually exclusive categories. Widespread discourse about "the N-factor" suggests that "neo-liberalism" is indeed *the* big issue: an alleged consensus that "this is what most people want even if it is going to destroy everything" – but what if precisely that very idea is the "opium of the people" to borrow Marx' expression? Not neo-liberalism itself, as a quasi-hegemonic ideology, but the very idea that this *is* our predicament, is the ruling ideology. The call for agency is, in essence, a faint and vain call for a *deus ex machina*. The traditional Russian questions: "Who's to be blamed [кто виноват]?" and "What is to be done [что делать]?" have shifted to "What is to be blamed [что виновато]?" and "Who's doing something [кто действует]?" Once again, to paraphrase Karl Marx, the philosophers are interpreting the world differently, instead of proceeding to change it. To *change* the world was certainly part of Sergei Bulgakov's agenda, both before and after he became part of the Russian Orthodox clergy in 1918.

Bulgakov labeled *Filosofija khožajstva* his *ontology* of the economy, announcing a second volume, in which he would give the (ethical and religious) *justification* – axiology and eschatology- of the economy [PW, p. 3]. This second volume never appeared, but the same content took shape in his later book *Svet nevečernyj* (1917; translated into English as *Unfading Light* (2012)). *Pace* Bulgakov, the editors of the present book call this text Bulgakov's 'justification of the economy' [PW, p. I], and they may be right, esp. if we bear in mind that the translation of *khožajstva* with "economy" is slightly misleading – in fact, the German *Wirtschaft* is more adequate. In this book, Bulgakov is not demonstrating the ultimate purpose of "the economy", but the way in which he places it within the larger context of what we today might call "the management of created reality" clearly makes his text move beyond a merely descriptive analysis: his ontology makes sense only against the background of a deontology, and this gives the book a normative twist from cover to cover.

The translation, which has gone through many able hands, is close to the original and reflects its clarity. A comparison with the original and with the English translation allows this reviewer (who like all reviewers needs at least one thing to complain about) to note one slip into German absolutism. When Bulgakov writes about *social politics*, he claims that it has an object of its own: his "это *действие на совокупности*, на социальное тело" is rendered more adequately by Evtuhov's "*action on collectivities*, on the social body" than by the German "*die Einwirkung auf die Gesamtheit*, auf den sozialen Leib" [PW, p. 208]. From a Sophianic perspective on creative freedom, a *plurality* of collectivities is what one can logically expect – in fact, a society marked by *sobornost'* would *have* to consist of such a plurality. The only thing, finally, that this reviewer fails to understand about this publication is the double inclusion of an introductory article by Natalija Makaševa. Since the main text and the *Begleitband* are sold jointly, one gets the same text twice. While highly informative in its own right, and a clear sign of the internationalization of Bulgakov-scholarship, the double appearance, and with incongruous paging, does not make scholarly life easier.

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Najib George Awad, *And Freedom Became a Public-Square: Political, Sociological and Religious Overviews on the Arab Christians and the Arabic Spring*, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte, 46 (Münster, LIT, 2012), 280 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-90266-5

Despite the fact that this review is long overdue and thus the early assessment of the Arab Spring and the Christians' involvement in it in some respects has been overtaken by recent events, Najib Awad's contribution is still worth reading. In a sense this is perhaps even more the case now than it was earlier, because the basic issue that underlies Awad's book has become all the more relevant: how should Arab Christians contribute to the political developments of these years? Starting from an analysis of the political situation of the Arab world that led up to the revolutions and the changing position of Christians over the last century, he pleads for the development of a contextual theology that takes Arab Christians as fully part of the Arab world and that on the basis of a Human Rights discourse contributes to the creation of a civil society that allows a diversity of people (religiously, ethnically, linguistically, socially) to participate in its welfare and further development. This becomes especially important in the Syrian case that is the main focus of his book, albeit in constant comparison to other Arab countries, especially Egypt and Lebanon. Though the current situation puts pressure on Christians in all these countries, Awad sees the situation of the Christians in Syria as fundamentally different from that in Egypt. In Syria, Christians look back on a history of living together in the 'mosaic' of great variety of religions and (linguistically diverse) peoples, whereas in Egypt, Christians suffered much more from consistent discrimination and exclusion, which, in Awad's opinion, should make the potential contribution of Syrian Christians all the more welcome.

As to the current situation in the Middle East, Awad stresses three points, the first of which is that indeed there are also Christians taking part in the opposition to the Assad regime, exemplified by Michel Kilo (who was, in absentia, sentenced to death in July 2015), secondly that Christians need to face their (understandable) fears for Islamist governments because these are an unavoidable aspect of the transformations that take place, and thirdly, that under whatever governments, be they Islamist or otherwise, Christians should continue to support a full inclusive democracy. For that, he sees the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the best starting point (taking his lead from Charles Malek, Lebanese philosopher and diplomat), although he is aware that its acceptance in the Middle East especially among Muslims has been partial at most. However, his hope that Christians will assist in furthering its reception raises the question whether a group that occupies a marginal and often vulnerable position in society, can be asked to play a crucial role in changing that same society. While Awad's understanding of the position of Christians in Syria (both historically and as to its future potential) is fairly optimistic, every potential contribution is dependent on a more general acceptance of Christians as intrinsic and unalienable part of society.

THE JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Periodical of the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies in Nijmegen, in collaboration with the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies and the Institute of Early Christian and Byzantine Studies at the Catholic University of Leuven.

2015 Volume 67 Number 1-2

The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies (JEastCS) contains studies and reports on the traditions and present-day situation of the Eastern and Oriental Christian churches in the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, as well as on developments in the Diaspora.

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Manuscripts and review copies of recent publications should be sent to the executive editor.

Subscriptions and administration:
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E-mail: peeters@peeters-leuven.be

The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies is available online at http://poj.peeters-leuven.be

Subscriptions will be automatically renewed, unless written notice is received at least two months before the end of the year.

ISSN 1783-1555
eISSN 1783-1520

THE JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN STUDIES

PERIODICAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN STUDIES AT NIJMEGEN

IN COLLABORATION WITH

THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THE INSTITUTE OF EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE STUDIES AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LEUVEN

VOLUME 67
2015, 1-2