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**UNSTOPPABLE FORCE AND IMMOVABLE
OBJECT:
THE GREAT SCHISM OF 1054
by Ryan Howard**

The year was AD 476. Barbarian hordes had ransacked the countryside and cities of the Roman Empire for a century, and Goths had lived alongside Romans in their empire for more than a century before that. On September 4th, the barbarian chieftain Odoacer deposed the last emperor in the western part of the empire, Romulus Augustulus. The Roman rule of the western half of the empire had come to an end. For years, historians declared 476 as the year in which the Roman Empire fell. In recent decades, however, historians have recognized that 476 and its events were largely symbolic and symptomatic of a decline in the western half of the empire that was happening long before Odoacer seized power. The events of 1054 in Rome and Constantinople are much the same. The mutual excommunication of Michael Cerularius and Humbert of Mourmoutiers gained a prominent status as a watershed date in the schism between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. While this event certainly increased the bitterness between East and West that had been growing since the sixth century, most scholars of the twentieth century agree that 1054 was neither the beginning nor the sealing of the Great Schism; it was a conflict between two inflated, belligerent personalities that tore a hole in a garment that had been showing wear for centuries already.

The events of 1054 and the schism between the churches as a whole did not happen in a vacuum; they had their roots in the cultural differences that arose between Rome and Constantinople. While the Greek church allied itself firmly with the emperor in Constantinople and secular authority, the Roman church became a secular authority all its own. The Greek church rooted itself in the east, and the Roman church began looking north and west to the Franks and other Germanic kingdoms for military aid and secular alliances. While the increasingly western orientation of the Roman church was technically acceptable, it created a political wedge in between the two branches of the church and, when the Western emperors dared to refer to themselves with imperial language and don imperial symbols, provoked the wrath of the emperors in Constantinople. During Late Antiquity, Latin faded in the East and the West largely lost its knowledge of Greek, creating a language barrier that fueled theological controversies and misunderstandings.

The most ominous divergence that developed during Late Antiquity, however, was the difference in theories of religious

authority between the churches. Because of increased secular authority and the perceived authority of the Saint Peter, the bishop of Rome began to view his position as the sole authority for the entire church. The Greek church, in contrast, saw the ecumenical, or church-wide, councils as the unique and authoritative communicator of God's truth for the church.¹ These different views of church authority formed the basis of the first cracks that shook the foundation of the united church in the Middle Ages. The Iconoclast controversy created animosity and tension, with Byzantine Emperors destroying icons and Popes holding to a strong Iconodule position. In the sixth century, the Spanish added a phrase to the Nicene Creed that became a theological and linguistic wound, festering and churning the church into controversy for several centuries afterward. In Spain and Gaul, Christians influenced by Augustinian theology and fighting the still-potent forces of Arianism added the phrase "and the Son" to the Nicene Creed's pronouncement of faith that we believe "in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father". While the Filioque addition spread throughout Spain and the Frankish Empire, Rome did not add the clause to the Creed until 1014. Despite the dogged conservatism of the Roman church, the controversial phrase became a major point of contention between Greeks and Latins. The first major incident of the Filioque being used as a theological weapon against the Roman church arose during the controversy surrounding the Patriarch Photius in the mid-ninth century. Emperor Michael III deposed the Patriarch Ignatius in 858 and hastily appointed Photius who was a highly learned layman. Pope Nicholas I immediately seized the opportunity to assert the authority of Rome over the newly appointed Patriarch, provoking open conflict in which Nicholas refused to view Photius's appointment as legitimate and attempted to reclaim Western authority over Illyricum. Delegates that Nicholas sent to the territories of Moravia and Bulgaria began demanding that the Filioque be included in the Creed within these territories that had recently converted to Christianity under the influence of Eastern missionaries. Photius considered the Filioque a theological error, unsupported by church tradition, and a blatant sign of Germanic influence upon the church in Rome. He attacked the Roman church in his letters for the addition. Although the conflict between the Papacy and Photius ended in reconciliation of East and West, albeit with a phrase in the Greek acts of the council at Constantinople in 879 anathematizing anyone who added

¹ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Centenary Press, 1935), 54-56; Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times Until the Council of Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.

anything to the Nicene Creed, this episode demonstrated the theological divergence and tensions that were beginning to manifest themselves dangerously in relations between the two branches of the church.

Because of secular conflicts between Rome and the German empire to the north and Byzantine wars and inner strife and the mutual ignorance that sometimes resulted from them, during the next century and a half there was little major theological conflict between East and West. By the eleventh century, however, German secular power hung over the head of the Pope in Rome, furthering Greek suspicion that German theology was pervading the thought of the Roman church. The formal addition of the Filioque to the Creed in Rome confirmed this suspicion. Those present at the coronation of Henry II sang the Creed with the Filioque addition in 1014. At this point, the debate over the addition exploded with polemic literature on from both sides. The basic problem was that neither side understood the other. The Latins focused on the oneness of God because of their long, bitter struggle against the Arian un-deification of Jesus Christ the Son, while the Greeks emphasized the threeness of God because of the careful, intense Christological councils called to combat various heresies concerning the nature of Christ.² Furthermore, in 1009 Sergius, the Patriarch in Constantinople, chose not to include the name of the new Pope, Sergius IV, in the diptychs, either because of German influence in his election or the inclusion of the Filioque in the Creed.

Despite tensions brewing beneath the surface, the beginning of the eleventh century showed considerable promise for the relationship of the church of East and West. Pilgrimage was frequent and there was little talk, if any, of a break in the church. In 1024, however, the first rumbles of thunder sounded the approaching theological storm. Patriarch Eustathius wrote Pope John XIX concerning the autonomy of Constantinople. Eustathius apparently upheld the primacy of Rome in his letter and the Pope agreed, but Cluniac reformers quickly rebuked the Pope for conceding the authority of Saint Peter over the universal church. This event set the stage for the political conflicts that would rend the church in two over the next century and a half. Both the Latins and the Greeks began to seek uniformity in the liturgical practices of their congregations, leading to a mutual discovery of how different the liturgies of both truly were from the other.

In the midst of growing tension, one of the two forces behind the events of 1054 entered the scene. In 1043, Emperor Constantine IX appointed Michael Cerularius as Patriarch of

² Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life*, trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1963), 54-58.

Constantinople. Cerularius took office late in life after a life in civil service. He was not as well-versed in theological matters as many of his predecessors, but he was an able administrator and enjoyed widespread popularity among the people of Constantinople, more so than the emperor, in fact. He was a man of personal and ecclesiastical ambition. During the decade after Cerularius's appointment, tension between the different liturgical usages and ritual practices grew immensely. Rome increasingly insisted that Greek churches within its territory conform to Latin ritual, and Constantinople did the same for the Latin churches within its authority. In 1052, Cerularius began closing Latin churches that refused to conform to Greek usages. At the beginning of the next year, he commissioned a letter to be sent to Pope Leo IX that attacked certain ritual practices of the Roman church, including the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. The Pope received this letter while held in captivity by the Norman army which had defeated the papal armies in February. At this point, the second force of 1054 entered the picture. Humbert of Mourmoutiers was the Cardinal of Silva Candida and the chief Papal Secretary to Leo IX. Humbert was a man of piety but short temper and was, if anything, just as ambitious as Cerularius. He held the Greeks in distaste and was thoroughly Latin in his outlook and approach to religion. Humbert first received Cerularius's letter, translated it, and brought it to the Pope in his captivity; the Normans having allowed Humbert to be with Leo. Humbert, however, purposely exaggerated the hostility in the letter in his Latin translation. Leo IX was outraged and demanded that Humbert compose two letters, one to Michael Cerularius and the other as an apology of Latin ritual and usage. Although two new letters shortly arrived from Constantinople, one from the Emperor kindly urging political alliance and the other from Cerularius, surprisingly vacant of any of the previous attacks on Latin usage and asking for renewed unity within the church. Unfortunately, Cerularius provoked the Pope's anger by addressing him as "Brother" rather than "Father" and assuming the title "Ecumenical Patriarch" for himself. This prompted Leo IX to send a delegation to Constantinople headed by Humbert, and thus would the unstoppable force meet the immovable object; Humbert and Cerularius would lock horns like bulls and crack the unity of Christendom in the process.

The Roman delegation left for Constantinople early in 1054, accepting foolish advice along the way to deal mainly with Emperor Constantine IX instead of Cerularius. Humbert took the liberty of composing two letters in the Pope's name, one to Cerularius and one to the emperor. The latter urged the emperor to control the actions of the Patriarch. The former viciously attacked Greek usage and practice and deplored Cerularius's language in his previous

letters to the Pope.³ Upon arriving, the delegation visited the Patriarch, delivered the “Papal” letter and refused to give Cerularius the customary courtesies appropriate to his office. The letter infuriated Cerularius and fueled his political suspicions; he suspected that Argyrus, the pro-Latin general assigned to the Roman armies, had opened and tampered with the letter as the delegation came to Constantinople. This suspicion was not farfetched. The emperor treated the delegation hospitably, but Cerularius kept himself at a distance while they were in Constantinople. Humbert engaged in literary battles of theology while there and managed to annoy the populace and prove himself snide and ill-tempered while debating with the theologians of Constantinople. Pope Leo IX died in April, thus removing the delegation’s authority. Cerularius believed that he had won the battle. On July 16, 1054, however, Humbert strode with the delegation into Hagia Sophia during the afternoon liturgy. As the congregation watched, Humbert, head held high, laid a document upon the altar of sacrament, marched back to the entrance, shook the dust from his feet and, with the words “Let God look and judge”⁴, departed. The assembly stood in stunned silence for a few moments before all erupted into confusion. The document that lay upon the altar was a bull of excommunication against Michael Cerularius and his supporters. A deacon ran into the street and begged the delegation to take the bull back, but they refused and the bull lay in the street until it finally made its way into the hands of Cerularius. In the bull, Humbert spewed abuse over Cerularius and, in truth, the practices of the Greeks as a whole. His assumptions were full of error. Most notably, he held the belief that the Filioque clause was something that the Greeks were suppressing and omitting from the Creed instead of a western addition. The emperor had no hint of the hostilities of that afternoon and was appalled by Cerularius’s translation of the bull of excommunication. He called the delegation back after receiving a copy of the Latin text and discovering that the translation was accurate. The emperor had to order those who helped in the translation punished in order to stop rioting among the populace because of the contents of the bull and burned the bull itself. A synod met that formally anathematized Humbert and the delegation. Although the churches only considered the offending individuals in schism, both sides came to consider the events of 1054 as victories for their particular side and debates concerning

³ Leo IX, “Leo IX to Michael Cerularius, September 1053,” in *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. by Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 105-106.

⁴ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993),

liturgy and theology became more heated. Both Humbert and Cerularius were dead by 1058, but the animosity which they held for each other was a drop of poison that sickened the whole church. By 1204 with the sacking of Constantinople by western Crusaders, at the latest, the churches in Rome and Constantinople were in formal schism.⁵

The majority of writers of the twentieth century who chose to study and write about the Great Schism of 1054 were clergymen or influential churchmen, and most of those were of the Orthodox confession. Sergius Bulgakov, author of *The Orthodox Church*, was an influential and incredibly controversial Russian Orthodox theologian and priest during the 1930s and 1940s. John Meyendorff, a French-born Orthodox priest who committed himself to cooperation and unity between the Orthodox faith and other Christian groups, wrote *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. Kallistos Ware, born Timothy Ware, grew up in the Anglican Church but converted to the Orthodox faith, rose to a position of leadership after becoming a monk and a priest, and authored many works, including *The Orthodox Church*. A trend becomes apparent when examining these authors' works: many authors who discuss the Great Schism do so within the context of explanations, discussions or apologies of Orthodox theology and thought.⁶ Within these works, there are many that have as part of their purposes a desire to educate non-Orthodox Christians as a gateway to a formal healing of the schism between the churches and complete unity within the Christian faith once again. Even so, there are a number of Roman Catholics who give attention to 1054 as well, such as Francis Dvornik who penned *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* and Yves Congar, a French Dominican cardinal and theologian who wrote *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches*. Unlike the date of 476 and the fall of Rome, 1054 and the Great Schism are not topics that consume scholarly debate and warrant many books on their own.

Scholars and theologians differ on whether 1054 is even a significant date. Some books dealing with the Orthodox Church or even specifically the schism between the churches do not even directly mention the confrontation between Cerularius and

⁵ This historical background was drawn from: Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 1-54; Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times Until the Council of Florence*, 124-133, 206-218.

⁶ E.g. M. J. Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, trans. by Donald Attwater (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962).

Humbert.⁷ Edward Gibbon calls the mutual excommunication of 1054 the “thunderbolt” by which “we may date the consummation of the schism” and says that the Crusader fiasco of 1204 deepened the schism that was already there.⁸ Scholars of the Middle Ages after Gibbon tended to follow his example through the nineteenth century, but the twentieth century brought about an examination of the accuracy of pinning down the schism to 1054 or to any particular date. Twentieth-century scholars agree that 1054 is neither the beginning nor the climax of the schism. Henry Edward Symonds argues that the fiasco of 1054 was “an event with disastrous consequences, as seen in the subsequent history of the Church, but hardly noticed by [Cerularius’s] contemporaries.”⁹ Steven Runciman notes the same attitude of theologians in the East, although he points out that the West took the event very seriously. Meyendorff goes so far as to argue that the schism cannot be dated to any particular date or event. Researchers do disagree, however, on how to date the beginning of the schism. Edward Gibbon gives the Filioque controversy as the beginning, while Symonds claims that the Photian Schism of the ninth century was the beginning point. Several scholars, including J. M. Hussey, Francis Dvornik, and Timothy Ware, agree in dating the formal schism and final break with the Fourth Crusade in 1204. While there are differing interpretations of the importance of 1054, it is difficult to deny that 1054 made a historical impact. The mutual excommunications struck at a time in which the Roman church and the West as a whole was becoming aware of its own identity as a civilization and tradition new and separate from the old empire and was at the dawn of an era of reform for the Papacy. At the very least, the hostility of Humbert and Cerularius created a cause for outright hostility between East and West and deepened bitterness over theological and political issues that had already existed for a few centuries beforehand.¹⁰

⁷ John Meyendorff, in *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, barely makes mention of Michael Cerularius, much less the events of 1054, even in his chapter entitled *The Schism*.

⁸ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume II (A.D. 476-1461)* (New York: The Modern Library, 1781), 1085.

⁹ Henry Edward Symonds, *The Church Universal and the See of Rome: A Study of the Relations Between the Episcopate and the Papacy up to the Schism Between East and West* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939), 253.

¹⁰ Steven Runciman, *A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIIth Centuries*, 50-51; John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 91; J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 136; Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, trans. by Edwin A Quain (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 154-156; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 59-60; M. J. Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, 90-91; Henry Edward Symonds, *The Church Universal and the See of Rome: A Study*

Since many scholars agree that the crux of the events of 1054 was the conflict of personality between Humbert and Michael Cerularius, each scholar's personal interpretation of these two figures provides the primary colors with which he paints the picture of 1054. Both Humbert and Cerularius have occupied positions of disdain and contempt approaching that of antichrist in Orthodox and Catholic thought, respectively. Most contemporary scholars lay the blame upon both Humbert and Cerularius, but characterizations of either figure give clues to the author's view of the incident. For example, M. J. Le Guillou comments that Humbert's "tone of voice" greatly offended the Greeks because of his insistence on informing the Greeks of their flagrant errors.¹¹ Yves Congar writes of Cerularius personally desiring a break with the Papacy and of Humbert as a "combative, stiff-necked Cardinal...whose bull of excommunication is a monument of unbelievable lack of understanding."¹² The interpretation that has made 1054 more about Cerularius and Humbert than about the church as a whole has intensified characterizations of both figures.

Analyzing trends of historical thought among historians who deal with the Great Schism is difficult for a few reasons. First, many of these writers are not only Christians, but clergymen and leading men among their respective Christian groups, including Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests. The view that God has a hand in human history and that history is moving toward an end with God standing sovereign over history is a vital point in the Christian faith. Therefore, cyclical views of history and secular interpretations of the movements of human history are going to exist minimally, if at all, within the writings of Christian leaders. This is not to say that they will not have any background influence; they will simply not inform the backbone of what these scholars have to say. That being said, there are definite trends that present themselves in the works of twentieth-century writers that contrast with the approach of Edward Gibbon and other early modern scholars. The influence of the Annales School of historical thought is obvious in the twentieth-century writings. While Gibbon focused mainly on political and diplomatic events such as the formal mutual excommunication of 1054 as definitive markers, twentieth-century authors deal much more with social and cultural conditions and trends while still keeping the political events in mind. *Le longue duree* is evident from the fact that few authors

of the Relations Between the Episcopate and the Papacy up to the Schism Between East and West, 260-270.

¹¹ M. J. Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Orthodoxy*, 91.

¹² Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1959), 71-72.

have written monographs about the schism between the churches; most write about broader topics (e.g. the Roman primacy) and include the schism within those topics, and even those who write solely about the schism deal with a period of history of about one thousand years and discuss the social/cultural differences that led to the divergence of the churches. Twentieth-century writers concern themselves with everything that led up to and caused the schism, not simply the political event. Secondly, there is a wide range of agreement among twentieth-century scholars concerning the schism between the churches. Distinguishing schools of thought is difficult because there is so little divergence between these scholars on the mutual responsibility of Humbert and Cerularius, the schism reaching to before and after 1054, the importance of mutual misunderstandings, and other issues relating to the schism.

Edward Gibbon, the great English Enlightenment scholar of the Roman Empire, notes that the immediate cause of the schism was the insistence of both sides on the authority of their respective cities and sees. "The rising majesty of Rome could no longer brook the insolence of a rebel; and Michael Cerularius was excommunicated."¹³ He gives much credence to the issues that the Greeks themselves cite such as the Roman use of unleavened bread, celibacy of the clergy, and the alleged Jewishness of much of Latin practice. 1054 dates the point at which the formal schism began and the Crusades deepened the schism. Gibbon writes concerning the Crusades, "every tongue was taught to repeat the names of schismatic and heretic, more odious to an orthodox ear than those of pagan and infidel."¹⁴

Gibbon focuses on the political issues and events of the times that he studies. His malevolence toward the Christian religion leads him to shine a literary spotlight on the mutual hatred of East and West which was present, according to him, even at the time of the Photian schism. He points to the Filioque controversy as the origin of the schism and, while he does point out the issues of liturgy and ritual practice, he identifies them as serious religious issues rather than cultural misunderstandings. Gibbon worked extensively with primary sources and, since many contemporary Greek writers identified the ritual issues as major reasons for contention between East and West, they influenced his interpretation of the theological tensions present. He writes that political tensions between Constantinople and Rome largely drove the church into schism. Ultimately, Gibbon's interpretation of 1054

¹³ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume II (A. D. 476-1461)*, 1085.

¹⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume II (A. D. 476-1461)*, 1086.

is a thoroughly secular one, concentrating on political rivalries and hunger for power on both sides. While he acknowledges that the Filioque issue and the Photian conflict pushed East and West into mutual hatred, he still designates 1054 as the initiation of the formal schism.¹⁵

Henry Edward Symonds, who wrote *The Church Universal and the See of Rome* in 1939, was a member of the Community of Resurrection, an Anglican group who dedicate themselves to a lifestyle reminiscent and influenced by Benedictine monasteries. Symonds places much of the blame for the schism on Humbert, arguing that his violent actions exacerbated anger on both sides. The schism began with the Photian schism and climaxed in 1054. He argues that 1054 was incredibly significant even though the people of the time hardly took notice of it.

Symonds's writing still heavily carries the influence of Gibbon's focus on political events. He cites Charlemagne's empire crumbling and the Frankish influence on the Roman church as vital reasons for Byzantine contempt for the West and the schism. He also focuses on the actual event and the roles of Humbert and Cerularius. Although he emphasizes Humbert, neither does he have much good to say about Cerularius, focusing on the negatives of both of their characters. In regard to Cerularius, he says that efforts for union between East and West "were highly distasteful to Michael, who despised the Latins and their ways, and objected to his own See being regarded as inferior to that of Rome."¹⁶ Symonds shows the influence of Gibbon's style of history; he makes use of definite dates and markers to talk about the schism of the church. The Photian schism was the starting point and 1054 marked the inauguration.¹⁷

Steven Runciman was a British historian famous for his work on the Middle Ages, especially on the topic of Byzantium and her neighbors. He penned *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIIth Centuries* in 1955. Runciman argues that it is impossible to give a precise date to the schism. He places the causes of the schism into five categories: personal rivalries, nationalistic/social/economic rivalries, rivalry of the great sees, liturgical issues, and problems of discipline. Ultimately, he places blame for the event equally on Humbert and Cerularius. Although the event passed largely

¹⁵ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume II* (A. D. 476-1461), 1082-1086.

¹⁶ Henry Edward Symonds, *The Church Universal and the See of Rome: A Study of the Relationship Between the Episcopate and the Papacy up to the Schism Between East and West*, 253.

¹⁷ Henry Edward Symonds, *The Church Universal and the See of Rome: A Study of the Relationship Between the Episcopate and the Papacy up to the Schism Between East and West*, 252-270.

unnoticed by people of the time, its largest contribution was the growth of bitterness on both sides.

Runciman demonstrates the beginning of the influence of the Annales School on the study of the relationship between branches of the Christian church. The fact that he includes nationalistic, social, and economic factors in his study speaks volumes. Runciman explains the split in terms of differing concepts of authority. Both sides claimed to have the right idea and application of authority and sought to bring the other into submission. "It is more accurate to date the schism from the moment when rival lines of Patriarchs, Greek and Latin, appeared to contest each of the great sees."¹⁸ Runciman seeks to demonstrate the cultural understandings of both sides and to show why both sides misunderstood the other. His position outside the leadership of either church allows him to present the case fairly and understand the issues from an outsider's perspective.¹⁹

Yves Congar, a French Dominican cardinal, theologian, and priest who was active in ecumenism, wrote *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches* in 1959. Congar argues that 1054 is largely a symbolic date. "We could speak of the schism of Photius, the schism of Cerularius, and many others without the use of quotation marks; not so with the 'Oriental schism.'"²⁰ Scholars must interpret the schism within the framework of a long period of history. The schism began long before 1054 and did not become complete in a single moment.

Congar, by his own admission, writes from a Catholic perspective in hopes that the two branches of the church may once again achieve unity. He continues the trend of examining not just political history, but cultural and social history as well. He examines the importance of language as a barrier, differences in rituals, and the differences in methods of theology. His last chapter is entitled "Lessons from History." In this chapter, Congar pushes for a reunion of the churches, even going so far as to say that the churches were never truly in formal schism in the first place. He writes that the reason for the schism is that the churches have accepted the estrangement between them. While his argument is attractive, it grows more out of a desire for reunion than from historical fact. Both sides acknowledge formal schism, even if it is difficult to give a precise date. The churches have diverged

¹⁸ Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIIth Centuries*, 3.

¹⁹ Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIIth Centuries*, 1-55.

²⁰ Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches*, 2.

theologically and politically, and many have grown to view the teachings of the other as outright heretical. Congar's assertion is admirable, but historically false.²¹

G. S. M. Walker wrote *The Growing Storm: Sketches of Church History from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1350* in 1961. He argues that the main cause of 1054 was mutual misunderstanding between East and West. "The events of 1054 were not decisive in themselves; but they marked the climax to a long process of estrangement and misunderstanding."²² While he acknowledges faults on both sides, Walker paints a highly negative portrayal of Michael Cerularius as arrogant and overly ambitious. He lists a multitude of factors that led to 1054 and holds the date as a significant one.

While some historians from the first half of the twentieth century seek to discredit 1054 as an important date of any sort, Walker represents an attempt at a middle ground: resisting the traditional interpretation of 1054 as a definitive date but denying the idea that 1054 was an insignificant date in human history. He continues the trend of cultural history, although he emphasizes the lives of individuals and their influences on history. Walker discusses mutual misunderstanding brought about and exacerbated by the language barrier, Christological controversies, views on the state's place in church affairs, and competition among missionaries. A tension is present in Walker's writing between the influence of individuals and forces. He does not neglect political and cultural forces, but he chooses to emphasize individuals. He openly attacks Cerularius for his role in the schism and, due in part to his focus on Cerularius as a significant figure in history, holds 1054 as a significant date.²³

M. J. Le Guillou authored *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy* in 1962. Although he openly admits to writing the book in an effort to reconcile the two churches, he places the blame for the schism on the East. Guillou states that the cause of separation was mutual misunderstanding. "The process of separation may be summed up thus: at the level of their ideas about the Church and of how in fact they experienced the Church, Christian east and Christian West developed along different lines, which at length diverged. The result was a very far-reaching failure to understand one another."²⁴ While 1054 was not decisive in itself, it did mark a turning point.

²¹ Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches*, 1-6, 75-90.

²² G. S. M. Walker, *The Growing Storm: Sketches of Church History from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1350* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 73.

²³ G. S. M. Walker, *The Growing Storm: Sketches of Church History from A.D. 600 to A.D. 1350*, 57-73.

²⁴ M. J. Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, 89.

Guillou emphasizes the role of mutual misunderstanding in causing the schism. The writers of the late 1950s and early 1960s share mutual misunderstanding as a major theme of their writings on the schism. Guillou, because of the Orthodox focus of his book, does not speak much of Western cultural factors, but his book is full of Eastern culture because of the focus on the Orthodox Church. In fact, the Orthodox Church formed the basis of much of Eastern culture, which is a major point of divergence between East and West. The church in Rome did influence Western culture heavily, but the Greeks linked church and state so closely that it was difficult to separate them at times. Guillou also represent an attempt at a middle ground, stating 1054 as significant but not decisive.²⁵

Francis Dvornik, a Roman Catholic historian, wrote *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* in 1966. Dvornik names the issue of Roman primacy as the cause of the events of 1054, although liturgical issues played a lesser role. Oddly, Dvornik downplays the role of the Filioque in the schism. 1054 is relevant because it deepened patriotic sympathies and rivalry between Rome and Constantinople. The events of 1204 completed the schism, not 1054.

Dvornik is an odd bird in the discussion of 1054 because he minimizes the importance of the Filioque and takes great pains to point out when the Filioque is not mentioned. "It is interesting to note that [Leo of Ochrida] made no mention of the *Filioque*."²⁶ As much as he attempts to deny the Filioque, other scholars have demonstrated that the understanding of the Filioque is critical to the events of 1054. The entire correspondence between Leo IX and Cerularius began because of issues of liturgy and the Filioque. His attempt to relegate the Filioque to a secondary importance is puzzling. Dvornik is also a return to a more political focus within the study of the schism, emphasizing moments in history and individual personalities more than cultural trends.²⁷

John Meyendorff, a French-born Orthodox priest committed to inter-Orthodox relations, wrote *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* in 1974. Meyendorff states that scholars cannot give the true schism a precise date. In 1054, the Byzantines considered the Filioque to be the main issue of contention. Neither side fully understood the arguments of the other. The schism of 1054 focused mainly on issues of liturgy and ritual such as unleavened bread in the Sacrament.

Meyendorff does not deal extensively with the events of 1054, so his contribution to the discussion is minimal. He focuses

²⁵ M. J. Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, 89-92.

²⁶ Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, 132.

²⁷ Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, 124-147.

mainly on political and theological issues and sees the essential problem in issues of church authority and ecclesiastical organization. “Neither the schism, not the failure of the attempts at reunion can be explained exclusively by socio-political or cultural factors. The difficulties created by history could have been resolved if there had been a common ecclesiological criterion to settle the...issues.”²⁸ Strangely, for a historical book written in 1974, there is a notable lack of the power motifs so prevalent in much of the writing of the 1970s. Meyendorff is an example of how Christian historians often resist the prevailing historical trends of whatever period in which they are writing.²⁹

J. M. Hussey is a British Byzantine historian and scholar who penned *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* in 1986. Hussey argues that there was no formal schism in 1054 and contemporaries barely noted the Humbert-Cerularius confrontation. He defines a schism as having the two sides “regarding each other as heretics” which, according to him, the churches failed to do in the aftermath of 1054. The true schism occurred in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade.

Hussey revives the attempt to nullify 1054 as a significant date in history. “Viewed in their historical framework the events of 1054 have in a sense been magnified out of all proportion.”³⁰ Hussey provides a definition of schism that, in his mind, nullifies 1054 as a schism at all. While he makes a cogent point, Hussey oversteps by insisting that a schism implies mutual regard of the other side as heretics. This is certainly part of the issue, and Humbert and Cerularius certainly viewed each other as heretics. What of the churches today? Many Christians, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, do not regard the other side as heretical, and yet there is a schism de facto. The line between schism and estrangement is blurry, and Hussey gets caught in the grey area between them. He also does not deal with much socio-cultural history, choosing instead to focus on political events and theological controversies.³¹

Timothy Ware, an English Orthodox Bishop who grew up Anglican and became an Orthodox monk and priest, wrote *The Orthodox Church* in 1993. Ware recognizes 1054 as an important date even though the schism began long before 1054 and came to completion afterward. The two main issues were the Filioque clause and papal claims to authority over the church at Constantinople. He refers to the events of 1054 as a “severe quarrel”.³² He notes the

²⁸ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 91.

²⁹ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 91-101.

³⁰ J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, 135.

³¹ J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, 124-140.

³² Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 58.

Photian schism and the removal of the Pope's name from the diptychs in 1009 as important dates leading to the schism and puts the final break at 1204.

For an author focusing on the Orthodox Church as a whole, Ware discusses just as much political history as he does theology and culture. He manages to mix political and cultural history quite well, and he finds a good balance between the conflicting interpretations of the importance of 1054. He represents the pendulum of interpretation beginning to find a balance between extreme interpretations. He notes the important political events such as the Photian schism and discusses the cultural issues such as language barrier and mutual disdain as well. Ware is, in a way, a bridge between two worlds; having grown up in the Catholic-influenced Anglican Church and then turned Orthodox, he is almost an insider for both sides. As such, he presents a well-balanced and fair account of 1054, acknowledging the tension between it as a symbolic and significant date.³³

Henry Chadwick was a British academic and Anglican clergymen and a leading historian of the early church. He argues that although Humbert's actions in 1054 did not result in a formal schism, they began an outright enmity within the church that led to formal schism. Chadwick writes that the main issue in the separation of East and West was the authority of the patriarch and the Pope and the dichotomy of doctrinal authority by the Pope or ecumenical councils. While the Humbert and Cerularius merely excommunicated individuals, some contemporaries such as Peter of Antioch recognized the danger of a formal schism.

Chadwick deals mainly with political and theological issues. He extensively discusses the Filioque issue, exploring its origins in Western thought beginning with Augustine while most authors regard the Filioque as an addition of purely Gallic/Spanish origin. Chadwick, like Ware, strikes a good balance between the traditional interpretation and denying any importance to 1054 at all, although he cites primary sources that lean more toward the traditional interpretation. Chadwick argues that, whatever the actual political situation was, the churches were emotionally in schism. While the conflict of Humbert and Cerularius was personal in nature, Chadwick argues that its "historical importance lies rather in what most people assumed to be the case. Churches are out of communion with one another if they come to think and feel that they are."³⁴ Chadwick comes close to defending the traditional

³³ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 43-72.

³⁴ Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times Until the Council of Florence*, 218.

interpretation, although he still maintains that no formal schism occurred in 1054.³⁵

Whether the historical community should regard 1054 as a significant date is still a matter of debate. Some scholars have moved as far from the traditional stance as possible, holding that 1054 had no part in the schism whatsoever. Others seek a middle ground, acknowledging that 1054 was a notable event that deepened the estrangement that had begun to develop during the preceding centuries. Though the schism began before 1054 and came to completion after, there is no doubt that the actions of Humbert of Mourmoutiers, the unstoppable force, and Michael Cerularius, the immovable object, had an impact on the relations between the churches in Rome and Constantinople. The fact remains that the churches did enter into formal schism. 1054 was one step along the way to formal schism and a step that holds significance in historical thought to this day.

³⁵ Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: From Apostolic Times Until the Council of Florence*, 27-33, 206-218.