

**ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE DOGMA OF
THE CHURCH. ECCLESIAL LIFE,
LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

His Eminence Dr. IRINEU ION POPA¹

Keywords:

Holy Church, Holy Spirit, Orthodox Theology, Dogmatic Approach, Holy Fathers, Ecclesiastical Life

Abstract:

Church continual approaches, since the very last century, illustrate the high interest that a great number of theologians of our time show to ecclesiology. This ecclesiological approach is to be identified in the way some scriptural, patristic or moral present topics are analysed and debated. Since ecclesiology has become the harmonic meeting of present theological thought, it confers Orthodoxy a normal integrative shape, developing a comprehensive approach in theology as well.² Certainly, passing from the teaching of faith divided into chapters and from a Neo-Patristic vision synthesizing Orthodoxy without shedding enough light upon various approaches of the Holy Fathers, present trend for ecclesiology undertakes a bright path. It provides a balance for this type of approaches. On the other hand, the ecclesiological development sometimes highlights this world's spiritual crisis that no longer listens to the evangelical message of the Saviour Jesus Christ, and does not understand the meaning of the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils. As it is already known, when human sensitivity no longer resonates with the saving inquiries of the Church Fathers, it gives birth to dangerous examinations on pragmatic necessity and usefulness of community existence. Therefore, our heading towards the Body of the Lord, towards spiritual life, and holiness is meant to be the answer to a spiritual anguish and an intense secularization trend of the modern world. Today ecclesiology by its theologians has tried to define what the Church is, in order to more clearly explain what she cannot be. Being par excellence a dogmatic topic, it was approached in relation to divine economy, as Apostle Paul stated: "The Church is the Body of the Saviour Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit".³ No doubt that, after some scholastic

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trends have been overcome, the teaching on the Church was dealt with in a visible Christocentric and pneumatocentric way.⁴ Thus, theologians have striven to illustrate the way in which the Church works and how it is defined in relation to the world. From this point of view, the Creed illustrates the way in which the Body of the Lord is and not what She is and confesses the work of the Church and not how it works. Undoubtedly, in order for the spiritual solution of the present crisis to be understood, a turning back to the patristic way in which the questions were asked is needed.

THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF SOUTH INDIA

Fr. Dr. JACOB THEKKEPARMBIL²

Keywords:

Indian Christianity, Saint Thomas the Apostle, Syriac Theology, Malayalam, Syriac Language.

Abstract:

Since the 20th century St. Thomas Christians were gradually moving away from a Syriac ambience, because most of the liturgy began to be celebrated in Malayalam. The Syriac Malpan system of priestly formation gave way to seminaries which usually follow a European syllabus. Syriac studies had been neglected, though it was kept up nominally in some pockets. In Universities colleges, and some seminaries Syriac Studies were going on a peripheral level. But recently due to the arrival of SEERI on the scene, a revival of Syriac studies is being felt. All the Churches have a growing awareness in their Syriac roots. As a result, in some Churches Syriac is being taught in Sunday schools, parishes etc. This new interest is spreading from place to place. Perhaps this will compensate for the past negligence. It is the laity who very much demand the use of Syriac once again in liturgy. If the clergy and hierarchy take concrete steps in promoting this new impetus, Syriac will flourish all the more in India. One thing is certain: As long as St. Thomas Christians exist, they will not desert their theological, liturgical and spiritual heritage in Syriac language. Malayalam as a language and as a cultural tool is now richer than before, thanks to the arrival of Syriac language and heritage! The St. Thomas Christians were not mere

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passive receivers of heritage, but they opened the cultural package mixing it with waters of Indian heritage and produced the fruits that remain today.

SAINT PETER IN WEST SYRIAC LITURGICAL TRADITION

Rev. Dr. BABY VARGHESE³

Keywords:

Saint Peter, West Syriac, Liturgical Tradition, Anaphora, Holy Scripture, Book of Common Prayer.

Abstract:

The idea of the Primacy of the Pope set forth in the decrees of the first Vatican Council of 1870 is perhaps the most crucial subject discussed in the dialogues between the Catholics and the eastern and the Oriental Orthodox Christians. [E.g. XI-th session of the Plenary of the International mixed Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, Patmos, Greece, 16-23 October 2009 & XII-th Session in Vienna, 20 to 27 September 2010].

INDIAN CHRISTIANITY ORIGIN, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Rev. Dr. KURIAN KACHAPPILLY JOSEPH, CMI⁴

Keywords:

Indian culture, Indian Christianity, Hinduism, Saint Thomas the Apostle, Apostolic Origins.

Abstract:

The First Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his "Circular" published on 17 October 1952, wrote: "Remember that Christianity is a religion of large numbers of people in India and that it came to the south of India nearly 2000 years ago. It is as much a part of the Indian scene as any other religion." Indeed, Christianity in India is

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as old as world Christianity. Kerala is the cradle of Christianity in India, which traces its origin to the Apostle St. Thomas. As per the Census of 2011, Christianity is the third most followed religion in India (after Hinduism and Islam), with approximately 28 million followers. Christians, including Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, are found all across India, with major populations in parts of South India, Kerala, the Konkan Coast, and Northeast India. Indian Christians have the highest ratio of women and men among the various religious communities in India.

**OLD TESTAMENT. TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW:
“PESHITTA”**

Dr. SEBASTIAN P. BROCK⁵

Keywords:

Syriac Old Testament, Peshitta, Syriac translation, Biblical theology, Syriac Fathers.

Abstract:

The name “Peshitta” means “straightforward, simple”; it was given to the standard Syriac versions of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) in order to distinguish them from the seventh-century translations, the Syro-hexapla and the Harclean. The name is first encountered in the ninth-century writer Mushe bar Kipho; earlier authors had simply referred to the Peshitta as “the Syriac.”

The origins of the Peshitta translation are very obscure and Syriac authors had no clear memory of how and when the work was carried out (a few implausible guesses were nevertheless circulated). A close study of the translation itself can throw a little light; from such a study we can deduce the following:

The Peshitta Old Testament is not the work of a single translator, but must have been carried out by many different translators, perhaps working over a considerable period of time.

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**JESUS CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN.
A SYNOPTIC SURVEY**

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Keywords:

Master, Youth, Wealth, Commandments, Faith, Salvation, Sacrifice.

Abstract:

The account of the rich young man or ruler in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matthew 19:16–30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30) offers a profound insight into the human struggle between worldly attachments and the pursuit of spiritual perfection. The dialogue highlights Christ’s method of teaching through probing questions that lead individuals to confront their own inner conflicts. The young man’s inquiry about eternal life and his adherence to commandments reveal an awareness of his spiritual inadequacy, yet his inability to relinquish his wealth underscores the difficulty of surrendering worldly ties. Jesus’ response – calling for the sale of possessions and the giving to the poor – is tailored to the man’s specific internal conflict, illustrating that spiritual perfection requires detachment from anything that hinders a wholehearted relationship with God. The subsequent metaphor of the camel and the needle serves as a vivid hyperbole, emphasizing the near impossibility of entering the Kingdom of God when wealth and its comforts dominate one’s priorities. Yet, Jesus’ regard of love and the man’s sorrowful departure suggest hope – an acknowledgment of his struggle as a step toward transformation. This narrative reminds readers that salvation and spiritual growth demand self-examination, detachment, and a pursuit of perfect love, under the authority of Christ, which transcends mere obligation and arises from deep desire.

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**SOME ORTHODOX CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE THESIS OF “THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS”**

Rev. ADRIAN BOLDISOR, Associate Professor PhD⁷

Keywords:

History of Religions, Civilizations, Interreligious Dialogue, Orthodox Perspective, Orthodox Theology.

Abstract:

Nowadays, in the context of the growing migration of the Muslim population in Europe, caused by the wars in different areas, the question is increasingly being asked whether there is a danger of “Islamization of Europe” following “the clash of civilizations”. The last formula is not new. It created a real dispute in the past. But the discussions must also take into account other questions that are currently being asked: is there still a Christian Europe? Is it possible to speak of an intrinsic conflict between Christianity and Islam, which erupts at certain periods of time?

In this study I focused on the topic of “the clash of civilizations”, the impact that this formula had in the world at the end of the twentieth century and the connotations it has for our times. The topic of research starts from the realities that no one can dispute, globally emphasizing the problems that affect people: conflicts in various territories, difficult economic situations in certain regions of the world, reaching financial crises and important social changes, in which the majority populations have to live with minorities that, most of the time, they do not know and do not accept.

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IMAGINAIRES DES TECHNOSCIENCES ENTRE UTOPIE ET APOCALYPSE: PERSPECTIVE D'UNE ANTHROPOLOGIE CHRETIENNE

Prof. Univ. Dr. IONEL BUSE⁸

Mot clés:

Imaginaires, anthropologie chrétienne, Jean Boboc, Dumitru Staniloae.

Abstract:

Quel pourrait être la relation entre l'anthropologie et la pensée chrétienne dans un monde de plus en plus technoscientifique ? Dans notre article nous proposons d'analyser la perspective anthropologique de la pensée chrétienne face aux contradictions de l'imaginaire transhumaniste situé entre « l'image maniaque » de la mythification des formes technoscientifiques et « l'image phobique » de la disparition de l'homme par la relation avec la machine de l'avenir. Le texte représentatif de l'analyse est l'ouvrage « Le transhumanisme décrypté. Métamorphose du bateau de Thésé » de Jean Boboc l'ancien doyen du Centre de recherche « Dumitru Staniloae » de Paris, chercheur dans le domaine de l'anthropologie chrétienne orthodoxe et de ses interférences avec les sciences de la vie.

THE BELAGINES LAWS

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Keywords:

Code, rules, law, bellagines, conduct.

Abstract:

It seems that the Belagines laws were a code containing rules of conduct of the Geto-Dacian people. Jordanes and Iamblichos mention their existence. From Jordanes we learn that the laws of the Geto-Dacians were called "bellagines" and that they were written, and from Iamblichos we learn that Zamolxe created this code of written laws

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through which he showed the Getae the way to the immortality of the soul. The written text of the rules has not been preserved, but we will try, from the information we have, to reproduce their content as much as possible.

FUNDAMENTAL APOLOGETICS OF SCRIPTURE

Rev. IONITA APOSTOLACHE, Associate Professor PhD¹⁰

Keywords:

Apologetical Approach, Holy Scripture, Fundaments, Theological Dialogue, Theology and Philosophy, Theology and Science, Theology and Law.

Abstract:

The Holy Scripture is the starting point of the Church's dialogue with the world for its salvation. Within its pages lie the most compelling arguments and viable principles by which societies of all times and places have been positively shaped. The Bible provides a basis for juridical principles, leaving open the possibility for their reaffirmation in contemporary times through the Church's apologetic dialogue. Therefore, in the Holy Scriptures we can find many apologetical support regarding the dialogue between theology and philosophy, theology and science, theology and law. In our study we will try to develop and exemplify the principal direction regarding this important overview of the apologetical research.

THE IDEOLOGICAL VALENCES OF STEPHEN HAWKING'S THOUGHT

Rev. MADALIN-STEFAN PETRE, Associate Lecturer PhD¹¹

Keywords:

Origin and meaning of the human existence, Stephen Hawking, evolutionary theory, science, orthodox theology, deism.

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Abstract:

Today, the answer to the meaning of human existence is more uncertain than ever, not because of the denial of meaning, but because of the multitude of meanings and paths that are proposed. Paradoxically, the plurality of principles actually means their absence, just as polytheism is equivalent to atheism. Therefore, as far as the meaning of human existence is concerned, Stephen Hawking sometimes declares himself an atheist, but he basically promotes deism, which denies God by affirming Him. He denies God by affirming Him the way He is not. The science developed by Hawking provides the premises of a worship system, that is, a new religious view without God. He cannot give an accurate image of the human goal, because he cannot explain the origin of creation either. Hawking believes that the universe will end suddenly, but the Divine Revelation speaks not of the end but of transfiguration. In his way of describing reality, Hawking places God under human dignity, because he sees Him as an object that can be controlled. Finally, he sees the meaning of human existence in the complete knowledge of creation which could not give man more than any creature could.

**TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES: A RELIGIOUS APPROACH
ON FATE, MORALITY, AND REDEMPTION**

English Teacher & Trainer: OANA MITRIA, PhD¹²

Keywords:

Tess of the d'Urbervilles, novel, Thomas Hardy, A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented.

Abstract:

“Tess of the d'Urbervilles, novel by Thomas Hardy, first published serially in bowdlerized form in the Graphic (July – December 1891) and in its entirety in book form (three volumes) the same year. It was subtitled A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented because Hardy felt that its heroine was a virtuous victim of a rigid Victorian moral code. Now considered Hardy's masterwork, it departed from conventional Victorian fiction in its focus on the rural lower class and in its open treatment of sexuality and religion”.

Like each and every masterpiece of its genre, Tess of the

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d'Urbervilles is a classic 600 page novel which manages to draw a reader's attention from the very beginning but not in a positive way, on the contrary in a negative one. As one of Thomas Hardy's critics once noted, the first thing that strikes you is the bleakness of the novel.

Considered by many critics as a quite depressing piece of literature, Hardy's tragic love story is for sure a testimony of an English age when morality had a dual character and sin was treated differently according to the sex one had.

A MORAL-THEOLOGICAL VIEW UPON WAR FROM A PEACE PERSPECTIVE

Rev. SORIN-GRIGORE VULCANESCU, PhD¹³

Keywords:

War, Peace, Christian Church, Orthodox Church, Eastern Spirituality.

Abstract:

Christian bioethics deals with topics such as war, every time, in counterweight to its alternative: peace. The teaching of the Christian faith identifies war as a result of evil, sin and man's alienation from God. In fact, it is about a decay and moral degradation of the relationship that man has with God and with his fellow men. In the counterbalance of the conflict, there is peace, which in order to be complete depends on certain factors that I will identify and address in this article, in which I start from the explanations of the just war and conclude with a unique perspective on war: peace, from the point of view of the Fathers of the Eastern Church and of the theology of modern Christian scholar. Finally, the reader can understand the essence of the Christian message regarding peace and the importance of this imperative of good understanding and communion, as a state of essential primacy and as a final goal of eternal life.

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THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS AND WRITERS IN THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

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Keywords:

Patristic Theology, Early Fathers, Christian Writers, St. John Chrysostom, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras of Athens, St. Justin the Martyr.

Abstract:

The theme of the knowledge of God plays an important role in the overall concerns of the Fathers of our Church, being closely connected to the efforts of every Christian for perfection and salvation in Christ. Far from being a mere theoretical subject, the teachings of the great teachers of Christianity offer a path for all to follow; a path that aims to bring us closer to God through spiritual ascent, personal efforts, and the practice of virtues. God in the Holy Trinity, is the fountain of our true knowledge. The Savior calls us to become His disciples because the true knowledge is the knowledge of God in Christ, as a divine gift. When asked if this is possible, the Church Fathers start from the fact that man was created in the image of God, and this image is the premise of the knowledge we are called to rise to.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMPIRE OF NICAEA AND THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST ORTHODOX PATRIARCH FTER THE FOURTH CRUSADE (1204)

Rev. ADRIAN LUPU, PhD¹⁵

Keywords:

Orthodoxy, Theodore I Laskaris, crusade, Constantinople, Empire from Nicaea.

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Abstract:

The Fourth Crusade led to the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire. Under the leadership of Theodore I Laskaris, the Byzantines managed to organize themselves and establish a new state. The Empire of Nicaea represented the place of resistance from where they would reconquer Constantinople. The Orthodox Church, for its part, managed to survive and choose a new leader who will preserve traditional eastern spiritual values. With a new emperor and a new patriarch, even if they were in exile, they were able to claim themselves as successors of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church.

**FEMININE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY.
THE THREE NUNS FROM *APOPTHHEGMATA PATRUM*:
AMMA SARRHA, AMMA THEODORA AND AMMA
SYNKLETIKA**

ANA OCOLEANU, Associate Lecturer PhD¹⁶

Keywords:

Feminine Asceticism, Egypt, Apophthegmata patrum, Amma Sarrha, Amma Theodora, Amma Synkletika.

Abstract:

In the collection of ascetic sayings of St. Fathers from the Egyptian desert Apophthegmata patrum are surprisingly remembered and three saint women: Amma Sarrha, Amma Theodora and Amma Synkletika. The three ascetic women do not differ in their harsh way of life from their male counterparts. And they, like the Holy Fathers of Sketis, Nitria and Kellia, strive with dignity, speaking with great wisdom words of instruction especially for the female audience, but also for the male ascetics who end up visiting these holy women themselves, attracted by the fame they had earned. However, unlike the ascetic men of the Egyptian desert, who wander into the interior of the desert, the three saints of Apophthegmata patrum are living in the vicinity of the inhabited area around the Nile river.

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**MEDIAN MODES IN THE LIGHT OF THE GREEK
MANUSCRIPT NO. 9 FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN
DROBETA TURNU SEVERIN**

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Keywords:

Greek manuscript, 18th century, Byzantine chant, old notation, median modes, trohos system, Saint Ioannes Koukouzeles, Ioannes Plousiadinis.

Abstract:

The Greek manuscript no. 9 from 1751 – a sole manuscript in our country tells us more about the musical tradition of the Eastern Church, tradition which provided the unmodified safekeeping until today of the music and repertory that is an integral part of the cult of the Orthodox Church. Taking into account the importance of this manuscript for the musicological research of the ecclesiastical chant before the hrisantic reform, this study deals with different aspects from the old theory of Byzantine music, as: metrophony, solfeggio, median modes and trohos system.

**A BRIEF REFLECTION ON THE WOODEN CHURCHES OF
VALCEA COUNTY**

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ADRIANA-GABRIELA MARDALE,
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Keywords:

Monument, Wooden Church, Conservation, Restoration, Painted Layer,

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Wooden Support.

Abstract:

The article explores the rich architectural heritage of the Valcea region in Romania, with a particular focus on the wooden churches that have survived over the centuries. The document provides a detailed overview of the evolution of these places of worship, starting from the medieval period and continuing into the modern era. It is emphasized the fact that Valcea is home to a considerable number of wooden churches, which, according to the 1840 Census, numbered 127 such constructions. However, today their number has decreased, and many are in an advanced state of decay. The cultural and historical significance of these monuments is highlighted, as they are considered some of the most valuable in the country, as well as their contribution to the development of religious and vernacular architecture in the region. The article analyses the construction processes and artistic styles that have characterized these buildings over time, including the Brancoveanu and post-Brancoveanu influences.

Furthermore, the article explores aspects related to the iconographic program of the wooden churches, as well as the techniques and materials used in their construction. It underscores the need for conservation and restoration of these fragile monuments, which face threats such as degradation and neglect. In conclusion, the article offers a comprehensive overview of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Valcea region, emphasizing the importance of preserving and protecting these architectural jewels for future generations.

**HIERATIC SYMBOLISM AND DIVINE REVELATION IN
SACRED ARCHITECTURE AND ICONOGRAPHY**

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Keywords:

Architecture, Iconography, Painting, Revelation, Symbol.

Abstract:

To know God and the unseen world, and to draw closer to divinity, humans have always relied on symbols. All Holy Scripture is filled with

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symbols, and just as the Word of God was conveyed through symbols and parables, so too in the Church and in iconography, everything carries meaning. Each element observed by the faithful symbolizes something for the faith. Symbols are present in the Liturgy, in religious acts, and in the design and ornamentation of places of worship. In both church architecture and religious painting, holiness and grace cannot be conveyed or described through human means alone; hence, a symbolic language is used, employing specific shapes, colors, and lines. Through such means, Revelation, which comes from above, when expressed in material form, becomes accessible to our understanding. Church art, expressed through symbols, lines, colors, and shapes, becomes, through the continual testimony and invocation of Christ, a spiritual vision beyond the physical one – a vision of the Kingdom of Heaven through Faith.