

RECENZII ȘI NOTIȚE BIBLIOGRAFICE

BOOK REVIEWS

Bogoljub Sljakovic, *Ad Orientem. Essays from Serbian Theology Today*, (Belgrade, Los Angeles: Faculty of Orthodox Theology, St. Sebastian Orthodox Press, 2019), 373 p.

The jubilee of 800 years of autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church (1219-2019) determined a group of researchers and theologians from Serbian space (Belgrade, Serbian Republic and Foca, Republic of Srpska, BH) to bring together in an interesting anthology, some of their recent articles on contemporary debated topics.

The quality of the texts published is certified both by the backgrounds and list of previous publications of the authors and also by the journals or books where they have been firstly published. Therefore, the book coordinated by Professor Bogoljub Sljakovic, professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Belgrade University, already known to the readers for his rich research activity, but also for the editorial one, hosts texts from famous journals like *Lateranum* (Rome), *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (Crestwood, New York), *Philotheos International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* (Belgrade), *The Expository Times. International Theological Journal* (New York), *Revista Teologică* (Sibiu), but also researches that have been published initially in the books of important international conferences or unpublished ones.

In the fourteenth chapters, the reader encounters texts linked with biblical theology, the Patristic one, history of Serbian Orthodox Church, philosophy, doctrinaire or liturgical one. After the article of Professor Rodoljub Kubat from Belgrade, entitled "Alegoresis as a Method of Demythologization" (p. 15-28), where the allegorist method of the alexandrine school and its outcomes is presented and analysed in a very interesting way, Professor Pedrag Dragutinovic from the same university, proposes a new way of reading parables in contemporary Orthodox space (p. 29-52) underlining the fact that:

"The Orthodox Church is a particular "interpretive community" with a long and rich tradition of spirituality and speculative (philosophical) theology. It is an "interpretive community" in which certain interpretive interests and procedures are shared. Those interests and procedures have cultural and historical roots and backgrounds. The Orthodox Church has to be aware of the particularity of its models of interpretation and has to show respect for other, different interests, profiting from them and encountering them in dialogue, which is necessary for the practice of love in Jesus Christ." (p. 51).

The next research, signed by Vladan Tatalovic (p. 53-88) brings together biblical and historical research, offering an overview of the Orthodox New Testament Scholarship in Serbia.

It is very important there the fact that the author not only does he offer a presentation of the way how these studies are perceived today and where he presents in the study program during the time, but he links them with the biographies of the most representatives professors from this area.

The next six articles (p. 89-219) can be surely related with the patristic and philosophical space. There authors like Vladan Perisic (p. 89-102), Aleksandar Djakovac (p. 103-116), Miknoja Knezevic (p. 117-145), Bogdan Lubardic (p. 146-188), bishop Maksim Vasiljevic (p. 189-209) and Darko Djogo (p. 210-219) come in contact with topics like the possibility of having a contextual Orthodox Theology, apocatastasis, the order of Persons of the Holy Trinity in the *Apodictic Treatises of Saint Gregory Palamas*, Orthodox Theology of Personhood, the meaning of the expression "rising from the death" and its contemporary value or the role of history in the consciousness of identity. As a continuation of the work of Darko Djogo dedicated to the role of history, Professor Bogoljub Sljakovic offers a long and very documented essay entitled: "The Great War, Vidovan Ethics, and Memory of Serbian Sacrifice – on the History of Ideas and Memory" (p. 220-274), where as he emphasizes in the beginning of his approach:

"Having for my point of departure the characterization of contemporariness (the domination of financial and high technology sectors, pollicisation of economy, ideological utilization of culture and control of the capacity to think) and a concise analysis of expansionism (political, economic, cultural) in the wake of the Great War, I describe in more detail the spiritual situation before the Great War in philosophy, literature, art, as well as the national-political texts and war propaganda publicist literature of German intellectuals of the said times." (p. 219).

His trans-disciplinary approach that brings together history, theology and philosophy is followed by the one of Vedran Golijanin, dedicated to Paul Tillic's theory of religious symbolism (p. 275-298) and the one of Andrej Jetfic, which is a critical overview of Andrew Newberg's model of neurotheology (p. 299-325). The book ends with two articles that can be surely related with liturgical theology, but also with the history of the Church. First of them is dedicated by Zdravko Jovanovic to the "nonjuridical understanding of episcopal succession (p. 326-340) and the last one to "some questions of contemporary liturgical practice: tha altar bell of in the Liturgy" (p. 34-362; the problem being investigated by Zlatko Matic using documents from the 19th century).

Bringing together texts from different areas of theological space, the book coordinated by Professor Bogoljub Sljakovic, entitled: *Ad Orientem. Essays from Serbian Theology Today*, not only does it commemorate eight centuries of autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church but also contributes to the understanding of some important topics of this important Church and brings into attention topics debated by the contemporary specialists, creating bridges between spiritualities and between theology, philosophy, history, philology or other segments of contemporary science.

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