S-90 – Science and Orthodox Christianity around the World

The History of Science and Religion

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Abstract:

The study of the relations between Orthodox Christianity and science is a developing field of the general history of the science-religion relations. The literature on this hitherto poorly studied topic is expanding; it comprises the various aspects of these relations shaped during the long history of Orthodoxy, depending on the different geographical and cultural regions. From the medieval period, and based on the texts of the Greek Fathers of the Church, Orthodox theologians and thinkers developed multiple discourses concerning secular knowledge and especially the study of nature. During almost two millennia, the question of the use of philosophical tools in order to understand God’s creation has been renegotiated many times in diverse political and cultural contexts, facing different challenges. Depending on the period and the region, Orthodox theologians and scholars had to respond to the ideas about nature of ancient Greek philosophy, Islam, Western Christianity and finally Modern society.

The proposed Symposium aims to gather scholars who have studied the history of the inter-relation between Orthodox Christianity and science in various periods and cultures. It will focus on the Modern and Contemporary periods, and on Bulgarian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Greek, Russian, Georgian, Romanian and Orthodox Diaspora cultures, which constitute the overwhelming majority of Orthodox believers.

The Symposium aims to study the question how Orthodox Christianity has, in the aforementioned societies, shaped its relation towards science. What are the main common themes that illustrate this relation in the various Orthodox cultures? What are the main similarities and differences between the relations of Eastern and Western Christianity to science? Does the fact that Eastern Christianity scarcely participated in the making of the new European science of the 16th – 17th centuries affect its relations to Modern and Contemporary science? How important has the Orthodox patristic tradition been in the shaping of Orthodoxy-science relations during the Modern and Contemporary periods? What are the main themes of discussion between Orthodoxy and science?

Keywords: Science and religion – Orthodox Christianity – Modern period.

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