



Daniel Munteanu

## Editorial

The second issue of the *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* is mainly dedicated to *Animal Ethics* but also to an *orthodox philosophy of language*, to the concept of *perichoresis* in Dumitru Staniloae's theology, to "Synechōs or the Eucharistic Permanence in the *Paschal Ethos of the Church*", to "*The Time of the Establishment of Biblical Monotheism*" and also to the "*Biblical unicorns and fiery flying serpents: not dinosaurs and not pterosaurs*".

In the first article "Compassion for Animals in the Orthodox Church", His Eminence Kallistos Ware, Metropolitan of Diokleia, shows that nowadays *orthodox animal ethics* should take into account the place of animals in the liturgical and theological world of the Orthodox Church. Animals "are responsive and vulnerable. (...) As living beings, sensitive and easily



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hurt, they are to be viewed as a ‘Thou’, not an ‘It’, (...) not as objects to be exploited and manipulated but as subjects, capable of joy and sorrow, of happiness and affliction. They are to be approached with gentleness and tenderness; and, more than that, with respect and reverence, for they are precious in God’s sight.”

In my article: “Die Hellenisierung der Nephesh und der Verlust der Kultur des Herzens. Human-Animal Studies und orthodoxe Tierethik”, I show that the *Hellenization of Nephesh* has made a decisive “contribution” to the rejection of the view that also animals are endowed with souls. The translation of Nephesh with psyche and the restriction of the soul to rationality led to the loss of the heart as center of human being and the related *culture of heart*. In cultural history, the heart was no longer decisive, but the *nous*, which became the keymarker of imago Dei. So there were two serious losses due to the translation of Nephesh with Psyche. Firstly, the rationalization of the center and the loss of the heart, or the loss of the culture of the heart; secondly, the repression of the nephesh of animals, since only man was recognized as a rational being and the crown of creation.

In his article “*Towards an Orthodox Philosophy of Language*”, Christoph Schneider “makes a contribution towards an Orthodox philosophy of language by drawing on the work of Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov. Three dimensions of linguistic meaning are discussed: meaning as *reference*, meaning as *use* (the pragmatic aspect of meaning), and meaning as *sense*. The paper argues that a one-sided emphasis on one of these dimensions of meaning prevents the formation of a theologically convincing theory of language. First, an account is given of Florensky’s discussion of ‘pure empiricism’ that anticipates later criticisms of the logical empiricists’ theory of meaning as reference and empirical verification (ideal language philosophy). Second, the article argues that Florensky’s dialectic seeks to do justice to the pragmatic aspect of meaning, but without succumbing to a radical finitism and epistemic pessimism. Although linguistic

meaning is indeed dependent on pragmatic and contextual factors, Florensky believes that language enables us to acquire real knowledge of the world. Thirdly, the paper discusses Bulgakov's semantic realism and his Trinitarian understanding of semiosis."

In his article „*The Place of Trinitarian Perichoresis in the Dogmatic Theology of Fr Dumitru Staniloae*”, Danut Manastireanu shows that the concept of *perichoresis* is used by Fr Dumitru Staniloae in different dogmatic contexts. “The Trinitarian concept was expressed through a varied terminology (...). Trinitarian *perichoresis* is clearly the most important and generally accepted meaning of this term. Although the term is first used with this meaning by Pseudo-Cyril in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the concept is present implicitly in the Gospel of St John (10:30, 38: 14:10-11) and more explicitly in Athanasius, Hillary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria.” Danut Manastireanu shows also that “Staniloae’s use of intersubjectivity as related to the divine persons ‘constitutes the model and paradigm of all human relationships, and more specifically the model and paradigm of the Church’.”

Ovidiu Panaite’s article “*Synechôses or the Eucharistic permanence in the Paschal ethos of the Church*” proposes a journey back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century amidst the debates caused by the need for a rediscovery. The Philokalic renaissance, intrinsically and obligatorily accompanied by the rediscovery of the Eucharistic foundation of spiritual life, was the center of that discovery. By involving both great dogmatists, such as Athanasios of Paros, and well-known fathers of ascetic life, such as Nicodemus the Hagiorite, and by complying to the cultural exigencies of its time in a continuous fidelity to the Tradition, the phenomenon of the *Philokalic renaissance* built a few *topoi* of the subsequent discourse of the Church. (...)This paper aims to synthetically present several moments in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the Philokalic renaissance, highlighting the Eucharistic dimension in the spiritual life.”

In this issue we integrated also to articles with the main focus on Old Testament Theology. The first one is about “The Time of the Establishment of Biblical Monotheism”. Christos G. Karagiannis shows that “the concept of monotheism in the Old Testament is fundamental because it differentiates Israel from the other people of the Ancient Near East but also prepares man to accept the mystery of the ‘divine economy’. The time of the establishment of monotheism in the Old Testament is under scientific research, since according to the traditional view it dates back to the time of Moses. But this is the time when the concept of monotheism is presented to the people of Israel. The research shows that many centuries will pass, during which Israel will engage in syncretism, resulting in divine punishment, the destruction of Jerusalem, Exile and Diaspora. It is therefore the period after Babylonian Captivity in which the biblical text is edited in order the people of Israel to realize that their God has not abandoned them but remains the only God, the Holy, the Creator of all, the Lord of the Nations.”

The second article on Old Testament Theology deals with the topic “*Biblical unicorns and fiery flying serpents: not dinosaurs and not pterosaurs*”. This challenging, interdisciplinary article is written by Philip Senter, Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences Fayetteville State University, USA. According to Philip Senter, „an enormous body of literature claims that the Bible mentions dinosaurs and other Mesozoic reptiles. Such literature includes publications that claim that biblical ‘unicorns’ are horned dinosaurs and that the ‘fiery flying serpents’ of the Bible are fire-breathing or bioluminescent pterosaurs. However, clues from within the Bible and elsewhere reveal the biblical ‘unicorn’ is most likely the rhinoceros or the aurochs and that the ‘fiery flying serpent’ is most likely the cobra. The allegations that such animals are dinosaurs or pterosaurs is without supporting evidence.”

In the name of our advisory board, I wish our readers a fruitful lecture!