

EDITORIAL

THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ISSTA 2013 Religion and politics – the Church-State relationship From Constantine the Great to post-Maastricht Europe

The 12th International Symposium on Science, Theology and Arts (ISSTA 2013) was held in Alba Iulia, May 14-16, 2013. Due to the fact that 2013 celebrated 1700 years since the Edict from Milan, the organisers chose to focus the symposium on *Religion and Politics: The Church-State relationship - from Constantine the Great to post-Maastricht Europe*.

The event was organised by the University '1 Decembrie 1918' (Faculty of Orthodox Theology) in Alba Iulia, the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest, the Romanian State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, the Romanian Cultural Institute, L'Istituto di Studi Ecumenici 'S. Bernardino' di Venezia, the University of Pitești and 'Petre Andrei' University of Iași.

Since no country can afford to neglect the importance of religion and the balance that religious life can generate in society, the symposium was organised into the following sections: 1. Political Culture & Religious Culture, 2. Political Theology & the Morality of Politics, 3. Church & Society, 4. The State-Religion Relationship throughout History.

The first panel raised for discussion issues and questions such as: To what extent has Christian religious culture influenced contemporary political models? May we speak of a transformation or altering of Christian cultural models under the pressure (influence) of political currents? Do the cohabitation/collaboration models of the various history-validated political doctrines have any relevance within inter-religious dialogue? Can the *cohesion* model – proposed by political systems – be reconciled with the *communion* model – proposed by the Church? Which cultural aspects and topics can the Church successfully propose to the political environment, independently of the latter's own line of analysis? Are there any research methods within the sphere of religious culture that the laicized political environment would be willing to adopt, independently of religious doctrine? Since the foundation of our culture is Christian, why do we allow ourselves to witness the multiplication and aggravation of social problems? Which elements are of most importance for the Church within a cultural dialogue of a symphonic/ harmonic type with the laic (though perhaps not quite laicized or laicist) State?

The second section concerned the formulation of Christian political philosophy (political theology and religious politics). Papers reflected on the importance of political context, proper definitions and principles, as well as potential hazards, using inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches. Researchers addressed essential questions such as: Is there a political theology? Are we talking about the clericalisation of politics or the politicalisation of the ecclesial space? To what extent does the dogmatic consciousness of the Church manifest continuity with the process of structuring a morality for the *polis*? Might the theological justification of a political system be the finality of political theology?

The third panel dealt with the inclusion/exclusion of the Church in the economic, financial and cultural policies of society. Important aspects in the fields of sociology and bioethics were explored, including social ethics and effective public policy given limited resources, donation and transplantation of human organs, euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering, family ethics, the role and place of the Church in society, as well as the evangelical structure of ethical and political concepts, etc.

The fourth section treated the relationship between the State and the Church throughout the ages: State and Church in the Roman/Roman-Byzantine Empire; the State and the European religions: from Charles the Great to the Maastricht Treaty; State and Church in the East: from the fall of Constantinople to the fall of communism, etc.

The event gathered more than 120 registered participants, including 13 PhD students, who participated in a special session dedicated to their work. Among the participants were philosophers, historians, philologists, sociologists, economists, journalists, specialists in political sciences, law, education, arts and art history.

Important international researchers from seven different countries (USA, Italy, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Greece) presented papers at the conference. Among them we note: Herman Tristram ENGELHARDT Jr. from *Rice University (Department of Philosophy), Houston, USA*; Petr BALCAREK, *Vice-President of the Czech National Committee of Byzantine Studies of the Czech Academy of Science and Director of Institute for Byzantine and Eastern Christian Studies, Olomouc, Czech Republic*; Ana Smith ILTIS, *Director of the Center for Bioethics, Health and Society and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA*; Tiziano SALVATERRA from *University Pontificia Salesiana (Faculty of Communication Studies), Rome, Italy* and *Rector of the Catholic University of Tirana, Albania*; Ryan NASH from *Ohio State University, Wexner College of Medicine, Columbus, USA*; Corinna DELKESKAMP-HAYES from the *European Programs, International Studies in Philosophy and Medicine, Freigericht, Germany*; Nikolaos KOIOS from *University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, Department of Priest Studies* and Pascal HÄMMERLI, *coordinator of the PhD Program De Civitate Hominis, University of Fribourg (Department of Theology), Switzerland*.

We also note the presence of His Eminence IRINEU, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Professor in the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Alba Iulia and host of this cultural event, of His Eminence LAURENȚIU, Metropolitan of Ardeal, and of His Eminence GURIE, Bishop of Deva and Hunedoara.

The main Romanian universities were represented by their participants at the symposium. Is a remarkable fact that theologians from 13 of the 15 faculties of Orthodox Theology in Romania presented their work at the event.

In order to maintain high academic standards, the Scientific Committee decided to select just 15 papers (less than 15% of the total) to be published in this issue of the *European Journal of Science and Theology*. Although, parts of some papers were published before in the complete proceedings of this scientific event, while the general policy of EJST is orientated to original and new works and ideas, the editors have considered necessary to include them in this volume only for increasing the visibility of scientific production of Orthodox Theology from Romania in the international academic space.

We believe the aim of bringing together international and national specialists in Science, Theology and Arts has been achieved. This interdisciplinary approach contributes to a better understanding of the ongoing challenges in society. In this context, we hope that Alba Iulia will gradually regain its historical place, as not only ‘the soul capital of the Romanians’, the seal of the consecrating of the unified Romania, but also as a valuable centre of Romanian and Orthodox culture and spirituality open to international values and cultures.

Fr. Dr. Dumitru Vanca
Prof. Mark J. Cherry
Fr. Dr. Alin Albu

Mark J. Cherry is the Dr. Patricia A. Hayes Professor in Applied Ethics and Professor of Philosophy at St. Edward's University Austin, Texas, USA. He has acted as guest editor for this issue of the European Journal of Science & Theology together with Fr. Dr. Alin Albu from the University '1 Decembrie 1918', Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Alba Iulia .