

Das Handwörterbuch „Theologische Anthropologie. Römisch-katholisch – Russisch-orthodox“ setzt Maßstäbe für eine weitere theologische Annäherung der beiden Flügel eines organischen Ganzen.

Zoran Andric, München

*Georgios D. Panagopoulos*, Εισαγωγή στην ιστορία της δυτικής θεολογίας. Πρόσωπα, διδασκαλία, κριτική θεώρηση από την άποψη της Ορθόδοξης Παράδοσης [=Einführung in die Geschichte der westlichen Theologie. Personen, Lehre, kritische Betrachtung aus der Sicht der Orthodoxen Tradition], Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis 2012, 347 S., 20,- € (ISBN 978-960-427-132-0)

It is rare to find an Orthodox theologian prepared to give the medieval Western tradition the close attention it deserves. In this book Georgios Panagopoulos, Professor of Dogmatics at the Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Ioannina, presents a careful review of the thinking of a number of key figures of the high and late Middle Ages. His seven essays on Anselm of Canterbury, Abelard, the Victorines, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Martin Luther, followed by an appendix in which he compares the philosophical and theological traditions of Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, began as a series of lectures given at Ioannina on the roots of Western theological thinking. Reworked for publication, they are intended to acquaint Greek readers with the riches of the Western tradition while at the same time offering a critique from an Orthodox point of view. Their usefulness, however, is not limited to Greeks or even to Orthodox. Importantly, they can also help the non-Orthodox reader appreciate what it is in the Western tradition that causes unease to the Orthodox and why this should be so.

The scholarship of these essays is impressive. The careful analysis of each thinker witnesses to the author's engagement with the primary texts. His love for the Latin language is everywhere evident – from the very dedication to his wife, *uxori dilectissimae et amantissimae* to the abundance of quotation in the original language. Each essay is followed by a selection of key texts (in Latin with only an introduction and summary in Greek). The bibliographies are thoroughly up to date, referring to works in all the major languages (including Russian) up to 2011.

Three themes run through the book. One is how different a kind of an enterprise theology is in the two traditions. Starting with Anselm, who builds on Augustine's *fides quaerens intellectum*, Western theology becomes an intellectual discipline, a programme to deepen our understanding of the content of revelation by philosophical and philological methods so as to lay down the path leading from faith to the beatific vision of God. This is contrasted with the Orthodox way of doing theology, which is to reflect on the experience of those being deified as a result of participating through Christ in the uncreated Godhead of the Trinity. For the Orthodox revelation is the manifestation of God in his uncreated grace, not an objective datum that the human mind can fill out with the aim of understanding it more fully. Panagopoulos consequently presents Orthodox theology as *theognosia*, the fruit of the *experience* of God, rather than simply as an intellectual discipline or sacred philosophy.

The second theme is the sharp division between nature and grace which has been characteristic of Western theology up to the present time. In his treatment of Aquinas, Panagopoulos

laments the separation of nature from its Creator. This has been a consistent feature of the Western approach since the early Middle Ages. In this respect Martin Luther is firmly in the tradition of the scholastic theologians he reacts against, for he does not escape from the bonds of scholastic theologizing with regard to nature and original sin. As an antidote to this, Panagopoulos presents the teaching of Kavasilas and the Elder Sophrony of Essex on the healing of our nature by God's giving of himself to us.

The third theme is the growth of papal absolutism in conjunction with the philosophical currents of the Middle Ages. Here a key factor has been the separation of the ordination from the authority of bishops in the Western Church. Panagopoulos emphasises the principle of conciliarity, which he contrasts with the universal papal primacy that supplanted it. The result was the transformation of the Church into a this-worldly institution administered by the pope. In Panagopoulos's view this reflects a falling away of the Roman Catholic Church from the ancient tradition on the levels of epistemology and ecclesiology.

All this might sound like polemics rather than dispassionate theological investigation. But this would be a mistaken impression – a result of the very fact that the Western tradition treats theology as a *sacra scientia*. Panagopoulos's approach to theology is experiential. Theology is *theognosia* – the knowledge of God by experience. The Church for him is the *κοινωνία θεώσεως*, the communion of those in the process of deification. It must be said that at times Panagopoulos does not avoid an overschematized presentation. He says, for example, that 'Thomas replaces the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with Aristotle's First Mover' (p. 176). This is to ignore the mystical side of Thomas that we can glimpse above all in his great biblical commentaries. Such sweeping statements, however, are rare. The Western and Orthodox traditions are not presented as two monolithic structures with Aquinas on the one side and Palamas on the other as twin peaks of opposing systems. Panagopoulos is too well informed about the nuances of Western thinking and too aware that Palamism is not a 'system'. He gives many useful discussions, for example, of Anselm's ontological argument, or Bonaventure's notion of *illuminatio*, or Thomas's teaching on grace, or Duns Scotus's voluntarism. And he makes interesting comparisons between Palamas and Anselm on the purpose of the Incarnation, Barlaam of Calabria and Bonaventure on the knowledge of God, Palamas and Thomas on grace, and Kavasilas and Luther on the healing of our nature. His command of the detail compels respect even if the reader might disagree with the conclusions.

It has become fashionable (in the West) to decry any sharp opposition between the Eastern and Western traditions. Recent publications have drawn attention to the warm reception of Aquinas in the East by both Palamites and anti-Palamites after the translations of the Kydones brothers. It is rightly argued that the theological traditions of East and West have interacted more than one might have suspected. On the other hand there *are* differences between East and West and these differences reflect different theological mindsets. Panagopoulos, moving on the same wavelength as Romanides, Mantzarides and Yannaras, is right to draw attention to them. The essence and energies distinction is important to Orthodoxy, as is an experiential theology and a conciliar ecclesiology. Arguing as Panagopoulos does with learning and sensitivity, he deserves to be heard in the West by anyone who can read Greek. His book is a valuable and constructive addition to the literature on what divides East and West. Ecumenical rapprochement is impossible without taking its arguments into account.

Norman Russell, London