

The Historical-Critical Method and the Holy Fathers

A brief history of a mutual reception with ecumenical implications
at the level of biblical studies

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This study aims to capture the dynamics of the recent biblical studies in the Orthodox and Western, especially Protestant, theological areas. Both the Orthodox biblical theology and the Western biblical theology are streamlined by research, which can be inspired by each other's experience. Thus, the Orthodox biblical studies are recently shaped in receiving and developing an exegetical method, and in this sense may appeal to the Western experience, especially the historical-critical method. On the other hand, the Western biblical scholars are concerned with bringing into the present the meaning of biblical texts or their update, in a direction close to the Orthodox biblical experience. The solution to these concerns can be rediscovered in the mutual completion with ecumenical connotations.

Keywords: *Bible studies, exegesis, Church Fathers, historical-critical method, synthesis, ecumenical approach*

“Let us not have, then, the Bible without the Fathers, or the Fathers without the Bible but on the contrary read the whole Tradition of Christianity together for the wisdom and grace it has to offer us”¹

John Anthony McGuckin

1. Introduction

Orthodox Biblical Theology at the academic level has not yet developed an original method of interpreting Holy Scripture, which can be proposed and applied in a graduate context. Original is meant as being in strong agreement with the understanding of Scripture's role and place in believers' lives. Part of the explanation for this serious lack could be the fact that in the Orthodox biblical theology, a necessary distinction between hermeneutics and exegesis or method has not been made. As a matter of fact, hermeneutics has threatened exegesis, that is, methodology, in the sense that so far the preoc-

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¹ John Anthony McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition*, Tradition (SBEC 9), Lewiston - Queenston 1986, p. 100.