

CALL FOR PAPERS 2021

The Contemporary World and Post-Conciliar Orthodoxy RES 1/2021

In January 2020, the Ecumenical Patriarchate recently published a document entitled “For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church”. The “Social Ethos” document can be described as an omnibus of positions on the Church’s stance with regard to today’s socially significant questions. The purpose of this document is to offer a reference on vital issues and challenges in the world today in ways that are consistent with living as Orthodox Christians. It addresses important issues of our contemporary society in categorical form, such as: Ecumenical Relations, Church and State, Dialogues with other Faiths, War, Democracy, Science and Technology, Consumerism, Women, Poverty, Human Rights, Justice, Sexuality and so on.

It is not the first attempt, though, of the Orthodox milieu to express and construct an Orthodox social theology. In 2000, the Moscow Patriarchate composed a document regarding “The Basis of the Social Concept”. The Holy and Great Council of Crete, which convened in 2016 issued a document entirely dedicated to contemporary social issues, entitled “The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today’s World”. The same kind of references are to be found also in the 2016 Council’s “Encyclical”. The theological approach of different social themes resembles some of the documents of the Second Vatican Council (ex. *Gaudium et spes*) or the ones belonging to the post-conciliar popes (ex. *Evangelii Gaudium*) who tried to continue what began in the Catholic Church in 1962. Several other Catholic or Protestant documents have a similar content.

This coming issue of RES aims to explore and reflect on the construction of an Orthodox social theology in the multi-confessional context of a post-conciliar era departing from the “Social Ethos” document published by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and also by comparison with extant documents on social issues from all confessional backgrounds. Is this document consistent with the patristic tradition? Does it bring something new? Is it born out of the encounter of the Orthodox identity with other

Christian confessions or religious identities? Is this document inspired by other documents on social issues? Is its approach acceptable or relevant for all the parts of the Orthodox world? In this sense, we welcome studies on the sources, context, themes, relevance, and ecumenical resemblances regarding the “Social Ethos” document of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as studies on previous attempts of the Orthodox milieu to construct a social theology.

Submission deadline: January 1, 2021

Sacred Spaces in Motion RES 2/2021

Our contemporary world witnesses contrasting approaches to sacred spaces. While in some regions (especially in Western Europe) there is a decrease in the interest for religious buildings as places for worship due to the decline of the number of practicing believers, and they are sometimes reused as public institutions, hotels or restaurants, in other regions one can testify for a revival of an intense attention to religious architecture. This is manifested either through the large-scale construction of national churches (e.g., Church of Saint Sava, Belgrade; People’s Salvation Cathedral, Bucharest), the reconversion of former museums into places of worship (e.g., Chora or Hagia Sophia Museums), or shifts in their religious status (e.g., recent transformation of churches into mosques, as with the former Lutheran Church of Capernaum in Hamburg, Germany or the former church of Santa Maria Valverde in Venice). These contradictory tendencies and dynamics in understanding the role of sacred buildings highlights the exploitation of sacred spaces as areas for the affirmation of religious identity and negotiation of power resorts. Buildings concentrate different values, expectations, and social projections of a religious community, and most times the physical place itself where the building is consecrated bears an importance of its own (e.g., Al-Aqsa Mosque, Dome of the Rock and proposed third Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, Great Mosque of Mecca). The highly controversial call for a third Temple of Solomon exemplifies just how important the exact geography for worshipping God may be. But when different denominations request the same place (e.g., Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary of Jerusalem), or the same building (e.g., the Hagia Sophia) neither immediate nor long-lasting solutions are easily found.

This unique and topical issue of RES aims to bring together papers that deal with (but will be not be limited to) questions such as: How do sacred buildings reflect the interferences of the political with the religious?

What are the legal and theological bases for the (re)conversion of churches into mosques and of mosques into churches? To what extent and what foreseeable consequences building, decommissioning, repurposing, or converting religious spaces represent a form of domination and exclusion? Can one envision sacred spaces as communion places for different confessions or religions? Can historical sacred buildings become ecumenical edifices, in which different confessions and religions could worship under the same roof? We are also looking for contributions that discuss the complex significance that religious edifices bear in the architectural language of sacred spaces, from architects, archaeologists, art historians, historians of religions, theologians, philosophers or political scientists. Contributions are welcome on the confessional, ethical, political and aesthetical importance of historical sacred spaces in Abrahamic religions, such as the Hagia Sophia and historic Asia Minor, those in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the Tigris-Euphrates Basin region and the wider Middle East, as well as from the Balkans.

Submission deadline: May 1, 2021

**Religious Identities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Strategies
for the Construction and Representation of the Religious Self**
RES 3/2021

With the fall of the Roman Empire and the advent of Christianity, new political and religious realities gave an impulse for an interplay of identity constructions. “Christian,” “pagan,” “barbarian” or “Jew” became categories ideologically charged, and the borders between them became rather fluid. With the emergence of asceticism and religious devotion in communities, even other types of identities started to be displayed. “The outsiders” and “the insiders” became categories used in various texts, varying from monastic rules to imperial legislation, although the frontiers in-between were rather blurred. The rise of Islam determined a need for construction of new boundaries, which would stress the unique religious identity over common elements identity.

During the Middle Ages, Eastern Europe came to be known as an interference area between Western and Eastern Christianity, sometimes even the ground of ideological dispute or physical conflict. Varied and at times contrasting religious tendencies led to specific developments in this part of Europe. The literature regarding religious identities and the history of Christianity during the Middle Ages is currently facing a need for new narratives in Western Europe. On the other hand, in Eastern Europe, historians have yet to reach this threshold, since there is still a need of understanding the

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religious changes that took place after the collapse of the Roman Empire up until Luther's Reformation.

To the above considerations, one should add the new scholarly trends of comparing different spaces and chronological frames in analyses of anthropological concepts, using interdisciplinary approaches. Thus, this special issue of *Review of Ecumenical Studies (RES)* is dedicated to gathering materials that focus upon strategies for construction and representation of religious identities, as well as their evolution, change, and interplay, from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

Submission deadline: July 1, 2021