

EDITORIAL

Status quo

In 1984 I went in the army together with my colleagues. It was compulsory for those graduating the high school (and not only for them). Being there, we remembered the hit of 'Status Quo' band – 'You are in the army now' [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObntvRcKMrE>]. But what means Status quo? "Status quo is a Latin phrase meaning the existing state of affairs, particularly with regards to social or political issues. In the sociological sense, it generally applies to maintain or change existing social structure and values." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_quo]

Speaking about the army I remembered the quotation from the Bible: "Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is **Legion**', he replied, 'for we are many' [...] Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region." (Mark 5.9, 17) The actions happened in the region of the Gerasenes (actual Jordan – triple point with Syria and Israel). I visited the place in 2002 when I went to a chemistry conference in Irbid. The organisers made a trip there for all participants. It was astonishing for me. The old citadel is (as described in the Bible) on a cliff, where from one can see the Tiberias' sea. However, there are only ruins. Among other things, it is a hole with walls in the ground – the place of the church where Jesus had the above discussion. I prayed there. When I looked around I saw an Arab woman with two children. I called the children in order to give them a few coins. They haply came, took the money and returned to their mother. But she told them to return me the coins... And they did so... I remembered about this reading about the waves of refugees running now from Syria in Europe and all the problems created by this emigration process... Just see for example the article written by Jana Hubinová – , HYZA vs. immigrants: case study of immediate crisis management handling' [1].

I was in Jordan 12 years later, at Mutah University in Al-Karak, invited by my good friend, Professor Diab Al-Badayneh, to a conference on 'Citizenship, Identity and National Security'. Jordan suffered already at that time due to the emigration effects of the wars from Iraq and Syria... Even now, taking into account the last events, Jordan remains, with great efforts and sacrifices, one of the last stability zones in Middle East.

Mutah University includes a military school. In fact is the oldest military tradition in Jordan – almost 900 years! The Al-Karak (Kerak) Castle was built by the crusaders to control the trade routes from Damascus to Egypt and Mecca. Is an impressive construction with seven floors inside the mountain (it appears in Sir Ridley Scott's movie – *Kingdom of Heaven*). Amazingly, half of the town population from the gates of the castle are still Christians. After the retreat of the

crusaders came the Arabs, which also used the compound on military scopes. After them, the Ottomans, after them the British and now it belongs to the Hashemite *Kingdom of Jordan*. So, almost 900 years of military tradition, and it was a great honour for me to receive, during a large and impressive ceremony, from the part of the Rector of Mutah University the plaque for the co-operation they have with EJST.

As you might know, Romanian language has deep Latin roots. The small communities, on Romania territory, after the Aurelian retreat in 271, were led by “*homines boni et veterani*” (old/veteran good men) [2]. This was quite expected if we take into account that many veterans from the Roman legions received lands as colonists in Dacia and are considered as main factors in the formation of the new Romanian people. In this context, is interesting that apart of the substantive ‘legion’ (in Romanian – *legiune*) appeared a new one, derived from it, but with negative connotations - ‘*lighioana*’ (wild/domestic animal, pest insect, vile man(!)). The experience and wisdom of my people raised a profound question - to paraphrase the title of Dan Brown’s book - angels and/or demons?

I think that an army should be a factor of security and stability, to have a defensive and not an offensive role. But sometimes ‘the best defence is the attack’ and the line between the two is a very thin one...

The same happens with Science. As I wrote into an older editorial [3] Science has the chance to be ‘magic’ improving our lives, but more and more of its applications tend to be for the military zone [<http://scitation.aip.org/content/aip/magazine/physicstoday/news/news-picks/dvncementmdeininvisibleitycloks-a-news-pick-post>]. This is not a critique to any army in the world but is the actual *Status quo*... I think.

On the other hand, Theology is not far of this... Read only the article on the principles of Abu Mansur al-Maturidi by Akimkhanov et al published in this issue... [4]

Should we return to ‘Flower power’ and ‘Give peace a chance’ as John Lennon was singing in 1969? It seems so childish such an attitude... But “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Mathew 18.2) This is an individual option, but a (more) common option would be to “start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22.6) - the peace way. Maybe this would be a little light of hope as the lights of winter holidays are...

What about Science **and** Theology? Would they be able, working together, to solve such a problem? Maybe I am pessimistic but I am inclined to say no...

However, there are persons which devoted their life to this domain. Such a person was Father Professor **Javier Leach** from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. I say he was because, unfortunately, Father Javier died this summer, as other professors and mentors I respect so much.

Father Javier was a Jesuit priest and for nine years one of our Editors. Between 1961 and 1965 he studied Philosophy at the Facultad Pontificia San Francisco de Borja in Barcelona. After this (1965-1970) he studied Mathematics at the School of Mathematics, Universidad de Zaragoza. In 1970 he turned his attention to Theology at the Philosophisch-theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen in Frankfurt am Main (Germany). However, his focus on Science remained vivid and in 1977 he obtained the title of Doctor in Mathematics from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Since 1987, he has been Professor at the Universidad Complutense in the area of Computer Languages and Systems. Between 1999 and 2005, he has been the Coordinator of the Group of European Jesuits in Science and also Director of the LSI Chair of Science, Technology and Religion at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas - since its creation in 2003. A long and impressive activity, which makes him if not a 'Father', at least one of the 'great supporters' of Science & Theology in Europe and around the world.

One of his main books is 'Mathematics and Religion: Our Languages of Sign and Symbol' [5]. Reading about it I remembered about the 'Holy Grail' of the physicists – the Theory of Everything – which has many philosophical implications. Would Science & Theology be able to give at least an intuitive solving to this problem? I don't know, but if positive the work of Father Javier is a brick on this construction.

I firstly met him in 2004, at the ESSSAT conference in Barcelona. I perceived him as a sober but very friendly person. During the nine long years since he became a member of our Editorial Board, Father Javier got deeply involved in the life of the journal performing many reviews of the received articles, promoting EJST among his fellows and also to libraries, and providing good advices and support in difficult situations.

As you have maybe noticed, this editorial has many uncertainties but as I know Javier I'm pretty sure that he will always keep an eye on his work and co-workers from wherever he is.

Also speaking about Science & Theology, more specific about restoration and conservation of religious artefacts, I remind you that this year we have organised the eighth edition of ESRARC at University of Tuscia in Viterbo (Italy). The symposium was again a success, mostly due to the efforts of Dr. Claudia Pelosi and her co-workers – Georgia Agresti, Luca Lanteri and Cetty Parisi - a hard working team during a hard period. The result - more than fifty participants from eight countries presented works on three main themes: Socio-spiritual values of the religious art; Diagnostics, conservation and restoration of religious cultural heritage; and Sacral sights in the light of tourist trade marketing.

I also have to mention the presence at the opening ceremony of Monsignor Lino Fumagalli, the Bishop of Viterbo, who also graciously hosted the welcome dinner at Palazzo dei Papi. Monsignor Fumagalli is a really wonderful person. When he arrived to give greetings at the opening of the symposium, in the first row of the Rectorate Great Hall were seating three young Orthodox priests – the representatives of Ovidius University from Constanta (the

place of the next ESRARC). He went directly to them and asked them: “How are you brothers?”... Very impressive, at least for me... and also for them.

A great support for ESRARC 8 was granted by the Director of Vatican Museums Laboratory, Professor Ulderico Santamaria. Despite his high position he showed a remarkable opening for discussions with many participants from the symposium and for possible future co-operations. I hope that Professor Santamaria and/or one of his co-workers will join someday our Editorial Board.

In other words this is the *Status quo* of EJST now and I take, as usual, the opportunity of this editorial in order to wish all our friends (supporters, readers, authors, reviewers, editors) - ***Happy winter holidays and a 2017 as you wish!***

Dr. Iulian Rusu

References

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