



European Journal of Science and Theology

European Journal of Science and Theology

Q1 Religious Studies
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SJR 2021 0.28

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THE PANEL PAINTING OF SAINT MARK BY THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ARTIST ‘THE BALLETTA’ - A STUDY FOR THE RESTORATION

The support consists of a single cuspidate table, 112.0 cm high and 51.0 cm wide at the base. The thickness varies from the base (2.1 cm) to the upper part (3.5 cm). A preliminary naked eyes observation of wood rear surface allowed for recognise the wood defects due to original characteristics of the tree such as knots, grain deviation, reaction wood (Figure 2).

Large knots deriving from the branches were found located in the extreme parts of the support (Figure 2a and 2e). Deformations, cracks and fissures have occurred over time. On the back, the natural colour of the wood had undergone superficial variations, due to natural aging [18], but also discolorations presumably due to conservation in environments with high localized humidity (Figure 2b). The surface was rudimentary finished, and traces of the workmanship remained. In the central area, truncated fibres were detected (Figure 2c), indicating the presence of reaction wood, in this specific case, tension



Figure 2. Rear of the wooden support. Details of the observed defects: (a) and (e) - knots, (b) discoloration, (c) truncated fibres, (d) damage caused by entomatic galleries.

wood, typical of wood belonging from a dicotyledonous species. The plank was tangentially cut and was used vertically. On the rear, holes for the emergence of xylophagous insects, probably anobids, scattered over the entire surface, were easily noted, but the attack does

not appear to be active. In the central part the larval galleries are particularly concentrated and have weakened the wood (Figure 2d).

[...more at](#)

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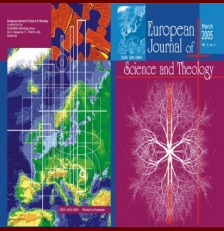
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Volume 20, no 2

APRIL 2024



EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

Newsletter 20.2

THE ARCANES CELESTIAL PRECEPTS THAT EXPOSE THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM AMID THE STELLAR TABLEAU OF JESUS' NATIVITY

Abstract: The identity of the star of Bethlehem reported in Matthew's Gospel remains one of Christianity's greatest mysteries. Equally inexplicable are the outright contradictions that appear in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth. Matthew 2.1-12 describes how a star had signalled the birth of the Christ-child, then led astrologers from the east to the child's house in Bethlehem, where they offer their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Luke 2.1-20 makes no mention of a star and instead describes a pastoral scene in which Jesus' mother, the pregnant virgin, Mary, utilizes a manger as a make-shift crib. Afterward, an "angel of the Lord" informed shepherds that the "swaddled child lying in a manger" would be the "sign" of the Christ-infant's birth. This article presents two esoteric forms of history verification accessible to the evangelists in the late first century A.D. From Hellenism came katasterismos, the idea that the constellations comprised tableaux of monumental, historic events. From Mesopotamia came lumāši - or 'constellation' -writing, the conviction that polysemy encrypted in the constellations' cuneiform titles imparted inviolable truth. When used as a cipher, these precepts expose a direct correlate to the main characters and props in Jesus discordant Nativity narratives, impart a word-to-word correlation with the Luke 2.12 claim that the "swaddled infant lying in a manger" would be the "sign" of the Christ-child, and simultaneously imply the Christmas star's celestial identity while providing an exact correlation with the words used to describe the star's scientifically implausible motion in Matthew 2.9.

THE FALL AND EVOLUTION IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY FROM MYTH TO SYMBOL

Abstract: When Christian theology is reconciled with scientific data on the origin of man, the following questions arise: if man appeared about 100 thousand years ago, can he be responsible for death and suffering of previously living beings in the struggle for the existence? If death, suffering and predation have already been, what is fundamentally new added by the fall of man? We discuss several theological approaches to these questions: Teilhard de Chardin's attempt to eliminate them by a complete rejection of the biblical myth; answers of modern theologians offering non-traditional interpretations of the biblical myth; the answer of Tillich, who understands the Fall as a symbol of the universal human situation. If one distracts from the chronology of these answers, then the logic of the development of theological thought can be described as a transition from a mythological understanding of the Fall to a symbolic one.

THE RELIGIOUS AND MENTAL HEALTH DETERMINANTS OF THE COVID-19'S FEAR IN THE CEE COUNTRIES

Abstract: The research analyses the relationship between fear and religiosity, particularly focusing on religious habits and intrinsic religiosity in the context of the covid-19 pandemic. A total number of 2212 questionnaires have been collected in Romania, Poland, Slovenia and Hungary in 2021 on the non-vaccinated population. The questionnaire covers topics such as vaccination, religiosity and socio-demographics, and includes the DASS 21 psychological scale, which measures depression, anxiety and stress symptoms. Furthermore, the questionnaire incorporated a specific question regarding the fear of SARS-CoV-2 virus. The findings show that the intrinsic religiosity, age, stress, anxiety and exposure to the news from the traditional media or to the information coming from professional sources seem to increase the degree of fear during the pandemic context. The study yields significant implications for understanding the complex interplay of factors shaping the vaccination attitudes of this group, as well as how they obtain information. This may contribute to developing more effective communication channels for people with passive strategies for coping with fear and anxiety. The need to seek information in times of uncertainty and attitudes that indicate a higher level of intimate religiosity can be leveraged to build more effective coping strategies for unexpected external events or situations that cause fear and anxiety. This is important in light of the ongoing development of Central and Eastern European countries and their specific social and economic background.

REFLECTIONS ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN THE THOUGHT OF METROPOLITAN ANTHONY BLOOM

Abstract: Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, the founder and first head of the Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh in Britain. He had a talent for spiritual reflection and contemplation, which inspired faith and love for God in countless hearts, including those of people of other faiths. At the age of fourteen, he had a personal mystical encounter with Christ that transformed his consciousness and set him on an unusual path as the future head of the Orthodox Church in England. Metropolitan Anthony's popularity was due to the psychological depth of his views, and he stood out among 20th century Orthodox hierarchs due to his pastoral style, evangelism and outsiderism against prevailing trends in contemporary Orthodox Church life. This article explores Metropolitan Anthony's views on self-knowledge, which is emphasized in Orthodox theology as necessary for achieving a perfect personality.

IS ANYONE THERE? AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION OF THE SELF

Abstract: Belief in a personal afterlife is a central tenet of Christianity as well as other religions; but how do such convictions fare under the scrutiny of philosophical analysis and scientific inquiry? Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this study explores current thinking about the nature of consciousness and what, if anything, constitutes the self. It examines the subjective quality of mental activity, together with other phenomena not readily accommodated within a physicalist belief-system, along with seminal early Christian expositions of afterlife, before concluding that personal consciousness and a sense of the self are nei-



ther accidental nor illusory, but genuine phenomena that supervene the electro-biochemical processes of the brain and could, in principle, be animated by other substrates - findings that resonate with Christian insights relating to afterlife as resurrection, as re-embodied, form-full, trans-physical being.

MAIMONIDES' ATTITUDE TO THE TALMUDIC TERM 'EIKA DE-AMREI' AS REFLECTED IN HIS HALAKHIC RULINGS ASSOCIATED WITH TRACTATE ERUVIN OF THE TALMUD BAVLI

Abstract: The article relates to Maimonides' attitude to the Aramaic term 'eika de-amrei' (= ED, i.e. there are others who say) when attempting to reach a halakhic ruling associated with the Talmud. It examines the impact of this term on Maimonides as reflected in his halakhic rulings emanating from Tractate Eruvin of the Talmud Bavli. The purpose is to explore whether Maimonides ruled consistently in accordance with the first statement or with the second statement preceded by the term ED, or whether his ruling was inconsistent in this regard. An endeavour is made to follow Maimonides' approach regarding the term ED when ruling, as evident from sugyot in Tractate Eruvin. Naturally, his approach in this tractate is also valid for sugyot in other tractates of the Talmud Bavli.

'LEVELS OF EXISTENCE' IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE MORAL DIGNITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Abstract: Ethical concerns within applied ethics pertain to the behaviour of individuals, social groups and organizations in relation to the natural environment. Given the subjective nature of ethical behaviour in applied ethics rooted in the notion of upholding individual rights, we are confronting with the fundamental question of how to extend ethical consideration to encompass human beings and other sentient beings, which aims to establish a moral imperative for humans to honour the rights of these entities. The current study delves into the perspective of philosophers of transcendent wisdom ('al-Hikmat al-Muṭa'ālīya') who reject the inherent divisions among existents. Instead, they embrace the principles of principality and unity of existence by considering all creatures as tangible reflections and facets of God's own existence. Consequently, this worldview posits a shared yet distinctive sanctity and value across the spectrum of existence. Embracing such interconnectedness among all entities inherently assigns value to each individual entity. In this light, humans bear not only a legal responsibility but also a moral duty to uphold the rights of every creature.

THE IMAGE OF THE PATRIARCH KIRILL IN THE POLISH MEDIA IN THE FIRST MONTH OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Abstract: During the first month of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (from 24.02.2022 to 24.03.2022), 2192 publications referring to Patriarch Kirill were registered in the Polish media. The authors of this article aimed to answer the following research questions: How did the media in Poland portray Patriarch Kirill's statements, how did they judge them? Was the media portrayal of the patriarch's actions varied, or was it unequivocally critical? Were the publications on Kirill purely of a news nature, duplicating agency services, or were they in-depth and exploring a broader aspect of the patriarch's behaviour? What was the distribution of publications on Kirill over time and what was the reason for the fluctuation in the number of publications? It is worth noting as a surprise the almost complete lack of worldview polarization towards the topic of Kirill. Topics related to religion, the throne-altar alliance, the right-wing narrative or homophobia, would otherwise likely be used for the politically-charged attacks characteristic of the polarized Polish media. Monochromaticity, however, should not be confused with a shallowing of the message. Kirill's position is portrayed as properly prepared, coherent and multi-faceted. It is a logical continuation of previous teaching, policies and actions both internally and externally. The article touches upon issues related to scientific disciplines such as communication and media studies and religion and culture studies.

THE PANEL PAINTING OF SAINT MARK BY THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ARTIST 'THE BALLETTA' - A STUDY FOR THE RESTORATION

Abstract: This paper presents a study of the panel painting representing Saint Mark exhibited in the Diocesan Museum of Colle del Duomo in Viterbo. The panel painting has never been investigated before this study; therefore, we would like to obtain information about the painting technique and the wood support in the view of a possible restoration that is desirable due to the poor state of preservation of the artwork. The panel painting was attributed by art historians to the Italian Renaissance artist Francesco D'Antonio Zacchi, well-known as 'The Balletta', operating in Central Italy during the 15th century. The painting representing Saint Mark may be considered a late work of the artist probably realized before 1476, supposed year of 'The Balletta' death. The artwork was investigated by different analytical techniques. The wood support was identified as poplar; the panel painting's materials were analysed by ultraviolet fluorescence photography (UVF) and Hypercolorimetric multispectral imaging (HMI), this last covering a spectral range from about 300 to 1000 nm. The UVF technique allowed to map the conservation status of the panel painting highlighting grouting and retouching; the HMI gave information about pigments such as cinnabar/vermilion, azurite, iron-based pigments and lead white, and made it possible to map the distribution of the painting materials through the algorithms of the processing software included into the HMI system.