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THE SEPHIROTIC TREE INTEGRATED INTO LANDSCAPE DIVINE HARMONY REFLECTED IN A BAROQUE GROUP OF CHURCHES

The Sefirotic Tree, also known as the Tree of Life, stands as a foundational visual symbol in Jewish mysticism (Figure 2) [3, p. 116]. This intricate diagram represents the hierarchy and interrelations of the ten sefirot, spiritual principles or spheres within Creation. Positioned at the top of the tree, the Sefira Keter, or Crown, signifies the connection to the highest aspect of absolute being, while the subsequent sefirot descend, forming a gradual process of emanation and structuring of reality. Lurianic Kabbalah, named after Isaac Luria (1534-1572), introduced significant innovations to the conception of the Sefirotic Tree. Luria's teachings emphasized the breakdown of the originally harmonious structure of the sefirot in the process of Tzimtzum (and Shvirat ha-Kelim - the breaking of the vessels) [3, p. 94]. This rationalized the concept of evil and chaos in Kabbalistic doctrine, explaining the existence of non-physical evil in the world. Lurianic Kabbalah

sparked further interest in exploring and understanding the interactions between the divine and the material world, shaping the ongoing development of Kabbalistic practice. Kabbalistic ideas concerning the doctrine of the sefirot began permeating Philosophy, religious thought and art. Mystics, philosophers and scholars sought to integrate Kabbalistic symbolism with traditional teachings and other intellectual currents. Various interpretations of the Sefirotic Tree emerged, becoming part of profound spiritual exploration and reflection on the nature of reality, divinity and human existence. Besides symbols reflected in built interiors they were used also used in landscapes projects, as we can see in Figure 1. Numerical symbolism and sacred geometry were often employed in the designs of sacred structures. They contributed to perceiving space as harmonious, spiritual and symbolically rich. Geometric

shapes and their combinations were used to create

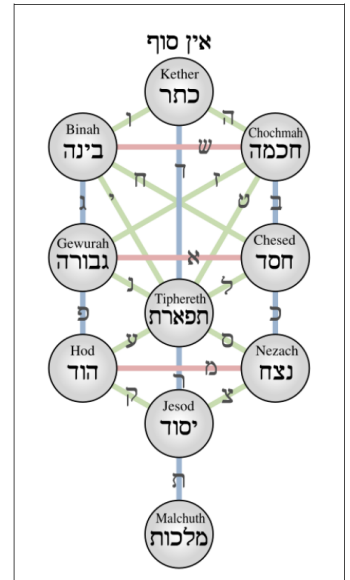


Figure 2. One of the contemporary methods of depicting the Sefirotic Tree, comprising 10 sefirot and 22 paths. Source: Anon Moos, Kabbalistic Tree of Life, World History Encyclopedia, <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/9278/kabbalistic-tree-of-life/>.

balance and proportions with aesthetic and symbolic significance.

[...more at](#)

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GOD, NATURE AND EVOLUTIONARY EVIL REVISITING THE DUAL CAUSALITY APPROACH

Abstract: In the ongoing discussion on the model of dual causality proposed by Thomas Aquinas, two elements are usually overlooked: the understanding of the operation of Nature itself and the eschatological orientation of God's action. This article proposes to relate this discussion of the first and secondary causes to the question of original justice, that is, the existence of the world before original sin. After describing the theological challenges associated with the image of a merciful God in the context of natural selection, we will discuss the usefulness of this dual causality model in perspective of theories of modern Biology.

THE ATTIRE OF THE JEWISH DOCTOR IN MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPE IDENTITY, STATUS AND RELIGION

Abstract: Clothing expresses cultural world, beliefs, and plays a role in gender, social and identity. The current study focuses on the attire of Jewish physicians in Europe in the Middle Ages and Modern Era. The clothes of Jewish physicians reflected the tension inherent in their status. They were supposed to reflect on one hand their dignified status and affiliation with an elite professional group, and on the other their belonging to an inferior group. In Christian Europe with its practice of discrimination against Jews, physicians normally had to bear a mark of ignominy on their clothes similar to all other Jews. Some historical sources attest to physicians who were exempt from wearing the pointed Jews' hat or a badge. However, these were rare individual cases of physicians who were permitted to treat non-Jews and operated with much success among general society or physicians who treated rulers and key figures and were granted special dispensations. Some halakhic authorities from the fifteenth century until recent generations discuss the question of whether Jewish physicians are permitted to dress as their non-Jewish colleagues or whether this transgresses the prohibition against following non-Jewish laws. Over time, Maharik's fundamental permit became a legal precedent utilized by various halakhic decisors in Jewish communities in Italy, Poland, and Germany. Several modern halakhic decisors claimed that there is no prohibition against wearing the modern doctor's coat although it was designed in the general secular world, as it is used only for professional purposes.

THE LINKAGE BETWEEN SHIPPING, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS A MULTICULTURAL DEBATE IN CONSTANTA MARITIME UNIVERSITY

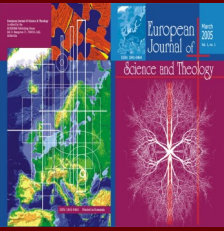
Abstract: Internalization is a process affecting almost all the aspects of our modern life, including higher education. Integration of international students is quite challenging for host universities and it requires institutional strategies enabling academic well-being and progress on campus. Maritime transport affects in a major way the global economy because it is related with different industries. Its fast development implies highly skilled seafarers, with technical and inter-cultural communication skills, since ships are operated by multicultural crews. For the maritime sector, multiculturalism is a situation firstly met in higher education institutions, and then on-board the ships. The goal of this article is to explore how an inexperienced welcoming activity can contribute to the integration of international students in Constanta Maritime University. The activity was conducted as a debate on shipping - climate change - religious beliefs linkage and has gone at the beginning of the current academic year. Participants were recruited from junior international students and senior Romanian students. A total of 42 students agreed to take part in the debate and to form three groups: pro team (Christians and Muslims), con team (seculars) and audience (Christians, Muslims, Hindu and seculars). Both teams showed strong pro-environmental values, expressed by different approaches: believers focused on stewardship, while seculars on empirical evidence. The conclusion of the debate, stating that bridging shipping, climate change and faith is appropriate and fruitful and that this theme improved communication between students with different values, was approved by 93% of participants.

HARMONIZING SCIENCE AND STATECRAFT A CONFUCIAN-MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ON POLITICAL GOVERNANCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Abstract: This paper explores the innovative synthesis of Confucian and Marxist ideologies within Vietnamese governance, offering a unique lens through which to view ethical governance and technological advancement. By examining the historical integration of these ideologies, their influence on modern policy-making, and their role in addressing contemporary global challenges, the study illuminates the potential of this fusion to foster equitable and sustainable societal development. Through a detailed analysis of Vietnamese governance models, case studies, and the impact on various sectors such as social welfare, education, and public administration, the research underscores the significance of harmonizing traditional values with modern socio-political ideals. The paper is concluded by reflecting on the future prospects of the Confucian-Marxist synthesis in Vietnam, highlighting its relevance for global governance and the digital era.

THEOLOGY OF MIRACLES IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE REFLECTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC CARDINAL WALTER KASPER

Abstract: Catholicism today is different from what we might have been dealing with, say, half a century ago. Such a difference was the result of complex processes of renewal and adaptation of Catholicism to the new realities of the current era. Various changes in their specificity and depth did not bypass the ideational element of this creed, including the 'question of miracles'. Declaring its constancy and commitment to tradition, Catholic theology has, by far, undergone important changes in recent times. Trying to show the practical social significance of the Catholic faith, its functionaries, representing it, significantly expand the range of issues that are amenable to theological understanding and exposition. Moreover, at the same time, they often resort to significant transformations of previous religious views and beliefs. Such processes and



their theological consequences are the focus of scientific interest of the author of this article. The article analyses the peculiarities of the interpretation of miracles by Catholic Cardinal Walter Kasper, reveals the organic connection between the categories of 'faith' and 'miracle' in Catholic theology, and shows the place and role of miracles in the theological constructions of Catholicism. Also analysed are elements of the traditional teaching of Catholicism about miracles, as well as current attempts to modernize this teaching; the author is also focused on highlighting the specifics of the process of integrating the achievements of modern natural science into the doctrine of miracles.

THE ORTHODOX IDENTIFICATION IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY

Abstract: This study explores the impact of the digital era on Orthodox religious identity. It focuses on how online environments, particularly Orthodox-centred websites, influence the self-perception and identification of Orthodox believers compared to secular individuals. The study utilizes qualitative research methods, including in-depth analysis of social networks and Orthodox websites. It aims to understand how digital environments shape religious identities, focusing on both the reinforcing and distorting effects of online content. On one hand, the internet serves as a tool for strengthening religious identity among Orthodox believers, providing a space for community, learning and expression. On the other hand, it presents significant challenges. The prevalence of misinformation and the transformation of traditional religious values in the digital sphere lead to a more fluid and potentially distorted understanding of religious identity. This dual effect creates a paradox where the digital world is both a facilitator and a disruptor of religious identity. The study concludes by emphasizing the nuanced role of digitalization in shaping Orthodox identity. It points out that while digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for religious engagement and community building, they also pose risks that can lead to a dilution or misinterpretation of traditional religious values. The research underscores the need for a critical understanding of how digitalization intersects with religious life, highlighting the importance of navigating these digital spaces thoughtfully to maintain the integrity of Orthodox religious identity in the modern world.

HUMAN BODY AND MEDICINE IN THE DIGITAL AGE ETHICAL ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

Abstract: Given the biological nature of human and social development in an increasingly high technology environment related to the digital age that tends to shape and adapt its components to some global conceptual necessities, we considered useful to analyse the process of augmentation of the individual in the medical field with its cyborgization. Regarding the process of simulation and artificial functioning of the body, we shall analyse mostly the cyborg as prosthetic body or implanted with various technological devices, sensory, motor or cognitive, without neglecting the cyborg as a concept. The primary purpose of this theoretical study is to subject to a critical reflection the three types of consequences of the process of simulation and artificial functioning of the body, namely: sociocultural, ethical and biological.

NEUROPSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS AND EMERGENT SUBSTANCE DUALISM

Abstract: Despite the numerous reasons of substance dualists on the immaterial existence of the mind, which according to them is the true self and soul, various contradictory theories have emerged about it by observing the effects of neurological disorders on mental states and personality traits. These theories can be classified into three kinds: those that deny the survival of the immaterial existence of the self/mind/soul, those that deny its immaterial substantiality, and those that consider its existence as a delusion. Meanwhile, substance dualists often suggest the theory of instrumentalism, which is prone to errors. However, a more accurate solution has been suggested that acknowledges emergent substance dualism and considers the hierarchical dependence of the emergent soul on the body. In proportion to the development and complexity of the body and the neural complex system, various levels of the soul (from the vegetative level to existence in itself for itself the autonomous human rational soul) and proportionate mental properties emerge. At all levels, the body has bottom-top causality for the soul, and its function or malfunction. The dependence of the soul at lower levels on the body is essential (intrinsic), and bodily injuries can destroy this level of the soul essentially; the dependence of 'in itself and for itself existence' of the rational soul (autonomous level) upon the body is accidental. Because of these intrinsic and accidental emergentist co-dependences of the body and soul/mind substance, various neural injuries can cause mental disorders to emerge as disturbing properties for the soul/mind substance. Such injuries can also submerge some (intact) mental emergent properties. So, the simple, in-itself-for-itself, autonomous, or separable existence of the soul/ mind-substance (after the destruction of the body) is intact from the accidental disturbing emergent properties of the body and intrinsically is hostage to what it has earned voluntarily and consciously.

ART AS A MEETING POINT OF THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED

Abstract: Currently, art and religion, in contrast to Science, are conceptualised as imaginative forms of comprehension of being. Inclination towards aesthetic experience is perceived as an innate property that ensures a person's spiritual existence. There are two views of the definition of art. In accordance with the first one, art means an artistic way of satisfying the individual's needs, his formation and development, corresponding to cultural anthropology and humanism canons. The second view of art is based on religious and spiritual values and meaning. Despite the dual understanding of art: secular, humanistic and spiritual-religious, they are not adverse, since in the first case art expresses the area of a person's initial interests, and in the second -the ultimate interest that determines our existence or non-existence. At the same time, the Divine Spirit can also manifest itself through objects of art that are not related to a religious theme. The pur-

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pose of the article is to present Christian art in the context of modern culture.

THE SEPHIROTIC TREE INTEGRATED INTO LANDSCAPE DIVINE HARMONY REFLECTED IN A BAROQUE GROUP OF CHURCHES

Abstract: This text delves into the fascinating theme of the influence of Kabbalah on architecture and art, specifically focusing on the Broumov group of churches. The analysis suggests that Kabbalah could have played a significant role in shaping the architectural elements, spatial arrangement, and symbolism of these sacred structures. Kabbalistic symbols, such as the Sephirothic Tree of Life or the symbolism of the number 10, may appear as part of the decoration, emphasizing the connection between heavenly and earthly spheres. Kabbalah provides an architectural perspective that utilizes mystical teachings in designing harmonious proportions and spatial arrangements for buildings and urban complexes, reflecting teachings on harmony and balance. Symbolic geometry, based on Kabbalistic principles, can be presented either explicitly or subtly for those with knowledge and understanding of these concepts. Lastly, the concept of the monastic landscape is transformed into a harmonious habitat connecting social, spiritual and economic aspects of life. The Benedictine order aimed to create a community that reflected the needs of both the spirit and the landscape, leading to the establishment of a more integrated and harmonious environment. The Broumov group of churches not only presents architectural masterpieces of the Baroque period but also signifies the profound spiritual significance of the connection between the human and the transcendent. This text provides a pilot study on how architecture can serve as a means of connecting people with the spiritual dimension and the landscape, demonstrating how physical matter can carry an invisible yet strongly felt significance. It serves as an example of how historical cultural heritage can continue to inspire and enrich our understanding of the world, becoming the subject of further intensive research.