

The editors of this volume placed a relevant appendix, which takes into account the recommendations made by the Conference of Orthodox Bishops of Germany, together with the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), to the members of the two Churches, in the context of this paper and placed under the generic: “So as not to grieve...” In this Document there are several guidelines, which the leaders of the two Churches have made for the Church ministers and for their faithful... Some of these should be mentioned: accompanying the sick to death and their relatives, prayer for the dying patient, forms of burial, death in exceptional situations, etc.

All these theological contributions have highlighted the fundamental coordinates of understanding life from a Christian point of view, in order to later capture the way in which death is understood on the horizon of the gift of life. The book is worth reading, because it brings many explanations for contemporary man, faced with easier or heavier suffering, and, finally, with the reality of death.

The merit of this paper is also that it highlighted that in addition to inter-Christian theological dialogue, the cooperation in practical terms is of great practical importance, ie in terms of serving one’s fellow man, according to the Model of Jesus Christ, Who came in the world, to serve and save the world.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan TULCAN

**Andreas ANDREOPOULOS and Demetruos HARPER (eds.),
Christos Yannaras, Philosophy, Theology, Culture,
Routledge Publisher, England, 2020, 222 pp.**

The volume *Christos Yannaras, Philosophy, Theology, Culture*, edited by Andreas Andreopoulos and Demetruos Harper represents a major contribution to the knowledge of the thought and work of Christos Yannaras, one of the most significant orthodox theologians of the contemporary world. This work is a natural concretization of the growing interest in the renewal of theological thinking proposed by Yannaras, a renewal that proposes both the assertion of a cultural identity characteristic of Eastern theology and the openness to initiate a dialogue with modern Western

thinking, using terms and exploring directions that transcend the historical difference between the East and the West, based on the enlightenment brought by the historical and eternal revelation of Jesus Christ.

Although printed a few years after the first conference dedicated exclusively to the deepening of the thinking and work of Christos Yannaras – the conference organized by the University of Winchester and the Forum of Orthodox Theological Research and held at St. Edmund Hall College, Oxford, September 2-5, 2013 – the present paper is an anthology that includes both the works of British theologians and of researchers present at the conference, as well as studies of other theologians from different countries, interested in deepening this direction of research.

The content of the book is structured in three major sections. The content of each section is centered upon one of the major directions pursued and identified by Yannaras: philosophy, theology, and culture. Considering the inevitable interference between these three fundamental areas, most of the papers presented are to an extent a synthesis, referring directly or tangentially to various defining aspects of the three areas. The impossibility of aligning according to a certain approach reflects the authors' belief that it is difficult to frame Yannaras in an exclusive way as a philosopher, theologian or man of culture, his holistic thinking often going beyond the rigors and structures of modern scientific thinking.

The first part of the paper is dedicated to philosophy. In this section, the authors of the studies place Yannaras' views in dialogue with modern philosophers and various philosophical theories. In the first study - *The apophatic in modern Orthodox theology - and modern philosophy* - Andrew Louth uses a critical and comparative approach highlighting the metaphysical and epistemological content of the apophatic theology promoted by Yannaras, aspects that are less visible in the theology built by the previous generations. Louth speaks of Yannaras's apophatism both in the broad context of Orthodox theology and within the limits of the theology promoted by Lossky, Florensky, or Bulgakov, while emphasizing the conceptual connection with modern Western epistemology.

Natalie Depraz generally opts for a similar approach. In her study - *Apophaticism and Phenomenology: Christos Yannaras in the Light of Jean-Luc Marion* - using an ontological approach, she shows that although Yannaras and Marion start from different points of view, there are congruent ideas as well, useful in understanding apophatism.

The next two studies focus on the concepts of person and nature, as defined according to Yannaras' theological thinking. Dionysios Skliris starts from an analysis of the patristic roots of these concepts, referring in particular to the teaching of Maximus the Confessor. Pui Him continues this line by questioning the ontology of the person in the context of the neopatristic synthesis, having as reference the thinking developed by Georges Florovsky.

Demetrios Harper, starting from the concept of morality in Yannaras's thinking, uses a critical approach to *The Freedom of Morality*, published in 1970 in Greek and first translated into English in 1984. Harper's critical approach seeks to strike a balance between the Greek patristic and modern ethics, highlighting the impact of Yannaras's thinking on modern Western ethics taught by Alasdair MacIntyre or Bernard Williams.

The second section of the volume is dedicated to theology. Neil Messer, in his study *Christos Yannaras's The Freedom of Morality and Western Christian Ethics*, centres upon a broader view of the moral theology developed by Yannaras and encourages the dialogue between the East and the West, focusing on the ethos of liturgical art and the importance of the ecclesial context in promoting Christian ethics.

Daniel Lemeni analyzes the distinction between the two dimensions that define Christianity: the institution and the Eucharistic community. Establishing a connection between the concept of "the ecclesial event" and the ontology of the person encountered at Yannaras, Lemeni emphasizes the importance of the distinction between institution and Eucharistic community, for contemporary Christianity.

The final part of this section is reserved for studies signed by Sotiris Mitralaxis and Evaggelos Bartzis. Both authors address areas that pose difficult theological challenges when addressed exclusively in their historical dimension. Mitralaxis focuses on the concept of "political theology", while Bartzis talks about nationalism and missiology. Treating them in a broader context and approaching them in the key of the prophetic element of theology, lead to an understanding of their relevance to the life of the Church today.

The last part of the volume is placed under the generic title: *Culture*. Evaggelia Grigoropoulos, a good connoisseur of Yannaras' theology due to the in-depth and concretized studies in the doctoral work dedicated to Yannaras' work, starts from the distinction between the Church Institution

and the Eucharistic Community and evokes the struggle he waged against a theological and ecclesial institution characterized exclusively by rationalism and institutionalism.

Kirillos Katerelos attended the Oxford Conference with a study entitled *Orthodoxy and West in Modern Greece*, a critical evaluation of Yannaras' position on the opposition between the Eastern and the Western theological thinking since the fourteenth century. Katerelos emphasizes the effects of Western influence that penetrated during the founding of the modern Greek state in the nineteenth century, leading to the westernization of theology and the emergence of certain slippages in the ecclesiastical context.

Apparently continuing the direction drawn by Katerelos, Andreas Andreopoulos addresses in his study the issue of contemporary Greek identity. According to Andreopoulos, Yannaras advocates the definition of an identity not for the opposition but for a meaningful participation in the cultural dialogue of the globalized world.

The volume ends with the study elaborated by Sotiris Gounelas. Starting from the way Yannaras evaluates contemporary culture, Gounelas' work is a manifesto that denounces the alienation of culture by uprooting spiritual roots and shaping a dehumanized and distorted civilization due to the renunciation of Christianity as a way of being.

The merit of elaborating a work that encompasses a wide range of studies on the thinking and work of Christos Yannaras is largely due to the two main editors: Andreas Andreopoulos and Demetrios Harper.

Andreas Andreopoulos is Reader in Orthodox Theology at the University of Winchester, UK, and an Orthodox priest. He has studied, worked, and taught in Greece, the USA, Canada and the UK. He has published several books and articles on Orthodox theology, iconography, and Christian symbolism.

Demetrios Harper is currently a post-doctoral researcher at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, a Visiting Research Fellow at University of Winchester, UK, and an Orthodox priest. His research interests are varied but focus especially on philosophical theology, ethics, and patristics. He has authored several articles and book chapters on ethical and metaethical topics in philosophy and theology.

Regarding the purpose of launching such a paper, Andreas Andreopoulos, one of the editors of the volume summarizes as follows:

“This volume is offered in order to facilitate the dialogue between the thought of Yannaras, which is expressed locally yet is relevant globally, and Western Christian thinkers. This is precisely the role that secondary literature tries to fulfil, analysing connections, facilitating discussions, and ultimately identifying areas that need to be developed further. In this case, the hope is to bring the distinct voice of Greek theology and the challenges it poses to the forefront of modern Christian theology”.

Marius Dumitru HANGANU, Ph.D.

Lois FARAG, *Athanasius of Alexandria. An Introduction to his Writings and Theology*, Cascade Companion, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020, 188 pp.

Lois Farag is a member of the North American Patristics Society, American Academy of Religion, Society of Biblical Literature, The Models of Piety in Late Antiquity Research Group. Since 2005 she is assistant professor of Early Church History at Luther Seminary. Previously she served as adjunct faculty at Ecumenical Institute of Theology, St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Baltimore, Md., Trinity College, Washington, D.C., and full time faculty at Loyola University Maryland, Baltimore, Md.

The work of the theologian Lois Farag on the work and theology of St. Athanasius, is composed of 188 pages, has 444 footnotes, and the bibliography of the book is small in quantity, being restricted only to the work of St. Athanasius and the most important works published in English about his theological contribution. From this point of view I can note a narrow approach of the author, not considering the significant contribution of Russian, Greek and Romanian theology, regarding the theology of St. Athanasius of Alexandria. However, given that the purpose of the paper is to acquaint the reader with the work of St. Athanasius and the historical context of his theology, this omission is justified.

The paper is structured in six chapters, at the end of which are placed two appendices. Also at the end of each chapter is attached a list of *Suggested Readings*, which will offer those who want a systematic deepening of the theology of St. Athanasius, directions to follow.