

Introductory Note

1923-2023: Centenary of the Journal *Theologia*

With this issue, the first of the 94th volume of the scientific journal *Theologia*, we enter hopefully the second century of the journal's life, as this year marks 100 years of continuous publication since its founding in 1923 by the late Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Chrysostomos Papadopoulos. That publication fulfilled “*the long-standing innermost desire of His Beatitude the Metropolitan, who, [...] as soon as he was elected president [of the Holy Synod] of the Church of Greece, considered the publication of ‘Theologia’ as a scientific theological journal to be one of his primary concerns, in order to affirm through it his acknowledged love for Theological Science [...]. Theologia appears “as a dove boldly released from the Ark of the Church after the flood”*”, as its first Director, the late Grigorios Papamichael, characteristically notes in the Introductory Note of the first issue.

This anniversary is especially honoured by the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece with various events. John Karmiris' study on the subject of «Ὁ Λούθηρος καὶ ὁ Μελάγχθων περὶ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας», which had been published in vol. 31, issues 1, 2 & 3 (1963, pp. 7-25, 196-213 and 359-389 respectively), has already been republished as an Appendix to the journal *Theologia* with the addition of a rendering of the text in Modern Greek. J. Daniélou's *The Origins of Latin Christianity* has been translated into Modern Greek and is currently in print. His other work, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, is also being translated. The events will culminate in the organization by the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece of an International Theological Conference entitled: “Orthodox Theology *in via* in the ‘Dematerialized Reality’ of Late Modernity”. The Conference will take place from 11 to 15 October 2023 in Athens in the presence of the most reverend members of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece. The Conference is expected to be graced by the presence of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our joy that remarkable guests from all over the world gladly responded to the invitation to participate with their papers and many scientists and researchers expressed interest and submitted their proposals for participation in the Conference following an Open Call for Papers. In the end, the proposals showed that this is a matter of concern.

The Conference is open to all those who are interested in attending its proceedings, but we kindly ask them to register by phone (2111824316), or at the e-mail address synedrio2023@ecclesia.gr, or to fill in the Preregistration Form on the website of the Church of Greece (https://www.ecclesia.gr/theologia100/theologia100_form.asp), as the capacity of the amphitheatre of the Megaron – Athens Concert Hall, where the proceedings of the Conference will take place, is not unlimited, but also to facilitate its better organization.

Certainly in these 100 years since the first edition of *Theologia*, on a social, philosophical, cultural, scientific level, the view of the world, of man and of God has shifted greatly. This was a result of the long-term fermentations that led to the development of science and technology in modern Western civilization, the essence of which lies in finding (or inventing) possibilities. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that technology affects every level of human life, even the religious one. The Church as a believing Community and its Theology are called upon to respond to today's challenges, to announce the message of the Gospel in the conditions of fluidity, instability and generalized anxiety which arise from the current situation. The newly emerging Artificial Intelligence appears to be uncontrollable and unpredictable according to many of its own creators.

The challenges are enormous. Therefore, it is imperative that they be answered and addressed through the timeless truth of Him who was incarnated, resurrected and is to come again in glory.

It is worth noting here the important contribution of the Editorial Boards to the completion and structure of the thematic content of each special issue. A special mention should be made of the 2017-

2018 Editorial Board, which gladly accepted the proposal for a tribute to technology. The Editorial Board anticipated the rapid technological development six years ago, when, in Greece at least, scientific discussions and publications on technology issues were rare, despite the fact that the wave of technology was sweeping each one of us. Fortunately, society's interest in these issues is evident today. It is revealed by the relevant articles in the printed and electronic press.

This first issue, of the second century of the journal's life, is dedicated to the subject "Diffused New Religiosity". In this tribute, the contribution of Stylianos Papalexandropoulos, Professor Emeritus of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, was decisive. It was he who proposed the subject to the 2019-2020 Editorial Board and coordinated the participating authors. We thank him warmly for this. It is perhaps no coincidence that the publication of the issue dedicated to Diffused New Religiosity coincides with the organization of the Conference on "dematerialized reality". Because part of the Diffused New Religiosity projects a virtual reality. Technological applications greatly facilitate the diffusion and mixing of religious ideas and concepts.

Religious ideas that once belonged to specific forms are diffused everywhere and adopted indiscriminately (e.g. electronic and printed magazines, television, internet, social media, interactive games). For example, scattered religious ideas and elements of various traditions or novel trends are circulated in songs, comics, cinema, games, literature, etc. It could be plausibly argued that the prevalence of this diffusion is both generated and expanded by technology and its digital capabilities.

Regarding the contents of this issue, the introductory article by the Professor Emeritus of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens Stylianos Papalexandropoulos, under the title "The Diffused New Religiosity", is published first. In it the author defines the subject and its aspects and parameters. The following is an article by Peter Admirand, Assistant Professor and Deputy Head of School in the School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music of Dublin City University on the

subject of “Horror, Evil, and Interreligious Dialogue: A Theological Analysis of *Gideon Falls* (First Story Arc: Issues 1-6)”. This is a case study of diffused religious ideas in comics.

Then comes the article by Dr. Ioannis Xidakis under the title “Sacred Spaces in the Video Game World” followed by the study of Dr. Dimitris Oulis on “The Diffusion of Religion in the Cinematic Spectacle: A Typology”. The next article in this issue is by Dr. Zambia Agrimaki titled “The Superheroes from Romantic Literature to Science Fiction: New ‘Messiahs’ and their Endless Eschatology”.

This is followed by Dimitrios Bekridakis’ study on “The Elementary Forms of the Diffused Religious Life” and then Loukia Roidou’s research under the title “Yoga in the online media as a form of Diffused New Religiosity”. The last article of this tribute issue is by Dimitrios Soukis on “Diffused New Religiosity: The universe as a higher power in the society and Popular Culture”.

After the aforementioned articles, the study of Christos Ath. Terezis, Professor of the University of Patras, is published in the column “Idiomela” under the title “Epistolography in Byzantium. Case study: Gregory Palamas’ Epistle *Α΄ Πρὸς Βαρλαάμ*”.

The next issue of *Theologia* [94, 2 (2023)] will be of varied content with articles mainly theological, but also of wider academic interest. It will be published in September 2023.

Alexandros Katsiaras
Editorial Director