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Portrait of religious studies in the modern world. Round table of “*Filosofska dumka*” (Philosophical Thought) and “*Essays on Religious Studies*”

There is presented a live discourse formed by real people – the makers of the modern science of religion.

The discussion relates to the following subjects: status of religious studies in the modern world; the influence of philosophy on modern religious studies; method problem; self-identification of a “scholar of religion”; the most prominent personalities of the modern religious studies; the role of religious studies in society; urgent “trends”, most discussed themes in the study of religion; idea of the existence of confessional or theological religious studies; and future development of religious studies.

The answers give a rather clear idea of the essence and ways of the contemporary religious studies, what are their objective and subjective problems, what is the vector of their development, and – the most important for the modern pragmatic thinking – what are their applied sense and their actual and desirable role in the modern world.

Keywords: religious studies, urgent trends, method problem, confessional religious studies

Yurii Chornomorets

Perspectives of religious studies in the XXIst century

The author notes a sharp turn of religious studies to the new way of theoretical thinking. The union of phenomenology, hermeneutics and communicative pragmatics, in author’s opinion, allows theologians to answer the postmodernism accusations. The article argues that phenomenological way of theological thinking is fully consistent with the nature of religion as a communicative life-world (Lebenswelt).

Keywords: phenomenology, hermeneutics, communicative pragmatics, religious studies

Volodymyr Kochergin

Theology of religions: identification problems

This article is about the roots and features of the theology of religions as a specific branch of theological studies. In the context of its contemporary developments, the author tries to eliminate challenges of the theology of religions from different aspects of humanities and

social sciences, such as: religious studies, sociology, social psychology, etc. Furthermore, the author makes an effort to show the identification problems in the theology of religions. Moreover the author tries to show urgent problems of the theology of religions and its capacities for contemporary and future researches. In the context of his survey he also raises the questions about the distinction between the academic and confessional study of religions and about the theology of religions' role as mediator or substitution for confessional study of religions in the above-mentioned distinction. Besides the efforts of elimination of the problems of the contemporary theology of religions, the author tries to link the theology of religions with the theological level of the concept of interreligious dialogue.

Keywords: theology of religions, academic and confessional study of religions, interreligious dialogue

Anna Maria Basauri Ziuzina

Academic study of Judaism in independent Ukraine

The author of the article gives consideration to the academic study of Judaism in the vast field of Jewish studies, which flourished in Ukraine before the communist regime and which was totally destroyed then, until it re-appeared in 1991. This goal calls forth the article's structure: first, the modern state of Judaic studies in the universities, research centers and non-government organizations is described. Multiple names of a single field of research: Judaica, Jewish studies, Judaic studies, etc., are also examined there. Special emphasis is given to the correlation between religious studies and the academic study of Judaism, demonstrating the percentage of scientific articles devoted to Judaism in the leading Ukrainian religious studies journal. Besides that the author gives information on the defended Ph.D. thesis and published books and journals, dealing with the academic study of Judaism. The author also resumes problems and shortcomings of the modern Ukrainian Judaic studies, which negatively affect its future.

Keywords: Judaica, Jewish studies, academic study of Judaism, modern Ukrainian Judaic studies

Ksenia Trofimova

Sociology of religion in Serbia: an overview of the current state

The article makes a brief review of the sociology of religion as a social science discipline and its place within the framework of the academic research of religious phenomena in present day Serbia. It describes the history of the discipline and the important contribution to social sciences made by different scholars on the early stages of its development (from the first half of the 20th century). The main attention is given to the period which started in the 1980's and lasts for more than thirty years representing the contemporary Serbian thought of the examined scientific area. This period covers various social processes which determine the specificity of the formation of national scientific schools and the relevant subjects of research. The sociology of religion in Serbia is developing as a part of sociological thought within numerous scientific associations and research centres though they include scholars from different academic areas. The history and activity of the leading associations such as YSSSR (Yugoslavian Society for the Scientific Study of Religion),

CEIR (Centre for Empirical Researches of Religion), and Centre for Religious Studies are examined. The subject area of the research made by famous scholars and research teams are presented and discussed.

Keywords: sociology of religion, Serbia, Yugoslavian Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Centre for Empirical Researches of Religion, Centre for Religious Studies in Serbia

Wouter Jacobus Hanegraaff

The dreams of theology and the realities of Christianity

Theologians are often considered to be the appropriate public and intellectual representatives or spokesmen of Christianity. However, Christian theology has been able to present itself as encapsulating Christianity only as long as Christian institutions were powerful enough to monopolize the perception and self-perception of Christianity as a religion. In fact, Christianity cannot be understood through a single theological doctrine, but can be understood as a religion based upon a symbolic system, which manifests itself in many specific Christian religions. A scholar of religion must thus accept the full variety of so-called heretical movements as legitimate expressions of Christianity, side by side with the “orthodox” churches, as well as “folklore magic” and syncretic Christian spiritualities – systems based on a Christian symbolic system, but incorporating non-Christian elements. Different, however, are syncretic post-Christian spiritualities, which are based on non-Christian symbolic systems, yet implement elements of Christianity.

Keywords: Christian theology, self-perception of Christianity, heretical movements, “orthodox” churches, “folklore magic”, syncretic Christian spiritualities
