

INTRODUCTION

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This special issue of the journal *Philosophy* “Dualism as a Challenge to Philosophy and Theology” is dedicated to dualism in its different aspects and mostly to the Bogomil teaching, which has deep roots in Bulgarian history and claims to regain its influence in modern times. Since the beginning of the 21st century, there is a revival of interest in Bogomilism, which until now has mainly taken the form of an apology, but its modern adherents also show greater ambitions. Since 2004, eight “forums on the Bogomils and ancient knowledge” have been held to date. According to the announcement for the eighth of them (Veliki Preslav, 16 – 18.06.2023), they aim to “raise the importance of Bogomilism for Bulgaria and the World”. In 2016, an international Bogomil forum was convened with the participation of representatives from France, Italy, Croatia, Romania and Bosnia, apparently with the ambition to restore the scope of this movement from the Middle Ages. An international team of scholars, including experts in the fields of Christian apologetics, Comparative theology, Oriental studies, Medieval history, Byzantine studies, Classics, History of philosophy, and Sociology, has come together for a research project aimed at an interdisciplinary study of historical and contemporary Bogomilism¹. In this issue of the journal, we present some results from an interim stage of the project.

The direct source of Bogomilism is the Eastern dualism. Therefore, it is important to learn more about it and the opposition it has already encountered in Armenian philosophy and theology. We are publishing two articles on this topic. The first of them by *Hayk Hakobyan* and *Dmitrii Goncharko*, “Towards the Question of Armenian Anti-Dualism of the 5th – 6th c. and its Philosophical and Theological Premises” is dedicated to its doctrinal and philosophical aspects. The second – by *Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev*, “The Polemics against Paulicians and Docetists in the Armenian Church and the Armenian-Syrian Council of Mantzikert (726)” aims at the ecclesiastical aspect of the topic.

Five articles are devoted to historical Bogomilism in medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium. The first of them by *Dimo Penkov* on “Dualistic Principles and Propositions in the Teachings of the Paulicians and Bogomils through the Eyes of Presbyter Cosmas and Euthymius Zigabenus” is dedicated to the criticism of Bogomil dualism by its two most prominent critics in the Bulgarian and Byzantine tradition. The article by *Boriana Nanova* – “Iconoclasm in Dualistic Heresies according to Anti-Heretical

Writings in Eastern Theology from 10th to the Beginning of 13th Century” examines the general theoretical issues of the denial of sacred images resulting from dualism and the fight against iconoclasm in Byzantium. Two articles examine the preserved artefacts as material evidence of Bogomil dualism. The first by *Lyubomira Stefanova*, “Imaginal Representations in the Dualistic Teaching of the Bogomils”, examines more generally the doctrinal aspects of the art of Bulgarian Bogomils and their offshoots in the Balkans. The second by *Emil Ivanov*, on the topic “Bogomil’s Depictions and Grave Symbolism in Bulgaria”, introduces the issue of the existence of residual elements of Bogomil Church art in Bulgaria. Finally, in the article by *Ivan Christov*, “The Bogomil Ritual before the Cross and its Doctrinal Foundations”, an attempt is made to reconstruct the actual meaning of the Bogomil ritual before the cross based on an analysis of the discrepancy between the words of Basil the Physician and their interpretation by his interrogator Euthymios Zigabenos, as well as the internal contradictions in the latter.

Also five articles are devoted to the subject of Neo-Bogomilism. The first two of them respond to the Neo-Bogomil claims that medieval Bogomilism is the basis of the European Reformation. *Martin Illert* in his publication “Discourses on Bogomilism in Early Modern Western Christianity” offers an objective view of the ambiguous attitude towards this heresy in the theology and philosophy of Protestantism, as well as its usage in the debate of the Catholic Church against the Lutherans. *Fr. Konstantin Anikin* continues his analysis and adds concreteness to one of the essential aspects of the topic in his article “The Role of Bogomilism in the Theological Debate between Pietists and Orthodox Lutherans”. The next three articles examine the modification of Bogomil teachings by its contemporary adherents. *Fr. Stelian Kunev* presents the occult-esoteric nature of some branches of modern Bogomil teachings, and *Yonko Bonov* studies the mythologizing of Bogomilism in some Bulgarian writers from the first half of the 20th c. Finally, *Fr. Sava (Shtoni) Kokoudev* seeks in the neo-Bogomil concept of Original Sin an approach to a contemporary dualism.

At the end of the issue, we also publish an article by *Martin Ivanov* on the social meaning of the dualistic views of Neo-Bogomilism and the possible risks for the integrity of Bulgarian society.

We conclude with the hope that this first attempt at an interdisciplinary study of the Bogomil dualism will add to our understanding of this important historical and modern phenomenon.

NOTES

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