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UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ
Faculty of Catholic Theology



INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM **TRADITION & HERMENEUTICS**



Zagreb, 13 November 2024

Nadbiskupijski pastoralni institut (Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute), Kaptol 29

Program and Abstracts

PROGRAM

9.00 Opening Symposium. Welcome speeches

- Assoc. Prof. Tomislav Kovač, PhD, President of the Program Committee
- Prof. Mario Cifrak, PhD, Acting Dean of the Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb
- Prof. Janez Vodičar, PhD, on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana
- Prof. Christoph Heil, PhD, on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology, Karl-Franzens University of Graz

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Moderator: prof. Nenad Malović, PhD

9.15 **Fundamental Principles of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics**

Prof. Danijel Tolvajčić, PhD

Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

9.30 **The Question of Tradition in Gadamer's Hermeneutics**

Prof. Daniel Miščin, PhD

Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb

9.45 **Text and Action: Insights into the Hermeneutic Philosophy of Paul Ricœur**

Prof. Janez Vodičar, PhD

Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

10.00 **The Role of Tradition in Political Philosophy: Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt in Dialog**

Affil. Rsch. Richard Atchadé, PhD

Center John XXIII, Grand Seminary, Luxembourg

10.15 **Reinterpretation of Islamic Tradition in the Thought of Mohammed Arkoun**

Assoc. Prof. Tomislav Kovač, PhD

Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

10.30 Panel Discussion

11.00 Coffee break

THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

Moderator: Prof. Danijel Tolvajčić, PhD

- 11.30 **Handing On. Preservation of Tradition Through Appropriation in Paul and the Synoptic Gospels**
Prof. Christoph Heil, PhD
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Karl-Franzens University of Graz
- 11.45 **Hermeneutics of Tradition in the Tradition of the Church**
Ass. Prof. Jakov Rađa, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb
- 12.00 **The dynamic vision of Tradition by Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI**
Assoc. Prof. Nedjeljka Sr. Valerija Kovač, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb
- 12.15 **Tradition and Innovation**
Assoc. Prof. Branko Murić, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb
- 12.30 **Ontolinguistic Hermeneutics and its Thomistic Sources. Gender Perspectives**
Ass. Prof. Antonina Wozna, PhD
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Karl-Franzens University of Graz
- 12.45 **The Role of the Family in Preserving Religious Identity and Christian Tradition in the Light of the New Directory for Catechesis**
Ass. Prof. Iva Nežič Glavica, PhD
Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana
- 13.00 Panel Discussion
- 13.30 Closing Symposium

ABSTRACTS OF LECTURES

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Prof. Danijel Tolvajčić, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

Fundamental Principles of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics

The presentation aims to present the basic outlines of Schleiermacher's concept of hermeneutics, which he understands as a theory of understanding. The French philosopher P. Ricoeur considers Schleiermacher to be the founder of hermeneutics as a general discipline which concerns every human act of communication, and not only as a group of specific techniques that deal with problematic old texts, i.e. Schleiermacher is the founder of hermeneutics as a “general theory of understanding”. For him, thought is what is “inside” language, and language is what is “outside” thought.

Schleiermacher was - as a reformed minister – interested primarily in biblical hermeneutics. For him, the biblical text - and any other text - should be approached as a linguistic and artistic product of its authors. In developing that task, he established the canon of “the hermeneutic circle”, i.e., the principle that the whole (of the text) must be interpreted from its parts and vice versa. In this sense, it is crucial to have a deeper understanding of the relationship between the text, the reader and the context.

Keywords: Schleiermacher, Hermeneutics, Text, Context, Reader.

Prof. Daniel Miščin, PhD
Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb

The Question of Tradition in Gadamer's Hermeneutics

The presentation will address the concept of tradition in *Truth and Method* by Hans-Georg Gadamer, with an emphasis on its role in shaping hermeneutic theory. Tradition is not understood as a static transmission of knowledge, but as a dialogical process in which historical and contemporary horizons intertwine. Gadamer's idea of pre-understanding, rooted in Heidegger's concept of *in-der-Welt-Sein*, highlights that all understanding necessarily includes prior understanding that shapes our worldview. Rejecting the objective method of interpretation, Gadamer emphasizes the dynamic nature of tradition, which constantly transforms through encounters with new interpretations. This approach allows for the creation of new meanings and has far-reaching implications for contemporary hermeneutics. Thus, tradition becomes a space where historical experience is not only reproduced but also creatively reshaped.

Keywords: Tradition, Hermeneutics, Historical consciousness, Gadamer, Pre-understanding, Interpretation, Heidegger.

Prof. Janez Vodičar, PhD
Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

Text and Action: Insights into the Hermeneutic Philosophy of Paul Ricœur

Ricœur's desire to understand human beings led him through reflexive philosophy and phenomenology to hermeneutics. He tried to combine the more existential German approach with the demand of structuralism and modern science in generally for an exact method. We will therefore show that it is the text that enables Ricœur to do both: to understand the ground of being and, at the same time, to conduct certain objective research. His fundamental position is that the more we interpret the better we understand requires a certain distantiation. It is this hermeneutical stance that leads him to open interpretations that emphasize the human desire for the transcendent. One wants and can do something before one grasps oneself in one's own thought. In the hermeneutics of the person we arrive at a desire that transcends the individual. For Ricœur, it is precisely this entrapment of man in the finitude of possibility and the infinity of desire that is the path to religiosity. This can only be approached indirectly, through symbols, rituals, texts. From this point of view, we will show how Ricœur applies his hermeneutics to biblical texts.

Keywords: Paul Ricœur, Hermeneutics, Text, Distantiation, Understanding.

Affil. Rsch. Richard Atchadé, PhD
Center John XXIII, Grand Seminary, Luxembourg

The Role of Tradition in Political Philosophy: Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt in Dialog

What is the value of traditional forms of thought in the face of the emergence of totalitarian regimes? Is this the end of political philosophy? Given the powerlessness of liberal democracy in the face of the rise of totalitarianism in the twentieth century, many thinkers have concluded that there is a crisis of politics and rationality. Foremost among them are Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt, who invite us to question the nature of the modern project. Our aim is to bring these two philosophers into dialogue, particularly in their approaches to the relationship between modernity and tradition. We shall see that Strauss defines the modern crisis as a crisis of reason and advocates a return to classical philosophy and the philosopher's way of life, which must maintain the gap between reason and political reality. Arendt, on the other hand, considers the crisis to be political; it is urgent to situate oneself within it, to adopt the world's point of view by initiating a process of understanding that is fundamentally different from the classical search for philosophical truth. By studying the political thought of these two authors, we will try to determine which of them is the best way of thinking about our modern situation, and what role tradition can play in overcoming the crisis of modernity.

Keywords: Political philosophy, Political thought, the Context of Tradition, Modernity, Historical knowledge.

Assoc. Prof. Tomislav Kovač, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

Reinterpretation of Islamic Tradition in the Thought of Mohammed Arkoun

Algerian-French historian and philosopher Mohammed Arkoun (1928-2010) is one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of his time. Throughout his life, he encouraged a modern critique of Islamic reason and tradition using the cognitive tools provided by social sciences, especially history, linguistics, and anthropology. His research method is both deconstructive and reconstructive. Arkoun first seeks to deconstruct the anthropological and theological epistemological structures that make up the classical Islamic tradition (*Quran, hadīth, sīrat al-nabi, tafsīr, sharh al-hadīth, kalām, fīqh*), wishing to shed light on the historical and cultural conditions of their emergence, in order to better understand their gradual reception and use in Islamic thought and practice, which, since the 13th century until today, has largely remained confined to an apologetic and hagiographic model that sacralises and absolutizes itself. Through continuous and enlightened hermeneutics, Arkoun then tries to reconstruct that thought by moving, overtaking and transgressing some of its fundamental beliefs, to discover what is still unthought, unthinkable and thinkable in Islam. The goal of this process is to free Islamic thought and tradition from its centuries-old intellectual stagnation and ideological uses, in order to activate those still undiscovered potentials that will help Muslims to make Islam an inclusive, tolerant and humanistic religion open to dialogue and equal coexistence with other religions, cultures and civilizations in the modern world.

Keywords: Mohammed Arkoun, Critique of Islamic Reason, Reinterpretation of Islam, Applied Islamology, Islam and Modernity.

THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

Prof. Christoph Heil, PhD
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Karl-Franzens University of Graz

Handing On. Preservation of Tradition Through Appropriation in Paul and the Synoptic Gospels

(1) For Paul and the Synoptics, tradition is (a) the Jewish Holy Scriptures, (b) the tradition of Jesus and (c) the tradition of the church. (2) We will look at how Paul preserved and appropriated these traditions on the basis of how he adapted (a) the Abraham figure in Romans 4 and Galatians 3–4, (b) Jesus' statements about divorce in 1 Cor 7:10-16 and (c) the ideas about the resurrection of Jesus in Phil 2:6-11 and 1 Cor 15. (3) With the Synoptics, in turn, (a) the Abraham figure (Mark 12:28 [parr. Matt 22:32; Luke 20:37]; Matt 1:1-2; 3:7 [par. Luke 3:8]; 8:11 [par. Luke 13:28]; Luke 1:55, 73; 13:16; 16:19-31; 19:9), (b) Jesus' statements about divorce (Mark 10:1-12 par. Matt 19:3-9; Matt 5:31-32 par. Luke 16:18) and (c) the presentations of Jesus' resurrection (Mark 10:32-34 [parr. Matt 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34]; Mark 16 [parr. Matt 28; Luke 24]) are discussed. (4) In conclusion, the results are summarised: Paul and the evangelists combine a fundamental conservatism towards tradition with refreshing creativity. In some places they even “invent” tradition (Eric Hobsbawm). What are the consequences of this for a contemporary concept of tradition?

Keywords: Paul, Synoptic Gospels, Abraham, Divorce, Resurrection, Preservation and Appropriation, Conserving and Developing Traditions, Invention of Tradition (Hobsbawm).

Ass. Prof. Jakov Rađa, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

Hermeneutics of Tradition in the Tradition of the Church

Referring to tradition is ubiquitous in the Church today. For some it is an obstruction to progress, and for others it is a guarantee of consistency and a safe haven. Receiving legacy like Tradition has nothing to do with returning to past times, but an ambient in which we are shaped by Christian principles so that we could live of them in the present. The process of receiving that legacy demands hermeneutics because conveying a “text” to a receiver always takes place in the “context” of a period the receiver is living in. Hermeneutics is a relatively new term which reflects the fact that faith does not presume only nature, but also a culture. Church has through history always known that the Tradition is in fact an explanation, hermeneutics of the kerygma and faith that was received by Apostles. A lecture “Hermeneutics of tradition in the tradition of Church“ will try to show great authors, which a Second Vatican Council also leaned on, like Irenaeus of Lyon and Vincent of Lérins have approached the Tradition in hermeneutical key.

Keywords: Yves Congar, Irenaeus of Lyon, Vincent of Lérins.

Assoc. Prof. Nedjeljka Sr. Valerija Kovač, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

The dynamic vision of Tradition by Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI

The importance of tradition in Christianity is one of the continuous theological themes, which Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI dealt with as a theologian, prefect and pope.

His understanding of tradition is based on a personal and historical understanding of God's revelation (i.e. the reality of Christ), from which derives Scripture as its material principle and tradition as its explication. Since revelation is a living reality and in those two ways present in the Church and in faith, according to this German theologian, tradition has different dimensions and can only be understood in the complex relationship between Revelation, the Church, the Holy Scriptures and faith. As tradition is a dynamic process of transmission within the Church, the question arises whether it is more "conservative" or "innovative".

Keywords: Joseph Ratzinger, Tradition, Revelation, Holy Scripture, Church, Faith.

Assoc. Prof. Branko Murić, PhD
Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb

Tradition and Innovation

The presentation examines the relationship between innovation and Tradition in theology, questioning if Tradition can be innovative despite its foundational and preservative role in understanding and interpretation of the revelation. It highlights the paradigm shift at the Second Vatican Council with the perspective that Tradition and innovation can be complementary, based on the permanent newness of the Gospel. The Old Testament prophets and apocalyptic literature introduced a theme of newness, promising a new creation under God's revelation, which Christianity adopted through ideas like the 'new man' and 'new creation' in Jesus Christ and the new covenant. This 'new' was central to Pauline theology and subsequent Church teachings, emphasizing renewal not as a mere new discovery, but anchored in Jesus' life and works. The tension between maintaining tradition and fostering innovation is critical to theological reflection, its hermeneutical approach, and the usage/understanding of language.

The topic of conversation suggests that authentic innovation should arise from a deeper connection to Jesus Christ, rather than from societal pressures or trends, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding insights in alignment with Jesus' teachings. Christian theology is called to discern valuable innovations from the incarnate Word transmitted through the source of revelation, while avoiding mere trends through the *auditus fidei et temporis*.

Keywords: Tradition, Innovation, Revelation, Theology, Hermeneutic, Church.

Ass. Prof. Antonina Wozna, PhD
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Karl-Franzens University of Graz

Ontolinguistic Hermeneutics and its Thomistic Sources. Gender Perspectives

Ontolinguistic hermeneutics are based on the notion of “onto” in Thomist and phenomenological sense. It also considers the linguistic bases of *hermeneia* that need dialogue in the sense of how Ricoeur understands it: action, speech, history.

The paper shows how and when the *aggiornamento* of Thomism happened and turned into a change of perspective on the purpose of theology. Coherently with the feminist category of experience, the hermeneutical status of theology requires its involvement in the reality of the entire humanity as it resounds in 1Pe 3, 15: “to give reason of our hope.”

The example of a gender application of ontolinguistic hermeneutics, according to the following principles is shown: (1) the appropriateness and credibility, (2) the propriety as Christian, (3) faithful creativity and (4) relevance. The more positive impact on humanity and according to the praxis derived from theological statements, the better and more holistic the discourse could be.

Keywords: Ontolinguistic Hermeneutics, Thomism, Gender, Telos.

Ass. Prof. Iva Nežič Glavica, PhD
Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

The Role of the Family in Preserving Religious Identity and Christian Tradition in the Light of the New Directory for Catechesis

In today's culture of "acceleration," which often questions the traditional values of the Church and its religious practices, the family as the "domestic Church" (*Ecclesia domestica*) strives to find a balance between the influences of the digital society and living according to the values of the Gospel. Therefore, the question is highly relevant: How can families, as active subjects of evangelical activity, proclaim the Gospel in these circumstances? Although the Gospel remains unchanged, there is a great need for new approaches, language, and methods.

Considering the synodal process and the lack of priestly vocations, the Church is aware that the family plays an increasingly important role both in the catechesis of children and adolescents, as well as in the preparation of young people for marriage. Her help is welcome in the catechesis of parents who are preparing to receive the sacraments of their children, parents who are introducing themselves to Christianity, in leading marriage groups, and in intergenerational catechesis. This is also confirmed by the new Directory for Catechesis (*Direttorio per la catechesi*).

Keywords: Family, Religious Identity, Christian Tradition, New Directory for Catechesis.

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Photo on the poster: *The Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles (14th century; Moscow, Pushkin museum)*.
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