

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Winchester
Unit of Assessment: D33 Theology and Religious Studies
Title of case study: Orthodoxy in Dialogue with Western Culture: the Orthodox Network in Winchester
1. Summary of the impact This case study describes the impact of Orthodox theological research at Winchester on Orthodox Christian life in the UK at several levels. The development of the Winchester Orthodox Network – a study and research network bringing academics together with members of Orthodox Christian communities – has had diverse impacts on the engagement of Orthodox life with British contexts, including: (a) a major contribution to the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist, enabling theological research to inform the practice of clergy and their communities; (b) expert advisory work; (c) continuing education for serving clergy; (d) the use of research expertise in informing the catechesis, liturgical and spiritual life of Orthodox parishes in Hampshire.
2. Underpinning research There are two overarching themes in the research that underpins the activities of the Orthodox Network in Winchester. The first relates to the comparative study of Eastern and Western theology. The second has to do with research in Christian symbolism, and more specifically with iconography and liturgy. These have been longstanding interests of Andreas Andreopoulos, developed in numerous publications prior to his move to Winchester in 2010. Since then he has explored in several publications the way Christianity is experienced beyond its doctrinal content, and how this spiritual experience fits within a wider European context. To this end, in a publication in <i>Sobornost</i> , Andreopoulos (2011b) offered an analysis on the theme of confession in the work of Alexandros Papadiamantis, a writer who is often considered equivalent to Dostoyevsky, and yet is not well known outside Greece. <i>Sobornost</i> is the journal of the St Alban and St Sergius Fellowship, which promotes Anglican-Orthodox dialogue (with 1,500-2,000 members), and therefore this analytical presentation of the spiritual strand of Papadiamantis fit within the context of the presentation of modern Orthodoxy in Western terms and audiences. What started as an exploration of literary and art works in terms of their contribution to theological thought, was developed further. The theme of the experiential aspect of Christianity, developed along the lines of Liturgy and Iconography, is explored in a more extended way in the monograph <i>Gazing on God</i> (Andreopoulos, 2013a). The book is intended to contribute to ecumenical dialogue by stressing the experience of worship (rather than doctrinal dialogue alone) as a basis for mutual understanding between Eastern and Western Christianity. There is very little research in this direction, and this book is an attempt to broach the subject in a way that will be useful not only to theologians but also to clergy and laity. In addition, the second part of the book offers a detailed analysis of selected icons, in order to demonstrate the depth of the symbolism of iconography. This analysis goes beyond the level of doctrine (as we find in the vast majority of iconology), touching on the understanding of time, space, absolute freedom, and participation in the life of God. It thereby opens iconographic symbolism more than previous texts – and makes that symbolism accessible also to readers whose primary interest is not in doctrinal interpretation alone. The exploration of liturgy and symbolism in the Orthodox tradition, and its relevance today, took a different turn in the article on the Byzantine anaphora (Andreopoulos, 2013b), which explores a much more focused problem. Liturgical theologians since the Middle Ages (even the most detailed ones) have not interpreted the meaning of the phrase “according to all and for all”, at the heart of the offertory of the Greek liturgies. The article proposes an interpretation (an eschatological reading) based on some earlier liturgical forms, scriptural evidence, and Patristic texts that have not been considered before. The gap in liturgical research was embarrassingly conspicuous, and therefore the findings should be of interest to a wide range of people, liturgical scholars, people who are interested in Orthodox theology, as well as clergy/practitioners. This more focused research also ties in with the theme of the interpretation of Christian symbolism and liturgy, and tries to make the eschatological character of the Byzantine liturgy more clearly understood. Both in

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this publication and even more so in 2013a, which also touches on matters of liturgical interpretation, the eschatological-made-present dimension of Orthodox theology is understood beyond its close historical boundaries. While publications such as 2013b explore Orthodox theology at the cutting edge, publications such as 2013a care to contextualize this research in a wider narrative that fits within the wider framework and vocabulary of modern Christian thought.

The same relationship between cutting edge research and Western contextualization of Eastern theology may be seen in Andreopoulos's work on the Transfiguration. Andreopoulos published a book dedicated to the Transfiguration in 2005, and subsequently numerous articles. His second book on the Transfiguration (Andreopoulos, 2012), explores some systematic directions that emerged as a result of an ongoing research into the Biblical and medieval significance of the Transfiguration, but also as a response to a number of publications by Western theologians since 2005 – and therefore, while it expresses a practice that is grounded in the Eastern tradition, it is part of the modern systematic theological dialogue on the significance of the Transfiguration, especially in the Eastern tradition. It includes much original research in terms of the connection of modern Orthodox systematic theology (which it tries to advance) with Patristic and Biblical themes.

The Patristic interpretation of Scripture can also be seen in the article on the Song of Songs (Andreopoulos, 2011b). The originality of that publication is that it tries to illustrate the mystical interpretation of this Biblical text for the early Christian tradition, by comparing and contrasting the major Patristic commentaries, and also it tries to build on this mystical spirituality and demonstrate how it still informs modern Orthodox theology today, and how it can be of interest to wider modern Christian theology.

Much of this research has informed Andreopoulos's teaching and research supervision. A product of the latter is the study of Dr Adrian Agachi on Dumitru Staniloae (Agachi, 2013), one of the very few and most illuminating publications that present and analyse the work of this Orthodox theologian, and his conversation with and reception by Western theology. Agachi's PhD was awarded in 2013 and he is currently a Visiting Research Fellow of CSTR.

3. References to the research

Agachi, A., 2013. *The Neo-Palamite Synthesis of Father Dumitru Staniloae*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Andreopoulos, A., 2011a. 'Alexandros Papadiamantis: the Saint of Greek Literature', *Sobornost* 32.2: 19-36

Andreopoulos, A., 2011b. 'The Song of Songs: an Asceticism of Love', *The Forerunner*, 57: 17-26.

* Andreopoulos, A., 2012. *This is my Beloved Son: The Transfiguration of Christ*, Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press.

* Andreopoulos, A., 2013a. *Gazing on God: Trinity, Church, Salvation in the Orthodox Church*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co.

* Andreopoulos, A., 2013b. "'All in all" in the Byzantine Anaphora and the Eschatological Mystagogy of Maximos the Confessor', *Studia Patristica*, 68: 303-12.

(* = included in REF 2)

4. Details of the impact

Orthodox theology has been part of British university life for a long time. Research in this area has been pioneered by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Prof Andrew Louth, Donald Allchin, and the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Now, however, with the retirement of this generation, Andreas Andreopoulos has been placed in a central position as far as the study of Orthodox theology in the UK is concerned. In addition, he is gradually replacing Kallistos Ware and Andrew Louth in several Orthodox organizations in the UK, taking the baton (as it were) from them. Under his leadership, Winchester is becoming a leading centre for research and study in Orthodox theology in the UK.

To ensure the maximum benefit to the Orthodox community in the UK from this research activity, and to ensure that Winchester's academic activity in this area remains closely connected to the needs of the Orthodox community, Andreopoulos has since 2010 been developing the Winchester Orthodox Network, formally inaugurated by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2012. This is an association of clergy, students and laypeople who are interested in Eastern Christianity.

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Its members are based in the area around Winchester, or are keeping close contact with it, and it also includes two Visiting Research Fellows, Prof Nicholas Loudovikos (Greece) and Dr Adrian Agachi (Romania). The Winchester Orthodox Network facilitates a continuous pastoral and theological dialogue, making it the first level of impact that connects the research conducted in Winchester with a number of other organizations and levels of dissemination and pastoral activity in the UK.

Andreopoulos has been a member of the committee of the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist for several years, becoming its chairman in June 2013. The Fellowship enables members of the several Orthodox Church Traditions in the UK to come together, and through prayer, discussion and mutual friendship, to deepen their understanding of the Orthodox Christian faith and its place in the West. It brings together clergy, theologians and laypeople, and for this reason it has a wide and large membership, of about 500 members. Andreopoulos' election as chairman was a recognition both of his research reputation and his commitment to pastoral life and theology. Through his work on the committee, Andreopoulos has had a considerable influence on the directions and interests of the Fellowship. The theological and pastoral background of his involvement is reflected in several of his publications, where the direction and the goals of modern Orthodox theology are discussed (such as 2012 and 2013a, which touch on the contribution of Orthodox theology and methodology to modern Christian theology), or publications that reflect a dialogue with the Patristic heritage (such as 2011b) and the continuous research into liturgical theology (such as 2013b).

The main aim of the Fellowship is to develop all levels of Orthodox life. It operates in such a way that learning and research are extended to the level of the parish and the average churchgoer, something especially evident in the annual Study Weekends, which are sponsored by, and held in, a different Orthodox parish every year. Through its close collaboration with Orthodox clergy and parishes throughout the country, the Fellowship affects the entire English-speaking Orthodox population of the UK, and much of the ethnic Orthodox Church in the UK, and promotes awareness of Orthodox spirituality, communal spirit beyond ethnic lines, and further understanding of liturgical life. Its activities include:

- An international residential weekend conference each summer. Recent subjects have been: Mothers and Fathers in God: Spiritual Guidance in the Orthodox Church (2010), Orthodox Witness Today (2011), Death and Eternity (2012), and The Liturgy: Entrance into the Kingdom (2013). Andreopoulos was a keynote speaker in the 2013 conference (July 12-14, 2013), with a presentation (*The Eschatological Character of the Divine Liturgy*) based on material from two of his publications (2013a and 2013b).
- A Study Weekend early each year, often devoted either to the Bible or to one of the Church Fathers. Andreopoulos was the organizer and keynote speaker of two recent Study Weekends, 'Song of Songs: Mystical Prayer, Poetry and Worship in Daily Life' (Jan 28 - Feb 2, 2011) and 'Symbolism in the Gospel of John' (Jan 25-27, 2013). His presentations were based on material from two of his publications (2011b and 2012 respectively).

The Fellowship Youth Committee also organises various events including Youth Festivals, choir concerts, pilgrimages and additional events according to demand. The Fellowship publishes an annual Calendar and Lectionary, as well as a Directory giving details of Orthodox clergy and places of worship in the UK and Ireland. The extent of its impact may be seen in the number of participants in its events (80-100 in most annual conferences; 30-50 in most Study Weekends), and in the annual sales of the Directory and the Calendar (about 200 for the Directory and 600 for the Calendar).

Andreopoulos has also undertaken direct pastoral duties. He provides regular pastoral support in collaboration with the local hospitals. In addition, he has founded and is in charge of a new Orthodox parish in Winchester, which has allowed Orthodox Christians to worship there on a weekly basis, and is open to people who are generally interested in Orthodox theology and practice. As preparation for the foundation of the parish, Andreopoulos held weekly catechetical lectures for a year at the Orthodox church of St Nicholas in Southampton, open to parishioners and inquirers (attended by 10-20 people every time). These catechetical lectures continued in the Winchester parish, and as he has been offering them in the last three years, they have drawn

material from all of Andreopoulos's publications. The thematic units covered included Biblical analysis, the Church lectionary and the feasts, ecclesiology and the theology of the sacraments, and the language and theology of iconography. The effect of these activities is considerable, at the level of community formation, generation and enhancement of spiritual practices, and the dynamic integration of the Orthodox community within the wider social and spiritual context.

Andreopoulos's speaking engagements have extended beyond the immediate area. He is often invited to preach or speak in clergy gatherings and lay theology conferences outside the UK. Examples include: lectures on the iconographic programme of St Nicholas in Cardiff, September 2012 (in association with Open Doors 2012 – European Heritage Days in Wales); an exposition of John's Gospel over two weeks to a clergy retreat (attendance of 30, mostly Catholic priests) in Tantur College, Jerusalem, November 2012 (drawing largely on material from Andreopoulos 2011b, 2012 and 2013a); a talk on New Martyrs, Diocese of Râmnicu Vâlcea, Romania, September 2012 (invited by the local bishop, with an audience of 200); an exposition of the challenges of spiritual guidance in modern Greece at the biennial Madingley Conference of the Friends of Mount Athos, March 2013 (attendance of 150). Such talks communicate the fruits of research beyond the context of higher education, but they are also a way to make sure that Orthodox theological study and research remain grounded in the needs of the wider community.

As an extension of this, Andreopoulos has provided expert opinions to the wider Orthodox community. A relevant example is the case of the iconostasis of the Orthodox Church of St Makarios in Leeds, which was bought by that community in 2013 (a cost of £20,000). Before its design and purchase, the priest of that community solicited the advice of Andreopoulos regarding its design. The advice sought had to do with the choice and the placement of the icons within the icon screen, a matter of theological and liturgical symbolism. This came up not only through Andreopoulos's personal involvement with that parish, but also because of the recognition of his expertise in iconography (such as may be demonstrated in 2013a).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Websites

Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist (OFSJB): <http://www.ofsjb.org/index.html>

Open Doors: European Heritage in Wales: <http://opendoorsdays.org.uk/single-event?language=e&eventid=49>

Orthodox Parish of the Transfiguration, Winchester: <http://orthodoxwinchester.com>

Videos of OFSJB 2013 Study Weekend talks: <http://vimeo.com/user7355275/videos/>

Documents

Conference reports on 2011 and 2013 OFSJB Study Weekends, from *The Forerunner*, Summer 2011 and Summer 2013 respectively.

Reference from OFSJB Committee member.

E-mail correspondence with Orthodox Church of St Makarios in Leeds (design of the iconostasis).

Individuals who have provided corroboration of particular impacts

Member of the Winchester Orthodox Network.

Director of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute (Tantur clergy retreat on John's Gospel).

Member of the Winchester/Southampton parishes (impact on the development of the community).

OFSJB Committee member, Study Weekend/conference participant.

Orthodox Church of St Makarios, Leeds (design of iconostasis)