

## Patristic Studies in the Russian Federation

Patristic studies in Russia which had flourished before the Revolution were banned during the Soviet time; and those scholars who wanted to study the Fathers were forced to use Patristic sources within other fields like philology or the history of philosophy. Russia still has its two-step own system of academic degrees without the possibility to defend dissertations in theology and Patristic Studies, leaving the scholars with interest in Patristics the basic option to defend within the field of history, the history of philosophy or philology, which shifts the focus of the work in the correspondent direction. On the other hand, there exist departments of theology at several Universities (up to the MA level) and educational centers affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church where Patrology is a part of the curriculum, yet the main focus of these programs is the education of clergy. Within the structure of the Orthodox Church it is allowed to defend dissertations in theology (and adjacent fields). These degrees are, however, not recognized by the state and mostly defended by academic clergymen.

From the geographical point of view the situation is typical for Russia with two capital cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg) with a significant community of Patristic scholars, and the regions with only a few scholars in every city. There is a Department of Patristic Studies at St. Tikhon's Orthodox University in Moscow; Patristic studies are carried out along with the ongoing publication of the multivolume Orthodox Encyclopedia. Recently St Cyril and Methodius Church Postgraduate and Doctoral School was organized in Moscow, headed by the member of our Association Metropolitan Ilarion Alfeev. In St. Petersburg at the Russian Christian Academy of Humanities the Program, "Byzantine Philosophy" was recently introduced, in fact, covering the Patristic field under that title. Byzantine Center at the Greek Institute in St. Petersburg started to carry out promising research in Byzantine hagiography.

Regular conferences with sections and individual papers on the Fathers are organized at St. Tikhon's Orthodox University and at the Department of Theology at Russian State Professional and Pedagogical University in Yekaterinburg; annual conferences on Byzantine Philosophy are organized in St. Petersburg at the Russian Christian Academy of Humanities.

Several journals and series of collected volumes in Russian include *Bogoslovsky Vestnik*, *Bogoslovskie Trudy* (Moscow), *Problemy Teologii* (Yekaterinburg), *Mir Pravoslaviya* (Volgograd). Probably the most effective example of collaboration between the Russian and Western Patristic scholars and publishers, is *Scrinium*, international multilingual scholarly periodical devoted to Patristics, critical hagiography and Church history, and its supplement thematic series, edited in Russia and published and distributed through the Gorgias Press (USA). St. Petersburg Series "Byzantine Philosophy" publishes new translations, among which I can mention new translations and commentaries on the works of Maximus the Confessor. Among the recent Patristic publishing projects are notable the two-volume *Anthology of East Christian Theological Thought* with new translations of many treatises as well as the volume of newly translated polemical treatises by Leontius of Jerusalem, Leontius of Byzantium and Theodore Abu Qurra.

Although there is a great interest in the Fathers, there also great problem with setting high standards for the students and scholars in Patristics, and the serious problem is languages, both ancient and modern. Another problem is the availability of published sources and scholarly literature which is partly compensated by the opportunities offered by globalization and the Internet. However, the greatest problem is the lack of the critical mass of Patristic scholars who could establish high scholarly standards in their studies, editorial work and translations. In relation to that problem, rich pre-revolutionary Patristic heritage with excellent studies and translations for the time is both a blessing and a curse since in the lack of modern research the publishers still prefer to reprinting old editions. The way of carrying out Patristic projects in such a huge country as Russia, as I see it, is networking, when a team of competent scholars, each with the expertise in particular area or areas of Humanities can unite for a certain project and communicate via internet.