

1700º ANO DO CONCÍLIO DE NICÉIA - DOSSIÊ Nº 1

doi: [10.25247/paralellus.2024.v15n37.p321-325](https://doi.org/10.25247/paralellus.2024.v15n37.p321-325)

**1700TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA AND 60TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLOSURE OF VATICAN II DOSSIER NO. 1**

1700º ANNIVERSARIO DEL CONCILIO DI NICEA E 60º ANNIVERSARIO
DELLA CHIUSURA DEL VATICANO II DOSSIER N. 1

1700º ANO DO CONCÍLIO DE NICÉIA E 60º ANO DO ENCERRAMENTO DO
CONCÍLIO VATICANO II DOSSIÊ Nº 1

*Riccardo Burigana**

*Luiz Carlos Luz Marques***

Since other controversial issues were also generating disquiet in the Church, such as the date of the Easter celebration, Constantine summoned the bishops of the empire to Nicaea, in Bithynia, making arrangements for them, as high officials, to use the imperial mail for the journey. With these words, the Silesian historian Hubert Jedin introduces the Council of Nicaea in his *Short History of Ecumenical Councils*, republished after the Second Vatican Council, in order to provide a concise and comprehensive overview of the Councils in the history of the Church, highlighting theological issues, relations with political power, and dynamic receptions in the

* Dottore in Storia (1991) presso l'Università della Repubblica di San Marino (1991). Professore visitatore permanente presso il Programma post-laurea in Scienze religiose dell'Università Cattolica di Pernambuco dal 2007. Professore invitato presso la Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale FTIM, Sezione San Tommaso, Napoli, dal 2022 e presso la Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Centrale, Firenze, dal 2016. Presidente dell'Associazione Italiana dei Docenti di Ecumenismo. Indirizzi e-mail: direttore@centroecumenismo.it e presidente@aidecu.it.

** Doutor em História Religiosa (1998), pela Universidade de Bologna, Itália. Professor do PPGCR da UNICAP. E-mail: luiz.marques@unicap.br.

perspective of grasping the continuity and discontinuity of Vatican II in relation to a centuries-old tradition.

This centuries-old tradition, not shared in the same way by the individual Churches—some of which recognise only the first three Councils—accords a prominent place to the Council of Nicaea, not only because it was the first to be convened as ‘ecumenical’ but also, and above all, for the issues it addressed. To borrow Jedin's words, we should mention the definition of the criteria for determining the date of Easter, a debate that continues to this day, beyond the calendars (Gregorian and Julian) adopted by the different Churches. It is precisely the richness of the theological debate, only partly reflected in the promulgated canons, as evidenced by the sources recounting the Council of Nicaea—enriched and/or distorted by the traditions that have, in turn, reinterpreted the Council—that has made the Council, celebrated in 325, a point of reference over the centuries for both the Church and society.

As the 1700th anniversary of its celebration approached, reflections and proposals for the reinterpretation of the Council of Nicaea began to multiply, emphasising its relevance, particularly on those topics that could promote further steps towards overcoming Christian divisions. In this way, it was as if the Council of Nicaea, so many centuries later, could still serve as a model of unity for the Church. Appeals, especially from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, and Pope Francis on various occasions, raised the question of experiencing the anniversary of the Council of Nicaea as an opportunity to rediscover its spiritual, synodal, and ecumenical dimensions. The aim was to make it a privileged source for an evangelical reform of the Church, one capable of addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

Amid these reflections and proposals, the need for further historical-theological exploration of the Council of Nicaea and its reception became ever more apparent, particularly in light of the recovery of unpublished documents and a critical evaluation of the historiography. Recent works had also confronted an overall assessment of the category of ‘council’ in the life of the Churches, reflecting on how this concept had been interpreted, over the centuries, in both the West and the East.

It was precisely in this period of reflection and proposals, recognising the importance of the Council of Nicaea and its reception, both in the past and present of the Church, that the idea emerged to establish the international historical-religious research project *Always Nicaea: Present, Ecumenical Memories, and the History of the Council of Nicaea (325-2025)*. Through this initiative, the institutions behind it—the *Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale - Sezione San Tommaso d'Aquino di Napoli*, the *Programa de Pós-graduação em Ciências da Religião* of the *Universidade Católica de Pernambuco* in Recife, and the *Centro Studi per l'Ecumenismo in Italia* of Florence—aimed to ‘foster a better understanding of the Council of Nicaea and its reception through the critical reading of the sources, interpretations over the centuries, the presence in Church documents, and studies dedicated to the Council of Nicaea. The goal was to offer a framework that could assist the Church, in rediscovering such a vivid memory, in addressing central questions regarding its mission in the 21st century, highlighting the fruitful relevance of the Council of Nicaea.’

For this reason, the project was divided into four thematic areas from its initial formulation: the first area focused on the Council of Nicaea and its reception, addressing the historical-theological reconstruction of the Council and incorporating the most recent studies to stimulate reflection on the relationship between the celebration of the Council and its first reception, including beyond the Roman Empire’s borders. The second area concerned the Council of Nicaea in the Reformation era, aiming to show, through precise research, the role of the Council in the religious reforms of the 16th century, which led to a new phase of Christianity, even in Churches that were not directly involved. This area began by seeking how to incorporate research from the 500th anniversary of the Reformation to reinterpret the Council without resorting to apologetic or ideological reconstructions that had hindered a true and comprehensive understanding of the 16th century. The third area sought to present the meaning of the Council of Nicaea in the contemporary ecumenical movement, paying particular attention to its presence, whether explicit or implicit, in bilateral and trilateral ecumenical dialogues at universal, continental, and national levels, serving as a privileged platform for developing a common heritage and ecumenical theology, aiming to live out the unity of the proclamation and witness of the Word of God amidst the diversity of Christian denominations. Finally, the fourth

area explored the relevance of the Council of Nicaea for 21st-century theology, not limited to the Christian context, as some issues discussed at Nicaea, such as the value of sacred texts in doctrinal formulation, were also topics of interreligious dialogue.

The project, divided into four thematic areas, was first reviewed by a small group of scholars, receiving comments, criticisms, and suggestions that led to an initial definition. In the first half of 2023, this resulted in the formation of a community of researchers from different geographical regions, denominational affiliations, and, above all, academic backgrounds, bringing together diverse knowledge and expertise. Simultaneously, the project garnered collaboration from academic institutions and research centres, also receiving the endorsement of the Pontifical Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity, the Academia Română, the Italian Association of Professors of Church History, and the *Gesellschaft für Konziliengeschichtsforschung*.

The research group began holding regular meetings in February 2024, with the primary goal of sharing knowledge through timely research, to be published as milestones leading to at least one international conference, scheduled for 13-14 November 2025 in Naples at the St. Thomas Aquinas Section of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy.

This issue of *Paralellus* presents the first results of this research project. The nine articles published below, in order of submission, by T. Rimoldi (Italy)¹, F. V. Fumo and D. O. Mutuque (Mozambique)², G. R. Schirone (Italy)³, A. C. Pestana (Brazil)⁴, A. Buzalic (Romania)⁵, R. Burigana (Italy)⁶, N. Palmieri (Italy)⁷, S. Cavallotto (Italy)⁸, and L. Tarquini (Italy)⁹, testify to the importance of re-reading the Council of Nicaea within historical events and theological reflection in an ecumenical perspective, opening up

¹ *La Chiesa Avventista del settimo giorno e Nicea.*

² *As contribuições dos concílios de Nicéia I e Constantinoplalna formulação do Dogma da Trindade.*

³ *Il ministero petrino nella prospettiva dell'unità.*

⁴ *Relendo Nicéia na espiral de nossas tradições.*

⁵ *Cambiamenti antropologici nel mondo contemporaneo e l'impatto sull'evoluzione della chiesa di domani.*

⁶ *Niceia. La storia e l'attualità del Concilio di Niceia.*

⁷ *Sempre Nicea. 325-2025. I Pentecostali e la festa dela Pasqua.*

⁸ *Il Concilio di Nicea nei protestantesimi.*

⁹ *Nicea e il battesimo.*

new research avenues, particularly regarding the continued relevance of the Council of Nicaea and its reception in the 21st century.

In addition to these articles, which further enhance our understanding of the Council of Nicaea, additional contributions will be published in the second issue of *Paralellus* in 2025, once again featuring work by members of the international research project *Sempre Nicea*.

In the "TEMÁTICA LIVRE/FREE SUBJECT" section of *Paralellus*, twelve more articles have been included, authored by scholars affiliated with different Brazilian universities and research groups: A. L. Boccato de Almeida, L. E. F. da Silva and M. H. de Souza (Brazil)¹⁰; C. O. Ribeiro (Brazil)¹¹; A. J. dos Prazeres (Brazil)¹²; C. I. Man Ging and W. Gonzaga (Brazil)¹³; R. Portella and E. P. Nunes Júnior (Brazil)¹⁴; P. S. L. Gonçalves (Brazil)¹⁵; E. P. da Silva and B. C. C. de Araújo (Brazil)¹⁶; C. F. S. da Silva and M. S. F. de Vasconcelos Leite (Brazil)¹⁷; F. dos Santos and G. S. Aragão (Brazil)¹⁸; R. C. Caldeira and V. A. Gama (Brazil)¹⁹; L. S. Pina Neta and L. C. L. Marques (Brazil)²⁰ and B. Melo de Araújo e E. S. Ribeiro²¹.

REFERENCE

H. JEDIN, *Breve storia dei concili. I ventuno concili ecumenici nel quadro della storia della Chiesa*, Brescia, 1978.

¹⁰ *O neoconservadorismo católico brasileiro e a resistência ao Concílio Vaticano II.*

¹¹ *A diversidade dos grupos evangélicos no Brasil e a questão ecumênica.*

¹² *Religião, secularização e linguagem problematizando a partir do pluralismo em Peter Berger.*

¹³ *El buen trato como el arte de prevenir el abuso sexual de menores: fundamentos bíblicos del reconocimiento de la dignidad de la persona.*

¹⁴ *Devoção a Jesus Cristo e culto ao rei grego: uma comparação.*

¹⁵ *Por uma teologia libertadora débil.*

¹⁶ *Os Metodistas e as estratégias da propaganda protestante no Brasil, no início do século XIX.*

¹⁷ *Envelhecimento e espiritualidade: competências para a felicidade.*

¹⁸ *Soul for the soulless.*

¹⁹ *Tradição, família e propriedade.*

²⁰ *Reflexões sobre a mística em Dom Helder Pessoa Camara.*

²¹ *Museus e Memórias Coletivas Religiosas no Brasil: O que nos diz o Cadastro Nacional de Museus?*