

Scala Paradisi św. Jana Klimaka jako arcydzieło duchowości – struktura, styl i cel pisma

Saint John Climacus and his *Scala Paradisi* – elements of presentation, style and purpose

Summary

St. John Climacus also known as John of the Ladder, John Scholasticus and John Sinaites, was a 7th century Christian monk at the monastery on Mount Sinai. He is revered as a saint by the Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches.

Of John's literary output we know only the *Climax* (Latin: *Scala Paradisi*) or *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, composed at the request of John, Abbot of Raithou, a monastery situated on the shores of the Red Sea, and a shorter work *To the Pastor* (Latin: *Liber ad Pastorem*), most likely a sort of appendix to the *Ladder*. The *Ladder* describes how to raise one's soul and body to God through the acquisition of ascetic virtues. Climacus uses the analogy of Jacob's Ladder as the framework for his spiritual teaching. Each chapter is referred to as a „step”, and deals with a separate spiritual subject. There are thirty Steps of the ladder, which correspond to the age of Jesus at his baptism and the beginning of his earthly ministry. Within the general framework of a 'ladder', Climacus' book falls into three sections. The first seven Steps concern general virtues necessary for the ascetic life, while the next nineteen (Steps 8–26) give instruction on overcoming vices and building their corresponding virtues. The final four Steps concern the higher virtues toward which the ascetic life aims. The final rung of the ladder—beyond prayer (*proseuche*), stillness (*hesychia*) and even dispassion (*apatheia*) – is love (*agape*). Originally written simply for the monks of a neighboring monastery, the Ladder swiftly became one of the most widely read and much-beloved books of Byzantine spirituality. This book is one of the most widely-read among Orthodox Christians, especially during the season of Great Lent which immediately precedes Pascha (Easter). It is often read in the trapeza (refectory) in Orthodox monasteries, and in some places it is read in church as part of the Daily Office on Lenten weekdays, being prescribed in the Triodion.

St. John's feast day is March 30 in both the East and West. The Eastern Orthodox Church additionally commemorates him on the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. Many churches are dedicated to him in Russia, including a church and belltower in the Moscow Kremlin. John Climacus was also known as „Scholasticus”, but he is not to be confused with St. John Scholasticus, Patriarch of Constantinople.