

The demarcation problem of knowledge and faith: questions and answers of theology –
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“Faith and reason”, “faith and knowledge” – these duals are still in us in popular observations when they attempt to make sense of the world. Whereas faith belongs into the areas of church, worship and personal piety, reason and knowledge belongs to the areas of the academy, of research and education. This differentiation may satisfy a rough common sense observation, but such simple duals as “faith and reason”, “faith and knowledge” are not capable of solving problems of demarcating borders, territories and boundaries of knowledge, at least not on an academic level and in environments which are not dominated by fundamentalist religiosity.

The presentation will argue that such duals are – at least in Euro-American environments which are shaped by both Jewish-Christian traditions and European modernity – highly deceptive. The passion for insight and education characteristic of non-mystical and non-fundamentalist Jewish and Christian theology and piety discourages all attempts to supplement and support the dual “faith and knowledge” with such duals as “subjective and objective knowing”, “motional and rational attitude”, “relation to the invisible and the visible.” As long-term cooperation between theologians and scientists has shown, even the last dual collapses in regard to quantum theory.

But if we have to deal with a set of sophisticated combinations and mixtures between trust and knowing in both the church and the academy, if in both cases we have to speak of “truth-seeking communities”, how can we differentiate between the cognitive and moral attitudes of the two communities and between their attempts to validate truth-claims and to seek an enhancement of their specific types of knowledge?

The contribution analyses the structure and procedure of truth-seeking communities. It then differentiates the goals of these communities in academic and religious environments in order to describe a contrast that cannot be grasped with the help of the dual “faith and knowing”, and its popular supplements and derivatives.