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Relations between Western and Eastern Churches in the Balkans in context of history of churches separation in Russia

Annotation: The dynamics of the church relationships of Ancient Russia with Western Europe has been essentially revised recently. Now the division of the churches in Russia is even more often referred to the beginning of the XIIth century. In this revision the important role was played by scientific data on relationships between Russia and the South Slavic and the West Slavic states. Therefore the history of the conflict of eastern and western Christian traditions should be studied now against a background of interchurch relations in all their variety. Undoubtedly the course of division of the church in both the western and the eastern parts was everywhere varied, however the interference of the related peoples should be reflected on the history of the interchurch conflict too.

Keywords: separation of churches, anti-latin polemical works, church relationships, schism, inter-church conflict.

Far-away are the days when the separation of churches for Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic was understood literally and simply. In pre-revolutionary Russian and Soviet historiography separation of churches dated from the year 1054 with the proviso that a conflict in time of Photius and Pope Nicholas I preceded it. It was believed that the rupture between the patriarch Michael Cerularius and Cardinal Humbert drew a line beyond which the church was legally and factually turned out to be in a state of conflict separation with all the following consequences.¹ This conclusion was taken in by all Russian historians and became an apriore judgement, and indeed the fact, based on which you can build a whole system of historical knowledge.

Now historians know that it was much harder. The attitude of the Russian Church and Russia as a whole to the church conflict in Constantinople, as well as their position in the inter-church relations was not simple. Anti-latin polemics slowly settled down in Russia.² Situation where the Kiev Metropolia, as a part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, was able to carry on their own, distinct from the Patriarchate's, foreign policy wasn't determined canonically. Certainly, it was agreed with the foreign policy of Kiev princes, but in a church context, it was ecumenical. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the formation of church conflict not only in the context of civil history, but also taking into account a variety of church-political and cultural relationships. The question of relations between the Balkan churches with the Russian church in the context of developing a church confrontation between East and West, as far as we know, hadn't been directly raised yet. However, the church relations themselves regard Russia and the Balkans in

¹ *Синайский А., свящ.* 1) Отношения древнерусской церкви и общества к латинскому Западу (католицизму) (X–XV в.) Церковно-исторический очерк. СПб., 1899; 2) Разбор мнений о католицизме Древней России (X–XV в.). Историко-критический очерк. СПб., 1899.

² *Костромин К. А.* Разделение церквей в контексте взаимоотношений Киевской Руси с Западной Европой во второй половине XI в. // Вестник СПбГУ. Сер. 2. 2010. Вып. 3. С. 85–89.

the eleventh century hadn't been studied well enough. The importance of such issue determined by the fact that, on the one hand, the area of settlement of peoples in the Balkan Peninsula (Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, and others) has become a field of diverse cultural contacts and political ambitions, which provided a polyphony of opinions, as well as a buffer zone that covered the Kiev Russia from the collision of positions, on the other hand, the fact that the relationship, particularly cultural, of the southern Slavs and Russia have been extremely rich. The main thing — do not overlook the fact that the separation of church is not a fact or story, but a very complex and long process, including a lot of mutually repulsive and mutually attractive circumstances.

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Today, the dynamics of relations between the Russian Church and Western churches in the IX–XII centuries represents as following. From 840's and up to the baptism of Prince Vladimir in 988, a gradual process of penetration of Christianity into Russia may be labeled with a chronicle term „choice of faith.” Embassy of the Russians in Ingelheim in 839, the baptism of Prince Askold at 856–860, the arrival of Rurik to Novgorod suspended in 862, the adoption of Christianity by some Igor warriors in Constantinople, the baptism of Olga in Constantinople and bishop Adalbert's visit to Kiev demonstrate the ambivalence of the choice of the Christian cultural tradition.³ This conclusion considers with such, seems to be contradictory, suppositions as Photius baptism of Russia (an opinion of historians of the nineteenth century on the basis of letters of the patriarch Photius), and the subordination of the Russian Church in the mid-tenth century to Magdeburg archbishops (hypothesis of A. Nazarenko).⁴ According to the later Nikon chronicle the baptism of Prince Vladimir was preceded by negotiations of his elder brother Prince Yaropolk with the Pope.⁵ While many historians believe these meetings were nothing more than a diplomatic contacts, for us it is obvious that missionary component of papal diplomacy in the third quarter of the tenth century was quite substantial.

If we carefully consider the circumstances of the baptism of Prince Vladimir, it is distinctive that it depends on troubles of internal politics of the Byzantine empire: the rebellion of Bardas Phocas was the reason to seek assistance from Vladimir, which in its turn led to the adoption of the baptism by him. Such a crucial influence of external factors, influenced the adoption of Christianity f.e. by the Bulgarian King Boris. However, we do not know exactly what were the Russian relations with the Byzantine Empire after the baptism of the prince Vladimir. Taking into account that the basis of ancient Russian literature is the Balkan Slavonic (mainly Bulgarian) roots, I believe that the following baptism of Russia further held primarily with the participation of the Balkan Slavonic clergy.⁶

In the last decade of the tenth century and first third of the eleventh century, judging from Western European sources, mutual relations between Russia and the European countries have experienced considerable growth, which could not affect the formation of church relationships. One fact is interesting: the Byzantine sources, attentive to the pagan Svyatoslav, lose interest in Russia after the baptism of Prince Vladimir, and they even ig-

³ Костромин К. А. Первоначальные церковные контакты Руси с Западной Европой // Клио. №2. СПб., 2010. С. 132–140; Сахаров А. Н. Дипломатия Древней Руси. IX — первая половина X в. М., 1980. С. 295–296.

⁴ Назаренко А. В. Русь и Германия в IX–X вв. // Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. Материалы и исследования. 1991. М., 1994. С. 80–93.

⁵ Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 9. Летописный сборник, именуемый Патриаршей или Никоновской летописью. М., 2000. С. 39.

⁶ Poppe A. *The Rise of Christian Russia*. London, 1982.

nore this fact. In any case, we learn about the Byzantine-Russian church contacts in the end of the tenth century, from anywhere, but not from Byzantine sources.⁷

Of course, the influence of the Byzantine church literature on ancient Russian one, mostly in the south-Slavic mediation, remained crucial. At the same time there are obvious parallels with Western literature: Czech — in the complex of monuments to Boris and Gleb, Latin — in the Sermon on Law and Grace by Metropolitan Hilarion, etc. It is remarkable that holy brothers Cyril and Methodius are widely respected in Russia, though they have very indirect relation to it, but they are greatly respected among the peoples of the Balkans, where their ecumenism had a long extension.⁸

Usually, a landmark date in the process of separation of churches called the year 1054, but it is necessary that neither immediately after, or after the period of more or less extend the Cerullarii — Gumbert's schism has failed to be noticed in Russia. The schism wasn't mentioned in neither chronicles, nor in biographic or, later, in the publicistic monuments of Slavic literature. The only thing this event is echoed in the fate of those nations, was the spread of Byzantine literary-polemical tradition. Even in this question there is a striking piece. The first literary-polemical works written in Russia after the events of 1054 and have reached the mind of ancient Russian readers, have become the message by Metropolitan Nicephorus, who came to Russia in 1108.⁹

History of anti-latin polemics in Russia, as it seemed to be in the XIX century, supposed to confirm the fact of the immediate and whole acceptance of an act of separation of church in 1054. However, upon closer inspection it turned out that a part of the polemical works was written in XII century but not in the eleventh century. These works were ascribed to the authors of the preceding century later. We are talking about „Styazanii with Latin,” ascribed to Met. George, and „The Word of the Latin faith,” supposedly written by reverent st. Theodosius Kiev-Pechorskii. If the first work is clearly influenced by the messages of Met. Nicephorus, making it difficult to clarify the authorship, the circumstances of the second quite easily determinable. Its' author was abbot of the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery Theodosius the Greek, who died in 1154.¹⁰

Two more polemical works: „The message of the unleavened bread” by Met. Leontius Pereyaslavskii and the Epistle of Kiev Met. Ephraim, (was found in the mid 90s of the last century, by I.S. Chichurov) may not appear as examples of ancient Russian controversy. Created in Greek, they were either translated into Slavic only in the thirteenth century (as a message to Met. Ephraim), or were not translated at all. For this reason, they did not have any effect on the separation of the Russian Church and the churches of Western tradition, taking part in theological debates just as the works of Byzantine literature.¹¹

There remains only one work, traditionally mentioned among number of polemic works, it is difficult to determine the period of its' translation into Slavic from Greek, that is the Message by Met. John the Russian to Antipope Clement III. In content it should have been attributed to as ecumenical or reconcile. Not taking into account the readiness

⁷ Древняя Русь в свете зарубежных источников / Под ред. Е. А. Мельниковой. М., 2003. С. 127–159, 259–397.

⁸ Парамонова М. Ю. Святые правители Латинской Европы и Древней Руси. М., 2003. С. 9, 14–16, 360–361; Ingham N. Czech Hagiography in Kiev: The Prisoner Miracles of Boris and Gleb // Die Welt der Slaven. Vierteljahrsschrift für Slavistik. Jg. X, H. 2. Wiesbaden, 1965. S. 166–182; Müller L. Die Werke des Metropoliten Parion. München, 1971. S. 80–86.

⁹ Костромин К. А. Разделение церквей в контексте взаимоотношений... С. 85–89.

¹⁰ Костромин К., свящ. Проблема атрибуции «Слова Феодосия, игумена Печерского, о вере крестьянской и о латынской» // Христианское чтение. №1 (36). СПб., 2011. С. 6–97.

¹¹ Čičurov I. Ein antilatinischer Traktat des Kiever Metropoliten Ephraim // Fontes Minores. Frankfurt/M., 1998. Bd. 10. S. 319–356.

to negotiate with the Pope, it is full of completely unacceptable for the polemical literature epithets and references to the head of the Roman church such as „Godloving”, etc. In any case it should not appear as contributing to the separation of churches.¹²

If you have a view of these circumstances, we can understand many of the facts of church history of the second half of XI century such as: — Visit of Prince Izyaslav to Europe in the years 1073–1076, the emergence of the celebration of removal of relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from Miry to Bari in a couple of years after the events in 1088–1091, Princess Eupraxia Vsevolodovna known as the wife of German Emperor Henry IV Adelhaide was buried in the Kiev-Pechersk monastery in 1109.¹³ After a scandalous divorce in 1094–1095 she went to Russia, where she was in close contact with the Kiev-Pechersk monastery, that saved close cultural contacts with Western Europe.¹⁴

The first steps of separation with churches of Western tradition, that can be clearly recorded, belong to the second decade of the twelfth century. During these years, Met. Nicephorus messages to the princes were created. There is the strong prohibition on contacts with the Latins in it. In these years, have been a crisis in Kiev-Pechorskii Monastery associated with the intervention of the prince and the Metropolitan and led to a sharp reduction in the influence of the monastery. In 1116–1118 was created the first all-Russian Chronicle — Tale of Bygone Years. The chronicle had anti-latin inserts and mentioning of the events, linking Russia with Western Europe were removed.¹⁵

However, conflicting moods slowly get into the public consciousness. In the early years of the century Abbot Daniel was in Jerusalem newly captured by the Crusaders and was very grateful to King Baldwin and the Latin clergy, who provided him wide opportunity to worship the relics of the Holy Land. Three decades later, in a similar trip went abbess St. Euphrosyne of the convent of Polotsk nunery. Her attitude to the Crusaders was similar. The description of the chronicles of a large campaign against the Polovtsian 1111 has clear parallels with the crusader movement. In other words, the first decade of the XII century the process of separation of church took place rather slowly, and the positive experience of the Western Christian tradition has continued to be taken into account.¹⁶

Dynamics of inter-church conflict in Russia in the twelfth century is difficult to trace first of all due to the fact that there are not so many sources for this period as for the history of the previous century, and those being available have the local value. However, if we take into account that the main body of anti-latin literary works was created in the era of the collapse of Kiev Russia, and there was a strong tightening of restrictions on the canonical communications with the bearers of Western Christian tradition. The first examples of a negative attitude towards the Catholics by the population (excluding Novgorod) appears in the 60–70s of the twelfth century.

How do they often write in today's research literature, the separation of the Orthodox world (including the Russian Church) and Catholic became a *fait accompli* after the

¹² Павлов А. Критические опыты по истории древнейшей греко-русской полемики против латинян. СПб., 1878. С. 169–170, 186.

¹³ Повесть временных лет / Подг. текста, перев., статьи и комм. Д. С. Лихачева. СПб., 1999. С. 120.

¹⁴ Янин В. Л. Русская княгиня Олисава-Гертруда и ее сын Ярополк // Нумизматика и эпиграфика. Т. 4. М., 1963. С. 155; Шляпкин И. Русское поучение XI века о перенесении мощей Николая Чудотворца и его отношение к западным источникам. СПб., 1881; Winter E. Russland und das Papsttum. Teil 1. Von der Christianisierung bis zu den Anfängen der Aufklärung. Berlin, 1960. S. 58; Ediger T. Russlands älteste Beziehungen zu Deutschland, Frankreich und der römischen Kurie. Halle, 1911. S. 57–63; Вернадский Г. В. Киевская Русь. Тверь-М., 2003. С. 361–363.

¹⁵ Малето Е. И. Антология хождений русских путешественников. XII–XV века. Исследование, тексты, комментарии. М., 2005.

¹⁶ Творения митрополита Никифора / Изд. подгот. С. М. Полянским. М., 2006.

capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. This event received considerable attention in Russia, and taking into account the complexity that began at the same period in the Baltic, where the German crusader orders at that time were confronted not so much by pagan Finno-Ugric tribes, but by Russian squads of Kukenoys, Gertsige, Kolyvan' (Tallinn) and Yuryev (Tartu), on the history of the conflict the point can be set.¹⁷

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You can pay attention to the fact that outlined dynamics of the conflict relations between the Russian and the Roman church is quite different from the dynamics shown by the history of confrontation between Constantinople and Rome. Traditionally, the story begins with the schism of Photius in the second half of the 9th century. Since the beginning of the tenth century, their relationship seemed to have started a few to improve. In this context, in the early eleventh century it is usually remembered, when the name of the Patriarch and the Pope sometimes disappear from the diptychs of Rome and Constantinople (respectively) churches. The events of 1053–1054 years is usually understood as the last and final stage in the division of the churches.¹⁸

In this connection it is necessary to note that certain circumstances preclude to recognize the schism in 1054 as the reason of the final rupture between East and West. Byzantine historical works of the second half of the eleventh century are silent about anathema.¹⁹ Since the task of a medieval historian consisted of comprehension of past events and the degree of alignment of their importance in the course of history and the political status quo of the era of writing of historical works. In addition, the heat of controversy, fixed in the 1050's, reduced in the 1060's, so much that Byzantium not only did not react negatively to the beginning of the Crusades, but even took part in the first campaign.²⁰

The fact of anathemas pronouncing in 1054 demanded its retraction, which did not happen in the next decades despite the ecumenical position of the Emperor Alexis Comnenus. Literary and theological controversy broke out again in the years 1113–1115, but fell silent again until 1160-ies. At the same time from the 1180-ies there have been recorded evidence of an armed confrontation between Orthodox and Catholics, in which the religious factor is playing an important role in substantiating the claims of the conflicting parties. As you know, the last and strongest argument in favor of the effectiveness of anathemas in 1054 was the capture of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204.²¹

It is important to note that the dynamics of the conflict with the Western church is different, if we talk about the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Russian metropolis.

It is hardly possible that Russia alone and independently perform such a independent church policy. Without foreign support of neighboring states that would be impossible, but beyond that there must have been a people that is close to the culture and level of development, where the church conflict should develop in similar pace. Such parallels we can see in ways of inter-church relations among the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula.²²

¹⁷ Византия и Запад (950-летие схизмы христианской церкви, 800-летие захвата Константинополя крестоносцами). Тезисы докладов XVII Всероссийской научной сессии византинистов. М., 2004; *Тихомиров М. Н.* Борьба русского народа с немецкими интервентами в XII–XV в. М., 1941.

¹⁸ *Пузовић В.* Црквене и политичке прилике у доба великог раскола 1054 године. Београд, 2008.

¹⁹ *Бармин А. В.* Полемика и схизма. М., 2006. С. 213–268.

²⁰ *Успенский Ф. И.* Очерки по истории византийской образованности. История крестовых походов. М., 2001.

²¹ *Бармин А. В.* Полемика и схизма. С. 268–477.

²² *Флоря Б. Н.* У истоков религиозного раскола славянского мира (XIII в.). СПб., 2004. С. 8–39.

It is the most important, the difficulty in solving of this problem in the Balkans highlighted the special geographical and ethno-cultural situation.

In my opinion, similar dynamics of the confrontation between the two Christian traditions — east and west — was observed in the Balkan peoples. In the ninth century in the Balkans there was almost the same situation as in Russia of uncertainty in the management of the church with characteristic ambivalence of religious traditions but more intense because of the immediate neighborhood of the Balkan peoples with Byzantium, on the one hand, and with the Western Christian world, on the other. The influence of the Roman church was carried out mainly through the church administration, as evidenced by the decisions of Split synodes 925 and 928 relating to the issues of canonical obedience by Dalmatian church structure and the language of worship. Byzantine influence penetrated by domestic relations with the Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula, realizing itself in hagiography, and used the Greek as the language of worship in a part of territory. At this conciliatory attitude was manifested in the fact that even Constantine Porphyrogenitus mentioned the participation of priests in the Roman baptism of the South Slavs (Croats and Serbs), with the permission of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. This story resembles the plot of „choice of faith” from Tale of Bygone Years. If at the end of the tenth century in Croatia Catholic influence prevailed, then in the Serbian lands you can see the co-existence of the Western Archdiocese of Dubrovnik and the episcopal office, subordinate to the Ohrid Archbishopric. In the monument of the second half of the twelfth century chronicles by pop Dukljanin there are almost no traces of the Orthodox-Catholic conflict. The only subject on which you should pay attention — the story of the death of Duklyanskii Prince John Vladimir, that, in our opinion, has direct parallels with the story of the murder of Old Russian princes Boris and Gleb in 1015. Until now, pointed out that the ancient story is connected with a similar story of Czech Prince Vyacheslav and Scandinavian legends about the „holy kings”.²³

Anti-latin polemical tradition developed in the Balkans, almost simultaneously, and similarly to the Kiev Russia. As in Russia, the first polemical message was written by Archbishop Leo of Okhrid in the middle of the eleventh century, and then only in the late XI — early XII century by Archbishop of Okhrid Theophylact, when it began more wide spreading of anti-latin sentiments. It is reflected in the hagiographic literature, where the idea of ownership conflict came with the direct participation of St. Theophylact. Therefore, upto the twelfth century, multi-confessional environment in the Balkans can be best defined by saying, well articulated by L. Margetić: Christianity in the Slavic lands „came from the east with the full consent of the Pope, and... at the organization of religious life the crucial role in it the Pope played with the full consent of the emperor”.²⁴

With some adjustment for a kind of ethno-political situation, this formula can be attributed to Russia. Since it was remoted from the centers of both Western and Byzantine traditions of the church in Rome and Constantinople, it did not play so significant role in the selection of church tradition — Russia had to deal with this issue itself. But this formula accurately reflects the internal philosophical attitude to both traditions in the ancient Russian princes in politics, which may be said in modern language as following: is defined as a Christian confessional tolerance.

²³ Принятие христианства народами Центральной и Юго-Восточной Европы и крещение Руси / Отв. ред. Г. Г. Литаврин. М., 1988; Христианство в странах Восточной, юго-восточной и центральной Европы на пороге второго тысячелетия / Отв. ред. Б. Н. Флоря. М., 2002.

²⁴ Христианство в странах Восточной, юго-восточной и центральной Европы. С. 337; *Подскалки Г. Средневековна теолошка књижевност у Бугарској и Србији (865–1459)*. Београд, 2010. С. 298–299, 303.

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