

Christians as “Tertium Genus” in the Context of Church Jurisdiction

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Abstract. *This paper aims to analyse the question of whether Christians perceived themselves as a distinct ethnicity in the first centuries and to discuss the relationship between Christian identity and ethnic/national identity, especially in the context of church organization. In the first part of this paper, we are going to present the arguments of the two ecclesiological conceptions as well as the historical circumstances that induced the formulation and systematization of their argumentation. The jurisdictional disputes of the 20th century were the factors that intensified the controversy over national identity as a factor in church jurisdiction. In the second part of the paper, we are going to discuss the concept of Christians as the "third race" in early Christian and pagan sources, in order to answer the question whether, according to early Christian theology, church identity was excluding ethnic identity. It is concluded that Christians were a "third race" exclusively in religious terms, in relation to Greeks and Jews, and that they were not summoned to reject their own ethnicity and to form a new nation on religious grounds. Organizing dioceses on a national basis, being in a collision with the canonical territorial principle, was thought to serve the Church's main purpose - the salvation of people, in the sense that believers had the opportunity to have bishops who could understand their mentality, language, and customs.*

Keywords: Russian orthodox church abroad, nation, diaspora, ethnophyletism, 34th Apostolic Rule.

Introduction

Identification of the Church and people* intensified during the Ottoman era. There was no longer a state that supported the Church. The patriarch was given the title of "millet bashi," meaning that he became both the spiritual and political leader of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, instead of the empire, people became the factor which was giving legitimacy to the episcopal authority and also the primary source of church finances. In addition, the Reformation in the West initiated the elimination of barriers between Church and civil authorities. These ideas found fertile ground in the Orthodox Churches in the light of the historical conditions in which they (Churches) existed.¹

In the eighteenth century the French Revolution took place, and one of its consequences was the transfer of a source power from God to the Nation. The change of understanding of the source of power is expressed in

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¹ Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 19.

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the *Declaration of Human and Civil Rights of 26 August 1789*, which states in Article 3 that: “The principle of any Sovereignty lies primarily in the Nation. No corporate body, no individual may exercise any authority that does not expressly emanate from it.” This change forced the Church to revise its relationship with political structures, and since then the people became a source of ecclesiastical authority also. This influence was reflected in the *Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs 1848*, which emphasized that the whole nation was the guardian of the Christian faith and truth, not any bishop, not even the whole clergy.² Identification of the Church with the new repository of political power - the people - resulted in the identification of the Church with nationality, which became an integral part of the identity of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.³

The question of nation and nationality as a factor in Church organization became the focal point of theological interest due to challenges to the unity of the Church in the XX-XXI centuries. First of all, we refer to the jurisdictional disputes among the local Churches within so-called Orthodox Diaspora, regarding the organization of the Church at traditionally non-orthodox territories which were not under the direct jurisdiction of any local Orthodox Church. Due to tragic historical circumstances (WWI, Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, WWII), many Orthodox Christians of different nationalities immigrated to the mentioned territories. The identity crisis of Orthodox immigrants in a new, non-Orthodox environment contributed to drawing attention of theologians to the question of the role of nationality in Church life. Exiled from the countries which had enabled them security as the members of the Orthodox church, into traditionally non-orthodox territories, Orthodox people had to find the way to preserve their religious identity. They were forced to define the essence of being an Orthodox Christian. Some did this by focusing on the Eucharist: sharing the same Cup signified belonging to the same Orthodox faith. Hence the insistence of some theologians on the “Eucharistic ecclesiology” which implied the territorial principle of ecclesiastical order: Orthodox believers of one territory must have had one and only bishop, and therefore to participate in the same Eucharist.⁴ Another way to preserve a religious identity was to identify it with ethnic or national identity. Many accepted this model, which resulted in numerous ethnic jurisdictions in the Diaspora.⁵ Undoubtedly, the

² *Ibidem*, p. 85-86.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 21-22.

⁴ One of the most prominent Orthodox theologians, John Zizioulas, directly links the Eucharistic ecclesiology and the territorial principle of church organization: *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001, p. 105-106.

⁵ Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness*, p. 129.

development of historical criticism and the social sciences also contributed to the rethinking of the Church-nation relationship.⁶

As has rightly been observed, this issue goes beyond the scope of purely “jurisdictional debates” and concerns the fundamental questions of Orthodox ecclesiology: the unity of the Church and its nature. Thus, the two ecclesiological currents, whose arguments are primarily a concern of this paper - territorial and national - have fundamentally diverged in their understanding of the unity of the Church and the way in which this unity should be manifested.⁷ A different interpretation of the unity of the Church resulted in a different interpretation of the canons that establish the basic principles of Church canonical organization: 34th Apostolic Canon and 9th rule of the Antioch Local Council. These canons speak of the assembly of bishops presided over by the primate as a fundamental principle of ecclesiastical organization, i.e. they establish a congregational organization of the Church.⁸ With the apparent similarity of the two rules, the 34th Apostolic Rule speaks of the bishops of “every people” (ἐκάστου ἔθνους) who “should know the first among them and regard him as the head”, while the 9th Antioch Rule speaks of “the bishops of every province(ἐκάστην ἐπαρχίαν)” who “must be aware that the bishop presiding in the metropolis (the civil capital) has charge of the whole province”.⁹ From different interpretations of these rules and their relationship, two ecclesiological conceptions emerged in Russian theology at the beginning of the 20th century: ethnic or national, and territorial or local.

1. Two ecclesiological currents in the 20th-century Russian theology

For the first time, these two ecclesiological positions came in conflict at the 1906 pre-council session regarding the restoration of the autocephaly of the Church of Georgia. At the session dealing with the organization of church in the Caucasus on June 2, 1906, the bishop of Imeretin Leonid and the bishop of Sukhumi Kirion (Sadzaglishvili, the future catholicos) insisted on the restoration of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church precisely based

⁶ Cyril Novorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness*, p. 2.

⁷ Владислав Пузовић, „Историјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, (Ph.D. thesis), Православни богословски факултет Универзитета у Београду, 2012, p. 132-38.

⁸ Атанасије Јевтић, *Свештени канони Цркве*, Београд, Митрополије и Епархије: Црногорско-Приморска, Дабро-Босанска, Новограчаничка, Захумско-Херцеговачка и Приморска, Православни богословски факултет Београдског универзитета, Манастир Тврдош, 2005, p. 45.

⁹ Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church, Volume II*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1876, p. 69.

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on the 34th Apostolic Rule, which was, according to their interpretation, giving every nationality the right to have its own church with a national hierarchy.¹⁰

The attitude of the members of the territorial ecclesiological conception was that ἔθνος in the 34th Apostolic Rule signified territorial locality, not ethnicity, and that in this case it was impossible to restore Church of Georgia's autocephaly until Georgia regained its statehood. The main leader of this conception was Nikolai Nikanorovich Glubokovsky,¹¹ who also published a short paper entitled “On explication of the 34th Apostolic Rule”¹² on this occasion. Referring to the Scottish archaeologist William M. Ramsay and the ancient historian Cassius Dion, Glubokovsky stated that the Romans called the provinces (ἐπαρχία) by the names of the people (ἔθνος) who lived there, and that in late Greek ἔθνος became the term referring to “the provinces of the Roman state”. Thus, ἔθνος did not mean anything other than a territorial locality.¹³ Therefore, Glubokovsky thought that the 34th Apostolic Rule could not be used as an argument for establishing an autocephalous church based on ethnicity.

The leader of the second stream was Nikolai Zaozersky.¹⁴ The debate between these two scholars, Glubokovsky and Zaozersky, was published in

¹⁰ „Национальный принцип в Церкви“, in *Прибавления к Церковным ведомостям*, № 47, 1906, p. 55-58.

¹¹ Nikolai Nikanorovich Glubokovsky (1863-1937), doctor of theology, member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (1909), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1929), professor of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Honorary Member of the Kiev Theological Academy, Kazan Theological Academy, Moscow Theological Academy, Moscow and St. Petersburg Archaeology institutes, church historian, biblist. In 1921 he left Russia, and after a short stay in Finland, Germany, and Czechoslovakia, arrived in Belgrade, where he had lived since August 1923, and taught at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology until May 1923. The difficult living conditions in Serbia forced him to move to Sofia, where he teaches at the newly formed Faculty of Theology. Being in emigration, he did not belong to any faction of the Russian Church, speaking at interconfessional meetings as a representative of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. He has lectured twice at the Institute of St. Sergius in Paris (summer 1925 and autumn-winter 1928-9). In 1935 he was elected an honorary member of the Institute of St. Sergius. Т. А. Богданова, А. К. Клементьев, «Николай Никанорович Глубоковский», in *Православная Энциклопедия*, том 11, Москва, 2006, p. 601-10.

¹² *Прибавления к Церковным ведомостям*, № 10, 1907, p. 319-20.

¹³ Николай Н. Глубоковский, „К толкованию 34-го апостольского правила“, in *Прибавления к Церковным ведомостям*, № 10, 1907, p. 319-20.

¹⁴ Nikolai Alexandrovich Zaozersky (1851-1919), church historian and canonist, professor of ecclesiastical law at the Moscow Theological Academy, since 1911 an honorary member of this institution. He addressed issues of the history of the relationship of church law with state law, matrimonial law, and issues of church judiciary. Свящ. Александр Бергащ, „Николай Александрович“, in *Заозерский Православная Энциклопедия*, том 19, Москва, 2008, p. 600-06.

the *Богословский вестник* journal. Zaozersky sought to prove that during the first three centuries, when the collection of Apostolic Rules was created, the Church was adapting its organization to the ethnicity of the newly baptized.¹⁵ Only later, in the period of the Ecumenical Councils when Christianity first became only legitimate and then state religion, the Church adapted its organization to the administrative division of the Roman Empire. This change was reflected in the introduction of a metropolitan church organization system analogous to the state provincial system,¹⁶ and in the 9th Antioch Rule, which used the term “ἐπαρχία” instead of the term “ἔθνος” for the metropolitan area.¹⁷ Zaozersky aimed to show that this territorial (local) principle of organization was not dogma, but that it had been accepted in order to harmonize the Church organization with the state organization, and that during its history the Church had blessed other models of organization before, including national ones. According to this, Zaozersky defined the Church of the first three centuries as “a spiritual covenant or federation of national, self-governing churches”, thus identifying “ἔθνος” of the 34th Apostolic Rule with national autocephalous churches.¹⁸ Thus, based on the rule 34 of the Apostles, Zaozersky claimed that the Georgian Church could renew its autocephaly on an ethnic basis, without strictly determining the territorial scope of its primate jurisdiction.¹⁹

Discussion on the national and territorial principle continued at the All-Russian Church Council 1917-18. Proponents of the restoration of the patriarchal structure in the Russian Church, which was abolished in 1721 at the time of Peter I, referred to the 34th Apostolic Canon, especially the part saying that “bishops of every nation should know the first among them and

¹⁵Николай А. Заозерский, „Точный смысл и значение Апостольского 34-го правила: (По поводу ст.: Глубоковский Н. Н. «Смысл 34-го Апостольского правила.)“, in *Богословский вестник* 3, № 12, 1907, р. 774-775.; Николай А. Заозерский, „Топографический смысл 34-го Апостольского правила“, in *Богословский вестник* 2, № 6, 1907, р. 351-353.

¹⁶Николай А. Заозерский, „Точный смысл и значение Апостольского 34-го правила“, р. 771, 780-781.

¹⁷Николай А. Заозерский, „Топографический смысл 34-го Апостольского правила“, р. 345.; Николай А. Заозерский, „Точный смысл и значение Апостольского 34-го правила“, р. 783.

¹⁸Николай А. Заозерский, „Точный смысл и значение Апостольского 34-го правила“, р. 779.; Obvious anachronism, because nations in the modern sense of the word can did not exist in antiquity, as sociological research argues: Antoni D. Smit, *Nacionalni identitet*, Beograd, Biblioteka XX vek, 2010, р. 22.; Benedict Anderson, *Nacija: zamišljena zajednica*, Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 1990, р. 18.

¹⁹Николай А. Заозерский, „Топографический смысл 34-го Апостольского правила“, р. 353-356.

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consider him as the head,” recognising the patriarch of local national Church in the term “first bishop”.²⁰

The opponents of the restoration of the patriarch's institution warned that ethnic interpretation of the 34th Apostolic Rule could lead to the separatist aspirations of orthodox nations living in the territory of the Russian Empire: e.g. Ukrainians, or the people of Siberia.²¹ The archpriest Nikolai Pavlovich Dobronravov stood out among them.²² He cited the example of the church in Georgia, which had already seceded itself on March 12, 1917²³ and proclaimed the restoration of the Georgian Patriarchate on its own initiative based on national interpretation of the 34th Apostolic Rule,²⁴ and

²⁰*Деяния Священного Собора Православной Российской Церкви 1917-1918 гг., том 2*, Москва, 1994, p. 344-45, 371-72, 381-83, 411-12, 424, 431.

²¹Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискуссия о территориальном и национальном принципах церковного устройства в русском православии XX века», in *Историческая и социально-образовательная мысль. Том 9, № 5/1*, 2017, p.112.

²²Nikolai Pavlovich Dobronravov (1861-1937). The latter Archbishop is Vladimir and Suzdal, priest-martyr. „Сященномученик Николай (Добронравов), Архиепископ владимирский и суздальский“, accessed on January 2nd 2020, <http://days.pravoslavie.ru/Life/life4862.htm>

²³Арсений В. Соколов, „Государство и Православная церковь в России, февраль 1917 — январь 1918 гг.“, Ph.D. thesis, Российский государственный педагогический университет имени А. И. Герцена, Санкт-Петербург, 2014, p. 337.

²⁴On March 27, 1917, the Provisional Government issued an act "On the establishment of the legal consequences associated with the restoration of the autocephaly of the ancient Orthodox Georgian Church with the Mchet catholicos as the head" (*ЖурналъзаседанийВременногоуправительства, том 1.*, редактор Б. Ф. Додонов, Москва, РОССПЭН, 2001, p. 178.) stating that: “The Provisional Government recognizes the autocephalous Georgian Church a national-Georgian character, without restricting it to a specific territory. All Orthodox Russian parishes and other non-Georgian parishes remain under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Russian Church. " There are two important points in this act that need to be addressed. The first is that autocephaly is recognized not over a particular territory but over a nationality. It was decided that in Georgia the Russian parishes would be governed by the Russian Orthodox Church, with each believer being able to decide which church structure he wanted to belong to. Self-proclaimed catholicos locum tenens bishop Leonid of Guria-Mingreli, dissatisfied with this decision, protested on March 29 the Provisional Government and president of Duma, insisting that the national principle of autocephaly, i.e. the possibility for Russian Church to continue to have its own parishes in Georgia, was unprecedented in history, and that it contradicted the canons, demanding recognition of Georgian autocephaly over the entire territory of Georgia, and not just for those believers who choose to belong to the Georgian Church. There is obviously a selective reference to canonical rules, which will also be the case in the latter jurisdictional controversies. Another important point is that by this time the Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire was called "Rossiskaya", and since March 27, 1917, there were "Russkaya" and "Georgian", with the official church headed by the Synod continued to name itself " Rossiskaya". Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискуссия о территориальном и национальном принципах церковного устройства в русском православии XX века», p. 111-112.;

whose delegates did not attend the Council.²⁵ Another prominent participant in the discussion P. Kudryavtsev spoke on this occasion as follows: “The canons speak not of the patriarch, but of the bishop of the first throne, or of the first bishop, whom the bishops of every nation should respect as their head. If we apply this canon to the Russian Church, based on it every Orthodox people living within the borders of the Russian state can claim the right of a separate primate: how many nations—so many primates.”²⁶ It did not take long to confirm these assumptions.²⁷ Separatist tendencies that prevailed in the country after February 1917 were reflected in the Church even before the beginning of the Council (started on August 15th, 1917), in the form of pretensions to the autonomy or even the autocephaly of individual dioceses. Apart from Georgia, the strongest were the separatist movements in Ukraine.²⁸

The next chapter in the controversy surrounding the local and national model of ecclesiastical jurisdiction was opened, with particular sharpness, by the jurisdictional litigation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Moscow in the 20th century.

Namely, in the 1920s the Patriarchate of Constantinople began developing a theory according to which all mission territories, meaning territories that did not fall under the jurisdiction of the existing autocephalous Orthodox churches, in accordance with the Rule 28 of the Chalcedon Council, belonged to the jurisdiction of Constantinople.²⁹ Coryphaeus of this ideology was the patriarch of Constantinople (1921-1923), latter the patriarch of Alexandria (1926-1935) Meletius Metaxakis.³⁰ The dispute arose over dioceses whose mother-Church was the Moscow Patriarchate, which, due to adverse historical circumstances (Bolshevik Revolution, civil war), had lost its connection with the dioceses in Eastern Europe and the Baltic (Poland, Estonia, Finland). In order to regulate their canonical status, these dioceses

Арсений В. Соколов, „Государство и Православная церковь в России, февраль 1917 — январь 1918 гг.“, р. 342-344.

²⁵ *Деяния Священного Собора Православной Российской Церкви 1917-1918 гг., том 2*, р. 348.

²⁶ *Деяния Священного Собора Православной Российской Церкви 1917-1918 гг., том 2*, р. 419.

²⁷ Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискуссия о территориальном и национальном принципах церковного устройства в русском православии XX века,» р.112.; Арсений В.Соколов, „Государство и Православная церковь в России, февраль 1917 — январь 1918 гг.“, р. 332-334.

²⁸ Арсений В.Соколов, „Государство и Православная церковь в России, февраль 1917 — январь 1918 гг.“, р. 332-334.

²⁹ Сергей В. Троицкий, «О границах распространения права власти Константинопольской Патриархии на "диаспору," in *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, №11, ноябрь 1947, р. 34-44.

³⁰ Алексей С. Бувеский, „Патриарх Мелетий IV и Русская Православная Церковь,“ in *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, № 3, 1953, р. 31-32.

addressed the Patriarch of Constantinople, who received them as autonomous churches under his jurisdiction (the Orthodox Church in Estonia and the Orthodox Church in Finland in 1923), or recognized their autocephaly (Orthodox Church in Poland 1924).³¹ The granting of autonomies and autocephalies to the dioceses considered by the Moscow Patriarchate as its integral part was regarded in Moscow as an invasion of the canonical territory of another diocese, in this case the Moscow Patriarchate. It was the beginning of a conflict that would continue throughout the twentieth century. The climax of the conflict occurred in 1931, when the Patriarch Photios II of Constantinople, on the petition of the Metropolitan in charge of the administration of Russian churches in Western Europe, Eulogius Georgiyevsky, received Russian Western European diocese under his jurisdiction.³² Thus, it could be rightly said that attitudes regarding the local and national principle in the interwar period were profiled, mainly, by the jurisdictional affiliation of the authors.³³ Accordingly, in this period we can distinguish two ecclesiological conceptions:

- 1) of theologians of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (“karlovčani”³⁴), who were close to the views of the theologians concentrated around the Moscow Patriarchate. This concept was characterized by the relativization of the territorial principle as the canonical norm of Church organization, the denial of its dogmatic character, and the emphasis on the national model as the norm of Church organization.³⁵
- 2) of Constantinople theologians, who were close to the views of theologians of the Russian Exarchate in Western Europe (because they justified their transfer under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1931 by preserving the territorial principle, assuming that the entire Diaspora

³¹ Епископ Иоанн Максимович, „Состояние Вселенского Патриархата. Доклад свт. Иоанна Шанхайского на II Всезарубежном Соборе,“ accessed on January 7th 2020 <https://pravoslavie.ru/115831.html>

³² Д. Н. Никитин, „Западноевропейский экзархат Русской православной церкви,“ in *Православная энциклопедия, том 19*, Москва, 2008, p. 610-612.; Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Каноническое положение высшей церковной власти в СССР и за границей*, Типография пр. Иова Почаевского в св. Троицком монастыре, 1948, p. 112-194.; Владислав Пузовић, „Историко-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, п. 256-271.

³³ Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискуссия о территориальном и национальном принципах церковного устройства в русском православии XX века,“р. 113.

³⁴ Russian Orthodox Church Abroad headquarters were first in Sremski Karlovci, from where it moved to Munich, and then in 1948 to New York.

³⁵ Владислав Пузовић, „Историко-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, p. 136-138.

belonged to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople),³⁶ so-called "eulogians".³⁷ The characteristic of this conception was the ontologization of the territorial (local) principle in the ecclesiastical structure, and the view that because of its dogmatic significance it had to be preserved in all circumstances.³⁸

Therefore, it can be said that both concepts used theological argumentation to justify the actions of their church structures: 1) the formation of the church administration of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in the territory of other local Churches on a purely ethnic basis in Karlovci, without territorial determinants (in the case of "karlovčani"), or the view that jurisdiction over a particular ethnic community in the Diaspora belonged to the mother-Church, the point of view which Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and Moscow ecclesiastical authorities agreed on; 2) the transition of the Russian Western European Exarchate under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to which, according to the ecclesiological argument of Patriarch Meletius and his successors, belonged the jurisdiction over bishops in all territories outside the canonical territories of the Orthodox local Churches. From this point of view, the subordination of these bishops to another local Church would be treated as an invasion of the canonical territory of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Different views of the Church organization in Diaspora arose from a different understanding of the unity of the Church. In Moscow and Karlovci, they insisted that every national autocephalous church should have had jurisdiction over its diaspora, while in Paris they insisted on a territorial model, meaning that not only the unity of the faith was sufficient for the unity of the Church, but necessary was the unity of Church structure as well.³⁹ Constantinople's provenance theologians were inclined to attach a dogmatic and ontological meaning to the territorial/local principle, insisting on that

³⁶ Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискуссия о территориальном и национальном принципах церковного устройства в русском православии XX века“, р. 113.

³⁷ Per Exarchate leader Eulogius Georgiyevsky (1868-1946). Т. А. Богданова, А. К. Клементьев, В. И. Косик, „Евлогий (Георгиевский Василий Семенович)“, in *Православная энциклопедия. том 17*, Москва, 2008, р. 161-68.

³⁸ It should be noted that the difference in ecclesiological conceptions between Paris and Karlovci ecclesiastical authorities can only be discussed since the 1930s. "The views of the Karlovci administration of the Russian Church Abroad and the Church administration in Paris, led by Metropolitan Eulogius, on the organization of the Orthodox Church in the diaspora (specifically, in the territories of Western Europe), during the 1920s, did not differ fundamentally. The views of both sides came from the national concept of church organization." Владислав Пузовић, „Историјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, р. 256.

³⁹ Владислав Пузовић, „Историјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, р. 133-136

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there could be no place for national principle in the Church's organization, since in Christ “there is no Greek, no barbarian, no Scythian” (Col.3:11). According to the territorial principle, in one place, in one territory, however small (parish, diocese, metropolis, patriarchy) there could only exist one church, in terms of a church organization, expressed through the unity of the priesthood.⁴⁰ The followers of the territorial current attached importance of dogmatic character also to the 8th canon of the First Ecumenical Council, which forbade “two bishops in one city”. Consequently, the situation in the Diaspora, where in one place, in one city were multiple bishops of different national jurisdictions, was unacceptable. In contrast, proponents of the “ethnic approach” believed that each ethnicity/nation had the right to have its own first hierarch and its own Church, whose jurisdiction didn't have to be defined solely by territorial boundaries, but by the ethnicity of the believers.⁴¹

The greatest contribution to the elaboration and systematization of the position of eulogians was made by archpriest Alexander Schmemmann.⁴² Schmemmann's thesis stated that the territorial principle stemmed from the very essence of the Church.⁴³ The purpose of the Church was that the faithful of one area or city, regardless of all differences and divisions, achieved a new unity of faith and love in the Church. Replacing that unity with the unity based on natural characteristics (nationality, language, etc.) was reducing the Church to phenomena that were “of this world”.⁴⁴ The principle of territoriality - one bishop in one city - was the core that had remained unchanged in spite of all the changes in the forms of Church life, and therefore the betrayal of that principle was the betrayal of the very nature of the Church. Moreover, the canons insisted on maintaining this principle “in all conditions” because the unity of the people of one place, regardless of their natural differences, was a concrete embodiment of the unity that Christ was achieving through his Church - unity in the faith and love of people who had one Lord, one faith,

⁴⁰ Владислав Пузовић, „Историјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, р. 66.

⁴¹ Вадим Г. Суворов, „Дискусија о територијалном и националном принципима црквеног уређења у руском православљу XX века“, р. 110.

⁴² Владислав Пузовић, „О неким еклисиолошким темама у руској богословској мисли XX века“, in *Српска теологија у двадесетом веку: истраживачки проблеми и резултати*, књ. 19, 2015, р. 53.

⁴³ Александар Шмеман, „О неопапизму“, in *Собрание статей*, сост. Е. Ю. Дорман, Москва, Русский путь, 2009, р. 347. Printed in *Церковный вестник Западно-Европейского русского православного экзархата*, №5(26), Париж, 1950.

⁴⁴ Александар Шмеман, „Церков, эмиграция, национальность“, in *Собрание статей*, сост. Е. Ю. Дорман, Москва, Русский путь, 2009, р. 309-310. Printed in *Церковный вестник Западно-Европейского русского православного экзархата*, №10, Париж, 1948.

one baptism (Eph. 4: 5).⁴⁵ This unity, not the unity based on a national basis, was the essence of the Church that its canonical structure was to reflect.⁴⁶

For the occurrence of this “canonical anomaly” Fr. Alexander condemned “church nationalism”. He placed the appearance of this phenomenon in the ninth century in the context of the baptism of Slavs. Namely, baptism was not only intended to enlighten with true faith but also had political purpose of national self-determination and was therefore carried out with the assistance of state authority. The Byzantines believed that through baptism the Slavic nations were becoming a part of the Byzantine Orthodox Empire. Since this empire had no longer been supranational, but Greek - this theory was perceived as Greek church-political imperialism by newly baptized nations. This led to a “clash of nationalisms”. The consequence of this conflict was the aspiration of the Slav states for ecclesiastical independence or autocephaly that was supposed to contribute to the preservation of political independence.⁴⁷

Similar views were expressed, somewhat later, by Bishop Cassian Bezobrazov,⁴⁸ I. Alexandrov,⁴⁹ and Sergei Sergeevich Verhovskiy.⁵⁰

Another prominent figure in the eulogian concept was Fr. John Meyendorff. Meyendorff's thesis was that multiple national bishops existing in one place was in contrast with the very nature of the Church, because just as one body had one head, so the church of one place, since it was the Body of Christ, should have had only one head - one bishop. According to Meyendorff, the canonical provisions regarding this matter were crystal clear and prohibited the existence of multiple bishops in one place (canon 8 of the

⁴⁵ Александар Шмеман, „Церков и церковное устройство: по поводу книги прот. Польского, ‘Каноническое положение высшей церковной власти в СССР и за границей’,” in *Собрание статей*, сост. Е. Ю. Дорман, Москва, Русский путь, 2009, р. 318-319. Printed in *Церковный вестник Западно-Европейского русского православного экзархата*, Париж, 1949.

⁴⁶ Александар Шмеман, „Спор о Церкви,” in *Собрание статей*, сост. Е. Ю. Дорман, Москва, Русский путь, 2009, р. 341-342. Printed in *Церковный вестник Западно-Европейского русского православного экзархата*, №2(23), Париж, 1950.

⁴⁷ Александар Шмеман, „Спор о Церкви,” р. 323.

⁴⁸ Еп. Кассиан (Безобразов), „Что дал русской православной эмиграции Экзархат Вселенского Престола,” in *Вестник русского студенческого христианского движения* 56, 1960, р. 9-10.

⁴⁹ И. Александров, „О значении Русского Экзархата Вселенского Патриарха в западной Европе,” in *Вестник русского студенческого христианского движения*, 56, 1960, р. 18.

⁵⁰ С. С. Верховский, „Единая Церковь или раскол,” in *Церковный вестник западноевропейской епархии*, 20, 1949, р. 4-13.

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First Ecumenical Council, canon 39 of the Fifth-Sixth Council).⁵¹ Therefore, denying territorial principle through the existence of parallel jurisdictions - Russian, Serbian, Romanian, Constantinople – Meyendorff called “canonical chaos”, “formally racist”, “heretical”, identifying it with the heresy of “phyletism” condemned by the Council in Constantinople in 1872. He even proposed that the future Ecumenical Council should adopt a new canon defining the following:

"In areas and countries where two or more autocephalous Orthodox churches send their clergy for permanent service, the canonical order requires the establishment of a united church. Procedures that must be followed should be defined by consultation between all concerned groups at general or local level. Language pluralism or tradition will be retained and guaranteed wherever necessary, by the formation of appropriate structures organized on a temporary basis."⁵²

For “Christ came to establish on earth a new and holy nation, the *tertium genus*, a kingdom that is not 'of this world'. A church whose sole function is to preserve ethnic identification loses the mark of a true 'Church of God'.”⁵³

Leaders of the second, we would say “ethnic ecclesiology”, were the representatives of the administration of the ROCA and the Moscow Patriarchate. Essentially, the position of this ecclesiology was based on the national concept of ecclesiastical jurisdiction which stated that each local Church was competent to govern its diaspora, and on denial of the dogmatic character of the territorial principle. The territorial principle had official character, because it served the internal, spiritual purpose of the Church - bringing people to Christ.

An illustrative example of their argument are the works of ROCA Archpriest Michael Polsky, as a part of his discussion with Schmemmann. The discussion began with the publication of Polsky’s book *Canonical position of the supreme church authority in the USSR and abroad* published by the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville in 1948.⁵⁴ A criticism of the chapter discussing the canonical status of the Russian Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Western Europe was given by Schmemmann in the article "Church and church

⁵¹ John Meyendorff, „One bishop in one city“, in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 5, no. 1-2, 1961, p. 55-60.

⁵² Јован Мајендорф, „Савремени проблеми православног канонског права“, in Зоран Крстић ed., *Живо Предање*, Крагујевац, Каленић, 2008, p. 94-96.

⁵³ Јован Мајендорф, „Савремени проблеми православног канонског права“, p. 95.

⁵⁴ Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Каноническое положение высшей церковной власти в СССР и за границей*, Типография пр. Иова Почаевского в св. Троицком монастыре, 1948.

structure: regarding the book of Archp. Polsky ‘Canonical position of the supreme church authority in the USSR and abroad’,⁵⁵ published in the *Церковный вестник Западно-европейского русского православного экзархата*. As a response to Schmeman’s criticism M. Polsky published a booklet *An outline of the position of the Russian Exarchate of Constantinople jurisdiction*, also in Jordanville in 1952.⁵⁶ Here, Polsky criticized the "eulogians" for not distinguishing the missionary territories from the territories of the local Churches, saying that these two types of territories could not be treated in the same way when applying canons regarding the organization of the Church. In missionary areas, the Church had always been administratively adapting to ethnic principle because it had contributed to the success of Christianisation. Based on the 34th Apostolic Rule Polsky concluded that “God Himself decreed that there be’ an autocephalous, self-governing Church in every nation.” Therefore, when speaking about only one bishop in one territory, canons implied the territory of one people and national hierarchy:

„Unity of command without national unity, and in the territory of a missionary area which does not have its own local Church, does not in any way signify unanimity, consent, and ecclesiastical well-being, because no one will have kin relations with its clergy, foreign to him, and it will be completely incapable of satisfying the needs of the churches. Full consent without any conflict of interest and disagreement is possible only with the unity of command in every national Church, and only in the absence of the many-command in it. This is what the canons have in mind which always imply one nationality in one territory, in any case the prevailing and dominant from the beginning.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Александр Шмеман, „Церковь и церковное устройство: по поводу книги прот. Польского, ‘Каноническое положение высшей церковной власти в СССР и за границей’”

⁵⁶ Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Очерк положения Русского Экзархата в селенской юрисдикции* Jordanville (New York), Holy Trinity Monastery, 1952, доступно 14. января 2020. <https://www.rocorstudies.org/2019/02/18/ocherk-polozheniya-russkogo-ekzarhata-vselsenskoj-yurisdiksii/>

⁵⁷ „Единоначалие без единства народного да еще на территории миссионерской области, не имеющей своей Поместной Церкви, совершенно не обозначает единодушия, согласия и церковного благоустройства, потому что ни у кого здесь не будет родственных связей со своим единоначалием, ему чуждым, и оно совершенно не способно удовлетворять нужды церквей. Полное согласие и без всякого столкновения интересов и противоречий возможно здесь с единоначалием в каждой национальной церкви, и только бы не с многоначалием именно в ней. Это и есть то главное, что имеют в виду каноны, всегда разумея на единой территории единую

Consequently, said Polsky, Christians should've been alien to both heathen nationalism and to underrating of nationality, because each one of us, through our own national Church alone, participated in the construction of the universal Church of Christ. He therefore considered that the criticisms directed to the national principle of the organization of the Church in Diaspora, were unfounded.⁵⁸ The dispute of these two theologians was ended by Schmemmann's article entitled “Epilogue”.⁵⁹

The national ecclesiological concept was also defended by other prominent representatives of the Russian emigration: Nathanael Lvov (Bishop of Brussels of ROCA after World War II),⁶⁰ Konstantin N. Nikolaev (legal consultant of the Synod of ROCA in the 1930s),⁶¹ and Sergei Viktorovich Troicki (professor of canon law) who can be considered the founder of the national ecclesiological conception.⁶²

народность, во всяком случае преобладающую и от начала первенствующую.“
Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Очерк положения Русского Экзархата вселенской юрисдикции*

⁵⁸ Протопресвитер Михаил Польский, *Очерк положения Русского Экзархата вселенской юрисдикции*

⁵⁹ Александр Шмеман, „Эпилог“, in *Собрание статей*, сост. Е. Ю. Дорман, Москва, Русский путь, 2009, p. 374-378. Printed in *Церковный вестник Западно-Европейского русского православного экзархата*, N°5(38), Париж, 1952.

⁶⁰ Bishop Nathanael became involved in this discussion on Fr. M. Polsky's side writing a response to the Fr. Schmemmann's criticism of Polsky's book entitled "On the fates of the Russian Church abroad - answer the priest Fr. Alexander Schmemmann". In this paper, bishop Nathanael does not deny the importance of the territorial principle, but does not agree with its absolutization. Territorial principle was the norm in the early Church, but throughout history the Church was aware of deviations from it: the case of the Archdiocese of Cyprus, referred to in the canons 37th and 39th of the Council of Trullo, as well as residencies of local churches in the territory of other local churches. Responding to the idea that the co-existence of two national jurisdictions in one territory is damaging to church life, he cites the example of the Serbian Church and the ROCA in the territory of Yugoslavia over a 23-year period that has been without controversy and mutually beneficial. „О судьбах Русской Церкви за границей – ответ священнику о. Александру Шмеману“, in *Православная Русь*, 15–16; 17; 18; 19, 1949, p. 8–10; 7–8; 7–9; 3–6.

⁶¹ Константин Николаевич Николаев, „Правовое положение православной церкви народа русского в рассеянии сущего“, *Церковная жизнь*, 5, 1934, according to Владислав Пузовић, „Исторјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, p. 81.

⁶² Владислав Пузовић, „Исторјско-канонски аспекти односа Карловачке управе Руске заграничне Цркве и Московске патријаршије“, p. 293. See Troicki's papers discussing the issue of local and national principle: Сергей В. Троицкий, *Размежевание или раскол*, Париж, 1932; „Экклесиология парижского раскола“, in *Вестник Русского Западно-Европейского Патриаршего Экзархата*, № 7-8, 1951, p. 10-33.; *Правовое положение Русской Церкви в Югославии*, Белград, 1940.

2. *National and territorial ecclesiological principle in post-World War II jurisdictional disputes*

In the post-World War II period, at least in theory, there was a change in the attitude of the Moscow Patriarchate regarding the organization of Church in the Diaspora. In 1970, Patriarch Alexei I of Moscow (1945-970) published *Tomos on the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America*, pointing out “church pluralism” as the main reason for giving autocephaly, which “contradicts the nature of canonical Orthodox church unity.”⁶³ The same reason was pointed out again by Patriarch Alexei I in his letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras on March 17, 1970 reporting on the Moscow Patriarchate's intention to give autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America.⁶⁴ In his reply on June 24, 1970, the patriarch Athenagoras (1948-1972) said that the final solution to the Orthodox Diaspora issue belonged to the future Holy and Great Council, condemning the unilateral giving of autocephaly by the Russian Church. In addition, in this letter the patriarch Athenagoras summarized the attitude of the Patriarchate of Constantinople towards the parallel national jurisdictions in the Diaspora: this condition was “extraordinary and abnormal” and it was braking the “basic dogmatic principle of Orthodox ecclesiology” - the territorial principle. The Patriarchate of Constantinople observed the national principle only “economically”, as a conciliation for the sake of “peace and unity among the fraternal Orthodox Churches”, until the final decision of the future Holy and Great Council.⁶⁵ Thus, in this case, Moscow and Constantinople did not disagree in deciding which principle should be the basis of ecclesiastical organization, but they disagreed on the matter of mechanism by which a solution to this situation should be found.

According to *Thomos*, the Moscow Patriarchate retained jurisdiction over several parishes and temples in the United States, and over all clergy and parishes in Canada. This was one of the segments of *Thomas* which patriarch Athenagoras opposed to in his letter dated on September 9, 1970. The locum tenens of the patriarchal throne Metropolitan Pimen (the future Patriarch of Moscow), in his response to Patriarch Athenagoras, made an argument contrary to what had been earlier stated as the reason for giving autocephaly to the Church of America. Justifying the retention of temples and parishes in

⁶³Томос об автокефалии Православной Церкви в Америке от 10 апреля 1970 года, accessed on February 3rd 2020 <https://drevo-info.ru/articles/20749.html>

⁶⁴ "Послание Святейшего Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Алексия от 17 марта 1970 года," in *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, № 4, 1970, p. 8.

⁶⁵ "Послание Святейшего Патриарха Афинагора № 583 от 24 июня 1970 г.," in *Журнал Московской Патриархии*, № 9, 1970, p. 14-15.

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the newly established autocephalous Church in America and Canada under the jurisdiction of Moscow Patriarchate, he pointed out that the history of the Church was aware of instances of deviation from the territorial principle, referring to the existence of different jurisdictions of local Churches in one territory.⁶⁶

However, a statement given by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1995 regarding the church crisis in Estonia stated that the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople had led to the emergence of parallel jurisdictions of the Patriarchate of Moscow and Constantinople in Estonia, and that those actions completely contradicted the earlier position of the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on parallel jurisdictions, which was described as “correct” in the letter, while the territorial principle was called “canonically important”.⁶⁷ Consequently, an inconsistency existed in the arguments of the Moscow Church authorities.

The final solution to the situation in the Orthodox Diaspora, where this canonically irregular situation still exists strictly due to the clash of two ecclesiological conceptions - territorial and national - was not reached at the recent Crete Council in 2016. In the official document called *The Orthodox Diaspora*, Council stated that “the will of the most holy Orthodox Churches is that the problem of the Orthodox Diaspora be resolved as quickly as possible, and that it be organized in accordance with Orthodox ecclesiology, and the canonical tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church”. However, adding that “during the present phase it is not possible, for historical and pastoral reasons, an immediate transition to the strictly canonical order of the Church on this issue, that is, the existence of only one bishop in the same place.”⁶⁸ This is a sign that this topic needs additional theological, historical, canonical and multidisciplinary elucidation in order to achieve the definite solution. We believe that the analysis of early Christian attitudes on the grounds of ethnicity, and in particular analysing the concept of Christians being a “new and holy nation”, can make a significant contribution to giving the answers to this crucial question of contemporary inter-Orthodox relations.

3. Christians as the "third race" from the perspective of the New Testament, apologists and apocryphal literature

⁶⁶ „Пимен, Местоблюститель Московского Патриаршего престола, Митрополит Крутицкий и Коломенский. Его Святейшеству, Святейшему Афинагору, Архиепископу Константинополя - Нового Рима и Вселенскому Патриарху,“ in *Журнал Московской Патриархии* № 2, 1971, p. 2.

⁶⁷ „Заявление Священного Синода Русской Православной Церкви,“ in *Журнал Московской Патриархии* № 9-10, 1995, p. 9.

⁶⁸ *The Orthodox Diaspora*, accessed on March 19th 2020 <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/diaspora>.

In order to properly comprehend the meaning of the term "tertium genus", and to answer the question of whether the first Christians perceived themselves as some kind of special ethnicity, it is necessary to analyse the term *genus* as well as the entire phrase in the form in which it appears with the New Testament authors and apologists. It is also necessary to consider the meaning attached to this term by their heathen contemporaries.

The Latin term *genus* as well as the Greek *γένος* could refer to the origin, race, descendants, family, nationality, order of living creatures (mankind, womankind), animal or plant species.⁶⁹ However, the term is used at only one place in the New Testament referring to Christians, in 1Pet. 2: 9:⁷⁰

“Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς”⁷¹

Nevertheless, this text has no ethnic implications. Christians are not a “new race” in the sense that their ecclesiastical identity abolishes the ethnic one. They are not called out as Jews were to build a state in this world, but to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Their mission, therefore, is of an absolute spiritual nature - as St. Paul says, to be the “aroma of Christ” in this world (2Cor. 2:15). And their promised land- the eschatological Kingdom of God, is also spiritual and metaphysical, likewise their citizenship (Heb. 13: 14).

Let's have a look at the use of the term "genus", "γένος" by early Christian writers. We are going to single out three sources: 1) *The Apology of Aristides*, 2) *Kerygmata Petrou* (Sermon of Peter), 3) *The Epistle to Diognetus*.

Sermon of Peter is the first work in which Christians are explicitly called the “third race”.⁷² The work dates back to the beginning of the second

⁶⁹Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 344.; P.G.W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 760-761.

⁷⁰Oskar Skarsaune, "Ethnic Discourse in Early Christianity", in James Carleton Paget and Judith Lieu (ed.), *Christianity in the Second Century Themes and Developments*, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 253.

⁷¹*The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition*, Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (ed.), Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994.

⁷²Erich S. Gruen, "Christians as a 'Third Race' Is Ethnicity at Issue?", in James Carleton Paget and Judith Lieu (ed.), *Christianity in the Second Century Themes and Developments*, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p.261.

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century, and is preserved only in fragments in The *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria.⁷³ The section we are interested in is the following:

“Νέαν ἡμῖν διέθετο; τὰ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ἰουδαίων παλαιά, ἡμεῖς
δὲ οἱ καινῶς αὐτὸν τρίτῳ γένει σεβόμενοι Χριστιανοί.”⁷⁴

The dative is used here: τρίτῳ γένει. Thus, the emphasis is on true Christian worship of God “in a new way“, different from the Hellenic and Jewish worship which is wrong. Therefore, this section also has no ethnic or racial connotation.⁷⁵ The same meaning exists in both Russian⁷⁶ and English translations.⁷⁷

The Apology of Aristides is thought to have originated around 140 AD, although there is a difference between the indications in the Syrian and Greek translations. By the end of the nineteenth century it was thought that the work had been lost, but in 1878 fragments of the Armenian translation were found, and in 1889 it was R. Harris who discovered the Syrian translation. J. Robinson discovered that there was altered version of the *Apology* in the Christian novel *Varlaam and Joasaf* attributed to St. John of Damascus.⁷⁸ In this version from the novel *Varlaam and Joasaf*, brought by Harris in his study, Aristides tells us that there are three kinds of people:

⁷³ Стилијан Пападопулос, *Од Апостолских ученика до Никеје*, Београд, Православни богословски факултет, 2012, p. 174.

⁷⁴ Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.41.6, according to Patrick Descourtieux, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Les Stromates, Stromate VI*, Paris, Éd. Du Cerf, 1999, p. 144.

⁷⁵Erich S. Gruen, "Christians as a "Third Race" Is Ethnicity at Issue?", p. 241-242.

⁷⁶„Итак, с нами заключил он новый (νέαν) завет, и тот, который заключен с эллинами и иудеями – стар. Вы же, поклоняющиеся отличным от них третьим образом, – христиане`. Отсюда, я полагаю, ясно, что единый и единственный Бог познается эллинами на языческий манер, иудеями – на их собственный, а христианами – новым и духовным образом.” Климент Александрийский, *Строматы, том III: книги 6-7*, перевод Е. Афонасина, Санкт-Петербург, Издательство Олега Абышко, 2003,р. 30.

⁷⁷“He made a new covenant with us; for what belonged to the Greeks and Jews is old. But we, who worship Him in a new way, in the third form, are Christians. For clearly, as I think, he showed that the one and only God was known by the Greeks in a Gentile way, by the Jews Judaically, and in a new and spiritual way by us.” Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata” V, in Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson LL. D. (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. II*, Edinburgh, T&TClark, 2001, p. 489.

⁷⁸ Стилијан Пападопулос, *Од Апостолских ученика до Никеје*, p. 151-153.

“φανερὸν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡμῖν, ὃ βασιλεῦ, ὅτι τρία γένη εἰσὶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ. ὧν εἰσὶν οἱ τῶν παρ’ ὑμῖν λεγομένων θεῶν προσκυνηταὶ, καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ Χριστιανοί.”⁷⁹

However, this section has no ethnic connotation, but rather indicates a difference in God worshipping, as the text later shows.⁸⁰ The Syrian version of Aristides’ *Apology* divides humanity into four races: barbarians, Hellenes, Jews, and Christians. The same translation says that the Christian religion comes from Jesus Christ, parallel with the origin of the Hellenic and barbaric religions from their gods, and Jewish from Abraham.⁸¹ Again, the section deals with the origin of religion, with no ethnic implications.

The Epistle to Diognetus represents an excellent example of a Christian attitude towards civil citizenship:

“For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity... But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers.”⁸²

It is said that every fatherland was a foreign land for them, and every foreign land a homeland, and that they were living among different nations observing local customs, but maintaining their religion and moral principles. Therefore, they did not perceive their religious identity as an obstacle for belonging to any other nation, nor that they themselves represented any

⁷⁹ J. R. Harris, *The Apology of Aristides on behalf of the Christians; with an Appendix Containing the Main Portion of the Original Greek Text by J. Armitage Robinson*, 2nd edn., Cambridge, CUP, 1893, p. 100.

⁸⁰ Erich S. Gruen, "Christians as a 'Third Race' Is Ethnicity at Issue?", p. 242-243.

⁸¹ Apol. Arist. (Syriac) 2.3. y J. R. Harris, *The Apology of Aristides on behalf of the Christians*, p. 36-37.

⁸² „The Epistle to Diognetus“, V, in Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson LL. D. (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, Henderson Publishers, 1995, p. 26.

„Christians as “Tertium Genus” in the Context of Church Jurisdiction”,
Astra Salvensis, VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 109-130.

particular ethnicity.⁸³ Christian identity and ethnic identity were not in any conflict.

The concept of Christians as a "third race" was also accepted by heathen writers, but in the negative context. The cause for this was the attitude of Jews, and later of Christians, towards the Roman practice of worshipping the emperor as a deity, and making sacrifices to the Roman gods. It is well known that the Romans considered these cults to be of paramount importance to the well-being of the empire, so a deviation from this practice was considered as a kind of attack on the welfare of the empire, a criminal act. One who did not want to practice the cult infuriated the gods and was putting the subjects of the empire at risk of their repression. Therefore, the one who was doing so was treated as a criminal.⁸⁴ The Jews were the only people who were given an exemption from the sacrificing to the gods from the emperor. As a result, in a way the empire was divided into two - those who were making sacrifices to the gods and worshipping the emperor as a deity - and the Jews. This division made two nations or “two kinds of people”. After that came the Christians, who weren't making sacrifices to the gods, nor were they Jews.⁸⁵ Tertullian testified that this was the cause for the Christians to be called “the third race”, which had a derogatory character. Namely, according to Tertullian's testimony, the pagans ridiculed Christians by calling them a “third race” in the circus, a race below the level of human beings. What is made clear in Tertullian's testimony is that, even when it was used in pejorative terms, the term “genus” had primarily religious character: Christians were called “tertium genus” because they differed in religion (*superstitio*) from Jews and Romans, not because of ethnicity (*natio*):⁸⁶

“Take care, however, lest those whom you call the third race should obtain the first rank, since there is no nation indeed which is not Christian. Whatever nation, therefore, was the first, is nevertheless Christian now. It is ridiculous folly which makes you say we are the latest race, and then specifically call us the third. But it is in respect of our religion, not of our nation, that we are supposed to be the third.”⁸⁷

⁸³ Oskar Skarsaune, "Ethnic Discourse in Early Christianity", p. 250.

⁸⁴ Зоран Крстић, „Политичност паганске религије и хришћанства у Римској империји“, in Златко Матић (ур.), *Црква у друштву: у прошлости и садашњости*, Пожаревац, Епархија браничевска, 2014, p. 21-23.

⁸⁵ Oscar Skarsaune, "Ethnic Discourse in Early Christianity", p. 262-264.

⁸⁶ Erich S. Gruen, "Christians as a 'Third Race' Is Ethnicity at Issue?", p. 246-248.

⁸⁷ Tertullian, “Ad Nationes” I.8, in Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson LL. D. (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. III*, Henderson Publishers, 1995, p. 117.

The second century is the *Sitz im Leben* of notion of Christians as the “third race”. In the second century, Christians were still viewed as a Jewish sect by the heathen people, there was no differentiation between the two groups yet, as was the case in the third century. Therefore, it was important for the second-century Christian writers, who turned to the pagans with the aim of getting them to know the Christian faith better, to emphasize that Christians were different from pagans because they worshiped one God, but also that they were different from Jews who also worshiped one God, but in a wrong way. In conclusion, Christians were a “third race” in religious terms, not in ethnic terms: they had a qualitatively better God worship than Greeks and Jews. In this sense, “tertium genus” could also be translated as “the third way, the third form (of God worship)”.⁸⁸

Conclusion

The decisive contribution to the formulation of the argumentation of national and territorial ecclesiological concept is given by the twentieth century Russian theologians, who can be divided into two groups: “eulogians” (supporters of the Western European Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate), who followed the concept of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and theologians supporters of Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, who were in close relation to the theological circles of the Moscow Patriarchate. The emergence of church-separatist movements in the Russian Church at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as jurisdictional disputes between Constantinople and Moscow, had a decisive influence on the sharpening of debate over which principle should have a normative character regarding ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and likewise set the focus of theological interest on the question of the place of nationality in Church life.

There is a significant amount of unknown in the relation of ethnicity and Church structure, especially considering the historical context of writing canonical provisions. The canons that formulate fundamental ecclesiological principles were formulated in the historical context of the Byzantine Empire, in which nations did not even exist in the modern sense of this term. Nowadays, there is no such relationship between the Church and a state as it existed in those days, nor the conditions to which the Church once had to adjust administratively. Undoubtedly the Christian faith does not call for the denial of ethnic identity, nor does it teach that Christian, church identity and ethnic identity are mutually exclusive. Referring to Christians as the “third race” for the sake of denying the organization of the Church on a national basis is unfounded. The “new race” of Christians should oppose bestial

⁸⁸ Oscar Skarsaune, "Ethnic Discourse in Early Christianity", p. 252, 261-62.

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nationalism and divisions in the Church based on national grounds, but the Church consciousness is no stranger to a change of church organization model. The established linguistic, folklore, and mentality differences give, at the very least, a reason for rethinking the centuries-old way of organizing, especially since that centuries-old way was formed in completely different political and historical circumstances of the Byzantine Empire.