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## **Liturgical Perspectives of the Relations between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the 19th–20th Centuries<sup>1</sup>**

*Liturgiološke perspektive odnosov med Anglikansko Cerkvijo in Srbsko pravoslavno Cerkvijo med 19.–20. stoletjem*

*Abstract:* The arrival of some 55 seminarians from St. Sava's Theological Seminary in Belgrade, accompanied by a number of their professors, in the United Kingdom in 1916 and 1917, who took refuge at the colleges in Cuddesdon and Dorchester as well as at St. Stephen's House in Oxford, was one of the more important events in the development of the relations between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Such an encounter allowed both sides to gain a better understanding of one another's traditions. It significantly improved their friendly intercourse, established in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The liturgical implications of these relations were recognized in Serbia. For example, during the First World War it seems possible that some Anglicans had received Holy Communion from the Orthodox Serbian side. Also, in Serbia an official order was issued that burials taken for Anglicans should be given with full sacramental rites. In retrospect, it should be recognized that the colleges in Cuddesdon and Dorchester, respectively, facilitated the further development of Orthodox Liturgiology, including other theological disciplines among the Eastern Orthodox Schools in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Keywords:* Church of England, Serbian Orthodox Church, theology, Liturgy, relations, Liturgiology

*Povzetek:* Prihod približno 55 semeniščnikov iz Teološkega semenišča svetega Save v Beogradu, ki jih je v letih 1916 in 1917 spremljalo več njihovih profesorjev, v Združeno kraljestvo (zatekli so se v kolidže v Cuddesdonu in Dorchestru ter v Hišo svetega Štefana v Oxfordu) je bil eden pomembnejših dogodkov v razvoju odnosov med Anglikansko in Srbsko pravoslavno Cerkvijo. To stičišče je obema stranema omogočilo, da sta bolje spoznali tradicijo druge strani. Bistveno so se

<sup>1</sup> This article is an extended version of unpublished paper, which was presented at the whole-day conference "Theological Refugees in Oxford" (Pusey House, Oxford, 6th September of 2018).

izboljšali prijateljski stiki, ki so bili vzpostavljeni v 19. stoletju. Liturgične posledice teh odnosov so prepoznali tudi v Srbiji. Za obdobje med prvo svetovno vojno se zdi možno, da so nekateri anglikanci prejemali sveto obhajilo od srbske pravoslavne strani. V Srbiji je bil tudi izdan uradni ukaz, da je treba pogrebe za anglikance opraviti z vsemi zakramentalnimi obredi. V retrospektivi je treba priznati, da sta kolegija v Cuddesdonu oziroma Dorchestru omogočila nadaljnji razvoj pravoslavne liturgike, pa tudi drugih teoloških disciplin, med vzhodnimi pravoslavniimi šolami v 20. stoletju.

*Ključne besede:* Anglikanska Cerkev, Srbska pravoslavna cerkev, teologija, liturgija, odnosi, liturgiologija

## 1. Introduction

After the outbreak of the First World War, the Serbian Orthodox Church decided that the seminarians from St Sava's Theological Seminary in Belgrade should leave for fear of Austro-Hungarian troops, who captured the city in late 1915. One group fled to Russia, and another escaped to France. Eventually, most of them congregated in Marseille before going to the United Kingdom in 1916. The arrival of some 55 seminarians from St. Sava's Theological Seminary in Belgrade, accompanied by a number of their professors, in the United Kingdom in 1916 and 1917, who took refuge at the colleges in Cuddesdon and Dorchester as well as at St. Stephen's House in Oxford, was one of the more important events in the development of the relations between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Such an encounter allowed both sides to gain a better understanding of one another's traditions. The liturgical implications of these relations were recognized in Serbia during the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

## 2. 2. A Short Historical Preview of Theological Development of the Relations between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Church of England before the First World War

Members of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches have carried out communications concerning their relations and theological problems since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup> In 1617, Metrophanes Kritopoulos of Veria (1589–1639), the future patriarch of Alexandria, was sent by the martyr-patriarch of Constantinople Cyril Lukaris (1572–1638) to continue his studies at Oxford.<sup>3</sup> As well, in the summer of 1623, Nicodemos Metaxas of Cephalonia (1585–1647) came to London and le-

<sup>2</sup> It should be stated that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) some Christians in England had developed interest in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition. More about these facts and further relations between the Anglicans and the Eastern Orthodox Christians see: Pinnington 2003.

<sup>3</sup> On Kritopoulos and his stay in England see: Davey 1987, 75–145.

arned the art of printing. He established the first Greek printing press in England (Palabiyik 2015, 381–404). One of the more interesting early documents of the Anglican-Orthodox relations is a “Synodical answer to the question: What are the sentiments of the Oriental Church of the Greek Orthodox? Sent to the lovers of the Greek Church in Britain in the year of our Lord, 1672.” It was issued probably at the instigation of John Covel (1638–1722), the Anglican chaplain to the English ambassador at Constantinople, 1670–1677, who had been urged by two professors at Cambridge University to inquire into the doctrine of the Real Presence as held by the Eastern Orthodox Greeks (Monks 1946, 410–411). Far more interesting and extensive is the correspondence between the Orthodox Greeks and Russians and the Nonjurors or “Catholic remnant of the British Churches”, who decided in 1716 to send a series of theological propositions to the Greek Orthodox Church in an endeavor to bring about a union (412–413).

Also, a long period of ever-increasing interest on the part of many Anglicans in the history and religious belief of the Eastern Orthodox Church shouldn't be forgotten. Representatives of such interest are: John Glen King (1732–1787), Fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies, and Chaplain to the British Factory at St. Petersburg with his famous work *The Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church in Russia; containing an Account of its Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline* (King 1772), William Palmer (1811–1879), a tutor and examiner at Oxford,<sup>4</sup> John Mason Neale (1818–1866),<sup>5</sup> the principal founder of “The Eastern Church Association” established in 1864, who had translated into English and edited *The Eastern Liturgies* (Neale 1859) and *The Hymns of the Eastern Church* (Neale 1866), George Williams (1821–1905),<sup>6</sup> an English philanthropist and founder of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and, later on, William John Birkbeck (1869–1916)<sup>7</sup> with his *Prospect of Reunion with Eastern Christendom in Special Relation to the Russian Orthodox Church* (read in London 1894).

After the gathering of the representatives of both the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches at the Bonn Conferences of 1874 and 1875, the first really definite statement of the general attitude of the Anglican bishops to reunion with the Eastern Orthodox was made at the Lambeth Conference of 1888 (Monks 1946, 415). In their encyclical letter they expressed a desire to confirm and improve the friendly relations existing between the two Churches and presented the doctrinal position which they held to be a necessary standard for fuller communion.<sup>8</sup>

The Lambeth Conference of 1897 appointed the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London as a committee to confer either personally or by correspondence with the Eastern Orthodox patriarchs, the Holy Governing Synod of the Church of Russia, and the chief authorities of the various Eastern

<sup>4</sup> On William Palmer see: Litvack 2004.

<sup>5</sup> On John Mason Neale see: Chandler 1995.

<sup>6</sup> On George Williams see: Hodder Williams 1906.

<sup>7</sup> On William John Birkbeck see: Birkbeck and Birkbeck 1922.

<sup>8</sup> More on this encyclical letter see: Davidson 1889, 264–276.

Churches, with a view to the possibility of securing a clearer understanding and of establishing closer relations (416). Consequently, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, for example, revealed a very definite attitude towards reunion, especially regarding Anglicans, in a reply to an encyclical of Joachim III, the Patriarch of Constantinople, sent in 1902 to several of the Orthodox Churches (416). The hopes of reunion among the Anglicans and Eastern Orthodox authorities were increased after the Lambeth Council of 1908 and a World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. Finally, the beginning of the First World War in 1914 and later on the Russian Revolution in 1917, were the events which had influenced the intensifying of contacts between Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Christians, and especially between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

### 3. Liturgical Perspectives of the Mutual Serbian Orthodox-Anglican Cordial Relations Before, during and after the End of the Great War

The early diplomatic relations of Great Britain and Serbia had been established very soon after the defensive and offensive treaty of alliance, concluded between Russia and Turkey at Unkiar-Skelessi in 1833. It is well-known that George L. Hodges was appointed the first British consul to Serbia on 30 January 1837, who took possession of the Consulate of Belgrade on 29 May 1837.<sup>9</sup> Such a sequence of diplomatic and political events was the cornerstone for the beginning of mutual sacramental understanding of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Church of England, and it facilitated the improving of their friendly intercourse. The first example of the realization of these Anglican-Serbian Orthodox relations was witnessed by William Denton (1815–1888)<sup>10</sup>, an Anglican priest, who had visited Serbian cities, churches, and monasteries, and described them in his magnificent book *Servia and the Servians* (Danton 1862)<sup>11</sup>. In August 1865, a correspondent of the *Church Times*, the mentioned William Denton noticed:

“When I mentioned in my former letter that I received communion in the Serbian Church at the hands of the Archimandrite of Studenitz [Studenica], I forgot at the same time to point out the full significance of the act. The Archimandrite was one of the ecclesiastics consulted by the Archbishop of Belgrade [and Metropolitan of Serbia Mihailo Jovanović, 1826–1898] as to my request for communion on Whitsunday [Pentecost], so that the administration was not the act of an individual, however prominent his position, but was the synodical act of the prelates and inferior clergy of Servia.” (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928)

<sup>9</sup> About the establishing of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Serbia, and the first British consul in Serbia see more in: Rastović 2000, 15–24.

<sup>10</sup> On William Denton see: Zarković 2013, 189–211.

<sup>11</sup> Beside this book, the reverend father Denton had also written and published the following: Danton 1863; Danton 1876; and Danton 1877.

After his staying in monastery Studenica, Danton had underlined his pleasant meeting with the Bishop of Čačak, travelling in the interior of the country and the talks with all the leading ecclesiastics of that time in Serbia. Above all, he testified that had found on all sides the greatest satisfaction concerning the act of his Communion and had heard the strongest desire expressed for closer intercourse with the English Church on the ground of its orthodoxy and the prominent position given to scriptural teaching in its formularies.

However, this Anglican priest didn't forget to express that had the most impressive conversation with the Bishop of Šabac (Gavrilo Popović, 1811–1871), who was described as an able and large-minded prelate for the question of Intercommunion of the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Taking into account the fact of Danton's communion at Studenica, Bishop of Šabac had recognized and hailed him as a member of the Serbian Orthodox Church, *id est* the Eastern Orthodox Church (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928).

Also, another interesting and unexpected act in effort of Intercommunion had happened during the Danton's staying in Šabac. He petitioned Bishop Gavrilo for the possibility of receiving Communion for one English layman, who was planning to stay in Serbia at least two months. The Bishop hadn't hesitated to state that there wasn't obstacle to communicating that layman in the Serbian Orthodox Church, and gave him a letter addressed to all the clergy of his Diocese, directing them to administer Communion to him, a member of the Church of England, if he desired to receive the sacred mysteries (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928).

The already-mentioned events had made strong impressions on Denton that he had informed all the members of the English Church about the possibility for their communicating in the Serbian Orthodox Church simply as the members of the Church of England. In fact, he had recognized these events as the sign of a real Intercommunion on the true Catholic basis, and the beginning of wider communion for the unity (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928).

According to Danton's report from Serbia, a leading article that appeared in the *Church Times* on 26 August 1865, written by C. H. Palmer, summarizes and highlights the following:

“The Servian Church has entered into full communion with the Church of England. This is the step to which we allude. The efforts of the ‘Eastern Church Association’ and especially the energy, perseverance, and personal popularity in Servia of one of the first originators of that association have induced the ancient Orthodox Church in Servia to admit privately to Holy Communion, and to promise to admit to participation in the sacred mysteries any traveler, whether priest or layman of the Anglican communion,

who shall bring with him certain letters commendatory, the form of which will be arranged and agreed upon by the Servian episcopate. Thus we really at the present moment are in communion with the whole Orthodox Church. For the Servian Church is an Orthodox branch of the great Slavonic communion, and is in full connection and communion with Constantinople. But the Servian Church has recognized our baptism, our orders, and our position, and has admitted our members into communion with herself: therefore now at last the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Church are as one..." (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928)

Described cases of Intercommunion in Serbia could be understood as precedents. But it shouldn't be overlooked that Gregory VI, Patriarch of Constantinople, on the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Campbell Tait (1811–1882), in a Synodical Encyclical which he sent to all the Metropolitans in 1869, ordered that all Anglicans who die in places where there do not exist Anglican cemeteries should be buried in the Orthodox cemeteries, and by Orthodox priests, and he likewise ordered a special service to be drawn up to be used on such occasions (Germanos, Archbishop Metropolitan of Thyatira 1929).

Contacts between Anglicans and Serbian Orthodox Christians had been intensified when the members of the Balkan Orthodox Churches sought Britain's financial and political support in the political and religious chaos following the First World War. There is no doubt that Great Britain had helped Serbia in different ways as its military and political ally. As matter a fact, many things had strengthened the friendship between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church in this period. First of all, was the help rendered to their deported clergy in Austria (The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1921). Also, the aid to the Serbian students, who had been very content in England, and where Orthodox Christian worship was practiced in Slavonic, and according to the *Typicon* of the Holy Laura of St. Sava the Sanctified near Jerusalem (The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1921).<sup>12</sup> At the same time, we shouldn't forget the gift by the S.P.C.K (The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) of tens of thousands of Serbian prayer books to the troops, who had left their country carrying only rifles. And, finally, we need to remember the prayers offered throughout England on behalf of, and for Serbia (The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1921).

Parallely in Serbia, on all occasions the Serbian Orthodox Church authorities showed great friendliness to the members of the Church of England, who were helping Serbia in British Hospital Missions or as the chaplains in the Serbian Army to assist in restoring the morale. Moreover, in Serbia an official order was issued that burials taken for Anglicans should be given with full sacramental rites. For example, one of the nurses of the Mission, Miss Ferris, died of enteric fever. The

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<sup>12</sup> For more about this topic see: Lubardić 2013, 52–127; 2011, 123–128; 141–150.

authorities arranged to give her a funeral with military honours, and asked if the Mission would like to have the English service in the principal church, the Cathedral of Kragujevac. Permission was accordingly sought from the Metropolitan, who gave the characteristically generous and charitable reply: "Let them do in our church exactly as they would do in their own church at home." (The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1921) When Mrs. Dearmer died a week later, the English service was said in the camp in a temporary chapel, her body was then taken to the cathedral, where the Serbian service was held, and at the graveside both the English committal was recited and the Serbian service was sung by the local clergy; thus both rites were used together (The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1921). Above all, it seems possible that some Anglicans had been given Holy Communion during the Great War (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928).

Development of the theological and liturgical relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Church of England continued after the end of the First World War<sup>13</sup>. The most striking example of this kind of bonding came to pass in 1927. The Metropolitan of Skoplje Varnava Rosić (1880–1937) had been asked to allow an isolated Englishman to make his Christmas communion at an Orthodox altar and this request had been granted. Hearing of this Dr. John D. Prince, the United States minister to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, asked the Metropolitan that he and certain others, all of course Anglicans, should be allowed to make their Communion at an Orthodox altar. There was no Anglican chaplaincy in Belgrade, and the Anglicans there, chiefly the staff of the American and British legations, had to depend for Anglican services upon occasional visits from the English chaplain at Trieste, twenty-four hours of journey away. The Metropolitan of Skopje communicated this request to the Patriarch Dimitrije Pavlović (1846–1930), who considered the matter and consulted with others, and finally he decided to grant it in a very public manner. On 25 December, the Serbian Patriarch Dimitrije gave Holy Communion with his own hand to eight prominent Anglicans (four Americans and four English people) during the celebration of the Divine Eucharist in the Cathedral at Belgrade, despite very strong opposition (Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent 1928).

The ensuing historical and political events during the 30s, the Second World War and the Era of Communism in the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will definitely slow down the tempo of liturgical relations between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, something else will be continued: and that is the growth of Serbian Orthodox Liturgiology in virtue of the help extended by the Anglican Church (among the others). Although the subject matter of Liturgics as a theological discipline was incorporated in the programs of Serbian theological seminaries according to an educational model of the

<sup>13</sup> On ecumenical dialogue between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church, after the end of The First World War, see: Radić 2022, 83–98. Also, the unique and striking example of theological and liturgical relations was given by the publishing of the translation of the Anglican Liturgies into Serbian language. On this see: Anglikanske Liturgije 1920.

Russian Orthodox Church, as of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it should be stated that the colleges in Cuddesdon and Dorchester helped the enhancement of Orthodox Liturgiology among the Orthodox Serbs in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The next step was made by sending a significant number of very precious liturgical books in English to the Library of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade, after the Second World War. The volumes received included titles such as: *Liturgies Eastern and Western, being the texts original or translated of the principal liturgies of the Church*, vol. 1. *Eastern liturgies* by F. E. Brightman (Brightman 1896), *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* by E. C. Whitaker (Whitaker 1960), *The Shape of the Liturgy* by Dom Gregory Dix (Dix 1964), *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* by C. W. Dugmore (Dugmore 1964), and some others.

#### 4. Conclusion

The arrival of theological refugees in Oxford in 1916, and in the following year, shouldn't be misinterpreted as an exclusive consequence of wartime circumstances. On the contrary, it was an unambiguous indicator of the relations between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church, established earlier, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Above all, this study visit was the unique realization of the Anglican-Orthodox theological dialogue based on Apostle Paul's words: "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15:5-7) For the reasons mentioned, the current and future theological dialogue between the Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church<sup>14</sup> might have a brighter liturgical perspective<sup>15</sup>. Not least because of its holy and prayerful benefactors — St. Nikolaj of Ohrid and Žiča (1880–1956) and St. Archimandrite Justin of Ćelije (1894–1979)<sup>16</sup>, who themselves represent a magnificent confirmation of the fruitfulness of the sojourn of theological refugees in the land of St. Alban, the first British Christian Martyr.

<sup>14</sup> On theological dialogue between Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Christians in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century see: Lubardić 2014, 490-496; Krivoshein 2011, 662-663; Krivoshein 1966, 31-47.

<sup>15</sup> One of the very interesting examples of the Eastern Orthodox–Anglican liturgical dialogue and synthesis is the Antiochian Orthodox Liturgy of Saint Tikhon which has been celebrated within the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. More on this see: Andersen 2005.

<sup>16</sup> On St Justin Popović as theologian of tradition and in the same time about his critical reception of British theology, philosophy and science see: Širka 2021, 583–596; Lubardić 2020, 37–48.



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