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## RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF ETATISM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BYZANTINE TRADITION

*The article analyzes the cultural and civilizational influence of the Byzantine Empire on the formation of Orthodoxy. It was established that Byzantium has a close connection between religion and politics, which was reflected in the concepts of a symphony of powers, conciliarism and statism. The latter conditions the formation of close ties between the government and the church and the identification of Orthodoxy with one empire and people. It is proved that the ideology of statism is aimed at creating an Orthodox state with an Orthodox monarchy as the only model of state and religion coexistence. Statism is based on the belief in the truth of the teachings of a certain church, when the effort to give it universal significance brings closer the imaginary prospect of a political union of Orthodox peoples under the leadership of an Orthodox king. In the national dimension, statism led to the appearance of Byzantine and Russian forms of its existence. For the first form, the revival of the ancient heritage of Roman Caesarism and the dominance of one religion became a characteristic feature. Instead, the hegemony of religion in all spheres of social life and the God-chosenness of the Slavic world in the construction of a Christian state became fundamental for the Russians. It was established that the followers of the ideology of Russian Byzantism identified its defects that needed correction: the absence of a specific Christian ideal that meets the needs of society; lack of desire for self-development; passive policy of the state towards the religious and social life of people; the absence of Russian kings who would correspond to the ideals of a Christian king; dependence of the church on the state. It is proved that the radicalism of the statist ideology was expressed in the justification of the idea of the revival of the Christian state in the form of the Orthodox monarchy, thus justifying external expansion and turning religion into a tool for achieving political goals.*

**Key words:** Byzantism, statism, cathedralism, Orthodoxy, religion, ideology, symphony of powers.

### **Yurii Sytalo. Religijne aspekty etatyzmu w kontekście tradycji bizantyjskiej**

*Artykuł analizuje kulturowy i cywilizacyjny wpływ Cesarstwa Bizantyjskiego na kształtowanie się prawosławia. Ustalono, że Bizancjum ma ścisły związek między religią a polityką, co znalazło odzwierciedlenie w koncepcjach symfonii mocarstw, koncyliaryzmu i etatyzmu. To ostatnie warunkuje kształtowanie się ścisłych więzi między władzą a cerkwią oraz identyfikację prawosławia z jednym imperium i jednym ludem. Udowodniono, że ideologia etatyzmu ma na celu stworzenie państwa prawosławnego z monarchią prawosławną jako jedynym modelem współistnienia państwa i religii. Etatyzm opiera się na wierze w prawdziwość nauczania pewnego kościoła, gdy dążenie do nadania mu uniwersalnego znaczenia przybliża wyimaginowaną perspektywę politycznej unii ludów prawosławnych pod przywództwem prawosławnego króla. W wymiarze narodowym etatyzm doprowadził do pojawienia się bizantyjskich i rosyjskich form jego istnienia. Dla pierwszej formy cechą charakterystyczną stało się odrodzenie antycznego dziedzictwa rzymskiego cezaryzmu i dominacja jednej religii. Zamiast tego hegemonia religii we wszystkich sferach życia społecznego i boskie wybranie świata słowiańskiego w budowie państwa chrześcijańskiego stało się dla Rosjan fundamentalne. Ustalono, że wyznawcy ideologii rosyjskiego bizantyizmu zidentyfikowali jego wady,*

*które wymagają naprawy: brak określonego ideału chrześcijańskiego, odpowiadającego potrzebom społeczeństwa; brak chęci samorozwoju; bierna polityka państwa wobec życia religijnego i społecznego ludzi; nieobecność królów rosyjskich, którzy odpowiadaliby ideałom króla chrześcijańskiego; zależność kościoła od państwa. Udowodniono, że radykalizm ideologii etatystycznej znalazł swój wyraz w uzasadnieniu idei odrodzenia państwa chrześcijańskiego w postaci monarchii prawosławnej, uzasadniając tym samym ekspansję zewnętrzną i uczynienie z religii narzędzia do osiągnięcia celów politycznych.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** Bizancjum, etatyzm, katedralizm, prawosławie, religia, ideologia, symfonia mocarstw.

### **Юрій Сутайло. Релігійні аспекти етатизму в контексті візантійської традиції**

*У статті проаналізовано культурно-цивілізаційний вплив Візантійської імперії на формування православ'я. Установлено, що візантизм має тісний зв'язок релігії та політики, який відобразився в концепціях симфонії влад, соборності й етатизму. Останній зумовлює формування тісних зв'язків влади та церкви й ототожнення православ'я з однією імперією та народом. Доведено, що ідеологія етатизму спрямована на створення православної держави з формою державного правління православною монархією як єдиною моделлю співіснування держави й релігії. Етатизм базується на вірі в істинність учення певної церкви, коли намагання надати їй всесвітнього значення наближає уявну перспективу політичного об'єднання православних народів під проводом православного царя. У національному вимірі етатизм призвів до появи візантійської та російської форми його існування. Для першої форми характерною ознакою стало відродження на античній спадщині римського кесаризму й домінування однієї релігії. Натомість для російського засадничою стала гегемонія релігії в усіх сферах суспільного життя та богообраність слов'янського світу в побудові християнської держави. Констатовано, що послідовники ідеології російського візантизму визначили її вади, які потребують корекції: відсутність конкретного християнського ідеалу, котрий відповідає запитам суспільства; відсутність прагнення до саморозвитку; пасивна політика держави до релігійного й соціального життя людей; відсутність російських царів, які відповідали б ідеалам християнського царя; залежність церкви від держави. Доведено, що радикалізм етатистської ідеології виражався в обґрунтуванні ідеї відродження християнської держави у формі православної монархії, виправдовуючи в такий спосіб зовнішню експансію та перетворюючи релігію на інструмент для досягнення політичних цілей.*

**Ключові слова:** візантизм, етатизм, соборність, православ'я, релігія, ідеологія, симфонія влад.

**Formulation of the problem.** The spiritual and value foundations of the existence of the Orthodox civilization are connected with the worldview and civilizational phenomenon of Byzantium. As a multinational state, Byzantium tried to adapt Christianity to the social and spiritual characteristics of the peoples who inhabited it. The Byzantine version of Christianity, with its inherent defects, proved to be an unbearable burden for the Slavic peoples. During the several centuries of existence of Byzantine Christianity on the territory of Rus', a unique spiritual heritage was formed, which was expressed in the Orthodox tradition, absorbing the psychology and mentality of the Ukrainian people. The set of properties and qualities that Ukraine received from Byzantium was called by two general terms – Byzantium and Byzantinism. These concepts have a lot in common, but they also contain their differences. For example, one of them is that the term Byzantinism is most often used as a cultural category, and Byzantium is interpreted in a socio-political sense.

A further difference concerns the evaluative activity of historical consciousness and is manifested in the fact that Byzantinism is considered a positive phenomenon, and Byzantium is a systemic quality, mostly negative. Byzantinism realized itself in such aspects of social and cultural life as the transition of the population of the empire from the Latin language to Greek, as well as the ethnographic diversity of the composition of the ruling elites, the development of a new type of worldview that combined Hellenistic and Eastern mystical components, systematic cultural

influences on the frontier peoples of the empire, including Eastern Slavs. In general, Byzantinism is the main systemic property that makes it possible to distinguish the Eastern Christian civilization from the Western one.

In the interpretation of Russian ideology, Byzantium is a large complex of religious-social, state-political, philosophical-moral ideas and their corresponding forms of social practice, the origins of which genetically reach back to the archetypes of Byzantine civilization. In the political sphere, Byzantium manifests itself in autocracy. On the other hand, in Orthodox Christianity, which differed from the teaching and structure of Western churches, (in the moral aspect – in the denial of the extremely exaggerated concept of the earthly personality, which was introduced into history by German feudalism) Byzantium means disappointment in everything earthly, the absence of the cult of earthly existence and earthly personality, the focus of a person on his own self-improvement in moral life.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The religious paradigm of Statism as a social teaching of modern Orthodoxy is an understudied scientific problem. The social and spiritual discourse of Statism was considered by M. Berdyaev, I. Ilyin, V. Solovyov, S. Frank, etc. The modern vision of this problem is inseparable from its civilizational dimension, highlighted in the works of modern European researchers D. Angelov, M. Grant, T. Gregory, T. Rice, and M. Saxby. In Ukraine, V. Omelchuk and N. Ishchuk are actively working in this discourse space.

In the theological environment, the attitude towards statist perspectives is rather ambiguous. This is explained by the existence in it of different approaches to ways of evangelization of society, including discussions on the involvement of state institutions in these processes. Part of the Orthodox clergy sees the radicalization of Christian demands for society and the restoration of the social paradigm of the times of the Byzantine Empire as their task, that is, the active implementation of the statist principle of interaction between the church, the state, and the people. More liberal-minded representatives of the church insist on the negative impact of such interaction not only on the evangelization of society, but on the fate of Ecumenical Orthodoxy.

**The purpose** of the article is to analyze the religious paradigm of Statism in the political and ideological structures of Byzantium.

**Presenting main material.** Byzantium is a complex socio-political and spiritual phenomenon, which found its full reflection in the doctrinal and institutional structure of the Orthodox Church. A characteristic feature of Byzantium is its interdependence with state power and the policy it implements. The connection between religion and politics of Byzantium was reflected in the concepts of a symphony of powers, conciliarism and statism.

The symphony of powers is an integral part of the Orthodox teaching on the state, which represents the model of the coexistence of the church and the state. This model is based on a fundamental idea reflected in the Russian ideology of mutual cooperation, assistance and duty without including one of the parties in the sphere of exclusive competence of the other. The state is considered as an organization of political power, which was formed in the process of long-term historical development, dependent on divine providence. The main function of the state is to take care of the calm, carefree and secure earthly life of people. Instead, the purpose of the church is to care for the salvation of the human soul and its eternal life after death. The symphony of powers determined the inadmissibility of institutions to spontaneously interfere in each other's affairs.

An important component of the religious paradigm of Byzantium, aimed at the adaptation of Orthodox teachings to society, is the idea of confraternity, which is a mystical paradigm of the collective life of people. Congregationalism is an integral part of the Orthodox teaching on society, which embodies the most optimal model of collective life. So, conciliarism presupposes the unity of all Orthodox and their desire to coexist with each other. The main ideas of conciliarism reflect the attitude of a person to the state and the people, as well as to society in general.

Among the prerequisites for the creation of a cathedral society, scientists include equality, freedom, justice, fraternity as the basis of social life; the freedom of a person in choosing such life goals that correspond to values based on love for one's neighbor, the church, God, and the state; the

unity of local churches in the righteousness of their existence and efforts to establish the true path to salvation; free choice between good and evil; internal harmony and coherence of human life [1, p. 132].

The cathedral's perception of the world was characteristic of the Orthodox worldview, which was not limited to man's earthly life and gave him hope for eternal existence. Congregationalism was an important component of human salvation, which depended not only on one's own efforts and aspirations, but also on the joint responsibility of all people in their organic totality. Orthodox soteriology contains the idea of salvation not only of humanity in general, but also of the entire earthly world in particular [2, p. 4]. This becomes possible only when the divine creation will be in council unity and collective responsibility.

In earthly life, social unity becomes possible thanks to collective work, which necessitated joint activity for the purpose of survival. The general, naturalistic perception of the world, in which man felt himself to be an integral part, also contributed to the spread of the idea of cathedralism on the territory of Byzantine civilization. It was through this organization and way of life that each individual determined his collective belonging and identified himself as a representative of a specific social group. The cathedral worldview began to take root in all spheres of human life, which led to the condemnation of individualism as a manifestation of disregard for the norms of the Orthodox community.

The idea of conciliarity found its expression through the Orthodox understanding of freedom. In the Western perception, the latter was interpreted as an inalienable right of an individual to protect his life from the encroachments of another individual. Instead, the churches of the East determined mutual responsibility for the mistakes and miscalculations of one person, since each believing person was inside the collective, which was inside the believer [3, p. 51–52]. That is why freedom of spirit was a component of faith in the structure of religious consciousness. Note that cathedral belonging as a paradigm did not involve the dissolution of a person by the community and the subordination of the individual "I" to the collective "we". The cathedral worldview did not encourage a person to introduce a passive way of life, on the contrary, it contributed to the formation of an active rejection of seclusion, alienation and directed to the realization of one's own self. Such a transformation led to a cathedral rebirth, when a person's consciousness, through the perception of other people's individualities, was able to make a holistic sense of life. As the scientists note, despite the fact that the ideas of conciliarity directed a person to voluntary union with the collective, they did not create the ideology of the enslaved person. For society, the cathedral's perception of the world determined the potential with which a person could coexist in a collective. Therefore, the ideas of conciliarity produced not only the patriarchal system of values, but were also the means of their preservation for practical implementation. The desire for freedom was not perceived as an aggressive effort to free oneself from established social laws and rules, "but the need for a personal community, the inevitable dynamics of personal self-overcoming and self-sacrifice in love" [4, p. 121].

However, in the conditions of the implementation of religious policy, the ideas of conciliarity could become the basis for limiting the rights and freedoms of the individual. This became possible when the cathedral idea was adapted to the needs of the authorities or certain political forces. In such conditions, an environment was formed when "communities of people were not formed as a result of the unity of human personalities, but one of the classes of such communities became a superior force in relation to man" [5, p. 45].

A radical form of conciliarity is the creation of the ideology of statism. The latter conditions the formation of close ties between the government and the church and the identification of Orthodoxy with one empire and one people. Statism is a political doctrine about the necessity and justification of the active intervention of the state in various spheres of social and spiritual, in particular, religious life, which is based on the understanding of the state as a universal value, the highest result and goal of social development [6, p. 625]. This ideology is aimed at creating an Orthodox state with a form of state government – an Orthodox monarchy as a single model of coexistence of state and religion. Statism is based on the belief in the truth of the teachings of a certain church, when the effort to give

its universal significance brings closer the imaginary prospect of a political union of Orthodox peoples under the leadership of an Orthodox king.

Statism as a political doctrine is a component of the ideology of Byzantium, which involves the use of the political influence of the state to exercise control over the activities of the population. The connection between statism and Byzantism rests on the restoration of the symphony of church and state power, politics and religion; justification of the divine origin of power; the revival of the Christian state in the form of the Orthodox monarchy; recognition of divine intervention in state management; identification of state power with the power of the monarch, who should promote the Christianization of all peoples; subordination of social life to religious norms; the influence of the religious factor on national identification; the natural unity of the people and the government; the formation of the autocrat's rights and duties in relation to his own people; development of the messianic idea of the exceptional importance of the people in the salvation of all mankind [7, p. 178–179]. So, the main feature of statism is the penetration of religion into all spheres of social and political life, their universal subordination to religion, the formation of a Christian empire, and the transformation of Orthodoxy into a single state ideology.

The emergence of statism was caused by social and political processes that took place in the Roman Empire. In the 3rd century, more and more educated people with high social status became Christians. The results of the spread of Christianity did not allow the Roman authorities to ignore its presence in the country. The emperor sought to unite the multinational empire with the help of religion and get rid of the spiritual crisis inherent in Roman society. A radical change in the attitude towards Christianity in the Roman Empire took place during the reign of Emperor Constantine I the Great. His greatest achievement was the signing of the Edict of Milan in 313, according to which the emperor legalized the existence of Christianity in the state.

Descendants of Konstantin did not show great political talents. The reign of the Constantine dynasty was a period of flourishing and rapid spread of Christianity. A radical change in religious policy took place during the reign of Julian II the Apostate. The emperor, fascinated by paganism in his philosophical interpretation of the Neoplatonist Iamblichus, set himself the goal of destroying Christianity and restoring paganism. However, his death was the triumph of religion and the end of the Constantine dynasty. During the reign of the next dynasty, Valentinian-Theodosius, Emperor Theodosius in 380 passed the edict "On Universal Faith", which declared Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, which led to "the existence of a limitless Christian Society, Church and State" [8, p. 265]. The establishment of Christianity, especially its orthodox form, as a state institution significantly influenced both the religious policy itself, primarily in relation to other religions and denominations, and the structure of state administration, causing the gradual "fusion" of church and state [9, p. 249]. During this period, the church distanced itself in its teachings from the apocalyptic attitudes of the early Christian community, which was in a state of "waiting for the end of the world and posthumous compensation for injustice in earthly life. Realizing that these ideas pose a threat to the existing political order, Christianity turned into a „power of political domination”" [10].

So, the formation of statism was the result of the transformation of the idea of Christian universalism, built on the existence of a sacred state with a common divine people united by common values and purpose. In the political dimension, Christianity formed the idea of exaltation not of a nation, but of a large multinational state, whose teaching declared the absence of national differences and recognized the equality of all nations that shared the cultural values of the Roman world. The political events of the 4th century became decisive in the establishment and development of statist ideology. In the East of the Empire, a powerful secular power was formed in the person of the emperor, who substantiated the idea of the divine unity of the church and the state and regulated the formation of dogmatic teachings by convening Ecumenical Councils by political means. The result of such a religious policy was the fusion of secular and church power, when the emperor decided all church issues and determined the content of Christian doctrines, and at the same time the clergy tried to find support from the state and actively cooperated with the authorities.

In 1453, the Turks conquered Constantinople, which led to the fall of the Byzantine Empire. The capital was renamed Istanbul, which became the main city of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of the Turkish conquest, Christians came under the rule of the Turks and adopted their view of religion. According to the legislation of the Ottoman Empire, all non-Muslim peoples received a special status – a millet, headed by an ethnoarch. The Turks considered Christians to be the only nation led by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Unlike other peoples, the millets had the opportunity to contact the government and defend the dignity of their people [11, p. 191–192]. Consequently, Orthodoxy became the defining means of unity and self-identification of the Slavic peoples. It is at this time that religious patriotism begins to grow and belonging to Orthodoxy is considered a great achievement. Therefore, Orthodoxy transformed into a national force that united people and became a factor in the national liberation struggle.

Finally, the ideology of statism took shape after the division of the Roman Empire into its Western and Eastern parts. At this time, Christianity in the East began to be identified with Greek, while Western Christianity began to be identified with Latin. Religious patriotism, which arose as a result of political events, took shape in a messianic ideology, which was supported by the state power, leading to the emergence of statism. The formation of Byzantine statism occurred not only thanks to the Crusades, but also due to the opposition of the Greek (Orthodox) faith to the Latin (Catholic): "Western nationalism was based on the independent development of church life, instead, the «great idea» in the interpretation of the Greeks assumed belonging only to the Orthodox faith, Greek culture and language" [12, p. 245]. The Greeks began to identify Orthodoxy with their own people and one empire, creating a monopoly on the Orthodox faith. At the same time, the highest value gradually became not the Christian empire (as before), but the nation as the basis of the formation of the Orthodox community and the center of this empire.

According to researchers of political processes, the Byzantine Empire demonstrated a model of state policy regarding religion, which acted as a component of the state administration system, ensuring the fulfillment of important domestic and foreign policy tasks of Constantinople. However, focusing on only one religion and confession significantly limited the space for geopolitical maneuver and narrowed the social base of the imperial power [8, p. 428–429].

After the decline of the Byzantine Empire, the ideas of statism became decisive in the establishment of the ideology of Moscow Orthodoxy, which formed the slogan "unification of the Orthodox" under the leadership of Moscow. Therefore, the statist idea was transformed into the opposition of Hellenism and Slavism, and the doctrine, which was formed by the Church of Constantinople, was replaced by Pan-Slavism, which was reflected in the slogan "Orthodoxy. Autocracy. Nation". With the growth of Moscow's political importance, Moscow's political ideology, known as the "Third Rome" theory, was formed. The theorists of the "Third Rome" proclaimed that the first Rome fell into heresy, the second Rome (Constantinople) fell under the pressure of the Turks, therefore the "Third Rome" should become the center of world Christianity, and Moscow claimed this place. Based on this ideology, the Moscow prince changed his title and began to be called the Moscow Tsar. Etymologically, the word "tsar" is associated with the titles of the Roman emperors "Cesar", "Ceesar", which are derived from the name "Caesar". Among the Slavs, the words "tsar" and "emperor" were synonymous. In particular, the Slavs called Constantinople Tsargorod, that is, the royal or imperial city. It was then that the coat of arms of the Moscow kingdom changed from the image of St. George to the image of a double-headed eagle. Having created the title "tsar" and re-elected the imperial coat of arms, the Moscow tsars needed to obtain autocephaly and the Patriarch of their own Church for the fullness of power. By bribery and intimidation, the Moscow tsar succeeded in having the Patriarch of Constantinople appoint the Moscow Metropolitan Job as the first Patriarch of Moscow.

So, historically, two forms of Byzantium were formed – Byzantine and Russian. For the first form, the revival of the ancient heritage of Roman Caesarium and the dominance of one religion became a characteristic feature. Instead, for Russian Byzantium, the hegemony of religion in all spheres of social life and the divine election of the Slavic world in the construction of a Christian state. Followers

of the ideology of Russian Byzantium identified its defects that require correlation: the absence of a specific Christian ideal that meets the needs of society; lack of desire for self-development; passive policy of the state towards the religious and social life of people; the absence of Russian kings who would correspond to the ideal of a Christian king; dependence of the church on the state. The radicalism of the statist ideology was expressed in the justification of the idea of "collecting Slavic lands", "protecting the Orthodox", "protecting the Orthodox faith", thus justifying external expansion and turning into a toolkit for achieving political goals [13, p. 26].

In the ideology of statism, the idea is embedded not only about determining the place of the people and the state in world history, but also about recognizing the king as the helmsman of all Christians. In the context of Russian Orthodoxy, the people, the state and the tsar are recognized as defenders of Orthodoxy as a religion and peoples who are bearers of the Orthodox faith. Therefore, the threat from the Orthodox Church, whose ideology is based on statism, is inevitable for all those countries where the population professes Orthodoxy.

The statist ideas of Byzantium limit human rights and freedoms and distort the authentic meaning of the concept of confraternity. In the cathedral tradition, the nation is interpreted as an organic unity of "cathedral subjects", which is expressed not only in the cohesion of society's life, but also in faith. Under the influence of statism, the nation-state idea is embedded in the consciousness of the people, which leads to the cultivation of ethnocentric attitudes of society and for the sake of which it was allowed to sacrifice individual people. Such principles of statism had negative feedback from the bearers of the Orthodox faith, as their compatibility with Christian values and ideals is highly questionable.

The civilizational dimension of Byzantium was reflected in the policy of the Russian Orthodox Church, which openly declares its Orthodox patriotism. It was reflected in calls for love for the motherland within defined territorial boundaries and co-religionists around the world. Manifestations of national feelings that produce xenophobia, interethnic enmity, and the division of peoples into higher and lower nations are particularly condemned by the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time, the hierarchs prove the superiority of a single Orthodox society, which forms an Orthodox people within the boundaries of one national, ethnic or civil community. In the rhetoric of the Russian Orthodox Church, the question of the need to restore the state status of Orthodoxy is increasingly raised. This is evidenced by the adoption of the concept of "polycentric brotherhood" to replace the Catholic doctrine of "Christian Europe". Resisting the hegemony of Western ideology, according to the Russian Orthodox Church, is possible only in the conditions of the union of religion and politics. That is why the church openly preaches Orthodox values in the "Russian lands" with the aim of uniting them in a single Orthodox state. The ideas of statism became the basis for the formation of the political doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church – "Russian peace" [14].

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** To ensure the integrity of the study, it is important to distinguish between the political and religious aspects of Byzantium. Considering that Byzantium is a basic element of Orthodoxy, when conducting a comparative analysis of the influence of the ideas of conciliarism, symphony of powers and statism on the activity of Orthodox churches, we do not attempt to compare individual positions of the mentioned students, but compare them exclusively in a political sense. It is the definition of the common elements of the doctrines of different currents that enables a comparative analysis of both general and individual positions of Byzantium in the teachings of the churches. A different interpretation of some issues of ethical issues of a non-fundamental nature is nevertheless important, as it can be used for political purposes. However, disagreements regarding the basic elements of Byzantium deprive the possibility of agreeing positions due to negation.

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