
The Nicholai Studies:
*International Journal for Research of Theological
and Ecclesiastical Contribution
of Nicholai Velimirovich*

Volume I, Number 1

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The Nicholai Studies:
*International Journal for Research of Theological
and Ecclesiastical Contribution of Nicholai Velimirovich*

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The *Nicholai Studies* is an international peer-reviewed academic journal dedicated to research of theological and ecclesiastical contribution of **Nicholai Velimirovich**, as well to the research of a wider context in which he lived and created, i.e. the reception of his ideas and his heritage in general. *Nicholai Studies* primarily publishes original scientific papers dedicated to the study of theology and spirituality. The journal is open for scientific papers and review articles based on research in other areas, like social sciences and humanities, philosophy, sociology, political science, philology, literature, history, historiography, archival research, etc. — as long as they correspond with the topic of the journal. *Nicholai Studies* also publishes relevant archival and documentary material, with accompanying studies and notes as well as bibliographies, shorter notes, reviews, comments and reviews of new publications. *Nicholai Studies* primarily publishes articles in English and Serbian language. Every article published in *Nicholai Studies* is reviewed two times and anonymously before being published.

The publisher of *Nicholai Studies* is the Christian Cultural Center “Dr Radovan Bigović”, based in Belgrade, Serbia. International scientific journal *Nicholai Studies* is published both as a printed and as an online open access journal. The journal is printed in A5 format on recycled paper in the Printing office of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade.

The scientific journal *Nicholai Studies* is founded in the year 2020 and launched in 2021. The journal *Nicholai Studies* is published two times a year. Papers published in *Nicholai Studies* are peer-reviewed. The published articles represent the views of the authors.

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From Editor: Introducing the 1st Issue of the *Nicholai Studies*

Dear readers,

With the first issue of the new international journal dedicated to the research of Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich's¹ legacy, the circumstances and the context in which he lived and created, and the issues of reception of his ideas and his contribution, we would like to say a word on the main editorial and publishing policies.

We fully endorse academic rules on publishing and publication ethics. Our journal is published both in English and Serbian language; we apply the double-blind unbiased peer-review, including internal review by the Editorial Board and external reviewers, experts on the topic.

We support the principle of international diversity — diversity of the Editorial Board, reviewers, and authors. Editorial

¹ **Nicholai Velimirovich**, in Serbian: **Николај Велимировић** (before taking monastic vows: Никола Велимировић), in Russian and Bulgarian: Николай Велимирович, in Greek: Νικόλαος or Νικόλαϊ Βελιμίροβιτς. His name in English and other languages written in Latin script can be found in following transcriptions: Nikolaj, Nikola, Nikolai, Nicola, Nicolai, Nicolay, Nicholay, Nicholai, Nicolae, Nicholas, Nikolas, Nikolaus, and his surname as Velimirović, Velimirovic, Velimirovich, Velimirovitch, Velimirovich or Velimirovitz: this can be confusing, but there was not one standardized form of a transcription of his name from the beginning of publishing of his works in English and other languages written in Latin script. In our journal, we will attempt to use the most common transliteration of his name from Serbian, and also according to his signature — as **Nicholai Velimirovich**, which is the same as he used to write his own name in English.

The only exceptions could be transliterations of his name in quotations and in references, where we will attend to keep the original form of a transcription of Velimirovich's name and surname.

Board invites and welcomes submissions from around the region and all around the world. In this issue — the first issue of *Nicholai Studies* — we are publishing a guide to authors, where you can find all necessary information for submitting your articles. We would like to underline that our journal follows the publication ethics principles to prevent scientific or ethical misconduct or plagiarism. Therefore authors are required to fill and submit the signed Authorship Statement, and also a brief academic biography along with their manuscripts.

We encourage you to submit responses and reactions to the authors or the editors discussing the results of published studies, communications, and reviews. We are opened to challenging opinions and discussions. We invite you to send your responses regarding debates on different topics — theology, spirituality, history, philosophy, and social sciences in general. We believe that if we all together took responsibility as authors, reviewers, and editors, we could reach our goal and bring your research to the attention of the international scientific community and contribute thus to a better understanding of Bishop Nicholai's role and contribution, as well as to better knowledge and understanding of the contemporary Church history and streams of theological thought.

Now we will mention the main reasons why we decided to publish a new international peer-reviewed journal, and why we dedicated our journal to the study of Bishop Nicholai's thought and influence.

December 23rd (O.S.) i.e. January 5th of the year 2021 marks the 140th anniversary since the birth of Nicholai Velimirovich. March 5th / 18th of 2021 marks the 65th anniversary of Bishop Nicholai's death.

In our opinion, Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich was a remarkable figure in his theological and mystical insights, spiritual reflection and literary creativity, caritative and missionary activity, promotion of Christian ideals, service and witness to Christian unity, and even to an all-human fraternity. His critics would point to certain controversial aspects of his life.

However, he was a remarkable churchman, who influenced the life and mission of the Serbian Orthodox Church a lot. His thought and his reflections and homilies also impacted many Orthodox theologians, authors, priests, monks. His books are interesting to religious people in a wider sense, and also to devoted churchgoers. St. Nicholai continues to motivate people to accept Christian identity, to read the Word of God, to practice Christian virtues even today. More than a half-century after his death, his writings are published and respected worldwide. New translations of his works are produced both in the East and in the West, and collections of his works are published in German, French, Russian, English, Spanish, Romanian, Greek, etc. And Velimirovich's readership is not limited to Orthodox Christians. He enjoys a reputation as a sort of universal Christian sage. He has impacted the lives of Christians for more than 100 years.

The year 2021 is a year to celebrate his legacy. To mark the 2021 anniversary and to motivate critical research of Bishop Nicholai's contribution, the Editorial Board of the present journal is launching *Nicholai Studies*, an international journal focused primarily to research the legacy of Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich. Therefore, we are looking forward to your contributions.

The *Nicholai Studies* are an international journal for the research of theological and ecclesiastical contribution of Nicholai Velimirovich (1881–1956), as well as the wider context in which he lived and created, i.e. the reception of his ideas and his heritage in general. *Nicholai Studies* are open for research of philosophy and theology, for works on the subject of ecclesiastical and social history, for ecumenical treatises, literary analyses, political science research, sociological and religious studies, and in principle, for every critical research of theological-ecclesiastical, socio-political and cultural climate in which Nicholai Velimirovich lived and worked.

Besides Nicholai Velimirovich, *Nicholai Studies* also focuses on the individuals who were his friends and associates,

as well as on the people who criticized him and on those people he was connected to, such as Archpriest Aleksa Ilić (Алекса Илић, 1842–1920), Serbian Patriarch Dimitrije Pavlović (Димитрије Павловић, 1846–1930), historian and diplomat Čedomilj Mijatović (Чедомиљ Мијатовић, 1842–1932), Christian Catholic bishop of Switzerland Eduard Herzog (1841–1924), Archpriest Vojislav Janić (Војислав Јанић, 1890–1944), philosopher and theoretician of modern painting Dimitrije Mitrović (Димитрије Митровић, 1887–1953), journalist and novelist Stephen Graham (1884–1975), Metropolitan of Skopje Josif Cvižović (Јосиф Цвијовић, 1878–1957), politician and diplomat Nikola Pašić (Никола Пашић, 1845–1926), Archbishop of Canterbury Randall Thomas Davidson (1848–1930), ethnologist and religious history scholar Veselin Čajkanović (Веселин Чајкановић, 1881–1946), doctor and suffragist Elsie Maud Inglis (1864–1917), Scottish divine and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland Rev. Alexander Whyte (1836–1921), diplomat and writer Jovan Jovanović Pižon (Јован Јовановић Пижон, 1869–1939), Oxford Anglo-Catholic theologian Rev. Leighton Pullan (1865–1940), Archimandrite Justin Popović (Јустин [Благоје] Поповић, 1894–1979), Bishop of Chichester George Kennedy Allen Bell (1883–1958), Bishop of Gloucester Arthur Cayley Headlam (1862–1947), Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich (Севастијан [Јован] Дабовић, 1863–1940), Canon John Albert Douglas (1868–1956), scientist and inventor Mihajlo Idvorski Pupin (Михајло Идворски Пупин, 1858–1935), inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla (Никола Тесла, 1856–1943), pedagogist and psychologist Pavle Raja Radosavljević (Павле Раја Радосављевић, 1879–1958), Anglican bishop Herbert Bury (1854–1933), Archimandrite Rafailo (Stevanović) of Hilandar (Рафаило [Радосав] Стевановић Хиландарац, 1886–1937), Hegemon Rafailo (Topalović) of Nikolje (Рафаило [Бошко] Топаловић, 1899–1982), Serbian theologian and a historian Archpriest Stevan M. Dimitrijević (Стеван М. Димитријевић 1866–

1953), Slovenian ethnologist and anthropologist Niko Županič (1876–1961), philosopher and theologian Archpriest Basil Zenkovsky (Василий Васильевич Зеньковский, 1881–1962), Christian Catholic bishop of Switzerland Adolf Kury (1870–1956), Episcopal Bishop of New York City William Thomas Manning (1866–1949), linguist and academic Aleksandar Belić (Александар Белић, 1876–1960), humanitarian Gertrude Carrington Wilde (c. 1865–1945), pioneer of ecumenism Robert Hallowell Gardiner III (1855–1924), humanitarian Dame Louise Margaret Leila Wemyss Paget — Lady Paget (1881–1958), Metropolitan of Thyateira Germanos Strinopoulos (Γερμανός [Γεώργιος] Στρηνόπουλος, 1872–1951), political activist and historian Robert William Seton-Watson — also known as *Scotus Viator* (1879–1951), missionary and ecumenical pioneer Clara Ruth Rouse (1872–1956), evangelist and activist John Raleigh Mott (1865–1955), Archbishop of Canterbury William Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864–1945), Canon Tissington Tatlow (1876–1957), activist Ruth Frances Woodsmall (1883–1963), Rev Henry Joy Fynes-Clinton (1875–1959), activist and humanitarian Grace Helena Saunders (1874–1970), founding First Hierarch of ROCOR Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky (Антоний [Алексей] Павлович Храповицкий, 1863–1936), Canon Oliver Chase Quick (1885–1944), Hegumen Cassian Korepanov (Кассиан [Константин] Тимофеевич Корепанов, 1867–1946), feminist and author Rebecca West — Dame Cicily Isabel Fairfield (1892–1983), King of Yugoslavia Alexander I Karađorđević (Александар Карађорђевић, 1888–1934), Queen of Yugoslavia Marija Karađorđević (Marie von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Марија Карађорђевић, 1900–1961), Elder Silouan the Athonite (Силуан [Семён] Иванович Антонов, 1866–1938), sculptor and architect Ivan Meštrović (Иван Мештровић, 1883–1962), translator and journalist Luka Smodlaka (1869–1956), Rev. Lloyd Burdwin Holsapple (1884–1959), philosopher and paleontologist Branislav Brana Petronijević (Бранислав Петронијевић, 1875–1954),

politician and Roman Catholic priest Anton Korošec (1872–1940), Hegumenia of Kuveždin Melanija Krivokućin (Меланија Кривокућин [нее Белегишанин], 1886–1942), Archimandrite Kirik Maximov (Кирик [Константин] Никифорович Максимов, 1864–1938), writer and critic Isidora Sekulić (Исидора Секулић, 1877–1958), the Sitters family — Chaplain Percy Henry Sitters and his wife Kathleen M. Sitters, Metropolitan of Sofia Stefan [Stoyan] Popgeorgiev Shokov (Стефан I [Стоян] Попгеоргиев Шоков, 1878–1957), Bishop of Chicago and seventeenth Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church Charles Palmerston Anderson (1865–1930), philosopher Ksenija Atanasijević (Ксенија Атанасијевић, 1894–1981), Bishop of Gibraltar and Bishop of Guildford John Harold Greig (1865–1938), Bishop of America and Canada Mardarije Uskoković (Мардарије [Иван] Ускоковић, 1889–1935), Bishop of Gibraltar and Bishop of Lincoln Frederick Cyril Nugent Hicks (1872–1942), general Milan Nedić (Милан Недић, 1877–1946), politician Dimitrije Ljotić (Димитрије Љотић, 1891–1945), professor Arnold Gilg (1887–1967), Serbian and Yugoslavian politician and economist Milan Stojadinović (Милан Стојадиновић, 1888–1961), general Dragoljub Draža Mihailović (Драгољуб Дража Михаиловић, 1893–1946), publisher Jovan Sekulović (Јован Секуловић, 1879–1950), a poet and diplomat Jovan Dučić (Јован Дучић, 1871–1943), activist and politician Vasilj Grđić (Василь Грђић, 1875–1934), hegumenias of Jovanje Irina Stefanović (Ирина Стефановић, 1908–1939) and Ekaterina Stanković (Екатерина Станковић, 1906–1943), Bishop of Gibraltar Harold Jocelyn Buxton (1880–1976), diplomat and statesman Winston L. S. Churchill (1874–1965), Archimandrite Andronik Elpidinskiy (Андроник [Андрей Яковлевич] Елпидинский / Эльпидинский, 1894–1959), Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Francis Fisher (1887–1972), historian and lawyer Slobodan Jovanović (Слободан Јовановић, 1869–1958), Metropolitan of Zagreb Damaskin Grdanički (Дамаскин [Драгутин] Грданички, 1892–1969), Archimandrite Syprian

Kern (Киприан [Константин] Эдуардович Керн, 1899–1960), Bishop of Catania Kassian Bezobrazov (Кассиан [Сергей] Сергеевич Безобразов, 1892–1965), philosopher Leo [Lev] Zander (Лев Александрович Зандер, 1893–1964), Archbishop of Kamchatka Nestor Anisimov (Нестор [Николай Александрович] Анисимов, 1885–1962), Bishop of Washington and Florida Gregory Grabbe (Григорий [Юрий (Георгий) Павлович] Граббе, 1902–1995), Archbishop of San Francisco John Maximovitch (Иоанн [Михаил] Борисович Максимович, 1896–1966), Hegumenia of Vračevšnica Ana Adžić (Ана Аџић, 1900–1975), Serbian Patriarch Varnava Rosić (Варнава [Петар] Росић, 1880–1937), first general secretary of WCC Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft (1900–1985), Bishop of Banja Luka Platon Jovanović (Платон [Миливоје] Јовановић, 1874–1941), executive of the International YMCA Paul Bernard Anderson (1894–1985), Orthodox theologian and historian Protopresbyter Georges Vasilievich Florovsky (Георгий Васильевич Флоровский, 1893–1979), Hieromonk Mihailo Đusić (Михаило Ђусић, 1911–1945), Protosyncellus Jovan Rapajić (Јован Рапajiћ, 1910–1945), Metropolitan of Zagreb Dositej Vasić (Доситеј [Драгутин] Васић, 1877–1945), diplomat Hermann Neubacher (1893–1960), monk Jakov Arsović (Јаков [Радоје] Арсовић, 1894–1946), secretary of WSCF and ecumenical activist Pastor Henry-Louis Henriod (1887–1970), Romanian Orthodox theologian Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban (1878–1949), Serbian Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić (Гаврило [Ђорђе] Дожић, 1881–1950), Bishop of Dalmatia Irinej Đorđević (Иринеј [Милан] Ђорђевић, 1894–1952), Bishop of Bačka Irinej Ćirić (Иринеј [Јован] Ћирић, 1884–1955), Hegumenia of Korporin Sara Đuketić (Сара Ђукетић, 1904–1964), Bishop of Žiça Vasilije Kostić (Василије [Тихомир] Костић, 1907–1978), Hegumenia of Ljubostinja Varvara Milenović (Варвара Миленовић, 1910–1995), Bishop of Hvosno Varnava Nastić (Варнава [Војислав] Настић, 1914–1964), Hegumenia of Drača Jelena Jokić, Bishop of America and Canada Dionisije Milivojević (Дионисије [Драгољуб]

Миливојевић, 1898–1979), Canon Edward Nason West (1909–1990), artist and iconographer Ivan Melnikov (Иван Иустинович Мельников, 1896–1969), iconographer Nicholas V. Meyendorff (Николай Феофилович (Богданович) Мейендорф, 1887–1969), Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York Anastasius Gribanovsky (Анастасий [Александр] Алексеевич Грибановский, 1873–1965), historian Vladislav Al'binovich Maevskii (Владислав (Владимир) Альбинович Маевский, 1893–1975), the Zernov family — philosopher and theologian Nicholas (Николай Михайлович Зёрнов, 1898–1980), his sister, humanitarian Sophia (Софья Михайловна Зёрнова, 1899–1972) and his wife, iconographer Militza (Милица Владимировна Зёрнова, 1899–1994), Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America John Shahovskoy (Иоанн [Дмитрий] Алексеевич Шаховской, 1902–1989), Bishop of Edmonton Sava Saračević (Сава [Јован] Сарачевић, 1902–1973), Archpriest Dušan Šukletović (Душан Шуклетовић), Archpriest Dušan Popović (Душан Поповић, 1921–1972), Archpriest Dimitrije Najdanović (Димитрије Најдановић, 1897–1986), Priest Mirko Maksimović (Мирко Максимовић), Bishop of Šabac and Valjevo Jovan Velimirović (Јован Велимировић, 1912–1989), Archpriest Aleksa Todorović (Алекса Тодоровић, 1899–1990), Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov (Софроний [Сергей] Семёнович Сахаров, 1896–1993), Bishop of San Francisco Basil Rodzianko (Василий [Владимир] Михайлович Родзянко, 1915–1999), psychologist Ratibor Đurđević (Ратибор Ђурђевић, 1915–2011), Archpriest Vlastimir Tomić (Властимир Томић), photographer Milan M. Karlo (Милан М. Карло (Карајловић)), historian Đoko Slijepčević (Ђоко Слијепчевић, 1907–1993), Hegemon Kalist Milunović (Калист [Добривоје] Милуновић, 1896–1991), Metropolitan of Libertyville and Chicago Christopher Kovacevich (Христофор [Велимир] Ковачевић, 1928–2010), biblical scholar Veselin Kesich (Веселин Кесић, 1921–2012) and others. The list of individuals that are of special interest for the *Nicholai Studies* journal is not concluded, of course.

The journal *Nicholai studies* is focused on the work and thought of Nicholai Velimirovich and on the whole context in which he created and worked — starting with his education and service in the Kingdom of Serbia (1881–1904), then his studies in Western Europe (1905–1909), the beginning of his monastic life, his service in the seminary and study times in Russia (1909–1912), his activities during war times (1912–1918), serving as a diocesan bishop (1919–1940), his destiny during World War II (1941–1945), to his life in exile (1946–1956), and his legacy.

In the eyes of his venerators, Nicholai Velimirovich is one of the most notable figures in the history of the 20th century. Velimirovich is recognized as a saint in the Orthodox Church and he is venerated as an exceptional preacher and outstanding pastor. On the other hand, Nicholai's critics see him as an anti-Semite, Nazi, misogynist, barbaric and primitive person, and a dark and retrograde figure. His name is entered in the *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, and that is not the only place where he is described as a notorious anti-Semite, collaborationist of Nazis, etc. Since his personality is the subject of controversy, the Editorial Board of the journal *Nicholai Studies* addresses the authors to shed the light on his contribution — primarily his theological and ecclesiastical contribution and then his cultural and social contribution in the wider sense, i.e. on the authentic insight of Velimirovich's role in the history of the 20th century and to do so objectively, by studying the life and work of Nicholai Velimirovich. The critics and apologists of Velimirovich's personality and opus are also invited to contribute. In this regard, the journal *Nicholai Studies* can be a platform for dialogue and comparison of different research results and different conclusions and opinions to acquire a more objective idea and clearer insights. In the past couple of decades, the life of Nicholai Velimirovich has been actively researched and a lot has been written about him (in the meantime two doctoral theses have been defended, several masters and bachelor theses on Nicholai Velimirovich,

and a few dozens of monographs and thousands of articles about him and his contribution), but it seems that the groups of researchers who made different conclusions did not communicate between themselves enough and had not compared their insights in a critical manner.

The desire to change this and to promote dialogue between researchers was one of the key motives for starting the journal *Nicholai Studies*. The Editorial Board of the journal is facing a great challenge, having an idea like that in mind. As a logical step forward, one of the main tasks of the journal would be to collect and organize current Nicholai's bibliography. As there are unanswered questions in regard to the authorship, editions, and versions of Nicholai's work, as well as the materials which are about to be published, creating a bibliography of Nicholai's work, as well as the articles and journals published in Nicholai's surroundings, then the work attributed to him, translations, and articles on Nicholai and individuals connected to him, would be a necessary step towards establishing a more systematical methodological framework for the research of Nicholai Velimirovich's work. The Editorial Board of the journal will make sure that domestic and foreign literary and scientific production is being tracked and to collect and organize bibliographical materials relevant for research of Bishop Nicholai's contribution.

Srećko Petrović, Editor

* * *



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What Did Jesus Write on the Ground? Exegetical Analysis of John 8: 6–8

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Abstract: Inspired by a sermon by Saint Nicholai of Ohrid and Ziča on Jesus' writing on the ground, the paper offers an insight into a wide range of exegetical analyses concerning the three basic issues related to Jesus' writing on the ground presented in John 8: 6–8. The question of the content of the inscription is first investigated. Despite the complete absence of the actual text, numerous authors over time have made many possible but hypothetical suggestions as to what words Jesus could have written. Then, various suggestions are considered regarding the meaning of this action, that is, the very fact that Jesus wrote. Finally, the study deals with the question of Jesus' literacy and in connection with Keith's claim that this pericope is a third-century interpolation inserted into the text of the Fourth Gospel in order to satisfy the Church's needs for literate leaders.

Key words: Writing on the ground, historical Jesus, sinful woman, literacy, Decalogue, pericope adulterae, Nicholai Velimirovich.

In the works of the pagan priest from Delphi, historian and member of the middle Platonism Plutarch from Chaeronea, there is, among other things, the story of Antigonos the First Monophthalmos (one-eyed), who lost an eye during the siege of Perinthos (around 340 BC). He was hit by a catapult bolt. In the same story (*Mor.* 183), Plutarch talks about the practice of writing on the ground, suggesting that it was carried out when a certain member of society was not allowed to speak in public.

The story of a woman caught in adultery (John 7: 53 – 8: 11), known in the New Testament scholarship as the *pericope adulterae*, which also gives us a description of Jesus' act of writing on the ground, has experienced an impressive number of studies in the history of New Testament exegesis. The research presented in them mainly concentrates on two basic issues: the origin and reception of the pericope, the date of its origin (together with its presence or absence in ancient manuscripts),¹ and its correct interpretation (Keith 2008, 377–404). Among the many studies dedicated to this pericope, there are those that concentrate only on the very act of writing on the ground. Since this is the only place in the entire canonical and non-canonical biblical literature about Jesus as a writer, the interest in this element is understandable. Augustine of Hippo included in his works at least six different explanations of Jesus' actions as a writer, repeating the solutions of Ambrose of Milan and Jerome of Stridon, and adding his own (Knust 2006, 533).² Chris Keith has already calculated thirty-eight interpre-

¹ There is a consensus among contemporary researchers of the John's Corpus regarding the status of this pericope as a subsequent interpolation in relation to the remaining text of the Fourth Gospel. The current location of the pericope after John 7: 52 was also the most popular over the centuries. There are, however, manuscripts in which this pericope is found after Lk. 21: 38 (on the linguistic level there is a similarity between Lk. 21: 37–38 and Jn. 8: 1–2) or as an addition to the entire John's Gospel after John 21:24 considering the criterion of compatibility of the text of the pericope with the literary context in which it appears, the best candidate for the original or original context is the text of Jn. 7–8. See more in: Keith 2009a, 209–231.

² In the history of the reception of the Gospel of John, it will be noted that the Latin fathers, to whom we refer in this study, paid much more attention to this pericope than their Greek contemporaries. Greek commentators have been devoting themselves to this pericope only since the 12th century. However, Eusebius suggests that Papius of Hierapolis knew the passage as part of the Gospel of the Jews (*Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 39,17). In the works of John Chrysostom known today, paragraphs 7: 53 – 8, 11 are not quoted. However, the Catholic preacher Jacobus de Varagine (13th century) claims: "and, according to John Chrysostom, he wrote: 'Ground, swallow these rejected people.'" (Hevelone 2010, 54). It is currently unknown whether Jacob confused the name of John Chrysostom with someone else, or whether there really was a work that has not been preserved to this day. In the East, the first interpretation of the passage belongs to Euthymius Zigabenus in the twelfth century.

tations and himself added his thirty-ninth attempt to answer the meaning of this act. Interpretations that try to explain Jesus' act go in two main directions. Such a considerable number of commentators consider the content of the inscription. These are inherently hypothetical considerations, because the author of the pericope did not provide us with any information regarding the content of the inscription. Other commentators choose a safer path, focusing on the fact and motif of writing. One possible answer is a suggestion that is almost completely banal, seeing in Jesus' activity proof of his literacy. This answer presupposes another, fundamental question posed in contemporary research of the historical Jesus, namely the question of Jesus' literacy. The three problems mentioned above will be the subject of our study. We will first present the opinions of the exegetes on the hypothetical content of the inscription of Jesus. Next, we sketch the different motifs for which Jesus wrote on the ground, pointing to the most convincing proposal. Finally, without delving into the purely historical question of Jesus' literacy, we will touch on this problem in his relationship with adulterers.

1. Reconstruction of the content of the inscription

Although the text of John's Gospel says nothing about the content of the inscription that Jesus was supposed to make, many exegetes, starting with Ambrose of Milan, offer five tried and tested solutions, and as a review of contemporary commentary shows, they are still trying to identify this content. The proposals go mainly in three directions. It most often refers to intertextuality, i.e. it is claimed that Jesus wrote some fragment or fragments of the Old Testament. Equally popular is the claim that Jesus wrote a sentence that incriminates a woman and, paradoxically, liberates her at the same time. The third suggestion that often appears is Jesus' statement in John 8: 7.

Jesus' act is described by the two verbs καταγράφω (8: 6) and γράφω (8: 8).³ Both verbs express the act of writing in their basic meaning. The first of these, present already in Jb. 13, 26 LXX; as in ancient papyri⁴, it can be translated as write down, register, record. Because of this, many commentators in ancient times believed that Jesus had begun to compile a list of sins. This interpretation also appeared in some ancient Greek and Armenian manuscripts.⁵

The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah was often mentioned in the above suggestions in connection with the writing of sinners on the ground: “O Jehovah, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be put to shame. They that depart from me shall be written in the ground (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς γραφήτωσαν), because they have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters” (Jer. 17: 13) The text itself does not speak directly about sins, but the mention of those who leave God identifies them as sinners *par excellence*. The spiritual leaders of people who accuse a woman of adultery are in fact spiritual adulterers, because, as the prophet Jeremiah says, they oppose the provisions of the covenant and follow other gods. The main example of interpretation that sees the list of sins as the content of Jesus is the work of Jerome, *Dialogue against the Pelagians*. Jerome, quoting the prophecy of Jeremiah above, says that Jesus wrote the sins of the accusers and all

³ V. Tatalović (2019, 137), pointing to the frequent use of the verb γράφω in the fourth Gospel, claims that “with this use, which reflects the authority of the Old Testament, the Gospel is in agreement with other New Testament books, to which the statement that Christ is fulfillment (πληρῶν) ... and the end (τελειῶν) of the Scriptures.”

⁴ For example: P.Oxy. 327 as well as P.Oxy. 472.

⁵ Several Greek manuscripts (UP and then 73, 364, 782 and 1592) add the following words to John 8: 8 after τὴν γῆν / (land): ἑνος ἐκάστου αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας Codex 264 (12th century) sets this voice after τὴν γῆ in Jn 8: 6. The oldest two codices mentioned here (U, P) date from the 8th or 9th century. This diversity is also noticeable in Armenian manuscripts. See: Metzger 2001, 190. The Armenian text of this pericope is in the codex from 989. It contains the following sentences: “He bowed his head and wrote with his finger on the ground to announce their sins. And they saw their many personal sins on the stones.” More in: Conybeare 1895, 406.

the people of the ground: they leave it on the ground to be written.” (*Adv. Pel.* 2,17,20–23).

The interpretation relating to Jer. 17: 13 can be understood in four ways:

- (1) As is the case in Jerome’s statement quoted above, it is a record of sin.⁶
- (2) The Latin Fathers of the Church (Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome) claim that Jesus wrote the names of the prosecutors.⁷
- (3) Jesus could only write the words of prophecy Jer. 17: 13.
- (4) Jesus performed a prophetic act, that is, he made a gesture of writing (without writing any specific content) and directing the course of events (mentioning sins in Jn. 8: 7), he actually implemented this prophecy (Michaels 2010, 497).⁸

⁶ Augustine almost quotes Jerome (*Pelag.* 2:17), adopting his interpretation by referring to Jer 17: 13 and identifying Jesus’ opponents as sinners saved on ground: “All those who forsake you may be ashamed; can those who retreat across the country be written off? It will be clear that Jesus marked these, because the Jews, defeated and confused, when they heard: ‘He who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her’, one after the other withdrew. It was then that he showed from which number, writing with his finger on the ground.” More in: Knust 2006, 517–519.

⁷ Ambrose, *Epistle* 50: 5: “While the Jews were praying, the names of the Jews were written on the ground, and since the Christians came, the names of the faithful are not written on the ground but in heaven. Therefore, those who were rejected by their Father, who tempt the Father and insult the bringer of salvation, are written on ground” (CSEL 82, 58). Ambrose clearly refers to Jer. 17:13: “All who forsake you will be ashamed, and those who withdraw will be written on the ground.” According to Augustine (*De cons. Ev.* 4,10,17), Jesus began to write on ground to indicate to the accusers that they deserved to be inscribed on ground, unlike the disciples whose names were joyfully written in heaven: “When he wrote with his finger, on ground, he showed them as such (i.e. as they really are) by writing [their names] on ground and not in heaven” (CSEL 43,411). Ambrose has already presented the same parable (*Epistle* 68:14): “Sinners (i.e. their names) are written on the ground, and the righteous in heaven, as you have [written] that he said to his disciples: ‘Beware, for the names are yours written in heaven.’”

⁸ According to some exegetes, the connection between Jesus’ activities (who bends and writes on the ground) and Jer. 17:13 was so evident that Jesus did not have to write down a certain content; he could write anything. Up. Beasley-Murray 1999, 146; Whitacre 1999, 207.

Modern exegetes often combined the second and third propositions. Jesus first wrote the words of the prophecy from Jer. 17: 13. Jesus' opponents, however, did not understand the message of the prophecy. Then, bending over again, Jesus wrote down the names of the accusers (Whitacre 1999, 208). H. J. Toensing, combining the first and second propositions, sees in the first Jesus inscription a record of all the other acts condemned by the law (and thus for the sins that accuse the plaintiffs), while in the second he notes the moment when Jesus addressed the prosecutors, saying that "other acts" refer to them (Toensing 2003, 164–165). Many modern commentators consider the interpretation of Jer. 17: 13 to be the most convincing.⁹ Referring to this prophecy, Jesus would refer to the idea of God's judgment on sinful Israel. In the presence of God, all people are sinners and as such have no right to judge others.

Rudolf Schnackenburg believes that the allusion to Jer. 17: 13 corresponds to the development of the plot in the entire pericope. People sensitive to prophetic signs, such as women accusers who were familiar with the Scriptures, could easily read the connection between the words of the prophecy and the situation in which they found themselves. If they did not see this connection, Jesus explained it in his own words (Jn. 8: 7). Continuing to write prophecy, Jesus forced them to confess their sinfulness (Schnackenburg 1990, 165). Michael Theobald emphasizes the importance of the structure of the pericope in which two references to the writer Jesus (8: 6.8) form the framework for Jesus' words in 8: 7. Therefore, since Jesus' word is about sin, his act of writing should point to the same reality (Theobald 2009, 558). The interpretation relating to Jer. 17: 13 also has support in the immediate literary context of both John's text and the prophecies, as both contexts speak of the temple (Jer. 17: 12; Jn. 7–8) and the desire to drink water (Jer. 17: 5–7; Jn. 7: 37–38). Just as God identified himself with the source of living water (πηγήν

⁹ For more details see: Eisler 1923, 306–307; Jeremias 1962⁶, 226; McDonald 1995, 421; Wilckens, 2000, 139; Schnelle 2009, 168; Theobald 2009, 558.

ζωῆς / Jer. 17: 13), Jesus identifies himself with “rivers of living water” (ρεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος Jn. 7: 38).¹⁰

The objection raised against this interpretation is doubt as to whether the reference to Jer. 17: 13 was so obvious to Jesus’ opponents and whether it was also obvious to the readers of the fourth Gospel (Schnackenburg 1990, 165). According to Theobald, the Judeo-Christian reader of the pericope (the original recipient of the text) was certainly familiar with the prophecy of Jer. 17:13 and could easily interpret it (Theobald 2009, 558).¹¹ However, as patristic and contemporary commentaries show, Jesus’ act of writing is also read as an allusion to other Old Testament texts. Furthermore, the interpretation that signifies Jer. 17: 13 as the original text omits an important detail of John’s text, and that is the use of the finger to write on the ground.

Ambrose of Milan thus claims in one of his letters (*Epistle* 50.4) that Jesus wrote the words, “Ground, ground, write down these rejected people, as it is written for Jehoniah in the prophet Jeremiah.” However, the text that Jesus would suggest with his inscription is Jer. 22: 29–30: “O ground, ground, ground, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah.” A possible echo of this quote are the words *terra terram accusat* (“the ground accuses the ground”), which are found by voice in the *Codex Sangalensis* 292 (9th century) and in the iconographic depictions of the pericope in the Latin Egbert Code (10th century).¹²

¹⁰ For more on this comparison, see: Schwarz 1982, 239–256.

¹¹ In this context, as Theobald emphasizes, Jesus’ words that point to the sinfulness of “everyone” (including Christian listeners of the pericope) sound extremely elusive, to everyone except Jesus himself (Theobald 2009, 558).

¹² This inscription has been used many times in the artistic representations of our pericope. An example is a wall painting from the 11th century in the church of San Angelo in Formis (Italy). The words *terra terram accusat* can also be a paraphrase of the words from the homily of Augustine in Ps 2:10 (Serm. 13: 4–6); where the bishop of Hippo reminded the groundly rulers that “the ground itself judges the ground.” As ordinary mortals, Augustine reminded, rulers will also be tried. For more details see: Ronig 1977, 76.

In another letter (*Epistle* 68.13), Ambrose claims that Jesus could have written his words that we know from the Gospel of Matthew: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (7, 3). According to Ambrose, Jesus wrote this twice because he wanted to refer to the two Testaments. Jews who accuse a woman of adultery will be charged in both the Old and New Testaments. In *Epistle* 68.14 Ambrose also says that Jesus wrote on the ground with the same finger with which he wrote the Old Testament law. In fact, the tables of the *Decalogue* are written with the finger of God himself (Ex. 31:18; Deut. 9:10). That is why Ambrose directly says that Jesus is the same God who gave the law to the people of Israel at Sinai. However, the Bishop of Milan does not suggest that the text written by Jesus is the *Decalogue*, although such a conclusion seems logical.

Starting from the assumption that both tables of the Law were written by God himself, and the inscription we are discussing is from Jesus himself, we see in the inscription an allusion to the law that God gave to Moses (Schöndorf 1996, 91–93; Burge 2000, 243). Some interpreters, beginning with Bede the Venerable in his homilies on the Gospel of John (1: 75–80), refer directly to the *Decalogue* as the text of Jesus’ inscription (Guilding 1960, 112). The argument for identifying the inscription of Jesus as the *Decalogue* is the direct literary context in which the *pericope adulterae* occurs (Jn. 7–8), because many references to the *Decalogue* and the Law of Moses can be found in it.¹³ The temple as the place

¹³ An allusion to the third commandment concerning the *Sabbath* observance (Ex. 20: 8–11; Deut. 5: 12–15) is found in Jn. 7: 21–23. The reference to the fourth commandment to honor one’s father and mother appears in John 8:49, when Jesus says “I honor my Father” (τιμῶ τὸν πατέρα μου). The allusion is noticeable on the lexical level because Jn. uses the same verb as Ex. 20: 12 LXX and Deut. 5, 16 LXX (τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου). Invoking the fifth commandment of the *Decalogue* “Thou shalt not kill!” (Ex. 20: 13; Deut. 5: 17) we find in the words, “Did not Moses give you the law, and [yet] none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?” (Jn. 7: 19). The allusion to the sixth commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20: 14; Deut. 5: 18) is found in the very pericope we are analyzing, in which the woman is accused of

where the scene described in the pericope takes place (8: 2) is also reminiscent of the stone tablets of the *Decalogue*, because Jesus had to write on the stone floor of the temple courtyard.

According to J. A. Sanders, Jesus first wrote in abbreviated form the text of the first table of the *Decalogue* (Ex. 20: 3–12; Deut. 5: 7–16), and the second time he wrote an abbreviated text of the second table of the *Decalogue*, i.e. the remaining five commandments (Ex. 20: 13–17; Deut. 5: 17–21). The content of the second table, which contains references to one's neighbors, would force the writers to admit their sinfulness.¹⁴

The verb καταγράφω used in Jn. 8: 6, in light of a fragment of a pyramid dating to 256 BC. (*Zenon Papyrus* 59), means persecution against someone. Based on that, R. A. Whitacre suggested that Jesus could have written the commandments of the *Decalogue* that women prosecutors had violated and thus formulated his accusation (Whitacre 1999, 207–208).

Ch. S. Keener also noted that writing the text of the entire *Decalogue* seems unlikely. While the woman's accusers called for the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20: 14; Deut. 5: 18), Jesus could write the commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" (Ex. 20: 17; Deut. 5: 21), which could apply to any of the plaintiffs. Ch. S. Keener notes that in the LXX the commandment that forbids lust begins with a neighbor's wife, while in the Hebrew text it speaks of a neighbor's house. As a result, Jesus presented a commandment to the prosecutors, against which they must have rebelled. Moreover, in Jesus' interpretation, the desire for a woman is equal to adul-

adultery. In Jn. 8: 4 and Ex. 20: 13 LXX and Deut. 8: 17 LXX the verb μοιχεύω is used. The reference to the eighth commandment (prohibition of false testimony — μαρτυρία — Ex. 20: 16; Deut. 5: 20) can be seen in Jesus' accusation that his testimony is not true (Jn 8: 13) and in Jesus' response to this accusation that it is true ("Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go" (8: 14). See: Brooke 1988, 102–112.

¹⁴ The fact is that in the old days, the text of the *Decalogue* was usually shortened. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly where this custom came from and, therefore, whether it was practiced in the time of Jesus. More in: Sanders 1990, 342.

tery (see Mt. 5:28). Jesus, therefore, determined the commandment by which he forbade lust on the same level as the commandment which the woman violated. He therefore presented to the prosecutors in writing a choice which also said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” (Jn. 8: 7). Accordingly, prosecutors realized that they were as sinful as the accused woman. Ch. S. Keener evaluates the above explanation as pure speculation and points to this weakness, which is the narrator’s failure to indicate the content of Jesus’ inscription. In the above interpretation, it is not the act of writing itself, but the content of the inscription that is the key to understand the dramaturgy of the situation. This reasoning is supported by the ancient rhetorical practice according to which the accused tried to show the involvement of prosecutors in the crime. If they could prove it, then they could force prosecutors to drop the charge. In the case of our pericope, Jesus would be the prosecutor of the prosecutors (Keener 2003, 737–738).¹⁵ On the other hand, Jesus did not have to write the above sentences to accuse the accusers, because the mere utterance of the phrase “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (Jn 8: 7) was enough to reverse the roles.¹⁶

J. D. M. Derrett suggested that Jesus wrote the words of Ex. 23: 1: “Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.” On the other hand, if in Jn. 8: 8, Jesus wrote the words of Exodus 23: 7a: “Avoid false words,” Jesus would write only the first words of these verses, because the small number of letters is enough to write them, which did not require him to rise and move to suggest that the woman was the victim of her husband’s plot,

¹⁵ Keener also cites the works of ancient authors confirming the practice of prosecuting prosecutors during trials (Keener 2003, 753).

¹⁶ Researchers who see Jesus’ answer in the key of the ancient principle of part and shame as key values that determine the position of a person at that time are also noticeable. Prosecutors set a trap to deprive Jesus of his honor. Jesus, for his part, defends his honor by examining the status of prosecutors as honorable people. See: Raspberry 1998, 293.

who called false witnesses to fabricate accusations against her (Derrett 1963, 18–23). As a counterweight to this interpretation, it should be noted that John's text speaks directly of a woman caught in adultery, and therefore there can be no false accusations. Accordingly to the regulations of the Torah, a woman is subjected to a just punishment. Moreover, Jesus does not question the sinful status of women (see 8:11). Acceptance of the above interpretation also requires an extremely creative reader of the Fourth Gospel, who adds more to the text than the text itself says or even suggests (Schnackenburg 1990, 165). Another disadvantage of this explanation is the fact that J. D. M. Derrett based his interpretation on his subjective calculations of the number of letters that Jesus could write in a sitting position.

R. D. Aus pointed to Mal. 2: 11 (“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of Jehovah which he loveth, and hath married the daughter of a foreign god.”) as the first text in Jn. 8: 6 and Os. 4: 14 (“I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for [the men] themselves go apart with harlots, and they sacrifice with the prostitutes; and the people that doth not understand shall be overthrown.”) as another written text in Jn. 8: 8 (Aus 1998, 28–34). This proposal, although extremely interesting, was not widely accepted in biblical scholarship. The ideas that should be seen in Jesus' text regarding Dn. 13: 5 should be seen as incredible (“Injustice arose among the judges — the elders of Babylon who considered them only leaders of the nation”)¹⁷ by the habit of drink-

¹⁷ From a historical point of view, this proposal is not convincing, because the text of Dn. 13 was known only in Greek (Jovanović 2018, 25), so it is difficult to assume that Jesus would have written this sentence in that language. The connection of the *pericope adulterae* with the story of Susanna (Dn. 13) is conditioned by the connection of these two texts in the Roman Liturgy from the fifth century. For a convincing critique of the search for a connection between Dn. 13 and our pericope, see Keith 2009b, 389–393.

ing the bitter water of Nb. 5:16–24 (Burgon 1896, 239–240)¹⁸ or to the text of the *Book of Esther* (Bowman 1975, 177).¹⁹

Medieval art already saw in Jesus' words the words spoken in Jn. 8: 7 ("He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."). Thus, on the golden cover of the 9th-century Latin Gospel in Trier (*Codex Aureus Monacensis*) we find a depiction of Jesus writing the words *si quis sine peccato* (Werchmestier 1963, 55). It is worth mentioning that Jesus' sentence had a double meaning: it was a condemnation (for the woman and the prosecutors), but also a mercy because it freed the woman.²⁰ K. E. Bailey thinks that Jesus first wrote the woman's death sentence (8: 6). However, Jesus' proposed execution (8: 7) meant that no one was able to do so because every Israelite felt sinful (Is. 53: 6). The topic of transcription (8: 8) was completely different. By writing and relying on the ground, Jesus wanted to avoid the public humiliation of his opponents, who leave the oldest to the youngest (Bailey 2008, 235). According to F. Godet and T. B. Manson, the scene described in the pericope, refers to a Roman judicial custom in which the president of the court first had to write (in a table) a verdict and then read it aloud.²¹ According to Manson, Jesus first wrote in

¹⁸ The custom described in Nb. 5: 11–31 applied to women accused of secret adultery. The accused woman had to drink bitter water, which extracted her curse of infertility if she was guilty or did not harm her if she was innocent. Burgon discusses the content of Jesus' inscription, claiming that a bitter punishment followed for the adulterers, but also speculating that the only connection between Jn. 8 and Nb. 5 is ground dust.

¹⁹ In his monograph, the author tried to show the relationship between the *Book of Esther* and the *Gospel of John*. Accordingly, Jesus wrote Esther's name in Jn 8: 6 and the name Haman in Jn 8: 8, so the prosecutors in the accused woman were instructed to see the innocent Esther and the blood-thirsty Haman in her.

²⁰ Peter the Chrysologist, in his sermon on Rome 7 (*Sermon* 115,3), said quite generally that Jesus wrote the sentence of forgiveness in the sand, as opposed to the expected condemnation in relation to the body: condemned the body.

²¹ F. Godet (1879, 310–311) argues that Jesus, in writing, alluded to the judicial office, which was attributed to him by his enemies at the time. Because the legal punishment is not only pronounced, but written. See also Jeremias 1951, 145–150.

8: 6 what he later said to the Scribes and Pharisees in 8: 7, and then in verses 8: 8 what he said to the woman in verses 8: 11. F. Godet and others suggest that Jesus wrote only the words in verses 8: 7 (Bruce 1983, 415; Morrice 1997, 35–36). Roman authorities had the right to issue the death penalty (*ius gladii*) at the time of Jesus.²² Jesus' gestures would therefore be a conscious allusion to Roman judicial practices that point to Jesus' right to make such a judgment (see Jn. 19: 11). The way Jesus judged ("He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her") means that no one is able to do it. Once again, the truth is confirmed that only God has the right to judge (Jn 8: 15–16). Ch. S. Keener noted that the historical context of the events speaks in favor of this solution. R. E. Brown denied the above proposal, noting that Scribes and Pharisees (and therefore female prosecutors) could read. It therefore seems strange that, after reading Jesus' sentence, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" they continue to ask Jesus questions, seeking a reaction and taking a stand (ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν — 8, 7). If Jesus had indeed written this sentence, it would have been read and the prosecutors would have begun to abandon it, just as he did after Jesus uttered this sentence (Brown 1995, 334). R. Schnackenburg criticizes Manson's proposal, arguing that the starting point of all reasons should be Jewish, not Roman customs (Schnackenburg 1990, 165). However, it is difficult to agree with this accusation, given the widespread knowledge of Palestinian Jews about Roman practices regarding *ius gladia*, as evidenced by the Gospel of John itself (18: 31).

The Serbian theological public is familiar with the interpretation of the *pericope adulterae* of St. Nicholai of Ohrid and Žiča in the sermon *What did Christ write in the dust?* (Velimirovich

²² It is worth emphasizing, however, that adultery was not punishable by death under Roman law. If Jesus supported the use of the death penalty by stoning, he would be exposed to the Roman authorities. On the other hand, there were "spontaneous" executions by stoning, without reference to the authority of the Roman authorities, as shown by Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7: 54–60).

2016, 341–350).²³ He judges the very scene of the dialogue between Jesus and the sinful woman by a “deliberate hellish plan to catch the Lord in a word contrary to the law, and to blame Him” (Velimirovich 2016, 346) about the content of the inscription, due to its unpleasant content.²⁴ As the orator reports, the accelerated dramaturgy of the scene shown in Jn. 8: 9, which describes the departure of the Scribes and Pharisees, testifies to this: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. Explaining the depth of shame that the Scribes and Pharisees experienced in this discussion, Bishop Nicholai refers to the folk tradition embodied in the belief that Jesus wrote the sins of his interlocutors on the ground.²⁵ From the exegetical point of view, Nicholai’s view of sins that Jesus wrote is especially interesting, as well as the explanation of the very act of writing that he gives below:

“But in vain to hide something from the eyes of the One who sees everything, and whose knowledge is seeing. M(eschulam) plundered the treasure of the church — he wrote the finger of the Lord on the dust; A(sher) committed adultery with his brother’s wife; Š(alum) swore wrongly; E(led) hit his parent; A(mariach) seized the widow’s estate; M(erari) committed the sin of Sodom; J(oel) worshiped idols. And so in turn he wrote on the dust the terrible finger of a righteous Judge. And

²³ The first integral version of this sermon was published in 1931 in the brochure of the same name in the edition “Pobožne knjige za narod”, by the Belgrade publishing house “Đura Jakšić”. In the meantime, it has been published in several different editions, and on this occasion we use the eighth book of the *Collected Works* of Bishop Nicholai.

²⁴ “It’s too disgusting and disgusting to write in the Book of Joy.” (Velimirovich 2016, 347).

²⁵ “He wrote something unexpected and devastating for those elders, the prosecutors of the sinful woman. He pointed out their most hidden iniquities with his finger on the dust. Because these hunters of other people’s sins and judges of public sinners and summoned sinners were experts in hiding their sins.” (Velimirovich 2016, 347).

those concerned were bent over reading what was written with unspeakable horror. Behold, their most skilful hidden week, which trampled on the law of Moses, was known to Him and is now written before their eyes. At one point, their mouths went silent. The arrogant boasters of their justice and even more arrogant judges of other people's injustice now stood silent and motionless like rocks in the walls of the temple. They trembled with fear. They were not allowed to look each other in the eyes. They didn't even think about the sinful woman anymore. They thought only of themselves and of their death, which was written in the dust. No language could move to say that boring and cunning question: what do you say? The Lord says nothing. He said nothing. He was disgusted to confess their sins with His pure mouth. That is why he resorted to writing in the dust. What is so dirty only deserves to be written on dirty dust. The second reason why the Lord wrote in the dust is even greater and more miraculous. What is written in the dust is quickly erased, and does not remain. And Christ did not want to reveal their sins to everyone." (Velimirovich 2016, 347–348)

This part of Nicholai's sermon remains especially enigmatic for us. Completely different from all other, both ancient and modern comments, the bishop announces not only the names of Jesus' interlocutors but also the sins they bore and which Jesus wrote down on the ground to shame them. However, it is impossible not to wonder where Bishop Nicholai draws the source for such a claim from, especially having in mind that this interpretation, to our knowledge, is unique in the entire tradition of interpreting the fourth Gospel. Also, it is obvious that Nicholai does not speak about the Old Testament persons, because the inscription refers to each of them individually and therefore states that "they were not allowed to look each other in the eye" (Velimirovich 2016, 348). Since we do not have clear evidence, we can assume that Bishop Nicholai probably found the material for the sermon in the

work of Pavel Matveyevsky *Evangelical History*, which he met during his stay in Russia. Matveyevsky is the only known author whose interpretation of this scene somewhat coincides with Nicholai's,²⁶ although he himself states that it is an ancient interpretation (Matveyevsky 1890, 532). Leaving room at this point for some further research, focusing on the sources of Nicholas' sermons,²⁷ we can still state that, although completely absent in other preserved comments of the *pericope adulterae*, this section served our speaker as an hermeneutic key to understanding the depth of sins such as perjury, idolatry and others.²⁸

²⁶ "According to the ancient interpretation, the Pharisees and Scribes, preoccupied with curiosity, came to him to find out what he was writing. And now, when one of them came very close and began to look over his shoulder, he suddenly saw that Christ, even without looking at him, wrote down his name and the sin he had once committed: 'Asher — he seduced his brother's wife.' Oh my God! it's a secret, no one saw them! How does he know?! Fearing that his iniquity would be exposed and he would be stoned, the Pharisee left quickly. Another Pharisee, interested in why this Asher left so quickly, also appeared behind Jesus Christ. His sin is also indicated: 'Meshullam stole the church treasury.' The Pharisee was terrified: 'No one knows about this, and now the trial continues, they are looking for a thief, and Jesus can tell about me. Then they will find the money and stone me.' And recognizing the great prophet in Jesus, he also hurried to leave. A third also approached. Jesus Christ, not turning back, but knowing who was behind him, wrote, 'Jonathan, caught in the hands of robbers, blasphemed the God of Israel and denied him.' The frightened Pharisee ran out of the temple. One by one, beginning with the elders (Jn 8: 9), they approached him and read: 'Shallum swore falsely ... Eled struck his father.'" (Matveyevsky 1890, 532).

²⁷ It should also be noted that Bishop Nicholai and Pavel Matveyevsky do not completely agree in stating the names of the Pharisees and their sins that Jesus was supposed to write on ground. While Nicholai speaks of seven names (Meshullam, Asher, Shallum, Eled, Amariah, Merari, and Joel), Matveyevsky's interpretation boils down to five of them (Asher, Meshullam, Jonathan, Shallum, and Eled). Despite everything, the question of the source for Nicholai's claim about Amariah and Merari remains.

²⁸ It is also interesting that the seven names from Nicholai's sermon are repeated by Milivoje Jovanović in the novel *Monk Callist* from 1984, which has also experienced several newer editions in recent years, so it is understandable that this story came to life deeper in the readership.

2. Discussion about the reasons for writing

Since the content of the inscription made by Jesus does not mention the narrator of the pericope, it is often concluded in the New Testament scholarship that he was not important (Brwon 1994, 334). The significance of Jesus' work lies, therefore, not so much in the content of the inscription as in the activity itself, i.e. in the very fact of writing.²⁹ However, it is worth emphasizing that this should not be concluded from the fact that the text of the inscription is not familiar with the insignificant importance of writing. Interpretations appear that deny the validity not only of the inscription (which we do not know), but also of the act of writing.³⁰ Dual information about Jesus' act of writing clearly places emphasis on this activity, and therefore Jesus' behavior must express something significant (Schnackenburg 1990, 166; Burge 2000, 242).

In the minds of the ancients, writing on ground, sand or dust was a behavior that by its nature did not communicate a certain content. This behavior expressed the subject's address to himself. This act, which did not focus on the transmission of certain content, was in fact a sign indicating a lack of availability for interpersonal communication (Hengstenberg 1865, 423). If the above belief of the ancients were applied to John's text, Jesus' action would mean aversion to any dialogue with the Scribes and Pharisees surrounding him. This interpretation is also confirmed by the insert “μη προσποιούμενος” which is found in many manuscripts at the end of Jn 8: 6.³¹

²⁹ According to O'Day, the story does not provide any information about the content of what Jesus writes, because the very act of writing is important. Interpretations that attempt to convey the content of what Jesus writes miss the significance of Jesus' nonverbal response (O'Day 1996, 629).

³⁰ Proof of the lack of understanding of the function of this gesture in the pericope is the ancient paraphrase written in Syriac in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.7 (6th century), a work wrongly attributed to Zacharias Rhetor. This text puts Jesus' gesture of writing at the very end of the event, while Jesus and the woman were alone (Strachan 1941, 204; Knust 2006, 523).

³¹ This part first appears in the *Codex Basiliensis* from the 8th century, and the following witnesses are three codices from the 9th century: *Codex Seidelianus* I

In light of the above belief, J. H. Bernard stated that Jesus only unconsciously wrote with his finger on the ground. It was a mechanical act that meant an unwillingness to comment on a question posed by Scribes and Pharisees and expressed concern for their own thoughts (Bernard 1928, 719). B. F. Westcott notes that any search for the contents of the record does not make sense, because the message of the text is limited only to the display of “mechanical writing”. Jesus’ actions show that he is focused on his own thoughts and neglects the presence of people who ask him (Westcott 1882, 126). According to Hoskyns, Jesus’ gesture means only an unwillingness to judge in the presence of prosecutors (Hoskyns 1947, 569). Similarly, B. Lindars sees the act of Jesus as a sign of his unwillingness to participate in the whole event, as shown in verses 8, 7 (Lindars 1972, 310–11). Ch. K. Barrett commented in the same vein, saying that there was no point in asking about the content of the inscription, because by writing, Jesus demonstrated in a sophisticated way the refusal to issue a sentence in the spirit of the later statement in Jn. 8:15 “I judge no man” (Barrett 1978, 572).³² The proposal made by A. T. Lincoln goes in the same direction, who sees the withdrawal gesture in writing. Jesus avoids directly facing the challenge proposed by the prosecutors, leaving them to wait impatiently.³³ J. M. Lagrange, in an interpretation that has received a lot of criticism, believes that by writing on the ground, Jesus expresses an attitude of inactivity (cf. Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 31) or, focusing on the act of writing, concentrates on his own thoughts (Lagrange 1936, 229).

and II as well as *Codex Cyprius*. The remaining manuscripts date from the following centuries, and the largest number of witnesses (twelve) dates from the 12th century. Read more in: Robinson 2005.

³² See also: Dietzfelbinger 20042, 233.

³³ According to Lincoln, this has the consequence of distracting him from the immediate challenge and diverting attention from opponents, who are temporarily caught in an unfavorable position, because then they have to persistently ask their question (Lincoln 2005, 531). Maloni goes further and sees this as a sign of indifference and even disappointment with the procedure (Moloney 1998, 261).

F. D. Bruner understands Jesus' gesture of writing as a way to divert the accuser's attention from the woman. In this way, according to him, Jesus also adds drama to the whole situation. He gives himself time to think before he answers, which proves the truth of his human nature. However, Jesus' second gesture of writing reflects something quite different: he is willing to distract the crowd from the accused prosecutors. Jesus protects the accused in this way (Bruner 2012, 505–506). According to O'Day, Jesus' gesture of writing associated with a lack of immediate and direct response deprives Scribes and Pharisees of control of the situation and puts them on the same level as the accused woman (O'Day 1992, 636–637). J. R. Seeley in his unique and often criticized view of this pericope, believes that Jesus is ashamed. He could not look at the crowd around him, the prosecutors and the woman. Embarrassed and confused, Jesus lowers his head to hide his face and begins to write.³⁴ Among many other interpretations, in *De cons. ev.* 4,10,17 Augustine also gave one in which the bending of Jesus' head and the placing of signs on the ground are an expression of his humiliation. In his commentary on the Gospel of John, however, Augustine stated that Jesus, striking the accusers with the word of justice (8: 7), did not want to see their public humiliation and began to write again.³⁵ Another ancient author, Cassiodorus the Senator, saw in Jesus' gesture a reaction to the hardness of the accusers (*Exp. Ps.* 56: 7).

Also, there was a suggestion that the evangelist introduced the act of writing around the ground into the text as an addi-

³⁴ Seeley speaks of Jesus' unbearable sense of shame. He claims that Jesus could not meet the eyes of the crowd or the accusers, and perhaps at that moment not even from the woman, but in his ardent shame and confusion, he bent down to hide his face, and began to write with his finger on the ground. (Seeley 1866, 116).

³⁵ Augustine, *In ev. Ioh.* 33,5,33. In a similar vein, Jerome (*Pelag.* 2: 17, 23–29) described how the prosecutors left the courtroom to avoid the eyes of Jesus, who, as a merciful judge, bent down, giving them the opportunity to leave in their shame: "and because all the prosecutors fled (namely, the merciful judge had given their embarrassment room to retreat, returning his gaze to the ground as he wrote on the ground), parted a little, and began to avoid his gaze."

tional interpolation, disturbing the natural dynamics of the story. It functions as a pause, postponement or cessation of dialogue aimed at increasing tension and at the same time showing the peace of Jesus (Becker 1963, 85–87). Becker considers the writing of Jesus to be a literary ornament (*novellistisch-ausschmückendes Detail*) irrelevant to the development of the narrative. At best, this gesture describes waiting for Jesus, who ceases to be interested in his opponents and leaves them to themselves (Becker 1979, 284). Some commentators interpret the break in a positive way. According to A. Watson, Jesus refrains from the sentence and, having begun to write, wants to postpone his answer. In this way, however, it gives interlocutors time to think (Watson 1980, 103). In the same vein, L. A. Guardiola-Saenz sees Jesus' gesture as a "space of silence" to help prosecutors reflect and revise their oppressive patriarchal stance (Guardiola-Sáenz 2002, 148). Similarly, B. H. Young considers the act of Jesus a prophetic gesture aimed at attracting the attention of accusers and making them think (Young 1995, 69).

P. Humbert believes that Jesus' gesture has magic and magical properties, so Jesus creates a magical act by pulling his fingers on the ground, so that the lines created by this gesture take the form of letters to finally utter the spell (Humbert 1918–19; 475–476). E. Power, referring to Arabic texts, believes that Jesus is expressing his anger. In fact, this action expresses the irritation of Jesus who sees the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. In this way Jesus also reveals his compassion for women (Power 1921, 54–57). A. J. Wensinck and after him F. F. Bishop, also mentioning the Muslim tradition, saw in Jesus' gesture a sign of reflection on an issue that requires serious thinking.³⁶

Based on the above interpretations, it is worth noting that a proposition that sees the unconscious creation of characters (e.g. drawing) in the works of Jesus, rather than consciously

³⁶ Wensinck (1933, 302) argues that it will be clear that Jesus does not write in the field as an indication of overlooking the questions of his opponents or his disrespect for them, but on the contrary, because he thinks of a difficult case and a serious answer that shapes in his mind. See also: Bishop 1934, 45.

writing a particular text or letter, has its support in the semantics of the verb καταγράφω, and commentators often repeat it (Keddie 2001, 314; Neyrey 2007, 152). However, the total value of the use of the verbs καταγράφω and γράφω, as well as their meaning in the LXX and New Testament, accurately indicates the act of writing and is in contradiction with the above interpretation (Keith 2009b, 27–49).

It is also suggested that the material he wrote on, and thus the ground or dust of the ground, is an important element in which he can correctly interpret Jesus' activity. In the Jewish tradition, it is forbidden to write on the Sabbath, or even to write two letters. The Talmud, however, says that writing on the Sabbath on the ground, in the dust of the ground, or on other unstable material is not wrong and cannot be punished. In the current literary context of the *Gospel of John*, the scene takes place on the seventh or eighth day of the *Feast of Tabernacles* (7:37), which is respected as a Sabbath day. Therefore K. E. Bailey believes that by writing on the ground, Jesus shows his perfect knowledge not only of the written Law (Torah), but also of its oral interpretations (Bailey 2008, 234).

On the other hand, writing material on the ground can suppress immutability (Bernard 1928, 719). Jesus would thus point to the permanence, weakness, nothingness, and transience of those who accused (Strack 1924, 521). Writing on the ground is the opposite of writing in the Book of Life (Ex. 32:32; Dn. 12: 1). Whoever rejects God, the source of the water of life (Jer. 17:13) or Jesus, the true source of the water of life (Jn. 7: 37–38), condemns himself to death, that is, by writing in the dust of the ground Jer. 17:13 (Whitacre 1999, 207). A gesture of writing on the ground would thus indicate the fate of a sinner to die or go to *Sheol*. It is worth noting, however, that the permanence of writing the material also illustrates the permanence of sin before God's forgiveness and the greatness of God's mercy that forgives human sin. As H. Ridderbos suggests that Jesus, writing on the ground, wants to point out the existence of situations in which, instead of sticking to the let-

ter of the law, it is better to “write on the sand”, to forgive, to reject punishment (Ridderbos 1997, 289).

Augustine also claimed that writing on the ground could be a symbol of the coming time when the Law / *Decalogue* (correctly interpreted by Jesus) would be written on fertile ground, as opposed to the time when the Law was written on stone, and therefore on barren land.³⁷ In modern times P. S. Minear read the gesture of writing on the ground as undoing the curse of the ground, mentioned in Gen. 4: 10–12 (Minear 1991, 29). It is not without significance that the Temple in Jerusalem, where the action of the pericope takes place, was in the Jewish tradition connected with Eden, the cemetery of Adam and Eve. Interestingly, Augustine compared Jesus’ gesture to God’s gesture, which bent over man when it was said: “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (cf. Gen 3:19).³⁸

The gesture of writing on the ground and at the same time Jesus’ attitude was also read metaphorically as expressing the humility of Jesus who accepts human nature. Jesus’ writing gesture is also explained by starting from the detail, which is the finger, and reading it in the context of the Old Testament texts about the “finger of God” (Brodie 1993, 158–159). Assuming that the recipients were primarily Judeo-Christians, i.e. people familiar with the Old Testament and recognizing the deity of Jesus, such an intertextual reference is possible. However, remaining on a historical basis (the text would correspond to the historical reality of Jesus’ encounter with the Scribes and Pharisees), this understanding seems difficult to accept, because Jesus’ opponents certainly did not see him as God writing with a human finger on the ground as he did in the Ex., writing the *Decalogue*

³⁷ Augustine, *In ev. Ioh.* 33.5.15–18: “What else could he have pointed out to you while he was writing on the ground with his finger? Namely, the Law of Moses was written with the finger of God, but because of the hardened (with the heart) it was written on stone. Now the Lord wrote on the ground because he was looking for fruit.” More in: Beutler 2013, 265; Kelber 1997, 18.

³⁸ Augustine, *Enarrat. Ps.* 2,30,7: “He was bowed to the ground again, that is. God bent down to the man who was told, ‘You are the ground and you will go to the ground.’”

(Ex. 31:18; 32:16; Deut. 9:10) or in the time of the prophet Daniel, writing on the wall (Dn. 5:25).

Many commentators point to the main theological purpose of mentioning the writer Jesus, portraying Jesus as the new legislator, and as God, the author of the *Decalogue* (Coleman 1970, 409–410; Genuyt 1986, 21–32). The very context of the trial in which the writer Jesus is mentioned remembers Moses and the time of the Exodus. Like God, in the days of his exodus he was questioned by the rebellious people of Israel (verb *πειράζω* — Ex. 17: 2.7; Nb. 14: 22; Ps. 77: 41.56 LXX), similarly to God, in the person of his Son, another attempt was made (*πειράζω* in Jn. 8: 6).³⁹ Jesus' interlocutors directly remember Moses and compare Jesus to him: "Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her?" (8: 5). In response, Jesus begins to write, which the author of the pericope in turn describes with the verbs *καταγράφω* in 8: 6 and *γράφω* in 8: 8. These are exactly the same verbs used in the description of the two tables of the *Decalogue* in Ex. 32: 15 LXX. Moreover, they appear in both texts (Exodus and John) in the same order. Furthermore, according to Ex. 31:18 LXX (see also Ex. 9:10 LXX), these tables are written with God's "finger". I would add that Jesus also writes with his finger (*δάκτυλος*) (Jn. 8: 6). There is no doubt that the tables of the *Decalogue* were written by God himself, for Ex. 32:16 LXX adds: *ἡ γραφή γραφή θεοῦ ἐστίν* ("and the letter is the letter of God"). Therefore, the Pericopean narrative suggests that Jesus is not only greater than Moses, but more importantly that he is equal to God, the author of the Decalogue. The fact that the act of writing in the Ex. takes place on stone tablets, and in John's narration on the ground, is not important here.

³⁹ Extremely eloquent in John's context (which defines the identity of Jesus as God and the new Moses) is the song Ex. 17: 2, where he quarrels with Moses and puts God to the test: *τί λιοδορεῖσθέ μοι, καὶ τί πειράζετε κύριο?* (What do you tempt the Lord?). Just as in the Pentateuch, God is the one who puts his people to the test (Ex. 15: 25; 16: 4; 20:20; Deut. 4: 34; 13: 4) and puts himself to the test, so in the Gospel according to John Jesus stands on the test of Philip (6: 6; the context of manna and Exodus) and is put to the test itself.

L. Manicardi, at the suggestion of F. Genuyt, suggests that the double bending and ascent of Jesus is interpreted as an allusion to the double entry and descent of Moses from Mount Sinai at the time he received the tables of the *Decalogue* (Genuyt 1986, 156). Since the first tables were destroyed because of a human sin, it was necessary to put together others (see Ex. 32–34). The gift of the other tablets actually refers to the gift of God’s forgiveness, which corresponds to the message of John’s text in which Jesus, after his Resurrection, utters the words of forgiveness. Before other tables are prepared, God reveals his name “forgiving iniquity, unbelief, and sin” (Ex. 34: 5–7). Indeed, in John’s text, both the accusers (8: 7) and the woman herself (8: 11) are described as sinners who break the law and therefore need forgiveness. Jesus, however, throughout the *Gospel of John* reveals his name as “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι — 8: 24.28.58; 13: 19; 18: 5.6.8), an echo of God’s name revealed in Ex. 3: 14 (I am that I am — ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν), which in turn is explained in Ex. 34: 6–7. L. Manicardi also emphasizes another possible parallel between Moses and Jesus. Well, Moses, innocent, gathered himself among sinful people in his prayer to God (“and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.” — Ex. 34: 9). Similarly, Jesus, innocent and without sin (Jn. 8: 46), was condemned to stoning (8: 59), accepting some kind of punishment (8:11) for a sin he did not impose (Genuyt 1986, 156). In short, the double act written by Jesus would be a reference to the double editing of the *Decalogue*.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ To justify the above interpretation, L. Manicardi notes that the verb καταγράφω was used to describe the first tables (Ex. 32: 15 LXX), while the verb γράφω (Ex. 34: 1.27.28 LXX) appears in the description of the other tables. As we mentioned above, the same two verbs in John’s narrative appear in the same order, describing the first and second acts of writing in turn. The fact is, however, that in the description of the first table in Ex. 32: 15 LXX not only the verb καταγράφω is used, but also γράφω. This somewhat undermines the legitimacy of the author’s arguments. Manicard also refers to the use of verbs that express the movement of “ascending” and “descending”: ἀναβαίνω (Ex. 24: 12.13.15.18; 32: 30; 34: 1.2.3.4) and καταβαίνω (Ex. 32: 1.7.15; 34: 29). However, in the description of Jesus’ activities we notice the use of other words, namely κύπτω, then κάτω (“down” — 8, 6) or κατακύπτω (“lean”

L. Manicardi also emphasizes the novelty of Jesus' behavior in relation to the parallel we find in Moses' work in Ex. 32–34. While Moses first ascends and then descends, Jesus does the opposite: first he descends (bends), and then he ascends (straightens). Jesus' inclination (κάτω κύψας, κατακύψας) and emergence (ἀνέκυψεν, ἀνακύψας) is a "revelation movement" that evokes Jesus' descent (καταβαίνω) from heaven (Jn. 3: 13; 6: 33.38.41.42.50.51.58). Therefore, the changes in Jesus' attitude have Christological significance: they reveal Jesus' humility (kenosis) and at the same time His exaltation, because the Cross in the fourth Gospel is the glorious moment of Jesus' exaltation (Manicardi 2001, 159–160). The reference to the Mount of Olives is also significant in the context of such an interpretation (8: 1) (related to the arrest and consequent death of Jesus, see 18: 1) and the narrator shows the real intentions of the Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to accuse Jesus (8: 6).

F. Genuit and L. Manicardi point out another parallel between Jesus and Moses, which clearly emphasizes the novelty of the gospel message. Thus the content of Jesus' inscription, which symbolizes the *Decalogue*, and more broadly, the Law, is updated with Jesus' saying or word. The comparison of Scripture with the words of Jesus corresponds to the conflict of the Law and the words of Moses present in the statement of the Scribes and Pharisees: "Now in the law Moses commanded us

— 8: 8) and ἀνακύπτω ("straighten up" — 8: 7.10). In addition to identical prefixes, it is therefore difficult to speak of a clear lexical connection between the text of the *Book of Exodus* and the *Gospel of John*. Manicardi also points to the similarity of the phrase "Moses descended to ground" (Μωυσῆς κύψας ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν Exodus 34: 8), and John's statement "and Jesus stooped down, and wrote with his finger upon the ground." (Ἰησοῦς κάτω κίς Jn 8: 6) However, the real similarity is limited to the use of the same verb κύπτω. The second parallel pointed out by Manicardi is the use of the expression "all the people" (πᾶς ὁ λαός), which also appears in Ex. 32: 3 LXX and Jn 8: 2. The use of this phrase is, however, too common in LXX (see Ex. 32: 10; 34: 10) to attribute special merit to the attribution of any special texts. Manicardi also suggests the hypothetical effect of the verb ὀρθρίζω ("rising early in the morning") found in Ex. 32: 6 and 34: 4 LXX on the presence of the noun ὄρθρος ("morning") in Jn 8: 2, which is the hapax legomenon in John's text. His speech is usually explained by Luke's influence (cf. Lk 24: 1; Acts 5: 21).

to stone such: what then sayest thou of her?” (8: 5). However, the relationship between the Scripture (the Law) and the word of Jesus is different from the relationship between the Scripture (the Law) and the word of Moses. While in the case of Jesus the Scriptures are surpassed by the word that updates the Scriptures, in the case of Moses his words or commands correspond exactly to the commandments of the Scriptures (1:17; 5: 46–47).

In short, the content of Jesus’ inscription may refer to the *Decalogue* or the Law. The double gesture of writing can refer to the double gift of the *Decalogue* / Law in Sinai. However, the narrator does not focus on the content of the record, but on the identity of Jesus as the real author and interpreter of the Law. Jesus is not only the new Moses (legislator and interpreter of the Law) and God himself, the author of the Law (actual and final legislator), but he is also the Word and the Law.⁴¹ In that sense, the record that Jesus left in John 8: 8 is illegible and it should be because it refers to Jesus’ only true writing, which was Himself and his work.⁴²

⁴¹ This interpretation is also confirmed by Jesus’ identification with light, which occurs in the closest literary context (Jn. 8: 12). The law is interpreted in Judaism as light. The Hebrew text Is 26: 9 is “because when your judgments are on ground” they are given in LXX as “because when your judgments are light on ground” (διότι φῶς τὰ προστάγματά σου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). In Sir. 45: 17 we read “Jacob teaches [διδάξαι] testimonies and enlightens [in his law] [φωτίζει] Israel.” In 4Q175, in the quote from Deut. 33: 10 (Leviticus blessing), the words “They teach thy statutes to Jacob and thy law to Israel” were changed to “Let them declare thy commandments to Jacob, and your law to Israel.” In Isaiah 2: 5 we read: “House of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord”, while in Targum we read: “Come, let us go and study the Torah of the Lord.” In Isaiah 42: 7 we read: “Open the eyes of the blind”, while in Targum we have: “Open the eyes of the House of Israel, who are blind without the Torah”. In Jb. 24:13 we read, “They resist the light, not knowing its ways, and do not stand in its paths”, while Targum explains, “They are among the rebels against the Torah”. Other examples are: Gaster 1958, 217–218; Vermes 1958, 436–438.

⁴² In this sense, the statement should be understood: “The Gospel of John finally shows the reader what Jesus wrote and that the words of Jesus (recorded in John 8: 6 and 8: 8) appear in the texts of Jn. 20: 30–31 and 21: 24–25. In other words, the written words of Jesus appear, not in John 8, but at the very end of the Gospel of John.” (Aichele 2004, 364).

3. Did Jesus really write?

Pericope as an apologetic interpolation

According to some commentators, the act of writing Jesus in the context of the event described in the *pericope adulterae* seems so strange that its uniqueness in itself becomes an argument for the authenticity of this act. In his doctoral dissertation he defended at the University of Edinburgh in 2008, Keith asserted that John's mention of Jesus' writing on ground was fabricated (8: 6.8), and that the *pericope adulterae* based on a real event in Jesus' life was an appendix to the original text of the Fourth Gospel. (Keith 2008, 433). The purpose of this apologetic act, according to Kate, would be twofold.

First, the pericope should refute the Pharisees' claim in the pages of John that Jesus was uneducated: "How knoweth this man letters (γράμματα) having never learned?" (7: 15). Moreover, if we refer to "this multitude that knoweth not the law" (ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον — 7: 49) Jesus' disciples and followers, extrapolation can assume that Jesus is included in this group. Keith sees this as a general statement that defines the knowledge of the Law among the Galileans, among whom Jesus should be seen (Keith 2008, 433). Therefore, the purpose of the *pericope adulterae* was to prove that Jesus achieved the highest level of education at that time, i.e. that he was able not only to read, but also to write at a level equal to his interlocutors. Jesus can, therefore, be an equal partner for a conversation with the scribes (οἱ γραμματεῖς — Jn 8: 3), who represent the most educated social stratum of modern Palestinian Judaism. It is important that the scribes appear only here in the entire Gospel of John, which can be seen as a testimony to the interpolative nature of this pericope. Of course, the accusation of not accepting education in Jn. 7:15 does not necessarily mean the impossibility of reading and writing, but only the lack of formal studies of sacred texts in addition to a recognized rabbi or sage. A similar situation is described in Acts 4:13, where

Peter and John are called “ignorant and simple” (ἀγράμματοι εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται), which does not necessarily mean that they cannot read (Evans 2012, 81). It is also worth noting that the charge in Jn. 7: 15 is quite ironic. Jesus’ interlocutors, believing Jews, face the eternal Word (creator of the world and personified divine wisdom) and say that this Word is an uneducated, unlearned person, without formal authority to be a teacher. Importantly, the author of the pericope describes Jesus’ response in a way that is encouraged by Ex. 32–34, i.e. the portrayal of Jesus as the very giver and author of the Law, God, and thus in every possible way surpasses the authority of the scribes, including Moses himself.

According to Keith, the second purpose of the anonymous author who added the *pericope adulterae* in the 3rd century was to answer the pagans (Celsus, Lucian of Samosata, Galen) that the first Christians and Jesus himself, the founder of Christianity, were uneducated and especially illiterate (Origen, *Celsus*. 1.62; Lucian, *Peregr.* 11; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 5: 2–4; Justin, *I Apol.* 60.) Allegations of illiteracy of the early Christians contradict figures such as Paul of Tarsus, his closest associates, or the evangelists themselves who belong a group of Jesus’ closest disciples (Matthew, John) or first-generation Christians (Mark, Luke). Historically, the question of Jesus’ literacy remains a moot point.⁴³

In short, an important argument supporting Keith’s hypothesis is the fact that the *pericope adulterae* is a subsequent interpolation to the original text of the *Gospel of John*. This hypothesis also provides an alternative to the generally accepted explanation that indicates the motive for its subsequent inclusion in the text. The weakness of Keith’s hypothesis is the fact that no early Christian author cites the *pericope adulterae* as proof of Jesus’ literacy. So, despite Kate’s claim about the burning problem of Jesus’ illiteracy as an accusation against Chris-

⁴³ The problem of Jesus’ literacy taken from a historical point of view is beyond the scope of this study. Some researchers claim that Jesus was literate, e.g. Foster 2006, 7–33; Evans 2012, 63–88. Other authors, however, argue that Jesus was not literate: Craffert 2005, 5–35; Keith 2011.

tians, which, in his opinion, caused the growth and interpolation of the *pericope adulterae*, no Christian author used this text for the apologetic purpose for which it should have arisen.⁴⁴

4. Conclusion

Purely hypothetical considerations regarding the content of Jesus' inscription focus on three propositions: a quote from the Old Testament (mostly Jer. 17:13), Jesus' judgment, and the words quoted in John 8: 7 ("He that is without sin among you"). In fact, the most convincing solution is an intertextual reference to the *Decalogue*. This is indicated by the context of the pericope (John 7–8), which contains many references to the Ten Commandments, as well as the theme of the story itself focused on the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery." In addition to the hypothetical content of Jesus' inscription, Jesus' act itself can be understood in several ways. For example, Jesus lowered his head in humiliation and shame or, on the contrary, Jesus lowers his head so that he would not know about the humiliation of his opponents who leave the stage. Undoubtedly, the double information about Jesus' gesture indicates the importance of this activity. The most convincing explanation for Jesus' act is the portrayal of Jesus as God, the author of the *Decalogue*. The text of the pericope reveals many connections with the narration of Ex. 32–34. It is important that these two verbs καταγράφω and γράφω were

⁴⁴ The fact is that this pericope may have been an "unwanted" text and therefore not included in the canonical Gospels because of its message that suggests a far-reaching forgiveness for the sin of adultery. This message was contrary to the practice of the early Church, in which adultery was the exclusive sin. The inclusion of the pericope in the canonical writings could coincide in time with the introduction of criminal practices and the verdict on the possibility of forgiveness of the sin of adultery. This could have happened around the year 220 in Rome. The location of the pericope in John, and not in another canonical gospel, may have its motif in Jesus' statement: "You judge by the flesh, I judge no one. But if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me" (8: 15–16). See: Riesenfeld 1952, 106–111.

used in this order to describe the two tables of the *Decalogue* in Ex. 32, 15 LXX and the activities of Jesus. Both activities were performed with God's finger (see Deut. 9: 10) and on the same stone material (in the *Gospel of John* it is the foot of the temple). The repetition of Jesus' gesture can also be understood as a reference to the double ascent and descent of Moses from Mount Sinai, and thus to the double gift of the *Decalogue*. Among other details about the pericope that Jesus confronts with Moses, there is a clear tendency for the author of the narrative to show that Jesus' identity is superior to Moses. Jesus, therefore, appears as the new Moses (Lawgiver and interpreter of the Law), as God himself, the author of the Law (real and ultimate Lawgiver), but also as identical with the Word and the Law. Keith's proposal, which sees the *pericope adulterae* as an apologetic interpolation that points to Jesus' literacy, is plausible, although it has the status of a hypothesis.

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Read Online

The Freedom from Passions and the Freedom for All:

St Nicholai Velimirović on Democracy*

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Abstract: The paper aims to analyse the sermons and writings of the bishop and recently canonized saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church Nicholai Velimirović in regard to democracy. Due to his critique of Europe for abandoning Christianity as its centre of civilization, and slipping into the barbarity of the two world wars, some scholars maintained that Velimirović condemns European democracy. The analysis is focused on two periods from Velimirović's life, the first one that comprises the period of his studies abroad, the WWI and interwar period, and the second one which includes the period of the WWII and Velimirović's subsequent emigration in the USA.

Key words: Orthodox Church, democracy, freedom, monasticism, Europe.

Many scholars, as well as politicians today perceive the Orthodox Church as the main obstacle for consolidating the democracy in the traditionally Orthodox countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia in the Balkans, as well as in Russia. However, the problem is not the role that Orthodox Church has

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played in the past by legitimizing various autocratic rules, because other churches also at a certain moment in history raised their voices against democratization and modernization, e.g. the Roman-Catholic Church. The spirit of catholicity (*sobornost*) of the Orthodox Church, usually interpreted as single-mindedness, is perceived as the main hindrance to the plurality of democratic values and positions.¹

The Orthodox Church encountered modern democracy during the nineteenth century when the democratic ideas of French Revolution and American Republicanism have spread among intellectuals and political actors in traditionally Orthodox environments.² Most of the Balkan Orthodox people were at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the rule of two non-Orthodox empires, the Muslim-dominated Ottoman Empire and the Roman-Catholic Habsburg Empire. In both empires the functioning of the Orthodox Church was regulated by law, which entrusted to one ecclesial centre jurisdiction over all Orthodox believers in the empire. The Greek Constantinopolitan Patriarchate exercised the role of the supreme spiritual, but also legal authority for the Orthodox people in the Ottoman Empire. In the Habsburg Empire, this role was assigned to the Serbian Metropolitanate, later elevated to the Serbian Patriarchate of Karlovci. The Orthodox hierarchs in Ottoman and Austrian Empire did not only supervise their Orthodox subjects, but also safeguarded the political order, which assumes that the Sultan's and the Kaiser's power is of divine origin. In the national emancipation from the foreign rule, and the ecclesial emancipation from patriarchal hegemony, the Orthodox lay-people and lower clergy employed the narratives of modernization and national liberation.³ For example, on a

¹ Radovan Bigović, *The Orthodox Church in the 21st Century* (Belgrade: Foundation Konrad Adenauer — Christian Cultural Center 2013), 70.

² Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 21.

³ Idek K. Yosmaoglu, "From Exoticism to Historicism: The Legacy of Empire and the Pains of Nation-Making in the Balkans," in *Beyond Mosque, Church, and*

number of Serbian church councils of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in spite of the opposition of conservative political and ecclesial structures, Serbian liberals managed to introduce some democratic practices in the Patriarchate of Karlovci.⁴ By the decision of the Annunciation Council from 1861 and of the subsequent state law from 1869, the rights of the bishops in the council of the Serbian Patriarchate were limited and became equal to the rights of the laymen.⁵ In the independent Serbia after the Congress of Berlin (1879), the clergy embraced modernization and democratization in order to keep pace with their secular counterparts, and even entered the Serbian political arena being members of parties and national parliament. Their democratic ideals are usually identified with the Serbian national goals, and their notion of democracy was reduced to the rule of majority, with no sensitivity for individual and minority rights.⁶

The generation of Serbian church intellectuals raised and educated at the end of the nineteenth century adopted nationalism, liberalism and anti-clericalism as core values of both the Church and the society.⁷ One of these intellectuals was a bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church Nicholai Velimirović (1881–1956). Nationalism, liberalism and anti-clericalism, as well as democracy are ideas present in his voluminous work. However, his ecclesiology, as well as his overall thought, is

State: Alternative Narratives of the Nation in the Balkans, ed. Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashimova (Budapest: Central European Press, 2016), 57–79: 64.

⁴ Thomas Bremer, *Ekklesiale Struktur und Ekklesiologie in der Serbischen Orthodoxen Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1992), 24–34.

⁵ Bremer, *Ekklesiale Struktur*, 74.

⁶ Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija i Demokratija 1903–1914: istorijska studija o 'zlatnom dobu srpske demokratije'* (*Serbia and Democracy 1903–1914: A Historical Study on the 'Golden Age of Serbian Democracy'*) (Beograd: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2003), 116–117.

⁷ Klaus Buchenau, "Orthodox Values and Modern Necessities: Serbian Orthodox Clergy and Laypeople on Democracy, Human Rights, Transition, and Globalization", in *Civic and Uncivic Values. Serbia in the Post-Milošević Era*, ed. Ola Listhaug, Sabrina P. Ramet, and Dragana Dulić (Budapest — New York: Central European Press, 2011), 111–142: 112–113.

perceived as a step backwards in the democratic modernization of the Serbian Church and state, achieved previously through the participation of the laypeople in the church councils of Karlovci Patriarchate.⁸ Moreover, inspired by the spiritual revival taking place in late imperial Russia and by Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Orthodox messianism, Nicholai Velimirović, according to Klaus Buchenau, began to preach that post-Ottoman Serbia had been on a wrong path in trying to become a modern Western-type democracy.⁹ Buchenau's claim makes us wonder what was the purpose of Velimirović's praise of democracy and which kind of democracy he had in mind. In the following lines I aim to examine Velimirović's sermons, letters and writings about democracy, with special focus on its European democratic tradition. I intend to analyse first his works, written mostly during the WWI and in the interwar period in which he tackles the question of democracy from the perspective of ongoing war and the future of Europe. I will shift then my attention to the late works written during the period of WWII, followed by his emigration in USA, including also the work *Nevercoming Land (Zemlja Nododjija)* from 1950. Finally, by comparing his early account of democracy with the late one it will be possible to conclude which elements in his view on democracy are permanent, and which emerged and disappeared due to the historical circumstances in which he found himself.

The early years and the interwar period

Velimirović spent the decade preceding the WWI as a student in Switzerland, Germany and England. He commenced his studies of philosophy and theology in Halle in 1905. He acquainted himself with the political and religious situation in western Europe, mainly in Germany and France. In his early

⁸ Bremer, *Ekklesiale Struktur*, 275.

⁹ Buchenau, "Orthodox Values and Modern Necessities," 115.

report essay published in 1906 'The Religious Social Movement in the West' (Versko-socijalni pokreti na Zapadu), he focused on the French Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State from 1905. Velimirović portrayed the events in the Roman-Catholic Church that preceded the promulgation of the law. His sympathies were undoubtedly on the side of the French Republic and against the Roman-Catholic Church, or precisely against the Vatican, which opposed this law. However, the reason for such a stance is not an Orthodox hatred of the Roman Church, as one would assume; it was rather Velimirović's concern for the Roman Church as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Velimirović argues that the new law will deprive the Roman Church of its traditions, privilege and pretensions to rule over people. In a 'single-lawful and democratic' environment, the Roman Church has to learn how to serve and how to 'wash the feet of the lowly and sinful'.¹⁰

Velimirović agreed with Roman-Catholic theologians and intellectuals of that time who thought that the new law offers a chance to the Roman Church to adapt itself to 'the new time and the cultural life of its people'.¹¹ In the same vein like Velimirović, on the occasion of the Second Vatican Council, Johann Baptist Metz commended the rapid secularization of the world for setting the Roman-Catholic Church in dialogue with the contemporary world.¹² Both thinkers have seen the democratization as the process that brings church to its true nature. However, at the beginning of his report Velimirović claims that small nations, such as the Serbian nation, should observe the historical changes that occur among large nations, but should not necessarily follow these tendencies and adopt

¹⁰ Nikolaj Velimirović, 'Versko-socijalni pokreti na Zapadu' (The Religious Social Movement in the West) in Nikolaj Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 2 (Himmelsthür, 1986, reprint Šabac: Manastir Svetog Nikolaja, Soko 2014), 167–180: 180.

¹¹ Velimirović, 'Versko-socijalni pokreti na Zapadu', 179.

¹² Johann Baptist Metz, *Theology of the World* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 19.

them.¹³ This raises the question of why the Roman Church would benefit from the separation from the French State, whereas the Orthodox Church in Serbia would not profit by its separation from the Serbian state?

The situation in Serbia was quite different from the one in France. While in France the clerics and the Republic were on opposite sides, in Serbia many clerics were members of political parties and of the national parliament. According to the Constitution from 1869 (article 45), all Serbian bishops and several priests were automatically members of the Serbian parliament.¹⁴ The number of priests in the national parliament increased in the following decades, and many of them deemed party politics a higher call than their Christian ministry.¹⁵ Since clerics dominated Serbian political arena, they hardly thought of the separation of the Orthodox Church from the state, albeit the socialists demanded it. Nevertheless, even if such separation would have taken place, this would rather lead to the devastation of the Serbian church, because many priests preferred party politics to pastoral work. In comparison to France where the Church was not secular enough, in Serbia, during the period of the so-called golden age of Serbian democracy (1903–1914), the Church was too profane and secular. Velimirović highly esteemed democratisation and its results, as the case of the French Law of separation proves, but at the same time, he despised the party politics regarding it as perversion of democracy. At the end of his report, Velimirović mentions that while the protestants in Europe exult because of the defeat of the Roman Church in France, the socialism acts on the destruction of both.

In 1906 Velimirović enrolled at the University of Bern, where he continued his theological studies. He had at least

¹³ Velimirović, 'Versko-socijalni pokreti na Zapadu', 168.

¹⁴ Živan Živanović, *Politička istorija Srbije u drugoj polovini devetnaestog veka* (*Political History of Serbia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*), knjiga 1 (Beograd: G. Kon, 1924), 246.

¹⁵ Buchenau, "Orthodox Values and Modern Necessities," 114.

two reasons for the decision to continue his studies at the Old-Catholic theological faculty. The first reason was a very cordial relation of the Old-Catholics with the Orthodox after their split from the Pope subsequent to the First Vatican Council.¹⁶ The second reason pertains to Velimirović's personal conviction, which he shared with the Old-Catholic, that papacy in its form of ruling and not of serving subjects is a burden to Christianity, especially to Catholicism. In Bern he obtained two doctorates, one in theology, in 1908 and another in history, in 1909.

In 1911, Velimirović became a tutor at the Orthodox Seminary in Belgrade.¹⁷ There he wrote his work *Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky* (1911–1912), in which he criticizes Friedrich Nietzsche for attempting to reintroduce the master morality. According to Velimirović, Nietzsche attacks Christianity, democracy and socialism because they all proclaim the slave morality.¹⁸ As for Velimirović, Nietzsche perceives in the contemporary individual the exemplification of the slave morality, he proclaims the superhuman (*Übermensch*) as the epitome of the master morality. In opposition to Nietzsche's superhuman Velimirović posits not the subhuman (*Untermensch*) like Nietzsche, but all-human (*всечеловѣк*) evoked by Dostoyevsky in his famous speech to Pushkin from 1880. The concept of all-human as 'the ideal in reality, the gold in the mud, the grandeur among the despised',¹⁹ was for Velimirović based on brotherhood and love among people and on serving to Christ.²⁰ Although for Velimirović, as the propagator of the slave morality, Dostoyevsky is the opposite of Nietzsche, he is close to Nietzsche in his diagnosis of the western society. According

¹⁶ Klaus Buchenau, *Auf russischen Spuren. Orthodoxe Antiwestler in Serbien, 1850–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 149.

¹⁷ Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism. Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2008), 22.

¹⁸ Nikolaj Velimirović, 'Niče i Dostojevski' (*Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky*), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (Collected Works), Vol. 2, 2014, 559–575: 563.

¹⁹ Velimirović, 'Niče i Dostojevski', 565.

²⁰ Velimirović, 'Niče i Dostojevski', 570–571.

to Velimirović, Dostoyevsky predicts the total collapse of the western world, whose decline commenced with Catholicism, continued with Protestantism, and will finish with atheistic and egoistic Socialism.²¹ Velimirović's interpretation of Dostoyevsky's view on Europe was adopted by his student, Justin Popović, who attended the St Sava's Seminary in Belgrade, at the time when Velimirović wrote his essay on Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky. Dionisios Skliris rightly observes that Justin Popović's view of modern European history is in agreement with the views on Europe promulgated by Carl Schmitt.²² The same is possible to say for Velimirović's view because both authors are indebted to Dostoyevsky. Similarly to Velimirović, Carl Schmitt argues that all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts.²³ For example, according to Schmitt, the concept of the sovereignty of the state order has its origin in the concept of the infallibility of the spiritual order, or the Pope.²⁴ The doctrine of the absolute sinfulness and depravity of human nature that is promulgated by the Catholic Council of Trent as the dogma of Original sin, is taken by the Enlightenment in order to justify the education of human being ignorant and rough by the nature.²⁵ Thus, according to Schmitt, it appears that both Catholicism and socialism have the same role, to make humanity better through a form of 'legal despotism'.²⁶ When Velimirović criticized Catholicism and socialism, his critique was not directed against the Christian morality or the equality

²¹ Velimirović, 'Niče i Dostojevski', 569.

²² Διονύσης Σκλήρης (Dionisios Skliris), "Αγαπώ άρα γνωρίζω: Η κριτική του αγίου Ιουστίνου του Νέου (Πόποβιτς) στη Δυτική Φιλοσοφία και οι Πατερικές της προϋποθέσεις" ("I love so I know": St. Justin the New (Popović's) Critique of the Western Philosophy and its Patristic Presuppositions), Αντίφωνο: Επιστήμες — Φιλοσοφία — Τέχνες — Θεολογία, accessed May 29, 2020, <https://antifono.gr/αγαπώ-άρα-γνωρίζω>.

²³ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1985), 36

²⁴ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 55.

²⁵ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 56–57.

²⁶ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 56.

in distributions of goods, but rather against their attempts to introduce the master morality and to subjugate humanity.²⁷

With the beginning of the WWI, the Serbian Government sent Velimirović to the UK and the USA to promote the Serbian cause. In the lecture '*Serbia in Light and Darkness*' delivered in the Canterbury Cathedral in 1915, he praised the British Empire because of its democracy and foundation based on the Christian philosophy of democratic equality and brotherhood, and considered England the champion of democracy. He urged Britain to protect Serbia and other oppressed European nations from German dominion by spreading democracy and Christian values.²⁸ Velimirović valued the idea of democracy and accused the Habsburgs of profanation of democracy.²⁹ He was very proud of the fact that prior to the WWI, Serbia was the only democratic state among the four independent Slavic states, namely Russia, Montenegro and Bulgaria.³⁰ According to Velimirović, the Serbian democracy has grown in the Serbian villages first and this fact differentiates it from British democracy, where democratic movements have developed in towns.³¹ In the lecture '*The Soul of Serbia*' delivered at the University of Cambridge in 1915, Velimirović considers England to be the home and heart of European democracy.³² In describing Serbian democracy, Velimirović compares it with the American democracy, because both were unplanned, unprepared, spontaneous, genuine and existed for a long time before people become aware of its name.³³

In his '*Sermon on Freedom*' written in 1918, on the occasion of Skopje's liberation by the Serbian army, Velimirović praises

²⁷ Velimirović, 'Niče i Dostojevski', 563.

²⁸ Nicholas Velimirovic, *Serbia in Light and Darkness* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1916), 8–9.

²⁹ Velimirovic, *Serbia in Light and Darkness*, 16.

³⁰ Velimirovic, *Serbia in Light and Darkness*, 16.

³¹ Velimirovic, *Serbia in Light and Darkness*, 53

³² Nicholas Velimirovic, *The Soul of Serbia*, (London: The Faith Press, 1916), 19.

³³ Velimirovic, *The Soul of Serbia*, 19.

Christianity and democracy as the two pillars on which the newly liberated country should be built.³⁴ For Velimirović, democracy goes hand in hand with Christianity, because the newly acquired political freedom cannot be fully realized if there is no spiritual freedom, or freedom in Christ. According to Velimirović, the spiritual freedom is dependence on God, not perceived as slavery, but as sonship.³⁵ Only the people liberated within themselves and free internally from the tyranny of sin, can also be free externally from the tyrannies of nature or other human beings.

Faced with the catastrophic consequences of the WWI, Velimirović's enthusiasm for a better European future gradually vanished. In his lecture given in 1920 at London's Kings College, he states that Europe has abandoned Christianity as the centre of its civilization and that it is doomed to decay unless it returns to its centre.³⁶ In his post-war essay 'The Anglo-Saxon Politicians and Faith' from 1923, Velimirović attempts to show that democracy and Christianity are closely associated, and that different ideological positions in Europe should not cause religious and political hostilities. Velimirović writes about the democratic determination and deep personal faith of American and British politicians whom he knew personally, commencing with the US presidents Woodrow Wilson and Warren Harding and the US state secretary Robert Lansing, and continuing with the British noblemen and lords, such as Lord of Salisbury and the British Labour party politicians Ramsey McDonald, the first Labour party prime minister, and George Lansbury, a socialist and the leader of the Labour Party.³⁷ For Velimirović, the ideological positions of politicians are irrelevant, as long as

³⁴ Nikolaj Velimirović, 'Iznad greha i smrti' (*Above Sin and Death*), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (*Collected Works*), Vol. 4, 289.

³⁵ Velimirović, 'Iznad greha i smrti', 288.

³⁶ Nicholai Velimirovic, *The Spiritual Rebirth of Europe* (London: The Faith Press, 1920), 20.

³⁷ Nikolaj Velimirović, 'Anglosaksonski političari i vera' (*The Anglo-Saxon Politicians and Faith*), *Hrišćanski život* (*The Christian Life*) 7 (1923): 351–355.

they comply with Christianity and democracy, two ideals on which the modern Europe should be built.

In the book *The War and the Bible*, written in 1931, while residing as the bishop of Ohrid (in contemporary North Macedonia), Velimirović reflects on the reasons of a future war. Although he does not mention democracy and democratic order, his reflections linger over the problems of contemporary Europe. He points to atheism as the main reason of the future war, arguing that atheism opens a door to five modern idolatries: materialism as the idolatry of matter, egoism as the idolatry of self, nationalism as the idolatry of nation, imperialism as idolatry of empire and culturalism as the idolatry of culture.³⁸ According to Velimirović, these five values, given to humanity by God, are good in itself, but when employed independently of the love and service to God, they become idols. The worshiping is not focused on a single idol, but on several ones at the same time. For example, materialism, egoism and imperialism go together with the public admiration for nation and culture.³⁹ Although the future war seems to look like a divine punishment for worshiping idols, Velimirović maintains that the war is an external consequence of the inner war with vices, that is lost.⁴⁰ Being waged against idols in each individual soul and lost, the war finally materialises itself as a war of one human being against another in the name of material goods, nation, empire, individual freedom or culture. Although Velimirović does not mention democracy, a similar reasoning may be applied to it, as it was applied to matter, nation, empire, individual freedom and culture. Only the democracy that serves higher principles such as love for God and for a fellow human being is deemed worthy of admiration.

In 1936, Velimirović resumed the bishopric of Žiža in central Serbia, where he previously served as bishop in 1919 and 1920.

³⁸ Nikolaj Velimirović, *Rat i Biblija (The War and the Bible)*, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 5, 181–251: 234.

³⁹ Velimirović, *Rat i Biblija*, 235.

⁴⁰ Velimirović, *Rat i Biblija*, 246–248.

In his writings of this period, he attempted to offer solutions to social and political problems of pre-WWII Yugoslavia. In the article 'Between Left and Right', Velimirović stands against internationalism and fascism, two most powerful movements and political orders in Europe at this time. The internationalism was unacceptable for Velimirović due to its negation of nation and national self-determination. On the contrary, fascism does not only glorify its own nation, but it also considers other nations as lower to and not equally worthy to one's own nation.⁴¹ He proposed a middle way between these two directions, which he elaborated at length in his article 'The Middle System', from the same period. For Radovan Bigović, Velimirović's concept of middle system was his theoretical attempt to reconcile political and social extremes in Europe, and to bridge the gap between individualism and collectivism.⁴² In this book Velimirović developed his thesis about the Serbian village-grown democracy and wealth distribution, roughly outlined previously in his work *Serbia in Light and Darkness*. In his opinion, the Serbian agricultural cooperatives that originated from small Christian communities were stumbling blocks to both plutocracy of cartels and aggressive communism.⁴³ As a result of these cooperatives, the human being is neither enslaved by other fellow human being nor by the state, and she remains free, what is the main precondition for democracy.⁴⁴ He restricted his explanation to simple forms of work associations mainly connected with agricultural production, originating in the Christian past. However, he hesitated to ponder on the desirable processes of work organization and distribution of goods in modern times from the Christian point of view. As

⁴¹ Nikolai Velimirović, 'Izmedju levice i desnice' (Between Left and Right), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (Collected Works), Vol. 9, 711–712: 711.

⁴² Radovan Bigović, *Od svečoveka do Bogočoveka* (From Allman to Godman) (Beograd: Raška škola, 1998), 331.

⁴³ Nikolai Velimirović, 'Srednji sistem' ('The Middle System'), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (Collected Works), Vol. 5, 687–700: 696–697.

⁴⁴ Velimirović, 'Srednji sistem', 697.

a theologian and not as an economist, he was not focused on work, capital or profit, but rather on the freedom of human being that was endangered in this process by other human beings or by the state. According to Velimirović, the successful application of the middle system is preconditioned by the link between divine *oikonomia*, such as the providential unfolding of the history according to the eschatological model, and the modern capitalist economy. Velimirović's attitude reminds of the contemporary studies of Giorgio Agamben, who draws the analogy between the Christian *oikonomia*, i.e. the redemption of the corrupted world by God as saviour, and the modern economy, i.e. the administrative praxis of government or state that 'governs the course of things, adapting at each turn, in its salvific intent, to the nature of the concrete situation against which it has to measure itself'.⁴⁵ Velimirović's intention was to root the economy, mostly based on agricultural production in the divine economy of salvation, and he was against the phenomenon, explained by Agamben, of replacing the kingdom and glory of God with a glorified and deified economy and government.

The idea about economy based on agricultural cooperatives (*zadruga*) was neither new nor original. It was shared by some Yugoslav right-wing politicians during the 1930's, the ministers in Yugoslav Royal Governments and the chief collaborators to the Nazis during WWII, such as Dimitrije Ljotić and Milan Nedić. However, their motives were completely different. For Velimirović, the *zadruga* system maintained the link with the ancient form of Christian communities that shared their wealth, properties, food and prayer and were kept together by the common faith,⁴⁶ while for Dimitrije Ljotić the *zadruga* system allowed a better state control of labour and capital, than the control that exists in liberal capitalism.⁴⁷ For Milan

⁴⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011), 50.

⁴⁶ Velimirović, 'Srednji sistem', 697.

⁴⁷ Dimitrije Ljotić, „Kakvu politiku hoćemo“ ('What Kind of Politics We Want'),

Nedić, the *zadruga* system originated, not from Christian communities like for Velimirović, but from racial-biological and ethnic realities and is the best expression of Serbian national socialism.⁴⁸

The treatise ‘Middle System’ is probably the last work dealing with modern European issues, written by Velimirović in the interwar period. The interwar period represented the pinnacle of Velimirović’s career both as an ecclesial and political figure and as an author. He developed his well-known literary style in this period and promulgated many of his pivotal ideas. Many scholars consider his appointment as bishop of Ohrid in 1920 as a major turn in his outlook, and the beginning of his transformation from an European gentleman into an Orthodox hermit.⁴⁹ According to Buchenau, Velimirović turned his back to intelligentsia and its European role models in this period and balanced between ‘harmless’ traditionalism and right-wing dictatorship.⁵⁰ However, in my opinion the major changes in his views happened not in the early period of his career, when he began to enrich his school knowledge of Christianity gained at the world universities with an authentic Christian life and experience, but rather with the beginning of the WWII and the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Thus, Velimirović recalled seldom and always with remorse and sorrow the ideas in regard to Yugoslavia and the unity of south Slavs or the ecclesial unity between Orthodox and Catholic Church or the Christian type of socialism and communism, vigorously supported during the WWI and interwar period. This raises the question of

in Dimitrije Ljotić, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 5 (Minhen: Iskra), 61.

⁴⁸ Milan Nedić, *Srpsko selo (Serbian Village)*, 29 May 1943. Retrieved from Olivera Milosavljević, *Potisnuta istina: Kolaboracija u Srbiji 1941–1944 (Suppressed Truth: Collaboration in Serbia 1941–1944)* (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava 2006), 303–304.

⁴⁹ Dimitrije Najdanović, *Tri srpska velikana (The Three Great Serbian Figures)* (Minhen: Svečanik-Verlag, 1975), 142; Bigović, *Od svečoveka do Bogočoveka*, 52.

⁵⁰ Buchenau, *Auf russischen Spuren*, 143.

whether he abandoned the idea about democracy and its value and this will be discussed in the following lines.

WWII and the Exile

The Europe known to Velimirović from his studies in Germany and Switzerland drastically changed during the 1930's. At the dawn of the WWII war, many European intellectuals maintained that Europe is sick unto death due to various reasons, from the disappearance of traditional values and rapid secularisation to nationalism and uncontrolled technical development,⁵¹ and Velimirović shared this view. The beginning of the WWII caught Velimirović as the bishop of Žiča. Due to his cordial relations with the British political establishment, Velimirović was deemed by Nazis as a potential treat, and he was arrested and put under German surveillance in the summer of 1941 at Ljubostinja monastery.⁵² One of the works written by Velimirović in this period was *The Serbian People as Theodule*.

Velimirović does not mention democracy particularly in this work, but he reflects on many important societal issues. He develops some ideas from the 'Middle System,' about the head of the family (*domaćin*) and agricultural cooperatives (*zadruga*) as the backbone of Serbian economy, substantiating them with examples from Serbian ecclesial history. It is evident Velimirović's motive to ground these popular ideas in the Christian ethos. Thus, in order to be a good head of the family (*domaćin*), one has to be a good servant to God, what Theodoulos in Greek originally means. The perfect examples are St Sava Nemanjić, the first Serbian archbishop and his father Nemanja, the ruler of medieval Serbia and founder of

⁵¹ Bogdan Radica, *Agonija Evrope: Razgovori i susreti (The Agony of Europe)* (Beograd: Geca Kon, 1940).

⁵² Rastko Lompar, "Zatočeništvo patrijarha Gavrila i episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića u Dahauu 1944. godine" (The Incarceration of Patriarch Gavrilo and Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Dachau in 1944), *Studije Istorije Ilarion* 3 (2018): 9–29: 14.

the Nemanjić dynasty.⁵³ Velimirović introduces a relatively new element, i.e., monastic practice, broadly understood as ascetical rules, as the constitutive feature of social life. Therefore, according to Velimirović, the Serbian agricultural cooperatives (*zadruga*) do not originate from relationships based on blood, but from service to God by adhering to ascetical practice preserved in the Orthodox monasteries, especially the Athonite monasteries.⁵⁴ For Velimirović, asceticism was the true philosophy. For him the ascetic life was not a reduction of the whole ancient philosophical legacy to several repetitive practices, but a perfect synthesis of Platonic cosmology, Stoic ethics, Aristotelian logic and Parmenidean ontology.⁵⁵ For Velimirović, the Greek philosophical and cultural legacy is in the best way embodied by Christianity, and the Month Athos was the perfect embodiment of the ancient political ideal. While serving as the bishop of Ohrid, Velimirović visited the Month Athos almost every summer and he established a strong bond with the Athonite Fathers and ascetics, especially with St Silouan the Athonite.

In the *Indian Letters*, another work written during his detention in Ljubostinja in 1941/1942,⁵⁶ and inspired by India and its deep culture and religiosity, Velimirović describes the Holy Mount of Athos. Seen through the eyes of an Indian envoy sent to Europe by Indian rulers to find out the reason for the great war and the European crisis, Velimirović describes the Holy

⁵³ Nikolaj Velimirović, *Srpski narod kao Teodul* (*The Serbian People as Theodoulos*), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (*Collected Works*), Vol. 5, 651–684, 660.

⁵⁴ Velimirović, *Srpski narod kao Teodul*, 671–672.

⁵⁵ Bigović, *Od svečoveka do Bogočoveka*, 129–130.

⁵⁶ Srećko Petrović, “Prilog proučavanju srpsko-ruskih crkvenih odnosa: Povezanost srpske jerarhije sa crkvenom misijom u Indiji tokom 1930-ih godina sa posebnim osvrtom na eventualnu ulogu Episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića” (A Contribution to the Research of Serbian-Russian Church Relations: The Connection of the Serbian Hierarchy with the Orthodox Church Mission in India during the 1930’s, With Special Reference to the Plausible Role of Bishop Nicholai Velimirović), *Teološki pogledi* (*Theological Views*) 53/1 (2020): 79–128: 97, n. 63, <https://doi.org/10.46825/tv/2020-1-079-128>.

Mount as “an empire without a crown, a state without an army, wealth without money, wisdom without school, cuisine without meat, prayer without ceasing, connection with heaven without interruption, worship of Christ without fatigue, death without sorrow”.⁵⁷ Finally, the Indian envoy concludes in his letter sent back to India that Europe would be much more peaceful and happy with the spirit of the Mount Athos.⁵⁸ Therefore, the fruits of the ascetic life and practice, especially Athonite, such as peace and happiness, inspired Velimirović to model his Christian agricultural cooperatives in according to monastic rules.

The German soldiers that searched Ljubostinja Monastery, where Velimirović was detained, found a radio transmitter, by which he allegedly communicated with London.⁵⁹ This caused Velimirović's transfer to the monastery of Vojlovica (near Belgrade) on the 16th (the 3rd according to Old Style) of December 1942, where a much stricter surveillance was imposed. Velimirović was detained there together with the Serbian patriarch Gavriilo Dožić, until the 14th of September 1944, when they were both transferred to the concentration camp Dachau near Munich.⁶⁰ This period was extremely harsh for both church dignitaries, as Velimirović testifies in his later works.

In 1986 a text entitled ‘Words to the Serbian People Through the Dungeon Window’ was introduced in the *Collected Works of Bishop Nicholai*, volume 13, published at Himelsthür in Germany. The publisher, Lavrentije Trifunović, then the bishop of Central European Diocese of the Serbian Church attributed the text to Velimirović. The original manuscript was allegedly found in the attic of the Serbian church in Linz and it was published for the first time by the parish of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Linz

⁵⁷ Nikolaj Velimirović, *Indijska pisma (Indian Letters)*, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 5, 701–792: 783

⁵⁸ Velimirović, *Indijska pisma*, 783.

⁵⁹ Lompar, “Zatočeništvo patrijarha Gavrila i episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića u Dahauu 1944. godine”, 15–16.

⁶⁰ Lompar, “Zatočeništvo patrijarha Gavrila i episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića u Dahauu 1944. godine”, 17.

in 1981. As a proof of authenticity of this work the publisher has included in the *Collected Works* the photography of one page from the *autograph*. In the short introduction to the text, Trifunović claims that Velimirović was cautious to hide this text from German guards and he even wrote the letter G instead of the full noun, when referring to Germans and Germany. There are many spurious facts in regard to this work of Velimirović. First, the printed text in the *Collected Works* occupies more than 160 pages, and could at least occupy the same number of pages in the *autograph*. Therefore, producing a text of such length for more than a month of his imprisonment in Dachau,⁶¹ under constant surveillance and hiding it from the German guards looks like a hardly feasible endeavour. Second, the nouns ‘Germans’ appear only twice in the whole text and both times in reference to the WWI. Moreover, the German people appear in not such a negative context as being the instruments of divine punishment of the Serbian people for their sins during the WWI. However, the nouns ‘Jews’ and ‘Jewish’ appear around 150 times in an extremely negative context, which determined some scholars to investigate the motives of Velimirović’s alleged anti-Semitism.⁶² The author accuses Jews that they are inventors of all evils that came upon Europe and responsible for its tragic destiny. The question raises why would Velimirović hide this text from German guards if it contains the worst anti-Jewish propaganda, which almost justifies the German treatment of Jews during the WWII. Finally, there is no mention in any of Velimirović’s latter works in which of his writings from Dachau.⁶³

⁶¹ Lompar, “Zatočeništvo patrijarha Gavrila i episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića u Dahauu 1944. godine”, 18.

⁶² Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism*.

⁶³ In several letters to Fr Aleksa Todorović, Velimirović mentions his works written during the WWII, including some writings from Dachau but he never refers to the particular book. See letters to Aleksa Todorović, one is undated, but probably written in early 1951, and another is from 19th of March 1953 in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 659–660; 693–694.

It may be assumed that the editors of ‘Words to the Serbian People Through the Dungeon Window’ assembled the text written by Velimirović in Dachau and the material from his earlier writings, but also interpolated some of the anti-Jewish propaganda composed by the members of political movement Zbor.⁶⁴ There were many examples in Velimirović’s letters written during the 1950’s, in which he wanted to distance himself from the actions of the pro-fascist movement Zbor in the emigration, which he labelled as “national godlessness” in order to differentiate it from the communist godlessness.⁶⁵ Velimirović’s sympathies for religiosity of Dimitrije Ljotić, the leader of Zbor movement, encouraged Ljotić’s adherents to interpret Velimirović’s words as the support for Zbor’s political goals, not only after the WWI, but also in the interwar period.⁶⁶ On several occasions, Velimirović himself tried to prevent Ljotić’s political adherents to usurp and exploit the publishing house “Svečanik” in Munich founded by Velimirović for their political goals.⁶⁷ Therefore, it would not be difficult to imagine that some of them forged Velimirović’s writings by interpolating the political agenda of the Zbor movement.

The term ‘democracy’, for example, appears only three times in the purported writings from Dachau. The first two appearances are along the line of Velimirović’s earlier expressed attitude, that democracy should go hand in hand with religion, and that the atheistic democracy is not long lived.⁶⁸ This attitude

⁶⁴ Jovan Čulibrk is also suspicious of the authenticity of this work. See Jovan Čulibrk, “Izraelci nas odlično razumeju” (The Israeli People Understand Us Well), *Jevrejski pregled (Jewish Review)* 2 (February 2009): 6–8: 7.

⁶⁵ Nikolaj Velimirović, Letter to Fr Aleksa Todorović from the 30th of April 1952, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 677.

⁶⁶ See for example Nikolaj Velimirović, Letter to Milan from 8th of October 1937, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 652–653.

⁶⁷ Nikolaj Velimirović, Letter to Fr Aleksa Todorović from the 2nd of April 1953, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 699.

⁶⁸ Nikolaj Velimirović, “Govori spskom narodu kroz tamnički prozor” 54 (Words to the Serbian People Through the Dungeon Window), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 181–350: 293.

is in compliance with his earlier ideas that only if the people are freed from the tyranny of sin by worshiping God, they will opt for democracy and not for the tyranny. The third mention of democracy appears in an anti-Semitic context:

“All modern European ideas were invented by the Jews, who crucified Christ: democracy, strikes, socialism, atheism, tolerance of all faiths, pacifism and universal revolution, capitalism and communism. These are all inventions of the Jews, or of their father the devil”.⁶⁹

It is very surprising that Velimirović, who had hardly mentioned Jews in all his previous works,⁷⁰ attacks them suddenly and furiously from the concentration camp, in the same place and at the same time when thousands of them have been killed on a daily basis. It is also less probable that democracy, uprisings, socialism and religious tolerance that earlier Velimirović highly valued, all of a sudden are proclaimed as the inventions of the devil. Therefore, due to the unproven authenticity of this work, one should exercise if not scholarly suspicion, then at least some caution in referring to it.

After his release from Dachau by the end of 1944, Velimirović together with the Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić were transferred

⁶⁹ Velimirović, “Govori spskom narodu kroz tamnički prozor” 77, in Velimirović, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 340.

⁷⁰ Velimirović’s earlier references to the Jews pertain mostly to the biblical context. Velimirović often refers to Jewish nationalism and Roman imperialism as two dangers that early Christianity had to avoid. Thus, the polemics Velimirović had with the chief rabbi the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Isaak Alcalay in 1928 was provoked by Velimirović’s remark that Jewish religious leaders condemned Jesus out of nationalism and clericalism. See Miloš Timotijević, “Dunuli su vihorni vetrovi”: Stavovi episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića o Jevrejima, liberalizmu, komunizmu i nacizmu u štampi Žičke eparhije pred Drugi svetski rat” (“Whirlwinds Have Blown”: Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović’s Attitudes towards Jews, Liberalism, Communism and Nazism in the Publications of Žiča Eparchy before the Second World War), in Dragan Drašković & Radomir Ristić (eds.), *Naša prošlost (Our Past)*, Vol. 8 (Kraljevo: National Museum Kraljevo and Historical Archives Kraljevo, 2007), 97–119: 102.

first to Schliersee (south of Munich), and then released to go to Vienna, in order to meet with the representatives of Serbian anti-communist troops that collaborated with the Nazi Germany.⁷¹ They waited for the war to end in Kitzbuhel in Austria and from there they fled to London. While Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić decided to return in 1946 to socialist Yugoslavia, Velimirović chose to go to the USA, where he lived until his death in 1956. He visited Europe just once, being briefly in London, but he never again wrote about Europe. By abandoning Christianity and democracy, at least in its parts under the Communist rule, Europe was for Velimirović doomed to slow death. However, due to its Christian faith and democracy, values Velimirović highly esteemed, America became for him not only the land of great material progress and scientific discoveries, but also a land of spiritual awakening and Christian power and grandeur.⁷²

Upon his arrival to USA, Velimirović stayed in New York, living in the attic of the Serbian cathedral St Sava in Manhattan. He travelled frequently across America preaching and lecturing. In June 1946 Columbia University in New York awarded Velimirović an honorary Doctorate of Sacred Theology. His American period was very fruitful for Velimirović as an author. One of the books written in this period, that will be in our focus, is *The Nevercoming Land: A Modern Tale (Zemlja Nododjija: Jedna moderna bajka)* from 1950. This was the first book of a trilogy he planned to write on the topics of Hitlerism, atheism and the need for repentance.⁷³ The plot of the book *The Nevercoming Land* was located in the concentration camp, where Gestapo interrogated Serbian officer Spasa

⁷¹ Lompar, “Zatočeništvo patrijarha Gavrila i episkopa Nikolaja Velimirovića u Dahau 1944. godine”, 23.

⁷² Nikolaj Velimirović, Sermon “To Be and To Do” delivered at the Grace Church, New York on the 6th of March 1946, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 512–515: 515.

⁷³ Nikolaj Velimirović, Letter to priest Aleksa Todorović from the 26th of June 1951, in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela (Collected Works)*, Vol. 13, 662.

Spasić. This book was not very well received among Serbian political emigration in the USA which collaborated with Hitler during the WWII.

Velimirović's modern tale takes place in July 1944 after the unsuccessful assassination of Adolf Hitler in the imaginary concentration camp Tannenwald. In the course of seven days the imprisoned Yugoslav officer Spasa Spasić, a commander of the prisoners' barrack 99, was trialled under the charge that he allowed his fellow prisoners to celebrate the alleged assassination of Hitler.⁷⁴ The seven days of trial correspond to the holy week in the life of Christ, and it ends with the metaphorical resurrection of Spasić and removal of all charges against him. There is a strong identification of Velimirović's attitudes with the attitudes of his imaginary character. The records from each night of trial are followed by the Velimirović's reflections on societal phenomena, like ethics, technics and freedom. The fourth night of trial and Velimirović's reflections on freedom, truth and love open a window for understanding Velimirović's late views on democracy. On this night of the trial the devil appears, explaining to Spasić that he rules the world through six demons: the misuse of knowledge, of power, of wealth, of physical beauty, of art and of food and drink.⁷⁵ The view on these six misuses serves as an introduction to the reflections on freedom and democracy, because for Velimirović the inner freedom from passions is crucial for establishing outer political freedom. In the short tractate about freedom, Velimirović overviews different political systems, from tyranny to democracy, arguing that democracy is the medicine against tyranny, because it extended freedom from one tyrant to all citizens.⁷⁶

By analysing Athenian democracy, Velimirović remarks that it fell prey to lie and selfishness. Therefore, he argues that for the

⁷⁴ Nikolaj Velimirović, 'Zemlja nedodjija: Jedna moderna bajka' (The Nevercoming Land: A Modern Tale), in Velimirović, *Sabrana dela* (Collected Works), Vol. 12, 11–57: 11–12.

⁷⁵ Velimirović, 'Zemlja nedodjija', 34.

⁷⁶ Velimirović, 'Zemlja nedodjija', 36.

perseverance of democracy as freedom for all it is required to be guarded by truth and love. Velimirović argues that the freedom secured by democracy is proclaimed a public good, while the truth and love are restricted to private sphere. This, in his view, endangers democracy and exposes its vulnerability. Velimirović concludes that religion, and especially Christianity, which is based on the principles of truth and love is inseparable from democracy. The truth liberates human beings from passions and opens a path towards love. According to Velimirović, only in conditions where the truth and love are fastened by faith in God the democracy can flourish, because truth directs and guards democracy by giving it a meaning, while love and mercy inspire good deeds.⁷⁷ The account on democracy from this book may be considered as Velimirović's final word about this issue.

Conclusion

Velimirović is known for changing his opinions on numerous occasions, adopting vigorously certain ideas and abandoning them abruptly. Some of the ideas he adopted or developed in his early period, like the political ideas related to Yugoslavia and the unity of Orthodox and Catholics in one Yugoslav Church or about India as the most promising land for the Christian mission are abandoned, while some other ideas were developed in the course of his life and never renounced, like the idea of democracy. Velimirović was preoccupied by the idea of democracy with other ideas, which if it is paired with Christian faith, provides equality and brotherhood among the people. For Velimirović democracy directly opposes the war, which is the consequence of the lost internal battle with the passions. As a completely opposite extreme to the war was democracy, because it refers first to the war won over the passions and to

⁷⁷ Velimirović, 'Zemlja nedodjija', 38.

the achieved state of internal freedom, which is then displayed as political freedom.

Velimirović's understanding of democracy is inseparable from spiritual practices mostly connected with the Mount Athos, as cradle of Christian, and particularly Byzantine asceticism in Europe. He related ascetical practices to democracy and economy because only by winning over the idols, or perverted values of material goods, nation, empire, individual freedom or culture in the human heart through ascetism will prevent of developing from values the collective idols.

For Velimirović, only democracy may provide freedom for majority of people if not for everybody. However, even such democracy is vulnerable, because it can easily fall pray to lie or selfishness. By being supported by Christian faith, which is based on the principles of truth and love or mercy, the modern democracy can survive. Every attempt to establish the foundation of modern Europe on other issues than democracy and Christianity is doomed to failure. It is also unacceptable for Velimirović to break these two apart. Therefore, democracy remains in the works of Velimirović highly praised as the best expression of human freedom, in which are all human beings free from passions, collective idols or other human beings.

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The Belgrade Nightingales:

A Russian Choir in London, 1939–1940*

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Abstract: In April, 1939, ten women — daughters of Russian refugees — travelled to London for what was intended to be a stay of between one and two years. In Belgrade they had lived in student accommodation, the ‘Society for the Assistance to Former Pupils of the Kharkov Institute of the Empress Maria Feodorovna’ which was run by Maria Alexeevna Nekludova. While in London, they would study English and also sing in English at Divine Liturgy served by Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes, former English tutor to the Russian Royal Family. This is the story of what happened to those women and how the Second World War impacted their future lives. The Choir Director was Maria Rodzianko, wife of Fr Vladimir Rodzianko, who in later years was appointed by Bishop Nicholai (Velimirovich) to be a priest in London.

Key words: Maria Alexeevna Nekludova, Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes, Maria Rodzianko.

Englishman Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes (1876–1953) was a tutor to the children of the martyred Tsar Nicholas II. After the Russian Revolution and Civil War, he went to live in Harbin, Manchuria where, at the age of 58, in 1934 he converted to Orthodox

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Christianity in the Russian Church. There he became a priest and then in 1936 returned to England. He was assigned as a supernumerary priest to the London parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile¹ by Metropolitan Seraphim (Lukyanov) of Paris. Late in 1938 Fr Nicholas began to hold services in English at the Russian Church in Buckingham Palace Road. However, early in 1939 he obtained the use of an Anglican church, the Chapel of the Ascension near Marble Arch, for English-language services. For Fr Nicholas the next challenge was to find a choir. Vladimir Rodzianko (later Fr Vladimir and Bishop Basil), who was in England in order to study at London University, introduced Fr Nicholas to Madame Maria Alexeeyvna Nekludova² who ran a student hostel in Belgrade, Serbia. Maria Alexeevna was able to send to London ten of her students, all daughters of noble Russian families who were living in exile in Serbia. This is the story of those women: how they came to be in England and what happened to them after the outbreak of World War II.

Arrival of the Belgrade Nightingales³

The group of women from Belgrade arrived at Victoria Station, London on 28th April, 1939, where they were met by Fr Nicholas and some of the Anglican nuns who were going to accommodate the visitors. The women had travelled from Belgrade where

¹ In the 1930s, what we now call ‘The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia’ was known in the UK variously as the ‘Russian Orthodox Church in Exile’ or the ‘Karlovcı Synod’. The church adopted the name ‘Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR)’ in 1950. In this paper usually I use the name ‘Russian Orthodox Church in Exile’ rather than ROCOR.

² A tribute to Maria Alexeevna Nekludova may be found here: Nicolas Mabin, “In Memory of Maria Alexeevna Nekludova”, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.rocorstudies.org/2020/04/09/in-memory-of-maria-alexeevna-nekludova>.

³ Fr Protodeacon Christopher Birchall mentions the choir in his book, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen* (New York: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014), 283–284. What he writes was based on the recollection of London Cathedral Choir Director Antonina V. Ananina. It is here that we learn of the sobriquet ‘Belgrade Nightingales’ as the London Russian community called them.

they lived in student accommodation, known as the ‘Society for the Assistance to Former Pupils of the Kharkov Institute of the Empress Maria Feodorovna’ which was run by Maria Alexeevna Nekludova (1866–1948). Many of the residents were orphans. In 1938, Maria Alexeevna made contact with Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes in London and subsequently arranged for 10 of her Russian students to travel to London in order to improve their English and to sing in English in a church choir organized by Fr Nicholas. According to Zina Rohan, daughter of one of the Nightingales (Helen Rodzianko), the introduction came about through Vladimir Rodzianko (later Fr Vladimir and Bishop Basil) who was in England to study. He learned of Fr Nicholas’s need for a choir and he knew that Madame Nekludova was keen to send some of her students to England in order to improve their English. Zina Rohan comments, “It’s anybody’s guess how well they coped with the liturgy in London as the only English words my mother, and quite possibly the other girls, knew were ‘Tveenkle Tveenkle Leetle Starr.’”⁴

The first service in the Chapel of the Ascension held by Fr Nicholas and his choir happened on 23rd April/6th May, 1939, the feast of Saint George. I think this must have been a *moleben* (service of thanksgiving) because on the next day he wrote to Fr Nicholas Behr in Bristol:

So at least there will be regular Orthodox services in English in London. We shall begin with the Liturgy on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. and gradually increase the services as the Choir becomes more competent. The Evening service at 6.30 p.m. on Saturdays will come next...⁵

⁴ Zina Rohan, “Family Article”, 2008, accessed June 30, 2020, <http://zinaron.squarespace.com/family-article/>. She refers to a well-known English lullaby which begins “Twinkle, twinkle, little star.”

⁵ Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes Archive held by the parish of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Oxford. St Nicholas Parish Archive (SNPA). In this paper all quotations are from the SNPA archive, 1939–1941, unless otherwise noted.



Fig. 1. Chapel of the Ascension, Marble Arch, London, where Fr Nicholas served Divine Liturgy from June until August, 1939, with the Belgrade Nightingales choir singing in English.

At the beginning of June, 1939, Fr Nicholas consulted Metropolitan Seraphim about what name the Choir should be given, since it was planned that it would give public concerts. Writing to Fr R. M. French, Secretary of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association (A&ECA), Fr Nicholas states,

The Russian name of the Choir [suggested by Metropolitan Seraphim] is literally translated “The Russian Female Church Choir in Memory of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna,” for short — The Alexandra Choir, but I shall turn this into: “The Russian Church Choir of Female Voices in Memory of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna.”

Fr Nicholas goes on to record the fact that the Choir was in London with the help of the A&ECA which was instrumental in ob-

taining visas for the women. “At the same time, we gratefully accept the Patronage of the A. & E. C. A., how exactly we shall work together, we must discuss, but I don’t think that there should be any difficulty about that...”

An English-language newspaper from Belgrade, the *South Slav Herald*, in June, 1939, published a full report on the arrival of the Russian women in London:

Belgrade Girls to Sing in London Church

Ten Russian girls from Yugoslavia have arrived in London from Belgrade to live in England for a year in various convents in the London area where they will learn English and acquaint themselves with English life.

A number of them will sing in London churches in a special choir.

This — the first party of Belgrade girls to travel to London under a plan conceived by Dame Maria Nekludova of Belgrade — has been hailed in the London press with great interest. After the initiative of Mdme. Nekludova, arrangements were made for their reception by the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association in London, at the personal intervention of Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes, former tutor to the Russian Imperial Family. The Bishop of London interested himself in the welfare of the girls, and helped in the obtaining of visas for their year’s stay in England.

Originally twelve girls were to have left Belgrade but one girl meantime was married and family illness prevented another from going.

One of the girls is a princess, Irena Sahovskaya, [sic] who will sing soprano in the choir of a West End church (St. Philip’s, Buckingham Palace Road) this summer. Another is Miss Helen

Rodzianko, granddaughter of the last President of the Russian “Duma” or parliament...

Queen’s Gift

Queen Maria of Yugoslavia has personally given a donation to the funds for the ten Russian girls, and she is the patron of the Society for the Assistance to Former Pupils of the Kharkov Institute of the Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia, which looks after the daughters of aristocratic families who have taken refuge in Yugoslavia. Many of them are orphans.

The ten Russian girls are delighted to be in London and have already written letters to their “mother”, Dame Maria Nekludova, the 70 years old former Superior of the Smolny Institute in Russia where the daughters of former Russian aristocrats’ families were educated.

Among her former pupils was the present Queen of Italy, then a Montenegrin princess.

Epic Journey

Dame Nekludova brought, single handed, without funds and almost without food, a body of 157 orphaned Russian girls, pupils of the Kharkov Institute, on an epic journey from South Russia to Bulgaria and eventually Yugoslavia.⁶ For three months of the winter, the girls, aged from 8 years upwards, were snowed up in a siding at Novorossisk in the Caucasus, until forced to flee by ship to Varna. Peasants gave them presents of food and fuel which kept them alive.

The ten girls are delighted to be in London. “We owe it all to our never-to-be-sufficiently-thanked Madame Maria Nekludova.

⁶ November, 1919, during the Civil War in Russia.

Hundreds of us Russian girls owe everything, our education and upbringing, to her” they say.

English-language services were held at the Chapel of the Ascension in June and July, 1939. At the beginning of August, the *Church Times* published the following announcement, almost certainly authored by Canon John Douglas, General Secretary, Church of England Council for Foreign Relations:

Russian Choir of Female Voices

Learning the Language

A Russian choir of female voices only is something of a novelty. A number of Russian young women have been brought over from Yugoslavia and given hospitality in various convents in and near London, and here they will learn our language and become acquainted with our Church life. England’s part in the work is conducted by the Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes, under the auspices of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. The other part, in Belgrade, is organized by a committee which has the patronage of the Queen of Yugoslavia.

This choir sings regularly at the Chapel of the Ascension, Bayswater Road, which the rector of St. George’s, Hanover Square kindly lends to Fr. Gibbes for the celebration of the Orthodox Liturgy in English. There are a number of members of the Russian Orthodox Church living in London who do not understand Church Slavonic [sic]. The choir will also sing both sacred and secular music at functions organized by the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association.

It is likely that there are other parishes, some perhaps not in a financial position to invite one of the larger Russian choirs, who be glad to have a visit from this choir of female voices. If so, they

should write to the Rev. R. M. French, Secretary of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, St. James's Vicarage, West Hampstead, N. W. 6.⁷

Then, in August, 1939, the Chapel was closed (by the Anglicans) for annual holidays and some of the choir members left London for a holiday in the countryside or at the seaside.

Outbreak of World War II

However, the whole English Orthodox project never resumed in London, coming to a shuddering halt with the outbreak of World War II in September, 1939. Called "Operation Pied Piper", the British evacuation of London began in preparation for the expected German Luftwaffe bombing of Britain. Fr Nicholas arranged for the ten women from Belgrade, who had been living in Anglican convents in the London area, to be re-housed in Anglican convents located in the countryside. Not surprisingly, the ten women, now refugees, were deeply unhappy about their situation. They were far from home, cut off from easy communication with Madame Nekludova and from their relatives in Serbia. Moreover, they were staying in Anglican convents where, necessarily, life was even more austere than in society at large. For the most part they were penniless, dependent on the goodwill of Anglican nuns. All were desperate to return to Belgrade and besieged Fr Nicholas with letters, begging him to help facilitate their return to Yugoslavia.

Fr Nicholas felt that their demands to return home were unreasonable; he thought that they were much safer in the UK. The journey to Yugoslavia in time of war would be perilous and, even if they succeeded in reaching Belgrade safely, their fate there was unknown and potentially full of danger. Nevertheless, he did attempt to secure the interest of the Yugoslav Legation⁸ in

⁷ "Russian Choir of Female Voices," *Church Times*, London, 1st August, 1939, 123.

⁸ "Legation. A resident or nonresident diplomatic mission headed by a minister — that is, by a head of mission of the second diplomatic class. Ordinarily, the

Queen's Gate, London SW7, as well as the League of Nations in helping his Belgrade Nightingales. He went to see the Yugoslav Minister in the first week of September, 1939. In a letter addressed to the ten women, Fr Nicholas reported that he had consulted the Yugoslav Minister who did not recommend them to return home at this present time. Fr Nicholas wrote to Maria Rodzianko, Choir Director,

All I wish to say is that he [the Yugoslav Minister] doesn't see any necessity to return when they are provided for here. As it would be quite impossible to find the money for their Railway Tickets and I do not myself expect that they will be able to receive it from home — the question seems to be settled as far as they are concerned.

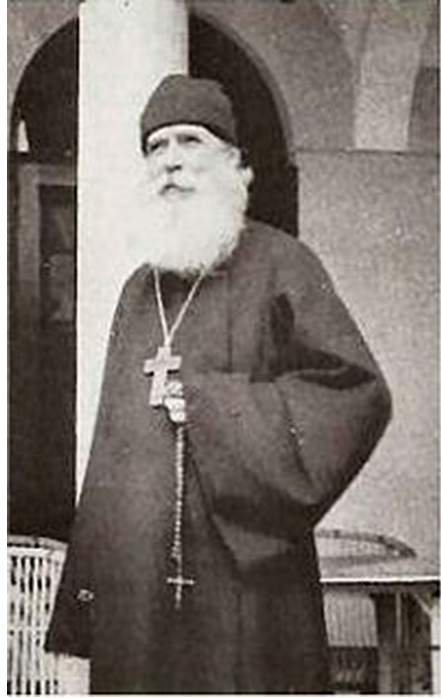


Fig. 2. The Very Reverend Archimandrite Nicholas (Gibbes)

A month later, at the beginning of October, 1939, Fr Nicholas wrote again to the Yugoslav Minister “regarding the ten (10) girls from Jugoslavia, who are now in my care...” giving him

minister's full title is envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. Legations used to be the usual type of diplomatic mission, embassies being exchanged only between major powers. However, since the Second World War they have gone dramatically out of fashion.” — G. R. Berridge and Alan James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke — New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230501348>.

details of their ages, passports, etc. and asking that Fr Nicholas be kept informed of any measures that might be taken for the protection of the young women. He received a reply, telling him that in fact one of the girls had been to see the Minister who informed Fr Nicholas that “the Legation is not, unfortunately, in a position to give financial help to her or to any other of the girls under your care who may wish to return home. All the Legation can do is to help them with their passports.” To another of the girls Fr Nicholas wrote,

The Legation have now plainly written to tell me that they will not give any money for the purchase of tickets, so unless your parents can persuade the Foreign Office in Belgrade to accept some money there and forward it to the Legation in London, I do not know how you can receive it.

A few days later, Fr Nicholas received the copy of a letter sent from Belgrade by Jakov Illashevich, the father of one of the girls, addressed in English to the “Right Honourable Sir High Commission for Refugees,” begging him to give financial assistance to the ten girls stranded in England.

In spring 1939, 10 girls of noble Russian families started from Yugoslavia to London in order to study the English language, to be able, later on, to earn their bread working in English offices here [in Belgrade].

These girls are refugees, come from Russia and have no pecuniary means whatever.

These young girls are boarded by the monasteries, but have no money for the necessary things, as clothing, postal-stamps, note paper, school books and fare for going to church, where they sing, etc. etc. Now because of the actual political situation, it is impossible for their relations to provide them with this money, as: 1/ money is not allowed to be sent out of Jugoslavia, and

2/ many of the relatives are now without work, owing to slack business in Jugoslavia.

Thus, these young girls are truly unfortunate. They are meanwhile, all of them, members-collaborators of the Fraternity,⁹ having helped it in different manners, singing at church-memorials or lectures and so on.

The Fraternity therefore considers it as the most sacred of duties to help these poor girls, by addressing itself to the High Commissioner, who took upon Himself the pecuniary aid to Russian refugees, and to beg Him to appoint a certain monthly sum to each of these girls for the above mentioned necessary expenses.

As the above mentioned young girls were admitted into the above named monasteries on the demand of the former tutor of the Russian Heir Apparent, Son of the late Emperor Nicolas II, now Abbot, Right Reverend Archimandrite Nicolas Gibbes, who knows where for the moment each of the girls can be found, the Fraternity begs the High Commissariat, in case the allowance would be granted, to kindly despatch it to the Right Reverend Archimandrite Nicolas Gibbes, begging him to hand it to the refugee girls according to indication.

Again, in October, 1939, Fr Nicholas wrote to the deputy of the Yugoslav Minister, Mr D. P. Subotić, telling him that two of the girls “are exceedingly bent” on returning to Jugoslavia. Fr Nicholas enquired as to whether it would be possible for their friends to pay in the money for their journey to some Ministry in Belgrade and for the girls to receive their railway tickets from the Le-

⁹ Jakov V. Illashevich (1870–1953) was President of the Fraternity in Memory of Father John of Kronstadt which had been sanctioned by the Patriarch of Serbia in 1931 and also by the Yugoslav Government in 1932. The Fraternity promoted lectures and published books in the spirit of the Orthodox Church, especially about Saint John of Kronstadt: it also, in case of need, undertook the care of the poor and the unfortunate.

gation here, the Legation being indemnified by the sum deposited in Belgrade. In parallel, Maria Alexeyevna Nekludova in Belgrade was making similar enquiries of government departments in Belgrade. Some success was achieved. By the end of October, Mdme Nekludova succeeded in sending a Banker's Order for one of the girls, Irina Shahovskaya, in the sum of more than £4.¹⁰ Her parents had provided the money through a businessman who already had some money deposited in London. As Fr Nicholas pointed out, £4 was not even half the fare from Belgrade to London.¹¹

An historian of train travel, Mark Smith, suggests that perhaps travelling by train from London to Belgrade early in 1940 was not quite so hazardous as Fr Nicholas thought it might be. He writes,

I see no problem with Paris or even Calais to Belgrade. The Germans occupy France [May, 1940], Italy is their ally, the USA isn't in the war, so no B17s over Germany yet, nor does the RAF have any heavy bombers. So, in 1940, everything should be operating fine on the most likely route, Paris–Lausanne–Milan–Zagreb–Belgrade.¹²

With regard to the cost of travel, archivist Peter Thorpe of the National Railway Museum in York makes the following observation:

...for travellers that were very short of money, the advertised through prices between major European capitals may not be relevant. Even in the UK, it was possible to access cheaper than standard fares (group discounts, excursion trains, workmen's fares, etc.) and it may well be the case that by making use of cheaper fares over shorter routes that they may have managed to make the journey at reduced cost.¹³

¹⁰ About £250 in today's values.

¹¹ This was not entirely correct. Fr Nicholas presumably was referring to the published price. However, as today, it was possible to find cheaper fares.

¹² Mark Smith, email to Nicolas Mabin, 1.5.2020.

¹³ Peter Thorpe, email to Nicolas Mabin, 11.5.2020.

The efforts of Fr Nicholas to facilitate the return to Belgrade of most of the girls to Belgrade seem to have petered out by the end of the year. It has to be noted that there seems to have been no suggestion that the A&ECA, as sponsors of the girls, nor indeed Fr Nicholas himself, should pay for the train tickets for the journey back to Yugoslavia. Yet the girls persisted and, as we shall see, some of them, together with their Choir Director, Maria Rodzianko, her husband and baby, succeeded in reaching Belgrade by March, 1940.

The Belgrade Nightingales

So, who exactly were the Belgrade Nightingales? Here is a brief portrait of each of the ten women (at the time referred to almost universally as “girls”). For some I have been able to write about their life after 1940; for others, regretfully, their story stops at 1940. I shall be happy to amend this paper as further information comes to light and I apologise wholeheartedly for any errors which may have crept in.

Julia Buracheck¹⁴

Julia Buracheck was 23 years old when she arrived in England with the Belgrade Nightingales in April, 1939. Julia travelled on a Yugoslav passport which had been issued in Pančevo. Notes from Fr Nicholas suggest that Julia was a student but not a singer. Together with Helen Rodzianko, Julia went to live at St Saviour’s Priory in Great Cambridge Street, Haggerston, London E2. At the onset of World War II Julia, together with Helen Rodzianko, relocated out of London, going to live at St. Mary’s Home,

¹⁴ Regarding the spelling of this surname, I follow the conventional Russian spelling — Burachek, although this name has been spelled as Buratchok and Buratchek in the British and American legal papers. Access to the original spelling in Russian should clarify the matter.

Littlemore, Oxford.¹⁵ Like most of the other women, Julia wrote to Fr Nicholas, asking for his help in returning home, despite the War. She received little sympathy from Fr Nicholas who in October wrote to Julia:

I was very glad that you received a sensible letter from your parents. I entirely agree with all that they say and moreover the Royal Jugoslavian Legation says exactly the same thing. What is the use of asking further? You are closing your eyes to the fact that a terrible war is going on in France and that you will have to cross that country and in addition to that an enemy country as well. It is madness to take such risks without very good reason. You will have endless trouble getting visas and I do not think that you will be able to get money to purchase a ticket. The Legation have now plainly written to tell me that they will not give any money for the purchase of tickets, so unless your parents can persuade the Foreign Office in Belgrade to accept some money there and forward it to the Legation in London, I do not know how you can receive it. Why not take your parents' advice? You are exceptionally well placed, near to Oxford, and not unhappy in your quarters. I therefore cannot understand why you are pitting your own will against an incontestable fate. Why not rather resign yourself to what God has sent? If you do that you will find much benefit will come of it. It is sent to you for a purpose.

However, Julia persisted and by December it was clear that she would be making the risky journey back to Yugoslavia. Then in March, 1940, Fr Nicholas reports to Madame Nekludova in Belgrade: "Irina Shahovskaya and Julia Buratchok are both planning to return home. Irina's arrangements are all made but Julia is continuing her studies. (They will travel together when Julia's expenses arrive.)" Julia indeed did leave for Belgrade and before

¹⁵ For more information on St Saviour's and Littlemore House, see the section on Helen Rodzianko.

the end of April, 1940, was once more resident at Madame Neklu-dova's Kharkov Institute in Belgrade.

Through the chaos of the Second World War in Europe Julia, together with her parents and brother eventually reached the USA. In New York Julia received a university education and went on to have a very successful career with a New York investment bank. Julia was a parishioner of the Ascension Cathedral in Bronx, NY, the Annunciation Church in Flushing, NY, and then the Holy Protection Church in Glen Cove, NY. Julia passed away on March 26, 2005 and was buried next to her parents at the Novo-Diveevo Cemetery, Spring Valley, NY.¹⁶

Irina Demiankova

When Irina arrived in London, she was 27 years old and listed as a singer. Irina travelled on a Nansen passport¹⁷ which had been issued in Belgrade. Accommodation for Irina had been arranged at the House of Charity which was located very centrally at 1, Greek Street.¹⁸ The House of Charity was run by the Community of Saint John the Baptist with its Mother House in Clewer near Windsor, west of London. The main focus of the Sisters in Soho was providing charitable support to the homeless. At the beginning of the Second World War the London House of Charity was requisitioned by the government and the Sisters moved back to

¹⁶ In an email (27th July, 2020) to the present writer, Archpriest Mark Burachek, rector of Our Lady of Kazan Church in Newark, NJ (ROCOR), expressed surprise that his aunt had ever spent a year in England, commenting that his Aunt Julia had never spoken to him about this experience. Indeed, he wondered whether or not the Julia Burachek who was in England from April 1939 to April 1940 in fact was somebody other than his aunt.

¹⁷ Nansen passports, officially stateless persons passports, were internationally recognized refugee travel documents, first issued by the League of Nations to stateless refugees. They became known as "Nansen passports" after their promoter, the Norwegian statesman Fridtjof Nansen.

¹⁸ Greek Street was closely associated with the Greek community which in the 18th century built an Orthodox church in nearby Charing Cross Road.

Clewer. Before the work of the Sisters came to an end, they had expanded their charitable outreach to include

“people who were emigrating to Australia and were awaiting the long sea journey, people who had to come to London for surgery in hospitals, servants who had lost their jobs, teachers between positions and émigrés from Russia and the Balkans — an association which still continues to this day [2020] with the monthly services of the Macedonian Orthodox community in the Chapel [of St Barnabas].”¹⁹

It seems, however, that Irina did not stay with the Sisters of Clewer in Soho Square for long. Soon we find her located at St Anne’s House, 34 Delamere Terrace, Maida Vale, London W2. This was a dependency of the Community of Saint Mary the Virgin at Wantage in Berkshire.²⁰ The Sisters lived at 34 and 35 Delamere Terrace, jointly named ‘St Anne’s’, and for daily prayer they used a chapel in the nearby Anglo-Catholic Church of St Mary Magdalene. The main work of the Sisters was performing charitable work within the parish.

The outbreak of war meant that Irina had to move again — this time far from central London. We do know that Irina went to live in Kent but there is no record of where in Kent. A possibility might be that the Sisters of the Church in nearby Randolph Gardens, Kilburn might have found room for Irina at the enormous 300-bed St Mary Convalescent Home and Orphanage at Stone Road, Broadstairs, Kent.

That Irina was living in a convent in September is clear from a letter written to her by Fr Nicholas. On 2nd October, after congratulating her on her recent Nameday (perhaps Virgin Martyr Irena commemorated on 1/14 September), Fr Nicholas tries to reassure Irina:

¹⁹ “House of St Barnabas”, Wikipedia, last modified April 21, 2020, accessed May 1, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_St_Barnabas.

²⁰ Peter F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: SPCK, 1955), 242–259.

Of course, we are not cut off from Yugoslavia which is still a friendly country. I feel sure that the difficulty is that normally the mails would go through ITALY, which can (in spite of her neutrality) hardly be considered a friendly country!... There is the CENSOR to be reckoned with, that is sure to take a long time!

In your last letter you expressed anxiety about staying in your Convent. It is true that the original arrangement was for six months only, but I expect that the war will have altered that. WHEN the question is raised, I will find you a new place, but it is no use to meet troubles half way!... You will probably find that you are much better off here than if you were in Yugoslavia!...

At the end of October, in a letter to Irina Shahovskaya, Fr Nicholas comments, “The only one that I don’t have much news of is Irina Demiankova, who is in Kent.”

By mid-December, 1939, Fr Nicholas himself is planning to move to Oxford. In a letter to a correspondent in Belgrade, he writes, “Three of the girls are now in Oxford: Helena Rodzianko, Tatiana Jakovleva, and Julia Buratchok. The last does not sing but on her departure, it is proposed to put Irina Demiankova in her place. I shall then have three singers together again.”

It would appear that Irina did not return to Belgrade with the Rodziankos early in 1940. In March, writing to Elizabeth Alexandrovna Narishkin in Oxford about various arrangements needed in connection with the commencement of serving the Divine Liturgy in Oxford, Fr Nicholas states that he will write to “Miss Demiankova” and ask her to come to Oxford at the end of her quarantine. Presumably Irina had been sick and was now recovering. On 6th April, 1940, Fr Nicholas wrote, “Irene Demiankova will go to another Convent in Oxford, which is a sister house of the one she is now in. The Choir is not yet ready to start at Oxford. For one thing Irene Demiankova has not yet moved there and the soprano they have cannot sing alone.”

In 1942 Irina married Vatcheslav I. Ostroumoff. Born in 1899, Vatcheslav was at that time living in Charleville Road, Fulham,

west London and working in road transport. Irina and Vatcheslav went on to have two children, Nathalie and Andrei. In May, 1947 the Ostroumoff family emigrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina. They travelled in third class on the *Highland Chieftain*, a Royal Mail Lines cruise ship, departing on the spring feast of Saint Nicholas of Myra, 9/22 May, 1947. The ship's register, which notes that the whole family was "stateless", records their last address in the UK: 14 St Dunstan's Road, London W6. This was the London clergy house of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, universally known as the "*podvorie*".

Olga Illashevich

Olga Illashevich was the daughter of Iakov V. Illashevich (1870–1953) who was President of the Belgrade Fraternity in Memory of Father John of Kronstadt. She was born on 24th July, 1910 and so when Olga arrived in London, she was 28 years old. Olga travelled on a Nansen passport which had been issued in Belgrade. The choir member was accommodated in an Anglican Convent in Normand Road, Fulham, London W14, the Mother House of the Community of St Katharine of Egypt, an Anglican order of nuns founded in 1879.²¹ Over the years the Sisters of Saint Katharine had undertaken various works of charity concerned with the welfare of young girls, especially orphans. By 1939, the main work at Normand Road was operating a hostel for girls on probation. The location for Olga was most convenient because the *podvorie* (clergy house) and All Saints Chapel of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile were located less than a mile away in St Dunstan's Road, Baron's Court, London W6.

As with the other women from Belgrade, at the outbreak of war, London was evacuated and Olga was sent off to a convent in the countryside. However, less than a week later Fr Nicholas wrote to the Choir Director, Maria Rodzianko, reporting that,

²¹ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 455–457.

“All the girls are still away except Olga Illashevich who returned a few days ago. Whether permanently or only temporarily I really cannot say.”

By the 27th October, 1939, Fr Nicholas was pondering the possibility of restarting the services at the Chapel of the Ascension, despite the threat of German bombing of London. Writing again to Maria Rodzianko, he says, “I am wondering whether it will be possible to fix up Tatiana Jakovleva somewhere in London. She very much wants to come. If she does that will make two (with Olga Illiashevitch). These with Ananina²² and Panaevna would be four.” Soon after this, the possibility of serving in Oxford arose and all further thoughts of returning to the Chapel of the Ascension in London were abandoned.

In the same letter, Fr Nicholas writes more about Olga: “Illiashevitch didn’t like the country so well as London and, with the permission of the Mother Superior, has come back here. I had a long talk with the Rev. Mother and she said that she was glad to have her back in London.”

When the possibility of relocating to Oxford emerged in November, 1940, Fr Nicholas appears to have approached Olga about transferring to Oxford. Olga politely declined:

How difficult for me to refuse your kind offer and how thankful I am to you for all what you have done for me. Only my poverty obliges me to do what I don’t want. I am very sorry, that now I shall not be able to help you in a choir, what I wished sincerely... but London’s and Oxford’s future are unknown to us.

It would appear that Fr Nicholas was none too impressed with her decision and insisted that she leaves London. Olga wrote again to Fr Nicholas on 6th December, 1939:

I would like to ask you please not to be angry with me... The abbess asked me to write to you and to ask you, on my behalf and

²² See separate section below on Antonina V. Ananina.

hers, to allow me to remain here [in London] for Christmas. She asked me why you want to send me away from here? Her brother is serving in one of the “war offices” and told her that London is the safest place, as it is well protected from aerial attacks. She said that if it really gets dangerous, she will send me away *immediately* to Tankerton [Kent], where our nuns are currently living. The abbess herself told me that she would be sorry to send me there without there being an express need, since the only people there are old ladies and the infirm, whereas all the “visitors” have already fled from there. There is no-one to talk to there, since they are all elderly and are sitting around with their groups of friends, such that you see them only at table. I am simply in despair, as there are no opportunities whatsoever to practice the language there. In my view, Tankerton is not one bit safer than London, and therefore I would like to ask you not to send me away now. My father has nothing against my being in London. I wrote to him saying that if it gets dangerous, the abbess will send me away from here.

I am being helped in my lessons by a woman who lives here. She even wanted to pay for courses for me, should these get going. I have been promised work up until Christmas time, sewing dresses, and I hope to be able to earn something. In addition to this, Foka Feodorovich [Volkovsky; Choir Director at the Russian Church] is paying me a bit for my singing. All of these things combined compel me to ask you categorically to allow me to stay here.

In a draft of a letter to be sent in December, 1939 to somebody called Tatiana in Belgrade, Fr Nicholas wrote about Olga:

With the others [Olga] was evacuated from London into the provinces but — without consulting anyone — she returned to London. In answer to my enquiry she said that she had not been so happy in the country as she had been in London. I offered to find her another Convent, but this she refused. I have warned

her of the possibility of danger by remaining in London — even if, up to the present, London has been safe. The responsible Ministers of the Crown have so frequently uttered warnings (see enclosed extract from the Prime Minister's speech) that I cannot take the responsibility of keeping any of the Choir in London. I wish therefore, in advance, to disclaim all responsibility for anything that may happen to Olga Illashevich. I shall be very glad if you will be so kind as to inform her father to this effect.

It is not clear whether this letter was actually sent. However, Fr Nicholas did write again on the subject, this time to Madame Nekludova in Belgrade on 12th March, 1940. He reiterated that Olga had refused to be located outside London and that he disclaimed all responsibility for Olga if anything happened to her as a result of being in the London Blitz, together with a request to tell her father the same.

Indeed, in 1940 Fr Nicholas “washed his hands” of any responsibility for Olga. He wrote to Madame Nekludova again in April, 1940 and his irritation, bordering on anger, comes through clearly:

I must also tell you that Olga Illiashevitch has chosen the Rev. Father Michael Polsky²³ as her Father Confessor. I therefore consider that she has *ipso facto* become a parishioner of a parish other than my own. I offer no objection to her doing as she prefers, but I cannot receive into my choir or take under my protection the ‘spiritual children’ of any other priest or parish. I therefore propose to hand over the care and charge of Olga Illashevich to the Reverend Father Michael Polsky. I have not yet spoken to Olga on this subject. I would prefer you to write to her and tell her of this transfer. Please inform Olga at once and let me know as soon as you have done so. She will then be excluded from my organization. It would perhaps be as well to make this

²³ Archpriest Michael Polsky (d. 1960), rector of the London parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile from 1938 to 1948.

question clear to them all. They are all quite free to do as they like but whoever is their spiritual father will have to undertake the responsibility and work of looking after them.

Olga remained in London throughout the war and in March, 1940 was granted permission to remain in the UK indefinitely, becoming a British citizen in 1951. The present writer first met Olga Illashevich in the early 1970's when she was living in Notting Hill Gate, west London. Olga had already retired from her work as a shorthand typist in an insurance company in the City. Olga remained a faithful member of the Choir and of the Sisterhood of Saint Xenia at the London Russian Orthodox Church in Exile until her repose in 1987 at the age of 76. She is buried in Gunnersbury Cemetery, London W3.



Fig. 3. July, 1968: Choir of the London Russian Orthodox Church in Exile singing a pannikhida (memorial service) for the martyred Imperial Family at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, London SW1. Second from the left is Olga Illashevich, a Belgrade Nightingale. Next to Olga is Countess Olga Bobrinskaya and conducting the choir is Choir Director, Antonina V. Ananina, who also sang in the choir for Fr Nicholas in 1939. Behind the Countess in a Russian shirt is Count Nikolai Tolstoy.

Tatiana Jakovleva

Tatiana was born in Russia in 1914. Travelling to England on a Nansen Passport in 1939, Tatiana was 24 years old when she arrived in London. There, together with Sofia Kvachadze, she was accommodated at the Anglican Community of St Peter in Kilburn, north London.²⁴ Tatiana was a member of the Choir. In September, 1939 both Sofia and Tatiana were evacuated from London and re-settled at the Community of Saint Peter, Maybury Hill, near Woking in Surrey. In October, Fr Nicholas toyed with the idea of bringing Tatiana back to London in order to re-start the Chapel of the Ascension project. However, by December Tatiana managed to secure for herself accommodation in Oxford, not in a convent but in a private home which meant that she could live in Oxford and progress her studies. In March, 1940 the Home Office informed the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations that Tatiana need not apply for further permission to remain in the UK while she was unable to return to Yugoslavia. By August, 1940, she had moved to Kilburn (north west London) where she had obtained a job which would allow her to attend the courses she had wanted.

In 1943 Tatiana married George Knupffer. George and Tatiana had three children, Michael, Marina and Alexei. Living in Chiswick, west London, the Knupffer family were devoted members



Fig. 4. Tatiana Knupffer, née Jakovleva

²⁴ For more information on this Anglican community, see the section on Sofia Kvachadze.

of the London parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile. For many years George served on the Parish Council. George was well known for his right-wing views, publishing many pamphlets about world politics and, in 1963, a book entitled *The Struggle for World Power* (London: Plain-Speaker Publishing Co.). George died in 1990, aged 82. Tatiana passed away twelve years later in 2002 at the age of 87. She was survived by three children and four grandchildren. Both George and Tatiana were laid to rest at Chiswick New Cemetery, London W4.

Sofia Kvachadze

Sofia V. Kvachadze (always known as ‘Sonia’) was born on 10th November, 1908. When she arrived in England in 1939, Sonia was already 30, making her the oldest of the Belgrade Nightingales. Like most of the other group members, Sonia was stateless and travelled on a Nansen passport. She was not a singer and did not claim to be, nor was she a student. The archives suggest that she had some competence in painting of icons but, from Sonia’s point-of-view, perhaps this capability was overstated. It is unclear where she was living in London initially. It was probably at the Mother House of the Community of Saint Peter, Mortimer Place, Kilburn, north west London. This Community of Anglican nuns (most of whom were ordained deaconesses) had been founded in 1861. War damage to the Kilburn location subsequently forced the Community to seek new headquarters in Woking, Surrey.²⁵ However, not long after arriving at St. Peter’s, Sonia appears to have taken up new accommodation at St. Mary’s, Burlington Lane, Chiswick, west London, a convent of The Society of St. Margaret, another Anglican order.²⁶ The St. Mary’s Convent and Nursing Home is still located in Chiswick, just over a mile away from the newly-built Lon-

²⁵ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 385–393.

²⁶ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 336–355.

don Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in Harvard Road, London W4.

At the end of August, Sonia is mentioned in a letter to Fr Nicholas, sent by the Choir Director, Maria Rodzianko. At that point Maria and her husband were arranging to move back to London from Cornwall. If that were to happen, then Maria would be able to do more with the choir but she needed a babysitter. “I thought about Sonia Kvachadze, but she is so busy in her Convent that I am really afraid that it will be hardly possible. I do not think they will allow her to be absent for long periods as would be the case, for instance, with our concert in Hove [in East Sussex, about 50 miles from London].” With the onset of World War II, the Rodziankos did not move back to London and, of course, the Hove concert was cancelled.

As part of the evacuation of London, Sonia then moved to Woking (about 30 miles from London) and lived at the Community of Saint Peter, Maybury Hill. Together with Tatiana Jakovleva who was also living at St Peter’s, Sonia wrote a number of times to Fr Nicholas, expressing their unhappiness in their current situation. They felt that they should be paid for their work in the Convent: “we fear to be left in the convent without a penny... We are both able to work, hence it is much more pleasant for us to do paid work than use charity.” Like all the other wom-



Fig. 5. 1977: At the Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, Emperor’s Gate, London SW7, Archbishop Anthony (Bartochevitch) holds the cross; to the left is Sofia Kvachadze

en from Belgrade, Sonia was concerned about obtaining funds in order to return to Belgrade. Fr Nicholas was not encouraging in this regard.

In March, 1940 she wrote yet again to Fr Nicholas, expressing again her unhappiness, especially with the departure of her close friend, Tatiana Jakovleva, who had left the Convent in December and had found accommodation in Oxford where Tatiana could continue with her studies:

Please forgive me for writing to you again and troubling you with a question. I have again ended up in an inconvenient situation in the monastery. Since Tania left, they are constantly putting guests who come to the monastery for some time, in my room to sleep. Sometimes for one night, sometimes for two or more. This is extremely unpleasant, all the more so given that these people are complete strangers to me. The main issue is that I can never be sure when I will be alone and how often these guests will be coming.

The last mention of Sonia in the papers of Fr Nicholas was in March, 1940 when the Home Office wrote to say that Sofia Kvachadze was able to remain in the UK indefinitely.

In fact, Sonia remained in London for the rest of her life until her repose in 1990. The present writer made her acquaintance in the early 1970s by which time Sonia had retired and was living in one of the retirement homes run by the Russian Red Cross²⁷ in Bedford Park, Chiswick, London W4. Sonia remained a stalwart of the London parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile and was an active member of the Sisterhood of Saint Xenia.

²⁷ Daniel Harold, “Russian Exiles in Britain, 1918–1926: The Politics and Culture of Russia Abroad” (Honours Dissertation, Department of Humanities, Northumbria University, 2015); available online — <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/media/7245181/daniel-harold-russian-exiles-in-britain.pdf> (accessed July 31, 2020). The Russian Red Cross was one of the most successful organizations in terms of coordinating the community in London. The RRC was initially located in the former embassy, before moving to the ‘Russian House’. They often held bazaars to raise funds for refugees and to support the Church.

After her repose at the age of 81 on 17th September, 1990, the earthly remains of Sofia Kvachadze were interred in Chiswick Cemetery, London W4.

Marina Liamina

Marina Liamina was born on 16th July, 1916. Being a stateless refugee, the 22 years-old Marina travelled to London from Belgrade in April, 1939 on her Nansen Passport which had been issued in Belgrade. Marina was not a member of the choir; she was designated as a student. Together with Nina Semenova, Marina was accommodated at first by the Anglican Sisters of the Church in Randolph Gardens, Kilburn, London NW6 where the nuns managed a large orphanage.²⁸ At the outbreak of World War II Marina, together with Nina Semenova, went to stay at the School of St. Michael in West Grinstead.²⁹

From West Grinstead Marina and Nina wrote numerous letters to Fr Nicholas, imploring his help in arranging for their return to their homes in Belgrade. As mentioned in the section on Nina Semenova, they even made a visit to the Royal Yugoslav Le-

²⁸ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 439–446.

²⁹ Founder of the community at East Grinstead, Fr John Mason Neale (1818–1866) was a Church of England clergyman who was a great scholar and a keen observer of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He was the principal founder in 1864 of the Eastern Churches Association, the forerunner of the Anglican & Eastern Churches Association. Among many books authored by Fr Neale were *A History of the Holy Eastern Church* (1847) and *Hymns of the Eastern Church* (1865). In 1855, Fr Neale founded the Sisters of Saint Margaret in East Grinstead. The main vocation of the Sisterhood was to nurse the sick poor in the community and later they established an orphanage, as well as St. Michael's School in nearby West Grinstead. In 1865, a year before his death, Fr Neal presided over the laying of the foundation stone of St. Margaret's Convent, now a Grade 1 listed building. The Russian Imperial Embassy chaplain, Archpriest Eugene Popoff, participated in these ceremonies (wearing vestments). Fr Eugene, Embassy Chaplain from 1842 until his death in 1875, is remembered for many achievements, not least being the building of the Imperial Embassy Chapel in Welbeck Street, London which had been opened but a few months before his visit to East Grinstead.

gation in London, asking for financial assistance. They felt very lonely at St. Michael's. In October, Marina wrote to Fr Nicholas,

As for our life here, there is no change for the better, we are quite alone the whole day & owing to this there is no use in our staying here. As we know that all arrangements for visas may take very long time, we should like to take advantage of the rest of our staying here & make it as profitable as possible. We should be most grateful to you if you would do what you intended to improve our conditions here. The only person with whom we could speak a few words in the evenings, a Lady-Cook, is leaving this house now & our isolation will be complete. We are still not allowed to be in the company of 10 Mistresses who live in this house. We are desperate at the thought of quite useless wasting of time....

Fr Nicholas took it upon himself to try to get the situation of the girls improved. The incident encompasses a brief insight to the class prejudices of the time. He wrote a remarkably sensitive appeal to the Mother Superior at East Grinstead:

I have had a letter from one of my spiritual children who is now living with you and I don't quite know what to do about it. It is rather breaking their confidence to show it to you, but, on the other hand, it expresses the "feelings" of both of them so well that I think it would be best for you to see it. I am therefore enclosing it (in confidence) for your information.

Obviously, the girls are very sensitive and in a great establishment such as yours, they feel rather "lost." It is the usual feeling of all little boys and girls going to a great public school for the first time. For although these girls are actually grown up, circumstances have placed them in an analogous position. They do not understand and it is impossible to explain to them what a "teaching staff" means in England. How individually they are all

kindness and simplicity, collectively they are very conservative and reserved and would not like, most probably would resent, 'having strangers around.'

The chief difficulty seems to arise from the fact that they are now doing work which classes them with the servants, whereas in birth and education they really belong to the higher staff. All the girls that are with me are from noble families and these, as most of the others, have already matriculated at the University.

May I leave it with you to decide whether any adjustments are possible? If it is not, you can advise me accordingly and I will try to make some other arrangement for them and this correspondence need never come to light. I am very much afraid to impose on your kindness in any way. It was most awfully good of you to take them in at a moment's notice and I was more than grateful for your quick response to our trouble at that time of great difficulty. The girls are warm in their praise of all the physical care that has been taken of them since they have been under your roof, and are suffering only from this terrible sense of loneliness. At first, I took little notice of their plaint, hoping that time itself would adjust matters but, since it has not, I am venturing to write you this letter. Asking your holy prayers, I remain very sincerely in Our Lord...

We do not have a copy of the reply from Mother Superior but on 4th November, Fr Nicholas wrote to her again:

I am indeed most grateful for the very kind way in which you have received my request. I was convinced that it was all an oversight and therefore ventured to bring it to your notice. I am very glad that I did so for I am sure that the girls will now be quite happy.

Despite the improvement in living conditions at St Michael's School, the two girls persisted in their quest for a return to Bel-

grade. In December Marina wrote to G. J. Kuhlmann, Deputy High Commissioner of The League of Nations in London. As a result, on 19th December, 1939, Mr Kuhlmann wrote to Fr Nicholas. Fr Nicholas replied by return:

With regard to Miss Liamina's letter, a copy of which is enclosed in yours of the 15th, I can only say that I was quite unaware of her intention to apply to you direct. It is however a fact that the girls who came here from Yugoslavia did not all intend to remain the same length of time. These periods varied between six months and two years. Only one elected to stay so short a time as six months: that was Miss Liamina. I state this to show that her decision to return home is not due to any kind of panic or caprice but in accordance with her predetermined plan.

I remember very well your saying that there were no League funds available to assist the girls individually, and I have conveyed this information to them. I must also state that I do not think that she is being pressed to leave the Convent where she is now staying or that it would be impossible to find her another. She and Miss Semenoff are not particularly happy where they are although I succeeded in improving the conditions in which they are living and they are now not in any way "unbearable".

At the same time, I know that in her particular case circumstances do call for her return home and it is for this reason that she is making such determined efforts to accomplish her end. Personally, I shall be very sorry when she goes because she is a singer,³⁰ but I do not feel that I can allow this to stand in her way. I am wondering whether you might be able to influence assistance to her from sources other than the League? I fully realize how difficult that is thought naturally, especially at the present time.

³⁰ This may have been stretching the truth since notes made by Fr Nicholas in August, 1939, indicate that Marina was not a singer.

Despite all the difficulties — war, a dangerous crossing of the English Channel, and the lack of funds — Marina reached Belgrade early in 1940. In a letter of 25th April, 1940, Madame Nekludova reported to Fr Nicholas, “Marina Liamina comes to the [Kharkov Institute] hall of residence on the days when she comes to Belgrade for lectures... Marina already has English lessons; she has to help her aunt, with whom she lives and who is quite like a mother figure to her.”

Helen Rodzianko

Helen Rodzianko was 18 years of age when she arrived in England in April, 1939. Like most of the other women from Belgrade, she held a Nansen passport. As the *South Slav Herald* of June, 1939 had noted, Helen was the granddaughter of the last President of the Russian *Duma*, Mikhail Rodzianko (1859–1924). She was the sixth of eight children and the first to be born outside Russia after the family fled to Serbia in 1920.

In London Helen was accommodated at St Saviour’s Priory which was located in Great Cambridge Street, Haggerston, London E2. This was a daughter house of the Society of Saint Margaret.³¹ The East London branch house had been established in 1868. In addition to their life of prayer, the sisters served the very poor local communities with an array of charitable works. Initially, it must have been a shock for Helen to live in such a deprived area.

At the onset of World War II Helen relocated out of London, going to live at St. Mary’s Home, Littlemore, Oxford. Previously known as Lawn Upton House, in the 19th century the land on which it stood had belonged to John Henry Newman (d. 1890), later Saint John Newman of the Roman Catholic Church, who at that time was Anglican priest of Littlemore. In 1836 he caused to be built the nearby church of Saint Mary and Saint Nicholas which became a centre of Anglo-Catholicism. St. Mary’s Home

³¹ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 336–355. See footnote 29 above.



Fig. 6. 1944: Helen Rapp (née Rodzianko)

was one of numerous foundations of the Community of St. John the Baptist, Clewer, Windsor, Berkshire. The Community took over Lawn Upton House from 1929 to 1953 and established there a home for ‘wayward girls.’

Late in September, 1939, Fr Nicholas was asking Helen to return to him the keys to Saint Philip’s Church and choir music books. In fact, Helen had accidentally left them behind at St Saviour’s in east London. Eventually the items were returned to Fr Nicholas by Helen in a parcel sent from Littlemore. Thanking Helen, Fr Nicholas wrote:

I am so glad that you have settled down in Oxford. You are very lucky to be in such an advantageous place. I hope that you will make good progress in your lessons. If you want any help or advice

in your studies you will be able to consult Mr. Subotić, the Inspector of Education, of the Yugoslav Legation, who is in Oxford...

The arrival of Helen and another choir member, Tatiana Jakovleva, in Oxford had prompted the local Russian community to invite Fr Nicholas to relocate from London and go to live in Oxford in order to serve the Divine Liturgy there, supported by at least some of his Belgrade Nightingales. Late in December, 1939 he reported to a correspondent in Belgrade:

Three of the girls are now in Oxford: Helena Rodzianko, Tatiana Jakovleva, and Julia Buratchok. The last does not sing but on her departure, it is proposed to put Irina Demiankoff in her place. I shall then have three singers together again. This has inspired some of the Russians living in Oxford to try and organize Orthodox services in that City. Arrangements are now complete. When they are quite concluded, the Church organisation which we had in London will be moved to Oxford.

There is a glimpse of Helen in a rather critical letter written by Elizabeth Alexandrovna Narishkin (d. 1945) who was helping Fr Nicholas to set up the Orthodox community in Oxford. Elizabeth was rather concerned by the lack of sheet music for the choir. "It is extraordinary how extremely unmusical both Helen and Tania are, and although they know the tune, they cannot stick to it without music."

Helen's daughter, Zina, recalls,

Every Saturday evening, Father Nicholas would show up at her college gates, his beard spreading over the chest of his cassock, and a long staff in his hand. The Belgrade Nightingales had scattered and he needed to know if she would be in church tomorrow, as by now she was all that remained of his choir.³²

³² Rohan, "Family Article," <http://zinarohan.squarespace.com/family-article/>.

In Oxford Helen studied English and then went on to graduate with a first-class degree in Russian at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Helen had become President of the Russian Society in Oxford and it was in that capacity that she met her future husband, at that time also a student of Russian at Oxford. This was George Rapp (d. 1982), a Jewish refugee who had escaped from Germany in 1935, only to be interned as an enemy alien by the British in Australia, nine months into the Second World War. By 1944 George had been released, returned to England, and married Helen in a civil ceremony at Willesden Town Hall, north west London.

In the 1950's Helen completed a doctorate at the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies and returned to Oxford to teach Russian. In 1962, together with Frank Seeley (d. 2000), Helen published a best-selling Russian language studies textbook. In 1960 Helen joined the BBC as a producer of arts programmes for Radios 3 and 4. Helen left the BBC in 1969 and became responsible for the arts curriculum radio broadcasts of the newly established Open University. It was at this time that Helen separated from her husband.

Helen died in 1998 at the age of 78. Her funeral was held at the Russian Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens (Moscow Patriarchate). She was buried at the Islington and St Pancras Cemetery in East Finchley, north London. Helen was survived by two daughters, Miriam Newman (d. 2000), the author Zina Rohan, and five grandchildren.

Nina Semenova

Born on 29th July, 1916, Nina was 22 years old when she arrived in England in April, 1939. Nina Semenova was a student but did not sing in the choir. Nina held a Yugoslav passport which had been issued in Belgrade. Her accommodation on arrival was provided by the Sisters of the Church in Randolph Gardens, Kilburn. This was the Mother House of the Sisters of the Church, an enormously successful Anglican order which operated dozens of or-

phanages and schools both in the UK and overseas. In 1939 the Randolph Road site was both a convent and a large orphanage. A year later it was destroyed by Nazi bombing and the Sisterhood relocated the Mother House to Ham Common in Surrey.³³ As we saw with Sofia Kvachadze, the Choir Director, Maria Rodzianko, was casting around for a prospective babysitter. Nina Semenova was her preferred choice. Writing to Fr Nicholas at the end of August, Maria said,

Nina Semenova, I think, is the only person who, if she is in London, will be in a position to do it, as she is, more or less, free in her place. I had written to her to ask whether she would do it for me, if you find it possible to retain her in London. She replied to me at once that she is very glad to undertake that responsibility.

However, with the outbreak of war and the evacuation of London, Nina, together with another member of the group, Marina Liamina, had to relocate to St Michael's School in West Grinstead, Sussex,³⁴ some 50 miles from London. Nina and Marina were fervent in their desire to return to Yugoslavia and sent many letters to Fr Nicholas, imploring his help. In October, 1939 they even went to see Mr Subotić at the Yugoslav Delegation in London, seeking his help in facilitating their return.

In November, 1939, through the intervention of Madame Nekludova in Belgrade, Fr Nicholas was able to send Nina a remittance to the value of about £120 in today's values which he had received via the London bank account of a Russian businessman based in Belgrade. A letter in November from Helen Rodzianko to Fr Nicholas mentioned Nina: "We are still very happy in here [in Oxford]; we try to study as much as possible and hope to see soon Nina Semenova and Maria Liamina. We wonder whether it is possible to put them somewhere in Oxford?" A month lat-

³³ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 439–446.

³⁴ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 336–355. See footnote 29 above.

er, Fr Nicholas responded to a letter from the G. J. Kuhlmann, Deputy High Commissioner at the League of Nations. The letter is mostly concerned with Maria Liamina. However, Fr Nicholas says about Nina, “[Marina Liamina] and Miss Semenova are not particularly happy where they are although I succeeded in improving the conditions in which they are living and they are now not in any way “unbearable”.

Writing about Nina and also about Marina Liamina in December, Fr Nicholas expresses his frustration with girls: “They are working in one of the very best schools in England and I consider them very fortunate to have this experience though I am sure they do not yet quite realize its value.” He goes on to say, “They were here [at the *podvorie* in west London] on Tuesday to arrange their papers for travel and they informed me that, since the day previous, efforts had been made to render their position [at the school] happier and they spoke, for the first time, with regret at the possibility of their having to leave England soon.”³⁵

In any event, Nina and Marina were successful in obtaining the necessary papers for return and early in 1940, despite the fact that Europe was at war, and regardless of the great risk of crossing the English Channel, they succeeded in returning to their home in Belgrade. We learn from a letter (25th April, 1940) sent by Madame Nekludova to Fr Nicholas that Nina was once more living at the Kharkov Institute in Belgrade.

Irina Shahovskaya

Our first introduction to Irina Shahovskaya was in the English-language *South Slav Herald* of June, 1939 (see above), which reported that Irina was a princess and that she would be singing soprano at the Russian Church in London. In 1939 Irina was 22 years old. As with most of the women from Belgrade, Irina held

³⁵ See the section on Marina Liamina as to exactly what caused their unhappiness at St Michael’s School.

a Nansen passport. On arrival in London Irina became a guest of the Society of the Sisters of Bethany at Lloyd Square, Clerkenwell, London WC1, an Anglican religious order founded in 1866.³⁶ The main activity at Lloyd Square was the holding of religious retreats for women, as well as conducting works of mercy and charity in the exceedingly poor neighbouring districts. The community had also become famed for its School of Embroidery and perhaps Irina would have helped with this activity. The Community of the Sisters of Bethany is still in existence but the Lloyd Square site was closed in 1962.

Doubtless, the Sisters of Bethany would have told Irina about a visit made to their convent back in November, 1937 by the Kursk-Root Icon, which was brought to them by Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) of Paris, Fr Nicholas Gibbes and Fr Michael Polsky. There was a *moleben* (service of intercession) in the Convent chapel before the Icon was taken by the visiting Russian Orthodox to the nearby hospital of St Barnabas where the Convent Chaplain, Fr Bartlett, was a patient. Together with other patients and nurses, he was blessed with the Icon.³⁷

With the outbreak of World War II, Irina was sent to Bournemouth, Hampshire, a seaside resort, about 120 miles from London. There she lived at the House of Bethany which was partly a convent and partly a guest house where retreats were held. However, she was deeply unhappy there and wrote several times to Fr Nicholas, asking for his help with enabling her return to Belgrade.

At the end of October, 1939, Fr Nicholas wrote to her in no uncertain terms, instructing her not to wish for something which, in his view was, unachievable. Having consulted with the Office of the League of Nations, he assured her that in the present circumstances it was impossible to transfer money from Belgrade to England in order to fund rail travel. He said that the Deputy

³⁶ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 405–412.

³⁷ John Salter, “The Sisters of Bethany and the Eastern Churches,” *Eastern Churches Newsletter: A Publication of Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, New Series, No. 5 (Autumn 1977): 22–25: 23. Salter wrongly suggests that the visiting Archbishop was Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgiadis).

Commissioner at the League of Nations, as well as the Yugoslav Minister, were united in their advice against making the journey. In any event she was “fortunate to be in Bournemouth, which is always considered to be one of the finest of the English resorts.” Fr Nicholas then responded to yet another letter from Irina in which she said that her mother and her sister were demanding that she return to Belgrade. They had heard that the Rodziankos were planning to return to Belgrade and they instructed Irina that she should travel with them. Fr Nicholas agreed that, if such was their wish, then she had better obey. He also was able to give Irina some good news. Madame Nekludova had arranged for money to be sent to Fr Nicholas for onward transmission to Irina. It came from the London bank account of a Russian businessman, in today’s values about £250.

Irina did return safely to her family in Belgrade sometime after March, 1940. In an uncharacteristically critical note to Fr Nicholas (25th April, 1940) Madame Nekludova comments, “Only Irina Shahovskaya rushed to return home, not having learnt everything that is necessary to get a good place and I do not approve of that.”

Ludmilla Vedrinskaya

Ludmilla Sergievna Vedrinskaya was born in Voinovka, nowadays the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia on 7th January, 1918.³⁸ In 1939 Ludmilla Vedrinskaya was 21 years old. She held a Yugoslavian passport. Notes from Fr Nicholas suggest that Ludmilla was a student but that she could not sing, and therefore did not form part of his choir.

On arriving in London, Ludmilla went to stay at St Andrew’s House, Tavistock Crescent, Westbourne Park, London W11.³⁹ However, in June, 1939 Ludmilla fell ill, having to undergo

³⁸ This is her birth date in UK records. However, Ludmilla’s gravestone denotes the date of birth as 24th January, 1919.

³⁹ Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 457–462.

an operation in hospital. She then went to Bournemouth for recuperation at the Herbert Convalescent Home in Bournemouth. On 29th June Ludmilla left the convalescent home and went to live with the Community of the Epiphany in Truro.

Some 250 miles from London, the Convent in Truro, Cornwall, was home to the Community of the Epiphany, an order of Anglican nuns. The sisters were involved in pastoral and educational work, the care of Truro Cathedral and nearby St Paul's Church, as well as church needlework. It is likely that Ludmilla would have earned her keep by contributing to the department for church embroidery.

In September, 1939, the Anglican Chaplain of the Convent suggested to Ludmilla that she should partake of the Anglican Holy Communion, given that she was cut off from her own Church. Fr Nicholas responded that he could not give his blessing for this, albeit very reluctantly. He explains that “although it is true that cases of inter-communion have been allowed, it is still (unhappily) not permitted in our branch [sic] of the Holy Orthodox Church.” Fr Nicholas does not question the efficacy of the Anglican Holy Communion. Instead, he writes, “So that even to obtain for you such an inestimable advantage, I cannot do as he [the Anglican Chaplain] suggests, much as I should like to...”

By happy chance the Choir Director, Maria Rodzianko, was living at Bodmin, about 30 miles from Truro. In October, 1939, Maria wrote to Fr Nicholas:

...Yesterday Ludmilla Vedrinskaya was here to see me and we had a very nice afternoon. She is evidently very happy in the Epiphany Home [and] has made on me a good impression. She has changed for the better very much indeed. I hope to visit her there sometimes. I like so much the Convent's atmosphere. She has told me about your letter and about the Communion problem. We are looking forward for your or Father Michael's visit. There will be a church and an English choir can sing the whole of our liturgy in English.

In a return letter, Fr Nicholas said that he had had a nice letter from “Vedrinskaya”.

...What a good thing we sent her to Truro, even against her will. She seems now to like it very much and she herself is certainly improved. Possibly the good food and good air have strengthened her morale as well as her body. Very often they go together.

Ludmilla received permission to stay in the UK permanently in March, 1940. Thereafter, the next we learn of Ludmilla is that on 5th July, 1944, in High Wycombe, Berkshire, Ludmilla married an American soldier, Boris Maximoff. Seven months later, in February, 1945, Ludmilla set sail for the USA aboard the US military ship, the *Thomas H. Barry*. The ship’s passenger records note that at that time Ludmilla was 27, a housewife, who was able to read and write not only English and Russian but also Serbo-Croat and French.⁴⁰ Ludmilla arrived in Boston in March, 1945 and went to live in Chicago and subsequently in Dayton, Ohio, where a city directory of 1946 has her listed under her maiden name as a professional translator.⁴¹ In September,



Fig. 7. Memorial Cross at the grave of Ludmilla Maximoff (née Vedrinskaya), Novo-Diveevo Cemetery, New York

1977, Ludmilla passed away in Spring Valley, Rockland, NY and was buried in Novo-Diveevo Russian Orthodox Cemetery. She was survived by her husband, Boris (d. 2009) and three children, Sergius, Nicholas and Catherine.

⁴⁰ “Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820–1963,” [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006, accessed May, 2020.

⁴¹ “U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995,” [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011, accessed May, 2020.

Maria Rodzianko

Maria Vasilievna Rodzianko was not one of the Belgrade Nightingales. She had arrived in England in 1938 with her husband, Vladimir. However, Maria was appointed by Fr Nicholas to be the Choir Director of the Belgrade Nightingales and it would be remiss not to record her part in the project.

Maria (née Kulyubaeva), the daughter of a priest, married Vladimir Rodzianko in 1938 in Belgrade. Vladimir had graduated from the theology department of the University of Belgrade in 1937. He and Maria then moved to England where Vladimir began working on a dissertation for the University of London. At the same time, Vladimir travelled widely in England, speaking to various groups about the Orthodox Church under the auspices of the Fellowship of Saint Alban & Saint Sergius. After their arrival in London in 1938, Maria and Vladimir had their first child, also called Vladimir.

An anonymous document in the archives of Fr Nicholas records that “The Choir Mistress [of the Belgrade Nightingales] is the talented Madame Maria Vasilievna Rodzianko, who not only herself possesses a remarkably pure contralto voice, but also conducts the choir with great ability and feeling.”

At the beginning of 1939 Maria with her baby son went to live in Bodmin, Cornwall at the home of Fr A. C. Canner, Anglican priest of the parish of Tintagel. Meanwhile, her husband was based in London, living at the home of the great friends of Fr Nicholas, Prince and Princess Vladimir Galitzine, but travelling outside of London extensively. Then in July, 1939 he went to live with his wife and son in Cornwall.

The Rodziankos had been planning to return to London as a family: there was a suggestion that they would live in a guesthouse in Belsize Park (north London) but the outbreak of World War II put paid to that idea. In fact, the Rodziankos determined to return to Belgrade as urgently as possible. Evidently Maria had written to the choir members, telling them of these plans. This upset Fr Nicholas because he thought that

there was little prospect of that dream becoming a reality. On 9th September, 1939, he wrote rather sharply to Maria:

As it would be quite impossible to find the money for their Railway Tickets and I do not myself expect that they will be able to receive it from home — the question seems to be settled as far as they are concerned. Therefore, do NOT make any suggestions to the contrary. Your letters to them on this subject have had a very disturbing effect. It is quite useless to suggest their going back to Yugoslavia unless you have the money for their Railway Tickets.

Nearly a month later Maria replied:

Thank you so much for your last letter. I was really sorry to hear that my letters had disturbed so much the girls. But I must say that some of them had written to me before I ever dreamed to advise them to be ready to go to Yugoslavia. They were very anxious what will happen with them and Liamina and Semenova expressed their earnest desire to return back to Yugoslavia. I have written to you but you were not able to answer me quickly and I thought it would be unkind not to discuss this question with the girls themselves, for I thought we will succeed in getting the visas and I could imagine what would the girl's parents ask me in that case. So, I decided to write to them, asking them whether they want to go to Yugoslavia and whether they have any means of going there, and whether their parents are in a position to help them with this and so on. I never advised them to go, and only asked them, saying what they have to do in case they want to go. Of course, now it is evident no one [sic] of us is able to go and therefore everything must remain it was.

I am really sorry for all the trouble I made by my letters, but I did not think it will happen.

Unfortunately, Volodia has not got the B.B.C. job we don't know why. It was of course disappointing, but I hope he will be able to work on [unclear] Farm, or doing gardening near Bodmin.

To which Fr Nicholas replied:

I have wondered many times how Volodia is getting on as a “farmer's boy”. (There is a very celebrated song of that name: does he now sing it?) It was a pity he didn't get the B.B.C. job, but they are not easy to get. I should think that his English was not good enough. He ought to improve his grammar — which (although he hardly believes it) is bad. Let him mark my words.

Early in 1940 the Rodziankos made it back safely to Belgrade, Yugoslavia and in 1941 Vladimir was ordained to the priesthood. However, in 1949 Fr Vladimir was sentenced to eight years' hard labour for promoting ‘religious propaganda’. Mercifully, mainly through the intervention of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1951 Fr Vladimir gained an early release. He was reunited with his wife, Maria, and their two young sons, Vladimir and Michael and together they went to Paris to live with the parents of Fr Vladimir who had emigrated to France at the end of the Second World War. There they lived near Versailles and this had the added benefit of allowing Fr Vladimir to reconnect with his spiritual father, Archbishop John (later Saint John the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco, d. 1962) who had recently arrived in Paris to become Archbishop of Western Europe (ROCOR). In 1953 Bishop Nikolai (later Saint Nikolai / Nikolaj of Ochrid and Žiča, d. 1956) appointed Fr Vladimir to be a priest at the Serbian Orthodox Church of Saint Sabbas in Notting Hill Gate, west London. The future Bishop Basil recalled his meeting with Bishop Nikolai:

When I was in England, [...] I met by chance with another Serbian saint, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich. I was standing in church in a cassock in the congregation. He noticed me,

called out to me, and found out who I was. We talked, and then he said: ‘We are one priest short in this church which I have consecrated. You will serve as the second priest.’ ‘But I don’t have a passport or visa.’ ‘I’ll arrange it all.’ And he turned to speak to the Archpriest [Miloje Nikolić]: ‘Here is your second priest.’⁴²

Fr Vladimir found paid work at the university in Cambridge, teaching Russian. Then he was offered a position broadcasting on BBC services. For the next 30 years, he produced religious programmes that were broadcast to the Soviet Union. For many years Maria also worked at the BBC as a presenter of Russian religious programmes. Tragically Maria Rodzianko died suddenly in 1978 at the age of 62. She was laid to rest in Chiswick New Cemetery, west London. Fr Vladimir then became a monk and in 1980 became Bishop Basil of Washington for the Orthodox Church in America, later becoming Bishop of San Francisco, and retiring in 1984. He passed away in 1999 at the age of 84 and his earthly remains were buried in the Russian cemetery in Novo-Diveevo, Spring Valley, NY.⁴³

Antonina Ananina

Antonina Shchukina was born in Novgorod, Russia in 1918. Her father, Vladimir, was an officer in the Tsar’s army. Taking his wife and baby child through war-torn Russia, he eventually escaped and managed to get to Yugoslavia. They settled in what is now Herzegovina, close to Montenegro. Antonina was sent to a boarding school, the Russian Girl’s Gymnasium, Velika Kikinda,

⁴² Viktor I. Kosik, *Russkaia tserkov’ v Iugoslavii (20–40-e gg. XX veka)* [*The Russian Church in Yugoslavia from the 1920s–40s*] (Moscow: Saint Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 2000).

⁴³ Joel Kalvesmaki, ed., “Bishop Basil (Rodzianko),” *Life, Works, Memories: Bishop Basil (Rodzianko)*, Holy Archangels Foundation, Inc., accessed June 30, 2020, <http://www.rodzianko.org/english/life/>.

Banat, some 60 miles north of Belgrade. Antonina only went home to her parents occasionally because of the difficulty of travel between Kikinda and her home in the mountains of Herzegovina. Tragedy befell the young Antonina in 1934 when her mother died of tuberculosis and her father committed suicide. Family friends arranged for the 16 years-old Antonina to travel to Finland where she had relatives who had fled there from Russia in 1918. However, on the way to Finland, Antonina stopped off in London, where in 1935 she met and married Vadim Ananin (1911–1998). When her contemporaries from Belgrade arrived in London in 1939, Antonina would have been overjoyed to meet the girls and she happily volunteered to sing in the choir of Fr Nicholas Gibbes.



Fig. 8. 1932: Antonina Shchukina, Belgrade, Yugoslavia (aged 14)

Vadim and Antonina lived at first in Purley, Surrey and later in Lambeth, south London. They had two children: Natalia, born in 1936 and Michael, born in 1940. In 1951 Vadim, by profession an engineer, was appointed to work at a newly-built power station near Poole in Dorset, about 120 miles from London. However, Antonina did not want to lose her involvement in the London parish and eventually obtained the use of a small apartment in Notting Hill, west London, dividing her time between the family in Poole and the parish in London.

After Archpriest George Cheremetieff (d. 1971) retired from his role as secretary to Bishop Nikodem (Nagaieff) of Richmond and Great Britain in 1961, Antonina became secretary to the Bishop as well as Secretary of the Church Council.

In 1965, Antonina had her first experience of directing the Cathedral Choir of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile in Emperor's Gate, London SW7 on the occasion of the visit to the United Kingdom of Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesenky, d. 1985), who brought with him the miraculous Kursk-Root Icon. The Choir Director, Mr A. A. Khaltygin, was sick and in hospital for some months. It fell to Antonina to direct the choir in his absence, including the many services held during the visit of the Metropolitan. Having been a member of the choir since the 1940's, in 1970 Antonina was appointed as the Cathedral Choir Director, following the retirement of Mr Khaltygin.

In 1968 the miraculous Kursk-Root Icon again was brought to England, this time by Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky, d. 1976). Archbishop Nikon wrote extensively about his visit to England. He recalled, "The housekeeper at the *podvorie* [London clergy house] is run by the Sisterhood and a very diligent worker, Mrs. Antonina Vladimirovna Ananina."

For many years Antonina was also Treasurer of the Sisterhood of Saint Xenia as well as organiser of the festal meals served in the Church Hall. As one of his spiritual children, Antonina devoted many years to looking after the ageing Archbishop Nikodem. As the oldest bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, Vladyka Nikodem passed away in October, 1976, at the age of 93. Antonina Vladimirovna nursed him to the very end of his life. Afterwards, she wrote a moving account of the last days of Archbishop Nikodem and his passing which was published in *Pravoslavnaya Rus'*.

For another twenty years Antonina Vladimirovna continued in her role as Cathedral Choir Director, finally retiring in 1996. On 28th May, 2006, at the age of 88, Antonina Vladimirovna died in Poole and was laid to rest with the remains of her husband in Parkstone Cemetery, Poole, Dorset. Three priests conducted her funeral, including one of her godsons, Hieromonk Avraamy.⁴⁴ Antonina was survived by Natalia, Michael, and six grandchildren.

⁴⁴ Antonina Vladimirovna was also godmother to the present writer.

Epilogue

Less than six months after the Belgrade Nightingales had arrived in England, the exigencies of war led to them being scattered. Some made the perilous journey back to Belgrade where in due course they were to experience the horrors of the Nazi regime and later the oppression of the Communists. Others stayed in England and lived through the Second World War and the German Blitz. Three went to Oxford and this inspired the small Russian colony there to start a parish, inviting Fr Nicholas to leave London and live in Oxford where he served the Divine Liturgy for the Oxford community, supported initially by three of his Nightingales. Serving at first in Bartlemas Chapel, some years later Fr Nicholas would go on to acquire his own church property, the predecessor of today's parish of Saint Nicholas in Oxford. In March 1940, Fr Nicholas wrote to Metropolitan Seraphim in Paris and told him of these developments:

Little by little part of the choir has gravitated to Oxford. First two, then a third and now I am hoping that a fourth will also shortly come. This has made it seem possible to the small group of Russians living in Oxford to ask me to begin regular Orthodox Services in that city. The principal difficulty has been to obtain a suitable place of worship, but even that has been, by the Grace of God, now overcome. A small and very ancient Chapel, dedicated in honour of St. Bartholomew, has been placed at our disposal. ... [T]he Chapel is now attached to one of the Oxford Parish Churches, whose vicar is allowing us its use. This kind action only awaits the official sanction of the Bishop of the Diocese and the Chapel can then be used by us. I have therefore the honour to report the above facts and humbly to beg Your Lordship's episcopal blessing on all that has been done and further to request Your official sanction to hold Russian and/or English Orthodox services in the Bartlemas Chapel in the City of Oxford.

At this time, Fr Nicholas was still within the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile but in 1943 he removed himself to the Moscow Patriarchate.⁴⁵



Fig. 9. Bartlemas Chapel in Oxford where Fr Nicholas served Divine Liturgy from 1940 to 1945, initially with a choir of three Belgrade Nightingales

As for the Chapel of the Ascension, sadly on 18th June, 1944, it was listed as “destroyed by enemy action.” It was never re-built and the remains of the Chapel were completely demolished in 1969.

* * *

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⁴⁵ Nicolas Mabin, “Archimandrite Nicholas Gibbes: From the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile to the Moscow Patriarchate,” accessed May 25, 2020, <https://www.rocorstudies.org/2020/03/26/archimandrite-nicholas-gibbes-from-the-russian-orthodox-church-in-exile-to-the-moscow-patriarchate/>; Николас Мабин, “Архимандрит Николай Гиббс: из Русской Православной Церкви в изгнании в Московский Патриархат,” accessed May 25, 2020, <https://bogoslav.ru/article/6026809>.

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Read Online

A Few Questions regarding Life, Work and Education of St. Jakov (Radoje) Arsović

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Abstract: In the recent publications on St. Jakov Arsović, there are many claims that he earned a double doctorate in France. However, in literature written in Serbian, there is no clear reference on his postgraduate studies, his research, or his thesis or theses. In the present article, we will offer a short review of known facts regarding Arsović, and we will try to find traces of his education and life in France in his writings. We will also pose certain questions regarding his opus. As the main goal, we will try to present known information regarding the issue of his postgraduate studies and to offer a review of relevant sources and literature.

Key words: Jakov (Radoje) Arsović, University of Montpellier, University of Sorbonne, Blaise Pascal, Serbian Orthodox God Worshipper Movement, Mission.

St. Jakov of Tuman, whose baptismal name was Radoje Arsović (in Serbian: Радоје Арсовић), was born in the village of Kušići near Ivanjica, in 1893 or 1894. According to the literature available in Serbian, after primary and secondary education, Radoje was eager for science and knowledge, so he continued his edu-

cation abroad (Plećević 2015, 44; 2016, 7),¹ and he completed his studies earning a double doctorate in France.²

It is possible that Arsović somehow found his way to France through the events of World War I, pushed by the consequences of war like many other Serbian soldiers and refugees. Probably he was mobilized — sergeant Radoje Arsović is mentioned in a short communication delivered by Jovan Premović from Geneva (cf. “Missing and Correspondence” 1916, 6),³ as well as in war news (cf. “Communications” 1917a, 2; “Communications” 1917b, 2);⁴ maybe he was even in France in 1916 already (cf. “Missing and Correspondence” 1916, 6).

¹ In the list of references at the end of this paper, we will offer a bibliographical key for the author–date system of citation according to The Chicago Manual of Style used here, both for the references in Serbian (which we will primarily list as translated in English) and other languages.

² Different information can also be found; for instance, a claim that Arsović finished his higher education in Serbia (cf. Radosavljević 2012, 11 — although here it is not clear if it refers to high school education or to university studies). Maybe he attended Gymnasium at Kragujevac for his secondary education (cf. *A Commemorative Book of the Male Gymnasium in Kragujevac* 1934, 544 — in 1906–1907 Radoje Arsović enrolled the 1st grade of Male Gymnasium in Kragujevac; that could be R. Arsović from Kušići).

³ Premović delivered a report from Rajko Krivokuća, which could be future (?) husband of Ivana Arsović, sister of Radoje which is mentioned on school bell in the elementary school in Kušići (cf. Svetković and Dimitrijević 2010, 8; cf. also Svetković and Obradović 2010, 29).

⁴ After World War I, Arsović was promoted from a rank of sergeant to a rank of second-lieutenant (in Serbian: потпоручник) as reserve officer in infantry troops by decree of King Alexander Karađorđević (cf. “Promotions and the Highest Orders” 1919: 234; “Correction” 1920: 959–960). An organization of veterans of war searched for his address in 1934 (cf. “A List” 1934, 21). Later he was disengaged as the reserve officer by decision of King Peter II regents (cf. “Promotions, Installations and the Highest Orders” 1938: 850) — maybe this disengagement was somehow connected to his monastic attitudes, since he was not too old for military obligation at that time (cf. Law on Organization of Army and Navy of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, article 137, par. 2 — which is mentioned in the decision — in “Law on the Organization of the Army” 1929, 1642; cf. also “Law on Amendments” 1931).

Questions Regarding Arsović's Studies and Life in France

Unfortunately, there is not much information on his studies published so far. Allegedly he graduated at two faculties (cf. Nikčević 2015, 153), or even at three faculties (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 20). According to literature, after graduation, Arsović enrolled in postgraduate studies and obtained a Ph.D. degree (Radosavljević 2002, 247–248; Janković 2008, 269), or two Ph.D. degrees (Nikčević 2015, 153; Plečević 2020, 96). There are different claims regarding his postgraduate studies. On one hand, there are claims that Arsović pursued a Ph.D. degree in Philosophy, which he defended at Sorbonne University in Paris (cf., for instance, Radosavljević 1994, 85; Dimitrijević 2007, 67; Svetković and Dimitrijević 2010, 25; Panev 2017). There are also claims he pursued another Ph.D. degree in Laws, at the University of Montpellier, as it is written in an article on St. Jakov in Orthodox online Encyclopaedia “Drevo” (cf. “Jakov Arsović” 2017) or in Wikipedia (cf. “Jakov of Tuman” 2020; “Tuman Monastery” 2020; cf. also Panev 2017; Marković 2020). Besides that, on the other hand, there is a claim that Arsović pursued a Ph.D. degree at the University of Montpellier, after studying the thought of Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) — a French mathematician, inventor, philosopher and theologian (cf. Nikčević 2015, 153).

As we can read in his biographies published in Serbian, Arsović worked as a clerk in the diplomacy of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, i.e. Kingdom of Yugoslavia in France (Radosavljević 1994, 85; Dimitrijević 2007, 67; Dimitrijević 2010, 48; Radosavljević 2012, 12–13, etc.). There are also claims that he was even engaged as an Ambassador of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in France during 1929–1930. But there is no known evidence so far, and it seems there is no known archival source regarding the diplomatic engagement of Arsović (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 10–11).

Arsović as A Reborn Christian in Serbian Orthodox Context

According to literature in Serbian, while resting in Vrnjačka Banja in the 1930s — or during a funeral service of Rajko Krivokuća in Čačak, according to a different source, i.e. according to notes of Boško Topalović (cf. Radosavljević 2009, 45–46; Svetković and Obradović 2010, 29), Arsović met Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich and his Serbian prayer movement, i.e. God-worshipping movement (in Serbian — “богомолјачки покрет / bogomoljački pokret”).⁵ Namely, by chance, he was present during the assembly of the Serbian worshiping fraternities. Arsović was amazed by the sermons of Bishop Nicholai and the clergy, and especially by a sermon of a simple Serbian peasant. Touched on that occasion by the grace of God, he left his worldly life and went to Bishop Nicholai with a request to be a novice (Radosavljević 2012, 13). Radoje left the diplomatic service and dedicated himself to monastic simplicity, becoming monk Jakov. He did not talk too much (Radosavljević 1994, 86), and he rather chose to stay anonymous. He became a tireless ascetic and missionary, dedicated to publishing and editorial work in missionary journals and spiritual literature (Radosavljević 2002, 253–255). He was engaged in translating, writing, and editing missionary material, but his humble personality was often hidden because he published his writings anonymously (Svetković and Obradović 2010, 21; Plećević 2015, 48), or he hid

⁵ The informal name of this movement is transliterated or translated to English in different ways. For example, as “Bogomoljacki pokret” (cf. Micich 2000), “God-praying movement” (Miljković Matić 2016, 32), “God Worshipper Movement” (cf. Radić and Djurić Milovanović 2017; Radosavljević-Čiparizović 2017), “Movement of the God-Pray-ers” (cf. Storheim 2020) etc.

For a critical review of the negative role, and also of certain negative aspects and subversive influence of the “God-praying movement” activity, with profound notes and insights on problematic pietistic presumptions of this movement, cf. Matić 2020, 189–198.

himself behind pseudonyms and acronyms — sometimes he was signed simply by R. A., R. J. A., R., J. A., etc. (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 19).

In 1932⁶ or at last in 1933, Arsović was already involved in translation and editorial work in a missionary publishing house established by Velimirovich: cf. *Readings from St. Anthony* 1933⁷ — which was translated by Radoje Arsović; cf. also his other translations of patristic texts, for instance excerpts from the writings of St. Ephraim the Syrian on spiritual experience, self-distortion and confession, fasting, repentance (cf. St. Ephraim the Syrian 1933a, 1933b, 1933c, 1934). From the writings of St. Dimitry of Rostov, he translated a lesson on the soteriological dimension of humility (cf. St. Dimitry of Rostov 1933). Humility is again the topic of an excerpt from the ascetical discourses of Abba Isaiah of Scetis, which Arsović translated under the title “Mustard Seed” (cf. Abba Isaiah 1933). He also translated excerpts from the writings of St. John Chrysostom (cf. “Chrysostom’s Golden Words” 1933; St. John Chrysostom 1934a, etc.). In a preface to *Readings from St. Anthony*, Justin Popović described him as “a hardworking novice, brother Dr. R. A.” (cf. Popović 1933, 4). In the years to come he continually contributed to missionary periodicals, both as an author as well as a translator. Starting from 1935, he becomes an editor and afterward also the editor-in-chief of missionary journals such as *The Missionary* (published in Bitolj and Kragujevac; in Serbian: *Мисионар: ордан Савеза њравославних брајисѣава Народне хришћанске заједнице*), *The Little Missionary* (published in Bitolj and Kragujevac; in Serbian: *Мали мисионар*:

⁶ According to literature — cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 14. Allegedly, Arsović in 1932 translated excerpts from ascetical lessons of St. Ignatius Brianchaninov (Игнатий Брянчанинов, 1807–1867), but we have no information where these translations originally appeared, and in literature there are no bibliographical references regarding original publication (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 131–136; Radosavljević 2012, 210–218).

⁷ A selection of lessons of St. Anthony — translated (and edited) by Arsović — appeared in March 1933 in the journal of the Pilgrims Society (cf. “Lessons and Thoughts of St. Anthony the Great” 1933a, 1933b).

десѣлаѣни годѣѣѣак Мисионарских ѣисама),⁸ *The God's Husbandry* (published in Bitolj and Kragujevac; in Serbian: *Њива Божија: годѣѣѣак Мисионару*), *The Letter* (published in Monastery of Žiča; in Serbian: *Писмо: ѣѣромесечни црквени листѣѣ*), etc. He used to stay in Ohrid and Bitolj, and after 1935 in Kragujevac, where he led an editorial and publishing office of God worshiper movement for some time (approximately 1936–1937) (cf. Saračević 2010, 33; cf. also Velimirovich 2016b, 124). He later moved closer to Bishop Nicholai, namely to Monastery of Žiča, where he was engaged in the pressroom of the monastery's publishing house (Radosavljević 2012, 17; Dragojlović 2014, 126). Finally, in 1938 or 1939, according to literature, he became a monk, now known as Jakov (cf. Radosavljević 2002, 251; Dragojlović 2014, 126).

But the last claim is unconfirmed by sources. However, it is likely that Arsović became a monk sometime between September 1939 and August 1940. In 1939 two translations and a few short articles signed by R[adoje]. A[rsović] were published (cf. “What is Ours on Earth?” 1939; “The Wisdom” 1939; Arsović 1939a; 1939b; 1939c). In an article published in December 1939, he is mentioned not as a monk but as “brother Arsović” (cf. Ljubibratić 1939, 29). According to an article published in January 1940, Dr. Radoje Arsović was a delegate sent by Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich to a gathering of the Serbian God worshiper movement held in Belgrade on September 27, 1939 (cf. “From the Life of Fraternities...” 1940, 30). In a publication from the printing office of Monastery of Žiča (where Arsović was engaged in printing job), printed for Easter 1940, the editor (and the owner) is signed as “Rad[oje]. Arsović” (cf. Velimirovich 1940: [IV]).⁹ But in August 1940 he was already a

⁸ For a report where Arsović's editing and publishing efforts were mentioned, cf. Milutinović, Nastić and Karić 1936, 240–241. Cf. also Vojinović 1971, 359; 2013, 303–304; Cisarž 1986, 48, 52; Radosavljević and Jovančević 2007, 14.

⁹ However, this publication could be printed earlier, for instance in 1939. But it is more likely it was printed in 1940 — since it was an (special?) issue of the journal edited by Arsović, namely issue IV for 1940, according to the information on the cover page (cf. Velimirovich 1940).

monk in Žiča, according to an article from *Pravda* (cf. “Between the Walls of Monastery with Two Doctorates” 1940, 16 [in this article he is wrongly signed as “Josif Arsović”]). In another article from the same year “Fr. Jakov Arsović” is mentioned as one of the speakers at the gathering of God worshiper movement in Krnjevo during that year, probably sometime during summer, before August 12th (cf. Kovačević 1940, [III]). The oldest mention i.e. the first known public appearance of monk Jakov we found — as “a new monk Jakov (doctor Arsović)” — was at a huge gathering of believers on the feast of St. Archangel Gabriel in Guča on July 26th (13th O.S.) 1940, where he held a remarkable speech during the lunch (cf. “From the Life of Diocese of Žiča” 1940, 30).¹⁰

If Arsović was not dressed in monastic robes on a gathering held in Holy Trinity Monastery in Ovčar on the feast of Annunciation in April 1941, according to the remembrance of Fr. Slobodan Nikolić (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 23), that could be a feature of his striking asceticism, rather than a consequence of mobilization to military service.¹¹ Or that could be, more likely, the wrong dating of this event, which would hardly occur on the second day of the Nazi German invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941 — if that event occurred one year earlier, it would easily fit the context.

¹⁰ We were not able to find more mentions of monk Jakov Arsović in 1940; of course, we hope some future research will reveal more information. Monk Jakov is mentioned as a member of monastic community of Žiča Monastery in a monograph published in 1941 — perhaps it was Arsović (cf. “Holy Žiča Today” 1941, VII; “Holy Žiča” 2016, 748). That monograph is attributed to Bishop Nicholai, and later included in his *Collected Works*. However, Velimirovič is not the author of that publication (according to information in Catalogue of National Library of Serbia in Belgrade) — it’s the unsigned 2nd edition of monograph edited by Vlahko Vlahović (originally published in 1937 — cf. Vlahović 1937), with an addition of the final chapter (cf. *Holy Žiča* 1941, I–VII).

¹¹ Since he was disengaged as a reserve officer in 1938 (cf. “Promotions, Installations and the Highest Orders” 1938: 850), and since in Kingdom of Yugoslavia clerics and religious could be exempt from military service (cf. “Law on the Organization of the Army” 1929, 1642 [par. 137, art. 2]) — as maybe Arsović was exempted.

Arsović as An Orthodox Author: Traces of French Influence

Starting from 1935 — and ending in 1936 — Arsović's articles were published in Serbian highly circulated missionary journals. In these pieces, it is obvious that there was a kind of connection of Arsović to France. In his writings from the 1930s, one can find a certain influence of the French culture. So there are reflections on events from the history of France, or on French society and culture in general — both positive (as the observance of Sunday — cf. Arsović 1936j, 169–170) and negative (as the legacy of French Revolution — cf. Arsović 1936l, 207–209 — or French educational system infected by skepticism — cf. Arsović 1936j, 169). He used to mention France (cf. Arsović 1934f, 7–8; 1935b, 9; 1936a, 9; 1936d, 43–44; 1936g, 171–172), Paris (cf. Arsović 1934a, 7; 1936k, 197; 1936l, 207), and also churches of Paris — as Saint-Étienne-du-Mont (cf. Arsović 1934e, 26). On the other hand, he criticized the secular principles of French society. He was a bitter critic of Parisian fashion (cf. Arsović 1936k, 197). Chaotic Parisian bourse for Arsović was an image of the corrupted and unreasonable world (cf. Arsović 1936l, 209).

In his critics of the secular world, Arsović used to employ topics from contemporary France. So while criticizing secular science and praising the advantages of the world-view based on the Holy Scripture, Arsović mentioned recent events from Paris. He used images from the burial of faithless French mathematician Paul Painlevé (1863–1933) and from the burial of a religious scientist Léon Charles Albert Calmette (1863–1933).¹² Interestingly, he writes as an eyewitness of those burials (cf. Arsović 1934a, 7–8; cf. also Arsović 1935e, 44) — but we do not know if that is just a stylistic figure.¹³

¹² A pious Christian who was a French physician, bacteriologist and immunologist, whose faith is praised by Arsović.

¹³ It is interesting to note that Arsović wrote on Jerusalem and Holy Land as an eyewitness as well (cf. Arsović 1934e, 25–27; 1935a, 7–9 etc.). It would be possible that he was a pilgrim to Jerusalem (there were numerous Serbian pilgrimages to Holy Land at the

He mentioned other pious examples and events from French history, as a pious priest and wondering ascetic Francis who acted in the eve of the French Revolution (cf. Arsović 1936g, 139–140). According to Arsović, the faith of two Parisian monks who prayed for religious schools in France — a joint effort of two people which he compared to efforts of Sts. Cyril and Methodius or St. Sava of Serbia and Theodore I Lascaris — resulted in Church schools which nowadays defend the Western world (cf. Arsović 1936j, 170–171). He also used examples from contemporary history — as the humble personality and piety of French general Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929), who served as the Supreme Allied Commander during World War I (cf. Arsović 1936d, 44).¹⁴

French influence could also be found in the manner of Arsović's transcription of names and terms. In writings of Arsović, St. Dionysius the Areopagite becomes St. Denys Areopagite (in Serbian: *Денис* instead *Дионисије* — cf. Arsović 1935a, 9; 1936g, 139).¹⁵ Masonry becomes franc-*maçonnerie* (in Serbian: *франмасони* instead *масони* — cf. Arsović 1934d, 7; 1936l, 207).¹⁶ Names of

time — cf. Mladenović 1933, [71]; Mikijelj 1935, [5], etc.), especially when we know that Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich and Serbian worshiping fraternities organized pilgrimages to Jerusalem in 1930, 1931, 1932 etc. (cf., for instance, Velimirovich 1930, 203–204; “Pilgrims” 1930, 226–227; Milivojević 1930, 1–5; Dimitrijević 1933a, 63; 1933b, 63; Subotić 1996, 97; Mavrogiannakis 2003, 441–442). Velimirovich established connections with Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem already in 1922 (cf. Petrović 2019, 696–701), and he continuously supported pilgrimages (cf. Savić 1935, 2). It is also interesting that, according to Velimirovich's book *Divan*, Scottish journalist John Paterson asked Arsović to let him know if Serbian Pilgrims Society, established by fraternities of God worshippers, organizes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem — because he would like to join (cf. Velimirovich 2016b, 199). It should be noted that Arsović was a contributor to the journal of Serbian Pilgrims Society in 1933 (cf. “Lessons and Thoughts of St. Anthony the Great” 1933a, 1933b).

¹⁴ In a journal edited by Arsović there were also short anonymous notes and articles regarding different topics related to France, like religiosity of French statesman and military leader Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) (cf. “One Opinion of Napoleon” 1936, 218–219), or pious movements in France (cf. “The Christian Movement in France” 1936, 219), etc.

¹⁵ These examples could be found only in original publications of Arsović's writings. In later reprints the text was obviously edited and changed (cf., for instance, Svetković and Obradović 2010, 60, 107, or Radosavljević 2012, 127, 201 etc.).

¹⁶ But this could be the influence of Russian as well (in Russian: *франкмасонство*).

Jannes and Jambres (mentioned in 2 Tim. 3: 8) are transcribed in an unusual way, according to Western reading (in Serbian: *Јанес и Јамбрес* instead *Јаније и Јамврије* — cf. Arsović 1936g, 139).

He used Latin (cf. Arsović 1936g, 139¹⁷), and he even gave biblical quotations according to Vulgata (cf. Arsović 1936d, 44;¹⁸ 1936k, 195¹⁹), which was quite unusual in the Serbian Orthodox context of that time. On the other hand, he used apocryphal and hagiographical material borrowed from Latin medieval tradition, like a spurious letter attributed to St. Ignatius of Antioch — the so-called *The Epistle of Ignatius to St. John the Apostle*, in which a reference to Holy Theotokos Mary can be found (cf. Arsović 1935a, 9).²⁰ It is interesting to note that, according to memories of Bishop Jovan Velimirović (in Serbian: Јован Велимировић, 1912–1989), Arsović was deeply inspired by the works of St. Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226). Velimirović claims Arsović approached Christ and Christianity through the works of Francis of Assisi, which he zealously read and knew almost by heart (Janković 2008, 269).

Zeal for proper understanding and practice of Christian faith is present in Arsović's writings (cf. Arsović 1934c). He criticized proselytism and the viewpoints of Seventh-Day Adventists. He

It seems Arsović was fluent in Russian, since he read Russian (cf. Arsović 1934b, 12 — where he referred to *Russian Prologue*) and he translated several pieces from Russian — for instance, ethical lessons of St. Dimitry of Rostov (cf. St. Dimitry of Rostov 1933) and — according to literature — St. Ignatius Brianchaninov (cf. Radosavljević 2012, 210–218), and also from Church Slavonic language (cf. *Lives of Saint Virgins* 1937) (cf. also Arsović 1995 — for an interesting mixture of Church Slavonic and Russian terms in the text in Serbian).

¹⁷ Here he quoted “poor” Cicero (“dii immortales”).

¹⁸ Through the mouth of Foch: “Non nobis, Domine non nobis; sed non to da gloriam” (Ps. 113: 9).

¹⁹ He quotes Genesis according to Vulgata: “et erunt duo in carne una” (Gen. 2: 24). It is interesting to note that in an unsigned article published in the same journal one month earlier, regarding same topics — Jewish bolshevism and nakedness of women — there are also quotations from Vulgata (“superbia vitae” — 1 John 2: 16 — and “Cecidit Babylon magna, Quia de vino irae fornicationis ejus bibernut omnes gentes” — Apoc. 18: 2–3): cf. “Polish Cardinal” 1936, 190–191.

²⁰ He probably also used other apocryphal material, which is suggested when he uses a story describing how statues of Jannes and Jambres fell when Jesus came to Egypt — cf. Arsović 1936g, 139.

argued against the observance of the Sabbath and urged for the advantage of the New Testament above the Old Testament (cf. Arsović 1936e). He also criticized Protestant understanding of Holy Mysteries, i.e. their rejection of the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, illustrating it with examples from history — regarding horse which kneeled in front of Holy Communion (cf. Arsović 1934g, 15). Similar episode — with the mule who knelt before the Eucharist — could be found in hagiographical material on the life of St. Anthony of Padua (1195–1231), or also in works of Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), an Italian Jesuit and a cardinal of the Catholic Church (cf. Elliott 1851, 99). Arsović argued against spiritism — a demonic trap for humanity (cf. Arsović 1936g; 1936i).²¹ Here we find another connection to the French context. In the first place, Arsović gives references to misconceptions of Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828–1893), a French critic and historian, and Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), an Italian criminologist and physician who wrote also in French, before he reflects on Serbian context (cf. Arsović 1936g, 139–140).

Arsović also showed that he was able to discuss with scholars, and that he will not keep quiet if the truth of the Christian faith is questioned. When Serbian philosopher Branislav Petronijević (Бранислав Петронијевић, 1875–1954) wrote an article on the interpretations of Beatitudes by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Leo N. Tolstoy (Лев Николаевич Толстой, 1828–1910), published in the Serbian newspaper *Politika* (cf. Petronijević 1935), Arsović's reaction was very quick and very fiery (cf. Arsović 1935g, 81–86). He also argued with a certain professor — actually with Russian thinker Evgeniy Vasilyevich Spektorsky (Евгений Васильевич Спекторский, 1875–1951). Namely, Arsović's harsh reaction to an earlier article of Spektorsky (cf. Spektorsky 1934) is published in *The Missionary* (cf. Arsović 1935e).²² But in those

²¹ Unsigned articles on the same topic can be found in the same volume of journal which was edited by Arsović at that time — cf., for instance, “Spiritism” 1936, 219.

²² By the way, Velimirovich had a different opinion regarding work and contribution of Spektorsky in general. After World War II, he was concerned for publishing Spektorsky's book (cf. Spektorsky 1953), and wrote a foreword for it,

writings published in religious publications, Arsović revealed no information on his education (with exception of “Dr.” title which he used occasionally), or on his studies in France, both graduate and postgraduate. However, it is interesting to note that a kind of reservation regards science and academy can be found in Arsović’s articles (cf. Arsović 1935e, 44; 1935h, 94; 1936b, etc.).

On the one hand, a kind of radicalization towards fundamentalist positions can be found in Arsović’s mentioned works published during the 1930s. He became focused on certain moral issues, and argued for traditional moralistic positions regarding questions of inappropriate language (cf. Arsović 1936h), or modern fashion, or emancipation of women in general (cf. Arsović 1936k), etc. He also gave attention to some popular and contemporary topics of the time — like questions regarding masonry, questions regarding the place and role of Jewish people in the world’s history, and so on. Freemasonry (*franc-maçonnerie* in Arsović’s expression) attacked the Serbian nation (cf. Arsović 1934d, 7). They have already taken rule in England, so even English bishops are freemasons. Behind the scene, there are Jews, real rulers. By the means of rationalism, they destroyed the spirit of the French nation and initiated the French Revolution. And now they transfer their literary logic from France to Russia — introducing another revolution (cf. Arsović 1936l). These viewpoints could be inspired by a controversial piece *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* — a piece which is probably compiled by Russian-French journalist and political activist Mathieu Vasilyevich Golovinski (in Russian: Матвей Васильевич Головинский, 1865–1920) circa 1900. In some way, *The Protocols* are, so to say, of Francophone origin. Namely, this work was based on parody by Maurice Joly (1829–1878) — a political satire which was written in French (cf. Joly 1864). After a few editions of the *Protocols* in Russia (cf. Butmi 1906; Nilus 1911, 57ff), this book was also published by Russian émigrés in Berlin

praising his scientific contribution (cf. Velimirovich 1953). Velimirovich invested a lot of effort to publish this book, as showed his correspondence with Fr. Aleksa Todorović (1899–1990), partially published in Vol. XIII of his *Collected Works* (cf. Velimirovich 2016c, 697, 700, 708–709, 719–721).

(cf. *Worldwide Secret Conspiracy* 1922) and in Paris (cf. *Zion Protocols* 1927). It impacted certain circles in Russian intelligentsia, especially in the traditional Russian Orthodox context (it is worthy to mention that the 3rd edition of *Protocols* was printed by the press office of The Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius in 1911), and later in exiled Russian communities. In Arsović's homeland, this material appeared in the 1920s, at the time when Russian refugees came. Since it was also published in France, both in Russian and French (cf. *Protocols* 1920), Arsović could become familiar with this pamphlet during the years he spent abroad. As we mentioned, Arsović probably was fluent in Russian (and he was a great admirer of Russian culture, holding an idea of the special Russian role in history — cf. Arsović 1935f, 49), and, as we will see, he spoke French — so he also could read this publication before he came back to his homeland. On the other hand, he could receive ideas launched in *The Protocols* from Russian émigrés as well — both in France or in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. *The Protocols* were acknowledged and influential in the Christian context of that time. Publisher of the 2nd French edition of *The Protocols* in 1922 (and of the next few editions as well) was a Roman Catholic priest Ernest Jouin (1844–1932). In Yugoslavia, this piece was regarded as authentic in Russian as well in the Serbian Orthodox Christian context of that time (cf. Lišančić and Naumović 2014, 155; a review of the *Protocols* appeared in the journal of God worshiper movement in 1926 — cf. Butmi and Tomić 1926b) — or in a wider context of the time.²³

But ideas from *The Protocols* are a kind of side topic in Arsović's writings. On the other hand, Arsović's main preoccupations were spiritual issues. He was deeply focused on ascetic virtues. He constantly dealt with topics of humility, faithfulness, repentance — which was obvious from his writings and his asceticism as well. At the same time, while he was strict towards himself, he showed pa-

²³ In Kingdom of Yugoslavia *Protocols* appeared in Croatian translation; first they were partially published as a series of articles printed in the Roman Catholic theological journal *Nova Revija (Nouvelle revue)* starting from 1925 (cf. Butmi and Tomić 1925, 1926a), and later as a book in 1929 (cf. Butmi and Tomić 1929), and again in 1934 — translated in Serbian (cf. Patriotikus 1934).

tience and understanding for other people, for instance for female novices (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 28–29). His humble personality made a strong impression on people who were in personal contact with him. But he was not focused only on inward issues. He was aware of and touched by the sad and cruel realities of this world. It looks like he was deeply compassionate with contemporary persecutions of Christians. He showed concern and compassion for the sufferings of brotherly Christian people, especially in Russia i.e. Soviet Union (cf. Arsović 1934b, 13; 1934d, 6; 1936d, 44–45; 1936j, 168–169, etc.). But he also was compassioned with the sufferings of Christians in Armenia and Ethiopia (cf. Arsović 1936c, 24). Anyway, history could be changed. Temporary sufferings are allowed by God's Providence. But only for reasons of the proclamation of God's glory, like it was when the Turkish Empire was defeated by small nations of Serbs, Bulgarians, and Greeks in 1912 (cf. Arsović 1936c, 24). As it was in Serbia in the past, in Ethiopia there is a holy moral flame, which God can bring to Russia (cf. Arsović 1936d, 46). Ethiopia is a pious country, according to Arsović (cf. Arsović 1936f, 81).

Some Preliminary Questions Regarding Arsović's Works

It seems the Arsović's literal activity was suddenly interrupted after 1936. In 1937 his translation of selected hagiographical sketches of devoted Christian virgins was published. But it looks like there are no know his articles published during that and next year.²⁴ An excerpt from St. John Chrysostom's writ-

²⁴ In a few publications dedicated to Arsović, an article published in 1937 is attributed to him — namely, an article written by editor of *The Missionary* (cf. Radosavljević 2012, 157–16). However, although Arsović was a responsible editor of the journal at that time, operating editor and author of that article was Hieromonk Jovan Rapajić (1910–1945), his younger colleague in editorial office of missionary journal (cf. Rapajić 1937, 336–343; cf. also Radosavljević and Jovančević 2007, 238–244).

ings translated by Arsović appeared in 1939 (cf. “What is Ours on Earth?” 1939), then a few patristic thoughts translated by him (cf. “The Wisdom” 1939), his translation of an article by Ivan A. Ilyin (Иван Александрович Ильин, 1883–1954) (cf. Ilyin 1939), a short article on the first icon of Christ (cf. Arsović 1939a; also reprinted as Arsović 1939b), and another one on religious press (cf. Arsović 1939c) but there seem to be no more known writings of Arsović published later. We are wondering what could be the reasons for his — so to say — Arsović’s literal inactivity. Maybe he simply became focused on his own inner life and lost his interest in writing. Or he wrote anonymously. Of course, there could be more reasons which generated this kind of retreat, of which we don’t know.²⁵ The next (and maybe the last) piece which is attributed to Arsović (although he is not signed) is a booklet — actually an open letter to Serbian clergy published during World War II, probably somewhere between 1942 and 1944 (cf. Saračević 2010, 35).²⁶

There seem to be a lot of questions regarding the authorship of articles published in missionary journals of the God worshiper movement edited by Arsović and elsewhere. As we mentioned above, he used to stay anonymous (cf., for instance, Arsović 1936d). On the other hand, as it was a manner

²⁵ For instance, certain authors suggested that there was a kind of tension and misunderstanding between Arsović and Rapajić, who finally succeed Arsović’s position as editor-in-chief of *The Missionary* in 1938 (cf. Pavlović 1994, 14, 26).

²⁶ Arsović’s pseudonymous *An Epistle to God-Beloved Clergy* (which originally was signed by the “Serbian Church Mission of Monks, Priests and Lay People, Belgrade, Prištinska Street 1”) was reprinted under the name of Monk Jakov Arsović in 1959 (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 39–40) and later as well (cf. Arsović 1995; Arsović 2008; Svetković and Obradović 2010, 82–87; Radosavljević 2012, 173–171). Bishop Pavle (Stojčević) of Raška and Prizren (later Patriarch of Serbia) in 1984 considered this publication as Arsović’s work (cf. Stojčević 1984, 32).

It is interesting to mention another epistle to clergy of Belgrade, similar in manner of criticism, probably also written during the World War II, which is suggested by the text. This piece is posthumously attributed to Bishop Nikolai and published in his *Collected Works* “for the first time” — according to editor’s note (cf. “Priests of Belgrade” 2016, 158–159).

in Serbian Orthodox periodical press during 20th century (and even today), there are numerous articles published during the 1930s which are not signed by an author. Bishop Lavrentije Trifunović mentioned difficulties regarding the questions of authorship for certain unsigned articles — namely, it is not possible to conclude if they were written by Velimirovich or by Arsović (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 21). We will mention some interesting examples. For instance, Bishop Nicholai wrote 300 missionary letters, originally published in a missionary journal named *The Missionary Letters* (in Serbian: *Мисионарска писма*) which was printed in Bitolj 1932–1934. More missionary letters appeared later, of which some were written by Velimirovich (cf., for instance, Velimirovich 1935a; 1935b; 1936a, etc.). On the other hand, Arsović used to write missionary letters as well (cf. Arsović 1935c; 1935e; 1935i; 1935j; 1935k; 1935l). But there are also unsigned missionary letters,²⁷ usually attributed to Velimirovich (cf. Janković 2003, 710ff; Protić 2016, 343ff), since Velimirovich also used to write anonymously or pseudonymously. For example, in the journal *The God's Husbandry* — more actually a supplement to the journal *The Missionary* in 1935 and 1936, a few unsigned missionary letters were printed.²⁸ All of those letters are attributed to Velimirovich (cf. Janković 2003, 717, 720; Protić 2016, 361–362, 370). The same applies to many unsigned articles and letters published in the journal *The Missionary* in 1935, 1936, and later. The style of these letters is very similar to those written 1932–1934 and later by Bishop Nicholai. One would say — the same. But there is a difference. There is no blessing or prayerful greeting at the conclusion of some of these letters, which, on the other hand, was somehow usual for Velimirovich's letters. Also, the use of the exclamation mark in some of these letters is frequent. Combined with warnings and monitions. That was

²⁷ Cf. “A Missionary Letter to An Intellectual” 1935 (in which there is a reference to *De bonis et malis* of St. Augustine, which is interesting), “A Missionary Letter to A Woman” 1935 etc.

²⁸ Cf. “The 1st Letter” 1935; “The 2nd Letter” 1935; “A Letter to A Priest” 1936.

a kind of feature in Arsović's style rather than Velimirović's (cf., for instance, Arsović 1935d). And this feature is obvious in other articles published anonymously during 1935 as well: a lot of exclamation marks, and a lot of warnings.²⁹ All of those unsigned articles are later attributed to Velimirović.

But the situation regarding authorship for mentioned letters and articles is not simple at all. For instance, in one of the mentioned letters printed in *The God's Husbandry* in 1936, there are references to persons from French history, namely to Denis Diderot (1713–1784) visit to Moscow, and on the other hand, there is no blessing at the conclusion (cf. Velimirović 1936c, 12). Like we showed above, images from the French cultural context were a kind of feature in some articles written by Arsović. However, the same letter (with a slightly altered title) is also published in *The Missionary*, again unsigned, but according to information on the front matter, the author is "E. N." — which could be (and probably is) an abbreviation for "Bishop Nicholai" in Serbian (cf. Velimirović 1936b).³⁰

At least, the authorship of these letters — and the authorship of dozens of shorter articles — which are originally published anonymously and later attributed to Velimirović, should be reconsidered and examined. Actually, there are cer-

²⁹ Cf. "Judges of Christ" 1935; "Service of Christ" 1935; "Olive Mountain — the Mountain of Mercy" 1935; "The Prophet Isaiah and Today's Generation" 1935 (with a bitter critic of Parisian fashion) etc.

Many other articles, published pseudonymously or anonymously, are also interesting for our research — for instance: Hist. 1935 (with mention of France, Paris and Voltaire — François-Marie Arouet, 1694–1778); A. 1935 (signed by an interesting acronym — a text regarding fashion); R. 1935 (signed by an interesting acronym — a text regarding missionary work); "Are There Predictions?" 1935 (unsigned, with mention of France, Louvre, Basilique-cathédrale de Saint-Denis, narrow streets of Paris) etc. Similar articles, with a kind of reference to France, appeared until the end of 1930s as well — cf., for instance, "Poincaré" 1939 (the last article was also later attributed to Velimirović, and published in his *Collected Works*, Vol. X, 519).

³⁰ Velimirović used to abbreviate his sign in the same manner until the last days of his lifetime (cf., for instance, a letter of Bishop Nicholai to Fr. A. Todorović, written on December 15 1954, in Velimirović 2016c, 727).

tain letters and articles which were signed by Arsović in the original publication, but later republished as Velimirovič's. It also should be noted that some of Arsović's writings are published in *Collected Works* of Velimirovič (cf., for instance, Velimirovič 2016a, 707–709).³¹

The situation is practically the same regarding some unsigned translations. There are unsigned translations of patristic texts which are of special interest for our topic — namely, the excerpts from the writings by the same authors and with the same topics which Arsović translated during the 1930s. These translations are published in the same journals where Arsović's translations already appeared (cf., for instance, St. John Chrysostom 1934b). Some of these translations are signed by three asterisks — * * * — in a manner in which Arsović used to sign his own writings (cf. St. Dimitry of Rostov 1934, 6 and Arsović 1934g, 15; 1936f, 81). However, the situation is not clear because there are also anonymous articles signed in the same manner (cf., for instance, “A Strange Sign” 1936, 87).

Arsović by no means edited hagiographical material published in journals where he was engaged as an editor.³² On the other hand, maybe he was not just an editor, but also a translator as well. In literature, there are mentions of Arsović's translations of hagiographical sketches, which were later used by other authors (cf. Svetković and Obradović 2010, 19). For sure he

³¹ It is interesting to note that the publishing institution of the missionary movement connected to the printing office, established in the Monastery of Žiča, where Arsović was in charge, started publishing anonymous publications in late 1930s. In a number of these missionary publications, compiled from short articles, spiritual reflections, translations of patristic lessons, hagiographic and other appropriate material, there is no single information on editors, authors, translators etc. — no single name (cf., for instance, *Žiča Wreath* 1939; *Žiča Treasury* 1940; *Holy Žiča* 1941, etc.). On the other hand, interestingly, these anonymous publications (and other as well), prepared and printed in pressroom where Arsović was engaged, were later attributed to Bishop Nicholai (for three anonymous publications mentioned in this footnote, cf. Janković 2003, 748, 758; Protić 2016, 454, 482, 484, 513).

³² Besides that, publishing institutions of God worshiper movement printing offices, where Arsović was engaged, printed numerous hagiographies during 1930s (cf. “The Lives of Serbian Saints” 1936, 319).

translated *Lives of Saint Virgins* in 1937. But maybe he also translated other hagiographical material — such as *The Life of St. Nicholas of Myra* published in Serbian translation in Arsović's journal (cf. "Saint Nicholas of Myra" 1939, 1–31). This translation is not signed. In the edition of *The Lives of Saints* later published by Fr. Justin Popović (the complete edition was finished in 1977, but partially published earlier), the text of this hagiography is very close to Arsović's edition. The same stands for *The Life of Holy Great-Martyr Demetrius*, published in Arsović's journal in an unsigned translation in 1939 (cf. "Saint Demetrius the Great-Martyr" 1939, 1–13). Of course, *The Life of St. Demetrius* and *The Life of St. Nicholas* could have been translated by Popović as well,³³ even for publication in Arsović's journal — we already saw that they were close to each other, and Bishop Nicholai for sure was a kind of connection for both of them. They also could use the same original, translating it independently. But how about the *Lives of Saint Virgins*? Since here again we can see that Popović's edition is very similar to Arsović's translation in some portions of the text. Maybe Popović used Arsović's translations for his edition of *Lives*.

As we can see, researchers have to face many difficulties when studying Arsović's works: in a lot of publications that appeared in his environment there is no sufficient information regarding authorship, or regarding translator, editor, even regarding volume and issue of the publication (cf. Velimirovich 1940). It looks like the authors who were behind these publications tried to hide their identity, or they simply did not care too much regarding their own authorship. As for Arsović, we are pretty sure that was the case since he signed himself fully only on a few publications. When considering Arsović's opus, however, researchers have to deal with many problems. Questions of

³³ Or by Hieromonk Dionisije Milivojević (Дионисије [Драгољуб] Миливојевић, 1898–1979; later Bishop of America and Canada) — who translated and published several hagiographies starting from 1920s (cf. Milivojević 1925a, 1925b etc.), or also by some other translators who contributed to publishing activities of God worshiper movement.

authorship and authenticity are of such kind. There are also serious obstacles regarding the availability of his works and relevant publications. Original publications of missionary periodicals and other printed material from the 1930s and 1940s are hardly available, sometimes preserved only in a few copies. On the other hand, some of these publications are very rare. We are also afraid that some of these publications are not preserved at all, or they are preserved only partially. In the light of those circumstances, a research of Jakov Arsović's legacy will probably look similar to a detective investigation.

On the Arsović's Last Years

In the eve of World War II, Arsović's ascetical practice became strict and striking (cf. Radosavljević 2002, 254–255; Dimitrijević 2010, 50–51). His monastic feat was prominent. He practiced foolishness for Christ, and also a very rigid fasting practice (cf. Radosavljević 1994, 87; Svetković and Obradović 2010, 20–21, 24; Plećević 2015, 48–52). He lived in extreme poverty, without any possession, dressed in old and dirty monastic robes (Plećević 2016, 8). He used to shock people and clergy by his outfit, and also by his unusual asceticism (cf. Saračević 2010, 33–34; cf. also the remembrance of Fr. Sava Ćirović (Сава Ћировић, 1924–2004) from the Monastery of Vaznesenje in Ovčar, in Svetković and Obradović 2010, 20–21). During this period he could be seen at an unusual place — namely at the entrance hall to Patriarchate building, witnessing evangelical call for repent in his own manner, by simply keeping silent (cf. Brzović 2010; cf. also Plećević 2019, 100).

According to literature, during wartimes he was in Žiča until November 1941 — actually, after Žiča was bombed he lived in a mountain with the rest of the brotherhood (Radosavljević 2012, 21–24). During this time he used to write lessons for novices (Radosavljević 2012, 24–25), but unfortunately we do not

know if any are preserved. Later he was with Bishop Nicholai — during the period of his confinement in Ljubostinja (cf. Radić 2006, 231; Radosavljević 2012, 25–26; Brotherhood of Tuman Monastery 2018, 11). Invocated to the mission, he used to go across occupied Serbia as a missionary, receiving torture both from Nazis and from Communist Partisans (cf. Radosavljević 2012, 26; Plečević 2019, 103–104). He also spent some time in Belgrade, engaged in preaching and mission (cf. Janković 2008, 270; Dimitrijević 2010, 50). During the time he was in Belgrade, as some authors claimed, he wrote and published an epistle mentioned above (cf. Saračević 2010, 35).

He died as a confessor of faith in 1946, after being tortured and beaten by representatives of the new regime (cf. Jović 2012, 97–98; Brotherhood of Tuman Monastery 2015, 30), and he was buried in Tuman monastery (cf. Plečević 2016, 9). He was officially recognized as the saint at the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 2017, and he is celebrated together with St. Zosimus of Tuman on August 21st.

Arsović's Ph.D. Theses

However, since there is no critical biography of Jakov Arsović so far, and there are just a few short known facts on his life (Plečević 2015, 43), certain suspicions regarding his Ph.D. degrees arose over time. Namely, in his biographies and literature on Arsović there is no single mention of the title of his Ph.D. thesis, so a question can be posed: did he earn a Ph.D. degree (or degrees) in France?

If we look at the Church historiography of our recent past, we can see that the lack of a critical approach, for instance, led certain authors to erroneous claims regarding Nicholai Velimirovich's education. Consequently, in literature written in Serbian one can find mentions of more than ten Ph.D. degrees Velimirovich earned at various Universities — at Halle, Bern (two Ph.D. degrees), Lausanne, Geneva, Paris, London — at

the Oxford University and King's College, and at Sankt Petersburg, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and also at the Columbia University in New York. However, Velimirovich defended two Ph.D. theses — both at the University of Bern in 1908 and 1909 (cf. Arx 2006, 313–315) — and received two honorary Ph.D. degrees — one at the University of Glasgow in 1919 and another one at the Columbia University in 1946. But uncritical reading and interpretation of literature and secondary (or tertiary) sources generated confusion regarding Velimirovich's education and degrees.

So, there was a doubt regarding Jakov Arsović's Ph.D. degree, since there is no mention of topics or titles of his thesis in literature, i.e. no clear mention of the topic of his postgraduate research. On the other hand, Arsović used to sign himself as “Dr. R[adoje]. A[rsović].” or fully as “Dr. Radoje Arsović” in a few of his articles published during the 1930s (cf. Arsović 1936, 22; cf. also impressum of *The Missionary* in 1936 — “Editor-in-chief: Dr. R[adoje]. J. Arsović”³⁴ — etc.). In 1936 he was sued as “Dr. Radoje Arsović” — as a responsible editor of missionary journal in which a critical article regarding missionary activities of Seventh-Day Adventists appeared (cf. Rapajić 1937). There are testimonies that Bishop Nicholai used to call him simply “Doctor” at that time (cf. Radosavljević 2012, 18), and that it was his nickname (according to an article by Bishop Sava Saračević, originally published in 1959, republished in Svetković and Obradović 2010 — cf. Saračević 2010, 35). Also, in an article in Serbian newspaper *Pravda* from 1940, there is a claim that Arsović earned a double doctorate at the University of Sorbonne (cf. “Between the Walls of Monastery with Two Doctorates” 1940, 16). In a book entitled *Conversations* [in Serbian: *Divan*], dedicated to Serbian God worshiper

³⁴ Similar can be found in the impressum of *The God's Husbandry* in 1935 and 1936: “Editor-in-chief: Dr. R[adoje]. Arsović”; cf. also the impressum of *The Little Missionary* in 1935–1937 (starting from March 1935, ending in October 1937): “Responsible Editor: Dr. R[adoje]. [J.] Arsović.”

movement, written by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich in 1951³⁵ and published in 1953 — in which Velimirovich recollected his own memories and reflections on pious fraternities gatherings, “Dr. Radoje Arsović” is mentioned several times as one of the remarkable figures (cf. Velimirovich 2016b, 124, 195, 197, 199, [201]). Velimirovich also mentioned him as “Dr. Arsović” in one of his letters in 1953.³⁶ There’s a claim that Arsović studied at the University of Sorbonne and that he was a doctor of both philosophy and theology, in an article by N. Brzović, originally published in 1958, republished in Svetković and Obradović 2010 (cf. Brzović 2010, 30–32).

Anyway, there was almost no information on Arsović post-graduate studies so far. But now, thanks to the efforts of today’s monastic community of Tuman monastery near Golubac, under the leadership of Archimandrite Dimitrije Plećević, we are happy to know a bit more regarding education i.e. regarding postgraduate studies of St. Jakov of Tuman. After efforts made by the Tuman brotherhood, the thesis which Radoje Arsović defended at the University of Montpellier was recently found. The authenticity of this thesis was later reconfirmed by the catalogues of French universities and libraries, and also by literature. Now we know that Arsović defended this thesis in Montpellier in 1925. The full title of his thesis is “Pascal and experiment at Puy-de-Dôme,” in French:

R. Arsovitch, “Pascal et l’expérience du Puy-de-Dôme: thèse Présentée devant la Faculté des Lettres de Montpellier.” Thèse par R. Arsovitch pour obtenir le grade de docteur de l’université

³⁵ Cf. a letter of Bishop Nikolai to Fr. A. Todorović, written on November 21 1951, in which he says that the manuscript of *Divan* is finished, in Velimirovich 2016c, 664–665.

³⁶ Cf. Velimirovich’s letter to A. Todorović, written on January 13 1953, where Bishop Nikolai mentioned Arsović’s huge efforts in reconstruction of Holy Trinity Monastery in Ovčar, in Velimirovich 2016c, 687–688; cf. also Velimirovich 2016b, [201].

(Mention Lettres), 4 Juin 1925. Université de Montpellier — Faculté des lettres, 1925 (Montpellier: Imprimerie de Firmin et Montane, Rue Ferdinand-Fabre et quai du Verdanson, 1925). In-8, 76 p., fig.

In this research, Arsović offered a contribution to the history of this experiment, its relationship with the experiments on the vacuum in the vacuum, and on Descartes' relations with Pascal.

Arsović's thesis was a so-called University doctorate. Namely, at that time, in postgraduate studies in the French educational system, "there was the University doctorate (doctorat d'université) which, however, carried little prestige, and the state doctorate (doctorat d'état), which was the standard requirement for a position as a full professor in an University" (Gutting 2001, 391). Arsović's Montpellier thesis is written on 76 pages (which was not unusual at the time, as can be checked in academic catalogues), and contains a list of members of Faculty of Letters at the University of Montpellier (p. 4), a dedication and an acknowledgment to Kosta Kumanudi (In Serbian: Константин Коста Кумануди, 1874–1962), "professor at the University of Belgrade, former Minister of Finance, a former delegate at the League of Nations" [A monsieur Kosta Koumanudi, professeur à l'Université de Belgrade, ancien ministre des Finances, ancien délégué à la Société des Nations, *très respectueusement*.] (p. 5), the text of thesis (pp. 7–68), an appendix (Appendice. Le texte de la «Gravitas comparata», pp. 69–71 — with a commentary on conclusions of a Catholic theologian and French grammarian Étienne Noël (1581–1659) and a French physicist and philosopher of science Pierre Duhem (1861–1916)), followed by 4 + 4 figures of Pascal's devices reconstructed by P. Duhem (pp. 72–73), 3 proposals for further reading ["Propositions de la faculté"] (p. 74) and a bibliography (pp. 75–76).

During the same year, Arsović's thesis was published as a book — probably with some corrections, so it is maybe dif-

ferent than his thesis defended at the University of Montpellier (according to the note in the catalogue of the National Library of France), although the number of pages and physical description of this book is the same as the description of his thesis — and even same typos are printed in both publications (cf. Arsovitch 1925a, 69 and Arsovitch 1925b, 69: *Granvitas*) — which leads us to the presumption that these are slight differences.³⁷

R. Arsovitch, *Pascal et l'expérience du Puy-de-Dôme* (Montpellier: Imprimerie de Firmin et Montane, Rue Ferdinand-Fabre et quai du Verdanson, 1925). In-8, 76 p., fig.³⁸

It is interesting to note that in 1925 an article written by Arsović, regarding a problem of Pascal's writings (cf. Arsovitch 1925c), namely an article on a letter which should be

³⁷ We compared Arsović's thesis and his publication, and the only differences we noted are those in the impressum — pp. 1, 5 — regarding information on defense of the thesis, and on the last page — p. 76: in his thesis Joseph Vianey (1864–1939) — the dean of the Faculty of Letters (Faculté des lettres), and Jules Coulet (1870–1953) — the rector of the Academy of Montpellier (Académie de Montpellier) are signed. Their signatures are dated to February 1925, as follows (cf. Arsovitch 1925a, 76):

Vu:
Montpellier, le 2 Février 1925
Le doyen de la Faculté des lettres,
J. Vianey

Vu et permis d'imprimer:
Montpellier, le 3 Février 1925
Le Recteur,
J. Coulet

³⁸ Both Arsović's thesis and his book are included in the voluminous *Serbian Bibliography*, under nos. 1805 and 1804 (cf. Živanov et al. 1989, 165). In the same publication there is a reference to an extant copy of his thesis, preserved in the National Library of France (Bibliothèque nationale de France), and also a reference to a copy of his book which is preserved in the Library of [the Faculty of Philology at] the University of Belgrade, which we used for the purpose of this paper. However, it seems that previous researchers did not note these references.

attributed to Pascal, since no one except Pascal could have written it — which Arsović shows through textual analysis³⁹ — was published in *Review of Literary History of France* (in French):

R. Arsovitch, “Une lettre qu’il faut attribuer à Pascal,” *Revue d’Histoire littéraire de la France*, 32^e Année, No. 3 (1925): 406–415.⁴⁰

So we can conclude that Arsović studied Pascal’s thought, as some earlier authors claimed, and he pursued a Ph.D. degree at the University of Montpellier in 1925. His doctoral research on Pascal’s experiment was noted and acknowledged in international scientific circles (cf., for instance, “Livres reçus” 1925, 45; Ritter 1925, 176; “Recent Publications” 1926, xcvi; “New publications” 1927, 126; Peyre 1930, 337; Andison 1948: 44, 54;⁴¹ Giraud 1958, 153; Leclercq 1960, 59; Leclercq 1964, 42; Mesnard 1970, 675). The same could be said for his research on Pascal’s letter as well (cf. Magne 1925, 167; Ritter 1925, 176; Josserand 1953, 8; Giraud 1958, 153; Cabeen 1961, 451).⁴²

³⁹ It is a kind of paradox because one decade later Arsović himself generated a confusion regarding his own writings — publishing it anonymously, pseudonymously, or signing it by acronyms.

⁴⁰ This Arsović’s research was also known in his homeland, as well as his thesis defended at Montpellier (cf. Ibrovac 1927, 93).

However, although there was certain interest for Pascal in Arsović’s homeland of that time (cf. Atanasijević 1935; Milojević 1938; Jagodić 1939), and Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church published a translation of Pascal’s *Pensées* (by Hieromonk Hrizostom Vojinović) in 1946 (cf. Pascal 1946), we were not able to find any other reference to Arsović’s research on Pascal in Serbian literature except the one mentioned above.

⁴¹ Andison underlines: “Nor should one fail to mention the thoroughly objective thesis devoted to the Great Experiment, presented in the University of Montpellier in 1925 by R. Arsovitch.” — cf. Andison 1948, 44.

⁴² In Cabeen’s influential work, we can read the following description of the Arsović’s article: “A *Lettre au père Annat* was included with *Provinciales* until Bossut’s ed. of *P[rovinciales]*. in 1779. Author restores it to *P[rovinciales]*., arguing soberly and convincingly from internal evidence.” — cf. Cabeen 1961, 451.

As for his Ph.D., which he allegedly obtained at the Sorbonne University, we could not find any information. In the catalogue of Ph.D. theses defended at French Universities from 18th century to 1940 there is just one thesis defended by Arsović — a mentioned thesis from the University of Montpellier (cf. Huguet 2009).

However, there are traces of his activity at Sorbonne. According to the list of thesis subjects deposited at the Faculty of Letters at the University of Paris before January 1, 1938 — and here please note that it is the list of subjects of theses which are not defended — which is published in the *Annals of the University of Paris* for 1938, Arsović deposited a subject for his Ph.D. thesis, i.e. subjects of theses for his state doctorate (D. E. = Doctorat d'Etat) in 1927. At that time, this degree required two theses, a primary one (Th. Pr. = Thèse Principale) and a shorter “complementary” thesis (Th. Sec. = Thèse Secondaire) “typically on a historical topic related to the main thesis” (Gutting 2001, 391–392). According to the mentioned list, Arsović deposited subjects for his primary and secondary thesis at the University of Sorbonne on July 7th 1927. In the mentioned list of subjects, in chapter 3 — with subjects in French literature (Littérature française), in subchapter C — with subjects on 17th century (XVII^e siècle), under nos. 634 and 635, the subjects of Arsović's theses from 1927 can be found (cf. “Liste de Sujets de Thèses...” 1938, 362):

634 — Pascal. — ARSŒVITCH⁴³ R. — Essai sur les *Pensées* de Pascal. — *Th. Pr. D. E.* (7 Juillet 1927).

635 — ARSOVITCH R. — La maladie de Pascal. — *Th. Sec. D. E.* (7 Juillet 1927).

We don't know if Arsović defended these theses at the University of Sorbonne. However, it is not likely he continued

⁴³ His surname is misspelled here, and it was corrected to Arsovitich on the last page of *Annals* (cf. “Corrections a la Liste de Thèses” 1938, 580).

his doctoral studies at the University of Sorbonne during the 1930s. As we mentioned, according to the literature, he was in Yugoslavia during the 1930s, and it seems he lost his interest in studying secular science, becoming focused on Orthodox spirituality and missionary work.

On the other hand, in a prestigious publication of the time, which was aimed to list theses (i.e. dissertations) in progress and “to serve as a clearing-house for dissertation subjects”, namely in the *Work in Progress in the Modern Humanities*, we can find mentions of those theses. This leads us to the presumption that in the late 1930s the scientific community was expecting an outcome of Arsović’s research on Pascal at the University of Sorbonne. Both of his theses are here listed again, and marked with the letter “D”, which signifies that “the work will be submitted for a degree, nearly always for a doctorate, at the university named” (cf. Osborn and Sawyer 1939, xiv). So we can read as follows, under nos. 3446 and 3447 (cf. Osborn and Sawyer 1939, 168):

3446. Arsovitch, R. (Paris). Essai sur les *Pensées* de Pascal. D

3447. ——— La maladie de Pascal. D

However, regardless of expectations the scientific community had — or at least regardless of expectations the editors of the *Work in Progress* had — it seems Arsović did not earn a state doctorate at the University of Sorbonne in the 1930s. And nor before nor after that time. But since he deposited subjects of theses for his state doctorate in 1927, why he did not finish his studies and crowned it with a doctorate? What could be the reason that made him give up on this prestigious title? There could be many reasons. Maybe he simply gave up. Since in meantime he became a novice and later a monk, we can guess he probably was not interested in an academic career. Similar to Pascal,

it seems he abandoned the scientific worldview as non-sufficient and put his attention to questions of Christian spirituality and asceticism. Maybe he lost his interest in studies or interest in secular science in general. On the other hand, maybe he was unable to finish his research since he chose poverty as a manner of life. And also, and this should be underlined, war troubles cut communication and changed the world, so even if he would have liked to defend his second Ph.D. thesis and obtain another doctorate, Arsović was not able to do that.



**Figure 1. Photograph of Jakov / Radoje Arsović.
The credit goes to the present Brotherhood of
Tumane Monastery**

Conclusion

We could not find any information on Arsović's graduate studies in France nor on the defense of his theses at the University of Sorbonne in the 1920s and 1930s. The only thesis Arsović wrote we know of so far is the thesis which he defended at the University of Montpellier in 1925. Our quest through literature and the catalogues of French libraries revealed no information on the defense of other doctoral theses by Radoje Arsović at the University of Sorbonne or other French universities. However, we would prefer not to draw conclusions, since there are traces of his research on Pascal at the University of Paris. Hopefully, some future research will shed light on his education and more generally on this period of his life.

However, in published works of Radoje / Jakov Arsović there are obvious traces of the influence of French culture, sociological and political context, there are frequent references to people from French history, and knowledge of French history as well. It seems his world view was significantly marked and shaped by his French education and life in France, both positively and negatively. This is obvious in his reflections on contemporary issues, where he used to mention France in both ways — by underlining examples of pious and religious people and by examples of secular and corrupted i.e. non-Christian way of life. But the questions regarding Arsović's opus are standing in the way when considering the actual extent of influence of his life and education in France to his world view and his theological insights.

Concluding this paper, we would like to add three short suggestions:

1. An archival investigation in ecclesiastical, public, and university archives — both in France and in Ex-Yugoslavia — would be necessary for the study of Arsović's life and work; hopefully, an outcome of that investigation would be more information for Arsović's biography.
2. A preliminary research of periodicals and publications from the time when Arsović flourished — which would bring out at least an annotated bibliography of Arsović's works — is needful to establish a frame for future research of his contribution.
3. At last, but not least, a critical edition of his works would be a presumption for proper understanding and interpretation of his thought in the future. And also an important step towards clarification regarding authorship of certain writings attributed posthumously to Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich.



Figure 2. Bishop Nicolai (in the middle) with Monk Jakov Arsović (on the right) among faithful people. Source: Plečević 2019, 100–101.

* * *

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Mission and reception of St Justin Popović*

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Vladimir Cvetković, Bogdan Lubardić (eds.), *Thought and Mission of St Justin Popović: International Thematic Conference Proceedings*, Belgrade 2019, 422 p.

Bogdan Lubardić, *Justin of Čelije and England: Ways of Reception of British Theology, Literature and Science*, Belgrade 2019, 224 p.

Владимир Цветковић и Богдан Лубардић (ур.), *Мисао и мисија Светиој Јустину Поповића: међународни темејски зборник*, Београд — Ниш: Институт за филозофију и друштвену теорију Универзитета у Београду — Православни богословски факултет Универзитета у Београду — Центар за византијско-словенске студије Универзитета у Нишу, 2019, 422 стр.

Богдан Лубардић, *Јустин Ђелијски и Енглеска: њујевски рецејције дријанске теолојије, књижевности и науке*, Београд: Институт за теолошка истраживања — Православни богословски факултет Универзитета у Београду, 2019, 224 стр.

This review essay brings a closer look at two books about Serbian saint and theologian Justin Popović, both were published in 2019 in Serbian. The first one, presented and analysed in this review, is the international thematic conference proceedings *Mission and thought of St Justin Popović*, edited by Vladimir Cvetković and Bogdan Lubardić from the Orthodox Theolog-

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ical Faculty in Belgrade (Serbia). The second one, presented in the next review, is *Justin of Ćelije and England: Ways of Reception of British Theology, Literature and Science*, written by Bogdan Lubardić. There is no need to introduce the life and work of Justin Popović (1894–1979) to the readers of this journal as it is generally known: monk and saint of the Orthodox Church (St Justin the New of Ćelije), professor at the University of Belgrade, co-founder of the Serbian Philosophical Society, one of the most prominent and important Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century. In my modest opinion, these two books open a new chapter in the research of Justin Popović's legacy, in contrast to revival-apologetic and descriptive approach that previously dominated the reception of Justin Popović's thoughts. This new approach is characterized by a non-ideological approach to Justin's work and balances between two extremes, in a certain sense it proposes a middle path. The first extreme, pietistic and defensive-panegyric, considers any criticism of Justin's work to be a direct attack on his holiness. The second extreme finds in Justin's work a justification to reject the Serbian Church and all Orthodoxy due to their anti-modern and retrograde nature. Both extremes had fed each other for years and insist on the objectivity and complete truthfulness of their own interpretation of Justin's work. The proposed middle ground no longer has as the starting point of whether Justin's views are correct or not, but it considers the reasons and circumstances in which Justin's work occurs.

The conference proceedings of justinological studies *Studia Iustiniana Serbica Collationes* brings extended and redacted papers presented at the conference *Mission and thought of St Justin Popović* organized in Belgrade on May 10 and 11, 2019 by the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory (Belgrade), by the Orthodox Theological Faculty of the University of Belgrade and by the Center for Byzantine-Slavic Studies at the University of Niš. This conference was a scientific forum for the formulation of new scientific-methodological approaches and for a

more thorough interpretation of Justin Popović's legacy, especially with regard to his critique of humanism, Catholicism and Protestantism. The conference participants tried to find ways of carefully distinguishing between the authentic spirituality of Justin Popović and its reduction, instrumentalization and ideologization. They made assumptions for the undeniably important contribution of Justin Popović's thought: thought that, according to the participants' opinion, is relevant not only for Orthodoxy, but for Christian theology and spirituality *per se*. Hence the published volume from a broader historical-theoretical perspective shows the status of the research of Justin's legacy both in domestic and foreign academic circles. From the 33 lectures presented at the conference 24 are included in this collection, many of them are by Orthodox theologians of Serbian, Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, or Western provenance, present are even Roman Catholic or Lutheran theologians.

A few words about editors. *Vladimir Cvetković* (*1970) is currently working at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade. He gained his education at Durham University and worked as a research and teaching fellow at the universities of Princeton (USA), Aarhus (Denmark), St Andrews (Scotland, UK), Oslo (Norway) and Niš (Serbia). Trained in patristics, Byzantine philosophy and Orthodox theology he wrote books on Gregory of Nyssa and on the perception of the West in contemporary Serbian Orthodoxy, noteworthy are also two edited volumes on Georges Florovsky's ecumenism. One of the things he emphasizes in his justinological studies is the previously overlooked presence of Maximus the Confessor in Popović's theological opinion, especially in connection with the doctrine of the human person as the image of God. The



second editor is *Bogdan Lubardić* (*1964), the Head of the Department for philosophy and religion studies at the Orthodox Theological Faculty of the University of Belgrade. He translated many important works by foreign authors (Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Kallistos Ware, John Zizioulas) into Serbian, but attracted attention with his authorial monographs (on Lev Shestov, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Justin Popović). His two monographs on Justin Popović (*Justin of Ćelije and Russia*, 2009 and *Justin of Ćelije and England*, 2019), but also his pedagogical and organizational activity, made him the custodian of Justin's legacy.

Cvetković and Lubardić are not only editors of the conference proceedings and organizers of the conference, but together they wrote an introductory chapter "Justinological studies in a Serbian and European context" which is, in a certain sense, a manifest of the new critical interpretation of St Justin Popović. In this chapter they show that the reception of Justin Popović's work is quite a complex and, in a sense, delicate issue due to certain aspects that still cause either doubts or the most contradictory opinions. They show that reception and interpretation of Justin's work during the last four decades (1979–2020) took place under the strong influence of historical and political events in the Balkans and was mostly ideological, hence they reconstruct several phases of the reception of Popović (p. 8). It is important to explain this further.

The *first* phase (from 1979 to 1990) is marked by the care of Justin's written legacy by his closest students, most notably Atanasije Jevtić and Amfilohije Radović. The *second* phase dates back to the 1990s, when Popović was discovered by the general public, but at the same time, however, continued the purposeful interpretation of his work for ideological purposes. The recognition of Croatian independence by leading Western countries significantly affected the decline in interest in Justin's anti-communism, which was replaced by an emphasis on his critique of papal authority and Roman Catholicism; the ecclesiological claims of the papacy to universal

jurisdiction have been interpreted as the Vatican's efforts for absolute power, which is incompatible with Christianity itself — this resulted in an increased interest in Justin's stance on ecumenism. The *third* phase began in the late 1990s, when Anti-Western sentiment in Serbian society culminated — fuelled by the policies of Western countries from the early 1990s, first by the break-up of Yugoslavia and then by economic and military support to parties with which Serbs were in armed conflict with during the war. Ignoring Serbia's national interests, the bombing of Serbia in 1999 was seen only as the culmination of this long-standing West policy towards Serbia. For this reason, interest in Justin's critique of the papacy has been replaced by an interest in his critique of humanism and rationalism, and his critique of Western anthropocentric and secularist values has come to the fore.

The end of the first decade of the 21st century is when the next, *fourth*, phase in the academic reception of the Serbian thinker's legacy started, characterized by the rise in the academic study of the spiritual and philosophical-theological contribution of Justin Popović. This momentum, as the editors admit (p.13) is to some extent the result of the scientific project *Serbian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, which took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia in two research cycles (2006–2010 and 2011–2015), and enabled an approach to Popović from different theoretical and methodological perspectives: from a dogmatic, liturgical, hagiological, patrological, philosophical, biblical, cultural and pedagogical educational perspective. This scientific project was a decisive impulse for the rise of an open academic debate on the interpretations of the work of Justin Popović. This impetus established the, until then missing, necessary conditions for the possibility of establishing *justinology* as a specialist discipline of Serbian and Orthodox patrology in general, which led to the latest, *fifth*, phase in the scientific-academic reception of Father Justin's legacy (p. 18). Justin's work is no longer perceived only within theological disciplines, but also within the broad-

er framework of the humanities and social sciences. Another point is that authors from abroad and from other denominations are also involved in Justin-research, and find in Justin's work a source of new and original interpretations. In this sense, we must perceive the recent (2019) international conference entitled *Mission and Thought of St Justin Popović*.

Authors involved in the reviewed conference proceedings often demythologize and de-instrumentalize Justin's work, but do not prove that it is less valuable or even worthless, as Justin's domestic and foreign critics would like; on the contrary, they show that it is far more philosophically and theologically relevant than its uncritical conservative admirers would prefer (p. 20). The justinological studies included in this volume bring a perspective of various humanistic disciplines (from theology and philosophy, through the theory of literature, to psychology, pedagogy and historiography), and hence show the value of Justin's work in the broader context of socio-humanistic disciplines. The Serbian saint is not presented as an ideological construct, nor is his work used to establish one's ideological position, but his thought is presented on the basis of external intellectual-cultural, socio-political and wider ecclesiastical and inter-confessional circumstances. All this shows that justinological studies have ceased to be a scientific discourse limited to one national culture and significant only within its locality, as one third of the papers included in this collection are the original conference presentations presented in English, and originally written in Russian, French, German, Czech, Bulgarian and Greek.

The collection contains 24 works divided into six thematic units, which depict the directions in which the reception of Justin Popović's work moves. The first thematic area "Justin Popović between ecumenism and anti-ecumenism" concerns the ecumenical and anti-ecumenical views of Father Justin; it contains chapters from both editors as well the Catholic perspective from prof. Thomas Bremer of the University in Munster, and the Lutheran perspective of a theologian from the Czech Republic. All four works show that Justin's relations with

the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches, as well as his relations with the institution of the papacy, are more nuanced and subtler than was understood previously. The next thematic unit “Justin Popović, Dostoevsky and religious philosophy” refers to Popović’s reading of Dostoevsky and his heritage, which is a link that ties together philosophy, literary criticism and theology. The works within this thematic unit shed light on various aspects of Popović’s reading of Russian religious philosophy, as well as the creative adoption of some key ideas. The third thematic area “Anthropology of Justin Popović” is dedicated to the anthropology of Justin Popović, which represents a significant contribution to Christian and philosophical anthropology in general. The works on this matter point to the supporting pillars of Justin Popović’s anthropology, such as the dialectic of human-centeredness and God-centeredness, or the spiritual dimensions of human nature, faith, grace and asceticism. The fourth thematic unit “Justin Popović: hagiographer, preacher, dogmatist, liturgist” deals with various aspects of the priestly ministry of Father Justin and his theological activities, which illuminates him as a clergyman, preacher, missionary, dogmatist and liturgist. This thematic section deepens the understanding of various aspects of Justin’s personality and his ministry, but also his theological opus. The fifth thematic area “Justin Popović and the West” is dedicated to Justin Popović’s attitude towards the West, which has often been described in previous research as too critical. The sixth and last part “Valorisation and Reception” (p. 365) deals with the reception of Justin Popović in certain environments and within certain historical contexts. It clearly shows the ways and means in which Father Justin reached his readers around the world as well as some of the reasons for his receptivity to others.

These thematic conference writings are recommended to all interested in Justin Popović and his world, but also to those interested in dogmatics, spirituality, theological anthropology, modern Orthodox theology, ecumenism, and patristics. The thematic conference materials are written in Serbian and non-

Serbian-speaking readers will have to wait either for an English translation or can hope that individual authors will publish their texts in English; both are highly recommended. The same can be said about the authorial monographs of Bogdan Lubardić, one of the editors.

The books of Bogdan Lubardić from the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade are famous for their careful and precise elaboration and this is also the case with his latest book *Justin of Ćelije and England: Ways of Reception of British Theology, Literature and Science*. There we can find a clearly described and then consistently followed methodology, cautious conclusions, detailed research, clear and comprehensible structure, consistent argumentation, precise expressions, objective evaluation of the analysed topics and reasoning of individual statements. Still, the author's vocabulary is not sterile, quite the contrary, reading this book can be compared to reading a detective story, where you consume word after word, just to find out what it was really like with Justin Popović in England.

The book *Justin of Ćelije and England* creates a diptych with the book written 10 years earlier (*Justin of Ćelije and Russia*, 2009) and in both books Lubardić follows aspects of Christian traditions with which Justin Popović communicated (p. 12). While in the book on Russia Lubardić dealt with the relation of Justin's work to the world of Russian Orthodox spirituality, in the reviewed book *Justin of Ćelije and England* the author focuses on Father Justin's ideas in relation to the world of Anglican spirituality and British culture. This step is indeed logical and expected if it is known that after his studies in St. Petersburg (1916) Justin continued his education in Oxford (1916–1919). The biographical and educational context of his life is thus immersed in a much broader and more fundamental context, which Lubardić calls the intellectual-existential context. The author is aware that behind Justin's ideas and thoughts one can find other thinkers; he does not want to say that Popović is performing some kind of synthesis, but

this awareness is an inevitable consequence of hermeneutically consistent reflection. In the spiritual sense, Popović encountered a number of thinkers, with whom he forms a spiritual-intellectual community that is not completely reducible only to a circle of Orthodox thinkers. Being aware of this fact led the author of the book to read Popović more inclusively, both in relation to Orthodox and in relation to other forms of Christian traditions (p. 11).

One of the highlights of this book is the methodology used. Lubardić's method of interpretation was already evident in his previous publications, but now is it clearly described in detail. It consists of the use of the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), more specifically in the application of effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), which allowed Lubardić not only to reconstruct the basic context and assumptions of Justin's starting position for building neo-patristic Christian philosophy, but also to introduce a mechanism of so-called selective reception. In short, Gadamer's methodology helped Lubardić to become aware that all received texts or ideas are not reciprocated statically or objectively, but are interpreted; what's more, interpreted from a specific point of view. This means that Father Justin's thoughts and texts should be considered in the context of those texts/authors/ideas that he himself reciprocated. If we do not do so, Lubardić realizes, we remain to some extent caught in a pre-critical way of understanding (p. 20). In his book Lubardić shows that Justin's texts and thoughts can, to some extent, be understood as the effects of his own (i.e. Justin's) reading; but it is not important only whether and to what extent and in what way these are the ideas and texts of Dostoevsky, Floren-



sky, Florovsky or Khomjakov (i.e. not just an inventory of influences), but one must follow the effective history wherever it leads us, both the main and seemingly secondary structures and roots that are contained and assumed in Justin's texts. In other words, without looking at the way the text is received in its history, with the socio-historical context of all stages of transmission, its interpretation may be false or misleading precisely because of, say, ideological intentions that we may not be aware of.

The application of the hermeneutic method helped Lubardić to achieve some results. First of all, it enabled him to underline that Justin Popović is an independent thinker in the neo-patristic synthesis movement and, at the same time, one of the pioneers of this movement. Lubardić labels Justin's theological method as *selective reception*. This methodology functions as a mechanism for the synthesis of spiritual and cognitive forms, to which Popović responds. In a critical dialogue with others, Popović filters the heterodox ideas, but accepts those he considers synthetically stimulating and Orthodox. Popović complements the method of selective reception with the criterion of reasoning, *diakrisis* (p. 29). As a result, Justin incorporates into his Christian philosophy and theology only what passes the critical test of thinking, and confirms the received content with his own seal — the dogma of Christ the Godman. The chosen hermeneutic approach allows Lubardić to avoid both the temptation to idealize Popović's thinking and the temptation to arrogantly disqualify his thinking. He searches for a possibility, a middle path, that would avoid both of these extremes and which would also preserve the seriousness of Justin's thoughts and theology. Lubardić respects the fact that Popović is a saint and a great thinker, but still is aware that like everyone else, he bears the stamp of the finitude. Lubardić does not perceive the undeniable holiness of Justin Popović as an alibi for literal or superstitious ideological reading "on his behalf".

It is obvious that Bogdan Lubardić is concerned with creating preconditions and establishing justinology as an offshoot

of Orthodox patrology, but the main task of his book is to create space for new possibilities of understanding the work of Justin Popović while at the same time preserving the integrity of his work. Henceforward Lubardić sees it as appropriate to shed light on the basic preconditions of Justin's spiritual, theological and philosophical thinking from new perspectives. He believes that introducing new contextual dimensions will ensure Popović the academic scientific and spiritual credibility that his work deserves.

The book contains six chapters; a description of the methodology and scientific research approach is in the first chapter. The story of Popović and England *per se* begins with the second chapter, entitled "Oxford: Justin Popović and Walter Frere: A Controversial Final Thesis on Dostoevsky — An Attempt to Mediate Horizons." Namely, during World War I, the Theological Faculty in Oxford welcomed a group of at least 55 theological refugees from Serbia — seminarians, professors and clergy. It was a non-trivial gesture of the British authorities that influenced the historical and social relations between two churches, and thanks to which the formation of theologians from the Serbian Orthodox Church in seminaries was preserved. Justin Popović was among the first ones to arrive in 1916, and he was accepted into a study program to obtain the title of Bachelor of Letters (Baccalaureus Litterarum, B.Litt.). His thesis was titled *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, but Justin did not defend it and did not obtain a certified degree from the university. In scientific circles this "Oxford debacle" (p. 40) is considered a controversial and rather vague matter, very complicated and, above all, sensitive. Examiners Walter Frere and Nevill Forbes acknowledged in their review that the work was a detailed and eloquent interpretation of Dostoevsky's religious beliefs, but criticized it for lack of any criticism and that it did not offer a reflection about Dostoevsky's relation to events in Russia and Russian Orthodoxy at that time. Opponents felt that Popović did not question Dostoevsky's assumptions at all, but accepted them as a predeter-

mined truth, which he himself “preached” rather than subjected to a critical approach.

Lubardić examines the pros and cons of this issue and convincingly shows that in contrast (and in addition) to his negative view of Western Christianity, which is the main reason why Justin’s work has not been accepted, Justin Popović in some passages also suggests a positive and inclusive relationship with Western Christianity (p. 40). This fact may somewhat revise the widespread view that Justin’s thinking is anti-Western. Lubardić reveals this positive relationship in a number of positive references to Anglican thinkers, theologians and poets, as well as British naturalists. He accepts the allegation that Justin’s dissertation lacks a meta-critical perspective, and acknowledges that opponents were more than competent to comment on this point. Among others, Lubardić suggests that opponents may even have fallen into the trap of fearing that Popović’s disqualification of ungodly humanism would also disqualify the entire Western Christian civilization and culture as such — as Lubardić tries to show, total disqualification of the West was never what Popović intended (p. 57). At the same time, Lubardić points out that the reviewers did not notice the pioneering dimension of Justin’s thesis, as it is written according to the model of the Fathers of the Church and should be placed among the books of spiritual-ascetic literature (p. 46).

Lubardić finds out that in Justin’s texts one encounters insufficiently described and researched cases of positive attitudes towards British thinkers, a detailed description of these references and connections is given in chapters 3 and 4. In the third chapter, entitled “Justin Popović and other British Minds 1: Literature and Theology, Murry and Newman”, he deals mainly with Justin’s relation to John Middleton Murry and John Henry Newman. In the fourth chapter “Justin Popović and other British Minds 2: Natural Science, Eddington, Jeans, Crowther, Sullivan, Taking into Account the Theology of Logos”, Lubardić underlines the influence of recent

astrophysical and physical cosmological facts and theories of British Anglican scientists on Justin. Popović sees these theories as spiritually meaningful and integrates them into his philosophical theology. Here Lubardić brings a new and surprising discovery of how Justin uses Maxim the Confessor's theology of *logos* and *logoi spermatikoi* in order to integrate and define the results of the new physical sciences of the first third of the 20th century (p. 134). Namely, Justin Popović believes that in each visible *logos* is an invisible, still distinct manifestation of the intention of the divine *Logos*. He uses the latest scientific discoveries of his time about the meaning of invisible structures behind the visible matter as proof that everything comes from the invisible creative *Logos* — Christ the Almighty. In short, everything strives for invisibility and infinity, *ad infinitum*, because everything derives from the creative principle of the Invisible. The model of Maxim the Confessor is thus for Justin, as Lubardić sees it, a model according to which the results of modern sciences can be theologically confirmed. Equally important is also Justin's convergence with the Anglican critique of the First Vatican Council, and his admiration for some English writers and poets (Shakespeare and Thompson). In the fifth chapter "Reflections from the Library of Justin of Ćelije: Theological Beams in English: Butler, Illingworth, Holland, Sayce, Pass, and Thompson's Theopoetics" Lubardić visits and explores Justin's own library (still located in the Ćelije Monastery), analyses the English books he found there, and explains their meaning for Justin Popović. The sixth chapter "Conclusion: Truth in Love and Love in Truth" is the prologue of the whole book and Lubardić brings here a final reflection.

What is the message we can take from this book? Certainly, it is an awareness that for Justin Popović spiritual empathy and respect for the Western Christian style were an expression of love for the truth, even though Justin means the truth of the (Orthodox) Church. Lubardić emphasizes that Justin's position is paradoxical only seemingly, or rather, it is formal-

ly paradoxical, but it is not fundamentally contradictory (p. 131). Considering more inclusive reflection of Western Christianity should be reason enough not to prematurely reject Justin's entire theological and philosophical work. On the contrary, one can pay particular attention to Justin Popović's life as a pilgrim, confirmed in prayer and asceticism, in the liturgical ministry and in spiritual contemplations about the mysteries of life with Christ in God. Justin's life and work were a deeply engaged witness in a time of spiritual crisis, and the source of his ideas is exactly this liturgical-ascetic communion with the living God-Man, it is not an anti-Western intellectual agenda, and therefore Orthodoxy should not be reduced to a religious-geopolitical matter. It must be emphasized once again, together with Lubardić, that for Justin, the "West" is a rhetorical-polemical topos that encompasses the whole of Europe, including the "Eastern" (p. 132).

Thus, if we saw the first major benefit of the peer-reviewed book to be in offering a new methodology that allows a much more comprehensive and holistic interpretation of Justin's thoughts, the second major benefit is a pioneering presentation of both the historical circumstances of Justin Popović's stay in England and their hermeneutic reflection, which showed (somewhat surprisingly) Justin's fundamental closeness to Western Christianity and British culture.

Both publications together open a new chapter in Justin-research and so contribute to the justinological debate. Let us hope that other books and publications will follow.

* * *



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Bojan Belić, *Bishop Nicholai, Hitler and Europe: Controversies*

Valjevo 2019, 259 p.

[In Serbian: **Бојан Белић, Владика Николај, Хитлер и Европа: конијроверзе.** Ваљево: Ваљевска гимназија, 2019. 259 стр. ; фотогр. ; 24 cm. ISBN 978–86–85419–13–3]

A book by Bojan Belić entitled *Bishop Nicholai, Hitler and Europe: Controversies* was published recently. An expert review for this publication was written by Dr. Veljko Đurić Mišina, the director at the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade, and Milorad Belić, a retired history professor. The most important facts regarding Bishop Nicholai's stay in Dachau are presented in Bojan Belić's book, a few of which are lesser-known to the Serbian audience, as well as the facts regarding his relation to Nazism, anti-Semitism, and Europe.

This publication brings out the data collected based on relevant sections taken from sources and literature in English and German language. One of the special features of this book is that it is written in a form of a discussion so it is abundant in polemical tones, mainly criticizing the conclusions reached by certain authors and a number of researchers who dealt with Bishop Nicholai's actions and fate prior to and during WW2.

According to Dr. Veljko Đurić Mišina (an excerpt from his review has been printed on the back cover of the book), this

work has several valuable characteristics: “among which the most important is that the author went through the effort of finding and later using numerous works on the relevant topic published in several languages”.

A preface (pp. 5–6) is followed by a chapter entitled “From Ljubostinja and Vojlovica to Dachau” (pp. 7–41) in which Belić is looking back at the assumptions and claims regarding Bishop Nicholai’s fate during WW2 brought up by Predrag Ilić, Jovan Bajford, Mirko Đorđević, Filip David, Aleksandar Lebl and other authors who criticized Bishop Nicholai’s actions and positioning in the context of Nazi politics. Those claims are being confronted by Belić, he is using testimonies taken from relevant documents, testimonies of Nazi detainees held in captivity during WW2, etc.

In the chapter entitled “An honorary bunker” (pp. 42–111), Belić explains why this title does not imply an honor conferred on detainees, comparing testimonies from historical records with the information on Bishop Nicholai’s and Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić’s stay in Dachau. Belić says:

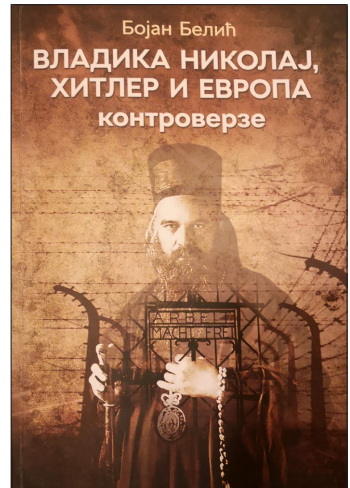
“‘Ehrenbunker’ was not some kind of an honorary bloc for guests of Nazi regime, it was a claustrophobic line of narrow damp hallways, weighted by heavy, dense, walls without windows, or a wall with a tiny window with bars, there was an interrogation room and possibly a room for physical punishments, surrounded by guardhouses, and in the yard there was a wall designated for executions by firing squad...” (p. 43).

The man who organized the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler — Johann Georg Elser (1903–1945), a German theologian and later a Bishop of Munich Johannes Neuhäusler (1888–1973), a French politician and prime minister Léon André Blum (1872–1950), the French army general and one of the leaders of the Resistance Charles Delestraint (1879–1945), Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) and other enemies of Nazi regime were imprisoned in this bunker which

contained 137 separate cells (p. 45). Serbian Church leaders were also held captive in the same camp block as some other Hitler's opponents and the prisoners of Nazi Reich, as Belić points out in this chapter, by collecting very useful and striking testimonies of witnesses, prisoners who survived terrors of concentration camps, as well as by collecting testimonies from other materials and relevant literature.

In a chapter entitled "Subcamp Schliersee" (pp. 112–133) the author shows that Dachau was not just a single camp, it was rather a system of camps — a complex which "was comprised of 77 side-camps and subcamps (some of which were remote and more than 200 km away), like Itter and Schliersee" (p. 113). This being said, it would not be accurate to consider the stay of Bishop Nikolai and Patriarch Gavrilo in Itter and Schliersee as their release, which was readily concluded by a number of the previous researchers. On the contrary, as these sub-camps were administratively dependent on the central camp in Dachau, this would mean that Serbian bishops were detained in the Dachau camp complex both at the end of 1944 and during the first few months of 1945, which to a significant extent redefines the approach to the question of the duration of their captivity in Nazi camp conditions, which in some studies was reduced to a couple of weeks of an honorary visit to Dachau during September or October 1945.

In the most extensive chapter of the book, entitled "Bishop Nikolai on Nazism, Jews and Europe" (pp. 134–246), the author first offers a kind of comparative analysis of the reception of Nazi politics during the 1930s, thus indicating that, in the broader context of international relations, firstly in the context of Western European and also Eastern European and especially Soviet politics of that time, intellectual and cultural



movements and life in general, the danger of Nazism was not immediately recognized.

In the thematic respect, the focus of this chapter shifts to a broader level, and it deals with additional issues concerning the attitude of Orthodox Church dignitaries towards Bolshevism, the anti-Semitism which characterized actions and thoughts of individual politicians and creators who put a decisive stamp to the history and culture of 20th century, the problem of modern Serbian auto-chauvinists who did not try to approach these topics in an impartial way and, who have, by ignoring certain facts, through biased interpretation in the scientific community, among other things, introduced the image of Bishop Nicholai as an anti-Semite, Nazi ideologue, stupid chauvinist, etc. The topics of this chapter extend even to the problems of recent European history, the French Revolution (pp. 204–209), German idealist philosophy (pp. 210), and so on.

In the methodological sense, the presentation of the author's insights in this chapter becomes, at times, congested with the amount of information he processes and interprets, and it is very demanding to follow it. It is assumed that, for the sake of method, it would have been better to divide this chapter into several shorter chapters or subchapters, in which certain topics would be treated separately. At the same time, the question arises as to whether and to what extent it is justified to open so many questions and raise so many topics in a book dedicated to controversies related to the character of Bishop Nicholai.

On the other hand, the effort to gather and analyze so much information, that are to some extent important for the basic issue that the author dealt with, and the result he presented in his book, are both very valuable and will greatly facilitate the work of future researchers. First of all, certain data that Belić came across in the Serbian scientific community were partially known or even completely unknown, and in that sense, this book has a lot to offer to the interested reader.

Two essential remarks that we would give to the mentioned chapter would concern the interpretation of the work known

under the title *To the Serbian People Through the Dungeon Window* (pp. 184–197). Namely, we believe that, before interpreting this work, one should first examine it critically, i.e. approach the issues of authorship, origin, and authenticity of this work, which was published for the first time three decades after the death of Bishop Nikolai, in circumstances that are not clear, and which bind to some caution at least.

In addition, it is a real pity that the author did not pay attention to the ecumenical activities of Bishop Nikolai in the context of the anti-Nazi initiative of inter-Christian ecumenical organizations during the 1930s, for example in the context of Velimirovich's involvement in the activities of the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, i.e. Commissions for Life and Work and the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches. The mentioned bodies were already in September 1933, after the annual conference of the Commission for Life and Work held in Novi Sad, in which Bishop Nikolai also participated, as well as at the meeting of the Executive Board of the World Alliance held a few weeks later in Sofia, as a result of joint efforts, through appropriate statements publicly announced their position — a clear and very negative attitude towards Hitler's racist policy, rejecting the so-called "Arian paragraph" and the then Nazi agenda as anti-evangelical and anti-Christian. The consequences of this attitude were far-reaching and very significant, and we believe that, on the other hand, Nikolai's participation and support for these early anti-Nazi initiatives was one of the reasons he was characterized as a mortal enemy in the eyes of the Nazi regime even before the war, as the one who should be removed from public life as soon as possible.

However, a critical research of Bishop Nikolai's legacy is yet to come, and publications such as this one are an important and significant step toward overcoming the uncritical and frivolous approach to the issues of Velimirovich's thought, as well as to the issues of his life and work. In that sense, our remarks should be understood as a support

for Belić's research efforts, and encouragement for him to continue his diligent and dedicated work, because there are many open questions regarding the life and work of Bishop Nicholai, but only a few clear and precise answers and a few thorough and objective researchers.

In general, Belić's book brings a large number of very useful and interesting data, from a perspective that has been largely neglected by previous researchers. There is a list of used literature at the very end of the book (pp. 249–258). Unfortunately, the publication is not equipped with an index of names, or subjects, which, given the density of data collected in this book, would be a necessary tool and key to use all the valuable information contained in it. We believe that it would be very useful if a possible second edition of this publication would be equipped with indices of names and subjects, or at least with an index of names.

In a technical sense, this publication should be addressed in terms of spelling errors, i.e. certain shortcomings concerning the poorly done proofreading part of the work, as well as the typeface and preparation for printing; so for example, pagination according to the content brought on p. 259 does not correspond to the actual pagination of the chapters in the book.

But regardless of these minor shortcomings, Bojan Belić's book brings valuable insights to Serbian readers and invites the scientific community to reconsider the ruling qualification of Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich as a collaborator of Nazis, a supporter of Hitler, and an anti-Semite. The valuable work of Mr. Belić in collecting and analyzing sources and materials relevant to this topic deserves every praise.

Srećko Petrović

* * *



Slavica Popović Filipović, *The Great Women in the Great War*

Pančevo 2020, 761 pp.

[In Serbian: **Slavica Popović Filipović, Velike žene u Velikom ratu.**

Biblioteka Hrestomatija [Mali Nemo]. Pančevo: Mali Nemo, 2020.

761 str.; ilustr.; 25 cm. ISBN 978–86–7972–124–2]

Just released is a new book by Slavica Popović Filipović (known to English readers as Popovich Filipovich as well) entitled *Great Women in the Great War*. It is a major publication, of an impressive size, as the result of many years of research investigation in the areas of the history of the World War I, remembrance, history of medicine and medical corps, cultural diplomacy, history of the suffragette movement, humanitarian and philanthropic work. This book is the crowning glory of many years of research and publishing works of Mrs. Popovich Filipovich, who had previously already published a large number of research papers that encompassed the above topics.

This research project was an undertaking involving reviewing extensive archived materials, original documents, correspondence, hand-written texts, and photographs in various archives in different parts of the world, as well as in private family storage. The work in front of us is dedicated to some exceptional women who command exalted positions, women who sacrificed their personal lives by sharing wartime suffering with the Serbian people and armies during the trau-

matic war years: the typhoid epidemics, the exodus through the Albanian mountain ranges, the exile on the island of Corfu, Corsica, North Africa, on the Russian Front, and in Dobruja. Thus, this book is a remarkable evidence of the dedicated affection and strenuous work of over 2000 women doctors, medical sisters, and nurses who served in the hospitals of the Serbian Red Cross Society, the Scottish Women's Hospitals, the hospitals of the Serbian Relief Fund (SRF) and other voluntary and humanitarian organizations, in Serbia itself, and in the exile — both during the Great War and afterwards.

Knowing that the place and role of women in the history of the World War I have been traditionally marginalised, as pointed out by the author in the Introduction (pp. 9–16), this book gives a significant contribution to our understanding of these exceptional women who willingly risked their own lives in order to help others in need.

Mrs. Popovich Filipovich has gathered valuable documentation about scores of outstanding women from the abovementioned number — about renown Serbian women, the first Serbian and foreign women doctors, British suffragettes, Scottish women, American, Australian and Canadian women humanists, writers, painters, journalists, titled Ladies, and heroines from across the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, each with her own chapter in this book.

Thus the readers will find in this book a humanist, teacher, and translator Ljubica Luković (1858–1915), who was President of the Serbian Women's Society “Kolo srpskih sestara” from 1905 until 1915 (pp. 17–54); Dr. Angelia Al. Yaksitch — Anđelija Jakšić (1871–1950), awarded the Order of St Sava, and the Medal Albanska spomenica (pp. 55–89); the Scottish Dr Elsie Maud Inglis (1864–1917), a doctor and surgeon, the founder and Head of the Scottish Women's Hospitals — SWH (pp. 91–136); Dr. Isabel Galloway Emslie, Lady Hutton (1887–1960), the Scottish doctor, awarded the Order of St Sava, and the Russian Order of St. Anna, volunteered in SWH in France, Gevgelia, Salonika, and in Vranje after the Liberation (pp. 137–173).

Among those extraordinary ladies that are introduced to us in the book by Mrs Filipovich are: the Honorable Evelina Haverfield (1867–1920), a Baroness and a member of SWH in Serbia during the typhoid epidemic, and buried in the grounds of the St. Elijah Church in Bajina Bašta (pp. 175–204); then a better known to the readers our renown woman painter and humanist Ms Nadežda Petrović (1874–1915), also awarded the Order of St Sava; Delfa Ivanić (1887–1972), the co-founder of “Kolo srpskih sestara” (pp. 229–262); then the American Dr Rosalie Slaughter Morton (1876–1968), who was awarded numerous Serbian and foreign state and church medals and awards for her various achievements (pp. 263–290); then the British volunteer nurse in Serbia Dame Louise Margaret Leila Wemyss Paget — Lady Paget (1881–1958), who headed the First Unit of the Serbian Relief Fund, and was granted the First Grade of the Order of St. Sava (pp. 291–326); Mrs. Gertrude Carrington Wilde (1856–1945), a longtime member of the Serbian Relief Fund, in the mission for the Serbian people and Serbian children, a holder of the Second Grade of the Order of St. Sava (pp. 327–340), Mrs. Hannah Hankin Hardy (1866–1944), a volunteer nurse in Kragujevac, who collected and delivered a huge medical and humanitarian aid for the Serbian hospitals (pp. 341–357).

Following the previous books, the author continues to do research about Mrs. Jelena Lozanić Frothingham (1888–1872), a relief worker, and representative of the Serbian Red Cross in America and Canada, now with the special emphasis on a joint mission with Michael Pupin and John Frothingham (pp. 359–402); Australian from Sydney, Dr. Agnes Elizabeth Lloyd



Bennett (1872–1960), the head of the Scottish Women's Hospital at the Salonica Front, who was granted the third grade of the Order of St. Sava (pp. 403–460); a humanitarian worker, writer and translator Miss Lena Alexander Jovičić (1885–1969), a daughter of a Scottish lady Alice Mary Rutherford and Alexander Jovičić, a Serbian diplomat (pp. 461–494); the British suffragette, relief worker and the holder of the Order of St. Sava — Mrs. Mabel Annie St Clair Stobart (1862–1954), the head of the Third Unit of the Serbian Relief Fund in Kragujevac, who established seven dispensaries in the villages of Šumadija (pp. 495–544); and Miss Olive Kelso King (1885–1958), a member of the Scottish Women's hospital in France, Serbia and on the Salonica Front, but also known for her humanitarian work, was granted the Order of St Sava and other Serbian and international decorations (pp. 545–585).

The following chapter is about a volunteer nurse and philanthropist French Countess Marie de Shabannes la Palice (1890–1977), who helped Dr. Mihailo Petrović to establish the First Serbian Surgical Field Hospital on the Salonica Front (pp. 587–621); Madam Mabel Gordon-Dunlop Grouitch (1872–1956), an American humanist, and Serbian daughter-in-law, promoter of the Serbian struggle in Europe and America (pp. 623–646); Russian noblewoman Mrs. Alexandra Pavlovna Hartwig (1863–1944), a humanist and volunteer nurse, who contributed to the formation of numerous Russian hospitals to help Serbia, personally delivered the medical mission *Russian Pavilion* in Niš (pp. 647–680); and the Serbian doctor Dr. Slavka Mihajlović-Klisić (1888–1972), the only doctor at the Belgrade General Hospital after the Great Exodus, who left a diary of the Belgrade's suffering in the Great War (pp. 681–715); Canadian humanist and doctor Dr. Harriet Macmillan Cockburn (1873–1948), a doctor in the Third Unit of the Serbian Relief Fund in Kragujevac and the head of the dispensary in Lapovo, but also her colleagues from the homeland of the maple tree, who treated Serbian soldiers in Serbia and on the Salonica Front (pp. 717–743).

From the introduction in Serbian and English, the book has 21 chapters, written on 761 pages, with each chapter having a summary in English (the translations were done by Bob Filipovich, NATI Fellow) extensive literature, and finally an index with hundreds of names (pp. 745–754), a note on the author, and her gratitude to numerous associates, friends, collaboration team, especially the reviewer Dr. Veljko Todorović, the translator Mr. Bob Filipovich, the editor-in-chief, Mr. Milan Orlić Ph.D., the book-cover designer, Ms Jelena Basta, the editors Mr. Duško Lopandić and Miss Danica M. Savić, and others.

This book is valuable for the researchers of the Serbian religious history in general, and also for the research into the personality and life and work of Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich in England, because this book documents his connection and cooperation with those heroines in the Great War, even at the time before he became a bishop, as well as with other Serbian Church dignitaries. Also in this book are presented personal diaries of Jelena Lozanić describing her meetings with Velimirovich in USA during 1915 (pp. 373–374), then about joint activities of Father Nicholai, Honourable Evelina Haverfield, Dr. Elsie Inglis, and other humanitarians in the Committee for the Serbian National Day “Vidovdan” (“Kosovo Day”) celebrated in Great Britain in 1916 (pp. 190–191). The book also describes the support of Bishop Nicholai for the establishment of the First Nursing School in Belgrade in 1920 (pp. 702), and the mention of the lifelong friendship between Nicholai and Lady Paget (pp. 322) etc.

In the chapter about Lady Paget a special attention is given to her dedication and her care and help for other Serbian refugees, such as Dalmatian Bishop Irinej Đorđević (1894–1952), and Archpriest Miloje Nikolić (†1989), as well as her unselfish care and assistance to countless Serbian refugees for whom this lady spent all her property. In the end she even sold her family castle, a very valuable property that was owned by her family and ancestors from the time it was built in 1865. This philanthropic woman spent the last years of her life in a small

cottage, having spent all her material goods and property for the welfare of others (pp. 322–323).

In this book are also collected and presented documents that exhibit the co-operation between other prominent religious personalities from the Serbian sacral history and those humanitarian women, who took care of the sick and wounded. One good example was Dositej Vasić (1878–1945), the wartime Bishop of Niš, who worked with Mrs. Hartvig and other humanitarians. The book also presents more information about philanthropic service to the needy, and humanitarian activities of persons from other denominations and churches, such as the Russian Medical Mission of Athonite Monks under Hieromonk Epiphanius (pp. 50, 667).

Though this book contains an Index of names, it is a great pity that some pages were not included (such as that of Nicholai Velimirovich, who was also mentioned on pages 323, 335, 374, 477, etc., but these pages are not included in the Index). Also omitted are the names of Bishop Irinej Đorđević and Fr. Miloje Nikolić. However, these omissions are negligible compared to the wealth of information that this book brings to the Serbian readers and others. These are indeed valuable fruits of many years of laborious research by Slavica Popović Filipović. Therefore, we warmly welcome the publication of this book.

Srećko Petrović

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Guide for Authors

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