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War Machines and Orthodoxy: Unmanned Combat Vehicles and Autonomous Weapons Systems in Eastern Christian-Orthodox Understanding of War

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Abstract: In this paper, the author aims to explain why the use of modern war machines, namely Unmanned Combat Vehicles (UCV) and Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS), cannot be justified in Eastern Christian-Orthodox ethics of war. The author explains how the moral dimension of war in Eastern Christian Orthodoxy is derived from its ontological nature, which prevents the creation of a just war theory. War is understood as a divine punishment for nations which "fall from God" and it does not have a Manichean nature in which one side represents the Good and the other Evil, unlike Western Christianity which developed not only a Just War Theory but also the concept of a Holy War. Eastern Christian-Orthodoxy perceives war as a combination of a cataclysm and temptation for all involved, creating a morally-tragic situation for all soldiers who are faced with impossible choices. Due to the key implications of the introduction of modern war machines into warfare, namely the elimination of risk and even the elimination of the human element from the process of killing, such machines transform war into a punitive action of the "just" side, a phenomenon more resembling hunting, police enforcement, or even pest control in which the outcome is not in God's hands but is actually predetermined. The author therefore concludes that modern war machines are fundamentally incompatible with Eastern Christian-Orthodox ethics.

Key words: Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, War, Ethics of War, Unmanned Combat Vehicles, Autonomous Weapons Systems, Just War Theory, Holy War.

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1. Introduction – Religious Foundation of *Weltanschauung*

Despite the much-discussed and controversial phenomenon of "post-secularization" which has emerged in postmodern societies, including "the affluent societies of Europe or countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand" (Habermas 2008, 17), current political systems still remain secular, in the sense that political power is formally separated from the ecclesiastical. However, regardless of the level of formal secularization attained by the majority of modern nations, the underlying role of religion in the formation of ideologies and overall worldview of nations cannot be underestimated or ignored. This becomes conspicuously obvious when critically examining phenomena of central and vital significance for individuals and societies, i.e., when analyzing the understanding perceptions and relationships of a society towards such phenomena that profoundly affect human life and the overall stability of society. Unfortunately, there are little, if any, phenomena that have been of more essential and substantial importance for all of humanity than the phenomenon of war – one of the very few things on which all great thinkers of human civilization agree. However, there is an expected diversity of opinions on pretty much everything else regarding war, including its very nature; while most understood war as the most detrimental and devastating phenomenon in existence, many a philosopher saw war as an instrument of history, even as a profoundly desirable and positive occurrence – from the unconditional condemnation of war from the likes of Erasmus, Voltaire, Tolstoy, and others to its laudation and praise from the quills of Nietzsche, Zola, Tocqueville, and many more (Станар 2019, 13-32). Regardless of the dissonant perspectives, there is no disagreement on the fact that war has always been, and will remain, "central to human history and social change", as Orend (2000) phrased it.

Therefore, it is important to understand just how religious perceptions and interpretations of the phenomenon of war affect our understanding of this ineluctable, and yet "most ruthlessly amoral of all human activities" (Schulte 2012, 99), both on an individual and specific national and cultural level. Only if we properly understand this fundamental connection between religion and our overall worldviews, even in the most secular of societies, can we actually understand not only a nation's distinct attitude towards war, but also towards all aspects, features, and elements of armed conflict, armed forces, military culture, the justness of the use of military force and violence, etc.

2. Eastern Christian-Orthodox Understanding of War

In this article, when referring to the Christian-Orthodox concepts of war, we shall only discuss the Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, albeit Eastern Christianity also includes Oriental Orthodoxy. Even though they have a lot in common, these two forms of Eastern Christianity must be recognized as separate. Unlike Western Christianity, meaning Roman Catholicism and Protestantism (including all denominations derived from these two) and Islam, Eastern Orthodox Christianity received little to no attention in the mainstream modern analysis of religious attitudes and traditions concerning war. This is quite surprising, having in mind that over 250 million people in the world are Eastern Orthodox Christians, and that they have unfortunately been directly involved in some of the most tragic conflicts in recent history. Countries like Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, North Macedonia and Montenegro are all nations with majority of Eastern Christian-Orthodox (ECO) population. And while "orthodox philosophical and theological thought isn't developing remotely proportionally with the war challenges of the orthodox world" (Grozdić et all. 2016, 17), the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia only further accentuates the necessity of better understanding the ECO conception of war, as both countries are ECO. So, can we speak of a unique understanding of war in ECO, that differs from that present in mainstream Western Christianity, despite the fact that there is no explicit theological formulation of this concept in ECO? Not only is this both possible and important, but also even necessary if we truly wish to understand the moral dimensions of war from the perspective of ECO, and thus the compatibility of war machines such as Unmanned Combat Vehicles (UCV) and Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) with that understanding.

2.1. The Ontological Nature of War

As Bertrand Russell famously wrote, "the question whether war is ever justified, and if so under what circumstances, is one which has been forcing itself upon the attention of all thoughtful men" (Russell 1915, 127). But, in order to understand the ECO answers to these crucial questions, it is necessary to understand the ontological nature of war from the perspective of ECO, as its moral dimension and potential moral evaluation are directly derived from its nature. Many ECO theologists and philosophers dealt with the ontological nature of war, producing somewhat different views on this phenomenon. However, there is a minimal common ground to be found for all of them – a common ground which epitomizes and sublimates the fundamental understanding of war. Namely, in ECO, every war on Earth is merely a reflection of the "Heavenly

struggle between legions of good and evil", a terrestrial continuation of perpetual celestial war on Earth, a tragic cosmic necessity which forever remains the quintessential "fabric" of reality. This Heraclitian understanding of war as a necessary Earthly reflection of perpetual Heavenly strife is best described in the famous "philosophical poem" *The Ray of the Microcosm,* written by the prince-Bishop Petar Petrović Njegoš (Његош 2020, 161-239). Therefore, according to the ECO church, "war originated in the Heavens" (Богосављевић 2017, 68-69), when Satan and one third of angels rebelled against God, and ever since then every single war on Earth represents a mere terrestrial manifestation of the same event. Nevertheless, the clash between nations on Earth does not simply unfold as a Manichean conflict between good and evil, in the sense that one nation represents "the good" while the other nation represents "the evil". Quite the opposite. However, this does not mean that some ECO authors, like the previously cited Bishop Njegoš, do not deviate substantially from this view, as he presents a Manichean nature of war in which "the good" represented by one nation fights "the evil", represented by another nation, on Earth (Станар 2021, 361-375).

War is actually understood as an instrument of God, with which he punishes all those nations which fall from His grace and become heavily morally corrupted over time. War represents an inevitable evil, with fratricide, started by Kain killing Abel, as its source (Шестаков 2017, 169). Just as man's sin towards man is caused by man's sin towards God, "war between men emerges as a consequence of man's war against God" (Кајтез 2021, 458), when nations become estranged from God. In this sense, war is a punishment "with damaging spiritual consequences for all involved" (LeMasters 2003, 410), regardless of the side, inflicted by God's Providence, as all wars usually come from "the sin of both belligerents... once men accumulate causes of war" (Велимировић 2002, 95-97) over a prolonged period of time. This religious understanding of war deeply affects the secular perception of war in ECO cultures - translated into a more secular discourse, we could say that wars happen when mistakes in judgment, hubrises, ideological illusions and historical miscalculations of many previous generations accumulate to an irreversible point in time in which war becomes inevitable for both sides. Therefore, to understand any war, we must go several decades, sometimes even centuries, back in time in order to grasp all the "sins", i.e., mistakes, miscalculations and deep historical causes that led to the point of no return at which war erupts. Admittedly, such an understanding has a not-so-subtle deterministic undertone to it; still, this does not imply simple abolition of responsibility and moral guilt. However, it would be impossible to automatically assign moral guilt *ex post* to *all* those in history whose actions and decisions contributed to reaching the irreversible point of the eruption of war, as it is very likely that they did not know that they were in fact producing causes of future conflict. Many times, decisions and

actions that, in the end, produce conflict are made out of the noblest of intents and with the purest of hearts. Still, we should keep in mind that attributing moral and historical responsibility, especially for a phenomenon as complex as war, is not a zero-sum game, and that it is quite possible to have large numbers of those who share small bits of historical responsibility for war, on both sides.

There is no, *sensu sticto*, Good and Evil side in war. Leo Tolstoy also understands this fatalistic nature of war, as it is "governed from above" for the sake of "subjugating man's freedom to God's laws" (Толстој 1974, 313) and punishing humans for their transgressions against God. Essentially, for all those involved in war this phenomenon represents a "combination of a cataclysm and temptation" (Бабић 2017, 313) - a cataclysm, almost resembling a natural disaster, which is a product of God's decision to punish those who have become morally corrupt; a temptation for all those caught in war who are now facing unprecedented "opportunities to sin" and "morally-tragic" (Иљин 2001, 163) situations in which there is no morally pure choice. This understanding of the ontological nature of war, as an inescapable phenomenon which is "unleashed upon us" rather than being a product of our *decision* to start it, is beautifully captured in many Slavic languages, in syntagms used to signify the start of war – war "erupts", war "breaks out", nations get "struck" by war, as if war was a volcano, a storm, a flood. Although war is cause by us sinning for a long period of time in peace – "people will not be punished by the 'stick' of war as soon as they sin, but after God has tolerated it and forgave it for too long" (Велимировић 2002, 122). Of course, just as God is the one who decides when, where, and how to unleash war upon nations, the outcome of war is also entirely in His hands, meaning that both sides can win or lose. This also means that both sides can be "worthy of victory" in war. Obviously, such an ontological nature of war has profound implications on its "axiological status" (Бабић 2017, 321) and moral aspects.

2.2. The moral nature of war – ethics of war

What is then the moral status of war if it is understood as a punishment for human transgressions against God, a "deep physical manifestation of illness" (Соловјов 1994, 426), an inherently evil phenomenon which exists and manifests itself beyond human control? Obviously, this unique understanding of war, which differentiates both from Western Christian and Islamic conceptions, is the main reason why ECO never developed a coherent "just war theory", let alone a notion of a "holy war". The only attempt to "westernize" the ECO understanding of war is that of Alexander Webster, who represents the most radical advocate of the Just War Theory in ECO with his unique and relatively new perspective on war (Webster 2003, 3-57). When it comes to the concept of

a "holy war", Laiou (2006, 32) claims that people of ECO, as a continuation of the Byzantine religious traditions, are the "only post-Old Testament people in the Mediterranean and in Europe never to develop the basic principles of holy war ideology", while Stoyanov (2009, 183) adds that ECO churches in the Balkans and in Russia "did not share the important transformation of Christian attitudes to warfare that occurred in medieval Western Christendom". Moreover, there has been comparatively much less coherent and institutional deliberation on this subject in ECO, and therefore "unlike the case of Western Christianity, the study of Eastern Orthodox approaches to the ethics and justification of warfare is still in its nascent stages" (Stoyanov 2009, 187), with a plethora of different views. If we were to follow the famous Bainton's concept of "evolution" of Christian attitudes towards war, "pacifism, the just war, and the crusade" which "chronologically emerged in just this order" (Bainton 1960, 14) we would find contemporary ECO attitudes towards war at "a stage" somewhere between pacifism and just war. While ECO does not take a pacifist standpoint - virtually no ECO theologist or philosopher advocates pacifism, while some even recognize it as "a form of heresy... originating in Protestantism" (Богосављевић 2017, 67) - the described ontological cataclysmic nature of war prevents it from ever reaching the next "stage" and developing a theory in which a war can be just. There are no requirements or criteria resembling those of *jus ad bellum* in Western Christianity's Just War Theory, although wars of self-defense are intuitively viewed with much less condemnation to say the least: for many ECO religious philosophers, especially late XIX – early XX century Russian thinkers, defense of one's state is a Christian duty, albeit a "tragic" one (Grozdić et all. 2012, 335-364). Similar voices can be heard coming from the highest dignitaries of contemporary Serbian Orthodox Church – Serbian Patriarch Irinej, Bishop Atanasije Jevtić, Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović, etc. (Младеновић and Ћулибрк 1996). Even for the most vehemently anti-pacifistic ECO religious philosophers, such as Ivan Ilyin, war can, at best, be *justified*, but never just as such. For Ilyin, regardless of everything, war remains unjust – it is "spiritually necessary despite being unjust". The path of the sword is "the least unjust", and those who take it "are NOT just, but justified" (Иљин 2001, 163-165). The only possible "just war" in ECO is the one in which one fights against "his own limitations, weaknesses, egoism, and necessity" (Џалто 2017, 201), i.e., a metaphoric, intrapersonal war. For that reason, the notion of pacifism had to "evolve" in a strange and peculiar fashion.

Naturally, such an ambivalent *ad bellum* attitude towards war, which neither "prescribes pacifism or nonviolence" nor "sacralizes war" (LeMasters 2003, 415), creates a significant moral and religious *in bello* challenge for ECO soldiers. They are "crucified" between ECO pacifistic presuppositions that every single act of killing in war represents a grave sin, even if it is justified, as they are killing their brothers and sisters who

are being punished by war just as they themselves are, and the Christian *duty* to defend their loved ones, those who are weak. In a sense, ECO soldiers are crucified between two profoundly significant and opposed interpretations of permissibility of killing enemies in war – that of St. Athanasius of Alexandria who proclaims killing enemies in war "praiseworthy" and that of St. Basil the Great who prescribes a "punishment in the form of exclusion from the chalice for three years" for all those who kill in war. Grozdić (2010, 87-104) wrote extensively on this dichotomy of views of two influential Holy Church Fathers. Basically, war represents a truly morally-tragic position in which soldiers are literally punished by God who places them in a morally impossible situation in which they cannot escape sinning and "risking" their salvation, no matter what they do – even doing nothing is not an option, as doing nothing to protect the weak is also considered a grave sin. Lev Karsavin highlights that "nonaction is a sin, a negative social act" (Бојанић 2017, 305). Therefore, soldiers must "take upon themselves the burden of inevitable unjustness, potential sinfulness, and probable guilt" as Ilyin (Ильин 2001, 146) writes, but also "the risk of eternal condemnation" as Zizioulas adds, even if their acts in war are justified! The famous Greek theologian writes that every killing in war is a sin, and potential absolution is in God's hands (Џалто 2017, 198). That is why only those with outmost moral fortitude and strength should be soldiers, as they are required to consciously sin and risk their own eternal salvation for the sake of others they aim to protect – to paraphrase the great Solzhenitsyn, in ECO soldiers represent the "sacrificial elite".

However, the sheer number of canonized warrior-saints in ECO clearly demonstrates that participation in war, even killing in war, does not necessarily and automatically cause damnation of the soul - seminal work of Borislav Grozdić in which he presents a collection of 182 biographies of warriors who were canonized and who are celebrated in ECO (Гроздић 2013) corroborates this claim. On the contrary, "a soldier can become a holy soldier, an officer can become a holy officer", as St. Justin writes, if he participates in war in such a way that the inevitable sins he commits can in fact be absolved. From the "*in bello* perspective" of ECO, to use the Just War Theory vocabulary, a soldier can fight in a way that *could* (emphasis here is on potential forgiveness, not automatic – God decides in the end, there are no guarantees) render him worthy of forgiveness if and only if he resists war temptations and displays Christian moral virtues. This is crucial for understanding ECO views on behavior in war – the dominant model of normative ethics in ECO is virtue ethics, meaning that virtuous behavior and character-building has "instrumental value... for the soteriological perspective" (Fatić and Dentsoras 2014, 531). The ECO soteriological doctrine of "tollhouses", through which every soul goes in the nine days after death, is a doctrine by which "God casts no-one to hell" (Swedenborg 2000, 533) meaning that we decide our own destiny

by developing a morally virtuous character during our time on Earth. In a Heraclitian fashion, our Earthly character becomes our Heavenly fate. After we die, it is the test of our character that effectively decides our fate, not God *per se* (Fatić and Dentsoras 2014, 523-536). This naturally includes our time spent in war, a state that represents a perfect setting for developing, forging, and exhibiting virtues such are "bravery, courage, self-sacrifice, heroism, and chivalry" a state which gives soldiers an opportunity to "ennoble and elevate human soul if we approach it spiritually" (Берђајев 1990, 191). To conclude, when God unleashes his punishment upon nations in the form of war, the only thing all soldiers can and ought to do is to display virtuous behavior in a morally tragic situation they find themselves in. As victory in war is in the hands of God, there is no place for any sort of utilitarian justification of actions and decisions, let alone justness and righteousness in killing. The only thing soldiers must worry about are their own actions and virtues, as their (un)virtuous behavior will effectively decide the fate of their souls. If they desire to be forgiven for the inherent sins of warring, they must act courageously, mercifully, honestly, chivalrously and primarily be prepared for "asceticism and self-sacrifice for the benefit of others" (Фатић 2017, 111-112). Can advanced war machines actually "fit" this conception of war ethics?

3. War Machines in ECO - Elimination of Risk and Virtue

War machines have been an integral part of human armed conflicts for so long, it seems impossible to imagine a war without them. From the Greek introduction of the stone-hurling catapult in the IV century BCE (There are even records of similar machines designed to shoot large stones at enemies dating back as far as VIII century BCE!), across various medieval versions of ballistas, trebuchets, battering rams, and other siege engines, to WWI introduction of tanks and combat aircrafts, our success in war has become significantly dependent on the use of machines. Modern war machines, i.e., their incredible development in the past half a century, has not only further enhanced our combat ability, but also induced many ethical arguments and discussions regarding their use in combat. This is particularly evident in regards to Unmanned Combat Vehicles (UCV) and Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS). UCVs include all unmanned lethal machines that are controlled remotely – aerial, terrestrial, and aquatic. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or simply drones, are dominantly used today, but the same logic applies to all UCVs. AWS or LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems) or "killer robots" on the other hand include all weapons that are capable of locating and engaging human targets without human interference or interaction. The general classification of robotic weapons includes three categories: humans in the

loop (human has to command the weapon to attack), humans on the loop (human oversee attacks and can override robots' decisions), and human out of the loop (human has no interaction with the robot) (Human Rights Watch 2015, 6). However, it seems as though our technological breakthroughs are at least a step ahead of our ethical considerations, not just in the military. Nearly 15 years after the introduction of modern UCV to the battlefield, Strawser noted that "the literature on the ethics of lethal drones, and the discussion of remote killing more broadly, is still in its infancy" (Strawser 2013, 4). Almost a decade has past since his assertion, and ethical consideration of UCV are yet to gain on its use. Moreover, not only do experts predict "a greatly increased role for unmanned systems in the future of the armed forces" (Sparrow 2013, 88), but we are also witnessing the introduction of functional AWS that completely remove "human from the loop", according to the recent reports made of fully capable AWS, such as the Harop, SGR A1, or STM Kargu-2 already in use (Consigny 2022).

The invaluable and much needed ethical discussion regarding UCV and AWS can and ought to be supplemented, enriched, and broadened with the analysis of the position of these advanced war machines in the ECO understanding of war. As elaborated above, no moral judgment regarding war in ECO, including, of course, the moral status and permissibility of UCV and AWS, can be divorced from the ontological nature of war. If we were to read significant critical discussions about the use of these war machines, we could identify several key implications their introduction to the battlefield produces. As it often occurs when introducing new technology, the greatest advantage that UCV and AWS provide – riskless killing – is simultaneously "the source of much controversy and the aspect... deemed most problematic" (Stanar 2022, 145). Unlike previous war machines which only reduced risk for soldiers of the party that had them (even this assertion has certain caveats – reduction of risk in one mode of combat usually meant its increase in another (Stanar 2022, 148)), UCV and especially AWS completely eliminate risk, thus marking a "qualitative change in the nature of military combat" (Sparrow 2013, 85). This new "nature" of combat and war is incompatible with the described ECO perception of the nature of war. With the complete elimination of risk, this "new war" no longer represents a cataclysm and temptation, God's punishment for all involved, but a "righteous" and punitive action of one nation against the other. A true hubris in which both war and its outcome are taken from God's hands and placed into hands of those who have such machines. The very logic of the conflict changes, transforming war into something that "most resembles police enforcement" (Kahn 2002, 4), or even "pest control" (Steinhoff 2013, 207) in which people are literally hunted down and "righteously" punished. This could perhaps be incorporated in the Western Christian concepts of just and holy wars which imply not only *justification* of violence but also its

normative necessity and praiseworthiness, but it is unacceptable for ECO in which there can be no "just" side and no "just" war. Implying that something is "just" means that it is righteous, necessary and that it *ought* to be done - that not doing it would in fact be unjust and sinful. Applied to war, such logic implies that *not killing* large numbers of innocent people, who are caught by war which they did not start nor directly cause, would be *unjust.* Such an assertion is unacceptable in Orthodoxy, but also in all forms of common-sense rationality. Implying that something is merely "justified" has no such implications, as *not doing* something that is potentially *justified* does not make it unjust. Furthermore, complete elimination of risk would simultaneously represent the elimination of the only possible theoretical justification of killing in war in ECO, i.e., protection of loved ones from the imminent threat of violence and death.

Naturally, this ontological "transformation" of war also reflects on its moral plain. From the ECO standpoint, these "new wars" transform morally-tragic Christian soldiers into plain killers of brothers and fellow-men. It would be impossible for them do develop and display virtue in, what Sparrow proverbially dubbed, a riskless war, a "war without virtue". Fighting and killing in such risk-asymmetric wars, "without clearly relying on any sort of presupposition of martial virtue... is by definition irreconcilable with the orthodox moral" (Фатић 2017, 118, 120) regardless of the potential moral justification of its aim. Nicholai Velimirovich foresees this unfortunate transformation of war, as he describes modern warfare almost a century ago - "the decisive role in war is attributed to machines... and war contraptions... war will be utterly deprived of any mercy, fairness, and chivalry" (Велимировић 2002, 42, 21). Moreover, the very moral foundation of military profession consists of martial virtues, which greatly overlap with warrior virtues recognized by ECO – courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice, asceticism, chivalry, etc. The "warrior's code", consisting of vital martial virtues which seem to be almost universal across times and cultures (French 2003), transforms "military community into one of the most powerful and cohesive moral communities in modern society" (Фатић 2017, 120) precisely because martial virtues become an essential part of an individual's overall moral character. As Sparrow (2015, 380-394) warns, advanced war machines could completely alter the very culture of armed forces, ushering us into the age of "Post-Heroic Militaries" which would "question the overall viability of military in the context of orthodox professional soldiers' ethics" (Фатић 2017, 121).

4. Conclusion – Not-So-ECO Views

The phenomenon of war attracts much attention in all intellectual, cultural, and religious traditions. ECO is no exception, as it offers "important parallels to and differences from... Western Christian

attitudes" (Stoyanov 2009, 166) which are largely incorporated into the globally prevalent Just War Theory or tradition. Emerging challenges surrounding war deserve to be carefully and diligently analyzed, not just from the standpoint of Just War Theory, but also from other perspectives, including the ECO one. New technologies represent precisely such phenomena as they bring forth a range of ethical issues and dilemmas. War machines, such are UCV and AWS, that eliminate risk and thus alter the very nature of war are completely incompatible with ECO perception of war. Due to its unique understanding of the ontological nature of war, ECO wouldn't even consider such armed conflicts as wars *per se.* Accordingly, there can be no moral justification for utilization of weapons which negate the need, or even possibility (!), for display of Christian virtue and development of Christian moral character. Those who opt to use such weapons are choosing the immoral and unchristian path that cannot lead them to salvation. The only way to incorporate UCV and AWS into the ECO paradigm of war ethics is to "westernize" it by adopting concepts of just and holy wars. In that case, pretty much everything could be theoretically justified. But this would represent a gross misinterpretation of basic and fundamental values and teachings of traditional ECO.

It is therefore quite surprising to see that high dignitaries of ECO churches resort to such narratives, in which they explicitly call for a holy war. One such occasion was when the Russian Patriarch Kiril of Moscow referred to the modern war on terror as "a holy one" (Stoddard 2016). He went on to repeat this formulation on several different occasions. This "evolution" of the perception of the nature and thus ethics of war is not a novelty in the modern Russian Orthodox Church. In the still current document called, *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* (ROC 2022), there are certain elements which can be interpreted as "theological means of strengthening the state ideology" (Цалто 2017, 191). This could be seen as a logical continuation of the well-known "Moscow the Third Rome" doctrine (Stoyanov 2009, 186-187) which was particularly exploited by Russian religious philosophers of the XIX and XX century, especially Ilyin and Vladimir Solovyov. The two who were accused of "equating the church with the state" and perpetuating a "messianic idea of Russia" by many, including their influential contemporary Nikolai Berdyaev who wrote that "there is nothing more monstruous than Christian churches blessing war and the phare 'Christ-loving warfare'" (Kajtez 2018, 5-144). No such ideas about an "amalgam" of the church and the state are found in original ECO of the Byzantine Empire where "the Church... never declared war, never engaged in war and rarely issued warlike statements" (Laiou 2006, 34). As such, they should not be regarded as belonging to the classical ECO perspective of war.

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