

Migration of Oriental Catholics to Germany: Unchangeable Rites in a Changing Context – An Introduction

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung: Orientalische Katholiken sind eine wenig beachtete, aber wachsende Gruppe von Migranten. Ihre Zahl wird in Deutschland auf 200.000 geschätzt. Von den 23 katholischen Ostkirchen sind 14 in Deutschland präsent. Dieser Beitrag ist die Einführung zu einem Panel, das am 01.09.2021 auf dem Kongress der European Academy of Religion in Münster per Videokonferenz gehalten wurde. Die Frage, die auf diesem Panel diskutiert wurde, lautete: Inwiefern schützt das Kirchenrecht die östlichen Riten als stabiles Element auch im Kontext von Migration und inwiefern ermöglicht es Anpassungen und Veränderungen? Die anderen Beiträge des Panels sind ebenfalls in der Zeitschrift NomoK@non veröffentlicht.

In context of the Münster conference of European Academy of Religion (30.08.2021-02.09.2021) B. Berkmann, T. Stümpfl, J. Dvořáček and A.-K. Nagel were able to discuss the topic “Migration of Oriental Catholics to Germany: Unchangeable rites in a changing context”.

The entire Catholic Church is divided into churches *sui iuris*. One of them is the Latin church. On the other hand, there are 23 Eastern churches. Of these 23 Eastern Catholic churches 14 are present in Germany.¹ Even though Oriental Catholics are a barely noticed group of migrants, their current number in Germany is estimated at ca 200.000.

The differences between the Latin church and the Eastern churches not only arise from their liturgical traditions. For the Latin church there exists a Code of Canon Law, the so-called CIC, in which the different subjects of ecclesiastical life are regulated, such as e.g. the Sacraments. There also exists a Code of Canon Law, the so-called CCEO, for the Eastern churches. While the CIC is given to only one church *sui iuris*, the CCEO is given to 23 churches *sui iuris*. The CCEO is the common law of these churches. Furthermore, their subjects are regulated in law titled particular law.²

The Oriental Catholics in Germany live in a so-called diaspora, which means outside of the original territory of their church. Their canon law, on one hand, aims to protect and preserve their identity, but on the other hand, it facilitates exchange with the Western Catholics domiciled in Germany. Also parts of the canon law of the Latin church are to provide an exchange with the Eastern churches and their faithful. Both, the canon law of the Eastern churches and the canon law of the Latin church, try to respond to the questions which arise

¹ Cf. DBK, Recommendation «Kirchenrechtliche Fragen in der pastoralen Praxis mit Gläubigen der katholischen Ostkirchen» (24.08.2020), 7f. These information of the recommendation are based on the document (Arbeitshilfe) «Christen aus dem Orient», published by the DBK in 2016.

² As well, for the Latin church exists particular law.

from the fact that the Oriental faithful are living outside the original territory of their church *sui iuris*. Who is responsible for their pastoral care? How does the inter-ecclesiastical relationship between the Latin church and the Oriental churches or between the different Oriental churches function?

These questions relate to the challenge for the canon law to protect the Eastern rites as a stable element even in the context of migration on one hand, and, on the other hand, to facilitate adaptations and changes. In consequence, the following contributions try to give an interdisciplinary approach. The first chapter, written by B. Berkmann, takes a close look at the tension between identity and integration. The second chapter, written by T. Stümpfl, deals with the central sacrament of initiation, the baptism, and tries to figure out the opportunities and challenges of the baptism of Oriental faithful in Germany. The third chapter, written by J. Dvořáček, examines the so-called conversion which means the process of baptized non-Catholics coming into full communion with the Catholic Church. In which church *sui iuris* must these faithful be enrolled?

The panel was part of a research project, the results of which are to be published in the following volume: Berkmann, Burkhard J. / Merkel, Josa / Stümpfl, Tobias, Migration von ostkatholischen Gläubigen: Kirchenrechtliche Grundlagen für die Seelsorge in Deutschland, Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag 2022, ISBN 978-3-8305-5166-9.