

## The Donatist hagiography and the Roman state

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*With the Donatist hagiography being not well studied yet, especially in the Russian scholarship, the article attempts to fill the gap. Seven martyr stories are considered in the research, and some of them prove to be spuriously attributed to the dissident church (especially, The Passion of Cyprian). Other texts, undoubtedly Donatist, were written not by eye-witnesses (except, possibly, The Passion of Marculus), but after the actual martyrdom. These texts are notable for their fervent polemics against the Catholic Church («traitors») and the cruel assistant, the Roman state.*

*The author is particularly interested in the polemics against the Roman Empire. After the Constantinian revolution the pagan state turned into a Christian one, therefore we might expect from believers, even from Donatists, a certain «bonhomie» towards it. Still the Donatist church preferred the rhetoric of exclusion and filled their martyr stories with it. Military and civil servants were accused of cruelty, greediness, adultery, helping the false (Catholic) church, hating the true (Donatist) church, lawlessness and being employed by the devil.*

*Though some scholars suppose, that Donatists produced special political theology, criticizing secular interventions in religious affairs, the author concludes that dissidents themselves did not act fitting to such a theory. They used every chance to gain the help of the Empire. The polemics against it could have a more practical goal: to save the people from leaving the schism under pressure of the anti-donatist legislation.*



Key words: [Donatism](#), [hagiography](#), [martyrs](#), [North-African Christianity](#)

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