

REPORT

By His Grace Bishop Makarios of Christoupolis
At the Synaxis of the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne on
The Ecclesiastical Issue in Ukraine
(Constantinople, 1-3 September 2018)

The first local ecclesiastical community, formed immediately after the Baptism of Vladimir and Kyivans in 988, was organized as a metropolis under the direct authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch¹, possessing, according to the Taktikon of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118), the 60th place among the Dioceses of the Church of Constantinople and bearing the title "Metropolis of Kyiv and all Russia."²

During the Mongol invasion (1237-1340), the blossoming Metropolis of Kyiv suffered its first heavy blow. Most of its population moved to the north, and following their flock later elected Kyivan metropolitans resided not in Kyiv, but Vladimir, which was eventually approved and blessed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate with two ecclesiastical aspects underlined:

Firstly, the residence of the Metropolitan of Kyiv in Vladimir was considered from the point of view of oikonomia and socio-political reasons, and secondly, not the See of the Metropolitan of Kyiv was established in Vladimir but the "second see" since the Mother Church recognized the historicity and significance of Kyiv and because that was the very place "where the see of the above-mentioned metropolis was located."³

The Metropolitan of Kyiv didn't reside in Vladimir for long as Peter (1308-1326), ordained in 1308 Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Russia, moved the Kyiv Metropolis from Vladimir to Moscow in order to prove his support for Prince Yuri of Moscow, who conflicted with Prince Michael of Tver. Due to the presence of Metropolitan Peter, Yuri was able to successfully claim the title of Grand Duke while his main argument was

¹ The theories of modern Russian theologians, who argue that the Kyivan Metropolis separated from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and became autocephalous from the beginning, are refuted on the basis of the following historical sources and evidence: 1) Theodore Balsamon, "The Canons of the Fourth Holy Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon", P. G. Migne 137, 489; b) Neilos Doxapatris "Order of the Patriarchal Sees" ("Τάξις τῶν Πατριαρχικῶν Θρόνων"), Migne P. G. 132, 1105.

² Κονιδάρη Γερασιμου, «Τακτικά», ΜΜΕ, Τόμος ΚΒ', σελ. 757.

³ Miklosich-Müller, Acta, I, 351-353.

that the first among the princes should reside in the Cathedral city of the first of the Church⁴.

Of course, it is worth noting that the transfer of the See took place without the approval and blessing of the canonical hierarchal body of the metropolis, i.e. the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Moreover, this is the first time in the Orthodox Church history, when "the state affairs follow the Church's" and not "the Church changes along with the civil possession and control"⁵, according to the famous dictum of Photius the Great or in accordance with the Canon 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council⁶ and Canon 38 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council⁷.

As it was natural to expect, the residence of the Metropolitan of Kyiv in Vladimir and later in Moscow did not suit the southern princes, as well as bishops, clergy and people of the territories of the so-called Little Russia, the present-day regions of Central Europe, Ukraine and Belarus. That is why there began a fatal rivalry, which eventually led to the division of the Metropolis of Kyiv and all Russia⁸. Thus, at the beginning of the 14th century there existed three metropolitans⁹ on the territories of Little and Great Russia: of Kyiv and all Russia with its See in Moscow; of Galicia, which included the areas to the North of the Carpathians divided today between Poland and Ukraine, including Kyiv¹⁰; and of Lithuania¹¹.

⁴ ΘΗΕ, «Ρωσική Ἐκκλησία», ὄπ. π., στ. 1005.

⁵ Φωτίου Πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. «Ἐπιστολαί, Ἀποτολογητική πρὸς τὸν Πάπαν Νικόλαον, Ἐπιστολή Β΄» P.G. Migne 102, 613.

⁶ The Canon 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council: "As touching rural parishes, or country parishes, in any province, they shall remain in the undisputed possession of the bishops now holding them, and especially if they have held them in their possession and have managed them without coercion for thirty years or more. But if during a period of thirty years there has arisen or should arise some dispute concerning them, those claiming to have been unjustly treated shall be permitted to complain to the Synod of the province. But if anyone has been unjustly treated by his own Metropolitan, let him complain to the Exarch of the diocese, or let him have his case tried before the throne of Constantinople, according as he may choose. If, on the other hand, any city has been rebuilt by imperial authority, or has been built anew again, pursuant to civil and public formalities, let the order of the ecclesiastical parishes be followed."

⁷ The Canon 38 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council: "If any city has been rebuilt by imperial authority, or has been built anew again, pursuant to civil and public formalities, let the order of the ecclesiastical parishes be followed."

⁸ A. M. Ammann, "Storia della chiesa Russa", Torino 1948, p. 76.

⁹ Φωτιάδου Ἐμμανουήλ, Σταυρίδου Βασιλείου, «Ἐπιτομος ἱστορία τῆς Ρωσικῆς Ἐκκλησίας», (manuscript), σελ. 146-147.

¹⁰ Christopher Hann, Paul Robert Magocsi, «Γαλικία: Μία πολυπολιτισμική Χώρα», Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2005 καὶ Paul Robert Magocsi, «Γαλικία: Μία ἱστορική ἐπισκόπηση καὶ βιβλιογραφικός ὁδηγός», Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983.

¹¹ Paul Robert Magocsi, "History of Ukraine", University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1996, pg. 128.

It is important to emphasize the following: the Metropolis of Kyiv and all Russia did not include Kyiv, which from time to time was a part of the Galician and Lithuanian Metropolises. Let's not forget that Patriarch of Kyiv and all Ukraine Filaret, now in schism, was ordained in 1968 as Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia. Therefore, the titles recorded in history up to 1448 do not correspond exactly to the territory, which they were named after.

In 1448, the local Moscow Synod, contrary to the canons, independently and arbitrarily ordained Metropolitan Jonah as the successor to Isidor, imitating the four Patriarchates of the East. Since then, our Russian brethren have believed that the Moscow Metropolis acquired its "autocephaly," despite the fact, of course, that there is no Patriarchal paper blessing this act. Then for the first time the local Metropolitan was given the title "of Moscow and all Russia" and then the geographical boundaries and titles that now correspond to them were finally set.

An important milestone for the Metropolis of Kyiv is the subsequent elevation of the Moscow Metropolis to the rank of Patriarchate. As it is well known, in 1588 Russian Tsar Theodore addressed with such a request Patriarch Jeremiah II Tranos of Constantinople, who made a trip to Moscow seeking financial assistance for his distressed Patriarchate.

Under the enormous pressure of Tsar Theodore¹², Patriarch Jeremiah granted the patriarchal status, ordaining Job the first Patriarch of Moscow at a joint solemn Patriarchal Liturgy in the Church of Our Lady in the Kremlin on 26 Jan 1589. Returning to Istanbul, he convened a multitudinous Synod to confirm the promotion of the Metropolitan of Moscow, and the official Patriarchal and Synodical Chrysoyul¹³ on behalf of the Mother Church was delivered to the Tsar and Patriarch Job by Metropolitans Dionysius of Larissa and Tyrnavos and Callistratos of Grevena¹⁴.

Of course, no one expected the Tsar and the Patriarch to express their extreme discontent and dissatisfaction when they found out that the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia "was ranked in prayers after the Patriarch of Jerusalem." According to the

¹² A number of historians claim that Patriarch Jeremiah II Tranos was jailed in order to force him to grant autocephaly for Russia. See Άριστήριου Πανώτη, «Τὸ Συνοδικὸν τῆς ἐν Ἑλλάδι Ἐκκλησίας», Τόμος Α΄, Ἐκδόσεις Σταμούλη, 1η Ἔκδοση, Ἀθήνα 2008, σελ. 401.

¹³ The text of Synodical Chrysoyul or Tomos was signed by the Patriarchs Jeremiah of Constantinople, Joachim of Antioch, Sophronius of Jerusalem and eighty one Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops. See the addendum (Document 1).

¹⁴ See the letter of Metropolitan Dionysius of Larissa and Tyrnavos in the addendum (Text 2).

Great Archivist of the Patriarchate, Archimandrite Kallinikos Delikanis, who later became Metropolitan of Caesarea, "since the Tsar and Patriarch Job didn't find satisfactory the last position among the Patriarchs, which was envisaged in the Synod's Tomos and fervently asked other Patriarchs, especially Jeremiah, to change this by placing Moscow third i.e., after the Patriarch of Alexandria and before the Patriarch of Antioch, a Council gathered in the Church of Our Lady Theotokos Paramythia."¹⁵

This detail must be paid attention to because it proves the groundlessness of at times sounding allegations that the Synod in 1590 was convened in order to issue a new Tomos to Russian Patriarch with the signatures of all the Patriarchs of the East, since it missed the signature of Alexander Meletios. The reality is that they received the Patriarchal status from Constantinople only. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem who co-signed the Tomos temporarily lived in Constantinople and as our archives show signed not only the Chrysovul to Russia but also all the decisions of the Synod of that time. Therefore, the proclamation of autocephaly did not require the signatures of all the primates, as some claim today in desire to depreciate the rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. If it were so, then it would require the signature of the Archbishop of Cyprus, who was also the head of an Autocephalous Church. But this did not happen. That is why the Council repeated what was said in the Tomos of 1590 and indirectly, but clearly, reproached Moscow for its unacceptable demand to take a place in the diptychs before Antioch and Jerusalem, thus giving the Church, which in the depths already bore the ideas of omnipotence, a certain signal.

In the future, despite receiving the Patriarchal status, the Moscow Church was found to have significant gaps, mostly of liturgical, but at the same time of theological and canonical natures. Quite explicit details came from the Patriarchs Paisius of Constantinople and Paisius of Jerusalem, who visited Moscow in 1654 and the latter in 1652. Both of them expressed serious concern, complaining to Patriarch Joseph of Moscow about the erroneous Church practices, which penetrated into the ecclesiastical life and mixed with paganism, witchcraft, magic and a number of superstitions. Notable is the report of the scholar-monk Arseny Sukhanov, to whom Patriarch Joseph of Moscow commissioned the correction of liturgical books. In his essay entitled

¹⁵ Αρχιμ. Καλλινίκου Δελιγάνη, Αρχαιοφύλακος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου, «Τὰ ἐν τοῖς Κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Αρχαιοφυλακείου Σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά Ἔγγραφα», Τόμος III, Ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, Ἐκ τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Τυπογραφείου, 1904, σελ. 20.

"Proskinitary" he notes that "Despite the Turkish yoke, Orthodox in the East have full unity and consensus on the rite of worship that all the Christians make a sign of Cross with three fingers and not by two (as was the case in Russia, he means), proclaim the Hallelujah thrice, carry a procession from right to left, etc."¹⁶ In any case, the situation in Russia did not indicate a spiritual and theological prosperity that should be expected from a Church, which was bestowed the Patriarchal status.

Meanwhile, after the liberation of Ukraine by Hetman Khmel'nitsky in 1654 and the political union of southwestern Russia with Moscow, the situation began to change in Kyiv, which was still under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. Then, the question of ecclesiastical unity with the Russian capital arose again. Of course, there were many protests from the Kyivan clergy and people. Prominent is the case of Metropolitan Silvester of Kyiv who said that "Neither he nor his flock can leave the jurisdiction of Constantinople, whom they belong to by the divine right, baptism and Holy Fathers' canons." Similarly behaved his successor Dionysius, who, upon receiving an invitation to the ordination of Patriarch Nikon in Moscow, strongly rejected the proposal and sent his representative in order to explain the canonical reasons for his refusal¹⁷.

The issue between Kyiv and Moscow and, more broadly, between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Church, arose when Patriarch Joachim of Moscow, contrary to the canons and without the approval of the Mother Church, ordained Metropolitan Gedeon of Kyiv. Then, as expected, he was deposed by the local Kyiv Synod, which is a fact still silenced by Russian historians, because the deposition of Gedeon indicates that the entire Ukrainian episcopate, clergy and people did not want to obey the Moscow Patriarchate. After that, the Tsar and the Patriarch of Moscow found themselves in a difficult situation.

To solve this problem, both the Moscow Patriarchate and the Tsarist government mobilized Ambassador Nikita Alexeev, who was instructed to obtain the approval and revalidation of Gedeon's ordination from the Mother Church in order to cancel the decision on the deposition imposed by the Kyiv Synod, but, above all, to achieve the subordination of the Kyiv Metropolis to the Moscow¹⁸.

¹⁶ Φειδά Βλασίου, «Ἐπίτομος Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία τῆς Ρωσίας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι σήμερον», ὅπ. π., σελ. 277.

¹⁷ Μαξίμου Μητροπολίτου Σάρδεων, «Τό Οὐκρανικόν Ἐκκλησιαστικόν Ζήτημα», ὅπ. π., σελ. 214.

¹⁸ Μαξίμου Μητροπολίτου Σάρδεων, «Τό Οὐκρανικόν Ἐκκλησιαστικόν Ζήτημα», ὅπ. π., σελ. 214.

Nikita Alexeev arrived in the city of Edirne, where at that time resided Grand Vizier Suleiman Pasha (because of the war on three fronts with Poland, Venice and Austria), as well as the Patriarchs Dionysius of Constantinople and Dositheus of Jerusalem. Ignoring the canonical order of the Church, the Ambassador considered that the priority would be to get a written confirmation of Gedeon's ordination and, in particular, the permission for the ordination of each Metropolitan of Kyiv, and therefore decided to first seek the approval of the Patriarch of Jerusalem who also was the Primate of an ancient Church. But Patriarch Dositheus¹⁹ immediately rejected²⁰ the demand for the subordination of the Kyiv Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarchate and, addressing the two ambitious rulers – the Patriarch and Tsar, said: "Maybe you wish Jerusalem became your diocese, and we washed your feet...Is it not enough that the Metropolitan of Moscow was bestowed the Patriarchal status, and you are elected by the Synod and are considered the Patriarch? But you want someone else's diocese!"

Further, Patriarch Dionysius deflated Alekseev's unfounded argument on the alleged necessity to choose Gedeon as the Metropolitan of Kyiv, strongly condemning this "covetousness" and the disruption of the ecclesiastical boundaries: "You say that there was a need, and you ordained the Metropolitan of Kyiv, but we believe that this was not a need, but a covetousness. Without need, why cross the boundaries set by our Fathers? Can this be forgiven? You have done this without any need, but only to satisfy your ambition. Instead of good, you do evil to yourself and to the Church." Patriarch Dionysius describes the results of his communication with Alexeev in this way: "I told him these things and other things, but the Ambassador twaddled, said blasphemy and even intimidated us"²¹.

¹⁹ Αρχιμανδρίτου Καλλίστου, «Ὁ Πατριάρχης Δοσίθεος (1669-1707) καὶ οἱ ἀγῶνες αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀδελφότητος ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἁγίων Τόπων», Ἐκκλησιαστικός Φάρος, Τεύχος Ιβ΄, Δεκέμβριος 1928, σελ.742-745.

²⁰ Concerning the Dositheus of Jerusalem see: Χρυσσοτόμου Παπαδοπούλου, «Οἱ Πατριάρχαι Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς πνευματικοὶ χειραγωγοὶ τῆς Ρωσσίας κατὰ τὸν 17 αἰῶνα», ὅπ. π., σελ. 186 καὶ ἐξῆς.

²¹ According to the judgment and comments of Archimandrite Chrysostom (Papadopoulos), later the Archbishop of Athens: "The resistance of Dositheus is explained, first of all, by his sacred eagerness to observe the Church order, which Moscow violated. But, perhaps, the great Patriarch thought that political changes should not be followed by such ecclesiastical changes, when a diocese breaks away from the Ecumenical Throne and unites with Moscow. And not in vain did Dositheus point out in the above-mentioned letters that when Antioch had obeyed the Arabs, hardly a third of the dioceses of the Antioch See remained independent as the Patriarchs of Constantinople did not even think about joining the few remaining dioceses to their See and abolishing the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch; they still remained under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch who lived in Constantinople. Dositheus believed that the Metropolis of Kyiv should not have joined the Moscow Patriarchate, and perhaps was afraid of the latter's excessive strengthening, anticipating a similar merger of the Church of Georgia with the Danube

After failing to persuade the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Alekseev thought that he would be able to remedy the situation of the Moscow Church's invasion of another ecclesiastical territory by turning to a political power. So he resorted to Grand Vizier Suleiman Pasha, who, not wishing the Ottoman Empire to have yet another enemy (as mentioned, the Empire was already at war with the Poles, Venetians and Austrians), applied the screw on Patriarch Dionysius, forcing him to satisfy the request of the Russian diplomat, and the Patriarch began compiling the famous letter of 1686.

In this regard, however, it is worthwhile to study some of the characteristic features of the letter, since it's the only argument of the Russian Church which it refers to for proving the subsidiary position of the Metropolis of Kyiv to Moscow. At the beginning, Patriarch Dionysius delimits and describes the congenial conditions that led to its manifestation. Surely, the text didn't just suddenly appear because the Ecumenical Patriarch decided to restore his rights to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the region of present-day Ukraine. This is very well explained in the part, where Synod held a meeting on this specific issue resulting in a series of the following decisions "in a condescending way" and "because of fightings that occur between the two greatest Powers, and because no permission came from his Patriarchal Majesty of the Ecumenical Throne for the lawful Metropolitan of Kyiv to be ordained after the diocese was left defenseless and according to the initially retained custom was considered subordinate to him".

This is explained even better further in the letter that reads "... the Kyivan province which is being ferociously pressed by various circumstances of the pastoral administration and of the ecclesiastical government." What are the problems of "pastoral administration and ecclesiastical governance"? And who is he that's "ferociously" pressing the Kyiv community? We do not forget that the problem itself arose because Patriarch Joachim of Moscow elected Bishop Gedeon of Lutsk as Metropolitan of Kyiv, in violation of the Divine and Holy Canons.²² This non-canonical act was not accepted either by the people of the Metropolis or, of course, by the

dioceses." See Χρυσοστόμου Παπαδοπούλου, «Οἱ Πατριάρχαι Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς πνευματικοὶ χειραγωγοὶ τῆς Ρωσσίας κατὰ τὸν 17 αἰῶνα», ὅπ. π., σελ. 189.

²² See Canons on the invasion and other foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction: the 35th of the Apostles, 13th and 22nd of Antioch, 3rd and 15th of Sardinia, and on the prohibition of annexation of a non-owned diocese see: the 53th, 56th, 98th, 120th of Carthage, the 6th of the First Ecumenical Council, the 8th of the Third Ecumenical Council, the 39th of the Trullian Quinisext Ecumenical Council.

eparchial local Council, which rejected Gedeon, as it was mentioned above. This created the great ecclesiastical problem, which the letter further describes using stronger expressions. Therefore, the Patriarch through the publication of the letter attempted to remedy the situation of this "ferociously oppressed" Metropolitan of Kyiv, which was torn by "the implements of evil," though with no intent to promote the "Russian Patriarchate's expansionist plans," of course.²³

For this reason, Patriarch Dionysius, disregarding the actual canonical lawlessness of Moscow in the face of necessity and by *oikonomia* provided the permission for the ordination of Metropolitan of Kyiv, but not the rights of the Mother Church.

It is noted in the letter that "In the Holy Spirit the beloved and desired brother and the co-servant of our mediocrity (the Patriarch of Moscow) has permission to ordain the Metropolitan of Kyiv according to the Church regulation."

It is obvious that those who pursue self-interests make a stronger accent on the following words in the letter: "and this Metropolis of Kyiv be under the control of His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow", without taking into consideration the whole text of the letter and without studying carefully the parts both before and after the aforementioned sentence. And the next sentence gives a clarification: "and this Metropolis of Kyiv be under the control of His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow, and those who are bishops in it, the one who is now and the one who comes after, may know the elder and the Primate the Patriarch of Moscow at that time, as from him they will be ordained..."

Indeed, from a certain perspective this letter and especially the specific phrase can appear a solid argument to some Russian interpreters, since they have no other ecclesiological argument to put forward, however, the ecclesiastical tradition and personal vision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate never referred the Metropolis Kyiv as not a part of Patriarch's canonical responsibility and territorial jurisdiction. In the context of the canonical unity and relations with a particular Church diocese, the

²³ Of course, a lot of commenters attribute this fierce oppression of the Kyiv Metropolis to the intervention of the Latins and to the intense activity of the Uniates at that time. Nevertheless, the history provides examples of consistent and saving interventions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the benefit of the Kyivan people and the greatest efforts of the Patriarchate to re-evangelize it, as has been pointed out above. Therefore, it is impossible to justify the letter under the ruse of opposition to the Union and the fact that the internal problems of the fiercely oppressed Kyiv Metropolis stemmed from the Latins. Moreover, a few years before, Constantinople participated in the Council of Brest (1596) that deposed the Latin-minded bishops and later the envoy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Theophanes of Jerusalem restored the Local Hierarchy in the Kyivan Church by election and ordination (1621).

Ecumenical Patriarchate incorporated a special reference in the Patriarchal and Conciliar Tomos "on granting Autocephalous status to the Polish Church" (1924) which proves that, despite 238 years had passed, this metropolis has never ceased to be the subject of care and canonical supervision of the Mother Church. In addition, the issuance of canonical permission for the ordination or transfer of a Bishop by other bishops and not by the Patriarchal Council was not unusual for that time and especially outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire. For example, let's examine a similar act, when a canonical permission was granted in the case of the ordination of the Metropolitan of Philadelphia for the Orthodox community of Venice, as well as for the consecrations of the hierarchs of the Romanian principalities.

In addition, it's important that in the letter there is a single basic condition that serves as a canonical and ecclesiological reference to the dependence of Kyiv on Constantinople. The condition for the execution of ordination is: "May he only keep the Metropolitan of Kyiv to commemorate the honorable name of the Holy Ecumenical Patriarch first when officiating the bloodless and divine Sacrament in that diocese." A contemporary witness of those events, Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem, gives an interpretation of this: "and no matter when the letter will be sent to Constantinople, either before the ordination of Metropolitan [of Kyiv], for the letter of release, or after, for information. May he only commemorate the Patriarch of Constantinople, and may the diocese belong to Constantinople but be directed by the Patriarch of Moscow."²⁴

As we all know, commemoration of a bishop is on the one hand the sign of a canonical reference, yet on the other hand it is a testimony of the ecclesiastical boundaries and jurisdictions. The disruption and violation of this ecclesiastical principle can generate canonical misconduct and is punishable. Unfortunately, the Patriarchate of Moscow chose or rather plotted the cease of the Ecumenical Patriarch's name commemoration, thus unilaterally abolished and violated the condition presented in the Patriarchal letter.

What response can our brethren from the Russian Church give to such non-canonical actions? Who allowed the Metropolitan of Kyiv to cancel the commemoration of the Constantinople Patriarch that shows his canonical dependence and ecclesiastical relation to the latter? Are there any other Patriarchal Letters or Synodical Acts by which

²⁴ An unpublished letter of the Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem to the Patriarch of Moscow on this issue.

the Ecumenical Patriarch gives up his rights over the Metropolis of Kyiv, allowing to commemorate the Patriarch of Moscow as a bishop of the Mother Church? Russian clergy and laity accused the Ecumenical Patriarch of invading someone else's Church diocese, speaking of the Metropolitan of Kyiv. In fact, the opposite is true. The Patriarch of Moscow invaded someone else's Church diocese using the political situation and began to act dishonestly, immodestly and without brotherly love, first electing the Metropolitan of Kyiv Gedeon and then canceling the commemoration of the Patriarch of Constantinople. And today, unfortunately, instead of realizing the non-canonicity of this act and repenting for a lot of Church offenses, accusations of violating the borders against the Church of Constantinople and the Ecumenical Patriarch continue in the most outrageous way. I wonder if a Metropolitan of the Moscow Patriarchate unilaterally ceased or changed the commemoration of his Patriarch, how would the Holy Synod of the Russian Church and the Patriarch of Moscow resolve this issue?

On the basis of the Holy and Sacred Canons, those of the metropolitans of Kyiv, who stopped the commemoration of the Patriarch of Constantinople, are subject to the punishment of deposition. It does not matter, of course, whether the Ecumenical Patriarchate imposes on them the punishment envisaged in the Holy and Sacred Canons, but these are Church and canonical realities. Today, everyone is talking about schismatic "Patriarch" Filaret, but to be fair, we must say that at the moment there is both a schism that is to be healed and hidden non-canonical activities in Ukraine.

After the letter of Patriarch Dionysius, the Kyiv Metropolis sometimes found itself in close relations with Moscow, and sometimes in completely formal ones. The next important historical milestone was in 1917 when Russia changed its political system, and a trend toward Church independence from Moscow subsequently re-emerged in Ukraine.²⁵ When three months after the fall of the tsarist regime from June 1 to 10, 1917 the all-Russian Council was held, the representatives of Ukraine who attended it submitted a bold proposal for autocephaly: "If Ukraine is an independent state, then its Church should become Autocephalous. If Ukraine will be recognized as autonomous, so must be Church."²⁶

²⁵ Αρχιμανδρίτου Βασιλείου Δημοπούλου, Ἐκθεσις ὑπ' ἄρ. Πρωτ. 108 τῆς 17ης Μαΐου 1928, πρὸς τὸν Βασιλεῖον Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριάρχην Γ', περὶ θεμάτων Ρωσσοικῆς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

²⁶ "The Report of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III, Eastern Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem and other heads of Autocephalous

Naturally, these organized movements for the autocephaly and the independence of the Church provoked so much indignation in Moscow Patriarchate that at the meeting of the Russian Council on September 7/20, 1918 they strictly forbade to make any suggestions about the Ukrainian autocephaly and deprived the initiators of the process, the archpriests Vasyl Lypkivsky and Nestor Sharaevsky, of their voice in the upcoming all-Ukrainian Clergy-Laity Congress. Of course, these Russian decisions caused strong protests. Many of clergy and laity began to create independent communities in Kyiv and Podolia, and the two above-mentioned clergymen ordained themselves into bishops by laying the hands of priests, founding the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church and, of course, causing a schism. Autocephaly of the Archpriest Lypkivsky and his associates was the first attempt to create an Autocephalous Church in the 20th century.²⁷

In early 1919, the Ukrainian government adopted the "Law on the Autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church," which forbade the commemoration of Patriarch Tikhon and the Pro-Russian Metropolitan of Kyiv Anthony, and at the same time the Synod headed by Metropolitan of Ekaterinoslav Agapitos was instituted. Within this legislative framework, the delegation headed by former minister Lotocky was sent to Constantinople in order to obtain the blessing for the Ukrainian Autocephaly. Then Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Dorotheus of Prusa, responded to this request on March 9, 1920 as follows: "The decisions taken in respect of this request cannot be canonical for us at present," but then he advised the representatives "to wait with full hope for the fulfillment of their aspirations according to the resolutions and the Holy Canons."²⁸

Nevertheless, the response of the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not deter the efforts of Ukrainians, who later became more persistent.²⁹ In September 1922, an informal Council headed by the Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate Mikhail took place, there it was decided that the issue of autocephaly needs an appropriate resolution by

Churches concerning the canonical grounds of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church" (in Russian), Kharkiv, 1926.

²⁷ Μαξιμου Μητροπολίτου Σάρδεων, "Τὸ Ζήτημα Οὐκρανικὸν Ἐκκλησιαστικόν", see above, p. 2017.

²⁸ Ἐγκόκλιος τῆς ἐν τῶν ἐν Βυρττεμβέργη Συνόδου ὑπερορία Οὐκρανῶν Ἐπισκόπων, 16 Μαρτίου 1946, Esslingen Γερμανίας.

²⁹ Ἀριχμανδρίτου Μεθοδίου Φούγια, "Ἀυτοκέφαλον Τὸ ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Οὐκρανίας", ὄπ. Π., σελ. 16.

the Clergy-Laity Congress.³⁰ A year later (October 25-27, 1923), the adherents of the Ukrainian autocephaly managed to convene the Bishops' Council in Kharkiv, where the main topic of discussion was the method of obtaining autocephaly after the final decision of the all-Ukrainian Clergy-Laity Congress.³¹

Finally, in November 1924 in Kharkiv, under the chairmanship of the former Bishop of Balta, subsequently Metropolitan of Kharkiv and all Ukraine Pimen, an all-Ukrainian pre-Council meeting was convened and made the decision that on May 17, 1925 the second all-Ukrainian Orthodox Clergy-Laity Congress will be convened in order to "appease the Church situation in Ukraine, to resolve the issue of autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church, to protect its universal Orthodoxy, strengthen its alliance with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch and other Eastern Patriarchs and prepare to the participation in the upcoming Ecumenical Council."³²

The second all-Ukrainian Congress, which was attended by members of the Holy Synod and representatives of the clergy and laity, was held from May 17 through May 27, 1925.³³ The participants unanimously proclaimed the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which was also signed by representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate.³⁴ In the spirit of these decisions and given that Patriarch Tikhon died in April 1925, the all-Russian Council convened in Moscow (October 6, 1925) in the presence of Ukrainian representatives and recognized the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church, which was reported in its encyclical address to "Autocephalous Orthodox Churches."

After careful study of this issue, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate considered that it should not take any decision until it receives and studies the relevant protocols of the all-Ukrainian Clergy-Laity Congress (May 1925).³⁵ But, since the requested protocols and other documents were not sent, there was no

³⁰ "The Report of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III...", see above.

³¹ "The Report of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III...", see above.

³² Μαξίμου Μητροπολίτου Σάρδεων, "Τὸ Ζήτημα Οὐκρανικὸν Ἐκκλησιαστικόν", see above, p. 220.

³³ The voice of Orthodox Ukraine, No. 8, April 19, Kharkov 1925 (in Russian).

³⁴ "The Report of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III...", see above, pp.6 and 15.

³⁵ Κῶδιξ Πρακτικῶν Ἁγίας καὶ Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου ἔτους 1926, Συνεδρία Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου 21ης Ἰανουαρίου 1926, σελ. 357.

recognition of autocephaly on the part of the Church of Constantinople.³⁶ Of course, all this was no longer relevant after 1930 when the Bolsheviks occupied Ukraine and abolished the so-called autocephaly.

In 1941, German troops entered Ukraine and interrupted Church relations between Ukraine and Russia. Despite the cramped conditions of the Second World War, the people of Ukraine decided that it was the right time to bring up the issue of the official recognition of the autocephaly already proclaimed in 1925 by the Second all-Ukrainian Local Council. The Archbishop of Lutsk and Volyn Polycarp, who headed the Autocephalous Ukrainian Church, acted in this respect, together with the bishops whom he ordained. Of course, his stay in Ukraine was not long, because after retreat of the German army he was also forced to leave because of his close contacts and cooperation with them.³⁷ Therefore, the second attempt to achieve autocephaly in the previous century initiated by the dubious Polycarp failed. Nevertheless, in 1942 the Russian Church signed an agreement on the recognition of Polycarp's autocephaly with provisional acceptance on condition that the Autonomous Church in Ukraine was placed under the control of Russian Metropolitan Alexios, but eventually after this agreement the Russian part withdrew the signatures.

Meanwhile, because of the difficulties that Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland faced trying to serve in Ukrainian areas, mainly during the World War II, in 1942 three Ukrainian bishops were ordained: Yuri of Brest, Nikanor of Chyhyryn and Igor of Uman, who received autonomy from the Polish Church. Nevertheless, this step, although it provided full ecclesiastical self-government on the territory of Ukraine, cannot be considered a continuation of the previous attempts to gain Church independence. It was something new and special.

The issue of autocephaly in Ukraine was again on the agenda after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galician Filaret (1968) being the main figure. After the death of Patriarch Pimen, Filaret was appointed Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow, and was the one having most chances to be elected. Finally, Metropolitan Alexios of Leningrad was elected Patriarch and Filaret was barred from the elections because of his Ukrainian origin.

³⁶ Μαξίμου Μητροπολίτου Σάρδεων, "Τὸ Ζήτημα Οὐκρανικὸν Ἐκκλησιαστικόν", see above, p. 223.

³⁷ Ἀρχιμανδρίτου Μεθοδίου Φούγια, "Αὐτοκέφαλον Τὸ ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Οὐκρανίας", see above, p. 28.

As a result of these events, and given the strong desire for Church independence from Moscow by the Ukrainian clergy and people, Patriarch Alexios had to grant Metropolitan Filaret of Kyiv and Galician a "Tomos" that provided independence and internal self-government in 1990. This was done during a ceremony in the Temple of St. Sophia of Kyiv. But this "Tomos" gave no clarification to what status the Ukrainian church had, Autonomous or Autocephalous.

Meanwhile, on August 24, 1991, Ukraine became independent from the USSR, and in November same year, the Clergy-Laity Congress once again voted for autocephaly and independence of the Church led by Filaret.

This move was the third attempt of Ukraine to get autocephaly in the past century. Of course, at the Bishops' Council of the Moscow Patriarchate on April 2, 1992, the Ukrainian bishops who had voted for the autocephaly were forced to withdraw their signatures and say that they had put them under the pressure and threats of Filaret. That is why the Russian Synod demanded his resignation. At first, Filaret agreed to leave, but when he returned to Kyiv, he broke the agreement and accused the Russian side of acting under the pressure of the FSB, the reorganized KGB.

Following these developments, the Moscow Patriarchate realized that it would not be able to prevent the establishment of an autocephalous -Church in Ukraine, which became an independent state. Instead of starting negotiations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Metropolitan Filaret, in May 1992, a self-appointed Council convened in Kharkiv where Ukrainian bishops who had declared their loyalty to Moscow elected the new Metropolitan of Kyiv, Vladimir. In June the same year, with the support of the government, the Patriarchate of Kyiv and all Ukraine was established. In 1995, Filaret was elected Patriarch of Kyiv and all Ukraine by the Clergy-Laity Congress, but he was deposed by the Russian Patriarchate in 1997.

In 1991, the Clergy-Laity Congress of Polycarp voted and recognized as the Patriarch of Kyiv and all Ukraine his successor, Mstislav, who died in 1993. The Mstislav group, which operated mainly in diaspora, after canonical procedures came under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Upon the death of Mstislav, a group of clergy and laity who lived in Ukraine elected Patriarch Dimitrius, who died in 2000, and then Methodius was elected as his successor but did not accept the title of Patriarch. For this reason he named his own group the "Ukrainian Autocephalous

Church." The current successor to Methodius is the incumbent Makarius who leads the third group of the Orthodox believers in Ukraine.

Therefore, today in Ukraine, in addition to the Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) there exist Filaret's jurisdiction called "the Patriarchate of Kyiv" (UOC-KP) and Makarius' one named "the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church" (UAOC). Before drawing conclusions, it may be necessary to provide some statistics that will help to summarize the outline of the current Ukrainian agenda.

The latest survey published in August 2018 with a basic question as to "which Church is considered to be the successor of the Kyiv Metropolis after the Baptism of the Russians?" showed that only 73% of the surveyed answered the relevant question. And 52% of those who responded consider that the Church of Filaret is the successor to the first Kyivan Church, 12% believe the Autonomous Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, led by Onuphrius, is the successor, 3% support the Church of Makarius, 2% support the Russian Patriarchate and 5% gave other answers.³⁸

According to another survey conducted in Ukraine from June 9 to July 7, 2017, the believers belonging to the so-called Kyiv Patriarchate make up 44% of the population, faithful of the Moscow's Autonomous Church amount to 18%, followed by those who believe but do not want to identify themselves with any Church. The latter group comprises 22%, followed by 6% who are Uniates, 4% who are atheists, 3% who did not respond and 2% who gave other answers, 1% who are Catholics and 1% who are Protestants.³⁹

This is the current picture of Ukraine in numbers.

After what has been said above, we can draw the following conclusions:

1) Since the early 14th century, when the see of the Kyivan Metropolis was moved without the canonical permission of the Mother Church to Moscow, there have been tireless efforts on the part of our Kyivan brothers for independence from ecclesiastical control by the Moscow center. Indeed, the obstinacy of the Patriarchate of Moscow was instrumental in occasionally creating repeated mergers and restorations of ecclesiastical eparchies, uncanonical elections of Bishops as well as schisms, which still

³⁸ See webpage: www.day.kyiv.ua

³⁹ Public Opinion Survey of Residents of Ukraine (June 9 – July 7, 2017) Center for Insights in Survey Research. A project of the International Republican Institute.

afflict the pious Ukrainian people. In the past there have been initial efforts to achieve autocephaly, with last three of them in the 20th century being the culmination, but they weren't successful because of sociopolitical and historical conditions. The Church issue in Ukraine, in any case, is not a recent phenomenon at all but a protracted one, which makes the need for the intervention of the Mother Church imperative. Thus, since Russia, as the one responsible for the current painful situation in Ukraine, is unable to solve the problem, the Mother Church in accordance with the authority afforded to her by the Sacred Canons (the 9th, 17th and 28th ones of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and the Canon 36 of the Quinisext Council), assumed the initiative and responsibility to take care of every other Church and unity, restore the canonical order and heal schisms and divisions.

2) The blatant and unjustified subordination of the Kyiv Metropolis to the Patriarchate of Russia is based on the letter of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysius, which, however, allowed the Patriarch of Moscow to ordain but not to authorize the transfer of his jurisdiction over the metropolis. The letter reads: "In the Holy Spirit the beloved and desired brother and the co-servant of our mediocrity (the Patriarch of Moscow) has permission to ordain the Metropolitan of Kyiv according to the Church regulation." Beyond this, however, the prescribed term of the agreement was not met: "May he only keep the Metropolitan of Kyiv to commemorate the honorable name of the Holy Ecumenical Patriarch first when officiating the bloodless and divine Sacrament in that diocese." The termination of the commemoration of one's canonical Bishop's name entails the canonical punishment of deposition.

3) The historical conditions under which the letter was written have now completely changed. Today, there is neither the "excess of the place" (or the distance) nor the difficulties caused by "fightings that occur between the two greatest Powers" that might prevent the Ecumenical Patriarch from exercising his canonical right over the Metropolis of Kyiv. So, since there are no historical conditions that caused the letter, and given that the clause on commemoration of the name of the Patriarch of Constantinople was breached, it is obvious that this letter is automatically considered invalid and can be revoked by its author.

4) In addition to the historical conjuncture and the church-political situation that caused the letter to be written, it would be necessary to study the current contextual

and conjunct factors which do not favor the Moscow Patriarchate. Historical circumstances not only pass away but changed to the opposite. Today, what once was the case for the Patriarch of Constantinople, namely that he could not come to Kyiv and ordain the Metropolitan "because of fightings that occur between the two greatest Powers," applies to the Patriarch of Russia who is very unwelcome in Ukraine, both by the government of the state and by the people. The dramatic political events, through which a completely different geopolitical configuration emerged, made the presence and intervention of the Moscow Patriarchate undesirable and at least contrary if not detrimental to the interests of the Ukrainian state and the unity of the Ukrainian people. So, if our Russian brethren so obsessively want to invoke historical and contextual reasons, they should urgently come to their senses and abandon the conquest and non-canonical dictatorship over the Kyivan Metropolis, recognizing the harm caused by their presence and unjustified insistence.

5) It was the Church of Constantinople that granted autocephalous status to all local Churches, the Russian one is no exception. When Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II convened the Synod in Constantinople in 1590, the Moscow Metropolis had already been elevated to the rank of Patriarchate (1589), and the other Patriarchs confirmed not Moscow's autocephalous status, but the already accomplished act of Constantinople. The reconsideration of the issue concerning the Church of Moscow at the 1593 Synod, as deduced from the relevant minutes, was carried out not to approve the promotion of Moscow once more, but because Moscow was not satisfied with the position it had in the diptychs and sought to take the third place, i.e. after Alexandria and before Antioch. The Synod rightly rejected the irreconcilable non-canonical and non-ecclesiastical request of the Tsar and Patriarch of Moscow.

6) The Holy Great Church of Christ embodies and defends the ecumenical character of Orthodoxy, free of self-interest and obsessions. If the service of the First, defined and blessed by the Ecumenical Councils, falls "in the hands" of those obsessed with ethnocentric trends and thoughtless ambition, it will lose its true ecclesiological essence and its ecumenical radiance. If any Church illegally holds the territory of other nations or forcibly and despotically intervenes there using the involvement of secular authorities, with hidden plans and all kinds of threats to church jurisdictions that are

not prescribed in its Tomos of Autocephaly, it splits the unity of Orthodoxy and constantly proves her spiritual and ecclesiological failure.

The Metropolis of Kyiv has suffered for many years and thus is experiencing its own darkness. I do not know what steps the Mother Church will take, and none of us can guarantee that all problems will be solved as if by magic when the autocephaly is given. It is certain, however, that once the autocephaly is granted a new dazzling day will come for the suffering Church of Kyiv.

Thank you.