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**The total divergence between**  
***Canonical Tradition and Russian Ethno-Ecclesiastical Policy***  
**(The multiplicatively uncanonical synodal decision**  
**of the *Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church of Russia***  
**to the detriment of the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria [13/26-12-2019])**

**Canonical Evaluation**  
**for**  
**THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA**

“I am exceedingly grieved to find that the Canons of the Fathers have been left unheeded and all strictness in the churches has been cast to the winds; and I fear lest, when this indifference has advanced a little more, the affairs of the Church *will wind up in a state of utter confusion.*  
(Canon 89/Basil the Great).

“The Church of Christ, *if anyone can see it...*,  
he sees nothing other than, and only, the Body of the Lord”.  
(St. Nicholas Cabasilas).

“The day the **power of love**  
overrules the **love of power**,  
the world will know peace.”  
(Mahatma Gandhi).

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**Prologue**

A Russian chronicler, already from **1512**, half a millennium ago, noted: “The City of Constantine has fallen, but our Russian land, with the help of the All-Holy Mother of God and the Saints, is growing and is **new** and **strong**. So may it be, O my Christ, until the end of the world!”... This comprises, primarily, the timeless definition of the *Russian secular eschatology*, which has nourished and nourishes to this day the Russian Ecclesiastical mega-ideations that permeate the institutional mentality and

functioning of the Russian Patriarchate. And since then until today the Church institutional rulers, officials and responsible persons have moved with these two aforementioned aggressive determinations: the **new** and the **strong!**... On this historical **newness** of (Russian) history and not on the unchanging *eschatological* Church was based the **New Theory** of the “Third Rome,” which was put at the loyal service of the Russian Empire. On this *earthen strength* (like the statue of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream...) they envisioned and built their two-fold (geo-strategic and geo-ecclesiastical) policy, as well as the recently emerging special ecclesiastical power of *global dimensions*, as, instead of preferring the *power of love* which they received as a gift of grace from the Church through Baptism and the *autocephalous-honor*, they have fatally slipped into and preferred the *love of [global] power*. This hearkens to a previous and well-known historical reality, that of the Patriarchate of Rome, which, for a whole millennium – from the **Break of Communion of 1054** to the present day – has been engaged in a race to acquire *ecclesial status of global dimensions* and *universal ecclesiastical power...*, which it finally instituted by the First Vatican Council (1870) and ratified by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Something similar is at work, as will be seen below, broadening the perspective of the resulting issue with the Church of Alexandria and the Patriarchate of Russia, by means of its recent Statuary and Synodal decisions, of just the past 20 years (2000-2019), which, as is emphatically noted by the present Canonical Evaluation, *transcend, in terms of intentions and goals, the recent conflict over the Ukrainian Autocephaly, which consists more of a pretext and an opportunistic occasion for the achievement of other visions and purposes on a global scale and perspective...*

The synodal decision of the Russian Patriarchate causes two identical anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical problems, which were caused throughout the second millennium and prevail unhindered until today. This is the twofold major problem of **creating Ecclesiastical co-territoriality** and **causing ecclesiastical polyarchy** in the Church in a given place. Simply, the Patriarchate in question – because it does not adopt theological methodology, but rather a proven *ethno-political* and *ethno-ecclesiastical* methodology – does not realize that it regurgitates past anti-canonical practices that were condemned and are condemnable by the Church, and thus incessantly wanders off onto extra-ecclesial paths. This twofold, major anti-ecclesiological problem is presented in what follows in order to examine both the synodal decision in question, as well as the announced threats of its implementation, from an ecclesiological and sacred-canonical perspective.

## I. Preface

### Introduction

The whole of the second millennium is marked by numerous and varied anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical divergences of the same *ecclesiastical polyarchy with co-territoriality of two or more Churches in the same place*, which have manifested themselves identically in the bosom of all the Christian Churches without exception (Roman Catholic, Protestant and, more recently, Orthodox) throughout the the second millennium, from the end of the First Crusade in 1099 to the present day. These deviations are presented in the present text in a systematic way, based on their characteristic appearance, at four different but homologous levels: **a)** at the level of the Bishopric, **b)** at the level of the Metropolis [the Metropolitan system], **c)** at the level of a local Church, and **d)** at the level of the Universal Church throughout the world. This multilevel ecclesial polyarchy at the local level abolishes the canonical principle which, already from the historical beginnings of the Church, stipulates for *Una Ecclesia in unum Territorium*, and at the same time it forcibly causes the anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical phenomenon of **Ecclesiastical Co-territoriality** and **Ecclesiastical Polyarchy**, which negate the fact of the Church in one place. The Russian Patriarchate, however, seems not to take this into account in its ecclesial life and in its communion with the other sister Orthodox local Churches of the same confession. Let us, however, first take a detailed look at the Synodal Decision of the Patriarchate of Russia before we pass to its historical-canonical examination, to its inevitable negative repercussions that will take the form of an *ecclesiological epidemic*, as well as to indicative proposals for dealing with this decision.

### The Synodal Decision of the Patriarchate of Russia (13/26-12-2019)

1. Indeed, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Russia recently decided to *break ecclesial communion* with His Most Divine Beatitude, Patriarch of Alexandria Theodore II (i.e. with the Patriarchate of Alexandria) and to remove and erase the Patriarch of Alexandria (well as some Metropolitans!) from the Ecclesiastical Diptychs (i.e. cessation of commemoration), as a drastic response to the recognition of the Autocephaly of the newly established local Church of Ukraine, but not of all the Metropolitans of the Patriarchate of Alexandria! [*sic*], something that does not resemble the corresponding Russian synodal decision for the Ecumenical Patriarchate!....., where the break of communion reaches also the priests and deacons, down to and including the laity! In other words, one can see that, during the same year and by the same Russian Synod, two different forms of *breaking of ecclesial communion* are issued: one of a *universal content* and one of a *selective content*, with equivalent local Churches of the same confession as their recipients!... However, break

of communion is provided for canonically, only in the case of declared heresy, it is carried out by a synodical *pan-Orthodox* decision and not by a single local Church; it is one and uniform in form, without having subcategories... Consequently, it is clear that the Russian synodal decision introduces in many ways a novel and arbitrary form of *breaking ecclesial communion*, a unilateral initiative with novel and abusive content. Therefore, the synodal decision in question, as novel, arbitrary, and abusive, is ecclesio-canonically considered *invalid*. Beside this negative aspect of the issue, there is another negative aspect which is much worse, discerned as a sinister intention that is completely unfamiliar and does not correspond to the canonical Church regarding a Synod of Bishops of a local sister Church. The structure of this decision indeed contains an attempt to split the Body of Bishops of the Patriarchate of Alexandria by an external synodal factor of a sister Church. This split, if achieved with their apparent ambiguous intentions, will have multifariously negative effects. This is the aim of the carefully formulated Russian synodal decision with this novel content of *breaking communion*: not to break the ecclesiastical communion with the Metropolitans of the Patriarchate of Alexandria uniformly, but rather, with the only mutually consistent condition that they do not recognize the new Church structure in Ukraine and, by extension, do not concelebrate with the Patriarch of Alexandria. This constitutes the definition of an attempt to provoke a split of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria in its central structure, the Holy Synod, and to provoke a divisive movement within the Synod and the Synodal Body, for a subsequently easier penetration into Africa, turning it into an atomic trap, and into the ongoing work of international mission, supplanting the Patriarchate of Alexandria. In other words, the distinct Russian synodal decisions of a *universal* interruption of communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a *selective* interruption of communion with the Patriarchate of Alexandria betray an attempt to split the “common consent of the Bishops” (canon 5/I) of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and create an internal rupture for the purpose of easier penetration into the African continent.

2. The decision also proclaims that the parishes on the African continent, which were created on the initiative or at the suggestion of the Russian Church, will be immediately removed from the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, to which they belonged until now, not out of “Moscow’s goodwill and friendliness,” but because of their automatic ecclesial-canonical incorporation into the local Patriarchate of Alexandria. The decision even indicates the way in which this removal will be implemented: these Russian parishes will be given *stavropegial status* (although normally the stavropegial status is granted at the time of foundation and never afterwards), in the same way as the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Tallinn was turned into a stavropegial, with the result that the Patriarchate of Russia itself has caused the spectacular and unimaginable anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical

phenomenon of *domestic co-territoriality*, i.e. two Russian ecclesial jurisdictions in the same place: on the one hand, the whole of Estonia being a Russian eparchy under Metropolitan Cornelius, belonging to the Patriarchate of Russia, and on the other, its Cathedral Church, recently made *a stavropegial (sic)*, not belonging to its own bishop, but directly to the Patriarch and Bishop of Moscow, thus creating two superimposed (superposées) ecclesial jurisdictions in the same place, in the same ecclesial eparchy, of the same Patriarchate. And of course, all this formation exists parasitically next to the canonical jurisdiction of the Autonomous Church of Estonia. It is precisely this heterotrophic formation that will be implemented locally and on the African continent, gradually implementing this synodal decision.

3. The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Russia also decided to change the Russian Patriarchal Representation in Alexandria, which will be transformed into a *direct superimposed tele-parish* of the Church of Russia in Cairo in the bosom of the local Patriarchate of Alexandria (which will cause both a broad *intrusion* with geographical spread on the African continent as well as the anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical problem of co-territoriality, as will be analyzed below), while at the same time deciding to abolish the Exarchate in Moscow (something along the lines of “ecclesiastical ethnic cleansing” for their own “canonical territory”). This also implies the fact that, those Russian priests who are currently serving in the local Patriarchate of Alexandria, will no longer be ecclesiastically connected to it, while those priests (*and bishops!...*) who will go there from now onwards will never be institutionally connected to it, as they will remain *tele-priests* (*and tele-bishops*) of the Patriarchate of Russia!...

The facts set forth constitute the recent Synodal Decision of the Patriarchate of Russia as “canonical” (*sic*) *measures* and “fraternal” (*sic*) *retaliation* for the “restoration to canonical correctness” (*sic*) of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and its Patriarch!... But who, and how, will stop this multiplicatively arbitrary, anti-ecclesiological, and anti-canonical behaviour of the Patriarchate of Russia? When will it be held accountable for its many arbitrary, anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical actions, in which it has been engaged for half a millennium now, from the time it was granted and acquired Autocephaly until today (1589-2019), being consciously attached to the bandwagon of the Russian National-Tsar?....

### **The four homologous anti-canonical deviations of *ecclesial co-territoriality* and *polyarchy* which annihilate the Church**

*Ecclesial co-territoriality* and *ecclesial polyarchy* constitute for the Canonical Tradition of the Church two identical and mutually successive ecclesio-canonical

divergences, which negate the Church herself and corrupt her hypostasis. It is a two-faced historical temptation, which threatened the Church in an alienating way from her very first historical steps and which she faced in various times (4th-7th centuries) and in various ways, mainly in a synodal way, when it acquired a visible or tangible form and manifested itself in a way that was counterproductive for the hypostasis and existence of a Bishopric or Regional Church. It would be of historical-canonical and topical interest to investigate this twin issue, which has been troubling the Church throughout its entire history, and to demonstrate the chief reasons that make it urgent, since this issue also troubles the Church today especially, more than ever before, in all its geo-canonical manifestations.

**The definition of *Ecclesial co-territoriality and ecclesiastical polyarchy*: “Two Bishoprics, two Metropolises, two local Churches, two Universal Churches throughout the World, within the same geo-ecclesiastical territory” (canon 8/I, canon 12/IV, canon 39/Quinisext and canon 57/Carthage-56/Quinisext, respectively).**

After the 1990s, and in particular immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1990), which signaled wider European geographical unifications, a manifest attempt, non-existent in our Ecclesial Tradition, at *multi-canoncity (sic)*, a *prismatic canonicity* began to appear in the bosom of the local Orthodox Churches. The consistency of the Canonical Tradition of the Church of two millennia appears to recede before the untested choice of a polyhedral form of canonicity and heterocentric practice of Canon Law, which fatally diffuses itself into the ethno-cultural demands of the times and inflames and fosters state political machinations. This *prismatic* appearance certainly has its pathogenic causes. However, nor are its consequences without (co-)responsibility, when it is mainly the Orthodox National Churches that not only adopt but also institutionalize such deviant ecclesial-canonical situations – as was the case in the past and continues to be the case with the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

However, the Canonical Tradition of the Church (1st-9th centuries), which developed homocentrically throughout its *institution of canons* during the first millennium, points in a diachronic and homotropic manner to four anti-ecclesiological, and therefore anti-canonical, deviations which have recently taken a more central position in the life of the Church than ever before and which annihilate and essentially abolish the Church, having as their common denominator of deviation *co-territoriality*, with multiple direct and immediate anti-canonical consequences, such as *episcopal co-jurisdiction*, *ecclesiastical polyarchy* and *local-geographic poly-*

*jurisdiction*. These four deviations, as identified, noted, and condemned by the canonical tradition of the Church, are the following:

**The ecclesio-canonical deviations of co-territoriality and polyarchy,  
as noted by the Canonical Tradition of the Church  
(First millennium)**

1. *Two* Bishoprics in the same place – Episcopal polyarchy (canon 8/I-**325**),
2. *Two* Metropolises in the same place – Metropolitan polyarchy (canon 12/IV-**451**),
3. *Two* local Churches in the same place – Ecclesial polyarchy (canon 39/Quinisext-**691**),
4. *Two* Worldwide Churches on the same Planet – Universal Ecclesial polyarchy (canon 57/Carthage-**419** and 56/Quinisext-**691**),

Let us examine more analytically the synodal indications of ecclesio-canonical heterocentrism and divergence as they are reflected in the synodal texts and crystalized in the Canonical Tradition of the Church throughout the centuries. These synodal remarks focus in an *ad hoc* and non-*ad hoc* way on the ecclesio-canonical problem described by the neologism *Ecclesial co-territoriality* examined herein.

- 1) *Episcopal co-territoriality*,
- 2) *Metropolitan co-territoriality*,
- 3) *Autonomous, Autocephalous-Patriarchal, Patriarchal co-territoriality and*
- 4) *Universal ecclesial co-territoriality*

The chronological diachronic arrangement and presentation, and indeed in a homocentric perspective, of this homonomous problem reveals that the Church has returned time and again to this particular anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical problem. A preliminary clarification of ecclesiological form should be made here, so that there can be a universal, objective co-apprehension in the attempt to point out the aspects and manifestations of this homocentric and complex ecclesio-canonical problem.

First of all there is evident an indiscriminate and frequent use of three canonical terms, each of which have a clearly distinct ecclesial hypostasis:

- a) **“Local Church”** (Bishopric),
- b) **“regional Church”** (Patriarchate, Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church, Autocephalous Church, Autonomous Church, Semi-Autonomous Church, Metropolis

[of the Metropolitan System]), that which, entirely wrongly today, Roman Catholics and Orthodox call a “*particular Church*” (*sic*) or a “*Local Church*”, and

c) the “***Worldwide Church***”,

*Confusion* is caused in the definition of “Church” in each particular case, even more so in the emergence of existing ecclesio-canonical problems, which, instead of being solved, become more and more complex upon approaching and attempting to solve them. The first two categories of Churches are indiscriminately defined by the term “*Local Church*”, provoking ecclesio-canonical, methodological and communicative/social confusions, while the third category is systematically (and intentionally?) ignored, replaced by the ecclesiologically arbitrary and canonically unknown term (*conceptio*) “*Universal Church*”.

We shall, therefore, consider the existing ecclesiastical-canonical problem:

- ◆ distinguishing three – shall we say – ***Categories*** of Churches (1. Local Church, 2. Regional Church and 3. Church throughout the Inhabited World) and
- ◆ four different ***Levels*** (1. Episcopal; 2. Metropolitan-Semi-Autonomous; 3. Autonomous, Autocephalous-Patriarchal, Patriarchal; and 4. Patriarchal and Universal).

However, since levels (2) and (3) are similar, they could be grouped into one category, and, in order to facilitate the consideration of the issue, we summarize them and arrive, for the sake of understanding, at the following correspondence, as shown in the following summarized table:

<b><u><i>Categories of Churches – Levels of Church polyarchy</i></u></b>		
<b>1.</b>	<b><i>Local Church</i></b>	→ Bishopric
<b>2.</b>	<b><i>Regional Church</i></b>	→ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Metropolis, Semi-Autonomous Church</li> <li>◆ Autonomous, Autocephalous, Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church</li> <li>◆ Patriarchate (of the Pentarchy)</li> </ul>
<b>3.</b>	<b><i>Worldwide Church</i></b>	→ Universal

Let us also note here something that is essentially related to the above conceptual distinction and is of interest to us also in terms of interpretation for the approach to the issue in question. The “*catholic Church*” of the Creed of the Divine Liturgy (“In one, holy, *catholic* and apostolic Church”) is only the *Local Church-Bishopric*, where each one finds himself at the moment of the Liturgical Synaxis, of which he is a constituent *gift of grace*-member, and not, as is wrongly said – and by the Russian Church, as will be seen below – the Worldwide or the “Universal” (*sic*) Church. And the Local Church is really the *only ecclesiologically existing one*. It constitutes an *institution* in the Church. The other forms of Church (Eparchial Church-Metropolis, Autonomous Church, Autocephalous Church, Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church, Patriarchate) make up institutional *Systems, canonical systems* of Local Churches which correspond to the geographical, pastoral and practical needs of the Church. As for the “*Universal Church*”, it is completely unknown in the long-standing Canonical Tradition of the Church, either as an entity or as a term. It constitutes a *post-canonical* invention of the second millennium, as we shall see below, which was put into practice by the recent decision of the Patriarchate of Russia. Thus, after these clarifications, we can approach the four homologous levels of anti-ecclesiological polyarchy, which essentially annihilate the Church in whichever of its *geo-canonical* manifestations.

### **1. Two Bishoprics in the same place – Episcopal polyarchy (canon 8/I-325)**

Those who have dealt with this question (cf. J. Meyendorff,<sup>1</sup> J. Gaudemet<sup>2</sup>) stopped their important critical intervention at this first (*episcopal*) level of ecclesiastical polyarchy. The homocentric problem, however, extends, as we shall see below, to other levels (*metropolitan, autocephalous-patriarchal, patriarchal* and *universal ecclesiastical*), since divergences appeared precisely after the establishment of these synodal ecclesiastical-canonical systems and the Church was obliged to come back several times and intervene synodically.

In particular regarding this first level of *episcopal co-territoriality and polyarchy*, the Church repeatedly took action in many ways, mainly through synodal decisions and canons. Indeed, there are numerous sacred canons which declare and dictate that this phenomenon should be *prevented* and that there should not be more than one bishop in the same ecclesiastical province. Mentioned as examples are

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<sup>1</sup> J. MEYENDORFF, “One Bishop in One City (Canon 8, First Ecumenical Council)”, in *St Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 5, nos. 1-2 (1961), pp. 54-62; IDEM, *Orthodoxie et Catholicité*, Paris, pp1965., 99-108.

<sup>2</sup> J. GAUDEMET, *Le gouvernement de l’Église à l’époque classique [Ile partie, Le gouvernement local]*, vol. VIII, vol. 2, Paris 1979, pp. 124.

canons 34, 35, and 38 of the Holy Apostles (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century), 18 of Local Synod of Ancyra (314), 8 of the First Ecumenical Council (325), 9, 13, 16, 21 and 22 of the Local Synod of Antioch (341), 3 and 11 of the Local Synod of Sardica (343), 2 of the Second Ecumenical Council (381), 12 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451), 20 and 39 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council of Trullo (691), 16 of the First-Second Local Council (861). The canons here are presented in chronological order in order to show more clearly the time span (2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries) they cover and the Church's interest in this complex issue as it has developed over the centuries. This timespan essentially coincides with the period of eight centuries of the *institution of canons* the Church (2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries). Finally, and on the question of the ecclesial "Diaspora," of the multi-ritualistic (Roman Catholics), multi-denominational (Protestants) and multi-ethnic (Orthodox) super-regions, the anti-ecclesiological phenomenon of episcopal polyarchy is what a modern canonologist calls the "many-headed monster:" "We can have only one bishop at the head of the *mixed bishops* ["Diaspora!"], because a body with many heads would be "a monster"..."<sup>3</sup>

And on this point, the long-standing argument of Ecclesiastical *Oikonomia* for the ecclesiological non-existent "Diaspora" and the endless transitional tolerance thereof cannot stand up ecclesiological and canonically because it remains unknown not only as an argument, but chiefly as an ecclesiastical practice in the Canonical Tradition of the Church of the first millennium. The Eucharist, which is connected with the realization of the Local Church-Body of Christ in every place, cannot be a *Eucharist of oikonomia*, because there is no Body of Christ of *oikonomia*, i.e. Christ according to ecclesiastical tolerance and consent.

## **2. Two Metropolises in the same place – Metropolitan polyarchy (c. 12/IV-451)**

The ecclesiastical-canonical problem under consideration is not only coexisting bishops in one city and in one common place, who thus cause ecclesiastical polycephaly. The overlapping geo-ecclesiastical territories, which these bishops represent by their institutional presence, constitute the same homocentric problem, for the bishops, as one of the four *constituent charisms* of the Local Church (St. Hippolytus of Rome),<sup>4</sup> ecclesiological do not constitute individualities, but constitute recapitulative collective personalities and for this reason they recapitulate their Local Churches or, if they are Metropolitans (bishops [of the Metropolitan

<sup>3</sup> "Il ne peut y avoir qu'un seul évêque à la tête de ces diocèses bigarrés, car un corps à plusieurs têtes serait "un monstre""- J. GAUDEMET, *Le gouvernement de l'Église à l'époque classique...*, *ibid.*, pp. 124.

<sup>4</sup> In his work "Apostolic Tradition" – see. B. BOTTE, *La Tradition apostolique de SaintHippolyte (Essai de reconstitution)*, Münster, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, LQF – Volume 39, 1989, 132 pp. (cf. also S.C. 11 bis).

System]), they canonically represent *regional* Churches, being the “canonical authority” thereof...Regarding the issue’s aspect of homocentricity, the *ad hoc* canons 34 of the Holy Apostles (2nd-3rd century) and 9 of the 16 Local Council of Antioch (341), 2 of the Second Ecumenical Council (381) and 12 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) could be quoted as examples, precisely because they are completely balanced.

And the problem consists in this very point: the anti-canonical coexistence of bishops in the same city means many anti-ecclesiological situations at the same time, but it means basically geo-ecclesial overlap and therefore *co-territoriality*, something which automatically generates not *heterotopic canonical ecclesial polycentricity*, but the *homotopic anti-canonical ecclesial polyarchy* and, by extension, the “confusion of the Churches” (canon 2/II). Such is the case of Paris for the Orthodox, with the coexistence of six Metropolises which coexist with six overlapping identical geo-ecclesiastical *ethno-phyletic* jurisdictions, creating the unacceptable ecclesiastical-canonical phenomenon of not two but a multitude of Orthodox bishops in the same place. Jerusalem is also a similar case for Roman Catholics, with the coexistence of five homonymous Patriarchs-Heads of Churches and five overlapping, identical and at the same time distinct, Ritualistic Patriarchal Churches, which introduces us to the third level of the homocentric ecclesio-canonical problem. But here there is also something paradoxical. The Roman Catholic Church, at the behest of the Second Vatican Council, issued the *Code of Canon Law of the Eastern Churches* (1990) alongside and parallel to the pre-existing *Latin Code of Canon Law* (1917 and 1983), in order to regulate the hypostatic ecclesiological existence of the ritualistic Catholic Churches. This *Eastern Code*, which sometimes even differs from the corresponding *Latin Code*, was finally issued not to resolve and heal, as the Canons of the Church of the first millennium require, this most serious and crucial ecclesiastical-canonical problem, but to *legitimize anti-canonivities* that constitute confabulations, canards, configurations and inventions (*conceptio*) of the second millennium.

### **3. Two local Churches in the same place – Church polyarchy (canon 39/Quinisext-691)**

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) faced the ecclesial-canonical problem of Metropolitan polyarchy (canon 12) and Patriarchal polyarchy (canon 28)<sup>5</sup> in a given

<sup>5</sup> Canon 28/IV did not want anti-ecclesiological overlap of patriarchal jurisdictions outside their geo-patriarchal boundaries, much less uncanonical patriarchal co-territoriality. That is why it defined the territorial boundaries of each of the five Patriarchates (of the canonical Pentarchy) and assigned the undefined territories outside the five Patriarchates – and of the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus – to the Ecumenical (for that reason) Patriarch of Constantinople, as the one and only bishop of these territories; thanks to which synodical ecclesiological responsibility the Patriarchate of Constantinople has been characterized as Ecumenical ever since. It is therefore clear that Canon 28 does not declare the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the Universal Church (*sic*), as believe or

geo-ecclesiastical place. But when, in continuation, following a historical-political occasion (the occupation of Cyprus by the Saracens and the transfer of its population to the Hellespont in 688), the issue was raised of the *coexistence of two local Churches* in the same place (canon 39) or the possible *ecclesial absorption* of one Church by the other (also canon 39), the Quinisext Ecumenical Council in Trullo (691) did not leave the issue pending, for more than three years (688-691), nor did it postpone it for reasons of “deference” to ecclesiastical *Oikonomia*..., as happens today, but immediately took action and bequeathed us this canon 39, which is a monument of canonicity and a model of canonical handling of similar ecclesiological issues and problems.<sup>6</sup>

In only two summarizing words, the Quinisext Ecumenical Council (691), faced with the problem of the compulsory establishment of a local Church (Cyprus) on the canonical territory of another local Church (Constantinople), which automatically caused an ecclesio-canonical problem, i.e. the *coexistence of two regional Churches in the same place*, proceeded from the ecclesio-canonical principle that, in order for these Churches to exist as distinct ecclesiastical entities without ontological alteration, as decided by the earlier Ecumenical Councils (Third of Ephesus – 431 and Fourth of Chalcedon – 451), they can neither *coexist, nor can one* (in this case, that of Constantinople, because it historically had full rights to its normal territory of Hellespont) *absorb the other* (that of Cyprus). In other words, neither *ecclesiastical coexistence* in the same place, nor *ecclesiastical absorption!*..., but one, unique and only regional Church in a specific place. That is why the territory of Hellespont was cut off from the Church of Constantinople – something which this Church, showing ecclesiological sensitivity, accepted unreservedly – so that there could be an ecclesiological-canonical solution, and ceded it to the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus. The territory of Hellespont was a canonical territory of the Church of Cyprus from then on, subsuming into itself the native Greeks of the Hellespont. This was the synodical canonical solution, *precisely in order to avoid co-territoriality and ecclesial absorption*. In our present era, an era of ecclesiastical culturalistic claims, Roman Catholic *ritualistic* claims (Jerusalem, etc.), Protestant *confessional* (Europe, etc.) and Orthodox *ethno-phyletic* claims (Estonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Western Europe, America, and recently Africa, etc.), which Church and which Synod would act in this way and with such genuinely canonical criteria?... On the contrary, the Church of Russia, with its recent decisions and actions, acts in direct

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claim those who challenge its ecumenicity, but establishes a single and unique ecclesio-canonical jurisdiction in the areas outside created and existing regional Churches. Therefore, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is not a World Church, as this confrontational epithet would define it.

<sup>6</sup> For this interesting ecclesio-canonical subject, see Grig. D. PAPATHOMAS, *L'Église autocéphale de Cypre dans l'Europe unie (Approche nomocanonique)* (The Autocephalous Church of Cyprus in United Europe (Nomocanonical Approach)), Thessaloniki-Katerini, Ed., 1998, 81-96.

contradiction to the above-mentioned tripartite synodal and canonical Tradition of the Church.

**4. Two Worldwide Churches on the same planet Earth –  
Universal Ecclesiastical polyarchy  
(canons 57/Carthage-419 and 56/Quinisext-691)**

First of all, two preliminary remarks are necessary here, in order to understand more clearly the ecclesio-canonical complexity that this level presents.

1. The sacred canons and the entire Canonical Tradition of the Church know one and only one Church throughout the inhabited World. A contrary or even a parallel reality of the Church, different from it, remains incomprehensible and inconceivable. Historically, during the first millennium, this one and only Church throughout the inhabited world was confined to the ecclesiastical communion of the five Patriarchates (of the canonical system of the Pentarchy) and the (autocephalous) Church of Cyprus. Therefore, it is the communion of these local Churches that makes manifest “the catholic Church of God spread throughout the inhabited world” (canon 57/Carthage-419). In other words, the “Church throughout the Inhabited World” presupposes: 1) the existence of more than one regional ecclesiastical entity and 2) the communion of these ecclesiastical entities with one another. If these two conditions do not exist simultaneously and in combination, we cannot have “the Church poured out throughout the world”. Thus is defined synodically, ecclesiological and canonically the one and only possible and existing “Church spread throughout the inhabited world”. And it is always referred to in the singular, never in the plural.

2. The “Church throughout the inhabited World” in the Holy Canons of the first millennium does not mean “*Universal Church*”, as it was formed in the second millennium by the Roman Catholic canonical tradition, especially after the 1054 *Break of communion*: A Patriarchate, after breaking communion with the other four Eastern Patriarchates, declares itself the “*Universal Church*,” identifying itself geo-ecclesiastically with the entire world geographical territory (First Vatican Council of 1870). The term and the ecclesial reality it aspires to encompass are completely unknown in the two thousand years of the Church’s Canonical Tradition. Such an attempt to identify one “regional Church” with the “Church throughout the inhabited World” entails anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical elements of the exclusivity of this one “regional Church” and at the same time the exclusion and annihilation of the geo-eucharistic distinctness of the other “regional Churches,” as it involves, moreover, the same elements of automatic cessation of communion of regional Churches and, therefore, the *provocation of ecclesiastical co-territoriality at the universal level*, a relatively recent (19th-20th century) anti-ecclesiological and anti-

canonical historical phenomenon which could be characterized by the neologism *Ecclesial Universalism* (Universalismus).

After these two pivotal preliminary remarks, it is easy to see that ecclesial *globalism* first appeared in the **Roman Catholic Church**, immediately after the provocation of co-territoriality (Jerusalem-1099), at two historical moments: during the four Crusades (1095-1204, until 1261) and during the re-establishment of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Pope Pius IX (1847), prior to its (*universalism's*) subsequent crystallization both synodically and officially as the dominant ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church by the same Pope Pius and the First Vatican Council (1870), with two defining characteristics: (a) the Pope as *Universal Leader-Primate* (who disposes) and (b) a *Universal jurisdiction*. Since then, the Roman Catholic Church has defined itself as the “*Universal Church*” (*sic*), established as such by a solemn Synod. We also observe a manifest ecclesial *universalism*, with an increasing tendency in **Protestant Churches and Communities**, especially in the latter half of the 20th century and onwards. However, Protestant ecclesial *universalism* has a peculiar feature. There are similar confessional unions (e.g. the Lutheran *World Church*, the Evangelical *World Church*, and so on), while an orientation towards communion between the different Protestant denominations is almost completely absent. They are content with a (con-)federation of the confessions among themselves, without seeking ecclesiological bases for ecclesial communion. That is why the rising ecclesiastical *Universalism*, even within their own bosom, will drive them even further away from this vision of unity and communion of the Churches, establishing *multiple* and *parallel* Protestant “*World Churches*” (*sic*).

Within the Orthodox Church, the phenomenon of ecclesiastical *universalism* began to appear institutionally recently, from 1980 onwards. Several mainly **National Orthodox Churches**, with obvious national-ecclesiological priorities, institutionally reflected the *ecclesiastical universalism* by adopting statutory ordinances which provided for the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over their compatriots on a global scale. Some such Churches have recently (1980-2010) been the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus (former Charter of 1980, article 2), the Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church of Russia (Charter of 1988 and 2000, 1980, Article I, § 3 of both Charters),<sup>7</sup> and the Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church of Romania (Synodal Pan-Romanian Decree of 11 February 2010), though implicitly and without any particular attempt at statutory enshrinement; other territorial Churches are active in this direction. Thus, the Orthodox, too, following ecclesiologicaly, *ignores*, *volentes*, *nolentes*, the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, unjustifiably contribute to the alienation of the Church,

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<sup>7</sup> See below.

by promoting nationalistic collective purposes and national-ecclesiastical fascinations and interests, as recently the Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church of Russia did in Africa, but retaining the same deviant ecclesiastical-canonical denominator:

**Categories of Geo-ecclesial Universalism (Universalismus)-21<sup>st</sup> century**

- I.     *Globalized* Roman Catholic Church
- II.    *Globalized* Confessional Protestant Church (-es)
- III.   *Globalized* National Orthodox Church (-es)

The present fourth level, apart from the other ecclesiological problems it produces by definition and on a permanent basis – automatically and recurrently, produces co-territoriality and polyarchy on the other three levels (diocesan, metropolitan and autocephalous-patriarchal) as well, and that is why it is, in terms of its effects and its canonical treatment, the worst form of ecclesial *co-territoriality* and polyarchy and the worst canonical problem that could exist within the bosom the Church. It is also the central and unique ecclesiological problem that has existed since the beginning of the second millennium (1099) and onwards between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Western Church, which claims as never before exclusive ecclesiastical territorial universality. This ecclesiological claim, as well as the continuous and uninterrupted attempt to impose the “*Universal Church*” (First Vatican Council of 1870), causes the birth and existence of *two Churches throughout the inhabited World*, thus institutionally abolishing the Church as such, as well as every concept and possibility of communion of the Churches. If this is the case, then where does this “Church throughout the inhabited world” of the sacred Canons really exist? When a territorial Church, via the Vatican Council, is absolutely identified with the “*Universal Church*,” then what communion of Churches are we talking about, and what possibility could there be for such communion? Does any room really remain for a communion of Churches? And then, what is the vision and the impact of the attempted dialogue between the Churches and the greasy papal declaration of “sister Churches”, when the anti-ecclesiological (co-)existence of the one Church in one place abolishes the existence of the canonically pre-existing other Church?

This is the existing overall problem, which historically, given the newly-developed Roman Catholic ecclesiological facts (1099-2006), will remain humanly unresolved and insurmountable, maintaining its obscurity and thus feeding the

perpetual search for an impossible canonicity (*canonicité impossible*). The papal primacy – and the *Filioque* – is (are), as our pivotal point of difference (*discorde*), the tip of the iceberg and not the iceberg itself... There is a serious reason for referring to this natural phenomenon here, since the form of the iceberg resembles the form of the ecclesio-canonical problem we face today. Indeed, as is well known, the structure of the iceberg is such that it has a minimal visible part which appears as its top, but the larger part of the iceberg remains present, even if it is difficult to discern if not invisible. And it is this that decisively influences the behaviour of its visible tip, which (behaviour) is perceived by us as an actual problem, but most of the time we are not able to explain the *why of* such or similar ecclesiastical-canonical behaviour. And in the end, we are trying only to smooth the tip of the iceberg, and not to find solutions for how to do away with the iceberg itself, which has gotten itself between us and has been separating us for a millennium... This is precisely the primary – and the ultimate – open and active ecclesiastical-canonical problem that the whole of the second millennium bequeaths to us.

However, the problem does not stop there. The Confessional Protestant Churches have also entered trajectory of ecclesiastical universalism, as briefly mentioned above, by declaring themselves, and each one separately, *Confessional Protestant “World Churches” (sic)*. The Orthodox have been moving along the same trajectory for 40 years (1980-2020), declaring institutionally and statutorily *National Orthodox “World Churches” (sic)*. And we arrive at the beginning of the 21st century and the third millennium to have not two, but many and multiple *parallel “World Churches.”* And so the sacred canons of the Church, which so clearly and so unambiguously mandate the contrary, now solemnly enter the realm of the museum past and of Christian archaeology!... For the Christian Churches of the second millennium, regardless of their Confession, were indeed built homonymously, successively and in an organized fashion solely by no longer serving the ecclesiastical geographical criterion along with the corresponding ecclesiology that it reflects, but rather the collective *ritualistic, confessional* and *ethno-racial* priority in the perspective of a planetary dimension. The recent Russian ecclesiastical decision for an anti-canonical intrusion of the canonical territories of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in old Africa is also inscribed within this context of ecclesio-canonical drift.

### *Comments*

• *After:*

1. the function of communion among Episcopal-Local Churches (first three centuries), in 325 at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea we have the first indication of a ***deviation of episcopal polyarchy*** from the ecclesial-canonical act of the one and only *Local Church-Bishopric*;

2. the function of the Metropolitan system (4th-5th century), in 451 at the Fourth Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon we have the first indication of a ***deviation of metropolitan polyarchy*** from the ecclesiological-canonical action of the one and only *local Metropolis*;
3. the function of the Autocephalous system (5th-7th centuries), in 691 at the Quinisext Ecumenical Council of Trullo we have the first indication of a ***deviation of ecclesiastical polyarchy*** from the canonical act of the one and only *territorial Church*;
4. the function of the Patriarchal system (5th-7th centuries), in 419 at the Local Council of Carthage, as well as in 691 at the Ecumenical Council of Trullo, we have the first indication of an avoidance of the ***deviation of universal ecclesiastical polyarchy*** from the canonical action of the one and only *Church throughout the world*.

• ***Today:***

all four of these anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical deviations coexist simultaneously in a perspective of *co-territoriality* and, by extension, in a perspective of *co-jurisdictionality*, the twin constituent elements of anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical *polyarchy* which automatically generates multi-jurisdictionality in many regions of the Earth where there are territorial Orthodox Churches (e.g., France, America, Estonia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and recently in Africa!, etc.), without, of course, expressing a sensitivity in proportion to the gigantic scale of this problem. On the contrary, there is even confidence in what is being thereby accomplished, arguing that this arrangement fully meets the contemporary demands of the times.<sup>8</sup> The same absence of ecclesial-canonical sensitivity appears in the Roman Catholic Church. The same theological aphasia is also observed in the Protestant world.

Another observation is consistent with the (*patriarchal*) level of this problem's manifestation. However, by speaking of the "patriarchal" level, we essentially include the level of the Autocephalous Church, not only because from a canonical point of view the Autocephalous system is the closest to the Patriarchal system, but mainly because at the time of the manifestation of the issue (691) one Patriarchate (Constantinople) and one (the only existing) Autocephalous Church (Cyprus) were involved. Consequently, the contextual juxtaposition of all the above sacred canons, which represent different eras and different historical contexts, demonstrates that the Church faced this complex issue and decided on it in a synodical and ecclesiological manner and within the four canonical *systems of* its manifestation within the Church:

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Interview of Patriarch Alexey II of Moscow and All Russia in the newspaper *To Vima*, no. 14658/8-1-2006, as well as an article by Daniel STRUVE "Réponse au père Grégoire Papatomas," in *Le Messager Orthodoxe*, vol. 141 (II/2004), p. 73-88, on the Estonian ecclesiastical question.

- a) Episcopal-*Local* Church
- b) Metropolis (of the Metropolitan system)-*Territorial* Church
- c) Autocephalous and Autocephalous-Patriarchal (*territorial*) Church
- d) Patriarchate (of the Pentarchy)-*Territorial* Church.

Not to remain, however, at a theoretical level, let us give an example. The Estonian ecclesiastical issue that has arisen since 1996, as well as the Ukrainian ecclesiastical issue that has arisen since 2019, have shown to what extent and to what breadth the complex ecclesiastical-canonical issue we are examining exists in the Orthodox Church. Let no-one consider a malicious and negative intention, the common statement of all of us who have experienced the unpredictable development of these similar issues, that whichever Orthodox national Churches have manifested behaviour of trans-border jurisdictional claims and ecclesiastical universalism have had and still have difficulties taking an open position with ecclesiastical-canonical arguments on both the Estonian and Ukrainian issues. In the end, it is not the canonically re-established Autonomous Church of Estonia (1996) or the just now canonically re-emerging Autocephalous Church of Ukraine (2019) that is being judged, but those local Orthodox Churches are judged by themselves and by their position, which show an ecclesiological deficit at one or more of the levels mentioned above, in which case the Churches of Estonia and Ukraine automatically become a touchstone for verifying this deficit. This is why the field remains cloudy, ambiguous and undecided to this day.

And so, the Russian Patriarchate, maintains canonically unopposed in Estonia:

- 1) a *bishopric* in Tallinn next to the pre-existing bishopric, despite the universal opposition of the First Ecumenical Council (canon 8/I),
- 2) a *Metropolis* in Estonia next to the pre-existing Metropolis, despite the universal opposition of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod (canon 12/IV), and
- 3) via this Metropolis maintains its presence as a *Church on a particular territory*, Estonia, where a territorial (Autonomous) Church already exists canonically, and alongside this pre-existing Church, despite the universal opposition of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council of Trullo (canon 39/Quinisext), is doing exactly the same thing in Ukraine and, recently, with a logic of purely political retaliation (*sic*), has synodically declared that it will act in the same way in Africa!... And all this is happening, however, not for the first time, as the septic fruit of an *ecclesiology of globalism*, which had already been emerging since the Soviet internationalist era, was reflected in the 1988 Charter of the Soviet era, and has been

repeated in the new and legally effective 2000 Charter of free and *democratic* Russia. Let us simply recall it:

**Charter of the Church of Russia (1988 and 2000)**

“The jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church *extends*:<sup>9</sup>

– *to persons of the Orthodox Confession* residing in the U.S.S.R. [1988]; residing on the *canonical territory* of the Russian Orthodox Church [2000], as well as

– *to persons abroad who have voluntarily accepted its jurisdiction*.<sup>10</sup>

(Article I, § 3, Charter of the Russian Church-1988 and 2000).

This fundamental statutory article, which belongs to the Fundamental Provisions of the official Charter of the “*Russian Church*,” and on the basis of which the recent uncanonical decision against the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria was taken, constitutes the definition of *ecclesiological universalism* but also the definition of substantiation of an Orthodox *National Universal Church*, founding a new Church throughout the inhabited world, or rather a “*Universal Russian Church*,” in reality alongside the one defined as such – the one and only – by the Holy Canons of the Church (canon 57/Carthage and 56/Quinisext), and despite the well-known opposition between them. The above three ecclesial-canonical deviations, observed in Estonia since 1996, in Ukraine since the last year of 2019, and recently at the expense of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria, are the fruit of this fourth deviation and not the other way round.

### **Homonymous ecclesio-canonical problems in the Baltic States and Ukraine**

The above statement is also confirmed by the fact that from 1996 to this day the Russian Patriarchate has been following a legal route to reinforce the anti-canonical co-territoriality (this is called a *post-ecclesiological legal situation*) which it itself caused with its presence in the Baltic countries, whereas during the whole previous period of a different legal order, the Soviet (1945-1991), it proceeded with the canonical offense of ecclesial absorption of the Estonian territorial Autonomous Church (1923/1945) and the bordering Latvian territorial Autonomous Church (1936/1945), which remains to this day in a state of ecclesiastical absorption. However, while in Estonia the canonically pre-existing from 1923 territorial Church was restored, despite the uncanonical Russian ecclesiastical presence and activity, according to what has been stated above, in Latvia nothing similar happened, which

<sup>9</sup> Instead of the canonically correct *is limited to* or *is exhausted by*.

<sup>10</sup> By this is obviously meant the faithful, but of mixed background. The emphasis is ours.

from an ecclesio-canonical point of view means that there the canonical offense of ecclesial absorption is still actively in process, no matter how long the period of absorption has lasted. And in fact this canonical offense is not subject to any canonical statute of limitations or “ecclesial usufruct”, however many years may have passed. What is more, ecclesial absorption, which was condemned by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) and the Quinisext Ecumenical Council of Trullo (691),<sup>11</sup> can never create a new ecclesiastical status, however many years may have passed. And this also became evident in the case of bordering Estonia (1996) for this very reason, and this last element, *on the non-creation of a new canonical ecclesial status* (as is being attempted in Ukraine), reveals a further aspect of the uncanonical nature of the Russian ecclesiastical claims in Estonia and in general in the North-Eastern countries of Europe. As for the arguments of an emotional type that were put forward by the Russian side at the time when the Estonian and recently the Ukrainian issue arose, this – as a communications ploy to serve ethno-collective priorities and not ecclesial ones – is already familiar to the Church from the beginning of its historical existence; the Church points it out and stigmatizes it, saying in the 33rd Apostolic Canon (2nd-3rd century), that many anti-ecclesiological things are done in the Church ***out of sentimentalism***: “[...] you shall not admit them into communion: for ***many things*** are done ***with a view to rapine***”...

This complex problem does not, of course, stop at this level of its initial manifestation. The Churches which cause an ***intrusion*** of the territory of another territorial Church, as is the case at the moment on the part of Russian clergy in Africa, apart from the consequent ***co-territoriality*** which immediately results, seek institutional and legal ***ecclesial homonymy*** (e.g. “*Russian Patriarchate of Alexandria*”). And while the Orthodox Church throughout the inhabited world, despite the constant efforts made by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in this direction, is unable to impose the canonical order in its entirety in both cases – it should be noted here that the State (in each case) can intervene and impose the legal order only concerning the second part of the problem. That is why ***canonical order*** within the Church will always remain the ***desideratum*** – the search for an ultimately unattainable canonicity, and the vision of the Canonical Tradition of the Church will remain unfulfillable because of us, the (orthodox) Christian Churches.

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11 On this issue, see. Gregorios D. PAPATHOMAS, “From conciliar ecclesial alterity and communion to two symmetrical deviations: The National Church and Ecclesial Absorption (The case of Ecclesial Absorption in the Baltic Countries, Estonia and Latvia, in the name of “uniformity” of the National Church),” in *L’Année canonique* [Paris], vol.48 125-133, in *Episkepsis*, vol. (38,68011/2007), pp. 5-21 and 4-19 (bilingual), in *Synaxis*, vol. 104 (4/2007), pp. 25-36, in *The Messenger* [London], vol. 5 (2/2008), pp. 30-47 (in English), in *Usk ja Elu*, vol. 5 (1/2008), pp. 23- (43in Estonian), and in *Inter* [Cluj-Napoca], vol. II, issues 1-2 (2008), pp. 484-495.

Furthermore, the concept of a National Church is implicit in these four homologous anti-canonical deviations. In other words, these ecclesio-canonical deviations are “homozygous,” their manifestation simultaneously accompanying that of the National Church. This is why ethno-phyletism was synodically condemned (1872) and is condemnable. It is ecclesiological and canonically impermissible for any Christian nation to torpedo the organic unity of the territorial Orthodox Churches, claiming from today and into the future (21st century) universal ethno-ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is noteworthy, however, that the same pathology and pathogenesis of ecclesio-communal polyarchy which plagues Orthodox ecclesiology, likewise identically and synonymously plagues both Roman Catholic ecclesiology and Protestant ecclesiology (-ies).

More specifically, and this must be carefully noted by the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the first three homologous anti-canonical divergences of continuity and territorial co-jurisdiction, where they are manifested, appear simultaneously and in the same way. As soon as one appears, let us say the first canonical deviation (two dioceses together), it gives birth immediately, gradually, and institutionally, to the other two. The Estonian example is indicative. The same is the case when we start from the third deviation, that of the establishment, in the prospective of coexistence, of two territorial Churches on the same territory. And then the very same thing happens again, only the direction is reversed: first we establish the Church and then we instate the bishops in various cities, who begin to coexist with other bishops, thus to end up again in the first deviation, that of two or (something which the canons did not imagine and which today we unabashedly adopt) more than two bishops on the same territory and in the same city. The Ukrainian example is indicative. And this, in order to see to what extent the four homologous anti-ecclesiological deviations constitute a *communicating problem*, according to the well-known natural phenomenon of the principle of *communicating vessels*, simply because they proceed from the theology of co-territorial ritualism (Roman Catholics), from the theology of the multiplicatively atypical *co-territorial confessionalism* (Protestants) and from the theology of national missionism and of the national Church (Orthodox).

### **Conclusions**

In contrast to the Old Testament Jewish tradition, which was monocentric (Temple of Jerusalem) in relation to the whole of the inhabited World, the Church, from the beginning of its development, was normally *polycentric* throughout the inhabited World. However, during the second millennium up to the present day, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox have uncanonically transformed it into something *co-territorial and polyarchival*, both regionally and throughout the

inhabited World. And the *ecclesial polyarchy* now manifests itself on four homologous polyarchical levels: **1) Local Church-Episcopal, 2) Eparchial Church-Metropolitan, 3) Territorial Autonomous Church, Autocephalous Church, Autocephalous-Patriarchal Church, Patriarchate-[level] Autocephalous-Patriarchal and 4) Worldwide Church-Global.** The responsibility for this, throughout the whole of the second millennium, is borne in full by the Roman Catholic Church, several Protestant Churches and some territorial Orthodox Churches. In more detail:

The **Roman Catholic Church** is responsible for the ritualistic co-jurisdictionality (1099) created *manu militari* by the Crusades (1095-1204, until 1261)<sup>12</sup> and confirmed by the papal encyclical of Pope Pius IX in 1847 and then by the First Vatican Council (1870), giving birth to *co-territorial* Churches and to ecclesiastical *polyarchy* in the canonical territories of the Eastern Patriarchates on the three first aforementioned levels. When the decisions of the First Vatican Council (Primacy – Universal papal jurisdiction) were imposed and came to dominate, then the Roman Catholic Church began to claim uniqueness in its ecclesiastical universality and, because of this claimed ecclesiastical uniqueness, to consider the other Churches (of the East), with which the Roman Catholic Church was historically in a situation of rupture in communion (1054) and not in schism (*sic*), as schismatic (dissidents) and therefore non-existent; The Roman Catholic Church's claims of ecclesiastical uniqueness reached completion on a global level only a short time ago, in 2006, with the renunciation of its fundamental title of "Patriarchate of Rome," which was granted to it ecclesiologically by the Church in the first millennium (Fourth Ecumenical Council – 451). And while historically and canonically the Church did not grant such an ecclesiastical status to the Patriarchate of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church declares itself to be the *Universal Church*, as the Russian Church has recently done through its Charter (1988/2000), and thus by definition it causes *co-territoriality* and ecclesiastical *polyarchy* throughout the World, including Africa, on the part of both Churches.

The **Protestant Churches** caused confessional co-territoriality and ecclesiastical polyarchy in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church in the historical areas of the Patriarchate of Rome. But, *volentes nolentes*, they did not stop there. In our time, the Protestant Churches, in their efforts to strengthen their respective internal confessional camps, have each begun to establish Worldwide similar Confessional churches (e.g. World Lutheran Church, World Evangelical Church, World Methodist Church, etc.), when the "Church throughout the inhabited World" (canon 57 of Carthage and 56 of the Quinisext) exists worldwide, but also at the time when... other

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12 For details on this issue, see. Gregorios D. PAPATHOMAS, *Kanonika amorphia (Essays on Canonical Oikonomia)*, Thessaloniki-Katerini, Epektas (series "Nomocanonical Library," No 19), 2006, p. 145-173.

parallel “World Protestant Churches” exist. In this mixed phenomenology, there is a deeper “atypical multiplication of ecclesial cells,” which in medical terminology is called “cancer.” This phenomenon would be of great concern to a physician, but it is not of concern to theologians or to the Churches, not even at least to seek its pathogenesis. The only certain thing, however, is that in this way the increasingly advancing *ecclesial polyarchy* in the perspective of **ecclesiastical universalism** (*universalismus Ecclesiarum*) is made visible.

This unbridled confessional ecclesiastical globalization of the Western Churches is being followed, inappropriately, by the **Orthodox National Churches**. Already three of them (Cyprus, Russia, Romania) are following this path of ecclesiastical globalism by synodal decision and statutes (1980-2010), consciously and from what seems to be from collective ecclesiastical conviction. Of course they are not the only ones. There are other Churches who in practice go along with this anti-ecclesiological vision without proclaiming it so loudly. Fortunately not all of them... Besides, the problem of the so-called “Diaspora” (*sic*) is also a result of this heterocentric trans-border tactic and global strategy of some Orthodox National territorial Churches. And this ecclesial-canonical problem is not due to the fact that the Orthodox Church is *polycentric* – it has always been so. Rather it is due to the fact that the mentality of the already globalized National Church becomes in fact the root cause of the anti-canonical existence of an ecclesiastical “Diaspora.” Therefore, the problem lies precisely in the fact that some local Orthodox National territorial Churches have chosen to operate across borders in a global perspective and therefore absolutely uncanonically, and have caused..., and are causing ethno-phyletic *ecclesial co-territoriality* and *ecclesiastical polyarchy* in various territories, ultimately not allowing each territorial Church Body to thrive harmoniously.

In short, no communion can exist between Churches, each of which claims to have **universal jurisdiction**. Let us show an honest realism. The mere fact that such a territorial Church considers that it possesses **ecclesial self-sufficiency** and for this reason is able to cover the whole face of the Earth self-sufficiently and by itself means there is really no room for ecclesial communion with other homonymous territorial Churches. In a context and an age such as ours of multi-confessionalism of the Churches, we can have “World Churches,” and we have many, because this is consistent with the *secular eschatology* which permeates them, but from an ecclesiological and canonical point of view, we can have only one, unique, and singular “Church throughout the inhabited World.” It is now a fact that post-modernity has in many ways and at many levels given rise to **post-ecclesiasticism**. That is why today the ecclesio-canonical criteria for the constitution and conduct of a Church anywhere in the world have been relativized, as the Russian Patriarchate

recently did against the Patriarchate of Alexandria, thus destroying all canonical expectations for canonical harmonization and historical continuity. Thus, the Ecclesial Body manifests an inability to reconcile what we have received from tradition with the contemporary facts that the ever-changing world imposes on us. This is precisely the reason for our multiple blatant contradictory actions in Ecclesiology and ecclesiastical Canonicity. In other words, lastly, *poly-ecclesiasticism* within one territory generates *poly-canonicity* and, by extension, “confusion of churches” (canon 2/II) at all the aforementioned levels, generating a ***prismatic canonicity*** within the Church that is incurable and, therefore, glaring ecclesiological contradictions and multi-uncanonicity. And the longer we remain indifferent in the face of this advancing multi-level alienation of the Church, its healing will become more and more impossible. To corroborate once again the canonical anxiety of Basil the Great, expressed already in the fourth century, about such a major issue: “I am exceedingly grieved to find that the Canons of the Fathers have been left unheeded and all the *akriveia* in the churches has been cast to the winds; and I fear lest, when this indifference has advanced a little more, the affairs of the Church will wind up in a state of utter confusion.” (canon 89 of St. Basil). And what he feared has already happened and in our day is advancing towards total completion...

Moreover, the ecclesiological problems of the whole of the second millennium, which characterize it both predominantly and exclusively, are not only unresolved, but tend to increase, and, as events demonstrate, these problems are solemnly bequeathed to the third millennium as well. So what is to come? The solution seems to be given there somewhere in a parable of Christ Himself, Who says that there are certain kinds of problems that will be solved only by ... a final reaping (cf. Mt 13, 29-30), insofar as we do nothing in this direction; “the harvest is the end of the age” (Mt 13, 39). We all agree (and tacitly and scandalously accept) that ritualistic ecclesiology (Roman Catholic Church), confessional ecclesiology (Protestant Churches), and ethno-phyletic ecclesiology (Orthodox National Churches) are tares in the life of the Church of Christ, because they abolish it...because they annihilate it... – the only thing is, that these tares come from within, from us, and not from those out in the world...

If we look at history, we will observe that ecclesiastical divisions sometimes bring about political changes. Europe is literally, if not exclusively, the site of this traumatic historical experience. That is why Europe has been particularly beleaguered by the various religious (*Christian*) divisions, past and present (hence the exclusion of a reference to Christianity from the European Constitution currently being drawn up), and even more so by the many Christian confessions, as well as by their disparate or contradictory deviations. But unfortunately for Europe too, this reaping will have to wait, since the Christian Churches have been doing nothing else for a thousand years

than to divide the single human race, whose unity they were called to preserve soteriologically (cf. John 17, 11:21-22)!... The word sounds harsh..., perhaps it is..., but the ecclesio-canonical reality itself is harsher than the declaratory word...

## II. Indicative Proposals

### Ecclesio-canonical considerations concerning further actions

Next, in accordance with the *entirety* of the long-standing Ecclesial Canonical Tradition, it seems appropriate to present some ecclesio-canonical data, along with some proposals and elements of broader consideration for possible future decisions, data provided for us or reflected by this long-standing and *diachronic* Canonical Tradition of the Church, assessing some contemporary aspects of the Canonical *issue* that has just arisen from the Synodical decision of the Patriarchate of Russia.

1. According to the recent **Synodical decision of the Church of Russia (2019) and based on the its Charters (1988 and 2000) combined...**, all of the parishes it variously created on the African continent on its own initiative, are removed from the Patriarchate of Alexandria's *canonically provisioned and territorially existing sole jurisdiction*. These two parameters, the *statutory* and the *synodical*, do not exclude the possibility of creating parishes at will in the future wherever it may seem fit, as well as missionary structures parallel to those canonically preexisting, not to say that they encourage it..., as is already becoming apparent from various actions and statements of Russian hierarchs. This indicates by definition that the Patriarchate of Russia has made a synodical decision to appropriate ecclesial jurisdiction that does not belong to it... Thus, the Patriarchate of Alexandria has to face two major successive, cascading fronts, which the Russian synodical decision of 2019 covers across the board: that of **anti-canonical intrusion** and **ecclesial co-territoriality**. With this decision, therefore, the Russians will not, by synodical definition, remain a mere ecclesiastical presence abroad with local activities – even if these activities are uncanonical – but will proceed *statutorily* and will implicitly cause ecclesial *co-territoriality* by organizing corresponding structures, which annihilates (will annihilate) the Church on a particular territory, because it will reveal the canard which is erroneously recognized, in our day, as *prismatic canonicity*. This is also betrayed by the fact that, in their decision, they adopted the *political logic of retaliation*... This is what they have done and are doing in other parts of the Planet.

2. Intrusion, as an anti-canonical act, can be divided into two categories: a) **Adventitious intrusion**, with a momentary and local sacramental action, known as “parochial action,” that is, for example, an autonomous celebration of the Divine

Liturgy or a sacrament without the local Church authority (Local Bishop, Primate, Holy Synod), and b) ***Institutionalized intrusion***, with *sovereign*, ecclesial attributes and with the characteristics of ever-increasing *action* in the canonical territories of another territorial Church, accompanied by the establishment of a Parish-Bishopric (cf. canon 8/I), a Metropolis (cf. canon 12/IV) or a homonymous territorial Church (cf. canon 39/Quinisext, as well as c. 57/Carthage and canon 56/Quinisext). This second case of anti-canonical intrusion is called by its contemporary, canonical term “ecclesial *co-territoriality*,” and it is the form, which was synodically, systematically and preventively condemned *ad hoc*, as explained above, in Part A of the Overview, by three (3) Ecumenical Councils (First in 325, Fourth in 451, Quinisext in 619) and one (1) Local Council (Carthage in 419). However, conditions for causing such an institutionalized intrusion are readily created, as shown above, by provisions of the current Charter of the Church of Russia (cf. CCR-1988 and 2000, Article I, § 3), which constitutes the precise definition of institutionalized intrusion, with provisions for global ecclesiastical visions...

3. Rupture in ecclesiastical communion, namely, in Concelebrations and in Commemorations recorded in the Diptychs, is interrupted only when there is a question of a brazen, public, anti-theological/heretical statement concerning the faith. For all other matters of a canonical nature, there is the synodical way, precisely because *living and governing in the Church are done synodically*. *Synodicity* includes, by definition, agreement, disagreement, diversity of approach, protest and the like. All of these are integral synodical and mutual rights for all territorial Churches. By extension, even in any negative circumstance, rupture of con-celebration and commemoration are realized as a pan-ecclesiastical, synodical decision, binding for everyone. Therefore, any *unilateral synodical decision* to break communion is uncanonical and arbitrary and abusive, and, in this sense, not acceptable.

4. In the same year of 2019, the same Synod of the Patriarchate of Russia, *for a theologically and ecclesiastically-canonically unsubstantiated reason*, issued a decision to break communion with two ancient Patriarchates, with completely differing content and novel, aberrant targeting of a political nature, namely, a ***universal*** rupture of communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and a ***selective*** rupture of communion with the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Moreover, for the Patriarchate of Alexandria, this *selective* rupture of communion is accompanied by the theologically and ecclesiastically unacceptable measure of... *retaliation* (!) of a secular and political formulation which is inconsistent with an ecclesiastical, ontological ethos and betrays a secular and worldly attitude. Among these “retaliations” is the foreseen conversion of the Russian Patriarchal Representation in Alexandria into a ***tele-parish*** of the Church of Russia in Cairo

within the Patriarchate of Alexandria, which constitutes a most provocative and unchecked **intrusion** that will once again cause an anti-ecclesiastical and uncanonical problem with respect to ecclesial *co-territoriality* in the form of *tele-metropolises*, and, as a result, the establishment of ecclesiastical *polyarchy* in the locality of an exclusive territorial unit. In other words, the *co-territoriality* and the consequent *polyarchy* resulting from the Russian synodical decision will be abolishing and shall abolish the designated ecclesio-canonical exclusivity of the sole Ecclesial authority of the Patriarchate of Alexandria on the African Continent. Also, the recent, *selective* rupture of communion seems to have as its aim and prospect the reaping of Russian collective benefits from the evidently intended split of the Body of the Bishops of Alexandria, as if they were adopting the Machiavellian system of “divide and conquer!”... Looking at the issue in question from another perspective, it is important to emphasize here that, according to the manner in which the synodical decision is structured and formulated, it targets *volentes nolentes* the organic unity of the Patriarchal Synod and of the Patriarchate itself. And if this attempt is not prevented *in time and in its genesis*, so that it will have no practical value and use in the long run, its implementation through such arbitrary conduct will destroy the work of Missions in Africa that has already been accomplished thus far, by conveniently setting up a *tele-Church* and a *tele-Patriarchate* (something similar to the tele-Churches set up by the Roman-Catholic Church after the Crusades in the lands of the East), adopting as a continuation of this intrusion unbecoming Russian tactics such as that of the *fabricated* “... *wrath* of the natives against the Greeks”..., or that of the warning of a Russian official regarding “mutiny of the African clergy” (!), who are being instigated by the same, using well-known political methods...

5. Let there be no complacency on the part of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in light of the fact that the Russian synodical decision falls completely outside of the canonical framework. If, in the end, they do make an intrusion, it will be, moreover, *legal* and *statutory*, – in a word, *legal-statutory*; that is, the ecclesiastical formations they will create will *gain legal-statutory validity*! It is simply pointed out that what the Russians intend to implement with *ecclesial co-territoriality* and *ecclesiastical polyarchy*, as an implementation of their synodical decision, is legally consistent both with the existing legislation of the local States in Africa as well as with the European/International Treaty of Amsterdam (1996, Article 9), which offers international safeguarding and legal protection to every *extant* and *known* Religious Community, without any regard for the ecclesiastical-canonical aspect of the issue or for what the Orthodox Church has as its... “canonical sensitivities” throughout the inhabited World. And as soon as this situation has been consolidated in a *legal-statutory* manner, later... without even getting their feet wet and quite easily, they will

set up Ecclesiastical and Theological Schools, as they have recently done in Estonia and Paris...

6. The Russian Church leaders adopted the *logic of retaliation* in their decision to break communion with the Church of Greece as well, “threatening” and asserting that they will integrate, implying statutorily, the Old-Calendar Communities-Churches of the Greek State into their own ecclesiastical communion, analogous to those whom they themselves considered “schismatic” (*sic*) in Ukraine. This fact alone, even as a “threat” (with latent, deliberate intentions of intrusion in this circumstance as well), shows that their arguments and their actions have no ecclesio-canonical basis, whereas they themselves, if someone makes a thorough observation, are marked by theological and canonical inconsistency.

7. Furthermore, from the synodical decision that has been taken, a two-fold question arises:

a. If the decision of the Russian Patriarchate to intrude on (and, according to them,... to *statutorily penetrate*) African territory has canonical correctness and is ecclesio-canonically advisable, why did it not precede the event of the Ukrainian Autocephaly, but is connected with it, and indeed, immediately after the Patriarchate of Alexandria ratified the Ecclesial Autocephaly of Ukraine? Why, then, did it not proceed with such an act beforehand, or long afterwards and at an independent time that causes no suspicion, but rather simultaneously and concurrently?

b. Since when does disagreement on an ecclesio-canonical issue imply provoking *retaliation* of a secular and political nature? In other words, it is clearly one thing to “disagree” about an event that occurs within the Church and to resolve it in a conciliar way, and it is clearly another thing to resort to a tactic, unknown to the Church’s ecclesio-canonical practice and tradition spanning two thousand years, that of any form of secular *retaliation* (!), which indeed reflects no ecclesio-canonical basis.

8. Four (4) Churches have directly and formally expressed themselves in favor of the Ecclesiastical Autocephaly in Ukraine, in chronological order as follows: the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Church of Greece, the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Russians’ stance is completely different towards each territorial Church. And not by chance... As for the first two, their stance appears as an “unadulterated” rupture of communion (despite the nonsensical incidents with lay people, in the case of communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate). Of direct interest for the question under consideration here is the differentiated attitude towards the two

Patriarchates of the East. Towards Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Russians decided to adopt a stance of *rupturing communion* by adopting an unlimited intrusion and provocation of co-territoriality, while for the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Russian hierarchs themselves “took the initiative and managed,” before it could be officially and publicly expressed, acting with “tempting” (!) counter-proposals that are extra-canonical and outside the canonical framework. In other words, the last two Patriarchates are treated by the Russian ecclesiastical authorities as a “weak link” (*sic*), in contrast to the first two local Churches, considered as “solid” in the Orthodox firmament. Africa is the first attempt to take measures that can be implemented in the future, such as those announced in the synodal decision of December 2019. And they will start from there!... This has already been shown by this decision and the corresponding declarations... In the case of the other ancient Patriarchate, they have taken another route...

9. Every local Church has the right to impose in the “innermost parts of its veil” and on its canonical territory the right of *non-communion*, without any accountability to those outside. For *church-wide* issues, however, an *ad hoc* Pan-Orthodox Synod or, due to urgency, a Synodal meeting of the Primate of the territorial Orthodox Churches is required (as has happened in recent years for different events, with the Church of Bulgaria in 1998 or in the case of the election of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in 2005). Consequently, the *selective non-communion* unleashed by a synodal decision of institutionalized intrusion into the Patriarchate of Alexandria, as novel, arbitrary and abusive, is assessed ecclesio-canonically as *groundless* and *unsubstantiated* and as a *hostile action* on the part of a sister Church towards a sister Church, and thus, “if anyone is able to see it... the Church of Christ” (St. Nicholas Cabasilas).

10. The Synodical decision of the Church of Russia is ecclesio-canonically full of holes in relation to what has been decided and announced. It announces a break in communion and takes measures which would be appropriate in the case that the Church of Africa were in *schism* (!). Indeed, the content of the decision against the Patriarchate of Alexandria, with the corresponding measures taken, points to a *schism* and not at all to a *rupture in communion*. This constitutes a blatant discrepancy between the Canonical practice and tradition of the Church, and the arbitrary and totally amateurishly political overtones of the decision in question. From an ecclesio-canonical point of view, the contents of the canonical measures are clearly distinguishable, as can be seen in the following diagram.



church (or other...) officials. In other words, the Ukrainian issue is not for them an autonomous issue of some possible ... “loss of canonical rights” (!), **but the golden opportunity to achieve other collateral aims and ultimate desires...** Simply, the Ukrainian issue was the historical fuse and the appropriate occasion for the beginning their implementation... Proof of this is the statement that follows from the whole of this text that, if there indeed existed a deep canonical sensitivity and not ethno-political or geo-political considerations, they would not have undertaken such anti-ecclesiological and anti-canonical actions, such as those that have been taking place over the last 20 years in Estonia (1996) and Ukraine (2019), and more recently in Africa, in occupied Cyprus or anywhere else, *and statutorily*, across the inhabited World... Who could possibly exclude the possibility that there is not already a road map for the Russian Patriarchate’s actions on the African continent?....

13. It has been repeatedly shown in history that the extroversion of the *ecclesiastical* (and not the Holy!) Russia has to do with the rise or the descent, the flaring or the remission of Russian political power at the international level, both geo-political and geo-ecclesiastical, exactly as the Russian chronicler of 1512 described it in advance and as a vision (Tsarist Empire, Soviet Empire, [today’s and tomorrow’s] Neo-Russian Empire of Putin through the Russian Orthodox Church, etc.). Thus, the Russian absurdity with Putin, envisions restoring – like Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Ottoman Empire – the Neo-Russian Empire, but this time on a *global scale*. And because territorially this cannot happen, because of International Law and the now generally well-established International treaties, two other ways, seemlier and more discreet, are adopted: Russian Civilization (in the sense of *cultural imperialism*) and the Russian Orthodox Church (in the sense of *ecclesiastical imperialism*)... – in other words, the always sought-after Pax Russica and, as an instrument of Russian soft power, the established *World Russian Church!*... It is ultimately a regional *Autocephalous-Patriarchal* Church-extension of the Russian State apparatus, according to the public statement of the current Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, more than 15 years ago (2003): “In matters of foreign policy we go hand in hand with the Orthodox Church!”... No comment is needed this laconic declaration of common action on a global scale. But if each regional Church identifies itself exclusively with the interests of its own State, then the Orthodox Church throughout the inhabited world will, by definition, be unable to remain united! However, this further proves the fact that the Russian Church has always acted as a *lever* of the Russians’ *Russification* of the peoples whom it has ecclesiastically dominated in various parts of the inhabited World...

14. Thus, it is revealed historically that the Russian Orthodox are possessed by a manifest tendency of archomania and extreme hegemonism, which is why they have

always, and in the long run collectively, succumbed to the third temptation of Christ (Matt. 4:9) for global power, authority, and dominance of worldly priorities and visions, which by definition choke the eschatological being of the Church within history, as well as every eschatological vision...

**15.** The above-mentioned facts confirm the fact, of which “the guardians have knowledge,” that contemporary Russian clerical leaders are not known for their theological and ecclesio-canonical sensibilities, as their priorities remain mainly, primarily and dominantly *ethno-political* and *ethno-ecclesiastical*, even – it is to be expected – in those cases where their initiatives are seemingly entirely ecclesiastical. Even the last proposal they submitted to the Patriarch of Jerusalem during his ecclesio-canonically unsuccessful visit to Moscow (December 2019), for him to take the initiative of a pan-Orthodox meeting of Primates in Jordan to resolve the Ukrainian issue, despite the different imperative of the Church Dictates, reveals the theological and canonical aphasia that distinguishes Russian clergy and theologians in all Pan-Orthodox ecclesiastical-canonical issues around the World... Exactly as a late Professor of the Theological School of the University of Athens, of blessed memory, used to say emphatically: “All this is done *in a Russian way!*”... However, this also reveals another aspect that goes beyond the limits and the mission of the present text: it is an attempt to “transfer” the Primacy by an indirect route, via unseen Russian “ecclesiastical manipulation”...

**16.** The envisioned establishment of a World Russian Church (CCR-1988 and 2000, Article I, § 3, and beginning with the *Ruptures of Ecclesial Communion*-2019), corresponding to the one established by the Roman Catholic Church (1870/1962-65/2006), bears the same characteristics of pathogenesis as the initial Latin rise to power of the Middle Ages (secular authority having been made autonomous, provocation of Ecclesial co-territoriality, inevitable creation of ecclesiastical polyarchy in various regions, and so forth), eventually slipping from the *Ecclesial plenitude of communion* to the ontologically fatal... *ecclesial self-completeness*, having lost, if left unattended and a change of position is not made, its course towards the Eschaton...

### Afterword

One secular personality, Mahatma Gandhi, though *secular*, aptly said that “the day the *power of love* overrules the *love of power*, the world will know peace”... And we would add, in the same perspective, not only the *peace of peoples*, but also the *canonical correctness* of the Church... Thus, after all that has been stated above, the inexorable and final question that arises is now clear: Who, and how, will stop this

multiplicatively arbitrary, anti-ecclesiological, and uncanonical behaviour of the Patriarchate of Russia against the other regional Orthodox Churches, which has so many negative consequences, in order to avoid in the long run a similar historical mistake as the one that happened with the Patriarchate of Rome a thousand years ago and is perpetuated until today?

## **A comparative assessment of “Ecclesial Co-Territoriality”**

### **Patriarchate of Rome (1054/1099-1204) – Patriarchate of Russia (2019-2020)**

The Russians today, in the 21st century, act in a similar way the Roman Catholics did in the 11th century. The latter, by means of a **Rupture in communion** and *political methods*, caused an **intrusion** into the other regional Churches of the East (the ancient Patriarchates and the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus) and subsequently proceeded to create, *parallel and co-existing* with the pre-existing regional Churches, Latin regional Churches with *culturalist-Latin* and *aggressive* names, thus causing the unprecedented and great ecclesiological problem of **co-territoriality** (1099 and onwards). The former, *mutatis mutandis*, have entered the same centrifugal orbit (**Rupture of Communion – Intrusion – Co-Territoriality**) and will be, if they have not already been, the culprits for deeply rooting the bases for the rampant outgrowth of a similar anti-ecclesiological and uncanonical situation within the bosom of the Orthodox Church around the inhabited World... Let us first look at the comparative characteristics of these two parallel ecclesiastical lives, at the beginning of the 11th and the 21st centuries, respectively, as the conclusions that follow are self-evident and effortless... A “Comparative *contrasting* Table” is given below, showing the similarities and simulations between the two Patriarchates and clearly identifying the negative consequences on the near and distant horizons.

### **Comparative *contrasting* Table**

<b><u>Patriarchate of Rome</u></b>	<b><u>Patriarchate of Russia</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>754<sup>1</sup>-1054:</b> 300 years of preparation for <i>suzerainty</i></li> <li>• <b>1054:</b> Rupture Ecclesial communion</li> <li>• <b>1095:</b> The <i>golden opportunity</i> → The Crusades</li> <li>• <b>1054-1099:</b> Persistence in the <i>Rupture of communion</i> with various Cold War-type actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1512-2016:</b> 500 years of preparation for <i>suzerainty</i><sup>3</sup></li> <li>• <b>2019:</b> Rupture of Ecclesial communion</li> <li>• <b>2019:</b> The <i>golden opportunity</i> → Ukrainian Autocephaly</li> <li>• <b>1988-2018:</b> Processes preceded and were</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Assumption and use of secular power, which continued thereafter.

<p>and simultaneous internal formation of a new <i>Church structure of global dimensions</i>. Preceded by processes and followed by corresponding actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1099</b>: Provocation of <i>co-territoriality</i>, as a realization of a unilateral <i>Rupture of Communion</i> with the ancient Patriarchate of Jerusalem</li> <li>• <b>1099</b>: They “baptized” the <i>Rupture in Communion</i> as a “Schism” in order to justify any <i>heterotopic</i>, irregular, and arbitrary creation of churches within the other regional Churches</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1099</b> → Start date of <i>mutations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1099</b>: Beginning of <i>multiple ruptures of ecclesial communion</i></li> <li>• Teleological path: <b>Rupture in Communion</b> → <i>Intrusion</i> → Co-Territoriality</li> <li>• Provocation of Church polyarchy in one place</li> <li>• 1. <i>Culturalistic</i> domination → <i>Pan-Latinism</i></li> <li>• 2. <i>Pan-Latinism</i> (<i>Universal Latin Church</i>)</li> <li>• Beginning of deviation by <i>breaking communion</i> → “Schism”</li> <li>• Beginning of the <i>Rupture in communion &amp; Crusades</i></li> <li>• <i>Post-rupture</i> activity included <i>co-territoriality</i> and <i>absorption</i> of regional Churches (Jerusalem – 1099, Antioch – 1100, Cyprus – 1171, Constantinople – 1204)</li> <li>• Ecclesial <i>co-territoriality</i> historically began with the <i>Rupture of communion</i> and the initially undeclared <i>Schism</i></li> <li>• RC → Refusal to grant Autocephaly (Protestants)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Objective → The <i>Universal Church</i> (1870-2006).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Since <b>2006</b> in full form of completion</p>	<p>followed by corresponding actions, prior to the first reaction with the elaborately multimodal <i>Rupture of Communion</i> (2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2019</b>: Provocation of <i>co-territoriality</i>, as a realization of a unilateral <i>Rupture of communion</i> with the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria</li> <li>• <b>2019</b>: They start “baptizing” the <i>Rupture of communion</i> in a <i>prepared “Schism”</i> in order to justify, in the future, the <i>heterotopic</i>, uncanonical, and arbitrary creation of churches within the other regional Churches</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2019</b> → Start date of <i>mutations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2019</b>: Beginning of <i>multiple ruptures of ecclesial communion</i></li> <li>• Teleological path: <b>Rupture in Communion</b> → <i>Intrusion</i> → Co-Territoriality</li> <li>• Provocation of Church polyarchy in one place</li> <li>• 1. <i>Culturalistic</i> domination → <i>Pan-Russianism</i></li> <li>• 2. <i>Pan-Russianism</i> (<i>Universal Russian Church</i>)</li> <li>• Beginning of deviation by <i>breaking communion</i> → “Schism?”</li> <li>• Beginning of the <i>Rupture in communion</i> and Statutes</li> <li>• <i>Post-rupture</i> activity includes <i>absorption</i> and <i>co-territoriality</i> in regional Churches (Estonia-1945, Latvia-1945/2020, Ukraine-2019, Alexandria-2019)</li> <li>• Ecclesial <i>co-territoriality</i> today begins with the <i>Rupture of communion</i> as well as an undeclared “Schism?”</li> <li>• Russia → Refusal to grant Autocephaly (Ukraine)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Objective → The <i>Universal Church</i> (1988-2000/2019).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">From <b>2000/2019</b> in a movement towards completion</p>
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2 *Protestants*. If the Roman Catholic Church had granted Autocephaly to the then-applicants for ecclesiastical emancipation, we would not have had the subsequent *Protestant schism* (1517 and afterwards). At that time, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, contrary to the Roman Catholic choice and position, granted Autocephaly to Russia (1589). However, Russia, on the contrary, for 100 years now (1920-2019), has done and is doing everything, in opposition to everyone, to prevent Ukraine from obtaining Autocephaly. It is clear from this that the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Church coincide ecclesiologically and that the Russian Church adopts *Roman Catholic* methodology and not the one it has learned from the *orthodox* Ecumenical Patriarchate...

3 The temporal plateau is due to the interference of the Ottoman Empire, despite the known attempts (Orlov revolt [1768-1774], Mount Athos [1910-1917]), with a *legal and statutory* culmination (CCR-1988 and 2000, Article I, § 3) in the last 30 years (1988/1990-2019).

4 If the Russian Church had accepted the four (4) times (1920, 1940, 1991, 2018) ecclesial emancipation was request for the granting of Autocephaly, we would not have subsequently had the Ukrainian issue that has arisen today...