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The Activities of the Patriarch Teofanes III in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

The Union of Brest divided the Orthodox Church into two factions: a) the Orthodox faction including most of the clergy and faithful and the bishops of Lvov Gedeon Balaban (1569-1607) and of Peremysl Michael Kopystensky (1591-1610), b) the Uniat faction including the remaining Orthodox hierarchy and supported by the king and the Catholic church. During the first twenty five years after the synod in Brest the Orthodox community failed to re-establish the legal status of the Orthodox Church from before 1596. The Uniats managed to achieve a legal status which allowed them to take over all of the privileges of the Eastern Church in the Commonwealth. They took over most of the bishoprics, churches and monasteries. Nevertheless they failed to fully triumph over the Orthodox Church.¹ Neither did the Uniats gain an appropriate position in the Latin Church. Their bishops still had no seats in the senate and their clergy did not receive the same rights as Catholic clergy. Uniat metropolitans protested in a memorial addressed to the Pope that they meet with as much contempt as the Jews.² The Orthodox community never accepted outlawing their church. In local and national parliaments Or-

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1. K. Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny a Rzeczpospolita Polska. Zarys historyczny 1370-1632* (Warszawa: 1934), 107-92; L. Bieńkowski, "Organizacja Kościoła wschodniego w Polsce XVI-XVIII w.," in *Kościół w Polsce*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, vol. II (Kraków: 1969), 779-837; M. Papierzyńska-Turek, "Kościół prawosławny na ziemiach ruskich Litwy i Korony," *Przemyskie Zapiski Historyczne* VI-VII (1990): 139-162; A. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny w dziejach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Białystok: 2001), 55-79; A. Mironowicz, *Prawosławie i unia zapanowania Jana Kazimierza* (Białystok: 1997), 17-33.

2. "Impedimenta ex parte Catholicorum Ritus Latini frigide defendentium Unionem," in M. Harasiewicz, *Annales Ecclesiae Ruthenae ad dioeceses ruthenae Leopoliensem, Premisliensem et Chelmensem* (Leopoli: 1862), 263-71.

thodox nobility, supported by the protestants, argued for the return of the rights of the “Greek faith” and bishoprics with their benefits. The parliament, fearing religious uprisings issued two constitutions in 1607 and 1609, which officially acknowledged the rights of the Orthodox Church in Poland. After the death of the bishop of Lvov, Gedeon Balaban (1607 r.) and the take over of the Peremyshl diocese by the Uniats, after the death of Michael Kopystensky (1610 r.), Lvov remained the only Orthodox bishopric. It was taken by Eustachy (Jeremiasz) Tysarovsky (1607-1641) but after he declared remaining Orthodox he was not accepted by the state. The bishop of Lvov was unable to oversee the religious life of the whole Kiev metropolia.³ It was natural for the Orthodox clergy and faithful to want to consecrate new bishops.

Endeavours towards ordaining bishops were made with the Constantinople Patriarchate by the Orthodox clergy and lay elites. These were supported by the Tzars and Russian clergy. As soon as 1612 the Kiev clergy asked the Greek monk Neofit, who was in the Dniepr region at the time, to ordain priests. Neofit had come to Kiev with the patriarch of Jerusalem Teofanes (1608-1645) in 1620 r., which could mean that he was an intermediary between the Kiev metropolia clergy and Constantinople.⁴ The Polish Orthodox negotiated not only with the patriarch, but with the Sultan as well. The Tzarogrod Patriarch could not visit Kiev personally to ordain the new bishops, because of the political situation and the Polish-Turkish conflict. In that situation other means were sought to reactivate the Orthodox hierarchy in the Commonwealth. One chance was the journey of the patriarch of Jerusalem to Moscow to ordain the new head of the Moscow Church – Filaret (1619-1633).

The patriarch’s stay had been prepared for a few years. The head of the Jerusalem Church received a letter from the Tzarogrod patriarch Timotheos (1612-1621) bearing the date of 1st April 1618. The patriarch Timotheos granted him the authority and blessing to ordain bishops on his way to Moscow. The patriarch’s letter does not men-

3. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny*, 74-78; D. Blazejowskyj, *Hierarchy of the Kyivan Church (861-1990)* (Rome: 1990), 232.

4. Chodynicki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 419.

tion any particular countries, but it indirectly suggests that a part of it refers to Poland, which was the only country at the time, to have a problem with the Orthodox Church hierarchy. The patriarch's letter was later often invoked by the Ruthenian clergy and members of parliament attempting to gain legal confirmation of the ordained church hierarchy.

The aim of Teofanes' mission involved more than just religion. Contrary to his predecessors the patriarch of Jerusalem did not travel through Poland but through the lands of the Tartars. On his way the patriarch indirectly took part in the Polish-Moscow talks, when he was in Tule. He awaited there for the decisions of the Truce of Dyvilino, which allowed Filaret, who was the candidate for patriarch, to return to Moscow from captivity in Poland. On the 24th June 1619 the patriarch of Jerusalem consecrated Filaret as the patriarch of Moscow and granted his blessing to the monks opposing Poland.⁵

In February 1620, while the patriarch Teofanes was in Moscow, a Cossack envoy ship arrived there to negotiate with the Tzar's officials. During the talks the Cossacks mentioned questions of religion, especially the persecution of the Orthodox in Poland. The new patriarch of Moscow, Filaret, supported their attempts to establish the Orthodox hierarchy. The patriarch of Moscow, who still had fresh memories of his imprisonment in Malbork, was resentful towards Roman-Catholics. He also had a strong influence on the policy of his son – tzar Michael Fyodorovitch Romanov. Nevertheless, it cannot be said, as it is traditionally presented in literature, that it was only in Moscow that the concept of re-establishing the Ruthenian episcopate was born.⁶ What happened later confirms that it had been agreed before Teofanes arrived in Moscow. Such a decision could not have been made without the knowledge and support of the patriarch of Constantinople. Only certain details and perhaps

5. Makarii (M. P. Bulgacov), *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. XI (Sankt-Peterburg: 1882), 13; M. S. Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, vol. VII (Kiev: 1909), 248.

6. Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 422; V. O. Eingorn, "O snosheniakh malorossiiskogo dukhovenstva s Moskovskim pravitelstvom v tsarstvovanie Alexieia Mikhailovicha," *Chtieniia w imperatorskom obshchestvie istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom Universitietie*, CLXV (1893): 18.

the list of candidates for bishops could have been decided on in Moscow.

The crucial decisions concerning the reactivation of the Orthodox hierarchy were made in Constantinople. The Tzarogrod patriarchate was supported by the patriarch of Alexandria Cyril Lukarys (1602-1620), who was in Poland earlier and had a good knowledge of the situation of the Orthodox Church. On 29th May 1620 he issued an address to the Ruthenian people, in which he encouraged them to remain with their Orthodox faith and oppose the union. In 1621 he became the patriarch of Constantinople (1621-1630).⁷ Other eastern patriarchs were also interested in recreating the organisational structure of the Kiev metropolia.

The patriarch Teofanes left Moscow on 4th February 1620 and around 22nd March he arrived in Kiev. Sigismund III Vasa (1587-1632), who feared his visit, ordered the voivod of Kiev Tomasz Zamoyski to follow the hierarch. Hetman Stefan Żółkiewski even wanted to arrest him, when he learned that the patriarch intended to visit Lvov. He finally changed his attitude out of fear of Cossack and Orthodox uprisings. On 5th May 1620 he urged the Kiev citizens to welcome the patriarch suitably and the people of Volhynia and Podillia to see to his safety. The patriarch himself informed the king in a letter that he came to polish lands with no ill intent. In response, the king informed the patriarch on 17 March 1620, that he trusted the patriarch's stay would be peaceful and that his safety was guaranteed.⁸

Returning from Moscow through Ukrainian lands the patriarch of Jerusalem Teofanes issued an address on 15th May 1620 to the Orthodox inhabitants of the Kiev region, where he blessed the members of the Kiev brotherhood. Ten days later he informed the faithful of his visits in Orthodox churches and monasteries and of granting his blessing to the Slavic-Greek school and the newly built church of the Annunciation of Holy Mary. During his stay in Kiev the patriarch of Jerusalem granted stauropegial rights to the Kiev, Lutsk, Mohylev

7. Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 346-48; 362-66, 422, 466-68; 512-28.

8. *Ibid.*, 424-25.

and Slutsk brotherhoods, as well as confirming the privileges of the Lvov and Vilnius brotherhoods.⁹ Teofanes started a close cooperation with the brotherhoods of Lvov, Vilnius, Lutsk, Mohylev and Minsk.¹⁰ Thus the patriarch Teofanes wanted to rally the brotherhoods, which opposed the union, to his cause. By making them independent of the local clergy and subjecting them to patriarchal rule, Teofanes made the brotherhoods into a tool for the realisation of his policy. Gaining the brotherhoods was the first step leading to the reactivation of the Orthodox hierarchy.

The next stage was an open letter to the Orthodox of Lithuania and Poland of 13rd August 1620, urging them to choose bishops from among themselves.¹¹ By the end of October a meeting of clergy and laymen took place, where candidates for the metropolitane and bishops were elected. At first the patriarch was reluctant about ordaining the hierarchs, as he feared the reaction of the Polish king.

In the meantime one important thing happened, which changed the patriarch's position concerning the ordination of bishops. At the start of October, Teofanes started preparing to leave for Kiev and Moldavia. During these preparations the departing patriarch received a message that the Polish expedition to Moldavia ended on 20th September 1620 with a defeat at Cecora and the ill-disposed towards the Orthodox hetman Stefan Żółkiewski died on 7th October. The patriarch understood that he was freed from the inconvenient control of the hetman's officials. Asked by the Orthodox clergy, the patriarch

9. *Arkhiv Jugo-Zapadnoi Rossii, izdavaemyi Kommissiieu pri Kiievskom, Podolskom i Volynskom General-Gubernatore*, part. I, vol. 7 (Kiev: 1887), 297-98; *Arkhograficheskii sbornik dokumentov otnosiashchsia k istorii Severo-Zapadnoi Rusi*, vol. II (Wilno: 1867), 58; Makarii, *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. XI, 244-46, 333; Chodynicki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 425; V. Kartashev, *Ocherk po istorii Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. II (Paris: 1959), 274-75.

10. S. Golubiev, *Kievskii mitropolit Petr Mogila i jego spodvizhniki*, vol. I (Kiev: 1883), 235-256; I. Flerov, *O pravoslavnikh tserkovnikh bratstvakh, protivoborstvovavshokh unii w Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii w XVI, XVII i XVIII st.* (Sankt-Petersburg: 1857), 56-58; A. Mironowicz, *Bractwa cerkiewne w Rzeczypospolitej* (Białystok: 2003), 35-36.

11. Makarii, *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. XI, 249, fn. 121; Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, vol. VII, 435-36; Chodynicki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 426.

returned to Kiev. There, after receiving guarantees of safety from the Cossacks, he decided to reactivate the hierarchy.¹² Under the protection of the Cossacks and the hetman of the Zaporozhe Army, Peter Sahajdachny (1613-1622), the patriarch ordained on 19 October in the Church of the Revelation in Kiev Yov Boretsky, an ighumen of the St. Michael monastery and the former rector of the brotherhood school in Lvov, as the metropolitan of Kiev and Halich. Earlier, on 16th October an ighumen of the Mezhyhorsk monastery Isaac Kopinsky, who spent 15 years at the Athos Mountain, became the bishop of Peremysl and Samborsk. A month later Teofanes ordained a well known author of polemics Meletij Smotryc'ky as the archbishop of Polotsk. After leaving Kiev, escorted by Cossacks, at the beginning of 1621, the patriarch ordained in Trekhymirov an ighumen of the local monastery Joseph Kurtsevich as the bishop of Volodymyr and Brest. In Biala Tserkiev he ordained an ighumen of the chernytsky monastery Isaac Boryskovich as the bishop of Lutsk and Ostroh. In Zhyvotovo he ordained the ighumen of the mieletsky monastery Paisij Hipolitovich as the bishop of Khelm and Bielsk. His companion, ordinary of Stachona, Grek Abraham became the bishop of Pinsk.¹³

12. Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, vol. VII, 436.

13. P. I. Orlovsky, "Uchastiie Zaporozhskikh kozakov v vostonovlenii iierusalimskim patriarkhom Teofanom pravoslavnoj juzhno-russkoi tserkovnoi iierarkhii w 1620 g.," in *Trudy Kievskoi-Dukhovnoi Akademii 1905 g.* (Kiev: 1905), 648; J. Pelesz, *Geschichte der Union der ruthenischen Kirche mit Rom von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. II (Würzburg-Wien: 1881), 145-48; Makarii, *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. XI, 242-64; Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, vol. VII, 426-37; D. Doroshenko, *Narys istorii Ukrainy*, vol. I (Warszawa: 1932), 206-07; Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 425-429; W. Tomkiewicz, "Cerkiew dyzunicka w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1596-1795," *Przegląd Powszechny CIC* (1921): 161-63; L. Bienkowski, *Organizacja Kościoła wschodniego. Zarys historyczny* (Lwów: 1936), 843-44; W. A. Serczyk, *Na dalekiej Ukrainie. Dzieje Kozacczyzny do 1648 r.* (Kraków: 1984), 188-89; A. Mironowicz, "Organizacja Kościoła prawosławnego do końca XVIII wieku," in *Europa Orientalis. Polska i jej wschodni sąsiedzi od średniowiecza po współczesność*, Z. Karpusa, pod ed., (Toruń: 1996), 214-15; Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny*, 80-84.

Before leaving Poland Teofanes issued two documents of political importance. In the first one the Cossacks were forbidden to fight against Moscow. In the second he informed the Orthodox community of his re-establishing of the Kiev metropolia with seven bishoprics and putting an anathema on the Uniats. The document states that after the death of the metropolite the bishops should choose the new one from among themselves and ask the patriarch of Constantinople for confirmation. Stauropigial brotherhoods, in these times so difficult for the Orthodox Church, should submit themselves to their bishops. He also urged the hierarchs to eliminate customs inconsistent with the Orthodox tradition.¹⁴ The patriarchal document shows that the problem of Orthodox citizens of Poland and Lithuania extended beyond the sphere of internal policy and into the range of influence of Moscow and Constantinople.

Of his activities Teofanes informed patriarch Filaret from Moldavia on 12nd March 1621: "Let it be known to you, holy lord, that we have, thanks to your prayers, the tzar's grace and God's help, freed ourselves from the enemies of our faith; the army and people of Kiev have led us to the Vallahian border and there we are now, worshiping your rule."¹⁵ Bringing this letter up as proof of the involvement of Moscow in reactivating the hierarchy is not justified. The patriarch of Moscow supported the activities of Teofanes, but had no real possibility of taking part in the reactivation of the hierarchy. The real forces supporting the patriarch of Jerusalem were the Cossacks and brotherhoods. The consecration of bishops and metropolitan Yov Boretsky took place in brotherhood churches. The patriarch enjoyed the financial support of the brotherhoods and the protection of Cossacks. Nevertheless, he mainly consulted his decisions with the monastic community, as can be seen by his visits in the monasteries in Mezhyhorsk, Trekhtemirov, Chernchysk, and Kiev. The new bishops came mainly from monasteries visited by the patriarch.

14. *Arkhiv Jugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, part. I, vol. 5 (Kiev: 1872), 1; Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 428.

15. Makarii, *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, vol. XI, 264-65.

Reactivation of the Orthodox hierarchy was seen as an act of disloyalty towards the state. The Uniate exerted pressure on the king, urging him to take decisive actions against the newly ordained hierarchs. Similarly did nuncio Kosmas de Torres (1621-1622). The political situation in Poland forced Zygmunt III Vasa to take more moderate actions. While Teofanes was in Ukraine the king asked him to convince the Cossacks to take part in the war on Turkey. The patriarch of Jerusalem complied with the king's request, so the Orthodox could count on acknowledging the reactivated hierarchy.¹⁶ The king could not disregard that, especially the protection the bishops received from the hetman of the Cossack army – Peter Sahajdachny. Firm intervention from the king would provoke a religious war in Ukraine. Therefore the king only proclaimed that he condemned the consecration of hierarchs against the laws.

Ruthenian members of the parliament attempted to confirm the rights of the Orthodox Church at the 1620 session. They asked for the reactivation of the hierarchy, keeping it a secret, that the choice of metropolitan and two bishops had already been made. At this session the member from Volhynia Wawrzyniec Drzewiński presented the situation of the Orthodox faith in Poland. He invoked drastic examples of restricting the freedom of faith of the Orthodox and their access to town offices. "Churches closed, church goods robbed, there are no monks in monasteries, children die unchristened, dead are buried without rites like carrion, men and wives live without blessing, the people dies without confession. So it happens in Mohylov, Orsha, Minsk. In Lvov a non-Uniate cannot join a guild, cannot go with the Holy Gifts to a sick man. In Vilnius the bodies of the Orthodox are driven out of town only through a gate used for disposing of garbage. For twenty years we have asked for our freedoms to be preserved, but to no avail."¹⁷ The brotherhoods also petitioned the king. Members of the Vilnius brotherhoods demanded

16. Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 432.

17. K. Znosko, *Istoricheski ocherk Tserkovnoi unii, ieia proiskhozhdenie i kharakter*, part. II (Warszawa: 1933), 127; N. Bantysh-Kamensky, *Istoricheskoie izviestie o voznikshei w Polshe unii* (Vilno: 1886), 64-69; Hrushevsky, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, vol. VII, 444, fn. 1.

that the rights of the Orthodox Church be confirmed. The problem of calming the "Greek faith" was one of the Cossack demands in the 1621 parliamentary session. In spite of these pressures the parliament failed to pass a constitution on matters of religion, therefore not acknowledging the ordained Ruthenian bishops.¹⁸

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While evaluating the activity of the patriarch of Jerusalem Teofanes in Poland in view of the later religious events one has to note that the Orthodox hierarchy had been re-established thanks to his visit. The realisation of this project was not a matter of chance. The time of the reactivation of the Orthodox hierarchy was carefully planned. The determination of the patriarch in the realisation of this venture resulted from the tragic situation of the Orthodox Church in Poland devoid of all rights and episcopate. By consecrating new hierarchs the patriarch Teofanes preserved the continuity of the hierarchy. The local church could not function without bishops. Because of the war on Russia and Turkey the Orthodox Church lost contact with the Tzarogrod patriarchate. It was equally important to confirm or grant stauropegial rights to the brotherhoods, which were at the time the main force defending the rights of the Orthodox Church. Brotherhoods, which played a growing role in the anti-Uniat activity, became the main support of the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The cooperation between the patriarch and the brotherhoods strengthened their position in the church and made their members even more active.

The patriarch Teofanes was the first to cause the Cossacks as a whole to support the Orthodox Church. The Cossacks, who were at first religiously indifferent, became by the middle of the 17th century the main protectors of the Orthodox Church. Teofanes' stay in the Commonwealth opened the period of the Cossacks with the Church. He also caused the monasteries to become more active. Appreciating the role of monasteries he indicated them as the main sources of Orthodox spiritual life. His actions resulted in a significant increase in the religious awareness of the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox

18. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny*, 82.

Church. In consequence the development of Uniatism had been stopped and the Orthodox Church started reclaiming lost churches and monasteries. The political circumstances of the patriarch's visit caused the problem of the Orthodox Church in Poland to become a matter of international politics. Finally, under the pressure from abroad and from the Orthodox people, the new king Vladyslav IV agreed to legalize the Orthodox hierarchy at the coronation parliament in 1633. A new metropolitan was appointed –Peter Mohyla (1633-1647)– and new bishops were ordained. The church structures could be restored and the hierarchy could preserve its continuity thanks to the mission of the patriarch of Jerusalem Teofanes in 1620-1621.