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## Seeking a Path to Autocephaly for the Church in Ukraine. Relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate (XX–XXI Century)

### Abstract

The article presents the history of the process of the Ukrainian Church's efforts to obtain autocephaly. It discusses the difficult and complicated relations of the Ukrainian Church with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the role that this Patriarchate played in the process of granting autocephaly. It outlines the complicated history of a Church divided due to the different visions of the various Ukrainian Orthodox communities established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All this contributed to the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Ukr. Православна Церква України). It must be emphasised that this process has not been completed yet. The article also describes the role played by the Ukrainian authorities in the process of establishing the autocephalous Church. The process of the constitution of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as the Church of Ukraine and its stance towards the Russo-Ukrainian war is also shown.

**Keywords:** Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Kyiv Patriarchate, Patriarchate of Constantinople, autocephaly, Tomos

The article is an attempt to introduce the history of the process of the Ukrainian Church's endeavour for autocephaly, the difficult and complicated relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the role it played in the process of granting autocephaly. The article outlines the complicated history of a Church divided due to the different visions of the various Orthodox communities established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All this contributed to the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Ukr. Православна Церква України). It must be emphasised that this process has not been completed yet. The following discussion also aims to show the role of the Ukrainian authorities in the process of creating this ecclesial community. The main research hypothesis is the role of the Ukrainian authorities and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the formation of the autocephalous Church, i.e. the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), and the formation of the Ukrainian identity of this Church. There are still divisions within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. To this day, the



Orthodox Churches have not developed a common position on the question of granting autocephaly, which conditions many disputes and disagreements on this issue.

The research methods and techniques used in the work are primarily content and source analysis, comparative method and observation method. The multifaceted nature of the issues discussed meant that research into the topic required interdisciplinarity, taking into account ecclesiological, cultural studies, and political perspectives on the historical process.

The tradition of the Orthodox metropolis of Kiev developing since the baptism of the Rus' was interrupted in 1686, when the metropolis, part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, became part of the Patriarchate of Moscow. The metropolis of Kiev did not have autocephaly. The Tsar's policy in the affairs of the Orthodox Church served the Russification of Ukrainian lands. Ritual differences between the Kiev Metropolis and other eparchies of the Russian Church were gradually eliminated, the rite was unified according to the Moscow model. The Kiev metropolis lost its administrative autonomy and cultural distinctiveness.

It was only at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the Ukrainian Revolution, that the idea of creating an independent Church was born. The first attempt to create an autocephalous Church was made by the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic (URL) headed by ataman Symon Petlura (1879–1926) in January 1919. In October 1921, the All-Ukrainian Sobor was convened at the St Sofia Cathedral in Kiev, which, under the influence of the URL authorities, declared the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Soviet authorities then pursued a nationality policy of so-called "korenizatsion". In the URL it was a process of Ukrainisation<sup>1</sup>. At that time, the Soviet authorities, due to this "tolerance" resulting from political calculations, stood behind the independence of the Ukrainian Church. It is worth noting that there was no widespread support for the idea of Ukrainian autocephaly among the supporters of the URL, or in the episcopate itself. In the beginning, no bishop supported this Church<sup>2</sup>.

In 1923, even the Moscow Patriarchate confirmed this autocephaly, but by early 1930 the self-dissolution of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Ukr. Українська Автокефальна Православна Церква) had already taken place. The Moscow Patriarchate officially annulled this autocephaly in 1934 (Modzelewska 2013: 1303). The Soviet power retreated from its policy of Ukrainisation. It began to fight against the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), calling it Symon Petlura's organisation. Consequently, the structure of this Church was abolished. It was also not recognised by other local Orthodox Churches, due to ambiguities related to its canonicity. It should be added that from 1921 to 1990, the URL had the Ukrainian Exarchate (ukr. Український Екзархат), which was an Orthodox ecclesiastical administration within the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). The clergy of the Exarchate, like the clergy of the UAOC, were also persecuted during this period. Clergy Belonged to the Exarchate were already persecuted in the 1920s<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> S. Plokhyy, F. Sysyn, *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, Edmonton 2003, pp. 76–77.

<sup>2</sup> A. Szeptycki, *Podziały religijne na Ukrainie*, in: *Religia w stosunkach międzynarodowych. 10-lecie współpracy Instytutu Stosunków Międzynarodowych ze zgrupowaniem Słowa Bożego (SVD)*, A. Solarz, H. Schreiber (eds.), Warszawa 2012, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> S. Plokhyy, F. Sysyn, *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, pp. 76–77.

The UAOC was re-established during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, i.e. during the Second World War. After the liberation, the bishops of this Church emigrated, mostly to North America, establishing Ukrainian Church structures there. In 1971, Metropolitan Mstislav (Skrypnyk) (1898–1993), nephew of Symon Petlura, became its head<sup>4</sup>.

In the process of creating the structures of the autocephalous Church, the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which had the right to grant autocephaly to the Kyiv Metropolia – being its mother Church – was overlooked. For this reason, Metropolitan Mstislav met with the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1963 and 1971, seeking the annulment of the 1686 decision to return the Kiev Metropolia from the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate to the jurisdiction of Constantinople on an exarchate basis<sup>5</sup>. In 1989, the renewal of the UAOC was announced in Lviv. A year later, the Vschechukrai Holy Council of this Church was convened, which independently declared the 1686 decision to be non-canonical without receiving the consent of the Ecumenical Patriarch. At the same time, the Kyivan and All-Ukrainian Patriarchate was established, with Metropolitan Mstislav as Patriarch<sup>6</sup>.

In January 1990, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) renamed the Ukrainian Exarchate as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church within the ROC. This church enjoyed partial autonomy. It was independent in administrative matters, but was not an autocephalous Church and remained part of the ROC. Any newly elected metropolitan of Kiev by the local bishops had to be approved by the Patriarch of Moscow, which is why Ukraine is considered, as a canonical territory of the ROC<sup>7</sup>. This church became known as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). It was regarded by the local Orthodox Churches as a canonical community. This Church was headed by Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko) of Kiev and all Ukraine. When Ukraine's independence was proclaimed in 1991, the Council of Bishops of the UOC-MP asked Moscow to grant autocephaly. Moscow did not agree to this.

The following year, in April in Zhytomyr, six UOC-MP bishops proposed convening a council, accusing Filaret of perjury. The council, which met in May 1991 in Kharkov, removed Filaret from office, electing Metropolitan Vladimir (Sabodan) Metropolitan Vladimir (1992–2014) as head of the UOC-MP. All actions took place with the approval of the Moscow Patriarchate. Metropolitan Filaret was accused by the Moscow Patriarchate and the said Council of Bishops of acting to the detriment of the Church. Filaret was deprived of all Orthodox dignities and had his priestly ordination annulled, considering him a mere monk<sup>8</sup>.

Metropolitan Filaret did not recognise this decision. He also undertook unification talks with the recently renewed UAOC. The result of the talks was the unification of some of

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<sup>4</sup> W. Osadczy, *Skrypnyk Mstyslaw*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka (EK)*, E. Giglewicz (ed.), vol. XVIII, Lublin 2013, col. 317.

<sup>5</sup> W. Osadczy, *Skrypnyk Mstyslaw*, col. 317; В. Романюк, *Патріарх Мстислав: маловідомі сторінки* (08.02.2018), <https://web.archive.org/web/20200713224753/https://gk-press.if.ua/patriarh-mstyslav-malovidomistorinky/> (date accessed: 20.01.2023); *Патріарх Мстислав (Скрипник)*, (Останнє поновлення здійснено, 04.02.2004), <https://web.archive.org/web/20091204210512/http://www.risu.org.ua/ukr/major Religions/uaoc/skrypnyk/> (date accessed: 07.05.2024).

<sup>6</sup> *Патріарх Мстислав (1898–1993)*, (02.01.2010), <https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/reference/persons/~%d0%9c/33656/> (date accessed: 20.01.2023).

<sup>7</sup> A. Szeptycki, *Podziały religijne na Ukrainie*, p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> W. Pawluczuk, *Ukraina. Polityka i mistyka*, Kraków 1998, pp. 132–133.

the parishes recognising Metropolitan Filaret as superior with the UAOC, which took place at a council in June 1992. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (Українська Православна Церква Київського Патріархату) was then established, with Mstislav, the former head of the UAOC, as its head. These actions were supported by the Ukrainian authorities, who hoped that a Ukrainian national Church would be created. When the patriarch died in 1993, there were three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine, as the UAOC was renewed<sup>9</sup>.

Vladimir (Romaniuk) was elected head of the UOC-KP (1993–1995). After his death, Filaret was appointed to the patriarchal office in 1995, which resulted in the transition of some of the faithful to the UAOC, mainly from the Ivano-Frankivsk-Vynnytsia and Buczac-Khmelnysia dioceses. The former returned to the structures of the UOC-KP as early as 1996. Eventually, the Holy Synod of the UOC, under the pretext of financial and moral scandals, excommunicated Filaret in 1995<sup>10</sup>. Filaret continued to fulfil his episcopal ministry, treating Moscow's excommunication as a political game. It should be added that during the Soviet era Filaret was an important hierarch of the ROC. He turned away from that Church and decided to work for the Ukrainian Church when he was not appointed to the office of Moscow Patriarch in 1990 after the death of Patriarch Pimen (1971–1990). It is worth mentioning that after the death of the aforementioned patriarch, he served as *locum tenens* of the Moscow patriarch for a month<sup>11</sup>.

Despite the excommunication and the associated problems, the UOC-KP continued to develop dynamically, not only in Ukraine, but also in Kandy and Western Europe, where the Ukrainian metropolis of the Kyiv Patriarchate was established. The Kyiv Patriarchate also established three eparchies within the Russian Federation: Moscow, Kursk-Belgorod and Tobolsk-Yenisei.

An important year for Orthodox Christians was 1997, when Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (since 1991) visited Ukrainian lands for the first time. On 24 September he arrived in Odessa and was welcomed by the head of the UOC-MP, Metropolitan Vladimir. The patriarch visited the monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God. There, he was expected by the then Patriarch of Moscow Alexy II (1990–2008). Patriarch Bartholomew visited Ukraine again in 2008. The occasion for his visit was the 1020<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Kievan Rus. He travelled to Kiev for the celebrations. His visit lasted three days from 25 to 27 July.

The Hierarch was welcomed by the then President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010) and the Metropolitan of Kiev, Vladimir. The Patriarch visited the Pechersk Lavra and St Sofia Cathedral, where he consecrated the restored royal gates of the iconostasis. He also met with Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, Bartholomew presided over the Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated on St Vladimir's Hill in Kiev. On the occasion

<sup>9</sup> A. Kozyrzka, *Pluralizm wyznaniowy a integracja narodu ukraińskiego po 1991 roku*, Toruń 2014, p. 177.

<sup>10</sup> A. Gajewski, *Tomos dla Ukrainy. Historyczna szansa czy nowe podziały?*, "Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny" 2018, vol. 1(76) 2018, p. 68; *Акт об отлучении от Церкви монаха Филарета (Денисенко)*, (Документ принят на Архиерейском Соборе Русской Православной Церкви 1997 года (07.06.2008)), <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/417804.html> (date accessed: 25.01.2023).

<sup>11</sup> A. Szeptycki, *Podziały religijne na Ukrainie*, p. 217; M. Ławreszuk, *Prawosławie wobec tendencji nacjonalistycznych i etnofiletystycznych*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 277–278.

of his visit by Patriarch Bartholomew and in connection with the commemoration of the 1020<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus', the National Bank of Ukraine issued a commemorative fifty hryvnia coin with the likeness of Patriarch Bartholomew and the President of Ukraine<sup>12</sup>.

Bartholomew was honoured by President Viktor Yushchenko with the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise for his ecclesial activity and for his services to the Orthodox Church worldwide. The Patriarch was honoured for the second time by President Viktor Yanukovich (2010–2014) on the occasion of the 1025<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus, and for raising the authority of Orthodoxy in the international field<sup>13</sup>. Patriarch Bartholomew made no move towards Ukrainian autocephaly. He has consistently supported the UOC-MP.

In 2008, the bishops of the UAOC, led by Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Methodius Kudriakov (2000–2015), asked Patriarch Bartholomew in a letter to resume dialogue and consider possible compromise solutions on the Ukrainian Church issue. The bishops began the letter by informing the patriarch that they were praying for the planned All-Orthodox Council to take place as soon as possible and for its activities to help renew and consolidate the Orthodox Church. They also asked that the Patriarch not pastorally neglect the problems of the eliminated Ukrainian nation<sup>14</sup>.

Until 2018, there were three Orthodox ecclesial communities in Ukraine: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) with Metropolitan Onufry (Berezovsky) as its head (from 2014), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP), whose head until 2018 was Patriarch Filaret, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), headed by Metropolitan Makary (Maletych) (2015–2018). Only the first of the above-mentioned Churches was recognised as canonical in the Orthodox world. The then President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko (2014–2019) played an important role in the efforts to obtain autocephaly. The President held talks with the heads of the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. He also convinced politicians to implement the project on autocephaly. In March 2016, he travelled to Fanar for a meeting with Patriarch Bartholomew. The fruit of the meeting at the Patriarchate of Constantinople was the adoption on 16 June 2016, by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, of a law that was an official request to the Patriarch<sup>15</sup>. The deputies asked the Patriarch of Constantinople to annul the 1686 decision and grant autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine. This request was addressed to Bartholomew three days before the start of the All-Orthodox Council in Crete.

The situation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church began to change radically in 2018. On 9 April, President Poroshenko again met with Patriarch Bartholomew on the issue of autocephaly. Then, on 17 April, he asked representatives of parliamentary clubs to support

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<sup>12</sup> Документ 651/2008, поточна редакція – Прийняття від 22.07.2008, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/651/2008> (date accessed: 22.10.2023).

<sup>13</sup> Документ 393/2013, поточна редакція – Прийняття від 27.07.2013, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/393/2013> (date accessed: 22.10.2023).

<sup>14</sup> Лист до Патріарха Константинопольського Варфоломея (26.08. 2009), Релігійно-інформаційна служба України, 26.08.2009), [https://risu.ua/list-do-patriarha-konstantinopolskogo-varfolomeya-2009\\_n34573](https://risu.ua/list-do-patriarha-konstantinopolskogo-varfolomeya-2009_n34573) (date accessed: 23.04.2024).

<sup>15</sup> ПОСТАНОВА Верховної Ради України “Про Звернення Верховної Ради України до Його Всесвятості Варфоломія, Архієпископа Константинополя і Нового Риму, Вселенського Патріарха щодо надання автокефалії Православній Церкві в Україні” (Відомості Верховної Ради (ВВР), 2016, № 27, ст. 528), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1422-19#n9> (date accessed: 23.01.2023).

an official request to the Ecumenical Patriarch. On 19 April, the Supreme Council of Ukraine supported the President's request to Patriarch Bartholomew to grant autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine<sup>16</sup>. Moscow was making efforts to take the lead over the Council being organised. Patriarch Kirill even demanded that the Council be convened at another time. Bartholomew did not postpone the Council.

The Council held its deliberations in Heraklion, Crete, from 19 to 26 June 2016. Representatives of ten autocephalous Churches participated in the deliberations. In the end, the Russian Orthodox Church refused to participate in the Council, despite having taken an active part in its preparations for many years. The decision to convene the Council was taken by all autocephalous Churches in January 2016 in Switzerland<sup>17</sup>.

The aforementioned request of the Ukrainian authorities for autocephaly was also supported by the Synod of the UOC-KP and the Synod of the UAOC. In turn, the Holy Synod of the UOC-MP headed by Metropolitan Onufry on 25 April sent a letter to the clergy, monks and nuns and the faithful, stating, that the creation of a parallel canonical jurisdiction in Ukraine will exacerbate the conflict within the Orthodox Church<sup>18</sup>.

The condition for starting this process without the approval of the Patriarch of Moscow was the cancellation of the 1686 decree by which the Kiev metropolis was temporarily handed over to Moscow. In favour of the endorsement were the UOC-KP and the UAOC, as well as two bishops from the UOC-MP<sup>19</sup>. Patriarch Bartholomew responded to this initiative by taking steps to grant autocephaly, sending two exarchs to Kiev on 7 September 2018: Daniel, Bishop of Pamphylia from the US, and Hilarion Bishop of Edmonton from Canada, both ethnic Ukrainians<sup>20</sup>. Bartholomew's actions were strongly opposed by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, accusing Bartholomew of acting in violation of canon law, without the consent of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and the canonical head of the Ukrainian Church, Metropolitan Onufry<sup>21</sup>. The Holy Synod invoked the canons of the Universal Councils claiming that the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople could exacerbate conflicts within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Disregarding the ROC's protests, in October 2018 the Ecumenical Patriarchate began the process of granting autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine. The Holy Synod, sitting on

<sup>16</sup> ПОСТАНОВА Верховної Ради України "Про підтримку звернення Президента України до Вселенського Патріарха Варфоломія про надання Томосу про автокефалію Православної Церкви в Україні", (Документ 2410-VIII, Прийняття від 19.04.2018), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2410-19#Text> (date accessed: 23.01.2023); Poroshenko supported the resolution on 22 April: T. Olszański, "Niepodległe państwo potrzebuje niepodległego Kościoła". *Walka o samodzielność kanoniczną ukraińskiego prawosławia* (2018.06.11), <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2018-06-11/niepodlegle-panstwo-potrzuje-niepodleglego-kościola-walka-o> (date accessed: 15.11.2023).

<sup>17</sup> A. Kuźma, *Wielki Sobór Kościoła Prawosławnego na Krecie w 2016 r. i jego ustalenia*, in: "Elpis" 2018, vol. 20 (2018), p. 169.

<sup>18</sup> (Синод звернувся до вірних УПЦ щодо інформації про можливість "надання Томосу про автокефалію Православної Церкви в Україні", 25. 05.2018).

<sup>19</sup> W. Radziwinowicz, *Ukraińska Cerkiew odłącza się od Moskwy. Putin przegrywa wojnę o dusze Ukraińców* (26.05.2018), <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,23450351-ukraina-cerkiew-odlacza-sie-od-moskwy-putin-przegrywa-wojne.html> (date accessed: 20.01.2023).

<sup>20</sup> P. Sterlingow, *Nowi egzarchowie na Ukrainie* (Cerkiew.pl, 07.09.2018), [http://www.wiadomosci.cerkiew.pl/-news.php?id\\_n=1911](http://www.wiadomosci.cerkiew.pl/-news.php?id_n=1911) (date accessed: 25.01.2019).

<sup>21</sup> *Заявление Священного Синода Русской Православной Церкви от 8 сентября 2018 года / Официальные документы*, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5264344.html> (date accessed: 25.09.2023).

9–11 October 2018 in Phanar, announced the return of the Kyiv metropolis to the supremacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch, cancelling the 1686 decision. Thus, the Church in Ukraine once again became part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the ROC ceased to have any influence over the Kiev metropolis. The Holy Synod also removed the excommunications imposed by the Moscow Patriarchate on Patriarch Filaret and Metropolitan Makary. Henceforth, the two non-canonical Churches became legitimate Orthodox communities in Ukraine<sup>22</sup>.

Following the above decisions of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the exarchs appealed to the three, already canonical at the time, Orthodox Churches of Ukraine to initiate actions to unite the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The exarchs declared that the takeover of the Kiev metropolis by the Moscow Patriarchate was a non-canonical act. This was opposed by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, stating that it was Patriarch Bartholomew's actions that were contrary to canon law. Moscow still tried unsuccessfully to stop the process initiated by Constantinople. Convened in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on 15 October 2018, the Holy Synod of the ROC broke Eucharistic unity with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, suspending all contacts with it<sup>23</sup>. Henceforth, the clergy of the two Churches cannot celebrate the Eucharist together, and the faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate cannot partake of the sacraments in the shrines of the Patriarchate of Constantinople<sup>24</sup>. As a result of this decision, the Orthodox Church was divided into "two camps": the Moscow and the Constantinopolitan camps.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the rehabilitated Patriarch Filaret supported Constantinople's position, calling for a unification council to be convened with the aim of establishing a single Church in Ukraine, which would be granted autocephaly. Constantinople's response was positive. The hierarchs of the three Ukrainian Churches were invited to the planned unification council, including the head of the UOC-MP Metropolitan Onufry<sup>25</sup> (*Филарет анонсировал объединительный церковный Собор*, 11.10.2018).

Metropolitan Onufry convened an extraordinary synod of the UOC-MP in Kiev on 13 November 2018, at which the same decisions were taken as at the synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in Minsk. The UOC-MP also severed all relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Finally, a Unification Council was convened, sitting in the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom in Kiev on 15 December 2018, presided over by the aforementioned Metropolitan Gaul Emanuel, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Council was attended by the hierarchs of the UOC-KP and the UAOC. Bartholomew's condition for the start of the deliberations to create one Church was the participation of the bishops of the UOC-PM.

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<sup>22</sup> *Patriarchat Ekumeniczny rehabilituje Patriarchat Kijowski i Cerkiew autokefaliczną* (12.10.2018), <https://www.ekumenizm.pl/koscioly/wschodnie/patriarchat-ekumeniczny-rehabilituje-patriarchat-kijowski/> (date accessed: 24.01.2019).

<sup>23</sup> A. Gajewski, *Tomos dla Ukrainy. Historyczna szansa czy nowe podziały?*, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup> W. Romanowski, *Czy Rosja wywoła nową wojnę, tym razem religijną?* (16.10.2018), <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/swiat/1767934,1-czy-rosja-wywola-nowa-wojne-tym-razem-religijna.read> (date accessed: 21.01.2019).

<sup>25</sup> *Филарет анонсировал объединительный церковный Собор* (11.10.2018), [https://zn.ua/POLITICS/filaret-anonsiroval-obedinitelnyy-cerkovnyy-sobor-296928\\_.html](https://zn.ua/POLITICS/filaret-anonsiroval-obedinitelnyy-cerkovnyy-sobor-296928_.html) (date accessed: 25.01.2019).

This condition was fulfilled, as two rulers came to the deliberations: Metropolitan Simeon Shostatsky and Metropolitan Alexander Drabynko. The Metropolitans attended the Council without the consent of their superior, Metropolitan Onufry. At the Council, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) (Ukr. Православна Церква України) was established, with the result that the UOC-KP and the UAOC were dissolved<sup>26</sup>.

The session also saw the election of the head of the newly-established Church, who became Metropolitan Epiphanius (Dumenko) of Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky and Bila Tserkva, the former hierarch of the UOC-KP. The new Metropolitan assumed the title of Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine<sup>27</sup>. Epiphanius taking up the Kyiv cathedral was 39 years old. He represents the new generation of the Ukrainian Church. He had no ties to communism. Unlike the older hierarchs, including Patriarch Filaret, he was not educated in Moscow. He has a theological and philosophical education. He studied in Kiev and Athens.

The reaction of the UOC-MP to the creation of the new Church was immediate. The Holy Synod, headed by Metropolitan Onufry, addressed the clergy, monks and faithful on 17 December 2018, condemning the decisions taken at the so-called ‘Obliterative Council’. The ‘Unification Council’, calling the newly formed Church a schismatic community<sup>28</sup>.

Patriarch Bartholomew notified all local Churches of the granting of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church on 24 December 2018. Metropolitan Epiphanius travelled to Istanbul on 5 January 2019 to the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Phanar. He was accompanied by the elected hierarchs of the newly established Church and President Petro Poroshenko with representatives of the Ukrainian authorities. They witnessed the signing by the Patriarch Bartholomew Tomos, a document confirming the granting of autocephaly to the newly established Church. The ceremony took place in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St George in Phanar. The following day, on the Feast of Epiphany, Epiphanius together with Bartholomew celebrated the Divine Liturgy, during which the Kyivan Metropolitan received the Tomos from the hands of the Patriarch<sup>29</sup>. Bartholomew announced after the Unification Council that there could not be two canonical Metropolitans of Kiev, so Metropolitan Onufry would be treated by Constantinople as Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine<sup>30</sup>.

The enthronement ceremony of Metropolitan Epiphanius took place on 3 February 2019 at the St Sofia Cathedral in Kiev. The induction ceremony at the Kyiv Cathedral was

<sup>26</sup> С. Хоменко, В. Червоненко, *Об’єднавчий собор Української церкви: як все відбувалося* (16.12.2018), <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46583417> (date accessed: 26.01.2023).

<sup>27</sup> Митрополит УПЦ КП Епіфаній обраний предстоятелем єдиної помісної православної церкви в Україні, 15.12.2018), <https://www.unian.ua/politics/10378407-mitropolit-upc-kp-epifaniy-obraniny-predstoyatelem-yedinoji-pomisnoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-v-ukrajini-foto-video.html> (date accessed: 26.01.2023).

<sup>28</sup> ЗВЕРНЕННЯ Священного Синоду Української Православної Церкви до архієпископів, пастирів, чернецтва та вірян від 17 грудня 2018 року, <https://news.church.ua/2018/12/17/zvernennya-svyashhennogo-sinodu-upc-do-archipastiriv-pastiriv-chernectva-ta-viryany-vid-17-grudnya/#2024-02-05> (date accessed: 25.01.2024).

<sup>29</sup> С. Хоменко., В. Червоненко, *Об’єднавчий собор Української церкви: як все відбувалося* (16.12.2018), <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46583417> (date accessed: 26.01.2023).

<sup>30</sup> В. Червоненко, А. Данильченко, *Томос церкви України: Епіфаній отримав грамоту про автокефалію* (BBC News, Україна, Стамбул, 06.01.2019), [https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46773365?ocid=socialflow\\_facebook](https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-46773365?ocid=socialflow_facebook) (date accessed: 24.01.2023).



presided over by Metropolitan Emmanuel of Gaul, Metropolitan Makary, former head of the UAOC, and Metropolitan Simeon of Vinnytsia and Bari. Epiphanius was given the title of Metropolitan of Kiev and all Ukraine.

It should be mentioned that on 20 December 2018, the Supreme Council of Ukraine, by resolution, obliged the UOC-MP to adopt a new name that would unambiguously indicate its affiliation to the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>31</sup>. However, the resolution was withdrawn the following year<sup>32</sup>.

The fate of Patriarch Filaret, who eventually found himself outside the newly created Orthodox Church, took an interesting turn. On 20 October 2018, Filaret was given by the Holy Synod of the OCU the title of Archbishop and Metropolitan of Kiev, and of all Rus-Ukraine, which he was to use in his dealings outside the Ukrainian state. Filaret was given the title of honorary patriarch of Ukraine, which he could use within Ukraine<sup>33</sup>. As was mentioned, prior to the establishment of the OCU at the Unification Council, the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were dissolved. Filaret was able to use the title of honorary patriarch of Ukraine.

Despite this, he convened a forum in June 2019 called “For the Ukrainian Orthodox Church! For the Kyiv Patriarchate!”, at which he announced that he did not recognise the provisions of the Tomos on autocephaly granted by Patriarch Bartholomew<sup>34</sup>. He declared that he would never agree to hand over to the Ecumenical Patriarchate the Ukrainian foreign parishes that belonged to the Kyiv Patriarchate and would not accept St Mir from Constantinople. He also did not accept the decision-making of the Patriarch of Constantinople in resolving possible conflicts in the Ukrainian Church. In his view, the above provisions in the Tomos contradicted autocephaly.

The consequence of this position was that Filaret announced the resumption of the Kyiv Patriarchate and convened an assembly of clergy and faithful on 20 June 2019, which was attended by only two bishops and about two hundred lay delegates<sup>35</sup>. Thus, Patriarch Filaret found himself outside the OCU. Holy Synod of the OCU that Filaret’s actions have no weight<sup>36</sup>. A similar stance on the issue was taken by the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> “Російська православна церква в Україні”: Рада зобов’язала УПЦ МП перейменуватись, (20.12.2018), BBC News Україна, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-46632682> (date accessed: 22.09.2023).

<sup>32</sup> Верховний суд відмовив Мінкульту у вимозі позбавити УПЦ її офіційної назви (16.12.2019), <http://web.archive.org/web/20191221071309/https://news.church.ua/2019/12/16/verhovnij-sud-vidmoviv-minkultu-u-vimozu-pozbaviti-upc-jiji-oficijnoji-nazvi/> (date accessed: 22.09.2023).

<sup>33</sup> Патриарх Филарет озвучил требования к будущему главе Единой поместной церкви (25.10.2018), [https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/patriarh-filaret-ozvuchil-trebovaniya-k-buduschemu-glave-edinoy-pomestnoy-cerkvi-298136\\_.html](https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/patriarh-filaret-ozvuchil-trebovaniya-k-buduschemu-glave-edinoy-pomestnoy-cerkvi-298136_.html) (date accessed: 23.09.2023).

<sup>34</sup> Владика Філарет на форумі інтелігенції: Ми цей Томос не сприймаємо (11.06.2019), [https://risu.ua/vladika-filaret-na-forumi-inteligenciji-mi-cey-tomos-ne-spriymayemo\\_n98570](https://risu.ua/vladika-filaret-na-forumi-inteligenciji-mi-cey-tomos-ne-spriymayemo_n98570) (date accessed: 23.09.2023).

<sup>35</sup> Собор Філарета відновив УПЦ КП з усіма її структурами і власністю та розкритикував текст Томосу (20.06.2019), [https://risu.ua/sobor-filareta-vidnoviv-upc-kp-z-usima-ji-strukturami-i-vlasnistyu-ta-rozkritikovav-tekst-tomosu\\_n98715](https://risu.ua/sobor-filareta-vidnoviv-upc-kp-z-usima-ji-strukturami-i-vlasnistyu-ta-rozkritikovav-tekst-tomosu_n98715) (date accessed: 23.09.2023).

<sup>36</sup> Ніяких наслідків для ПЦУ зібрання Філарета не має, це не розкол – реакція ПЦУ (20.06.2019), [https://risu.ua/niyakih-naslidkiv-dlya-pcu-zibrannya-filareta-ne-maye-ce-ne-rozkol-reakciya-pcu\\_n98719](https://risu.ua/niyakih-naslidkiv-dlya-pcu-zibrannya-filareta-ne-maye-ce-ne-rozkol-reakciya-pcu_n98719) (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Culture confirms liquidation of Kyiv Patriarchate (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 31.07.2019), [https://risu.ua/en/ministry-of-culture-confirms-liquidation-of-kyiv-patriarchate\\_n99446](https://risu.ua/en/ministry-of-culture-confirms-liquidation-of-kyiv-patriarchate_n99446) (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

The Kyiv Patriarchate, re-established by Filaret, is a separate structure, functioning outside the PKU.

After the holding of the Tomos, the OCU began to consolidate. The reception of parishes from the UOC-MP began. From the time the new church was established until January 2022, around 700 parishes, previously belonging to the UOC-MP, joined the OCU<sup>38</sup>. The attitude of some clergy and believers towards the Church, headed by Metropolitan Onufry, became increasingly negative after the start of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The outbreak of war contributed to the acceleration of the process of believers leaving the UOC-MP.

Quite a number of UOC-MP clergy oppose the position of Patriarch Kirill, who has unequivocally supported the actions of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin. Some clergy have stopped mentioning the name of the Moscow patriarch during services, e.g. the monks of the Pechersk Lavra, considered the most devoted to Moscow until the war<sup>39</sup>. Kirill was publicly accused by some four hundred clergy of the Church of supporting the Russian army. The clergy considered the doctrine of the "Rus mir" promoted by the Patriarch of Moscow to be incompatible with Orthodox teaching<sup>40</sup>.

Already on the day of the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Metropolitan Onufry called on Vladimir Putin to stop the aggression against his country, and urged the citizens of Ukraine to be brave and remain calm<sup>41</sup>. Ukrainians, including believers belonging to the UOC-MP, increasingly began to support the separation of the Ukrainian Church from Moscow with Onufry at its head after the outbreak of war. In March 2022, in a poll conducted by the Rejting group, 52 per cent of the UOC-MP faithful supported the Church's exit from Patriarch Kirill's jurisdiction. After two months of war in April 2022, more than 60 per cent of the faithful belonging to the Church ruled by Metropolitan Onufry were in favour of separation from the Moscow Patriarchate<sup>42</sup>.

At a council convened by Metropolitan Onufry on 27 May 2022 in Kiev, an amendment to the statutes of the UOC-MP was adopted, establishing independence from the Moscow Patriarchate. However, these provisions have not been published, further calling into question the independence of this Church and its formal status within the Orthodox community. What was published, however, was a criticism of Kirill for his support of the hostilities. The bishops also expressed regret for the ongoing war, but did not explicitly name the aggressor. The council convened by Metropolitan Onufry presented its negative attitude towards the OCU, which was established in 2018, calling it a non-canonical community.

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<sup>38</sup> A. Szabaciuk, *Święta wojna patriarchy Cyryla* (Instytut Europy Środkowej, 23.03.2022), <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/swieta-wojna-patriarchy-cyryla/> (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> J. Rogoża, *Ucieczka do przodu: Ukraiński Kościół Prawosławny Patriarchatu Moskiewskiego wobec wojny* (Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 06.06.2022), <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2022-06-06/ucieczka-do-przodu-ukrainski-kosciol-prawoslawny-patriarchatu> (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

<sup>41</sup> A. Szabaciuk, *Święta wojna patriarchy Cyryla* (Instytut Europy Środkowej, 23.03.2022), <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/swieta-wojna-patriarchy-cyryla/> (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

<sup>42</sup> J. Rogoża, *Ucieczka do przodu: Ukraiński Kościół Prawosławny Patriarchatu Moskiewskiego wobec wojny* (Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 06.06.2022), <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2022-06-06/ucieczka-do-przodu-ukrainski-kosciol-prawoslawny-patriarchatu> (date accessed: 24.09.2023).

The newly formed Church was also accused of forcibly taking over parishes under Onufry's jurisdiction<sup>43</sup>. The actions taken by Metropolitan Onufry's Church indicate a desire to disassociate itself completely from ties with Moscow. The bipartisanship among the clergy of this Church, as well as the process of parishes leaving the structures of this Orthodox Church, testify that Ukrainians, however, still identify the Church ruled by Onufry as a pro-Moscow structure.

There are clergy who have not accepted the findings of the Council convened by Metropolitan Onufry. They still have a pro-Russian attitude. Some of them have even left Ukraine for the Russian Federation<sup>44</sup>. The Rovnevska eparchy covering the lands of the self-proclaimed Lugansk People's Republic has left the UOC-MP, disagreeing with Metropolitan Onufry's position, moving directly under the jurisdiction of Patriarch Kirill. It appears that the Church headed by Onufry considers itself a completely independent Church. There is currently no communication with either the ROC or the OCU. The process of leaving parishes belonging to the Church headed by Metropolitan Onufry is likely to continue. The Moscow Patriarchate still considers the UOC-MP to be part of it.

In contrast, the OCU, which received autocephaly from Patriarch Bartholomew, clearly identifies the Russian Federation as the aggressor, advocating Ukraine in all its actions. The Holy Synod of the same Church on 29 July 2023 expressed gratitude to God and the defenders of Ukraine, reiterated its condemnation of Russian aggression and demanded that Patriarch Kirill cease supporting the war. The synod also expressed readiness for dialogue with the UOC-MP for reunification. Gratitude was also expressed to the Ecumenical Patriarch for supporting Ukraine.

The OCU is increasingly taking on its own character, seeking to distinguish itself consistently in various spheres of activity from the Russian Church. The bishops are showing openness to dialogue with the Catholic Church. They plan to introduce various innovations in Orthodox churches, e.g. allowing women to enter churches with their heads uncovered, placing benches in churches, and allowing funerals to be held for people of the Catholic faith<sup>45</sup>. It should be noted that the PKU is following the changes that have long been introduced by the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The OCU seeks to implement the programme of reforms published in a special document, written on the eve of the enthronement of Metropolitan Epiphanius. The aim of the authors of the document was to identify and determine a more effective implementation of the mission of the Ukrainian Church in the modern world. The undertaking was initiated by clergy and laity. The document in question contained ten proposals for the newly established Church: the establishment of a viable conciliarism, the renewal of parish life, greater involvement of the faithful in the affairs of the Church, the renewal of Eucharistic life in communities, good translation of liturgical texts, the introduction of the so-called "new evangelisation", which is to be carried out by the Church of Ukraine. "New evangelisation", which is to lead to Christocentrism and to show the importance of the Word of God, rejection of the old relationship between Church and State – the old symphony of power,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>45</sup> *Не покривати голову хусткою та лавки в церквах: ПЦУ змінить правила для вірян* (25.03.2019), <https://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/ne-pokryvaty-holovu-khustkoiu-ta-lavky-v-tserkvakh-ptsu-zmynyt-pravy-la-dlia-viryan-189053.html> (date accessed: 23.09.2023).

i.e. politicisation of the Church, strengthening of transparency and accountability, social service of the Church, reform of Church education, dialogue and openness<sup>46</sup>.

The OCU tries to reach the faithful in various ways, e.g. through the development of the Orthodox press. The newspaper “My Orthodox Church” (ukr. *Моя Церква*), which is the official publication of the Kyiv Metropolia, has been published since 28 July 2019. The magazine is also distributed electronically (*Вийшов друком перший номер газети “Моя Церква”*, 05.08.2019). In September 2021, the “My Orthodox Church” app was launched, making it easy to find the nearest church, prayers for various needs, and the Orthodox church calendar. The app also informs about important Church initiatives and events<sup>47</sup>.

From May 2019, OCU membership is conditional on the completion of an application. Each parish maintains an open register of parishioners who are actively involved in religious, educational, financial, economic and charitable activities of the community<sup>48</sup>.

The Ukrainian Liturgical Association was established in Kiev to work on improving translations of liturgical texts in Ukrainian, developing prayer, liturgical and theological terminology. Members of this scientific association include theologians, philologists and translators. The new translations are to be in line with the Greek originals used by the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Ukrainian Orthodox liturgical tradition and texts were greatly influenced by the period when the Ukrainian Church was under the jurisdiction of the ROC<sup>49</sup>. One of the steps towards a return to the old liturgical traditions was the decision of the Holy Synod of the OCU (19 November and 5 December 2023), according to which the clergy celebrating the Divine Liturgy may omit the recitation of the ektenia (litany) for catechumens if there are none in the parish. It should only be recited if there are persons preparing to receive the sacrament of baptism in the parish. This has long been the practice in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. By the decisions of the Holy Synod, the traditional celebration of Epiklesis during the Eucharist was restored, among others, without the addition of the prayer introduced by the Russian Orthodox Church, in accordance with the practice prevailing in the Orthodox Church in the Ukrainian territories until the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>50</sup>.

A major change in the OCU was the adoption of the Revised Julian calendar (the New Julian calendar). From the beginning of his assumption of office, Metropolitan Epiphanius

<sup>46</sup> *10 тез для ПЦУ: віряни опублікували пропозиції до плану дій нової помісної Церкви* (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 31.01.2019), [https://risu.ua/10-tez-dlya-viryani-opublikovali-propoziciji-do-planu-diy-novoji-pomisnoji-cerkvi\\_n96159](https://risu.ua/10-tez-dlya-viryani-opublikovali-propoziciji-do-planu-diy-novoji-pomisnoji-cerkvi_n96159) (date accessed: 24.01.2024).

<sup>47</sup> *“Моя церква”: ПЦУ запустила власний мобільний застосунок з молитвами і онлайн-чатом зі священником* (15.09.2021), [https://censor.net/ua/news/3288399/moya\\_tserkva\\_ptsu\\_zapustyla\\_vlasnyyi\\_mobilnyyi\\_zastosunok\\_z\\_molytvamy\\_i\\_onlayinchatom\\_zi\\_svyaschennykom](https://censor.net/ua/news/3288399/moya_tserkva_ptsu_zapustyla_vlasnyyi_mobilnyyi_zastosunok_z_molytvamy_i_onlayinchatom_zi_svyaschennykom) (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

<sup>48</sup> *У Православній церкві України запроваджують відкритий реєстр членів парафій, – митрополит Іоан* (20.05.2019), Черкаські новини, <https://prochek.info/news/7-cherkassy/72536-u-pravoslavnij-tserkvi-ukrayini-zaprovadzhuvt-vidkritij-reestr-chleniv-parafij-mitropolit-ioan> (access 02.10.2023).

<sup>49</sup> *Отець Андрій Дудченко про важливість якісних літургійних текстів українською: Перше, з чим зустрічається вірянин в процесі богослужіння – це його мова* (Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 23.08.2019), [https://risu.ua/otec-andriy-dudchenko-pro-vazhlyvist-yakisnih-liturgijnih-tekstiv-ukrajinskoju-pershe-z-chim-zustrichayetsya-viryanim-v-procesi-bogosluzhinnya-ce-yogo-mova\\_n99794](https://risu.ua/otec-andriy-dudchenko-pro-vazhlyvist-yakisnih-liturgijnih-tekstiv-ukrajinskoju-pershe-z-chim-zustrichayetsya-viryanim-v-procesi-bogosluzhinnya-ce-yogo-mova_n99794) (date accessed: 11.01.2024).

<sup>50</sup> *Журнали засідання Священного Синоду від 19 листопада та 5 грудня 2019 р.* (10.12.2019, Журнал №58), <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/zhurnaly-zasidannya-svyashhennogo-synodu-vid-19-lystopada-2019-r/> (date accessed: 30.01.2024).

emphasised that the transition to the new calendar should take place gradually, as the faithful must be ready for it. He believed that the clergy should prepare for this change<sup>51</sup>. In December 2021, Epiphanius declared that within ten years the majority of Ukrainians would celebrate Christmas on 25 December<sup>52</sup>. The following year on 18 October, the OCU allowed Christmas services to be held on 25 December. Celebrating Christmas with the Novitulan calendar was to be done with the consent of the pastor and parishioners. Each eparchy was obliged to inform the Kyiv Metropolia in writing of the number of participants in the services<sup>53</sup>.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) was also planning to switch to the new calendar. On 24 December 2022, the head of this Church, Archbishop Sviatoslav (since 2011), handed Metropolitan Epiphanius a letter containing information on the future reform of the calendar in the Greek Catholic Church. The heads of the two Churches established a joint working group to consider the future calendar reform<sup>54</sup>. The following year, on 2 February, the Holy Synod of the OCU allowed, after undergoing a procedure, parishes and monastic communities to make full use of the New Julian calendar<sup>55</sup>. Finally, the Council of Bishops on 24 May 2023 decided to switch from the Julian calendar to the New Julian calendar. The OCU switched to the new calendar on 1 September 2023<sup>56</sup>. The date was not coincidental, as 1 September is the first day of the liturgical year. The UGCC did the same. The adoption of the new calendar was accelerated by the Russian-Ukrainian war. The so-called old calendar became increasingly associated with the Moscow Patriarchate, while the New Julian calendar is identified with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This calendar has been used by almost the entire "Greek world" for a hundred years.

The process of cutting ties with Russia is ongoing. On 2 February 2024, the Holy Synod of the OCU removed the commemoration, much venerated by the ROC, of St Alexander Nevsky from the liturgical calendar. The prince was canonised by the Moscow Orthodox Church in 1547<sup>57</sup>.

OCU is undergoing a number of changes and reforms. It is trying to reach out to Ukrainians who are not connected to the Church. It is the largest religious community in Ukraine.

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<sup>51</sup> *Епіфаній розповів про можливі реформи календаря та "дрес-коду" в ПЦУ* (16.02.2019), <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/epifaniy-rozpoviv-pro-mozhlivi-reformi-kalendarya-ta-dres-kodu-v-pcu-1298550.html> (date accessed: 19.11.2023).

<sup>52</sup> *Епіфаній спрогнозував, коли більшість українців святкуватимуть Різдво 25 грудня* (18.12.2021), <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-epifanii-rizdvo-25-hrudnia/31615538.html> (date accessed: 19.11.2023).

<sup>53</sup> *ПЦУ дозволила різдвяні богослужіння 25 грудня* (18.09.2022), <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/10/18/7372478/> (date accessed: 19.11.2023).

<sup>54</sup> *Відбулася зустріч Предстоятеля ПЦУ з Отцем і Главою УГКЦ* (24.12.2022), *Православна Церква України*, <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/vidbulasya-zustrich-predstoyatelya-ptsu-z-ottsem-i-glavoyu-ugkts/> (date accessed: 19.11.2023).

<sup>55</sup> *Постанова Священного Синоду про порядок надання благословення парафіям та монастирям на використання новоюліанського календаря* (Православна Церква України, 02.02.2023), <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/postanova-svyashennogo-synodu-pro-poryadok-nadannya-blagoslovennya-parafiyam-ta-monastyryam-na-vykorystannya-novoyulianskogo-kalendarya/> (date accessed: 20.11.2023).

<sup>56</sup> *Доповідь Предстоятеля на засіданні Архієрейського Собору 24 травня 2023 р.* (Православна Церква України, Документи, 24.05.2023), <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/document-post/dopovid-predstoyatelya-na-zasidanni-arhierejskogo-soboru-24-travnnya-2023-r/> (date accessed: 20.11.2023).

<sup>57</sup> *Офіційне повідомлення про засідання Священного Синоду 2 лютого 2024 р.* (Православна Церква України, 02.02.2024), [https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/ofitsijne-povidomlennya-pro-zasidannya-svyashennogo-synodu-2-lyutogo-2024-r/?fbclid=IwAR1DYkppe-QVBdyWlzbID8iVZ94x86KeOAv9J-0d\\_zj4X-dZm5ePuF1nf2TM](https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/ofitsijne-povidomlennya-pro-zasidannya-svyashennogo-synodu-2-lyutogo-2024-r/?fbclid=IwAR1DYkppe-QVBdyWlzbID8iVZ94x86KeOAv9J-0d_zj4X-dZm5ePuF1nf2TM) (date accessed: 02.02.2024).

When it was founded, it had about seven thousand parishes. According to a survey conducted in January 2023, 69 per cent of Ukrainians admitted to being Orthodox, 41 per cent said they were members of the OCU, four per cent indicated affiliation with the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, and 24 per cent of respondents stated that they were Orthodox but did not admit to any of these Churches<sup>58</sup>.

The PKU is the fifteenth autocephalous Church in the “Orthodox world”. The Ecumenical Patriarchate has included OCU in the diptych of local Churches. In the list, under the heading “Autocephalous Churches” (Gr. *Αυτοκέφαλες Εκκλησίες*), after the Church of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the following are included: “Church of Ukraine” (Gr. *Εκκλησία τῆς Οὐκρανίας*)<sup>59</sup>. The decision of the Ecumenical Patriarch was followed by the majority of the Churches of the “Greek world”. On 8 November 2019, the autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine was recognised by the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The Church of Greece also recognised the autocephaly of Ukraine on 12 September 2019. The next to recognise this autocephaly was the Church of Cyprus. This happened on 24 September 2020.

Two Churches did not officially recognise the autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine. Of course, it was not recognised by the Moscow Patriarchate. On 28 December 2018, it came to light that the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church did not recognise the OCU, and decided to appeal to the other local Churches not to recognise it<sup>60</sup>. On 13 March 2019, it became clear that the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church did not recognise the autocephaly of the OCU<sup>61</sup>.

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine is waiting for the recognition of the other local Churches. The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Patriarchate of Romania, the Patriarchate of Bulgaria, the Orthodox Church of the Czech Republic and Slovakia have not expressed their attitude towards the new Church.

Rather, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, the Patriarchate of Georgia, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania are opposed to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church believes that the OCU structure is a schismatic structure. On 15 November 2018, it banned its clergy from liturgical and prayerful contacts with the clergy of the non-canonical Churches of Ukraine of the so-called “Kyiv Patriarchate” and the so-called “Autocephalous Church”<sup>62</sup>.

The Ukrainian Church’s relations with Constantinople have been difficult for centuries. There have been periods when Constantinople had no influence on the Kyiv metropolis. In recent years, Constantinople has supported the UOC-MP. In 2018, it rehabilitated the

<sup>58</sup> ПЦУ має вдесятеро більше прихильників, ніж УПЦ Московського патріархату (18.01.2023), <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/ptsu-mae-vdesyatero-bilshe-prihlnikiv-nizh-1674048312.html> (date accessed: 22.09.2023).

<sup>59</sup> Αρχική Σελίδα / Αυτοκέφαλες Εκκλησίες, <https://ec-patr.org/aytokefales-ekklisies> (date accessed: 23.12.2023).

<sup>60</sup> ЖУРНАЛ № 98 (Официальный сайт Московского Патриархата, 28.12.2018), <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5330863.html> (date accessed: 24.01.2019).

<sup>61</sup> Став Српске Православне Цркве о црквеној кризи у Украјини (13.03.2019), [https://web.archive.org/web/20190314192623/http://www.spc.rs/sr/stav\\_srpske\\_pravoslavne\\_crkve\\_o\\_crkvenoj\\_krizi\\_u\\_ukrajini](https://web.archive.org/web/20190314192623/http://www.spc.rs/sr/stav_srpske_pravoslavne_crkve_o_crkvenoj_krizi_u_ukrajini) (date accessed: 23.01.2024).

<sup>62</sup> J. Doroszkiewicz, *Komunikat Kancelarii Św. Soboru Biskupów PAKP, 15 listopada 2018 roku*, (16.11.2018), [https://wiadomosci.cerkiew.pl/news.php?id\\_n=2031&id=2](https://wiadomosci.cerkiew.pl/news.php?id_n=2031&id=2) (date accessed: 24.01.2024).

heads of the non-canonical Churches, removing the anathemas imposed by Moscow. He cancelled the provisions of 1686 and finally granted the Ukrainian Church autocephaly, which was an opportunity to unite Ukrainian Orthodoxy. This process is in progress and will be very difficult due to the ongoing war and the opposition of the Moscow Patriarchate, which considers Ukraine as its canonical territory. The Orthodox Church of Ukraine seeks to move closer to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It emphasises that Constantinople is its “Mother Church”. It increasingly refers to the Greek-Byzantine traditions. It reforms its rite, which is in the spirit of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century traditions, the traditions of Kievan Rus and the source of its baptism – Constantinople. The adoption of the Novitulan calendar also brings the Ukrainian Church closer to the Churches of the Greek tradition. These changes are obviously intended to differentiate it from the Russian Church. The moment that accelerated the process of “demosocialisation” of this Church was the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Since then, many parishes have left the Moscow Patriarchate and joined the OCU.

History has proven that the processes of establishing autocephalous Churches have been painful, lengthy and often gave rise to conflicts within the Orthodox Church. This was the case, for example, with the autocephaly of the Bulgarian, Greek or even Polish Churches. The process that is taking place in Ukraine needs time, prudence, calm and such actions within the Orthodox Church that will serve to maintain mutual relations and strive for their repair.

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