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The Three Kyivan Churches of Ukraine and the Three Romes¹

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A note from Heather J. Coleman, Director of the Program on Religion and Culture, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta

Each year, the Research Program on Religion and Culture at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) sponsors the Bohdan Bociurkiw Memorial Lecture. These lectures honour the memory of Professor Bohdan Bociurkiw, one of the founders of the CIUS and an eminent political scientist and internationally-renowned specialist in human rights, Soviet religious policy, and the history of the Ukrainian churches. They bring to Edmonton prominent scholars to speak on research at the intersection of Professor Bociurkiw's interests in politics, religion, and history in Ukraine.

The article below constitutes an expanded version of the 2021 Bohdan Bociurkiw Memorial Lecture, given by Professor José Casanova of Georgetown University. Professor Casanova is one of the world's top scholars in the sociology of religion and a senior fellow at the Berkley Center, where his work focuses on globalization, religions, and secularization. His best-known work, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (U of Chicago P, 1994), has become a modern classic in the field and has been translated into several languages. Since the 1990s, Professor Casanova has been a close observer of the evolution of civil society, nationalism, and religious pluralism in Ukraine. Indeed, in 2017, he published *Beyond Secularization: Religious and Secular Dynamics in Our Global Age* in Ukrainian.

On 5 January 2019, Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople signed a *tomos*, or decree, that officially recognized and established the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and granted it self-government, or autocephaly. This act formalized a major rift in Orthodox Christianity, as the Moscow Patriarchate, which claims canonical jurisdiction in Ukraine, then broke off relations with Constantinople. The hope that the new church would heal the rifts in Ukrainian Orthodoxy, bringing together the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate), Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church into one, was not immediately realized. Moreover, in addition to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, too, claims the mantle of the Kyivan religious tradition. In his lecture, Professor Casanova brings his sociologist's eye to the question of the competition of three different national churches in present-day Ukraine and the

¹ This essay is amended with a brief statement at the end, pertaining to Russia's war against Ukraine, started on 24 February 2022.

consolidation of a pattern of religious pluralism that he terms “incipient denominationalism.”

Following the canonical legitimation of the newly constituted Orthodox Church of Ukraine, there are now three competing “national” churches, headed by a hierarch with the same title, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv and All Ukraine, with divergent transnational allegiances to the Pope (First Rome), to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Second Rome), and to the Moscow Patriarchate (Third Rome). The lecture will analyze some of the consequences for church-state, nation, and civil society relations, for the consolidation of a pattern of religious denominational pluralism, and for ecumenical and geopolitical relations between the three Romes.

The *Tomos* of autocephaly granted on 5 January 2019 by the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, to the newly constituted Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) brought to a successful culmination a century-long series of attempts to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, independent from Moscow and in communion with global orthodoxy. The new church was established at the Council of Unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy that took place on 15 December 2018 at Kyiv’s St. Sophia.

The council brought together all the bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) and of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP), the two Orthodox churches of Ukraine that were viewed as uncanonical and illegitimate by the rest of the Orthodox world. But only two bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), Metropolitan Simeon (Shostats'kyi) and Metropolitan Oleksandr (Drabynko), joined the Council. The morning of the council, the UAOC and the UOC-KP formally self-dissolved, so that the assembled bishops could function as bishops of the Metropolis of Kyiv under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Previously, in October 2018, Patriarch Bartholomew I had removed the sanctions that the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) had imposed on the leaders of UAOC and UOC-KP as “schismatics.”

Metropolitan Emmanuel (Adamakis), Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch in France, presided at the Council of Unification. It was agreed previously that the council would not nominate Patriarch Filaret (UOC-KP) as the primate of the new church (Denysenko). On the second round of voting, the council elected Filaret’s protégé, Archbishop Epifanii (Epiphany Dumenko), as the primate of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), with the title Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine.

In convoking the Council of Unification and granting the *Tomos* of autocephaly to the new church, the Ecumenical Patriarch claimed to have maintained uninterrupted canonical jurisdiction over the Metropolia of Kyiv

since its inception at Kyivan Rus' at the end of the tenth century, a jurisdiction which according to Constantinople had never been abrogated, even after its temporary conditional cession to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686. In response, the Moscow Patriarchate claimed to have the legitimate canonical jurisdiction over the Metropolia of Kyiv and all Ukraine, and in retaliation for the Ecumenical Patriarch's "illegitimate" intervention in its canonical territory, the Moscow Patriarch unilaterally excommunicated the Ecumenical Patriarch creating a new schism between Moscow and Constantinople. Moscow Patriarch Kirill (Gundaev) insisted that the Ecumenical Patriarch had "committed a crime" and overstepped his ecclesiastical authority and canon law by annulling the 1686 edict and by granting autocephaly to the OCU.

As a result, Ukraine offers now the anomalous situation of having three Eastern rite "national" churches, each claiming to be the rightful heir of the Kyivan-Rus' church, each headed by a primate with basically the same title, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv and All Ukraine, under different external patriarchs. These churches are the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church headed by His Beatitude Metropolitan Archbishop Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) under the jurisdiction of Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome; the Orthodox Church of Ukraine headed by His Beatitude Metropolitan Archbishop Epifanii (Dumenko), ambiguously still under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, the Second Rome; and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-MP headed by His Beatitude Metropolitan Archbishop Onufrii (Berezovs'kyi) under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow, the self-designated Third Rome.²

Having situated the context of the contemporary ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine, in the remaining of my lecture I would like to explore four interrelated issues: 1) the timing of the *Tomos* and why it took place now, and not before or after; 2) the likely consequences of the existence of three national churches for the relations between church, state, and nation in Ukraine; 3) the likely consequences for the consolidation of the pattern of religious pluralism in Ukraine, which for over twenty-five years I have been calling "incipient denominationalism";³ and 4) the prospects for ecumenical dialogue between the three churches in Ukraine and for geopolitical relations between the three Romes?

² Metropolitan Archbishop Sviatoslav, as primate of the UGCC carries the official title, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv and Halych, another historical title of the Metropolia of Kyiv-Rus. Important is the fact that he shares the title of Metropolitan of Kyiv with the primates of the two Orthodox churches, OCU and UOC-MP.

³ For more on this, see Casanova, "Incipient Religious Denominationalism"; "Ethnolinguistic"; and Brik and Casanova.

1. THE TIMING OF THE TOMOS AND THE RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL UNIFICATION OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOXY

The two previous historical attempts to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, first in the midst of the Bolshevik Revolution and then during World War II, had failed for geopolitical and ecclesiastical reasons (Denysenko). After independence, post-Soviet Ukraine presented the anomaly of being a major Orthodox country with the second largest Eastern Orthodox population in the world, yet without its own autocephalous national Orthodox Church, as it had become the norm throughout the Orthodox world in the nineteenth century. The arrival of *glasnost* in 1989 and of independence in 1991, once again led to an explosive demand for Ukrainization of the churches and for autocephaly, as it had happened during World War II particularly in Volhynia. This time, the third rebirth of the UAOC started in the more religious Western oblasts, the historical stronghold of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Polish rule, which had been incorporated into Soviet Ukraine only at the end of World War II (Sysyn, "The Third Rebirth").

Soon there were three competing Orthodox churches in Ukraine: the historical UAOC; the newly formed UOC-KP as a breakaway from the Moscow Patriarchate, led by Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko); and the remaining exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, which renamed itself UOC-MP (Denysenko 161–208). Despite the loss of large number of parishes and the sharp decline in affiliation and popularity within Ukrainian society, the UOC-MP remained the only canonically recognized church within global orthodoxy and the largest in terms of parishes. Moreover, it had at its disposal the enormous financial resources of the Moscow Patriarchate to continue rebuilding its institutional structures in Ukraine at a faster pace than its competitors.⁴

In the long run, the ecclesiastical situation of Ukrainian orthodoxy was untenable. Longitudinal polling showed that a majority of Orthodox faithful no longer considered themselves affiliated with the UOC-MP, having left the Russian Orthodox church in order to worship in their own "national" Ukrainian Orthodox churches, or viewing themselves as "simply Orthodox," refusing any denominational affiliation. But those churches were not in communion with global orthodoxy. The UOC-MP, while still maintaining ownership of the largest number of church buildings, had de facto become a minority church in terms of affiliation. Yet, it claimed to be the only legitimate Orthodox church and claimed exclusive canonical jurisdiction

⁴ For comparative numbers and analysis, see Brik and Casanova 263–64, et passim.

over the entire territory of Ukraine, accusing the other Ukrainian churches of being “schismatic” and refusing to recognize the validity of their sacraments (baptisms, communions, or weddings).

But in the short run, there appear to be no easy way out of the conundrum of Ukrainian orthodoxy. Various attempts to unify the two independent Ukrainian Orthodox churches from below had failed. Enforced unification from above by the state could not work, given the complex plural religious structure of Ukraine and its geopolitical situation between Russia and the democratic West. Only unification under the Ecumenical Patriarch could offer ecclesiastical legitimacy, but at the price of forsaking the Kyiv patriarchate, something which the self-designated Patriarch Filaret seemed unwilling to do (Plokhyy, “Ukrainian Orthodox”).

The year 2014 marked a turning point. The unifying national-patriotic spirit of Maidan, the military response of the Putin regime through the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas, the Russian World (“*ruskii mir*”) project advanced by the Moscow Patriarchate, and the increasing competition for the leadership of global orthodoxy between Constantinople and Moscow in preparation of the 2016 Pan-Orthodox Council of Crete, altogether opened up new favourable conditions that culminated in the Council of Unification and in the *Tomos* (Brik and Casanova 274–76).

The death of Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), also in 2014, and the elevation of Metropolitan Onufrii (Berezovs'kyi), known for his resistance to any type of Ukrainization, once again unsettled the dynamics within the UOC-MP. A small but significant number of prominent bishops, such as Metropolitan Oleksandr (Drabynko), prominent clerics such as Archpriest Heorhii Kovalenko, and prominent laity such as Kostiantyn Sihov, became now advocates of the process of unification of a canonically recognized Orthodox Church of Ukraine, under the Ecumenical Patriarch. President Petro Poroshenko, himself a member of the UOC-MP, became personally involved in negotiations with the Ecumenical Patriarch. Most importantly, diaspora bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada and the United States became involved in the negotiations leading up to the Council of Unification, as exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

This time, Patriarch Bartholomew committed himself fully to the process of unification of an Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodoxy Church under conditions laid down by him. He was well aware of the threat of breaking ecclesial unity with Moscow but also knew that what was at stake was the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch as *primus inter pares* within global orthodoxy. In return, the Ecumenical Patriarch would gain jurisdiction over the second largest Orthodox church in the world. However, the process had to take place according to the canons and under conditions set by the Ecumenical Patriarch. Ultimately, one could argue that the process succeeded this time because of the ability of all the parties involved in

convincing “Patriarch” Filaret to put aside for the time being his claims to the Kyiv Patriarchate and to step aside accepting the nomination of Metropolitan Epifanii as Primate of the new church.

2. CHURCH, STATE, AND NATION AFTER THE *TOMOS*

The German sociologist Max Weber offered parallel and related definitions of “state” and “church.” According to Weber, “the state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a territory” (“Politics As a Vocation” 78). A church, in turn, is an ecclesiastical institution that claims the monopoly of the legitimate means of sacramental “grace” within a territory (Weber, “The Church” 1163). The monopolistic claims over a given territory is what church and state share. In fact, only the state’s monopoly over the means of violence can enforce the church’s monopoly over the means of grace over a territory. The moment one finds multiple competing churches distributed over a territory, their exclusive monopolistic claims become less and less credible without state enforcement, particularly under modern democratic conditions of popular sovereignty.

The process of unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy into a single autocephalous church has partly succeeded, but the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine is unlikely to become “the national” Ukrainian Church in “symphonic” alliance with the state for three reasons.⁵ First of all, constitutionally the Ukrainian state is a secular state that protects the freedom of religion of all the religious communities and eschews the establishment of any particular church. As has happened in the past since independence, particular presidential as well as local administrations may favour one church over others, but the structural conditions to elevate either OCU or any other church to the rank of quasi-establishment are missing (Shevel).

Second, there is no evidence of political support for the establishment of a national Orthodox church either among the political elites or among the population. Opinion surveys by the Razumkov Center since the *Tomos* indicate that OCU has consolidated its position as the largest or most popular church in Ukraine. Approximately 33% of the Ukrainian population identify with the new church, while the identification with the UOC-MP has declined significantly to less than 20%. However, the most striking finding is the high percentage of the Orthodox Ukrainian population, also around 33%, who declare themselves “simply Orthodox,” unwilling to take sides for one

⁵ On the model of Orthodox church-state *symphonia*, see Antonov.

denomination or another (Razumkov Center). Yet, according to a more recent survey by the reliable Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), over half (58%) of the Ukrainian Orthodox population claimed affiliation with OCU, while the affiliation with the UOC-MP had also grown slightly to 25%. Most significantly, the proportion of those defining themselves as simply Orthodox had diminished to 12% (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologhii). If the trend continues, it will be a clear sign of a consolidation of denominational affiliation between the two Orthodox churches.

Third, the very attempt to establish politically a national Orthodox church would most likely open up new dynamics of conflict with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the UOC-MP, and would unsettle the positive dynamics of religious pluralism, peaceful co-existence and civic collaboration among all religious communities of Ukraine—Orthodox, Christian, and non-Christian. The experience of Maidan, when many of the religious communities of Ukraine worked together actively in support of the Revolution of Dignity (2013–14), for democracy, an open civil society, and a Ukrainian nation for all Ukrainians, irrespective of language, faith or ethnicity, confirmed the value of religious pluralism in building a democratic Ukraine (Casanova, “Ukrains'kyi Maidan”).

His Beatitude Epifanii himself has reiterated that OCU does not aspire to become the established national church of Ukraine. In his official remarks on his visit to the Lviv Polytechnic National University on 12 September 2019, Metropolitan Epifanii stated:

“We, as the unified recognized Ukrainian Orthodox Church, are willing to further maintain good, warm and friendly relations with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. . . . In fact, we see that we are moving in the same direction, we all want to see a successful, integral, independent Ukrainian state. Our Church stands on a patriotic basis, as well as the Greek Catholic Church.” He [Epifanii] recalled that he had repeatedly met with the head of the UGCC Sviatoslav Shevchuk and discussed future cooperation with him because, in his opinion, it was necessary to “look for common ground that unites us and does not separate us.” (qtd. in Filatova)

However, in countering the Patriarchate's claims of canonical jurisdiction over the territory of Ukraine, Metropolitan Epifanii has lately also begun to use the problematic language of territorial canonical jurisdiction, stating that “all Orthodox parishes within the borders of Ukraine belong to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine” (Myropolyt Epifanii).⁶

⁶ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

3. CONSOLIDATION OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE PATTERN OF INCIPIENT DENOMINATIONALISM

For over twenty-five years I have been arguing that the pattern of religious pluralism that is consolidating in post-Soviet Ukraine, a pattern with multiple competing “Eastern” national churches and relatively free exercise for other “Christian” and “non-Christian” religious communities, is unique not only among Orthodox countries but also among European societies.⁷ I call it “incipient denominationalism” because it shows some structural similarities with American denominationalism. It is obvious, however, that the Protestant sectarian sources of American denominationalism, reinforced by the plural dynamics of religious immigration from all world religions and cultures of the world, are different from the soft confessionalization of an Orthodox majoritarian country like Ukraine caught between the Catholic pluralist culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Imperial Russian Orthodox Church (Casanova, *Global Religious* 16–36, 48–52).

The dynamics of religious pluralization in post-Soviet Ukraine started in the Lviv oblast in 1989, spreading from there first to the Western oblasts and then to the rest of Ukraine. It was the enforced confessionalization of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic population and of the Ukrainian Orthodox population of the Western oblasts into Russian Orthodoxy after their incorporation into Soviet Ukraine that paradoxically created the conditions of possibility for religious pluralization (Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian* and “The Orthodox Church”; Denysenko 135–60). After 1989, over half of the population of the Lviv oblast opted to return to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church, which had been liquidated by the Soviets and the Moscow Patriarchate in the Lviv Sobor of 1946. But over 30% of the population chose to remain Orthodox in any of the three soon available options (UAOC, UOC-KP, UOC-MP).⁸ In short order, the Lviv oblast became the most religiously pluralistic oblast of all Ukraine. The competition between the four national churches opened possibilities for other religious communities also to thrive.

Vlad Naumescu’s ethnographic study of the transformation of the Sykhiv district on the outskirts of Lviv offers a clear illustration of the dynamic of denominationalism from below, characterized by soft confessionalization, and flexible and fluid confessional boundaries, under what Naumescu characterizes as an “orthodox imaginary” (*Modes of Religiosity* and “Encompassing Religious Plurality”). The old village of Sykhiv had been a predominantly Polish settlement before the war. The Polish *kościół* of St. Mikhail became briefly a Greek-Catholic *tserkva* after the ethnic Polish

⁷ See references in footnote 3, above.

⁸ The Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) offers data on changes in the religious organizations of Ukraine annually from 1999 to 2019. See “Statystyka.”

population was relocated forcibly to Poland, and then a Russian Orthodox church after 1946. Under the Soviet regime, the area was turned into a proletarianized suburb of Lviv with an open central square filled with the Communist Party headquarters and other Soviet administrative buildings. After 1991, all the open spaces around the central square began to be filled up with churches of different denominations: two Orthodox (MP and UAOC), two Protestant (Baptist and Pentecostal) and an imposing Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall, all dwarfed by the magnificent Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, designed by the Ukrainian-Canadian architect Radoslav Zuk, on which grounds took place the meeting of Pope John Paul II with Ukrainian and Polish youth (half a million strong) in his 2001 visit to Lviv ("Pastoral Visit"; "Pope Preaches"). I do not believe that one can find anywhere else in Europe a square with such a diversity of churches, all built within the last thirty years.

In the seventeenth century, Lviv had served as the stronghold of Orthodoxy against the Union of Brest (Sysyn, "The Formation"). Later, after the partition of Poland, under the Austro-Hungarian empire, Lviv became the stronghold of the Greek Catholic Church, differentiating ethnic Ukrainians from the many other ethno-religious communities in Halychyna (Himka, "The Greek Catholic Church"). After World War II, despite a significant number of Russians settling in the city of Lviv, Lviv oblast became for the first time an ethnically and religiously homogeneous region, ethnically Ukrainian and religiously Russian Orthodox. Under such conditions of frequent re-confessionalizations, denominational switching does not signify properly conversion to another religion, but rather adapting one's core religious sensibility to changed circumstances (Metreveli, *Orthodox Christianity* and "Sentimental Orthodoxy"). Public opinion surveys in Ukraine indicate that in addition to those that tended to declare themselves "simply Orthodox," close to 10% would declare themselves "simply Christian" or "just a believer."⁹ The proportion of atheists and unbelievers by contrast is relatively low, between 6 and 7 percent of the Ukrainian population, according to the latest KIIS's survey (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii).¹⁰ The picture that emerges is that of a majoritarian Orthodox country (over 70% of the population), with an Orthodox imaginary and a marked religious sensibility, soft confessionalization, hybrid religiosity, fluid denominational boundaries and tolerance of the religious other.

⁹ The different results often depended on the different formulations of the various questionnaires.

¹⁰ The proportion of "unbelievers" in the Ukrainian population has decreased continuously and progressively since the early 1990s, when it stood in the low 30s, to most recently when it has oscillated between the low teens and high single digits.

AUCCRO, the ALL-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, may be viewed as the institutional expression of Ukrainian denominationalism. It encompasses representatives of all religious communities of Ukraine: Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Protestant in multiple denominations (Evangelical Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, etc.), plus Jewish and Muslim religious communities. What makes the council unique is the fact that the presidency rotates among its members every six months, denoting the equality of all denominations without distinction. I do not believe that any other country in Europe has or could have such a council of religious communities.

A few historical vignettes may serve to illustrate this striking pluralism in a European context. On 22 January 2014, in the midst of the Maidan mobilization, an official delegation of AUCCRO visited Ukraine's President Viktor Ianukovych with two main petitions (Casanova, "Maidán ucranio"). The first was an urgent demand that the government and security forces should use maximum restraint in order to avoid bloodshed and violence in responding to the Maidan protest movement and that a maximum effort should be made to ensure that the conflict and the confrontation between the government and the Maidan movement be resolved through peaceful negotiations and political dialogue. The second petition was actually an offer of mediation, whereby all the religious communities of Ukraine represented in AUCCRO expressed their readiness to serve as *bona fide* mediators between the government and the opposition and between all the social and political forces.

Striking about the delegation was the fact that it was composed of high representatives of all the religious communities of Ukraine. There were representatives of the three Orthodox churches as well as of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. There were also official representatives of the other Christian communities of Ukraine, of the Roman Catholic Church as well as of the three main communities from the Reformed tradition—the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Association of Ukrainian Baptists, and the Ukrainian Association of Pentecostal Assemblies. In addition, there were also representatives of the Jewish and Muslim communities of Ukraine. Each and all the representatives of such an ecumenical body spoke in unison in support of a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the conflict. This was at a time when the government had announced plans to pass legislation at the Ukrainian National Assembly which would basically decriminalize the increasingly violent crackdowns of the security forces while criminalizing any Maidan-like peaceful civil activities.

Fortuitously, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), at the time the largest religious community of Ukraine, at least in terms of the number of parishes, and the one closest to the Ianukovych

regime, happened to occupy the rotating presidency of AUCCRO. Therefore, Metropolitan Onufrii felt compelled somewhat reluctantly to lead the delegation and support its demands. The religious situation in Ukraine had been radically different only 25 years earlier, before Gorbachev's *glasnost* policies arrived belatedly in Ukraine in 1989. At the time, the Russian Orthodox Church was for all practical purposes the only officially recognized Christian Church in Ukraine, claiming canonical hegemony over the entire Soviet Republic.

In March 2019, at the initiative of the Chief Rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine, Yakov Dov Bleich, who at the time was serving as the rotating chair of AUCCRO, a delegation representing all the religious communities of Ukraine (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim) travelled together in pilgrimage to the Holy Land and met with Israeli government officials to discuss Ukrainian-Israeli relations ("AUCCRO Met").

Throughout 2021, AUCCRO delegations have met regularly with parliamentarians and government officials in the ministries of education and science, and health and defence to discuss a wide range of issues, including the promotion of spiritual and moral education, countering the Covid-19 pandemic, organizing military chaplaincies, combatting domestic violence, and promoting family values and the education of children and youth. What is striking from a comparative perspective is that all these initiatives take place as a consensual collaboration between all the religious communities of Ukraine and government agencies.¹¹

In June 2021, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of AUCCRO, the Ukrainian Post Office issued a commemorative stamp ("Redemption"), while at a conference celebrating the anniversary, Metropolitan Archbishop Sviatoslav, head of the UGCC and rotating chair of AUCCRO, indicated rightly that "There is no such Council anywhere else in the world." In his welcoming speech, he added: "The slogan 'We are all equal, but everyone is different,' which we chose to describe the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, is the key to solving difficult tasks and serving for the common good" ("There Is No Such Council").

One could say that the town of Sykhiv offers a picture of denominationalism from below at the local level, while AUCCRO offers a picture of denominationalism from above at the institutional level of religious organizations. Moreover, after Maidan, it was striking to observe that politicians occupying four of the highest offices in the democratic system of Ukraine were affiliated with four different religious denominations: President Petro Poroshenko was Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate); Prime Minister, Arsenii Iatseniuk, was Ukrainian Greek

¹¹ See the numerous entries of RISU (Religious Information Service of Ukraine) on AUCCRO ("AUCCRO").

Catholic; Oleksandr Turchynov, Speaker of Parliament, Interim President and Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council during the war in the Donbas was a Baptist minister; and Volodymyr Hroisman, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada and later Prime Minister, was Jewish (previously he had served as elected Mayor of Vinnytsia).

I am leaving aside the question whether these politicians were, in fact, religious practitioners in their respective denominations. Significant is the fact that they were not political representatives of religious communities but simply politicians elected by the people not because but most likely irrespective of or despite their religious affiliation. Religious pluralism is an important fact of Ukrainian civil society, but it is not a relevant political phenomenon in and of itself. This makes it worth noticing. Again, such a phenomenon of the four highest elected officials in a democratic political system being members of four different religious denominations, is practically unthinkable in any other continental European country.

4. THE THREE KYIVAN CHURCHES AND THE THREE ROMES

Let me finally return to the key topic of my lecture, “the three Kyivan Churches and the three Romes,” in order to show how all three local national churches are embedded in global transnational networks. In fact, we could do the same with every other religious community of Ukraine. All of them are local, but all of them are embedded in wider transnational networks: Roman Catholics of course, but also all Protestant groups, and Jehovah’s and Mormons, and of course the Jewish and the Muslim communities. They are embedded in what could be called global ummas, something which as I have emphasized in my writings is characteristic of our contemporary global age, though not unique to it (Casanova, *Global Religious Dynamics* 61–66; “The Karel Dobbelaere Lecture”; “From Modernization”; “Religion”).

The reference to the three Romes points to the late nineteenth century ideological construction of the Christian imperial identity of Moscow in the early modern era, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, as the Third Rome (Strémoukhoff). The claim was that Muscovy and the Patriarch of Moscow had superseded the Second Rome, in the same way as the New Rome, that is, Constantinople, the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Ecumenical Patriarch had superseded the First Rome, the Latin Roman Empire and the Papacy, after the fall of Rome in the fourth-fifth centuries.

I only bring back the concept of the Third Rome because it underlies the “Russian World” project and the ongoing claims of the Moscow Patriarchate and the imperial claims of the Russian Federation over Ukraine (Laruelle; Soroka; Engström). Moreover, one could argue, following Frank Sysyn, that notwithstanding the claims of their common origins in Kyivan Rus', the real

historical origins of the differentiation between the three Kyivan churches of Ukraine can be traced back to the early modern period between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries (“The Formation”; “The Ukrainian Autocephalous”).

The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 marked the fall of Byzantium, “the Second Rome.” This fall triggered both, the search of new routes to the Indies by the Iberian Catholic powers and the proclamation of Moscow as the Third Rome. In 1492, the very same year of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas that initiated the age of discoveries and the historical globalization of Catholicism, Metropolitan Zosima of Muscovy in his work *Izlozhenie paskhalii* (*Presentation of the Paschalion*) called the Grand Duke, Ivan III, “the new Tsar Constantine of the new Constantinople—Moscow.” A few years later, in a letter addressed to a grand princely official written in 1523–24, monk Filofei stated that “all Christian empires have come to an end and are gathered together in the single empire of our sovereign in accordance to the books of prophecy, and this is the Russian empire: because two Romes have fallen, and a third stands, and a fourth there shall not be” (Poe 4).

Clerics in Moscow explained the fall of Constantinople as the divine punishment for the sin of the Union with the Catholic Church at the Council of Florence. The doctrine of the Third Rome implied that Moscow had become the heir of the Second Rome in its dual dimension of imperial sovereignty and ecclesiastical supremacy. Moscow rulers adopted the title of Russian Tsars claiming the inheritance of both Kyivan Rus’ and Byzantium. The captivity of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and of all Orthodox churches in the Balkans and the Middle East under the Ottoman Empire seemed to justify the rediscovery in the nineteenth century of the ideological fiction of “the Third Rome,” sacralizing the emergence of the Holy Russian Empire as the protector of Holy Orthodoxy around the world.

The reference to the sin of the Union of Orthodoxy with the Catholic Church at the Council of Florence brings us to the sin of the Union of Brest in 1596, which marks the historical foundation of the Uniate Greek Catholic Church. The story of Florence repeats itself. While most of the Orthodox episcopal hierarchy at both councils was ready to entertain union with Rome in order to overcome the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity, upon hearing the news back home the local clergy, the monks, and the laity rebelled and rejected the union. Thus, the emergence of a Greek Catholic Church aimed to serve as bridge for ecumenical dialogue between East and West, was, in fact, viewed with suspicion on both sides as being truly neither “Catholic” nor “Orthodox” (Gudziak; Pelikan).

There is no doubt that Halychyna, the region that became eventually the primary home of the Greek Catholic Church, has served as the primary

catalyst of a differentiated Ukrainian national identity against Catholic Poland and Orthodox Russia, and is in this respect one of the primary carriers of Ukrainian nationalism (Himka, *Religion and Nationality*). Indeed, Galicians like to refer to themselves as the Piedmont of Ukrainian national resurgence and unification. The analogy is actually inappropriate and hides more than it reveals. After all, the Kingdom of Savoy, Piedmont, and Sardinia was the hegemon that unified the Kingdom of Italy. Galicia has not been the hegemon, but rather a crucial dissolving catalyst that helped to precipitate the independence and separation of post-Soviet Ukraine from the Russian Federation.

In the same way that Putin has implicitly acknowledged that the Soviet Union could not stomach, i.e., absorb well, the annexation of Halychyna, expressing the wish that Galicia be re-absorbed by Poland so that the project of New Russia (*Novorossia*) could succeed, Metropolitan Ilarion (Alfeev) and other representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate view “Uniatism” as the cause of all the troubles and schisms of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.¹² In fact, in every dialogue with Rome, Moscow reasserts that the Uniate Church remains the main obstacle for any meaningful and substantive ecumenical dialogue and that only the abolition of the Uniates and their absorption into the Roman Catholic Church would make a truly ecumenical dialogue possible beyond the instrumental useful alliances they are pursuing now.

We have referred before to the crucial role played by Bishop Ilarion (Rudnyk) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and Archbishop Daniel (Zelensky) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church USA, as exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the negotiations leading to the Council of Unification. Without them, it may not have succeeded. The immigrant diasporas were equally crucial for the survival of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and for its extraordinary post-Soviet revival.

One only needs to consider the role of the diaspora in the ecclesiastical careers of the last “Patriarchs” of the UGCC in post-Soviet Ukraine. Cardinal Josyf Slipyi spent the last twenty years of his life in Rome after having been released from the Gulag in 1963. Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky was ordained a priest by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi in 1938 in Lviv and spent most of his priestly life in the United States, before moving to Rome as coadjutor to Cardinal Slipyj in 1979; he then returned to Ukraine as head of

¹² In a recent interview with the propaganda TV channel “Russia 24,” Moscow Patriarch Kirill stated: “The greatest tragedy is that Ukraine was divided on religious grounds, and this division did not begin today or in our time. The emergence of Uniatism was the first such blow to Ukraine, then there were the divisions in the twentieth century, and no one will convince me that this is not a plan aimed at weakening the spiritual life of Ukraine, breaking the unity of historical Rus” (“Patriarkh Moskovs'kyi”).

the UGCC. Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, a native of Lviv, emigrated to the US after World War II, where he worked as a priest from 1958 to 1969, before moving to Rome and becoming a Studite monk in 1974 and moving back to Ukraine in 1994 where he served as head of the UGCC from 2001 to 2011. Finally, Metropolitan Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk was ordained a priest in Lviv in 1994, earned a doctorate in theology in Rome, served as rector of the Lviv seminary, and then moved to Argentina to serve as Bishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy in Buenos Aires from 2009 to 2011, before returning to Ukraine upon his election as Major Archbishop of the UGCC, replacing Husar.

If the Galician immigrant diasporas have been crucial for the development of post-Soviet independent Ukraine, this has been in large part thanks to the role of the UGCC in these diasporas. Indeed, paradoxically, the most regional and local of churches, just a Galician church, has become thanks to emigration a truly global church. This is an advantage that few other migrant regions or even migrant nations have, other than perhaps the Armenian global diaspora, organized also through a single global autocephalous church.

The Irish and Italian diasporas are larger and even more global, but they are embedded within the global Roman Catholic Church without their own autocephalous ecclesiastical structure. Ukrainian Greek Catholics have understandably mobilized for decades for a Patriarchate of their own (Plokyh, "Between Moscow"). The Metropolitan Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church officially does not carry the title of Patriarch, even though unofficially he is recognized as Patriarch by all the faithful. De facto, however, the UGCC functions ecclesiastically as a patriarchate structure under the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv and Halych.

The synodal (i.e., *sobornist*) organization of the Synod of UGCC Bishops is crucial for the autonomous patriarchal structure of the church. The Synod meets regularly, usually annually, mostly in Ukraine, though in 2019 it met in Rome and occasionally has met in the Americas. Presently, it has 36 eparchies and exarchates, 17 in Ukraine and 19 outside Ukraine throughout the global diaspora. In the Ukrainian immigrant diasporas overseas, there are 5 dioceses in Canada, 4 in the US, 2 in Brazil, 1 in Argentina, and 1 in Australia, while in Europe there are 2 in Poland and 1 each in London, Paris, Germany, and Italy. Moreover, in principle any bishop can be nominated to any Ukrainian Greek Catholic diocese in the world, possibly going back and forth between continents. Bishop Sviatoslav was sent to Argentina and back to Ukraine, and Bishop Borys was sent from Ukraine to Paris and then to Philadelphia as Metropolitan Archbishop (Gudziak). An Argentinian bishop from Brazil was sent as the new bishop for Byzantine Catholics to Italy, while

a Redemptorist priest from Ukraine serving in the Ukrainian Catholic parish of Newark, NJ, was nominated Bishop of Melbourne, Australia.

This condition of being an autonomous church within the Roman Catholic Church obviously has its limiting restraints, but being episcopally embedded within the national Roman Catholic churches throughout the world also gives the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church tremendous possibilities of access to the networks and resources of the global Roman Catholic Church. The development of the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv in the last twenty years would not have been possible without the help and resources not only of the Ukrainian diaspora throughout the world, but also of the numerous Roman Catholic universities, institutions, and foundations, which have supported its growth.

Moreover, in the same way that UCU is not just a local Ukrainian Catholic university, having become a national Ukrainian university, the UGCC is no more just a Galician church but has become a Ukrainian national church with eparchies all over Ukraine. The move of the Metropolitan Archbishop and of the central administrative structures of the UGCC to Kyiv and the construction of the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection of Christ on the Left Bank, opposite the Caves Monastery (Pechers'ka Lavra), reflects the aspirations of the UGCC to be a truly Ukrainian national church. In 2011, at the ceremony of enthronement of His Beatitude Sviatoslav as Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv and Halych, there were three bishops representing the three Ukrainian Orthodox churches: Metropolitan Mefodii (Kudriakov) Primate of the UAOC, Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan) Primate of the UOC-MP, and Bishop Ievstratii (Zoria), representing Metropolitan Filaret, Primate of the UOC-KP, who allegedly was ill at the time. Symbolically, it represented the implicit recognition by the other Kyivan churches of the right of the Primate of the UGCC to carry the same title of Metropolitan Archbishop of Kyiv (and Halych).

In terms of affiliation, the UGCC remains a regional church based in the western oblasts and particularly in Halychyna. The membership of the UGCC has remained stable for several decades around 9% of the Ukrainian population. While in the western oblasts Ukrainian Greek Catholics constitute 26.4% of the population, they are a small minority in other regions of Ukraine: 2.7% in the centre, 0.0% in the south, 2.1% in the east, and 3.7% in the Donbas. Yet, in terms of recognition, the UGCC's "national" character is reflected in the high estimation which the UGCC and its primate, Metropolitan Sviatoslav, attain in national public opinion polls, in comparison with the other two "national" Orthodox churches and their leaders (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii). According to the June 2021 KIIS Survey on "Religious Self-Identification of the Population and Attitude of the Main Churches of Ukraine," over one third of the Ukrainian population (36%) expressed a "positive" attitude towards the UGCC. By

contrast, a majority of the respondents (52%) expressed a “positive” attitude towards the new OCU, while less than a fourth of the respondents (23%) expressed a “positive” attitude towards the UOC-MP. The proportion of respondents who expressed a “neutral” attitude towards the UGCC was very high (49.1%), but the same “neutral” attitude was also relatively high toward the OCU (34%) and even higher towards the UOC-MP (37%). Most significantly, the proportion of respondents who expressed a “negative” attitude toward the churches was lowest toward UGCC (6.6%), slightly higher toward OCU (9.2%), and significantly higher toward UOC-MP (34.8%) (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii).

When it comes to the reputation of the leaders of the three “national” churches, Metropolitan Sviatoslav attains a relatively high “positive” attitude (30.6%), in the middle between the higher estimation attained by Metropolitan Epifanii (44.8%) and the lower one attained by Metropolitan Onufrii (20.2%). Most significantly, Metropolitan Sviatoslav elicits the least “negative” attitude (4.5%) among the national sample of respondents, slightly lower than Metropolitan Epifanii (5.7%), but significantly lower than the high “negative” estimate attained by Metropolitan Onufrii (29.4%) (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii).

Presently, the conflicts and tensions between the Ukrainian churches are not so much between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, that is, between Rome and Constantinople, or between Rome and Moscow, but rather within global orthodoxy between Moscow and Constantinople (Keleher). The ecumenical relations between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople have been positive and cordial at least since the “Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I” on 7 December 1965, at the end of the Second Vatican Council. The joint declaration expressed regret for the exchange of mutual excommunications in 1054, indicating that the censures were directed against the persons concerned and not the Churches and thus were not intended to break ecclesiastical communion between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople.

Subsequent popes and ecumenical patriarchs have frequently visited each other, have maintained cordial relations, and have produced joint statements on diverse issues affecting global humanity. Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew share a deeply felt common dedication to a responsible care of the environment as part of creation, to integral human development, and to the protection of immigrants and refugees. Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* (2015), is the first papal encyclical to quote profusely the writings of an Eastern Orthodox hierarch (*Encyclical Letter*). On 7 September 2021, Pope Francis as leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew as leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Archbishop of Canterbury as leader of the Anglican Communion released a joint statement warning of the urgency of

environmental sustainability, its impact on poverty, and the importance of global co-operation (“Press Release”).¹³

The same good ecumenical relations transpire between the UGCC and the OCU, as both consider themselves daughter churches of Constantinople. Metropolitan Sviatoslav has repeatedly stressed that the UGCC considers itself to be in communion with both, with the Bishop of Rome and with the Ecumenical Patriarch. In his remarks at the Lviv Polytechnic, Metropolitan Epifanii indicated that it was “too early to talk about a certain union [of the Churches] The key to the unification . . . is not in Ukraine but in Rome and Constantinople. ‘After all, ecumenical communion takes place there’” (Filatova).

Possibly, the UGCC could play an important mediating role between Rome and the OCU, which so far have not yet established relations. The main obstacle right now resides in the conflict between Constantinople and Moscow. Partly as a result of this conflict, Moscow has tried to improve its relations with Rome. The historical meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill in Havana in February 2016 has to be viewed in such a context. The joint declaration signed in the first meeting between a Pope and a Moscow Patriarch was very different in character from the one signed by Paul VI and Athenagoras half a century earlier. The Havana declaration dealt mainly with geopolitical and global issues of common interest, rather than with ecclesiastical relations. Pope Francis, known for his preference to build bridges rather than walls, expressed his willingness to practise what he calls “the culture of the encounter” and go anywhere to start the conversation, without negotiating very hard for the compromise text that ensued, a text that both the UGCC and the UOC-KP at the time found “disappointing,” particularly in its eschewed reference to the war in the Donbas.¹⁴

The timing of the Havana meeting clearly was related to the intra-Orthodox conflict between Moscow and Constantinople in preparation of the Pan-Orthodox Council. After decades of intra-Orthodox negotiations and preparations, started by Patriarch Athenagoras in the 1960s, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (in singular) convened in Crete in June 2016. The Synod’s agenda was to include: The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today’s World, the Orthodox Diaspora, the proper regulation of church autonomy (i.e., autocephaly), and the relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world. Most contested were the issues of jurisdiction over the Orthodox Diaspora and the jurisdiction of autocephaly (“Holy and Great Council”).

¹³ The immediate response of the Moscow Patriarchate was to “prohibit” the Ecumenical Patriarch to speak in the name of global orthodoxy.

¹⁴ On the controversies over the Havana declaration, see Chirovsky.

The boycott of the Council by the Russian Orthodox Church, along with the Churches of Antioch, Bulgaria, and Georgia, and the absence of the Orthodox Church in America, laid bare the serious divisions within global orthodoxy ("Pan-Orthodox Council"). Most clearly, it revealed the conflict for supremacy of global orthodoxy between the Second and Third Rome. After almost half a millennium of quiet captivity under the Ottomans and under Turkey, in the last decades the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople has regained some stature on the global stage and has manifested his leadership as *primus inter pares* within the orthodox world, his important role in global ecumenical dialogue with the papacy and with other religions, and his pastoral and prophetic voice on global issues, such as the environment, that resonates beyond an Orthodox audience (Roudometof).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, following a period of relative weakness, the Moscow Patriarchate, in alliance with the Putin regime, has also re-emerged on the global stage with its claim of canonical territorial jurisdiction over the "*russkii mir*" and with its claim of supremacy over global orthodoxy on the grounds of being the largest Orthodox Church in the world. For the Moscow Patriarchate the loss of Ukraine signals not only the failure of the "*russkii mir*" project, but also a challenge to its claim to global orthodox supremacy. Moscow's response has been the excommunication of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the ongoing geopolitical struggle to control Orthodox diasporas all over the world.

The visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Ukraine in August 2021, on the occasion of the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Ukraine's Independence, once again offered a clear manifestation of the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Constantinople not only over the canonical jurisdiction over Ukraine, but over the legitimate authority over global orthodoxy. The Russian Orthodox Church made loud and clear its negative reaction against what it termed the uncanonical and illegitimate visit of an Orthodox bishop (Bartholomew I) to a territory (Ukraine) under the episcopal jurisdiction of another Orthodox hierarch (Metropolitan Onufrii), announcing the preparation of a Synod of the ROC in September to condemn Bartholomew I with an official anathema ("U Moskvi").

In Ukraine, the UOC-MP also expressed its official boycott of the visit, promising to organize massive mobilizations of the Orthodox faithful, which never materialized beyond a few symbolic counterdemonstrations, which OCU spokesman Archbishop Ievstratii (Zoria) declared "pathetic" ("Anti-Church Round Dances"). The three-day official visit of Bartholomew I to Ukraine, August 21 to 24, proceeded smoothly and without any major incident and was declared a "historic" success (Onisenko). On 23 August 2021, Patriarch Bartholomew met with the leaders of AUCRRO. In a photo in front of St. Sophia, Bartholomew appears between Metropolitan Epifanii and Metropolitan Sviatoslav, surrounded by over 20 leaders of all the religious

communities of Ukraine: Ukrainian Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Roman Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim ("Patriarkh Varfolomii"). Conspicuously absent is Metropolitan Onufrii or any other leader of the UOC-MP. The June 2021 KIIS Survey already indicated that the visit was welcome by a large majority of Ukrainians and that, therefore, the boycott of the Moscow Patriarchate was unlikely to succeed.

According to the KIIS Survey, a large majority of the Ukrainian population (57.3%) expressed a "positive" attitude toward the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch, while only a small minority (6.4%) viewed it negatively, and a third of the population (32.5%) expressed "neutrality" (Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii). Naturally, the visit was viewed most positively (72.4%) and least negatively (1.3%) by those expressing affiliation with OCU. Ukrainian Greek Catholic expressed equally high approval (62.9%) and low disapproval (5.9%). Among the self-declared "simply Orthodox," the approval was also high (49.3%), while disapproval was low (6.2%). Most surprisingly, even among those indicating self-affiliation with the UOC-MP there was a very high "positive" attitude (49%), and a relatively low negative one (14.6%) toward the visit, while a third of respondents (34.4%) expressed a "neutral" attitude. This may be viewed as a clear indication that affiliation with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-MP does not mean support for its policies, much less support for the policies of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Moreover, besides its territorial claims over Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate, in alliance with the geopolitical goals of the Russian regime, is now engaged in a new global project of assuming the leadership of a Moralism International defending traditional Christian and family values in the global culture wars against liberalism, secularism, feminism, and gender ideology, directed primarily against the European Union (Casanova, "Transnationalism"; Stoeckl, "The Russian Orthodox Church's Conservative Crusade" and "The Russian Orthodox Church as Moral Norm"; Stoeckl and Uzaner; Stoop 4–10, 21–22).

Ukraine has become not only the main battlefield between Moscow and Constantinople but also the place where the three Romes meet. The future relations between the three Kyivan churches under their respective jurisdictions will also determine their global relations. So far, the churches of Greece, Cyprus, and Alexandria have followed the Ecumenical Patriarch in recognizing and entering in communion with OCU. Other Orthodox churches are likely to follow, eventually. Metropolitan Epifanii urges patience and Christian love, certain that more sectors of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, now still within the UOC-MP, will also eventually reunite with OCU. Yet a numerically diminished but significant sector of Ukrainian Orthodoxy is likely to opt to remain within the UOC-MP.

The sources of division between OCU and UOC-MP are primarily geopolitical and are fostered by the Moscow Patriarchate with its considerable financial resources and its imperial claims on Ukraine. However, it would be an error not to recognize that a significant minority of Ukrainian Orthodox, perhaps as large as the Ukrainian Catholic minority, are likely to continue opting for the UOC-MP for ecclesiological and for traditional reasons. After all, one cannot simply erase the memory of having belonged to the “Russian Orthodox Church” for generations.

In the long term, the goal of the three Kyivan churches ought to be not “union,” at least not one that would try to erase the different traditions, histories, memories, liturgies, and languages for the sake of confessional uniformity under a national church, but rather “communion”—learning at first to co-exist peacefully side by side, each representing a different part of Ukrainian Christian history, until they learn to live in communion recognizing each other as sister churches. But this can only happen if they abandon the territorial model of church, of exclusive canonical jurisdiction over a territory, and cease viewing each other as schismatic and illegitimate. If they succeed in doing so, Ukraine could serve as a privileged site for ecumenical dialogue between the three Romes and beyond, between all Christian churches, and between the three Abrahamic religions.

The war of aggression initiated by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 is dramatically transforming the dynamics within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-MP and its relation to the Moscow Patriarchate. In the face of the Moscow Patriarchate support of the invasion as a means of securing the “*russkii mir*” project by military intervention, once again there is strong support within the Ukrainian exarchy throughout Ukraine to move “away from Moscow” either for autocephaly, which would mean a new schism within Ukrainian orthodoxy, or for unification with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Numerous voices are asking Metropolitan Onufrii to lead the movement “away from Moscow.” One can anticipate that whatever remains of the exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine after the war, it will be a greatly diminished church. However, a prolonged Russian military occupation of Ukraine could lead once again as in 1946 to severe repression and to the renewed attempt to liquidate both the “schismatic” Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the “uniatist” Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

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