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# **The Patriarchal Institution in the Early Church**

*(The Pentarchy of the Patriarchs.  
The Presuppositions, the Evolution  
and the Function of the Institution)*

by

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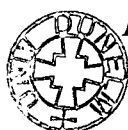
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**UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM**

*Department of Theology*



- 6 OCT 1997

*to my parents*  
*Antonios and Stamatina Panagiotopoulos*

## FOREWORD

The command of St. Paul, «πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γίνεσθω» (1 Cor 14:40), specifies the exact limits of the operation of the ecclesiastical community. Therefore any operation or action outside the limits of the ecclesiastical order, is not simply a problem for the Church's life but also a transgression of the apostolic commandment and the gospel. This influences the whole life of the ecclesiastical community as far as its historical continuity is concerned and, in this way, the evolution of the ecclesiastical administration. With this historical continuity in mind, we shall try to trace the evolution of the system of ecclesiastical administration of the Early Church. This period, which is commonly called the Early Church, continues to be of vital interest for us, because the global village in which we live corresponds, in some sense, to the unity of the Roman Empire. It is not surprising that modern man has taken an interest in this historical period, perhaps because now, more than ever before, he needs to understand himself. Modern man needs to show off the real thing authentically and to make up authentically the so-called "collective consciousness."

This thesis was the occasion for a personal journey from the East to the West, and from the West to the East. The new experiences and the knowledge, which we have gained, surpass the limits of the written word of the following text. We bear on our shoulders the continuous sense of the weight, which the "ironed feet" of the great scientists and researchers, who have worked in such a great and interesting period for the Theology and the History, has accumulated. I would like to thank my supervisor the Very Revd. Dr. George D. Dragas for his unreserved support, his advice, suggestions and his crucial contribution to this

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effort. I owe him a great deal, because as my supervisor, he showed me not only the path I ought to pursue in my research, but assisted me academically and personally in many ways, for which I am very thankful, and made my experience in Durham a memorable one. I would also like to thank my Greek Professor Vlassios Ioan. Phidas of Athens, for introducing me to Dr. Dragas and helping me with invaluable suggestions and advice. Finally I would like to thank my parents for their love and support throughout this project.

*Ioannis Ant. Panagiotopoulos*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	<b>E. Schwartz</b> , ed., <i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , Berlin, 1927 ff.
BEPES	Βιβλιοθήκη Ἑλλήνων Πατέρων καὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συγγραφέων [Library of Greek Fathers and Ecclesiastical Authors] (ed. Ἀποστολική Διακονία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος) Athens 1955 ff.
ΕΕΘΣ	Ἐπιστημονική Ἐπετηρίς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν. [Scientific Annual of the Dpt. of Theology of the University of Athens]
HCC	<b>C. J. Hefele</b> , <i>A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents.</i> , tr. <b>H. N. Oxenham</b> , 5 vols, Edinburgh, 1876.
IEE	Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους, (ed. Ἐκδοτικὴ Ἀθηνῶν), vls. 1-15 (A' - IE'), Athens, 1970-78.
Mansi	<b>G. D. Mansi</b> , <i>Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio</i> , Florence, 1759-63
MACE	<b>H. R. Loyn</b> , ed., <i>The Middle Ages, a Concise Encyclopaedia</i> , London, 1989, "Thames and Hudson".
NJBC	<b>Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy</b> , ed., <i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> , Student edition, 1993.
ODB	<b>Alexander P. Kazhdan</b> , ed., <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , vls. 1-3, New York - Oxford, 1991.
Phidas, Pentarchy	Βλασίου Ἰω. Φειδᾶ, Ὁ Θεσμός τῆς Πενταρχίας τῶν Πατριαρχῶν, v.I: Προϋποθέσεις Διαμορφώσεως τοῦ Θεσμοῦ (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τὸ 451), Athens, 1969, v.II: Ἱστορικοκανονικά Προβλήματα περὶ τὴν Λειτουργίαν τοῦ Θεσμοῦ (451 - 553), Athens, 1970.
PG	<b>J. P. Migne</b> , ed., <i>Patrologiae Graecae Cursus Completus</i> , Paris, 1844-66
PL	<b>J. P. Migne</b> , ed., <i>Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus</i> , Paris, 1844-66
SC	<b>Sources Chrétiennes</b> , Paris, 1941 ff.
SYNTAGMA	Γ. Ἀ. Πάλλη - Μ. Ποσλῆ, ed., <i>Σύνταγμα τῶν Θείων καὶ Ἱερῶν Κανόνων</i> , vls. 1-6 (A - ΣΤ), Athens, 1852-1859, (Reprint 1992).

# INTRODUCTION

Research, scientific speculation and involvement in the question of the patriarchal institution are not something new for Theology and Church History. It is well known that theological researchers have shown great interest in this subject. It could not have been otherwise, since the institution has been alive and works until today. While much has been written on this subject, and although a lot of it has stood the test of time, I believe that reexamination is needed. Before, however, we begin this task, we think that it would be fair to mention those persons who more or less specialized in their scholarly work in the patriarchal institution. It is important to note their opinions about this institution in general and about the Pentarchy in particular. Having a full picture from the beginning, we will have the opportunity to protect the value of our opinion and the impartiality of our conclusions.

## General Treatises

**Abbé Guettée**, a Frenchman, wrote on *The Papacy; Its Historic Origin and Primitive Relations with the Eastern Churches*, in the 19th Century.<sup>1</sup> This book is important because of the personal history of the author, who was a Roman Catholic priest but later became Orthodox. Thus, this treatise has the character of a witness to the historical truth, and is sympathetic to the See of Constantinople. Guettée was a talented historian, as is evident from his use of the sources. This fact makes the treatise and the author contemporary. He follows the tradition of the 12th Century Byzantine canonists in his interpretation of the patriarchal institution, and makes a distinction concerning the sanctioning of the patriarchal institution in the canons 6 and 7 of the First Ecumenical Council<sup>2</sup> (which agrees with the opinion of most Orthodox and Western researchers). As a result, this perspective does not discern the importance of the precedence of honour in the evolution and function of the patriarchal institution. Although he has a limp sense of its significance in the formation of ecclesiastical administration, he understands, thanks to his persistence to appealing to the

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<sup>1</sup>Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy; Its Historic Origin and Primitive Relations with the Eastern Churches*, New York, 1866, (Minos Publishing Co.).

<sup>2</sup>Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.95.



sources, the role of the Fourth Ecumenical Council to the patriarchal institution.<sup>3</sup> The book remains useful and timely to researchers, because the author cites the original sources in a thorough way.

The same perspective which we saw in the previous treatise can also be seen in a book by **B. J. Kidd**.<sup>4</sup> In his book, Kidd enumerates in chronological order the arguments for the Roman primacy. Therefore, he maintains all the characteristics of a treatise which has as a goal to cite the sources. He does not accept the later theory of Roman primacy, and he correctly criticizes the historical sources. Unfortunately, while he has collected many important sources, he does not delve deeply into their meaning and significance. In spite of its shortcomings, the book remains useful, because it successfully introduces the reader into the historical context.

The first chapter of **Geoffrey Barraclough's**<sup>5</sup> book, *The Medieval Papacy*, contributes to our thesis not just because it gives us concisely the historical environment of the West, but, basically, because it cites successfully the evolution of the status of the bishop of Rome as patriarch of the West during the first six centuries A.D. This treatise is well known to scholars of the papacy, and for this reason it is important to the study at hand.

There is a certain group of scholars, who are characterized by the fact that they are "partisans" of the Roman primacy theory, and whose treatises attempt to justify historically the decisions of the First Vatican Council. This fact has as a result that their work has a particular perspective. This perspective affects the way in which they use and interpret the historical sources. **Francis Dvornik**, a great ecclesiastical historian of our times, could be placed into this group of "partisans". His work is comprehensive and voluminous. He has had a notable effect on contemporary research, because he has left a body of material which contains valuable historical information. Unfortunately, the scientific rigorism and the thorough research of his treatises have been moderated by the restricted perspective of his historical interpretation. Especially with regard to the question

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<sup>3</sup>Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.118.

<sup>4</sup>**B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy to A.D. 461*, London, 1936, (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge).

<sup>5</sup>**G. Barraclough**, *The Medieval Papacy*, London, 1992 (1968), Thames and Hudson.

of the Pentarchy, F. Dvornik changed his opinion about the historical beginning of the institution. In his first treatises, he placed this beginning in the 7th century.<sup>6</sup> In his later treatises, however he declared that the institution began with the commencement of Justinian's legislative work (6th century).<sup>7</sup> I believe this reversal speaks to Dvornik's character and to his merit as a historian, because it exposes his willingness to change his thesis in the face of new information gathered from his research. F. Dvornik might have met with greater success, had he not followed the Roman primacy theory, but the importance and merit of his work are clear.

**Wilhelm de Vries**<sup>8</sup> (a meritorious scientist) is also influenced by the Roman primacy theory. The result is that he cannot interpret the facts impartially. At the same time, his treatises are important for the West, because they were instrumental in the decisions of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>9</sup> As regards the patriarchal institution, he accepts the admission of a supra-metropolitan authority as declared by the First Ecumenical Council. He places the institution of the Pentarchy after the 6th century. Because of this, he incorrectly interprets the communion letters (*κοινωνικά γράμματα*) which the prestigious thrones had exchanged with each other as a recognition of papal supremacy.<sup>10</sup> We shall give answers to these questions in the following chapters. On the whole, W. de Vries is important for providing data, although his evaluations are partial.

**Robert B. Eno**, a contemporary scholar, also accepts the papal theories.<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that he used the critical method in his treatise, especially for the first four centuries of Christian history. As might be expected, Eno's view is not accepted. It has been refuted by other catholic scholars, but he falls victim to

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<sup>6</sup>F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge - Massachusetts, 1958, (Harvard University Press), pp.163 ff.

<sup>7</sup>F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, New York, 1979<sup>2</sup>, (1966), Fordham University Press, tr. Edwin A. Quain, (Byzance et la primauté romaine, Paris, 1964, Les Éditions du Cerf), pp.75-76.

<sup>8</sup>W. de Vries, *Orient et Occident. Les structures ecclésiastiques vues dans l'histoire des sept premiers conciles œcuméniques*, Paris, 1974, Les Éditions du Cerf. W. de Vries, *Orthodoxie und Katholizismus*, Freiburg, 1965, tr. in Greek, **Roussos Markos**, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, Athens, 1979.

<sup>9</sup>W. de Vries, *Rom und Die Patriarchate des Ostens*, 1963.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. W. de Vries, *The "College of Patriarchs"*, in *Concilium, an International Review of Theology*, v.8, Oct. 1965, (Canon Law), pp.35-43.

<sup>11</sup>R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, Wilmington, Delaware, 1990.

his perspective. Because of this, he does not realize that the growth of the prestige of the bishop of Rome was parallel to that applicable to the prestigious eastern thrones during the second half of 4th century. Hence, he does not understand the enactment and the function of the institution of the Pentarchy, which he regards as "Pentarchal theory" and he transfers the beginning of the institution to a later time than the facts that he examines suggest.<sup>12</sup> While his book is important, it has clear failings, and demonstrates the contemporary tendencies which the Roman partisans display.

**Jeffrey Richards'**<sup>13</sup> book covers the final years of the designated period of our thesis, and is a useful work for research in this field. Unfortunately, the author did not examine the question of the institution of the Pentarchy, and therefore makes no assertion concerning it. His insistence on the sources and the collation of them has the result of providing an analysis of many particular questions related to our subject. This study has not shown the function of the patriarchal institution and the Pentarchy in the 5th century, because it cites the bishopric of Rome as the only patriarchate of the West.

Another important body of work comprises the treatises of **Walter Ullmann**.<sup>14</sup> The distinguishing mark of his work is that he wrote about the evolution of the Papacy in the Middle Ages. His work is useful because it examines the historical context of the period with which we are concerned.

From the pro papal party, we have **Patrick O'Connell**.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that O'Connell believes that the institution of the Pentarchy began at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, and in the canonical function of the institution of the Pentarchy in all subsequent developments in the life of the Catholic Church.<sup>16</sup> He writes, «In any event, the idea of the five patriarchs, the "pentarchy," as should have emerged from the texts considered, is no phantom. It is the expression of the unity of the Church, in teaching apostolic doctrine and safeguarding the

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<sup>12</sup>**R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, p.89.

<sup>13</sup>**J. Richards**, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, London, 1979.

<sup>14</sup>**W. Ullmann**, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, London, 1974<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>15</sup>**P. O'Connell**, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828), Patriarch of Constantinople. Pentarchy and Primacy*, Roma, 1972, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 194.

<sup>16</sup>It is important to note that by the title Catholic Church we mean Church as understood by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

tradition, which is manifested by the universal proclamation of this doctrine by all five patriarchs. Thus, the three key ideas of unity, catholicity and apostolicity are linked together and qualify, or should qualify the persons, the actions and teaching of the five patriarchs.»<sup>17</sup>

The historical conditions (imposed by the birth of the Soviet Union) gave rise to the development of Orthodox Theology in Central and Western Europe by the representative of the Russian Diaspora during the twentieth century. It is clear that the theologians of the Diaspora had been from very early on asked to give answers to the problems of their social environment. We have a lot of examples demonstrating that. When Oscar Cullmann<sup>18</sup> raised the question about the position of St. Peter in the College of the Apostles and in the Apostolic Church, the party of these theologians was not slow in answering him. They answered him by putting the question he raised into the context of an Orthodox interpretation.<sup>19</sup> With their treatises they have provided complete answers to this issue and have obviously succeeded in turning over every wrong position of the Petrine theory.<sup>20</sup> The work of these theologians continues to affect the Orthodox world today, but this does not mean that all of their positions are acceptable to the Orthodox Church. It goes without question that they accept the patriarchal institution. Nevertheless we observe that they do not have a clear distinction and a clear position about the chronological limits of the Pentarchy. This is a logical necessity of their Eucharistic perspective in the historical interpretation of the sources, because this interpretation (the historical one) is of a second rank.

One of these theologians, **John Meyendorff**,<sup>21</sup> who was an important Orthodox theologian of the modern period, and whose treatises have been significant and voluminous, exhibits the same failing which we have just

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<sup>17</sup>P. O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828)*, p.36.

<sup>18</sup>O. Cullmann, *Saint Pierre. Disciple - Apôtre - Martyr*, Neuchâtel - Paris, 1952.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian diaspora: church, fathers, eucharist in Nicolai Afanas'ev (1893-1966)*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.127 ff.

<sup>20</sup>see in *The Primacy of Peter*, London, 1963: J. Meyendorff, *St. Peter in Byzantine Theology*, pp.7-29; A. Schmemmann, *The Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology*, pp.30-56; N. Afanassieff, *The Church which Presides in Love*, pp.57-110; N. Koulomzine, *Peter's place in the Early Church*, pp.111-134.

<sup>21</sup>J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions. The Church 450 - 680 A.D.*, New York, 1989, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press; J. Meyendorff, *La primauté romaine dans la tradition canonique jusqu'au Concile de Chalcedoine*, in *Istina*, 4, 1957, pp.463-482.

described, i.e., that is confined to a partial historical perspective. He utilizes interpretations in his historical observations, which are foreign to the climate of the events, with the result that he adopts views which are not acceptable to contemporary Orthodox theologians. He does not accept the institution of the Pentarchy in the 5th century, neither does he accept that the institution affected the whole life of the Church,<sup>22</sup> although this is a fact which is demonstrated by a plethora of historical data as we shall see later. These partial opinions oblige one to approach his historical conclusions with great caution.

**Chrysostom Papadopoulos**, the late Archbishop of Athens, holds a special place among Greek ecclesiastical historians. Particularly, his systematic research in the history of the Eastern patriarchates is of great importance. The importance and the role of the patriarchal institution in its historical evolution have been amply discussed. Papadopoulos links the beginning of the patriarchal institution with canon 6 of the 1st Ecumenical Council (which he found in the canonists of 12th century).<sup>23</sup> He does not have a clear opinion about the chronological limits of the Pentarchy, and so he does not fall into any error through speculation. The picture of the function of the precedence of honour is systematically presented in the whole length of his research. The author does not succeed, however, in analyzing the connections and the forms which the precedence of honor produces. In his treatises, Papadopoulos has provided the basic manuals which the Greek-speaking researcher of the Eastern patriarchates needed, and formulated the opinion of the East on this issue. These treatises are necessary for the full development of our work.

Archimandrite **Vassilios Stefanidis**, following the opinion of his contemporary Western scholars, asserted that the Pentarchy was instituted by Justinian.<sup>24</sup> **Ger. Konidaris** had the same opinion, although later he developed second thoughts about it.<sup>25</sup> **E. Chrissos** recognizes that the institution of the Pentarchy was in the mind of the Church before Justinian, and believes that it

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<sup>22</sup>J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, p.58.

<sup>23</sup>C. Papadopoulos, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, Athens, 1964<sup>2</sup>, p.21.

<sup>24</sup>V. Stefanidis, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία*, Athens, 1959<sup>2</sup>, pp.358 ff.

<sup>25</sup>G. Konidaris, *Ἡ θεαρία τῆς Πενταρχίας τῶν πατριαρχῶν καὶ τοῦ πρωτείου τιμῆς αὐτῶν εἰς τὰς Notitias episcopatum*, in *Les Paralipomènes*, Alexandria, 1954, pp.121-143.

was enacted by him.<sup>26</sup> Thus, we see that Orthodox scholars follow either the opinions of their contemporary Western scholars, or the opinions of the canonists of the 12th century.

It is obvious that the question of the institution of the Pentarchy was in retreat at this time. The question had not been thoroughly examined or honestly faced by contemporary Orthodox theology. This real gap was covered by Professor **Vlassios Phidas** of the University of Athens who produced the fullest treatise on the subject.<sup>27</sup> Phidas was the first to face the question of the institution of the Pentarchy in the context of its historical evolution. In his thorough treatment gives convincing answers to all the problems that have emerged in scholarship.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Phidas has provided the most useful manual for the researcher of this issue.<sup>29</sup>

What is it that makes Phidas' treatises so important? Through his interpretation of the sources, he concludes that the establishment of the Pentarchy lies in the canonical decisions of the 4th Ecumenical Council (451), which enacted the patriarchal institution (a question which we will discuss at length in the following pages of our thesis). This conclusion could not have been drawn outright, although it has strong sources and clear facts. It was reached through the discovery of an ingenious idea, which was historically correct. Phidas discovered, from within the historical evolution of the institution, the

<sup>26</sup>**E. Chrissos**, *Η ἐκκλησιαστική πολιτική τοῦ Ιουστινιανοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἔριν περὶ τὰ Τρία Κεφάλαια καὶ τὴν Ε΄ Οἰκουμένην σύνοδον*, Thessaloniki, 1969, p.98.

<sup>27</sup>**V. Phidas**, *Ὁ θεσμός τῆς Πενταρχίας τῶν Πατριαρχῶν*, v.1: *Προϋποθέσεις διαμορφώσεως τοῦ θεσμοῦ (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τὸ 451)*, Athens, 1977<sup>2</sup>, (1969), v.2: *Ἱστορικὸ-κανονικὰ Προβλήματα περὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τοῦ θεσμοῦ (451-553)*, Athens, 1977<sup>2</sup>, (1970).

<sup>28</sup>Vlassios Phidas' book has been criticized by **A. de Halleux**, *L' institution patriarchale et la pentarchie. Un point de vue orthodoxe*, in *Revue Théologique de Louvain*, 1972, pp.177-199; **V. Peri**, *La Pentarchia: Istituzione Ecclesiale (IV-VII sec.) E Teoria Canonico - Teologica*, in *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo*, v.34, Spoleto, 1988 (I), pp.209-318.

<sup>29</sup>It is well known that Orthodox Theology has had different periods after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. These periods are characterized by the flourishing or not of Theology, and by the different influences, due to the Turkish occupation. (see **G. Podskalsky**, *Griechisch Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821)*. - *Die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatrischen. Konfessionen des Westens*, München 1988). Greek Orthodox Theology especially has experienced a great deal of exterior influence after the National Revolution of 1821 with the establishment of the New Greek State. Eventually the work of Orthodox especially in the period after 1950, began to reach maturity. This is seen in the rise of theological studies such as the treatises of Prof. Phidas. These treatises mark a new beginning Orthodox research because they are rigorous and independent of exterior influences.

connection of the precedence of honour (*πρεσβεία τιμῆς*), of certain thrones, with the right to ordain (*δικαίω χειροτονιῶν/jus ordinandi*) and to judge bishops (*δικαίω κρίσεων ἐπισκόπων/jus jurandi*). In other words, he found the Seniorities among the sees were derived from the function of two poles: that of precedence of honour, and that of the right to consecrate and to judge bishops as these emerged in the whole historical life of the early Church. This fact permitted Phidas to interpret impartially the historic forms of the ecclesiastical government. In the following pages, we will examine how this interpretation was rooted in the historical data.

Because of Phidas' importance, it is necessary to look at his entire work, not only at his first treatise on the institution of the Pentarchy, but also at his most recent productions: his "Byzantine History"<sup>30</sup> and his "Church History"<sup>31</sup>. In these later treatises, he gathers all his research together, and advances a number of important formulations which give his thesis a greater degree of certainty and maturity. In the following chapters we will analyze the content of Phidas' treatises in conjunction with those of the other scholars.

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<sup>30</sup>V. Phidas, *Βυζάντιο. Βίος - Θεσμοὶ - Κοινωνία - Ἐκκλησία - Παιδεία - Τέχνη*, Athens, 1990<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία Α΄*, Athens, 1994<sup>2</sup> - *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία Β΄, ἀπὸ τὴν Εἰκονομαχία μέχρι καὶ τὴ Μεταρρύθμιση*, Athens, 1994.

## Chapter 1

## Ecclesiological Prerequisites of the Patriarchal Institution

Shortly before his Ascension, Christ defined once more to his Apostles, their apostolic commission by his commandment: *«Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.»*<sup>32</sup> (Matthew 28:19-20). The Apostolic Church remained faithful to this commandment. From the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the death of the Apostles, the Church turned her interest to this mission, i.e. to the “evangelization” of the world (as we see in the book of Acts, in the Epistles, and in the later ecclesiastical texts). The Apostles acted on the authority which the Lord gave them. The development of the Church’s external organization and structure, whose gradual evolution led to the patriarchal institution, was necessary for the maintenance of this work *«even unto the end of the world»* (ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος).

The Patriarchal institution is very important for the administrative system of the Church. This is true not only for the Early Church also for the Orthodox Church today. It is necessary, then, to answer some general questions about it in this first chapter of our thesis, in order to elucidate our understanding of it. These questions are inextricably connected with the whole development of the administrative system (=τὸ Πολίτευμα) and the unity of the Church as ecclesiological prerequisites to the patriarchal institution. At the end of this chapter we will present a general historical outline (i.e. the chronological table) of the period in question, from the Early Church to the 5th Ecumenical Council.

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<sup>32</sup>«Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος»



### I. The administrative system (*Τὸ Πολίτευμα*) of the Church.

It is important to examine the administrative system of the Church, by examining her historical life,<sup>33</sup> that is, by examining the external evolution and structure of the Church's institution. Protestant theologians tried to answer, with particular persistence, the questions relating to the administrative structure of the Church during apostolic times and its evolution during the post-apostolic period.<sup>34</sup> Their work was basically apologetic. It set aside the prevalent Western Catholic tradition of apostolic succession,<sup>35</sup> which is of importance, because it asks: What was the vehicle for the transmission of the office of episcopacy from the Apostles to their successors? Or what was the relation between apostolic succession and the local ministry? We ought to answer these questions for the period that ends at the beginning of the 2nd century, because the apostolic succession is connected with the "head bishop" (*προεστῶτα ἐπίσκοπον*) of the

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<sup>33</sup>The administrative system of the Church (*Τὸ Πολίτευμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας*) as a notion has to do with the organization of the Church. Of course, our goal is not to formally answer this great question, but to point out the prerequisites necessary for understanding the meaning and the principles of the government of the Church. This question has been raised by Western theologians, because they themselves had ecclesiastical problems. These problems affected, and continue to affect, the ecclesiological identity and consciousness of Western theology. For the East, the matter is rather academic, and freely leads to the confirmation of the mind of the ecclesiastical body, of the Church.

For the administrative system of the Church see **G. Konidaris**, *Γενική Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, Athens, 1957<sup>2</sup>, pp.127-143; **V. Phidas**, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία Α*, pp.59-113.

<sup>34</sup>Research on the Unity of the Church has been undertaken by different Schools, which affected the broader meaning of the governmental structure of the Church. The connection between the Unity of the Church and her governmental structure is self-evident and a logical necessity. The following Schools were developed in West:

- A) the School of "Idealism," of F. C. Baur and the School of Tubingen
- B) the School of "Personalism," Adolf von Harnack
- C) the School of "Eschatological Realism," of J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer

The so-called "Universal ecclesiology" of N. Afanassieff, which was developed in the West beside the Protestant Schools by the partisans of Papacy, was a way of interpreting the Church's Unity (see **N. Afanassieff**, *The Church which Presides in Love*, p. 58). "Eucharistic ecclesiology" was developed in the Russian Diaspora. In the last analysis, this is a "Christocentric ecclesiology," which is the basis of contemporary Orthodox Theology, and is identified with the Tradition of the Church. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.18-21; **C. Voulgaris**, *The Unity of the Apostolic Church*, Thessaloniki, 1974, pp.15-72, 73-175; **J. Zisioulas (Metr. Pergamou)**, *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῷ Εὐχαριστίᾳ καὶ τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ κατὰ τοὺς Τρεῖς Πρώτους Αἰῶνας*, Athens, 1965, pp. 3 ff.

<sup>35</sup>The Protestant research generally accepts the following:

- I. There was a separation of the "charismatic ministries" from the local ministries in apostolic times and the former were regarded as superior to the latter.
- II. Episcopal authority, in view of the New Testament evidence, is to be rejected.

eucharistic gathering in the epistles of Ignatius. It is only through the primary sources that we can answer this question.<sup>36</sup>

This question was already raised during the apostolic period. The position of the Apostles and their "authority" (which have a general and ecumenical character) are clearly demonstrated in the New Testament (NT). In this N.T. perspective the Apostles are not tied to any local Church.<sup>37</sup> The Apostolic Synod of Jerusalem is a clear example of this, because it made unanimous decisions with universal (catholic) validity (Acts 15). In addition, there is no distinction among the Apostles in their work.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, there is a difference between the ministry of the Apostles and that of other persons who became ministers in the Early Church. The Apostles, who were chosen by Christ Himself (the Twelve, St. Paul and certain other persons beyond the Twelve),<sup>39</sup> retained their ministry in and authority over the entire Church until their death. With this in mind, there are two questions which need to be raised: who were the successors to the Apostles, and what did they receive from the Apostles?

The tradition of the Church (written and oral) answers that the successors of the Apostles were their disciples, who were initially called *Prophets* (Προφήται). The designation "prophet" implies, first of all, the notion of "gifts of divine grace" (χαρίσματα). Hence, many questions have been raised about the place of "charismatic" ministries in the Church's life, and about the supposed separation between the local and the "charismatic" ministries. Is it possible however, to talk about a rank of Prophets, who have been separated from the ministry of the Church's government? The famous passage Ephesians 4: 10-12<sup>40</sup> has been the subject of misinterpretations. This passage was supposed to have introduced a

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<sup>36</sup>The sources of this period are: 1. the books of the *New Testament*, 2. the *Epistles of Clement*, 3. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, 4. the *Didache of the Twelve Apostles*. The other books of the so-called apostolic fathers belong to the next period. see **G. Konidaris**, *Γεν. Ἐκκλ. Ιστ.*, pp.129 ff.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. **R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.16-18; **C. Papadopoulos**, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.10 ff.

<sup>38</sup>**Guettée** observes: «When the apostles assembled at Jerusalem, Peter spoke in council only as a simple member of the assembly, not even the first, but after many others. ... James, Bishop of Jerusalem, summed up the discussion, proposed the resolution which was adopted, and acted as the veritable president of the assembly. (Acts 15: 7.)» (*The Papacy*, p.41).

<sup>39</sup>Cf. **L. Philis**, *Τὸ Πρόβλημα τῶν Ἑβδομήκοντα Ἀποστόλων τοῦ Κυρίου*, Athens, 1976

<sup>40</sup>«... ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ...»

separation between the local and the “charismatic” ministries.<sup>41</sup> Phidas proves this by comparing this passage with the equivalent passage found in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians (12:28-31)<sup>42</sup>:

1. there was a rank of “gifts”, and Apostles and Prophets had a leading position in the Church.
2. the relation between Prophets and Apostles had an institutional character.
3. the separation between local and “charismatic” ministries was intangible.
4. the rank of Prophets was older and more important than that of Apostles.<sup>43</sup>

The precedence of the rank of Prophet is very pronounced in many passages of the NT. It is clear that Prophets were personal collaborators of Apostles (Acts 15,22. 15,32. 15,36. 13,4. 14,23. etc.). The *Pastoral Epistles* (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) contain very important witnesses,<sup>44</sup> from which we gather information<sup>45</sup> not only about the life and the needs of the first Christian communities but also about the function of the prophetic gift with which the two disciples of St. Paul (Timothy and Titus) were endowed. This “gift” had been given to these persons at ordination and was permanent. This clearly demonstrates that the *Prophets* were disciples of and successors to the Apostles, and can be found in many passages of the NT.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Cf. **A. von Harnack**, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, tr. J. Moffatt, New York, 1904, v.1, pp. 398 ff.

<sup>42</sup>«... καὶ οὐς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι μὴ πάντες προφῆται· μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι· μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις· μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσι ἰαμάτων· μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν· μὴ πάντες διεκμηνεύουσιν· ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα.»

<sup>43</sup>**V. Phidas**, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, pp.62-63.

<sup>44</sup>We mention some passages, in which we understand the function of Timothy’s “prorhetical ministry”: **1 Timothy, 1,18**... Ταύτην τὴν παραγγελίαν παρατίθεμαί σοι, τέκνον Τιμόθεε, κατὰ τὰς προάγουσας ἐπὶ σέ προφητείας, ἵνα στρατεύῃ ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν... **4,13-14**... ἕως ἔρχομαι πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ. μὴ ἀμέλει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοι διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου... **6,14**... τηρήσαι σε τὴν ἐντολὴν ἄσπιλον ἀνεπίληπτῶν μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ... **6,20**... τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον ... **2 Timothy 1,6**... Δι ἦν αἰτίαν ἀναμνησκῶ σε ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου ... **1,14**... τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν...

<sup>45</sup>**C. Voulgaris**, *The Unity of the Apostolic Church*, pp.407 ff.

<sup>46</sup>About the “choir” of the disciples of the Apostles see **C. Voulgaris**, *The Unity of the Apostolic Church*, p.405; **V. Phidas**, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.72.

The *Revelation*<sup>47</sup> is one of the most interesting and most misinterpreted books of the NT. It was written in the second half of the first Christian century. Although the text is equivocal, it is certain that it reflects the ecclesiastical situation of the ages. It can be argued that the *Revelation* is an important book of the martyrs (witnesses), and gives us a glimpse of the liturgical life of the Church.<sup>48</sup> The passages about the prophecy are especially interesting for us (1,3 ... τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας... and 19,10 ... ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας... etc<sup>49</sup>). These passages, the passages about the pseudo-prophets (ψευδοπροφήται), (Rev. 16,13. 19,20. & 20,10) and the equivalent passage of St. John's *1st Epistle* (4,1),<sup>50</sup> indicate that there was an institutional rank of *Prophets*. If the institutional rank of *Prophets* had not existed, the title pseudo-prophets would not have been found in the book of *Revelation*. (It is a logical necessity that the negative exists with its positive.)

The problem of pseudo-prophets is dealt with in the book of the *Didache* (Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων)<sup>51</sup> with particular emphasis, «... γνωσθήσεται ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης καὶ ὁ προφήτης...» (Did. XI, 8).<sup>52</sup> This book was written before the end of

<sup>47</sup>S. Agouridis, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψη τοῦ Ἰωάννη*, Athens, 1978; S. Agouridis, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψη τοῦ Ἰωάννου* (Ἐχει μελλοντολογικὸ ἢ κυρίως παραινετικὸ χαρακτήρα;), Athens, 1992; N. Anagnostou, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις*, 1971; Andreas of Caesarea, *Ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου*, PG 106, cols 216-457; Arethas of Caesarea, *Ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου*, PG 106, cols 500-785; I. Giannakopoulos, *Ἐρμηνεία τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως*, Thessaloniki, 1991<sup>2</sup> (1950); A. Makrakis, *Ἐρμηνεία τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου*, 1882; P. Bratsiotis, *Ἡ Ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Ἰωάννου*, Athens, 1992<sup>2</sup> (1950).

<sup>48</sup>Prof. P. Boumis makes an interesting "ecclesiological interpretation" of the seven epistles of Revelation, through a diachronic division of the historical evolution of the Western and Eastern churches. Many novel and interesting opinions derive from this interpretation. (Ὁ Ἐπίλογος Μίας Πορείας, Ἐκκλησιολογικὴ ἐρμηνεία τῶν ἐπτὰ ἐπιστολῶν τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως), Athens, 1993.)

<sup>49</sup>Revelation, 22,7-10 & 18-19. 11,18. 16,6. 18,24.

<sup>50</sup>«Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐξελήθησαν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.»

<sup>51</sup>The book of the *Didache* («Διδαχὴ τῶν 12 Ἀποστόλων» or «Διδαχὴ Κυρίου διὰ τῶν 12 Ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν») was published by Philotheos Vrieniōs in 1883 and this was a very important publishing event. (It is questioned whether Vrieniōs discovered the text. The Metropolitan of Mytilene Iakovos Nikolaou bears witness that the Patriarch of Constantinople Ioakim III had an interest in publishing this text. Constantinos Typaldos had prepared it to be published. see G. Metallinos, *Ἐπιφανῶν Μαθητῶν τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς Χάλκης Ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς Κων. Τυπάλδων -Ιακωβάτων*, in ΕΕΘΣ 24, Athens, 1980). This book was possibly written in Syria between 90 to 100 AD. It is the oldest ecclesiastical order. see D. Balanos, *Πατρολογία*, Athens, 1930, pp.36 ff; P. Christou, *Ἑλληνικὴ Πατρολογία*, Thessaloniki, 1991<sup>2</sup> (1978), v.II, pp.25-37; S. Papadopoulos, *Πατρολογία*, I, Athens, 1982, pp.170-173; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Westminster, Maryland, 1993 (1950), v. I, pp.29-39.

<sup>52</sup>«you can tell the impostor from the true», M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Penguin Books, 1968, p.196.

the first Christian century, and its witness is remarkable, because it describes the ministry of the Prophets in the early Church with unrivaled clarity and exactitude (Did. X-XV).<sup>53</sup> At the same time, we must note that the description belongs to a transitional stage in the formation of the Church. During this period, the Prophets assume the ministry of the Apostles, and we see the tendency of a permanent establishment. The difference between Prophets and Apostles was the content of the episcopal ministry, i.e. ministry of overseeing. This Episcopal ministry is limited to a geographical region, whereas a Prophet travels from place to place. With the passage of time, the Prophets' episcopal ministry came to be associated with one local church. For example, St. John stayed at Ephesus. The tendency to reside in a particular location began at the end of the first Christian century. It was due to particular circumstances, which differed from place to place, and began to reshape the organization of the Church. As it turned out, these circumstances repeated themselves through out the entire Church, because they were common problems.<sup>54</sup> The Prophets were chosen by the Holy Spirit, for the needs of the ecclesiastical body, just as Christ Himself had chosen the Apostles. The *Didache* is clear concerning the ministry of the Prophets, «...αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ὑμῶν...» (Did. XIII,3),<sup>55</sup> and delineates the liturgical and administrative position of the Prophets in the Primitive Church.

It is clear in the texts of St. Clement,<sup>56</sup> that the Prophets are the successors of the Apostles because they assumed the task of the Apostolic ministry. Clement of Rome, as a disciple and collaborator of St. Paul, had a supraregional "apostolic" authority.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Clement rightly bears the title of Apostolic Father,<sup>58</sup> «ὁ καὶ ἑωρακώς τοὺς μακαρίους ἀποστόλους, καὶ συμβεβλήκως αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔτι ἔναυλον τὸ κήρυγμα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τὴν παράδοσιν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχων, οὐ μόνος. ἔτι γὰρ πολλοὶ ὑπολείποντο τό-

<sup>53</sup> **BEPES**, v.2, pp.218-220

<sup>54</sup> The different circumstances describe a non-Episcopal succession during this period. This occurred because some of the Prophets may have acted as the Episcopal ministry in the local church, like Clement of Rome. Cf. **R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.26-29.

<sup>55</sup> «... they who are your "High Priests" ...» **M. Staniforth**, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.196.

<sup>56</sup> see **D. Balanos**, *Πατρολογία*, pp.30 ff; **P. Christou**, *Ελλ. Πατρολογία*, v.II, pp.357-381; **S. Papadopoulos**, *Πατρολογία*, v.I, pp.160-165; **J. Quasten**, *Patrology*, v. I, pp.42-63.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. **V. Phidas**, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.79; **R. Eno** is forced by this historical fact to ascertain that there are not witnesses which make sure with exactness that Clement had the ministry of bishop of Rome (*The Rise of the Papacy*, p.28).

<sup>58</sup> Prof. **S. Papadopoulos** accepts the title *Apostolic Fathers* only for Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp. He refuses to use the title for other persons or books (which is wrong for him). The criterion is the apostolic mind of the persons. (*Πατρολογία*, v.I, p.92.)

τε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων δεδιδαγμένοι.» (Irenaeus, *Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*, 3, III, 3).<sup>59</sup> Clement tries, through his Letter to solve a problem in the local church of Corinth «ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς» (Clement of Rome, *1st Letter to the Corinthians*, XLIV,1).<sup>60</sup> He makes use of his extraordinary authority derived from his status as Prophet. He puts into practice the “*principle of affinity*,” because it appears that the local church of Corinth did not have an ecclesiastical person with the same extraordinary authority as Clement.<sup>61</sup> We see once again the connection between the “charismatic” ministries (*Prophets*) and the government of the Church and the episcopal ministry.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to note that the exact content of the titles of church ministries named in the sources of the apostolic and early subapostolic period, are not known, although we know their limits. There is even some speculation concerning the Apostolic Fathers (Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement). They held the episcopal office as Prophets in great geographical regions before their permanent stay in a city. Here we find the Episcopal ministry, either regional or local, but not universal (as the ministry of the Apostles), and that it is from this ministry that the whole apostolic succession is derived. The mind of the Church of the first half of the first Christian century validates this. The commandment of Christ is clear: «He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward;» (Matthew. 10:40-41).<sup>63</sup>

## II. The Unity of the Church.

The prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for the *Unity* of His Church, is the permanent and continuous center of ecclesiastical interest, «11... πάτερ ἅγιε, τήρη-

<sup>59</sup> BEPES, v.5, p.143

<sup>60</sup> BEPES, v.1, p.30; «over the title of bishop», M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.41.

<sup>61</sup> About the ministry of Clement see V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, pp.78-101.

<sup>62</sup> Abbé Guettée has the same opinion. He accepts that the Epistle of Clement was written in 69 AD, and that the first successors of the Apostles had an extraordinary ministry (*The Papacy*, pp.53 ff.). R. B. Eno does not subscribe to this belief, and, therefore, he cannot understand the exact the role of Clement in the Primitive Church (*The Rise of the Papacy*, pp. 35-36.).

<sup>63</sup> «ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς (τοὺς ἀποστόλους) ἐμὲ δέχεται, καὶ ὁ ἐμὲ δεχόμενος δέχεται τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με· ὁ δεχόμενος προφήτην εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου μισθὸν προφήτου λήμψεται, ...»

σον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, ἵνα ὧσιν ἐν καθῶς ἡμεῖς. 12 ὅτε ἤμην μετ' αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἐτήρουν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι, καὶ ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπώλετο εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, ... 20 Οὐδὲν περὶ τούτων δὲ ἐρωτῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν εἰς ἐμέ, 21 ἵνα πάντες ἐν ὧσιν, καθῶς σὺ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ γὼ ἐν σοί, ... 22 καὶ γὰρ τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ὧσιν ἐν καθῶς ἡμεῖς ἐν. 23 ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἓν, ...»<sup>64</sup> (John 17:11-23).<sup>65</sup>

The care for the unity is understood both spiritually and practically. The Church is the body of Christ. Every member of the Church belongs to the body of Christ. St. Paul<sup>66</sup> teaches that this ecclesiastical truth applies to each and every member of the Church (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). The unity of the Church was already in danger during the apostolic period, specifically with the problem of the acceptance of the gentiles into the Church (Acts 15). The unity of the faith was in danger due to several heretics, who tried to distort the faith (1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians etc.).

As for the latter problem, the distortion of the faith, became even more problematic in the 2nd century. This was due to the activities of several heretics and the appearance of Gnosticism,<sup>67</sup> both of which had serious repercussions for

<sup>64</sup>«11 ... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. ... 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; ...»

<sup>65</sup>The Church prays, in any case, for Unity. "... Ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου, εὐσταθείας τῶν ἁγίων τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων ἐνώσεως, τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν... (p.3)... ἔνωσον αὐτοὺς τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου, Καθολικῇ καὶ Ἀποστολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ... (p.14) ... Τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως ... (p.32) ..." from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. ed. Ἀποστολικὴ Διακονία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος. etc.

<sup>66</sup>Concerning the Ecclesiology of St. Paul, as understood by St. John Chrysostom see A. Jeftiš, *Ἡ Ἐκκλησιολογία τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου κατὰ τὸν Ἱερόν Χρυσόστομο*, Athens, 1984.

Orthodox Theology has had an increase in the number of ecclesiological treatises in the last decades. Except for the previous treatise, the top book is that of Prof. I. Karmiris, *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησιολογία - Δογματικὴ τμημα Ε'*, Athens, 1973. We can also add the following dissertations: S. Charkianakis (Archbishop of Australia), *Περὶ τοῦ Ἀλάθητον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Θεολογίᾳ*, Athens, 1965; N. Georgopoulou, *Ἡ Ἀγιότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐξ Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐπόψεως*, Athens, 1967; A. Delikostopoulos, *Αἱ Ἐκκλησιολογικαὶ Θέσεις τῆς Ρωμαιοκαθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς Δογματικὸν Πρόβλημα τοῦ Θεολογικοῦ Διαλόγου*, Athens, 1969; C. Scouteris, *Ἡ Ἐκκλησιολογία τοῦ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Νύσσης*, Athens, 1969.

<sup>67</sup>Gnosticism was one of the greatest threats to the Church. It was an expression of religious syncretism, and was at its height during this period of the Roman Empire. Cf. A. Theodorou, *Θέματα Ἱστορίας Δογμάτων*, Athens, 1989, p.125-223; V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλ. Ἰστ.*, I, p.142-169; see for further bibliography G. Filoramo, *A History of Gnosticism*, 1990, tr. A. Alcock.

the organization of the Church. The key question here was: Who gave the unmodified truth of the faith, the apostolic tradition and who had the unbroken succession from the Apostles? It was the Church that had the authority against heresy, the protection of the apostolic succession, and the apostolic tradition in union with her bishops. The bishops were in unity with their local church, because the bishop was the apostolic voice of the local Church. «The vehicle of the apostolic succession is the whole body of the local church in unity with her bishop, just as the bishop is the vehicle of the apostolic succession in unbreakable unity with his local church. For this reason we have an unbreakable apostolic succession of bishops in the same Church, who lives out, as a body, the apostolic tradition and guards it in unbreakable unity always with her visual head, her bishop.»<sup>68</sup>

St. Ignatius,<sup>69</sup> also called Theophorus (Θεοφόρος), explicates a theology of the Episcopal ministry, founded upon the absolute equivalence to the title of bishop.<sup>70</sup> St. Ignatius praises the Ephesians, «who are as inseparably one with him (the bishop) as the Church is with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ with the Father; so constituting one single harmonious unity throughout» (Ephes. V.1),<sup>71</sup> because of their unity with their bishop «like the strings of a harp» (Ephes. IV.1).<sup>72</sup> He emphasizes the position of the bishop in the Christian community and calls the members of the Church «continue in unity and prayerfulness with one another. For it is the duty of everyone, and most particularly of the clergy, to see that the bishop enjoys peace of mind; for the honour of the Father and Jesus

<sup>68</sup>V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.184. see and **OBD**, pp.291-292.

<sup>69</sup>St. Ignatius was the first great theologian. We do not know much about his life. He was martyred between the years 107 and 117 AD. He gives to himself the adjective Theophorus, which was not interpreted. It is possible that he was called Theophorus, because he was the child that Christ took in His arms (Matthew. 18:1). see **D. Balanos**, *Πατρολογία*, pp.43 ff; **P. Christou**, *Ελλ. Πατρολογία*, v.II, pp.408-436; **S. Papadopoulos**, *Πατρολογία*, v.I, pp.173-180; **J. Quasten**, *Patrology*, v. I, pp.63-76.

<sup>70</sup>We have already mentioned that St. Ignatius belongs to the generation of bishops, about whom we can use the title *Prophet* (**ibid.** pp.18 ff). So it seems that the authority of St. Ignatius goes beyond the limits of the bishopric of Antioch (see **V. Phidas**, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.102).

<sup>71</sup>**M. Staniforth**, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.62. «τοὺς ἐνκεκραμένους αὐτῷ (τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ) ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς τῷ πατρὶ, ἵνα πάντα ἐν ἐνότητι σύμφωνα ᾗ.» **BEPES**, v.2, p.265;

<sup>72</sup>**M. Staniforth**, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.62. «ὡς χορδαὶ κιθάρας» **BEPES**, v.2, p.265.



Christ and His Apostles» (Trall. XII,2).<sup>73</sup> The bishop is the head of the local church, as Christ is the head of the universal Church: «Where the bishop is to be seen, there let all his people be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is present, we have the catholic Church.» (Smyrn. VIII,2),<sup>74</sup> because, «for godly unanimity in everything you do. Let the bishop preside in the place of God, and his clergy in place of the Apostolic conclave, and let my special friends the deacons be entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from all eternity and in these last days has been made manifest.» (Magn. VI,1).<sup>75</sup>

St. Ignatius demonstrates the position of the bishop within the incontestable ecclesiological principles which transmit the consciousness of the subapostolic Church transfers in its fullness.<sup>76</sup> St. Ignatius calls the Magnesians, «be as submissive to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was to His Father, and as the Apostles were to Christ and the Father; so that there may be complete unity, in the flesh as well as in the spirit.» (Magn. XIII,2).<sup>77</sup> The form of the pyramid that the apostolic Father uses, is interesting for us. Christ, in the flesh, submits to His Father. The Apostles submit to the Holy Trinity, the people submit to the bishop and to one another. This triadic structure is an attempt by the apostolic Father to explicate the goal of the members of the Church, which is nothing less than the unity of the members *in flesh and in spirit*. Hence, the bishop is the center of the Eucharistic gathering, because there is «one Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of union with His Blood, and one single altar of sacrifice - even as also there is but one bishop» (Phil. IV)<sup>78</sup> and, «... to

<sup>73</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.81. «διαμένετε ἐν τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ ὑμῶν καὶ τῇ μετ' ἀλλήλων προσευχῇ. πρέπει γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῖς καθ' ἓνα, ἐξαίρετως καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, ἀναψύχειν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον εἰς τιμὴν πατρὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων.» BEPES, v.2, p.273.

<sup>74</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.103. «ὅπου ἂν φανῇ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω ὡς περὶ οὗ ἀν' ἡ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.» BEPES, v.2, p.281.

<sup>75</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.72. «ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ θεοῦ σπουδάζετε πάντα πράσσειν, προκαθημένου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου εἰς τύπον θεοῦ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων εἰς τύπον συνεδρίου τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν διακόνων, τῶν ἐμοὶ γλυκυτάτων, πεπιστευμένων διακονίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅς πρό αἰῶνων παρὰ πατρί ἦν καὶ ἐν τέλει ἐφάνη.» BEPES, v.2, p.269.

<sup>76</sup>It is important to note that although the word of St. Ignatius is descriptive of the ecclesiological situation of his period, his word also has the meaning of what we must do. This is not to belittle the merit of what St. Ignatius says about the Episcopal ministry, but rather merely point out how he uses this word.

<sup>77</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.74. «ὑποτάγητε τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ σάρκα, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι. ἵνα ἑνωσῆς ἡ σαρκικὴ τε καὶ πνευματικὴ.» BEPES, v.2, p.271.

<sup>78</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.94. «μία γὰρ σὰρξ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἐν ποτήριον εἰς ἑνωσιν τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ. ἐν θυσιαστήριον, ὡς εἰς ἐπίσκοπος...» BEPES, v.2, p.277.

obey your bishop... the one common breaking of bread...» (Ephes. XX,2).<sup>79</sup> The Eucharist is not an action of the bishop for the local church, but an action of the bishop through the Church. The unity of the bishop with the local ecclesiastical body is an “organic unity”, and any separation between clergy and laity is inconceivable. The eucharistic experience of the historical Body of Christ is the foundation of the Christocentric unity of each local church. The bishop is the authentic expression of the Christocentric unity of the ecclesiastical body. The fullness and the Catholicity of each local church is found in the identity of the Body of Christ.<sup>80</sup> *Christ Himself is He who offers and who is offered in the Church.*

The unity of the local churches is expressed through the unity of the whole body of the bishops throughout the ecumene, because «our bishops, even those who are stationed in the remotest parts of the world, represent the mind of Jesus Christ» (Ephes. III,2).<sup>81</sup> St. Irenaeus has the same opinion. He locates the unity of the local churches, in the Eucharist, through the communion of the whole body of bishops, which presupposes their unity in the right faith: «*Ἡμῶν δὲ σύμφωνος ἡ γνώμη τῆ εὐχαριστία, καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία...βεβαιοῖ τὴν γνώμην... Προσφέρομεν δὲ αὐτῷ τὰ ἴδια, ἐμμελῶς κοινωνίαν καὶ ἔνωσιν ἀπαγγέλλοντες, καὶ ὁμολογοῦντες σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἔγερσιν.*» (Irenaeus, *Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*, I, XVIII,5).<sup>82</sup> The mind of the Church is expressed by St. Cyprian of Carthage in the 3rd century, who sees as, “*episcopum in Ecclesia esse et Ecclesia in episcopo, et si quis cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non esse;*”<sup>83</sup> It is obvious, from these examples, that the unity of the Church is consciousness and common place of the entire Christian literature of the 2nd and the 3rd century.

The ecclesiastical needs in the middle of the 2nd century, the growth of the communities, and their geographical dispersion, set in motion the division of the Bishop-centred Eucharistic gathering.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the communities broke into

<sup>79</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.66. «εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ὑμᾶς τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ ... ἕνα ἄρτον κλῶντες...» BEPES, v.2, p.268.

<sup>80</sup>Cf. V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, pp.185-188.

<sup>81</sup>M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.62. «...καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι, οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὀρισθέντες, ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώμη εἰσίν.» BEPES, v.2, p.265.

<sup>82</sup>BEPES, v.5, p.153.

<sup>83</sup>Cyprian, *Epistle 69*, PL 8, col. 406B.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. I. Zisioulas, *Ἡ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, pp.151-188; V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.189.

parishes, where the presbyters, or the Chorepiscopi (Χωρεπίσκοποι, “the bishops of the fields or village-bishops”) officiated at the Eucharist.<sup>85</sup> This new situation was not incongruous to the ecclesiastical usage of the past.<sup>86</sup> Of course, this division did not change the relationship of the bishop to the local church, because the bishop remained the head of the local Church, and the Eucharist was officiated in the name of the bishop with his permission. On many occasions, the bishop sent the sacramental bread (*fermentum*), consecrated by him, so that this “ferment” could be united with the holy gifts which were offered by the presbyters of the parish. The unity of the Church is not broken, because Christ is her center, and her members are the members of the Body of Christ. No member who leaves the Church, breaks her unity, because the Body of Christ is not broken into pieces (“μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός;”, 1 Corinthians 1:13). The Church never ceases, even for a moment, to be interested in the unity of the faith and in the return of those who have fallen outside of the ecclesiastical body. On the basis of this principle, we are called to understand the whole evolution of the ecclesiastical government and the historical facts which surround her. The love of Christ calls for the love for the unity of the Church. The holy Fathers of the Church knew this well. The unity of the Church is a commandment, it is a dogma of the faith.

### III. The General Historical Outline.

The length and the unity which describe the Church as historical phenomenon, are an event with many-faceted consequences. The encounter of the ecclesiastical body in its diachronic progress, calls for a strict concentration on the sources and a thorough interpretation. If the researcher is to succeed in his work, he will always have to bear in mind that the Church is the Body of Christ, for if he forgets this truth, he will lose the Church itself, and in the end he will lose Christ. This is why we examined in the previous chapter, the *administration system* and

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<sup>85</sup>see C. Papadopoulos, *Περὶ Χωρεπισκόπων καὶ τιτουλαρίων ἀρχιερέων ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ*, in *Ἐκκλησία* (8-10), Athens, 1935.

<sup>86</sup>St. Ignatius writes to the Smyrnaeans that the presbyters can officiate at the Eucharist with the permission of the bishop, “ἐκείνη βεβαία εὐχαριστία ἡγείσθω, ἣ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπίσκοπον οὐσα, ἢ ᾧ ἂν αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέψῃ” (Smyrn. VIII, 1. **BEPES**, v.2, p.281). «The sole Eucharist you should consider valid is one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him.» M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.103.

the *unity* of the Church, from which we have attempted to understand the ecclesiological prerequisites of the evolution of the ecclesiastical system of government.

This historical period, which we have been examining, spanned the first three Christian centuries. It is customary to call it the period of the Early Church. Our research covers the totality of this period and is also extended to the years which follow it. It is well known that some of the greatest theologians and historians have worked on this period, and produced great volumes in size and in scope, and that each new researcher feels the weight of this legacy. It is important, however, at this point to specify here the historical limits of the period with which we are working, because we shall not follow a strict chronological pattern in the development of this thesis.

The dissemination of the Christian message was neither easy nor without obstacles. The problems with which the Apostles and their successors met are well known. Relations between the Church and the Roman Empire was the greatest external problem which the Church had to face during the first three centuries of the historic existence. The problem emerged each time a persecution had finished, and affected the ecclesiastical government. This is because the produced schisms had their source in the persecutions. The disorder in discipline, which arose out of persecution, deeply injured the ecclesiastical body, because it was generally an occasion for losing members. The Church's attempt to confront these problems produced useful forms for the evolution of the ecclesiastical system of government. The conversion of the emperor Constantine the Great was the greatest event that brought to an end this first period of relations between the Church and the Roman State. This event has been emphasized on all sides, and for this reason we shall not dwell on it. We shall simply note that the Church found itself in an advantageous position after the period of persecutions. Following the conversion of Constantine, the relations of the Church with the Roman State developed on a new basis, that is, the principle of "συναλληλία" (complementarity). This evolution was not immediate, but gradual. The principle of "complementarity" was practiced however, with proportional concessions

from each side, depending upon the circumstances, until the final dissolution of the Roman Empire by the Ottomans in 1453.

The time limits of our research are extended to the time of Justinian, when the institution of the Pentarchy reached its full development. On the political level, the Roman State was separated by the successors of Constantine into Western and Eastern. The Western State suffered great catastrophes by the barbarians. Rome fell on two occasions, once to the Visigoths in 410, and again to the Vandals in 455, but the generals of Justinian recaptured the city in 536. In the Eastern State, the evolution was different. The New Rome (*Roma Nova*), the city which the Great Constantine had founded, increased in power and authority while the Empire became powerful. A number of important emperors, such as the Great Theodosius and Justinian, arose to the fore front of history. The Church held five Ecumenical Councils until the age of Justinian, which dealt with Christological errors and consolidated the Orthodox faith. Christological controversies were at the center of theological dialogue which provided responses to heresies such as Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism. These heresies produced many disruptions in the life of the Church. The new forms which were produced during the course of these controversies, shall be examined in the chapters that follow.

Although heresies besieged the Church, the preservation of the unity of the Church is the characteristic mark of the Church's concern during the first six centuries. Heresy was confronted with the persistence of Orthodoxy, right faith and action. Although the Western Roman State suffered destruction with the encroachment of the barbarians, it continued to live along with the Eastern State until the end of Justinian's reign, while the Eastern State lived for another thousand years. It would be no exaggeration to say, that the church history of this period is as valuable as the mosaics of St. Sophia in Constantinople. It is an eternal heritage to the whole of Christendom and to humanity in general.

## Chapter 2

## The Precedence of Honour attributed to certain Thrones during the first three centuries AD

It goes without question that from the day of Pentecost to our time many changes have been made to the external organization of the Church. These changes did not alter, in any way, the Church's system of government which was founded upon divine law, and was, therefore, unchangeable. This evolution did not happen by chance, but was based upon principles full of ecclesiological prerequisites and on firm canonical foundation. The patriarchal institution is an outward evolution of the Episcopal ministry (bishop - metropolitan bishop - patriarch).<sup>87</sup> *Precedence of Honour (Πρεσβειᾶ Τιμῆς)*<sup>88</sup> is basic canonical principle of ecclesiastical government, upon which the evolution of the patriarchal institution was based. «By this term we must understand that more generally the honour awarded by custom to the bishops of the Sees which are considered more prestigious».<sup>89</sup> Prof. Phidas' definition raises certain questions,<sup>90</sup> which we shall answer in our attempt to understand the place of this canonical principle in the system of the ecclesiastical government.

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<sup>87</sup>About the Episcopal ministry see *ibid* pp. 22 ff.

<sup>88</sup>The meaning of the word honour (Τιμή) is manifold. It means merit, price, respect, esteem, - ἐκ Διὸς τιμὴ καὶ κῶδος ἀπάξει: Honour (respect) and glory are attributed to Zeus (God) - dignity, authority and penalty. The word precedence (Gr. Πρεσβεία, it is the plural of the word: Πρεσβεῖον) means the honourable gift, the premium, but in plural it means the preference, the privilege, the right. The composition of the two words means the privilege of respect and authority.

<sup>89</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.18.

<sup>90</sup>«Which is the character of this special honour, which was recognized by the bishops of the supposed prestigious Sees? Who was this honour recognized for? Was it extraordinary or regular? The answer to these questions has particular significance for research into the evolution of the organization of the ecclesiastical government, because this is the only way for the later differentiations to be understood and to be appreciated. The confrontation of these questions leads us into a host of problems, which still occupy the researchers of the sources of the first Christian centuries.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.18.

The prestigious Sees of which Phidas speaks, are those Sees to the bishops of which a special honour was given by the other local churches (e.g., the Sees of Rome, Antioch, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Caesarea of Palestine, Corinth, Alexandria, Carthage, etc.). This ecclesiastical practice resulted in the formation of an order based on custom. We will try to discover how this practice worked, that it is how the *Precedence of Honour* worked in the first three Christian centuries, and how it prevailed in the 4th century.

The rise of heresies and especially of gnosticism provided the first significant occasions for the emergence of this practice, as these challenges forced the Church to fight in order to guard its apostolic tradition which was connected with apostolic succession. This was of special importance for each local church, and for the Catholic Church as a whole. Hegesippus bears witness to this: «...μέχρι τῶν τότε χρόνων παρθένος καθαρὰ καὶ ἀδιάφθορος ἔμεινεν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἐν ἀδήλῳ που σκότει ὡς εἰ φωλευόντων εἰς ἔτι τότε τῶν, εἰ καὶ τινες ὑπῆρχον, παραφθείρειν ἐπιχειρούντων τὸν ὑγιῆ κανόνα τοῦ σωτηρίου κηρύγματος: ὡς δ' ὁ ἱερός τῶν ἀποστόλων χορός διάφορον εἰλήφει τοῦ βίου τέλος παρεληλύθει τε ἡ γενεὰ ἐκείνη τῶν αὐταῖς ἀκοαῖς τῆς ἐνθέου σοφίας ἐπακουσῶν κατηξιωμένων, τηρικαῦτα τῆς ἀθέου πλάνης ἀρχὴν ἐλάβανεν ἡ σύστασις διὰ τῆς τῶν ἑτεροδιδασκάλων ἀπάτης, οἱ καὶ ἄτε μηδενὸς ἔτι τῶν ἀποστόλων λειπομένου, γυμνῇ λοιπὸν ἤδη κεφαλῇ τῷ τῆς ἀληθείας κηρύγματι τὴν ψευδώνυμον γνῶσιν ἀντικηρύττειν ἐπεχείρουν...».<sup>91</sup>

St. Irenaeus of Lugdunum (Lyon) also bears witness to this: «...Τοῦτο τὸ κήρυγμα παρεληφύια, καὶ ταύτην τὴν πίστιν, ὡς προέφαμεν, ἡ Ἐκκλησία, καίπερ ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ διεσπαρμένη, ἐπιμελῶς φυλάσσει, ὡς ἓνα οἶκον οἰκοῦσα. καὶ ὁμοίως πιστεύει τούτοις, ὡς μίαν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχουσα καρδίαν, καὶ συμφώνως ταῦτα κηρύσσει, καὶ διδάσκει, καὶ παραδίδωσιν, ὡς ἓν στόμα κεκτημένη. Καὶ γὰρ αἱ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον διάλεκτοι ἀνόμοιοι, ἀλλ' ἡ δύναμις τῆς παραδόσεως μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ. Καὶ οὔτε αἱ ἐν Γερμανίαις ἰδρυμέναι Ἐκκλησίαι ἄλλως πεπιστεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλως παραδιδόασιν, οὔτε ἐν ταῖς Ἰβηρίαις, οὔτε ἐν Κελτοῖς, οὔτε κατὰ τὰς ἀνατολάς, οὔτε ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, οὔτε ἐν Λιβύῃ, οὔτε αἱ κατὰ μέσα τοῦ κόσμου ἰδρυμέναι. ἀλλ' ὡσπερ ὁ ἥλιος, τὸ κτίσμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτός. οὔτω καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς ἀληθείας πανταχῇ φαίνει, καὶ φωτίζει πάντας τοὺς βουλομένους εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀλήθειας ἐλ-

<sup>91</sup> Eusebius, *Eccl. History*, 3, 32,7-8. **BEPES**, v.19, pp.274-275. «...that the church continued until then as a pure and uncorrupt virgin; whilst if there were any at all, that attempted to pervert the sound doctrine of the saving gospel, they were yet skulking in dark retreats; but when the sacred choir of apostles became extinct, and the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom had passed away, then also the combinations of impious error arose by the fraud and delusions of false teachers. These also, as there were none of the apostles left, henceforth attempted, without shame, to preach their false doctrine against the gospel of truth.» C. Crusé, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea, in Palestine*, London, 1870, p.107.

θεῖν...».<sup>92</sup> These witnesses indicate the dangers to which the right faith was exposed and the common quest for the maintenance of the pure apostolic faith on the part of all the local churches. The safe keeping of the apostolic tradition was the central concern of the Early Church. The well known quote of Tertullian «...*quod Ecclesiae ab Apostolis, Apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo accepit...*»<sup>93</sup> and the other one of Vincent of Lerins «...*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est...*»<sup>94</sup> set the limits for, and the meaning of the apostolicity in the order of succession<sup>95</sup> and in the catholicity of the faith.<sup>96</sup> Apostolicity is characteristic of the fullness of each local church. At the same time we can also say that apostolicity describes a local church which was founded by one or more Apostles. Indeed this is true of many apostolic Sees<sup>97</sup> in Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>**Ireneus**, *Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*, A, X,2. **BEPES**, v.5. pp.115-116

<sup>93</sup>**Tertullian**, *Liber De Praescriptionibus*, XXI, PL 2, col. 33B.

<sup>94</sup>**St. Vincent of Lerins**, *Commonitorium Primum*, 2, PL 50, col. 640.

<sup>95</sup>The local churches piously kept the lists of bishops, with which they proved themselves to be in unbroken continuity. The maintenance of these lists was not an act of vanity nor an act serving the "historical consciousness" of the local churches. It referred to the real need to strengthen the witnesses in the fight against heresy. Later historians such as Hegesippus and Eusebius of Caesarea used these lists to their advantage. (**Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, 4, 22,2-3. **BEPES**, v.19, p.303. & 5, 5,8 ff. **BEPES**, v.19, pp.324 ff).

As regards the lists of bishops of the church of Rome, see **B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.16-22. This question was of interest later, because of the *Petrine Theory*. See **F. Dvornik**, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.41 ff. In opposition to him, **Robert B. Eno** disputes the authenticity of the lists of bishops and characterizes them as «baseless inventions of later generations.» (*The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.31-34).

<sup>96</sup>The connection between Precedence of Honour and orthodoxy of faith was realized for the first time during the fight against heresy. The question of the faith is essential to both the spiritual as well as practical life of the Church. The loss of orthodox faith involves the loss of salvation itself. Precedence of Honour meant orthodoxy. The bishops of the prestigious See became established guardians of orthodoxy. The consciousness of the Catholic Church recognized this by attributing Precedence of Honour to these bishops. Unity and persistence on orthodoxy in the local church is demonstrated by the communion of the bishops.

This ecclesiastical situation led to the establishment of similar forms of ecclesiastical government in the life of the Church. The Church actiated the power of the Precedence of Honour whenever she needed to protect the orthodox faith. There are examples of this in the first three centuries, such as the convocation of local synods, at the time of Victor of Rome and Polycrates of Ephesus (*ibid* pp.35 ff). Another example is Paul of Samosata. He was deposed by the synod of Antioch (268) for his heretical opinions (**Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, 7, 30, 1-19. **BEPES**, v.20, pp.34-37). In the case of the See of Antioch, the synodical system put in practice the protection of the faith and the adjudication of the bishops of the prestigious Sees (Cf **V. Phidas**, *Εκκ. Ιστ.*, I, pp.244-246; **HCC**, v.I, pp.118-126). The question of the adjudication of the bishops of the prestigious thrones was the most pressing question during the next few centuries.

<sup>97</sup>The ecclesiastical meaning of the word throne (*θρόνος*) is different from the secular meaning. This is a very beautiful word as far as meaning is concerned, because it specifies the distinguished position of the bishop amongst the clergy and the laity of his bishopric. This is produced by the visual presence of the bishop's position in the church, during the services. It is



Indeed, we can distinguish in the 2nd century between those local churches which had bishops with unbroken succession reaching back to the apostolic age, and those who did not, i.e., local churches that owed their foundation to the mission of other local churches.<sup>99</sup> This fact allows us to distinguish between "Mother Churches," which had been founded by the Apostles, and "Daughter Churches," which had been founded by the missionary efforts of the previous ones. Clearly the *Mother Churches* had greater authority and respect than their *Daughters*, but this did not effect, in any way, the integrity of the latter. This respect was equivalent to the respect that the younger owed to the elder. At the same time, there were practical reasons which led to this respect, such as the maintenance of the scriptures and of the oral church tradition by the older local churches. Hence the older churches had the *preference of witness* (τὴν προτίμησιν τῆς μαρτυρίας) for any problem that arose. Their witness was appreciated as more reliable, because it stemmed from the apostolic tradition which they had maintained, as in Ephesus: «ὑπὸ Παύλου μὲν τεθεμελιωμένη, Ἰωάννου δὲ παραμείναντος αὐτοῖς μέχρι τῶν Τραϊανουῦ χρόνων, μάρτυς ἀληθῆς ἔστιν τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων παραδόσεως»<sup>100</sup>

The "mouth" of each local church was the bishop, who expressed the witness of the living apostolic tradition of his church. It was a logical necessity, however, that the bishop of a local church who had "preference of witness", should enjoy a particular honour over the other bishops. This honour was not attributed just to the person of the bishop, because it derived from his local church, whose orthodoxy was expressed by her bishop.<sup>101</sup> In this way, the subjectivity of the

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well-known that there was a multiple-throne (σύνθρονον) in the early Christian churches in the sanctuary around the altar, with the bishop being placed in the middle and the presbyters at his side. Liturgical evolution saw the throne move from the sanctuary to the nave after the sixth century where it has remained until today see **G. Antourakis**, *Χριστιανική Ἀρχαιολογία καὶ Ἐπιγραφική*, Athens, 1990, v.I, p.204.

<sup>98</sup> **F. Dvornik**, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, p.44.

<sup>99</sup> Cf **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.26-30.

<sup>100</sup> **Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, 3,23,4. **BEPES**, v.19, p.265. «...which had been founded by Paul, and where John continued to abide until the times of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.» **C. Crusé**, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, p.94.

<sup>101</sup> Clearly, the *Precedence of Honour* of a prestigious Episcopal throne was attributed to the bishop of this throne. Even in the cases, when the bishops of the prestigious thrones were not important persons, the *Precedence of Honour* of their throne was still attributed to them. Only in exceptional situations, were persons placed above the limits of the *Precedence of Honour*. Both Ossius of Cordova (see **V. De Clercq**, *Ossius of Cordova*, Washington, D. C., 1954) and Palmas of Amastris in Pontus were exceptions that confirm the law, in the first case because of

Episcopal witness is reduced. St. Irenaeus had clearly explicated this notion.<sup>102</sup> The *charisma veritatis*, which is given to the bishop by St. Irenaeus,<sup>103</sup> is the expression of the living *regula veritatis* of the Church. «It is easy to understand, that the prestige of the churches having apostolic foundation was greater than the prestige of those not being in such a position, because the presupposition for the horizontal unity of the churches in the ecumene was the vertical connection with the Apostolic Church.»<sup>104</sup> We see that the prestige of certain local churches (the most prestigious Sees) gave *Precedence of Honour* to their bishops, and at the same time, it created an order based on custom with enhanced authority.

The result of this canonical tendency was that since the 2nd century *Precedence of Honour* was attributed to the bishops of certain prestigious apostolic Sees.<sup>105</sup> If we turned our attention to this, we should ascertain that the sources bear witness to a connection between *Precedence in Honour* and the Sees that had political importance in the life of the Roman Empire as political,

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his theological education, and in the second, because of his *Precedence in Consecration*. (Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.49)

It is important to note, however, that the prestige of some persons was very important in the life of the Church. It had such a great meaning that the theology of the Ecumenical councils was connected with these persons. There is not one Ecumenical council in which persons of exceptional prestige did not participate, or on whose work it was not based. Who does not know the prestige of such persons as Dionysius of Corinth, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrosius of Mediolanum, Basil of Caesarea, Memnon of Ephesus, Cyril of Alexandria, only to mention a few. The chorus of the Saints of the Catholic Church covers the pages of ecclesiastical history with persons of exceptional prestige. The criterion of sanctity, of those who tasted the *Holy Spirit's* gifts, of the defenders of spiritual life, characterizes the historical life of the Church and is in direct connection with the Episcopal ministry (see **I. Blachos**, *Ὁρθόδοξη Ψυχοθεραπεία (πατερική θεραπευτική ἀγωγή)*, Athens, 1992 (1986).). The importance of the prestige of these exceptional persons in the life of the Church is so great that St. Papadopoulos refers to it in terms of "primacy of truth". Actually Prof. St. Papadopoulos claims, in connection with the person of Dionysius of Corinth, that, «indeed, there was and there is primacy in the Church. This is dependent on the truth. A bishop expressing more authentically and more deeply than other bishops the divine truth about problems that concern salvation and life in the Church has a primacy. We find the primacy of truth, which is a divine mystery, first in Clement of Rome, then in Ignatius of Antioch and now in Dionysius of Corinth. This primacy creates an inner sense of responsibility to the person who expresses it and grants to him the right to speak and to insist and to order (προστάτη) the churches. Not only does this not have any relation to the primacy of jurisdiction or of power, but also refutes this substantially.» **S. Papadopoulos**, *Πατρολογία*, v.I, p.269.

<sup>102</sup>«Καὶ οὐτε ὁ πάνυ δυνατὸς ἐν λόγῳ τῶν ἐν ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις προσεστώτων, ἕτερα τούτων ἔρεῖ (οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον), οὐτε ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ἐλαττώσει τὴν παράδοσιν. Μιᾶς γὰρ καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς πίστεως οὐσης, οὐτε ὁ πολὺ περὶ αὐτῆς δυνάμενος εἰπεῖν, ἐπλεόνασεν, οὐτε ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον, ἠλαττώνησε.» (**Irenaeus**, *Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*, A, X, 2. **BEPES**, v.5, p.116)

<sup>103</sup>**Irenaeus**, *Contra Haereses*, IV,26, PG 7, cols. 1052-1056; 4,1, SC 34, pp.114 ff.

<sup>104</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.33.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.35.

cultural and financial centers. Tertullian mentions those thrones which had exceptional ecclesiastical prestige, and associates them with political importance. It is characteristic of his perspective, that he mentions only those prestigious thrones who received apostolic letters, leaving out others, e.g., Alexandria, Antioch, etc. In the same way, he leaves out those Sees which had received letters, but who no longer had political importance at the time he was writing. «...percurre Ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsae adhuc cathedrae Apostolorum suis locis praesident; apud quas ipsae authenticae litterae eorum recitantur... Proxima est tibi Achaia; habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia; habes Philippos; habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiae adjaces; habes Romam.»<sup>106</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea mentions the names of the bishops and the Sees, which took part in the synods which were summoned to deal with Easter, but he only mentions the prestigious thrones. «...Θεόφιλος... Καισαρεία... Νάρκισσος... Ἱεροσόλυμοις,... Ῥώμης... Βίκτορα,... Πόντον ... Πάλλμας,... Γαλλίαν... Εἰρηναῖος,... Βακχύλλου τῆς Κορινθίων,... Πολυκράτης (τῆς Ἐφέσου)...»<sup>107</sup> This interconnection was not strange to the tradition of the Church. The development of the apostolic mission had targeted those cities with geopolitical importance in the Roman Empire. The Apostles used this situation to their advantage.<sup>108</sup> The Church did not overlook the secular environment in which she found herself, even though her interest was beyond the world, because of her eschatological perspective (ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, Philippians 3:20). Thus, at the end of the 2nd century, there was no province without a throne, which did not find itself within the structure of the *Precedence of Honour*. Even Carthage and Lugdunum had *Precedence of Honour*, although they were not apostolic Sees. Clearly there was need for a center of unity, so much so that the custom of the 2nd century creates the precedent for ecclesiastical action in the 3rd century. It is a matter of fact that the requested center of unity was easy to find in the political center of the province.

*Precedence of Honour* referred to relations between bishops, since the spiritual authority of bishops over their flock and clergy was self-evident. We

<sup>106</sup> Tertullian, *Liber De Praescriptionibus*, XXXVI, PL 2, col. 49.

<sup>107</sup> Eusebius, *Eccl. History*, 5, 23,3-5. BEPES, v.19, pp.341-342.

<sup>108</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.37-39; F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, p.29.

must note, however, that *Precedence of Honour* was not clothed with any authority during this period. It was not obligatory and it did not specify institutional jurisdiction of the prestigious Sees. *Precedence of Honour* was attributed and applied during the process of synods in the sense that bishops honored by custom were given the presidency of these synods. The synodical system of the Church was the natural environment where *Precedence of Honour* was developed. A good example, of the way in which *Precedence of Honour* evolved in this period,<sup>109</sup> are the disputes about Easter, and the synods which were convoked for the consecration of bishops. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why *Precedence of Honour* depends directly upon the synodical system of the Church.

As regards the synodical system, we must note that it was the authentic expression of the ecclesiastical function of the Church, and was not a copy of other contemporary systems of government. Indeed, in the function of this system, the Church utilized for its advantage the experiences and models of the Judaic and Hellenistic environment, by assuming all those which were useful to it. However, the Church expresses, through the synodical system, her whole experience, the living, the spiritual and liturgical life, and the effective presence of the "gifts" of the *Holy Spirit*. This specific distinction sets the synodical system apart from any secular model. The Apostolic council of Jerusalem (48 AD)<sup>110</sup> was the model and the beginning for the historical function of the synodical institution, which set the limits of the apostolic work by its decisions.<sup>111</sup> The Apostolic council authentically expressed the consciousness of the Church, and its decisions were the authentic canon of each council until today.<sup>112</sup>

A great gap appears in the operation of the synodical system,<sup>113</sup> beginning with the Apostolic period (Apostolic council) and reaching the middle of the 2nd

<sup>109</sup>see Eusebius, *Eccl. History*, 5, 23-25. **BEPES**, v.19, pp.341-344.

<sup>110</sup>see C. Boulgaris, *Χρονολογία τῶν Γεγονότων τοῦ Βίου τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου*, Athens, 1983<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>111</sup>Cf. C. Boulgaris, *The Unity of the Apostolic Church*, pp.315 ff.

<sup>112</sup>εἶπε γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπιτάγῃς, ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας, ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε. Ἐρωστθε." (Acts 15:28-29).

<sup>113</sup>Cf. **OBD**, pp.540-543.

century, at which time the Church needed to confront the problem of heresies<sup>114</sup> (and especially Montanism).<sup>115</sup> We know that the activation of the synodical institution is an extraordinary action, which occurs when a question arises which needs to be answered in order to preserve the life of the Church. We discover the vigorous character of the synodical structure in a large number of letters (such as those of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus) during this century. The unanimity of the body of the bishops was expressed in this way with regard to questions which occupied the mind of the Catholic Church. We see the synodical character of the Church in the meetings of bishops, like that one of Anicetus of Rome and Polycarp of Smyrna concerning the question of the date of Easter.<sup>116</sup> We see the synodical practice in the consecration of bishops,<sup>117</sup> which were done by the nearest neighbouring bishops. It is self-evident that the bishops who performed the consecration could refuse to consecrate a person whom they judged to be unqualified, which sometimes went against the will of the people. Certainly, at least three bishops were needed both for the service of consecration and for the election of bishops,<sup>118</sup> and it was at these gatherings that the communion of the local churches was confirmed. The bishops were the vehicle of their common belief, and the synods called for the consecration of bishops were the model of the local councils in the 2nd century.<sup>119</sup> *Precedence of Honour* had an important role in the function of the previous forms, as we said. That is because the head of a council was a bishop whose throne had an appropriate

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<sup>114</sup>Eusebius preserves the epistle of Serapion of Antioch to Caricos and Pontios, where the condemnation of Montanism is implicit in an entirety of local councils. Eusebius, *Eccl. History*, 5, 19,2. **BEPES**, v.19, p.338.

<sup>115</sup>The synodical character of the Church is fundamental and self-evident. It is seen in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the members administer the body of Christ (the Head of the Church) and therefore among them. The common unity of the person of the bishop is the expression of the common unity of the local churches. The common unity of this body was obvious when there were no questions which questioned the unity of the Church.

<sup>116</sup>Eusebius, *Eccl. History*, 5, 24,16-17. **BEPES**, v.19, pp.343-344. About the position of the bishop of Rome in the body of the bishops of the Catholic Church, see **Abbé Guettée**, *The Papacy*, pp.56-62.

<sup>117</sup>The word consecration (*χειροτονία*) has two meanings. The first meaning, which is literal, has the content of election. The second meaning, which prevailed because of the liturgical tradition, has the content that we give today to the word, that is the liturgical action of the laying on of hands in ordination of the bishop. This distinction of the word's content permits us to understand the historical evolution of the meaning of the word.

<sup>118</sup>Very important information about the election and ordination of a bishop is preserved in the book: **Constitutions of the Apostles** (*Διαταγαὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων*), 8, 4-5. **BEPES**, v.2, pp.142-144. & **Hippolytus**, *Apostolic Tradition*, **SC**, v.11, pp.40 ff.

honour (although, the head-bishop could also be the one who had *Precedence of Ordination*). The importance of the practice of *Precedence of Honour* was great, because it allowed for the harmonic functioning of each ecclesiastical activity, and at the same time it created a law of custom (customary usage).

The authority of prestigious thrones was result of a combination of many ecclesiastical presuppositions. The practice of charity was a deeply spiritual activity of the Church. The well known collections (*λογεῖαι*) were activities of financially flourishing Christian communities undertaken for the support of poor communities. This practice is certainly connected with the spiritual work of the Church, and stemmed from the message of the Gospel. The Apostle Paul calls the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8,1-9,15)<sup>120</sup> to strengthen the local church of Jerusalem, in the same way as the Macedonian churches had done. He regards this ministry very important, and does not hesitate to devote a large part of his letter to advocating this position. He tries to bring this about through an appeal to love,<sup>121</sup> about which he had spoken to the church of Corinth. St. Paul expresses, through this endeavor, his love for the church of Corinth, «'Αλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν παντί περισσεύετε ... καὶ τῆ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπη» (2 Cor. 8,7), and in turn asks of the Corinthians to confirm their love for the Church «καὶ τὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης γνήσιον δοκιμάζων» (2 Cor. 8,8) by their participation in the collection for the church of Jerusalem. This love, then, among the local churches was realized with works, such as the granting of financial support to the poor churches, as the practice had been since apostolic times. Corinth was, in St. Paul's time, a flourishing commercial and financial center, and the local church flourished in these respects too.

Indeed, the collections (*λογεῖαι*) were ecclesiastical practice, based upon apostolic foundation and expressed real Christian love, which was the basic bond of the local churches. They enlivened this bond and, therefore, become very important to the entire body of the Catholic Church. The attribution of honour to

<sup>119</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.40-47.

<sup>120</sup>The interpreters agree that St. Paul calls the Corinthians to strengthen the collection for the local church of Jerusalem. see S. Agouridis, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην*, Athens, 1971, p.258. I. Karavidopoulos, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην*, Athens, 1984, p.234. J. Murphy-O'Connor, in *NJBC*, pp.823-825.

<sup>121</sup>This is the famous hymn of love, whose merit is unique and it shows off St. Paul as the theologian of the love (1 Cor. 13). see S. Agouridis, *Ἀποστόλου Παύλου Πρώτη πρὸς Κορινθίους Ἐπιστολή*, Thessaloniki, 1985, pp.225-231; V. Ioannidis, *Ἡ καινὴ ἐντολὴ τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ ὁ ὕμνος αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου ἐν 1 Κορ. 13*, Thessaloniki, 1950.

certain churches was also the result of this practice, which, could be also connected with *Precedence of Honour*. It was logical inevitability that the prestigious thrones which were in the financial centers of Roman Empire and had the necessary financial foundation, made collections (λογεῖται) for other churches. The prologue of St. Ignatius' letter to the church of Rome demonstrates this. The local church of Rome is characterized by St. Ignatius as the "foremost in love"<sup>122</sup> (καὶ προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης),<sup>123</sup> as having "Precedence in love". Apparently, St. Ignatius used this honourable title because of his first-hand knowledge of the work of the Roman church in this respect.<sup>124</sup> The good father actually borrows his terminology for the Church of Rome from St. Paul. The comparison of these two passages alone convinces us of the basis of St. Ignatius' thinking and supplies a clear equivalence in both terms and meaning.<sup>125</sup> We ought not to forget that the authentic patristic tradition presupposes a biblical foundation. The church of Rome, who gives her love as an authentic expression of her spiritual life, is eligible for full recognition of her work. Any other interpretation, which leads to arbitrary conclusions about this recognition such as that connected with the later papal primacy, is without basis and substance.<sup>126</sup> The *Precedence of Honour* and the status of Rome, as of other prestigious thrones, was the result of guileless love towards the weaker sister churches.

The question of the *Precedence of Honour* of the bishop of Rome, while belonging to the entire spectrum of this issue, has taken on a bigger dimension

<sup>122</sup> M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.85.

<sup>123</sup> BEPES, v.2, p.274.

<sup>124</sup> A. von Harnack expressed this opinion first (*The Expansion of Christianity*, v.1, p.231) for the interpretation of the passage. Contemporary researchers share this opinion (Cf. R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, p. 35).

<sup>125</sup> «Ἄλλ' ὡσπερ ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πάσῃ σπουδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπῃ, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε.» (2 Cor. 8,7) «...ἀξιώθεος, ἀξιοπρεπής, ἀξιωμακάριστος, ἀξιεπίανος, ἀξιεπίτευκτος, ἀξιώαγνος καὶ προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης, χριστόνομος, πατρώνυμος,...» (Ignatius, *to the Romans*, prologue, BEPES, v.2, p.274) = «worthy of God, worthy of honour, blessing, praise, and success; worthy too in holiness, foremost in love, observing the law of Christ, and bearing the Father's Name.» (M. Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p.85.)

<sup>126</sup> According to VI. Phidas, the characterization «describers in a superfluous way the flourishing spiritual life of the Roman church and it cannot be used in support of the later claims of papal supremacy» (Ἑκκλ. Ιστ., I, p.197). B. J. Kidd is in the same way (*The Roman Primacy*, pp.12-14). Unlike them, N. Afanassieff regards that St. Ignatius intimates with this characterization that the Roman church acted as having metropolitan jurisdiction around its bishopric (*The Church which Presides in Love*, pp.94-95). But C. Papadopoulos sees this as basis of the principle of accommodation (*Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, p.15).

because of the development of the theory of papal primacy. It is characteristic that the sources of the first Christian centuries were used to support the previous opinion of the papacy. The famous, and difficult, passage of St. Irenaeus of Lugdunum, from his book “*Detection and Overthrow of the Pretended but False Gnosis*” (chapter III, 3, 2), is a classical example of this. This passage is preserved, unfortunately, in a Latin translation, which is problematic. It reads: «Sed quoniam valde longum est in hoc tali volumine omnium ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximae et antiquissimae, et omnibus congitae, a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romae fundatae et constitutae Ecclesiae, eam quam habet ab apostolis Traditionem et annuntiatam hominibus fidem per successiones episcoporum pervenientem usque ad nos indicantes, confundimus omnes eos, qui quoquo modo, vel per sibi placentiam malam, vel vanam gloriam, vel per caecitatem et malam sententiam, praeterquam oportet colligunt. *Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam propter potiore principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper, ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis Traditio*»<sup>127</sup>

Many interpretations have been given to this passage, and many contradict one another.<sup>128</sup> The most original, and, in my opinion, the best translation, is given by V. Phidas. He accepts the following:

1. The Latin translation is strictly dependent upon the Greek text, and therefore, a restoration of the text is not possible «because in our opinion the only impartial and acceptable way for the restoration of the original text, is the text of the Latin translation.»<sup>129</sup>
2. He corrects the translation of the Latin word *undique* from the Greek word *όπουδηποτε*, which means “if somebody is everywhere”, to the Greek word *όπουθενδηποτε*, which means “if somebody comes from everywhere”.

<sup>127</sup> Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, 3,3,2, PG 7, cols. 848-849; SC 34, p.102.

<sup>128</sup> With regards to the speculation concerning this passage, see V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, pp. 197-205.

<sup>129</sup> V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.199.



3. The phrase “*omnem ecclesiam*” must be translated in the singular and not in the plural, as it is done today.
4. The connection of the two previous comments shows that St. Irenaeus refers to the church of Rome, and the problem which confronted her due to the multinational structure of its people. He calls all these to follow the local tradition in their liturgical life.
5. It is obvious that the church of Rome is mentioned by St. Irenaeus. The Greek text of the following paragraph confirms this fact, «Θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρησαν...» (III,3,3).<sup>130</sup> The conjunction “οὖν” proves that the author is referring to the local church of Rome in the previous paragraph.

This is the restoration of the Greek text by Vl. Phidas: «(III, 3, 2) Ἄλλ' ἐπειμῆξιτόν ἐστι ἐν τιοιούτῳ τόμῳ πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἀριθμεῖν τὰς διαδοχάς, ἐπίδειξιν παρέχοντες τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων παραληφθείσης παραδόσεως καὶ τῆς καταγγελθείσης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πίστεως τῆς καταντηκυῖας ἄχρις ἡμῶν ταῖς τῶν ἐπισκόπων διαδοχαῖς τῆς μεγίστης καὶ ἀρχαιοτάτης καὶ πᾶσι γνωστῆς, τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνδοξοτάτων δύο ἀποστόλων Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου θεμελιωθείσης καὶ οἰκοδομηθείσης, ἐν Ρώμῃ ἐκκλησίας, καταισχυνοῦμεν πάντας ἐκείνους, οὔτινες ἐν οἰφδῆτινι τρόπῳ (προσχήματι) εἴτε δι' αὐθάδειαν ἢ ματαιοδοξίαν ἢ τύφλωσιν καὶ λογισμόν κακὸν παρασυναγωγὰς ποιοῦνται. Πρὸς ταύτην οὖν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (= τῆς Ρώμης), διὰ τὴν ὑπεροχωτέραν ἀρχήν, ἀνάγκη τὴν πᾶσαν συμφωνεῖν ἐκκλησίαν (= τῆς Ρώμης), τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τοὺς ὀποθενδήποτε πιστούς, ἐν ἧ (= ἐκκλησία Ρώμης) πάντοτε ἐφυλάχθη ὑπὸ τῶν ὀποθενδήποτε (= ἐν Ρώμῃ πιστῶν) ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων παράδοσις αὕτη. (III, 3, 3) Θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρησαν...»<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> BEPES, v.5, p.143.

<sup>131</sup> V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλ. Ιστ.*, I, p.203. *The English translation:* «But as it would be very tedious to enumerate in such a work the succession of all the churches, by tracing the tradition that comes from the Apostles and the faith that was declared to men and that has been transmitted to us, through the bishops' succession of the very great and very ancient church and known to all, of the church which was founded and established at Rome by the two very glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, we confound all those who in any manner whatsoever, either through blindness or bad intention, do not gather where they should. Hence, with this church (= of Rome, i.e., with her tradition), because of the most powerful principality, is obliged to agree the whole church (of Rome), that is to say, *the faithful who are from all places*, in this church (of Rome). This tradition of the Apostles has been preserved (in Rome) always by those who are of all countries. § The blessed memory Apostles, who founded and established (this) church, consecrated Linus for the Episcopal ministry ...»

I think that the translation made by Vl. Phidas, is indisputable.<sup>132</sup> Thus, any attempt to make a connection between this text and the theory of papal primacy is unfounded. The connection made of the above text with the decision of Victor of Rome to put an end to communion with churches who supported different traditions than he shown, is not right.<sup>133</sup> The meaning of this passage of St. Irenaeus is important, because it supports the apostolicity of the church of Rome and demonstrates its *Precedence of Honour*. It is interesting that the Apostolicity of the church of Rome is founded upon the Apostles Peter and Paul during this difficult situation. We see that the church of Rome does this, every time that it has an internal or external problem.<sup>134</sup> The stress and overstress of the

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<sup>132</sup> **V. Stefanidis'** opinion that Irenaeus had been influenced by opinions circulating in the West at the end of the second century concerning the position of the local church of Rome is invalid, not only because of the reasons already stated, but because such opinions did not exist during this period (Έκκλ. Ιστ., p.286). **J. Kelly** does not accept nor mention papal primacy in this passage «there is therefore no allusion to the later Petrine claims of the Roman see» (*Early Christian Doctrines*, London, 1993 (1968), pp.192-193). **Abbé Guettée** interprets the passage correctly by making the correct philological suggestions about the translation of the Latin text. He ascertains that the text is directed at the local church of Rome and its faithful who were there from other churches (*The Papacy*, pp.62-67). **B. J. Kidd** has the same opinion (*The Roman Primacy*, pp.15-16). **Robert B. Eno** agrees with this interpretation. He believes there is a connection between this passage and the Quartodeciman communities in the local church of Rome. The communities created problems in the liturgical life of the Church of Rome. (*The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.37-42). For further bibliography see **V. Phidas**, Έκκλ. Ιστ., I, p.198.

<sup>133</sup> see **Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, 5, 24,9-11. (**BEPES**. v.19, p.343). Victor broke with the churches, following the tradition of the Quartodecimans (τεσσαρεσκαιδεκατικοί). This had negative results for him, because «οὐ πᾶσι τε τοῖς ἐπισκόποις ταῦτ' ἤρέσκετο», and for that matter, there is a precedent of common unity between Anicetus of Rome and Polycarp of Smyrna. This proves that the actions of Victor resulted from the pressure of the church of Rome itself, and did not indicate any idea of papal supremacy. We can assume that Victor questioned the place of Rome because it had just arisen out of a period of serious political crisis. Victor (189-98) was the first in the order of the non-Greek bishops of Rome. He was borne in Africa and this must have played an important role in his spiritual formation. Victor marked another first, in that he had connections with the palace of Rome. He was the first bishop of Rome who had connections with the government. These facts may indicate why he acted as he did. Cf. **J.N.D. Kelly**, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, Oxford, 1986, p.12; **W. de Vries**, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, pp.31-32.

<sup>134</sup> The followings are similar such events: **1.** The controversy between Soter of Rome and Dionysios of Corinth. The bishop of Rome invokes the apostolic tradition of his church from Apostles Peter and Paul, but Dionysios does the same thing. (**Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, 2,25,8). **2.** The reaction of Tertullian against Callistus of Rome, about the forgiveness of mortal sin. It is the first time a connection was made between the famous passage Matth. 16,18 without giving up the connection to Apostle Paul. **3.** The controversy between Stephen of Romē and St. Cyprian of Carthage in the previous passages and the interpretative problems that are created in the use of the previous passage (Matth. 16,18) by St. Cyprian during the support of Cornelius of Rome. Cf. **V. Phidas**, Έκκλ. Ιστ., I, pp.205-208. **Abbé Guettée** has collected and analyzed all the known passages, which the defender of papal supremacy accept as the basis of the practice of this theory in the Early Church (*The Papacy*, pp.67-91). see and **B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.23-41; **G. Barraclough**, *The Medieval Papacy*, pp.15-19; **R. Eno**, *The*

apostolicity of the local church of Rome was a historical phenomenon which led to the creation of different forms of ecclesiastical government during the passage of time.<sup>135</sup> This phenomenon was transformed into a problem when it created such forms, which were absolutely devoid of ecclesiological prerequisites. Of course, it is a well-known fact that the *Precedence of Honour* of the church of Rome was recognized, as had been the case with the other prestigious Sees.

In conclusion, we see that the birth and development of customary rank of *Precedence of Honour*, which was bestowed upon the prestigious thrones of the Church, occurred during the first three Christian centuries. There was no connection between *Precedence of Honour* and authority. *Precedence of Honour* existed absolutely with reference to relations between bishops. It determined the presidency of the local councils, the consecration of bishops, and or the solution of other ecclesiastical questions. The importance of the *Precedence of Honour* will be demonstrated in the evolution of the ecclesiastical government at the beginning of the next century. It is worth mentioning that the development of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious thrones did not occur without reactions from other local churches.

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*Rise of the Papacy*, pp.42 ff. N. Afanassieff, *The Church which Presides in Love*, pp. 59 ff. C. Papadopoulos, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.15 ff.

<sup>135</sup> Francis Dvornik is inclined to accept this historical situation, because of the facts themselves, although he is a zealous defender of the petrine theory (*Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.42-43.).

## Chapter 3

## The Precedence of Honour attributed to certain Thrones during the fourth century AD

The fourth century of Christian history has a distinguished place in ecclesiastical and profane historiography. This is the century of the triumph of the Church, and the great dangers due to the heresy of Arianism. Unquestionably, the convocation, proceedings, and doctrinal and canonical decisions of the 1st Ecumenical Council (325) were a top-ranking event.<sup>136</sup> The decisions taken then, especially those concerning ecclesiastical government, were of great importance, because they introduced the *metropolitical system*. The *Precedence of Honour* which up to that point was attributed to certain Sees was changed into a *Metropolitical Precedence*, that is, Precedence was attributed to the thrones of the capitals (*Μητρόπολις*) of political provinces. This decision did not stand in opposition to the prevailing at that time system of *Precedence of Honour*, because the Metropolitical thrones were actually identical with the thrones that had been attributed *Precedence of Honour* in the majority of the cases. The holy Fathers of the Council of Nicaea<sup>137</sup> demonstrated direct compliance with its decisions, and the signatures in the records of the synod prove this. The recognition of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious thrones is certified by these signatures,<sup>138</sup> but this did not mean that the

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<sup>136</sup>P. Christou, *Ἑλλ. Πατρολογία*, v.3, pp.22-26; L. Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, pp.33-80; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.5 ff; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, London, 1993 (1972<sup>3</sup>), pp.51 ff; I. Karmiris, *Dogmatica et Symbolica Monumenta Orthodoxae Catholicae Ecclesiae*, Athens, 1952, pp.118-129; G. Konidaris, *Γενική Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, Athens, 1957, pp.241 ff; S. Papadopoulos, *Ἀθανάσιος ὁ Μέγας καὶ ἡ Θεολογία τῆς Οἰκουμένης Συνόδου*, Athens, 1980; V. Phidas, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.377 ff; V. Stefanidis, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, Athens, 1959, pp.99 ff; F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.1 ff.

<sup>137</sup>Cf. D. Gonis, *Νίκαια: ἡ Μητρόπολις τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Βιθυνίας: Ἱστορικό Περιγράμμα*, in «Νίκαια, Ἱστορία, Θεολογία, Πολιτισμὸς 325-1987», Nicaea, 1988, pp.13-48.

<sup>138</sup>Mansi, II, col. 881; «Ὁσῖος ἐπίσκοπος Κορυθούβης Ἰσπανίας, οὕτως πιστεύω ὡς προεγγράπται: Τῶμης Βίτων καὶ Βικεντίνος πρεσβύτερου Αἰγύπτου Ἀλέξανδρος; Ἀντιοχείας τῆς μεγάλης Εὐστάθιος; Τε-

*suprametropolitan Precedence of Honour* of these Sees were given equal recognition.<sup>139</sup>

The canonical decisions of the metropolitanical system demonstrate the breadth, quality and type of the speculation which was produced concerning the practice of the relative canons (4, 5, 6 & 7) and also the experience of the Fathers of the Holy Synod. Canon 4<sup>140</sup> introduced the metropolitanical system. It solved the question of the election and consecration of a bishop by the provincial synod by direct reference to the metropolitan. The metropolitan has the absolute right of confirming the proceedings, and he is the master of ordinations. The whole canon is in harmony with the tradition and the ecclesiastical procedure prevailing up to that time, according to which the final election and consecration of a bishop was to be done by the neighbouring bishops. Metropolitanical power has, as its goal, the protection of the election of a bishop from possible peccadilloes that, as we understand, had emerged up till then. Canon 5<sup>141</sup> determined the function and the time of the convocation of the provincial synod, whose purpose was to provide a solution to any problem presented to it (such as to act as the judge of clergy or laity indispute, and to deal with other pastoral questions).<sup>142</sup>

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ροσολύμων Μακάριος: Ἐρποκρατίων Κύνων: καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν: ὧ̄ εἰς πλήρες τὰ ὀνόματα κεῖται ἐν τῷ Συνοδικῷ Ἀθανασίου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπισκόπου.» **Socrates, Eccl. History**, I, 13, PG 67, col. 188.

<sup>139</sup>The question of the presidency of the First Ecumenical Council is difficult to determine and in fact is controversial because the records of the synod were not preserved. It appears that the power of *Precedence of Honour* was applied to this situation and Eustathius of Antioch must have acted as president (see **V. Phidas, 'H A' Οἰκουμένη συνόδος. Προβλήματα περὶ τὴν σύγκλησιν, τὴν συγκρότησιν καὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῆς συνόδου**, Athens, 1974). **Abbé Guettée** believes that the bishop of Rome did not act as president of the first four Ecumenical councils (*The Papacy*, pp.102-124).

<sup>140</sup>«Ἐπίσκοπον προσήκει μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ καθίστασθαι: εἰ δὲ δυσχερὲς εἴη τὸ τοιοῦτο, ἢ διὰ κατεπείγουσαν ἀνάγκην, ἢ διὰ μῆκος ὁδοῦ, εἴ ἅπαντος τρεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναγομένους, συμψήφων γινομένων καὶ τῶν ἀπόντων, καὶ συντιθεμένων διὰ γραμμάτων, τότε τὴν χειροτονίαν ποιείσθαι: τὸ δὲ κύριον τῶν γινομένων διδόνθαι καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπαρχίαν τῷ μητροπολίτῃ.» **Syntagma**, v. 2, p.122. For the English translation see **N. Tanner, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils**, v. 1, London, 1990, p.7.

<sup>141</sup>«Περὶ τῶν ἀκοινωνήτων γενομένων, εἴτε τῶν ἐν κλήρῳ, εἴτε τῶν ἐν λαϊκῷ τάγματι, ὑπὸ τῶν καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπαρχίαν ἐπισκόπων, κρατεῖται ἡ γνώμη, κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τὸν διαγορευόντα, τοὺς ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἀποβληθέντας ὑφ' ἑτέρων μὴ προσέεισθαι. Ἐξεταζέσθω δὲ, μὴ μικροψυχία, ἢ φιλονεικία, ἢ τινι τοιαύτῃ ἀηδία τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ἀποσυνάγωγοι γεγένησιν. Ἴνα οὖν τοῦτο τὴν πρέπουσαν ἐξέτασιν λαμβάνοι, καλῶς ἔχειν ἔδοξεν, ἑκάστου ἐνιαυτοῦ, καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπαρχίαν εἰς τοῦ ἔτους συνόδους γίνεσθαι: ἵνα κοινῇ πάντων τῶν ἐπισκόπων τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναγομένων, τὰ τοιαῦτα ζητήματα ἐξετάζῃται, καὶ οὕτως εἰ ὁμολογομένως προσκεκρουότες τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, κατὰ λόγον ἀκοινωνήτοι παρὰ πᾶσιν εἶναι δόξωσι, μέχρις ἂν τῷ κοινῷ τῶν ἐπισκόπων δόξῃ τὴν φιλανθρωπότεραν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐκδέσθαι ψῆφον. Αἱ δὲ σύνοδοι γινέσθωσαν, μία μὲν πρὸ τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς, ἵνα πάσης μικροψυχίας ἀναφουμένῃς, τὸ δῶρον καθαρὸν προσφέρῃται τῷ Θεῷ: δευτέρα δὲ, περὶ τὸν τοῦ μετοπίου καιρὸν.» **Syntagma**, v.2, pp.124-125. For the English translation see **N. Tanner, Decrees**, v.I, p.8.

<sup>142</sup>Cf. **F. Dvornik, Origins of the Episcopal Synods**, in *The Once and Future Church: A Communion of Freedom. Studies on Unity and Collegiality in the Church*, Staten Island, N.Y., 1971, p.27.

The *Precedence of Honour* of the bishops of the prestigious thrones was extraordinary, and was not connected with any kind of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Unlike this situation, the metropolitan system gave special power to the metropolitan bishops. The development and practice of the metropolitan system was based on the principle of accommodation (civil dignity), that is, the organization of the ecclesiastical government in accordance with the division of the political jurisdiction (provinces). Where the ecclesiastical capital was not identical with the political capital, the political capital prevailed,<sup>143</sup> but the prestigious thrones were not without their problems. Canon 7<sup>144</sup> is a canonical confrontation with problem of the Church in Jerusalem. It is well known that historical evolution had favoured the development of the city of Caesarea, while the city of Jerusalem was in decline.<sup>145</sup> Of course, the authority of the local church was great in the Catholic Church. «*Since there prevails a custom and ancient tradition*» according to the so called *Precedence of Honour*, metropolitan honour was given to the See of Jerusalem. This honour was not suprametropolitan, because the metropolitan rights of the See of Caesarea were fully protected. When personalities like Eusebius were bishops of Caesarea, there was no other way.<sup>146</sup> The metropolitan system showed its greatest strength during this period. The holy fathers of the First Ecumenical Council employed the metropolitan system with firmness, and without deviations. Of course, there could not be any deviations from the perspective of the holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. The magnitude of the synod had a catalytic effect upon all the Fathers who participated, and thus it was not concerned with the question about the position of the most prestigious sees (Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Rome) as having a kind of universal

<sup>143</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.54, ft 7.

<sup>144</sup>«Ἐπειδὴ συνήθεια κεκράτηκε, καὶ παράδοσις ἀρχαία, ὥστε τὸν ἐν Αἰλίᾳ ἐπίσκοπον τιμᾶσθαι, ἐγέτω τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῆς τιμῆς: τῇ μητροπόλει σωζομένου τοῦ οἰκείου ἀξιώματος.» *Syntagma*, v.2, pp.131-132. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.9.

<sup>145</sup>The political history of the first Christian centuries in Jerusalem is marked by a rank of catastrophes. Titus occupied the city at 70 AD. The Roman emperor Andrianus occupied the city and exiled all the Hebrews, after the failure of the revolution of Simon Bar-Kochba (132 AD). Then the city was reduced to a *colonia*, i.e., military colony, and was renamed *Aelia Capitolina*. We find this name in the sources. Of course the city as a city lay in ruins; it lost its geopolitical importance. see G.Galitis, *Ἡ Ἱστορία Ἐποχῆς τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης*, Thessaloniki, 1988 (4), pp.78-93; V. Tzafiris, *Ἅγιοι Τόποι*, Athens, 1992<sup>3</sup>, p.46.

<sup>146</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.56, ft 11.

authority.<sup>147</sup> The connection of canon 7 with canon 6 is an interpretative mistake, which derives from a misinterpretation of canon 6.<sup>148</sup>

Canon 6 has great importance because the interpretations that were given to it during the following centuries were not intended to demonstrate the tenor of the Fathers of the Synod, but to confirm the later evolution of the ecclesiastical government.<sup>149</sup> As to «whether the letter and the spirit of the canon are completely in harmony with the various interpretations of its tenor produced

<sup>147</sup> Although the canonists of the twelfth century interpreted in the light of the historical events, believed that canons 6 and 7 introduced the patriarchal institution, i.e. Zonaras (*Syntagma*, v.2, p.132) and Aristenos (*Syntagma*, v.2, pp.132-133), Valsamon interpreted canon 7 correctly, while still speculating about the connection with canon 7 (*Syntagma*, v.2, pp.130-131). Of course these canons were the canonical basis for the later suprametropolitan precedence. Cf Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.57-58, ft 13.

<sup>148</sup> «Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν: ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν. Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις, τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Καθόλου δὲ πρόδηλον ἐκεῖνο: ὅτι, εἴ τις χωρὶς γνώμης τοῦ μητροπολίτου γένοιτο ἐπίσκοπος, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἢ μεγάλη σύνοδος ὤρισε μὴ δεῖν εἶναι ἐπίσκοπον. Ἐὰν μέντοι τῇ κοινῇ πάντων ψήφῳ, εὐλόγῳ οὕσῃ, καὶ κατὰ κανόνα ἐκκλησιαστικόν, δύο, ἢ τρεῖς δι' οἰκείαν φιλονεικίαν ἀντιλέγωσι, κρατεῖτω ἢ τῶν πλειόνων ψήφος.» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.128. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.9.

<sup>149</sup> It was accepted, in the light of the historical events and the established ecclesiastical practice, since the middle of the fourth century, that canon 6 introduced the suprametropolitan system (F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, p.32) and that it is the basis of the patriarchal system. The canonists of the 12th century supported this opinion. Zonaras supports the following: «Βούλεται ὁ κανὼν τὰ παλαιὰ ἔθνη κρατεῖν, ὃ καὶ κανόνες μεταγενέστεροι, καὶ νόμοι πολιτικοὶ διορίζονται. Τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας οὖν ἐπίσκοπον θεσπίζει τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει προέχειν: καὶ τὸν Ἀντιοχείας τῶν αὐτῶ ὑποκειμένων ἐπαρχῶν, Συρίας δηλαδὴ, καὶ Κοίλης Συρίας, καὶ Κιλικίας ἑκατέρας, καὶ Μεσοποταμίας, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐπισκόπους τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξουσιάζειν χωρῶν: καθὼς καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ προεδρεύοντι, τῶν ἐσπερίων ἄρχειν ἔθος ἐκράτησε.» (*Syntagma*, v.2, pp.128-129). = «The canon keeps the old customs, and makes the latter canons and political law strong. It establishes the bishop of Alexandria as the preëminent church leader among the churches of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis. It establishes the bishop of Antioch as ordainer of those bishops subject to him in his province, that is, Syria (koile Syria), Cilicia, and Mesopotamia, and the other bishops under these provinces. As to the presiding of the church of Romans, the usage prevailed to lead those of the west.» Valsamon believes that «Ἐπὶ τῶν ἑσπερίων τεσσάρων ἐπισκοπῶν, καὶ ὁ ἑβδομος, διορίζονται τοὺς τέσσαρας πατριάρχας, δηλαδὴ τὸν Ῥώμης, τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας, τὸν Ἀντιοχείας, καὶ τὸν Ἱεροσολύμων, (περὶ γὰρ τοῦ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐν ἑτέροις κανόσι διαληφθήσεται), κατὰ τὰ παλαιὰ ἔθνη τιμᾶσθαι» (*Syntagma*, v.2, p.129). = «The present canon 6 and canon 7 specify the four patriarchs, that is, the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, (because the case of the bishop of Constantinople will be specified by other canons), stipulating that they should be honoured according to the old customs.» Aristenos has the same interpretation and speaks about "patriarchs" (*Syntagma*, v.2, p.131). So, he follows the others in this anachronism (on the other canonists of the 12th century see J. Siciliano, *The theory of the Pentarchy and views on Papal Supremacy in the Ecclesiology of Neilos Doxapatris and his contemporaries*, in *Byzantine Studies-Études Byzantines*, 6, Pts. 1-2, 1979, pp.167-177). The latter researchers (on them see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.58 ff.) share the same view. Especially Francis Dvornik (*The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, pp.8 ff.) holds the introduction of the suprametropolitan authority, but without regarding this opinion as absolute (*op. cit.* p.18). W. de Vries (*Orient et Occident*, pp.18-19) follows the same way. Cf. J. Meyendorff, *La primauté romaine dans la tradition canonique jusqu'au Concile de Chalcédoine*, pp.464-469.

from time to time,»<sup>150</sup> we can say the following.<sup>151</sup> The interpreters of the canon distinguished two parts in the canon: **a).** *The ancient customs... to be preserved.* and **b).** *that in general... the vote of the majority shall prevail.* This distinction is accepted by us only inasmuch as it makes the interpretation of this canon easier.

Vlass. Phidas clearly demonstrates the presence of following points in canon 6:

1. The See of Alexandria *is the center of the legislative interest of the Fathers of the synod.*
2. Authority is granted to the See of Alexandria over the churches of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis.
3. The Sees of Rome and Antioch are not mentioned independently but in relation to the See of Alexandria
4. *The same Precedence is also recognized to other churches in each province.*<sup>152</sup>

These assertions, although adequate, make us turn our attention to the historical and philological interpretation of the canon.

Canon 6, which begins with the phrase «*the ancient customs shall be maintained*» (τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω), shall now be examined for both quality and meaning. The customs that are mentioned were those that had prevailed in the church of Alexandria. It is a fact that there was a peculiar situation in the province of Egypt. We know from political history that Egypt was placed in the prefecture of the East having previously being an independent prefecture. The political situation up until that time had favoured an equivalent ecclesiastical one.<sup>153</sup> It is a logical necessity that the synod of Nicaea should impose the practice of the metropolitanical system on all three equivalent provinces of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis. But this was opposed to the *Precedence of Honour* of the church of Alexandria which was recognized by all three of these provinces. The delay in the evolution of the ecclesiastical government, or rather the peculiarity of the local church, cited these the recognition of the metropolitanical honour of the throne of Alexandria in all these three political provinces. So, we understand

<sup>150</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.57.

<sup>151</sup> We follow Vlass. Phidas' interpretation of this canon. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.57-95

<sup>152</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.58.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. C. Papadopoulos, *Ιστ. Ἐκκλ. Ἀλεξανδρείας*, pp.473-501, 165 ff.



that the suprametropolitical authority/honour of the See of Alexandria was not introduced by the canon, and hence we do not see the organization of three different metropolises under the authority of this throne, but the organization of a united metropolitical province.

The goal, of course, of the composition of this canon was the protection of ecclesiastical order in the church of Alexandria. If this local church had not been confronted with grave problems of government, because of the Melitian and Colluthian schisms, and the heresy of Arianism, this action would not have been as necessary.<sup>154</sup> The Melitian schism was encountered at the same time as Arianism and solved by the synod of Nicaea. The aim of the Fathers of the Synod, in Canon 6, was to place the bishop of Alexandria at the center of the local church in order that he might act as the guardian of Orthodoxy against heresy and schism. It is my belief that the reluctance in imposing the metropolitical system and the delay in the evolution of the ecclesiastical government in the case of this church were due to the peculiar geographical position of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis. We see a similarity in the evolution of the ecclesiastical government of Carthage, which occurred in the same way.<sup>155</sup> There is a parallel imposition of Carthage upon the whole prefecture of North Africa, with nearly the same geographical and climatic situations as those in Egypt. Therefore, we can conclude that the geographical position was a crucial element in the evolution of the two thrones, and their place in the government of the Church.

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<sup>154</sup>According to Vlass. Phidas, the Melitian schism was the cause for the composition of this canon. It appears as if Melitius, bishop of Lycopolis, (the second in rank in the *Precedence of Honour* after the bishop of Alexandria) had a disagreement with Peter of Alexandria about the way the Church should accept the *lapsi* after the persecution of 305 AD, although he had done uncanonical consecrations of vacant bishoprics. Melitius disputed the *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Alexandria and claimed this honor for himself. **Theodoret of Cyrrihus** (*Haereticarum Fabularum Liber Quartus*, PG 83, col. 425), **St. Epiphanius of Salamis** (*Adversus Haereses*, PG 42, cols. 184 ff) in his last position and of course **St. Athanasius the Great** (*Apology against the Arians* (Ἀπολογία τικώς) 59, PG 25, col. 356) hold this opinion. The events that followed with the Colluthian schism and the heresy of Arianism, imposed the solution for the problem. The First Ecumenical council tried to solve the problem. Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.59-64; **Abbé Guettée**, *The Papacy*, p.94. **C. Papadopoulos**, *Ιστορία Ἐκκλ. Ἀλεξανδρείας*, pp.150 ff.

<sup>155</sup>Cf. **W. Frend**, *The Donatist Church, a Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, Oxford, 1952, (Clarendon Press), pp.27 ff.

The canon continues by comparing the custom of the ecclesiastical order of Alexandria to that of the local churches of Rome and Antioch, «...since a similar custom exists with reference to the bishop of Rome. Similarly in Antioch...» (...ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν Ρώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν. Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν ...). This comparison is important because it demonstrates the local peculiarities of the practice of the metropolitan system. Research has shown that it was the metropolitan system, and not the suprametropolitan system, or *quasi* patriarchal system that was actually practiced in Egypt. Therefore, we must look for this practice in the churches of Rome and Antioch, as well. It is well known, through the sources, that there is a problem in the practice of the metropolitan system in the West, due, at least in part, to the delay in the development of the ecclesiastical government (in large regions such as Southern Italy, Gaul, Spain and Carthage, i.e., Northern Africa). We cannot exempt from this either Central or Southern Italy, where, of course, the church of Rome is distinguished by its great spiritual and political radiance.<sup>156</sup> It is certain that Rome, with the bishoprics of Central and Southern Italy under it, constituted a unified metropolitan province, in which the See of Rome had *metropolitan precedence*. We find the same situation in Antioch (which has many things in common with Alexandria). It was universally accepted that Antioch exercised its metropolitan authority over more than one political provinces of Syria, but always in the framework of metropolitan authority.<sup>157</sup>

The first part of canon 6 ends with the phrase «*and in the other provinces the precedence prerogatives of the churches are to be preserved*» (καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις

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<sup>156</sup>**Vlass. Phidas** presents the opinions of **K. Müller**, derived from earlier research (*Beiträge zur Geschichte der Verfassung der alten Kirche*, in *Abhandlungen der Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch - philologische und historische Klasse*, (Berlin 1922), pp.18 ff) and **H. Leclercq** (*Histoire des Conciles*, I/2, 1198-1199). The first sees a parallel in the ecclesiastical governments of Rome and Alexandria. The second point is that we can not prove that the bishop of Rome had a primacy of power in the West as the bishop of Alexandria did. Here, the witness of Rufinus is important, because he extends the governmental jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome only on the *suburbicarum ecclesiarum* (**C. Turner**, *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta*, London, 1930, p.197). This is of great importance because the **Vicarius Urbis** of Rome, by virtue of the governmental reforms of Diocletian and Constantine the Great, had 10 provinces of Central and Southern Italy, including the islands, which were named *urbicariae* or *surbicariae*. Therefore, the metropolitan system has not been fully introduced in Southern Italy. Rome and Southern Italy were united as a metropolitan province. Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.66-68; **Abbé Guettée**, *The Papacy*, pp.94-95.

<sup>157</sup>see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.68.

ἐπαρχίαις, τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις). The interpretation of this phrase was one of the most difficult, and thus many regard it as referring to the churches of Ephesus, Caesarea in Cappadocia and Heraclea. Why should not the churches of Carthage (Northern Africa) and Mediolanum (Northern Italy -*Italiae Annonariae*-) be also meant by this phrase?<sup>158</sup> This opinion was initially rejected, because the exarchial system was introduced in the East at the end of 4th century, and the holy Fathers of the Synod of Nicaea imposed the metropolitanical system, strictly and persistently. The problem is put better on the basis of philological criticism. It is obvious that there is a gap between the meaning of the text and the syntax, because the text is vague in this passage. Therefore, the canon appears to be broken, giving the impression that this passage is composed of two different parts. There is the problem of the definition of the word «ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις» (*the churches*). Phidas asserts that the word «τῶν μητροπόλεων» (*of the metropolises*) had been removed from the text. He bases his opinion on the old Latin translations, which preserve the whole text.<sup>159</sup> The unity and the meaning of the text are clearly demonstrated with the correction of the text, «καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς [τῶν μητροπόλεων] ἐκκλησίαις» (*and in the other provinces the prerogatives of the churches [of the metropolises] are to be preserved*).<sup>160</sup> Clearly only metropolitanical power is introduced by canon 6, and this is in absolute harmony with the canonical work of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

<sup>158</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.69.

<sup>159</sup> Vlass. Phidas believes that E. Schwartz presents the full meaning of the phrase in the restored Latin translation: «et in ceteris provinciis primatus habeant ecclesiae civitatum ampliorum» (E. Schwartz, *Der sechste nicanische Kanon auf der Synode von Chalkedon*, in *Sitzungsb. der Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch - philologische und historische Klasse 27* (1930) p.633 ff). The text of the papal legates to the synod of Carthage (419) is the following: «et in ceteris provinciis propria jura surventur metropolitanis ecclesiis» (C. Turner, *Eccl. Occident. Monumenta.*, p.121). But the text of the translation of the church of Constantinople addressed to the same synod of Carthage shows that the local church of Constantinople presented the full text until the beginning of the 5th century: «et in aliis provinciis privilegia propria reserventur metropolitanis ecclesiis» (C. Turner, *Eccl. Occident. Monumenta.*, p.120). The text of the oldest collect of canon law in Latin, collection Priska, is similar (C. Turner, *Eccl. Occident. Monumenta.*, p.121). Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.70-71. We would like here to observe that the church of Constantinople lost the full text between the synod of Carthage (419) and the Fourth Ecumenical council (451). see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.94.

<sup>160</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.71

The word «ἐξουσία» (power) connects the nuances of meaning of the two parts of the canon.<sup>161</sup> The power that is given to the metropolitan bishop of Alexandria, «Καθόλου δὲ πρόδηλον ἐκεῖνο» is «ὅτι, εἴ τις χωρὶς γνώμης τοῦ μητροπολίτου γένοιτο ἐπίσκοπος, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἡ μεγάλη σύνοδος ὤρισε μὴ δεῖν εἶναι ἐπίσκοπον.» (*In general, the following principle is evident: if anyone is made bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, this great synod determines that such a person shall not be a bishop.*), that is, the metropolitan bishop, who is the master of the election, and consecration of bishops in his metropolitan province. The goal of the canon is clear, the metropolitan of Alexandria has absolute control over his metropolitan region through the right of electing and consecrating bishops. Its intention was to confront the crisis that had broken out in the church of Alexandria. On the one hand, the heresy of Arianism, and on the other, the Melitian and Colluthian schisms, were a source of crisis for the See of Alexandria, and for the unity of the Catholic church herself. The letter of the holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council to the churches of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis is an indisputable witness to this view.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, the catalogue of 29 Melitian bishops,<sup>163</sup> which Melitius submitted to the Synod of Nicaea, and which Athanasius the Great preserves, and the Epistle of the Melitian bishop Arsenius<sup>164</sup> to the Archbishop of Alexandria Athanasius the Great, verify what has been previously said, and shows that the canon 6 was intended to address issues concerning the church of Alexandria.<sup>165</sup>

The contemporary meaning of the canon is connected with the Melitian schism. This historical reality and this interpretation allowed us up until this point to arrive at exact conclusions, under the presupposition that our conclusions are absolutely confirmed by the sources and the errors of anachronism are avoided. It is in this sense that the conclusion of canon 6 must be examined. «Ἐὰν μέντοι τῆ

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<sup>161</sup>It appears that the opinion concerning the two parts of canon 6 has prevailed since the 4th century, because their separate usage was common (canon 19 of synod of Antioch). This usage led to the wrong interpretation of the canon. It is important to repeat here that canon 6 is clearly concerned with the local problems of the local church of Alexandria. Cf **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.73-74.

<sup>162</sup>**Socrates**, *Eccl. History*, I,9. PG 67, cols.77-81, on the interpretation of the Epistle see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.76-80.

<sup>163</sup>**Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 71. PG 25, col. 376.

<sup>164</sup>**Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 69. PG 25, col. 372.

<sup>165</sup>Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.74-85.

κοινῇ πάντων ψήφῳ, εὐλόγῳ οὐσῃ, καὶ κατὰ κανόνα ἐκκλησιαστικόν, δύο, ἢ τρεῖς δι' οἰκείαν φιλονεικίαν ἀντιλέγῳσι, κρατεῖται ἢ τῶν πλειόνων ψῆφος» (*If however two or three, by reason of personal rivalry, dissent from the common vote of all, provided it is reasonable and in accordance with the church's canon, the vote of the majority shall prevail*). The meaning of this is very important, because it introduces the *Principle of the Majority* in the election of a bishop. Against it, canon 4, as we saw, demanded «σύμψηφον γινομένων καὶ τῶν ἀπόντων» (*that the bishops that were absent should take part in the vote*) for the election of a bishop to be valid. Clearly, the election of a bishop is to be done only by the bishops of the metropolitan province, which seems to have already been practiced by the beginning of the 4th century. However, the role of the people should not have been abolished by these regulations (of course, in as much as such a role was envisaged by the local tradition). It is our belief, that the conclusion of canon 6 must be referring to bishops, because of its use of the term “dissenters”, and the general intention of the whole canon.<sup>166</sup> We have stated from the beginning what the meaning of the *Precedence* of the church of Alexandria was for the Fathers of the synod of Nicaea. Specifically, they tried to secure the whole process of the election of bishops from factionalism, by allowing the return of the Melitian bishops. Thus, the 29 Melitian bishops, who returned, could not prevail over the decisions of the 100 orthodox-catholic bishops. It is indicative that these fears were confirmed at the election of Athanasius the Great.<sup>167</sup> The facts confirm the contemporary interpretation of the canon, and prove that the goal of the canon was to solve the administrative problems of the church of Alexandria.<sup>168</sup>

The decisions of the First Ecumenical Council imposed the practice of the metropolitanical system on the ecclesiastical administration. The *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees was not ignored, but rather used as an advantage,

<sup>166</sup>The council of a province elects and consecrates the bishops. We see that this new ecclesiastical practice was widely spread. This was done for reasons of ecclesiastical order, because the participation of the people in the election of bishops usually created problems. We see this canonical tendency, which we have just described, in canon 19 of the synod of Antioch (341) and in canon 13 of the synod of Laodicea (360), «Περὶ τοῦ μὴ τοῖς ὄχλοις ἐπιτρέπειν τὰς ἐκλογὰς ποιεῖσθαι τῶν μελλόντων καθίστασθαι εἰς ἱερατεῖον.» (*Syntagma*, v.3, p.183). Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.86-88.

<sup>167</sup>Although Athanasius the Great was elected by a unanimous vote, seven bishops perjured for his election at the synod of Tyre. see **Sozomen**, *Eccl. History*, II, 17. PG 67, col. 977.

<sup>168</sup>Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.85-90.

according to the content of the decisions of the synod. Obviously, the synod did not introduce the *suprametropolitan (patriarchal) precedence*, because this was not its intention. Canon 6, according to its contemporary interpretation, clearly refers to the local church of Alexandria.<sup>169</sup> The previous interpretations allowed the canon to become the canonical foundation of the patriarchal structure (through the inevitable and obvious connection of this canon with the notion of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees).<sup>170</sup> The problems that arose in the practice of the metropolitanical system, became the vehicle for the evolution of the ecclesiastical system of administration in conjunction with the notion of *Precedence of Honour*.

«The positive contribution of the metropolitanical system to the unity of the Church depended on its proper function. On the contrary, the threats to the unity of the Church were greater than those which the Church encountered during the first Christian centuries.»<sup>171</sup> The crisis caused by Arianism was very great.<sup>172</sup> The support that the emperor of the Eastern state, Constantius, gave to the Arianizers, and the diametrically opposite support given by the emperor of the Western state, Constans, to the orthodox people, enhanced this situation. The

<sup>169</sup>The restoration of the Greek text of canon 6, with the clarifications made by Prof. Vlass. Phidas is as follows: «Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ (Θηβαῖδι) καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρειᾳ ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν (τοῦ χειροτονεῖν ἐπίσκοπους), ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ρώμῃ ἐπισκόπων τοῦτο σύνθηρές ἐστιν (ἐν Ν. Ἰταλίᾳ), ὁμοίως καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν (ἐν Συρίᾳ): καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεία σώζεσθαι [ταῖς τῶν μητροπόλεων] ἐκκλησίαις. Καθόλου δὲ πρόδηλον ἐκεῖνοι: ὅτι, εἴ τις χωρὶς γνώμης τοῦ μητροπολίτου (Αἰγύπτου) γένοιτο ἐπίσκοπος (ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, Θηβαῖδι, Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει), τὸν τοιοῦτον ἢ μεγάλη σύνοδος ὤρισε μὴ δεῖν εἶναι ἐπίσκοπον. Ἐὰν μέντοι τῇ κοινῇ πάντων (τῶν καθολικῶν ἐπισκόπων) ψήφῳ, εὐλόγῳ οὕσῃ καὶ κατὰ κανόνα ἐκκλησιαστικόν, δύο ἢ τρεῖς (Μελιτιανοὶ ἐπίσκοποι) δι' οἰκείαν φιλονεικίαν ἀντιτέλωσι, κρατεῖτω ἢ τῶν πλειόνων (καθολικῶν ἐπισκόπων) ψήφος». Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.90. The English translation: «The ancient customs of Egypt (Thebais), Libya and Pentapolis shall be maintained, according to which the bishop of Alexandria has authority (of concecrating bishops) over all these places, since a similar custom exists with reference to the bishop of Rome (in South Italy). Similarly in Antioch (in Syria) and in the other provinces the precedence prerogatives of the Churches (of the metropolises) are to be preserved. In general the following principle is evident: if anyone is made bishop (in Egypt, Thebais, Libya and Pentapolis) without the consent of the metropolitan (of Egypt), this great synod determines that such one shall not be a bishop. If, however, two or three (Melitian bishops) by reason of personal rivalry dissent from the common vote of all (the catholic bishops), provided it is reasonable and in accordance with the church's canon, the vote of the majority (of the catholic bishops) shall prevail.»

<sup>170</sup>Historians who do not make a distinction between the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious thrones and its meaning and the historical evolution of the patriarchal institution, commit the same error. see Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.95.

<sup>171</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.96-97.

<sup>172</sup>G. Konidaris, *Γεν. Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.280 ff; V. Stefanidis, *Ἰ. κλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.181 ff; V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.470 ff.

use of the metropolitan system by the partisans of Arianism to their benefit is certain. They turned metropolitan self-sufficiency to their advantage. They were after and succeeded in the deposition of bishops even those of the prestigious thrones of the East.<sup>173</sup> The result of this situation for many bishops of the East, was that they sought refuge in the West. The communion of the bishop of Rome with the deposed orthodox bishops from the East had serious repercussions for East-West relations. The grave possibility that Arianism might prevail in the Eastern empire, was the perspective from which relations between East and West were developed during this period. The facts demonstrate the following: Although the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council were respected by all, the historical context necessitated that the Church turned to forms of government which had functioned in the past. It seems that in this situation the Metropolitan Precedence was put to question by the *Precedence of Honour* which had been in force in the very recent past. So we are going to see to which measure this took place and what forms did this evolution produced.

In order to understand this historical situation, we will describe in broad outline the events which necessitated the development of new forms in Church government. The decisions of the provincial synods that had deposed the orthodox bishops were confirmed in Antioch in 339 once more. Julius of Rome reacting against this, convoked a council in Rome (340), in order to bring about the return of the deposed bishops. The refusal of the delegates of Eastern bishops to participate in the Council if the decisions of the provincial synods of the East were not accepted beforehand, led to the demise of this effort, but this synod did produce some important decisions. It confirmed the persistence of Orthodoxy in the West, and accepted the orthodox bishops of the East who had been turned away, although this action constituted an intervention beyond jurisdictional boundaries and, as such, was against the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council. Julius of Rome tried to support the orthodox at the synod of Eastern bishops in Antioch (341);<sup>174</sup> in his letter, he claimed that the bishop of Rome could overturn the decisions of the deposed bishops of the provincial

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<sup>173</sup>see Sozomen, *Eccl. History*, III,7. PG 67, col. 1049.

<sup>174</sup>F. Dvornik, *Origins of the Episcopal Synods*, pp.27 ff.

synods.<sup>175</sup> The intervention of the bishop of Rome could be accepted on the basis that he acted as the protector of orthodoxy. The protection of the integrity of the faith was an obligation of all bishops of the Catholic Church and, therefore, an action in this direction would include the bishop of Rome, who was the occupant of one of the most prestigious thrones and upholder of orthodoxy at that time. Against this argument, the bishops of the synod of Antioch forcefully, and I believe rightly, condemned any intervention of the bishop of Rome as anti-canonical.<sup>176</sup> The bishops of the synod of Antioch, protecting the canonical order as it had been established by the First Ecumenical Council, refused to accept any viewpoint that promoted the intervention of the bishop of Rome over against the decisions of the metropolitanical provinces. In this way, they protected their heterodoxy by following the established order of the Church.<sup>177</sup>

Julius of Rome, trying a tactical fall back, or clarifying his letters, responded to the Synod by stating that in his previous letter, he was not representing himself, but the bishops of Italy, who are the bishops of his metropolitanical province (according to the metropolitanical organization of Italy which we have already mentioned).<sup>178</sup> He also put the question the condemnation of the bishop of the prestigious throne of Alexandria, in the same letter, by virtue of the *Precedence of Honour* which had been established by ancient custom and, because the usual letters of communion, announcing the change in the throne of Alexandria, had not in this case been sent to the prestigious thrones.<sup>179</sup> The

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<sup>175</sup>see **Socrates**, *Eccl. History*, II, 17. PG 67, cols. 217-220. **Sozomen**, *Eccl. History*, III, 10. PG 67, col. 1057

<sup>176</sup>see **Sozomen**, *Eccl. History*, III, 8. PG 67, cols. 1052-1056. **Socrates**, *Apology*, II, 15. PG 67, cols. 212-213. **Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 20. PG 25, cols. 281-284.

<sup>177</sup>Cf **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.99-101.

<sup>178</sup>**Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 26. PG 25, col. 292.

<sup>179</sup>**Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 35. PG 25, col. 308. It is of great importance to us that especially broadened synods were convoked for the adjudication of the bishops of the prestigious sees. This practice was followed in the adjudication of Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch (see **Eusebius**, *Eccl. History*, Z, 27-29. **BEPES**, v.20, pp.33-38), at the synod of Tyre, where St. Athanasius was deposed (see **Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 35. PG 25, col. 308), and at the synod of Sardica, which was intended to be Ecumenical, for the adjudication of St. Athanasius. Athanasius the Great held the same opinion concerning the exile of Liberius, bishop of Rome, in which the Arianists played a leading role (see **Athanasius the Great**, *Letter to the Monks*, 35. PG 25, col. 733). It is clear that the ecclesiastical tradition demanded for the adjudication of a bishop of a prestigious throne the extraordinary formation of such synods. Cf **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.130-131; **F. Dvornik**, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, p.50.



answer of the Synod of Antioch to the reasoning of the bishop of Rome is demonstrated in the canonical decisions of this synod, and especially in canon 14.<sup>180</sup> This canon determined, that when a case was appealed, the participation of the provincial synod and of the neighbouring bishops whom the local metropolitan bishop calls and specifies, was required.

Both West and East stood immovable in their respective positions, and the result was a breach in the unity of the Church. The intervention of the philorthodox emperor of the West Constans<sup>181</sup> led to the convocation of the synod of Sardica (342, contemporary Sofia of Bulgaria), designed to solve the problems which had broken the unity of the Church.<sup>182</sup> The metropolitan precedence, legislated by the First Ecumenical Council, had put in danger the unity, which previously had been guarded by the *Precedence of Honour*. The importance of the question was great, and so the synod of Sardica was convened as Ecumenical. It lost the outward criterion of Ecumenicity, however, because of the absence of the participation of the Eastern Arian bishops in the proceedings of the synod. Their request for the cancellation of the decisions of the West concerning the restoration of the orthodox bishops at the East was not accepted.<sup>183</sup> The effort for the restoration of the unity of the Church resulted in failure, because of the persistence of each side in their positions. The canonical decisions of the synod of Sardica fell into disuse almost directly after their formulation, but they were significant because they enable us to determine the intentions of the synod, which were nothing less than the restoration of the orthodox bishops, in a conciliar framework of compromise between the opposite positions of West and East. At the same time, the fact that the church of Rome

<sup>180</sup> «Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἐπὶ τισὶν ἐγκλήμασι κρίνοιτο, ἔπειτα συμβαίη περὶ αὐτοῦ διαφωνεῖν τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ ἐπισκόπους, τῶν μὲν ἀθῶον τὸν κρίνομενον ἀποφαινόντων, τῶν δὲ, ἐνοχόν: ὑπὲρ ἀπαλλαγῆς πάσης ἀμφισβητήσεως, ἔδοξε τῇ ἁγίᾳ συνόδῳ, τὸν τῆς μητροπόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἀπὸ τῆς πλησιοχώρου ἐπαρχίας μετακαλεῖσθε ἑτέρουσ τινάσ, τοὺς ἐπικρινούντας, καὶ τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν διαλύσοντας, τοῦ βεβαιῶσαι σὺν τοῖς τῆς ἐπαρχίας τὸ παριστάμενον.» *Syntagma*, v.3, p.152.

<sup>181</sup> Emperor Constans followed this course of action due to the pressure of the synod of Mediolanum (see *Abbé Guettée, The Papacy*, p.124). This fact, by itself, shows the extraordinary position and influence which the church of Mediolanum had had and used. This situation developed during this century and had great results.

<sup>182</sup> see *Socrates, Eccl. History*, II, 20. PG 67, col. 326. *Zonaras and Valsamon, Syntagma*, v.3, p.227.

<sup>183</sup> The Arianist bishops convoked their synod at Philippoupolis and endorsed their previous decisions. see *Phidas, Pentarchy*, I, pp.104 ff.

tried to use these canons on several occasions makes for their correct interpretation particularly important.<sup>184</sup>

Although many scholars have expressed various opinions concerning the authenticity of the canons of Sardica, we should accept the text that has been received (without denying it text requires literary criticism). Our interest is centered on canons 3, 4 and 5. They raise the question of revisiting the condemnation of the orthodox bishops who had been deposed by the defenders of Arianism. Canon 3 prohibits bishops of a particular province to pass judgement on bishops outside this province,<sup>185</sup> and criticizes the way in which many orthodox bishops were deposed. It introduces the right of reconsideration, where by bishops who were deposed, may have appealed for their cases to be reconsidered. The reconsideration is done in the framework of the metropolitan system, with the participation of the bishops of the metropolitan province and of other neighbouring bishops. This practice had already been endorsed and applied by the synod of Antioch (341) in canon 14. The canon of Sardica had an essential difference from the canon of Antioch, because the list of the neighbouring bishops, who were to participate in the reconsideration or second judgment, was to be determined by Julius, bishop of Rome. This difference gives us the reference to the context within which the synod moved. Canon 4, in the same way,<sup>186</sup> states that a new bishop who is to take the position of a deposed one must not be elected before the court of the reconsideration is concluded. Canon

<sup>184</sup>The canons were presented as part of the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council, at the synod of Carthage (419) by the papal legates. Pope Gelasius (492-496) tried to base his claims on these canons. His claims were preserved in the *Pseudo-Isidorian* decretals. Pope Nicholas I followed the same method. Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.106.

<sup>185</sup>«Ὁσῖος ἐπίσκοπος εἶπε: Καὶ τοῦτο προστεθῆναι ἀναγκαῖον, ἵνα μηδεὶς ἐπισκόπων ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἐπαρχίας εἰς ἑτέραν ἐπαρχίαν, ἐν ἣ τυχάνουσιν ὄντες ἐπίσκοποι, διαβαίνοι, εἰ μὴ τοὶ παρὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ κληθεῖν: διὰ τὸ μὴ δοκεῖν ἡμᾶς τὰς τῆς ἀγάπης ἀποκλείειν πύλας. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ὡσαύτως προνοητέον, ὥστε, ἐὰν ἐν τινὶ ἐπαρχίᾳ ἐπισκόπων τις ἀντικρὺς ἀδελφοῦ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ συνεπισκόπου πρᾶγμα σχοίη, μηδένα ἕτερον ἐκ τούτων ἀπὸ ἑτέρας ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπους ἐπιγνώμονας ἐπικαλεῖσθαι. Εἰ δὲ ἄρα τις ἐπισκόπων ἐν τινὶ πράγματι δόξῃ κατακρίνεσθαι, καὶ ὑπολαμβάνει ἑαυτὸν μὴ σαθρὸν ἀλλὰ καλὸν ἔχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἵνα καὶ αὐθις ἢ κρίσις ἀνανεωθῆ, εἰ δοκεῖ ὑμῶν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, Πέτρου τοῦ Ἀποστόλου τὴν μνήμην τιμῆσωμεν, καὶ γραφῆναι παρὰ τούτων τῶν κρινάντων Τουλῖφ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ Ῥώμης, ὥστε διὰ τῶν γειτνιόντων τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ ἐπισκόπων, εἰ δεοί, ἀνανεωθῆναι τὸ δικαστήριον, καὶ ἐπιγνώμονας αὐτὸς παράσχοι. Εἰ δὲ μὴ συστήναι δύναται τοιοῦτον αὐτοῦ εἶναι τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὡς παλινδικίας χρῆζειν, τὰ ἅπασι κεκρυμμένα μὴ ἀναλύεσθαι, τὰ δὲ ὄντα, βέβαια τυγχάνειν.» **Syntagma**, v.3, pp.233-234. For the English translation see: **J. Stevenson**, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, London, 1993, p.15.

<sup>186</sup>«Γαυδέντιος ἐπίσκοπος εἶπεν: Ἐάν τις ἐπίσκοπος καθαιρεθῆ τῇ κρίσει τῶν ἐπισκόπων τῶν ἐν γειτνία τυχάνοντων, καὶ φάσκη πάλιν ἑαυτῷ ἀπολογίας πρᾶγμα ἐπιβάλλειν, μὴ πρότερον εἰς τὴν καθέδραν αὐτοῦ ἕτερον ὑποκαταστῆναι, ἐὰν μὴ ὁ τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπος ἐπιγνοῦς, περὶ τούτου ὄρον ἐξενέγκῃ.» **Syntagma**, v.3, p.238.

5 referred specifically to the orthodox bishops who went to the West after their deposition.<sup>187</sup> It accepted the right of the bishop of Rome to have communion with these bishops, and to take steps for the reconsideration of their judgment according to canon 3. Obviously, in order to secure the proceedings of the second adjudication, canon 5 states the mission and authority of the papal legates, assuming of course that the deposed bishop had asked for the second adjudication.

But the question must be asked: «What was it, and why, that these three canons of Sardica legislated?»<sup>188</sup> It is a matter of course that the defenders of the papacy tried to find in these canons the recognition and establishment of papal primacy, and the right of the bishop of Rome to hear appeals. These opinions<sup>189</sup> were based on the following phrase of canon 3, «Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου τὴν μνήμην τιμῆσωμεν» (let us honour the memory of Apostle Peter). However, the only intention of this phrase was to honour the struggle of the bishop of Rome Julius in support of Orthodoxy.<sup>190</sup> Besides, the opinion that the right of hearing appeals was given to the bishop of Rome is unfounded, because such a right is firmly given to the synod of the metropolitan province and is activated, either according to canon 14 of Antioch, or after the personal appeal of the deposed bishop to the bishop of Rome. The exceptional right that the synod gives to the bishop of Rome is the determination of the neighbouring bishops. This position is directly connected with the fight of the bishop of Rome in support of Orthodoxy. However, the metropolitan province preserved the right to judge a bishop (on a primary and secondary degree) with the great persistence of all the local synods

<sup>187</sup> «Ὁσῖος ἐπίσκοπος εἶπεν: Ἦρσεν, ἰν' εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος καταγγελθεῖ, καὶ συναθροισθέντες οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τῆς ἐνορίας τῆς αὐτῆς, τοῦ βαθμοῦ αὐτὸν ἀποκινήσωσι, καὶ ὡς περὶ κκαλεσάμενος καταφύγη ἐπὶ τὸν μακαριώτατον τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ἐπίσκοπον, καὶ βουλευθεῖ αὐτοῦ διακοῦσαι, δίκαιόν τε εἶναι νομίση ἀνανεώσασθαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐξέτασιν τοῦ πράγματος, γράφειν τούτοις τοῖς ἐπισκόποις καταξίωση τοῖς ἀγγιστεύουσι τῆ ἐπαρχία, ἵνα αὐτοὶ ἐπιμελῶς καὶ μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἕκαστα διερευνήσωσι, καὶ κατὰ τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας πίστιν, ψῆφον περὶ τοῦ πράγματος ἐξενέγκωσι. Εἰ δέ τις ἀξίων καὶ πάλιν αὐτοῦ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἀκουσθῆναι, καὶ τῆ δεήσει τῆ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Ῥωμαίων ἐπίσκοπον κρίνειν δόξη, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου πλευροῦ πρεσβυτέρους ἀποστείλοι, ἵνα ἢ ἐν τῆ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὅπερ ἂν καλῶς ἔχειν δοκιμάσῃ καὶ ὀρίσῃ δεῖν, ἀποσταλῆναι τοὺς μετὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων κρινούοντας, ἔχοντάς τε τὴν ἀuthεντίαν τούτου, παρ' οὗ ἀπεστάλησαν: καὶ τοῦτο θετέον. Εἰ δὲ ἔξαρκεῖν νομίξοι πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ἐπίγνωσιν καὶ ἀπόφασιν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ποιήσει ὅπερ ἂν τῆ ἐμφρονεστάτη αὐτοῦ βουλῇ καλῶς ἔχειν δόξη. Ἄπεκρίναντο οἱ ἐπίσκοποι: τὰ λεχθέντα ἤρσεν.» *Syntagma*, v.3, pp.239-240.

<sup>188</sup> *Phidas, Pentarchy*, I, p.107.

<sup>189</sup> For example, the attempt by the papal legates to impose the right of appeal on the church of Carthage in 419. This effort demonstrated the fight on the party of the church of Rome for imposition of its will on the Western churches, which had begun to develop by the beginning of the fifth century.

<sup>190</sup> see *Phidas, Pentarchy*, I, p.107.

of this period.<sup>191</sup> The object of having the bishop of Rome act as regulator of the metropolitan provincial court of appeal did not happen, and consequently these canons immediately became redundant.<sup>192</sup> In comparison with the canonical work of the synod of Antioch, the attempt to restore the deposed orthodox bishops of the East is clearly demonstrated.<sup>193</sup> At the same time, the canonical decisions of the synod of Sardica are a conciliatory effort between the position of Julius of Rome and the opposite position of the Eastern bishops who were defenders of Arianism.<sup>194</sup>

It is obvious, given all the above, that not the bishop of Rome but the restoration of the deposed orthodox bishops is at the center of the canonical regulations of the synod of Sardica. This is particularly shown by the study of the canons and the historical environment in general. This allows us to understand the various regulations which occurred in close proximity to these regulations. Although the circumstantial character of canons 3, 4 and 5 is not declared, the causes of their timely legislation imply this. The suggestion that the timely nature of the legislation of these canons depended on the person of the bishop of Rome,

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<sup>191</sup>«Therefore, the Roman-Catholic defenders of the primacy of the bishop of Rome over the whole Church, by divine law, were correctly frustrated by the content of these three canons of the synod of Sardica, *because they did not recognize the right of reconsideration by divine law in them but was rather abolished!*» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.111.

<sup>192</sup>**W. de Vries**, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, p.33.

<sup>193</sup>Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.111-115.

<sup>194</sup>**Vlass. Phidas** concludes the following from the three canons:

- a) The action of judgment of the deposed bishops introduced by the Eastern synods by the synod of the bishops of Italy is abolished in the West. At the same time, the finality of the judgment of the decisions with the unanimous opinion of the provincial bishops of the Eastern synods (which judged and deposed a bishop one time) is removed. (canons 3 and 5 of Sardica)
- b) Others will not be consecrated to the thrones of the deposed bishops until the final judgment of the greater decision of the synod, because the final judgment of the division of the synod at the first level is removed by the possibility of revising them. (canon 4 of Sardica)
- c) Those judged at first level by bishops of the province participate in the second level of judgment, with the bishops of the bordering provinces. Thus, the greater synod guards the local character claimed by the defenders of Arianism. (canons 3 and 4 of Sardica)
- d) The familiar metropolitan bishop will not invite the bishops from the bordering provinces, but rather this will be done by the bishop of Rome (canon 14 of Antioch). The appeal of a deposed bishop will be announced to the bishop of Rome by the synod at the first level (canon 3 of Sardica) or by the deposed bishop. (canon 5 of Sardica)
- e) The bishop of Rome can not judge what has already been adjudicated, but only send the need for revision to a greater synod. There, the papal legates could participate if the deposed bishop so demanded. (canon 5 of Sardica). **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.114-115.

is, in my opinion, a superficial explanation.<sup>195</sup> Obviously, the holy Fathers of the synod avoided damaging the unity which existed among the bishops of the province, which means that the metropolitan province has the right to consecrate and elect bishops, in addition to the right to adjudicate at primary and secondary level. If the right granted to the bishop of Rome had been permanent, the right to elect bishops would have also been given to him, which was more important than the restoration of deposed bishops.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, at the very moment when a problem concerning orthodoxy of faith was solved, the role of the bishop of Rome, previously given to him, would cease.<sup>197</sup> By entrusting Julius of Rome with this role, there were important advantages for two other practical reasons:

1. The bishop of Rome had a direct connection with the orthodox emperor of the West, Constans. Hence, he could present him with his opinions. The murder of Constans (350), and the resulting monocracy of Constantius ended this possibility.
2. The Sees of Rome and Jerusalem were the only prestigious thrones which had orthodox bishops. Out of these two Sees, only the bishop of Rome had the necessary means, at that time, to provide for the successful outcome of the synod's aim, that was the restoration of the deposed bishops of the East.

It is quite clear from what has been said that «the barrier of the metropolitan autonomy» was definitely broken «and the way was opened for the formation of suprametropolitan authority»<sup>198</sup> through the canonical decisions of the synods of Antioch and Sardica. The decisions of these two synods gave the synod suprametropolitan authority for the secondary adjudication by the neighbouring bishops and the bishops of the province. The Eastern defenders of Arianism

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<sup>195</sup> **Vlass. Phidas**, presenting his opinions about the timely character of the previous canons, believes that «this reasoning is on the surface and is not touched by the substance of the issue...» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.115 ff.

<sup>196</sup> The witnesses for the unity of the episcopal power of the province are preserved by the synod of Constantinople (394), canon 15 of Antioch, the response of synod of Carthage (418) to Celestine of Rome. Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.117-120.

<sup>197</sup> Cf **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.121. **Theodoret of Cyrrhus**, *Eccl. History*, II,13. PG 82, col. 1037. (Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγὼ ἀξιώ πρότερον οἰκουμενικὴν ... ἐξετάσαντες τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν, συμπεριενεχθῶμεν.)

<sup>198</sup> **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.129.

preferred to maintain all of metropolitan rights and the loose maintenance of connections with the bordering provinces, thus preferring a limited development of suprametropolitan authority. Contrary to this the bishops of the West, and the deposed bishops of East, preferred the development of the suprametropolitan authority of the prestigious Sees, as a service to Orthodoxy and to the unity of the Church. Of course, the defenders of Arianism tried and succeeded in their attempt to control the prestigious Sees of the East, and, thereby, showed their real intentions and the canonical tendencies that were formed in the East and in the West.<sup>199</sup> It is clear, in all this, that the canonical tendencies for the determination of the relationship between the prestigious Sees and metropolitan precedence began to appear.<sup>200</sup>

Up to this point we have examined the problems in the development of the relations between a metropolitan See and a prestigious See or of the dependence of the former to the latter. The famous controversy between Cyril of Jerusalem and Acacius of Caesarea led exactly to the second option. Canon 7 of the First Ecumenical Council, as we have said, gave metropolitan honour to the See of Jerusalem, even though Caesarea had the metropolitan precedence over Palestine, because on the principle of accommodation the bishops of Caesarea had a special political role. It was inevitable that this differentiation between the two Sees would eventually lead to a crisis. The Arian controversy provided the occasion for this. Maximus of Jerusalem was the leader of the orthodox when Eusebius of Caesarea ceded to the defenders of Arianism.<sup>201</sup> Acacius, who was also a partisan of Arianism, succeeded Eusebius in 338. Maximus died, or was deposed in 350, and Cyril was consecrated as his successor by Acacius of Caesarea. The intention of Acacius was to impose himself on the orthodox

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<sup>199</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.128.

<sup>200</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.127-129. Valsamon sees a relationship between the decisions with the meaning of the suprametropolitan authority of the prestigious Sees in the annotation of the related canons from the synod of Sardika: «Τὰ μέντοι ὀρισθέντα περὶ τοῦ πάπα, ἐκκλησιέου καὶ εἰς τὸν πατριάρχην Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, διὰ τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως καὶ τοῦτον τῷ πάπῃ τιμηθῆναι ἀπὸ διαφόρων κανόνων.» (indeed, the arrangement for the Pope must also be allotted to the Patriarch of Constantinople, because he was honored by various canons as equal in every sense with the Pope.) *Syntagma*, v.3, p.237.

<sup>201</sup>Maximus of Jerusalem convoked a synod at Jerusalem in 346 and communicated with Athanasius the Great. (Cf. **Athanasius the Great**, *Apology*, 51-57. PG 25, cols. 341 ff; **Athanasius the Great**, *Letter to the Monks*, 25. PG 25. col. 720. **Sozomen**, *Eccl. History*, III,22. PG 67, cols. 1104-1105.)

bishops of Palestine through the consecration of Cyril. The period that had elapsed, however, had elevated the authority of the See of Jerusalem, because of the long suffering of the bishop of the mother church for the cause of orthodoxy. Cyril was not disposed to abandon this authority.

Although Acacius had different hopes, Cyril demonstrated himself to be a fighter for orthodoxy, and claimed the metropolitan precedence for his See in Palestine, through the claims of the Apostolicity of the throne of Jerusalem.<sup>202</sup> That the cause of this controversy was primarily the claim of *precedence* of the See of Jerusalem is the common argument of most of the historians who describe the facts relating to this case,<sup>203</sup> and they do so without following the historical development of the controversy between the two greatest Sees in Palestine, which continued with great passion from both sides,<sup>204</sup> and from which we can ascertain the attempt of the prestigious throne of Jerusalem to invest its *Precedence of Honour* with metropolitan precedence. The fact that the *Precedence of Honour* was recognized leads us to conclude that there was a canonical tendency for the See of Jerusalem to claim authority over ordinations and adjudications of bishops in the metropolitan province of Palestine. The See of Jerusalem became a clear example of the fight of the prestigious thrones to impose the suprametropolitan precedence on the Church.

The events of the second half of the fourth century demonstrate the problems of the Arian controversy, both how they were occurred, and how they were dealt with. The holy Fathers turned their attention to the restoration of the deposed orthodox bishops, and as a result, this led to a search for short-lived solutions. The basis of the problem was also the same at the beginning of the second half of the fourth century, because the Arian controversy continued to infect the Church.

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<sup>202</sup>The claim of Apostolicity raised by Cyril did not mean that only Jerusalem was the mother church, but rather referred to the faith of the local church. This question was of great importance during the Arian period when the faith was sorely challenged.

<sup>203</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem «περί μητροπολιτικῶν δικαίων διεξέρετο πρὸς Ἀκάκιον τὸν Καισαρείας, ὡς ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου ἡγούμενος» (Sozomen, *Eccl. History*, IV, 25. PG 67, col. 1196.) and «Ἐντεῦθεν τε εἰς ἀπέχθειαν κατέστησαν καὶ ἀλλήλους διέβαλλον, ὡς οὐχ ὕγιως περὶ Θεοῦ φρονοῖεν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ πρὶν ἐν ὑπονοίᾳ ἑκάτερος ἦν, ὁ μὲν τὰ Ἀρείου δογματίζων· Κύριλλος δὲ τοῖς ἀμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ τὸν Υἱὸν εἰσηγομένους ἐπόμηνος...» (Sozomen, *Eccl. History*). But in reality «Οὗτοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ πρωτείων φιλονικούντες, μεγίστων κακῶν τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐγένοντο πρόξενοι.» (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eccl. History*, II, 22. PG 82, col. 1064.)

<sup>204</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp. 133-134. C. Papadopoulos, *Ιστ. Ἐκκλ. Ἱεροσολύμων*, pp. 107ff.

The problem had changed form, because the restoration of the deposed bishops was of no interest to Orthodox, but rather they focused their attention on the successors to the orthodox bishops, and the facts relating to the schism at Antioch clearly show this.<sup>205</sup> The defenders of Arianism and their various offshoots born by them tried to impose like-minded bishops onto the Church, thereby creating local majorities.<sup>206</sup> And while the Orthodox bishops outnumbered the Arian, their status as a majority was in danger. This new situation, while grave, was also the occasion for the opening of new horizons for the future of the Church. Clearly there was a need for a suprametropolitan structure which would secure the election of orthodox bishops. At that time there was still a strong connection between ordinations and the adjudication of bishops within the limits of the metropolitan province.

The orthodox, in their fight against the heresy of Arianism, again searched for temporary centers of unity. They found one in Caesarea of Cappadocia, where Basil the Great (330-378) was bishop.<sup>207</sup> The person, work and greatness of this Saint of the Catholic Church are well known. This holy Father and Teacher of the Church, who was the center of the unity of the orthodox people of his age, became deeply involved in the politics of the Church, placing bishops in the bishoprics near him,<sup>208</sup> though without complete success.<sup>209</sup> St. Basil tried to unite the orthodox forces of the East and the West in this common fight.<sup>210</sup> The fact is that the prestige of the metropolitan system had been seriously damaged because it was proven to be ineffective in protecting the unity of the Church. The

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<sup>205</sup>see **V. Stefanidis**, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, p.203; **V. Phidas**, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.516 ff; **C. Papadopoulos**, *Ἱστ. Ἐκκλ. Ἀντιοχείας*, pp.172 ff.

<sup>206</sup>«...οἱ τῆς Ἀρείου συμμορίας... Πάντα γὰρ νόμον παρέβαινον ἀδελῶς, κρατῦναι πειρώμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν· καὶ τῶν θεσμῶν ἢ παράβασις ὑπόβαθρα τῆς θλασφημίας ἐγένετο. Πολλὰ δὲ τοιαῦτα πολλαχοῦ γῆς ἐνεύχμωσαν.» **Theodoret of Cyrrhus**, *Eccl. History*, II,27. PG 82, col. 1080.

<sup>207</sup>see **P. Christou**, *Ἑλλ. Πατρολογία*, Thessaloniki, 1989, v.4, pp.20-104; **S. Papadopoulos**, *Πατρολογία*, Athens, 1990, v.2, pp.355-407; **J. Quasten**, *Patrology*, v.3, pp.204-236; **V. Takakis**, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τῆς Καππαδοκίας στὴ Χριστιανικὴ Σκέψη*, Athens, 1989<sup>2</sup>, (1960), pp.65-138; **F. Young**, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.92 ff.

<sup>208</sup>St. Basil mentions the importance of the election of orthodox bishops in a number of his epistles (*Letter 70*, PG 32, col. 436 & *Letter 92*, PG 32, col. 480), while in others he exhibits his effort for the election of orthodox bishops (*Letter 28*, PG 32, col. 309. & *Letter 30*, PG 32, col. 313). Whenever his aim did not succeed, he did not accept in communion the elected defenders of Arianism (*Letter 207*, PG 32, col. 760). The question of the ordination is put in a strong way in other epistles as well (see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.137-139).

<sup>209</sup>Cf **Basil the Great**, *Letter 138*, PG 32, cols. 580-581.

<sup>210</sup>**B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.60-62.



need for a suprametropolitan authority who would secure the unity of the Church, gained favour in the ecclesiastical consciousness. St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his works, expresses his bitterness at the events of this period,<sup>211</sup> obviously because he was obliged to leave the throne of Constantinople, and because the varying methods for governing the Church seriously damaged its unity.

It is not surprising that this bad ecclesiastical situation led to a search for a new system of government for the good of the Church. The Sees of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea of Cappadocia, Ephesus, Herakleia, Ancyra, Constantinople, Thessalonika, Rome, Milan, Carthage, progressively acquired a prominence that was suprametropolitan, of course within the structural possibilities and the historical context of each throne.<sup>212</sup> On the other hand, the metropolitan bishops were not inclined to relinquish any part of their governmental power, that is to say, the ordination and adjudication of bishops within their metropolitan province. At the same time, the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees did not have a governmental character, although their authority was gradually strengthened. The Church was under great pressure to solve these problems of ecclesiastical government at the end of the Fourth Christian century.

The accession of Theodosius the Great (379-395) to the throne of the Empire affected the ecclesiastical situation radically because the new emperor was a defender of the Council of Nicaea and of orthodoxy. A permanent synod, or the so-called Endemousa synod, was convened in Constantinople in 381,<sup>213</sup> whose aim was to elect the new bishop of the city. The outcome of this synod's doctrinal and canonical proceedings was its recognition as the Second

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<sup>211</sup>Cf **Gregory of Nazianzus**, *Poems about himself* (Ἐπη περὶ ἑαυτοῦ), lines 1546-1565. PG 37, cols. 1136-1138. etc. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.140-141; **P. Christou**, *Ἑλλ. Πατρολογία*, v.4, pp.105-158; **S. Papadopoulos**, *Πατρολογία*, v.2, pp.495-529; **S. Papadopoulos**, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος (Σπουδὴ τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ ἔργου του)*, Athens, 1991; **J. Quasten**, *Patrology*, v.3, pp.236-254; **V. Tatakis**, *Ἡ Συμβολὴ τῆς Καππαδοκίας*, pp.139-200; **F. Young**, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.113-115.

<sup>212</sup>About the churches of Pontus and Asia Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.142-145.

<sup>213</sup>**V. Phidas**, *Ἐνδημοῦσα Σύνοδος, Γένεσις καὶ διαμόρφωσις τοῦ δεσμοῦ ἄχρι τῆς Δ' Οἰκομενικῆς συνόδου (451)*, Athens, 1971; **F. Dvornik**, *Origins of the Episcopal Synods*, pp.31-38.

Ecumenical Council.<sup>214</sup> Although the synod dealt with the problems of the Eastern churches, its canonical work signalled a new era in the ecclesiastical government of the Catholic Church. We have already spoken of the canonical work of the synods of Antioch (341) and Sardica (342-343), and their attempt to introduce a relative suprametropolitan authority. While these synods had confronted the crisis of the depositions of the orthodox bishops, the interest shifted and was now primarily concerned with the election of the successors of these deposed bishops.

Canon 2<sup>215</sup> of the Second Ecumenical Council categorically forbade the introduction of every outlandish (ὑπερόριον) intervention. The meaning of the words «οἰκονομεῖν» (*to administer affairs*) and «διοικεῖν» (*to manage*) which are used in the text of the canon, refers clearly to the election and consecration of bishops.<sup>216</sup> It was believed that, in connection with what had been previously said, the language of the canon was to condemn the outlandish intervention of the See of Alexandria in the affairs of the See of Constantinople.<sup>217</sup> This is not

<sup>214</sup>P. Christou, *Ἑλλ. Πατρολογία*, v.3, pp.38-44; I. Karmiris, *Dogmatica et Symbolica*, pp.129-136; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, pp.296-331; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.88 ff; G. Konidaris, *Γεν. Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.267; J. Meyendorff, *La primauté romaine dans la tradition canonique jusqu'au Concile de Chalcedoine*, pp.474-476; S. Papadopoulos, *Πατρολογία*, v. 2, pp.142-182; V. Phidas, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.518-542; V. Stefanidis, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.89ff. F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.98 ff.

<sup>215</sup>«Τοὺς ὑπὲρ διοίκησιν ἐπισκόπους ταῖς ὑπερορίοις ἐκκλησίαις μὴ ἐπιέναι, μὴδὲ συγγέειν τὰς ἐκκλησίας: ἀλλὰ κατὰ τοὺς κανόνας, τὸν μὲν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ μόνον οἰκονομεῖν: τοὺς δὲ τῆς Ἀνατολῆς ἐπισκόπους, τὴν Ἀνατολὴν μόνον διοικεῖν: φυλαττομένων τῶν ἐν τοῖς κανόσι τοῖς κατὰ Νίκαιαν πρεσβείων τῆ Ἀντιοχείων ἐκκλησίαι: καὶ τοὺς τῆς Ἀσιανῆς διοικήσεως ἐπισκόπους, τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσιανὴν μόνον διοικεῖν: καὶ τοὺς τῆς Ποντικῆς, τὰ τῆς Ποντικῆς μόνον: καὶ τοὺς τῆς Θράκης τὰ τῆς Θρακικῆς μόνον οἰκονομεῖν. Ἀκλήτους δὲ ἐπισκόπους ὑπὲρ διοίκησιν μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν ἐπὶ χειροτονία, ἢ τισιν ἄλλαις οἰκονομίαις ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς. Φυλαττομένου δὲ τοῦ προγεγραμμένου περὶ τῶν διοικήσεων κανόνος, εὐδῆλον ὡς τὰ καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπαρχίαν ἢ τῆς ἐπαρχίας σύνοδος διοικήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐν Νικαίᾳ ὄρισμένα. Τὰς δὲ ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς ἔθνεσι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας, οἰκονομεῖσθαι χρὴ κατὰ τὴν κρατήσασαν συνήθειαν τῶν Πατέρων.» *Syntagma*, v.2, pp.169-170. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.31-32.

<sup>216</sup>About the meaning of the words «οἰκονομεῖν» and «διοικεῖν» see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.151.

<sup>217</sup>According to Vlass. Phidas, for the following reasons, the outlandish interventions were questioned:

- a) The intervention of the throne of Alexandria in the election of Maximus the Cynic to the throne of Constantinople.
- b) The intervention with divisive results of the See of Old Rome in the schism of the Church of Antioch.
- c) The enthronement of Gregory Nazianzen to the throne of Constantinople by Meletius of Antioch.
- d) The refusal of the See of Alexandria to accept unity with Meletius of Antioch, rather supporting Old Rome, and thereby aggravating the schism in Antioch.
- e) The usual arbitrary consecrations by the defenders of Arianism, and especially of Acacius of Caesarea, Basil of Ancyra and Macedonius of Constantinople. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.152.

completely true, because this canon is also concerned with the See of Antioch.<sup>218</sup>

The main section of canon 2 defines the administrative provinces (founded upon the political prefectures which were related to them) within which the greater Synods were summoned in order to deal with the election, ordination and adjudication of bishops to a secondary level. These synods were considered to be the highest administrative authority, whose decisions were final, both in character and force. However, the metropolitan province keeps all of its rights at the first level. The historian Socrates made the mistake of connecting this canon with the famous edict of Theodosius the Great (381), by which the emperor appointed, in the persons of particular bishops, the temporary centers of unity of the orthodox people.<sup>219</sup>

Canon 2 is related in meaning and content to canon 6.<sup>220</sup> Canon 6 clearly specifies the members of the greater synod of the political prefecture. It limits the requirements for the composition of the greater synod in its relative part, where our concern is centered, because this big canon clearly explicates the requirements for the composition of an accusation against an ecclesiastical person. Therefore, it appears that the holy fathers of the synod preferred to follow the canonical tradition that had gained favour in the East. They broadened the synod of the neighbouring bishops (with the bishops of the metropolitanical

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<sup>218</sup>Vlass. Phidas supports the idea that the «Second Ecumenical Council confronted all the existing governmental questions about the relationship between the metropolitanical Sees of each political prefecture and the prestigious Sees of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch» (*Pentarchy*, I, p.149). The particles «μέν, δέ, μέντοι» which connect the cities of Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople equally to canons 2 and 3, intimate that these three prestigious thrones employed the Second Ecumenical Council. The opinion that the canon is employed by the throne of Alexandria, was sustained by the facts concerning Maximus the Cynic, which describe exactly canon 4. («Περὶ Μαξίμου τοῦ Κυνικοῦ, καὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτὸν ἀταξίας τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει γενομένης: ὥστε μήτε Μάξιμον ἐπίσκοπον ἢ γενέσθαι, ἢ εἶναι, μήτε τοὺς παρ' αὐτοῦ χειροτονηθέντας, ἐν οὐδὲν ποτε βαθμῶ κλήρου: πάντων καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν, καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ γενομένων ἀκυρωθέντων.» *Syntagma*, v. 2, p. 176. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.32).

<sup>219</sup>Socrates, *Eccl. History*, V, 8, PG 67, cols 576-581. Sozomen (*Eccl. History*, VII,9, PG 67, cols. 1436-1440) avoided the mistake of Socrates. *Cod. Theod.*, XVI,1,3, (381 July 30), T. Mommsen, *Theodosiani Libri XVI Cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis*, v.12, Berolini, 1905, p.834; Cf Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.149-150.

<sup>220</sup>«... λέγοιεν δὲ ἔχειν τιὰ ἐκκλησιαστικὴν κατὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου κατηγορίαν, τούτους κελεύει ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν τῆς ἐπαρχίας πάντων ἐπισκόπων ἐνίστασθαι τὰς κατηγορίας, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἐλέγχειν τὰ ἐγκλήματα τοῦ ἐν αἰτίαις τισὶν ἐπισκόπου: εἰ δὲ συμβαίη ἀδυνατῆσαι τοὺς ἐπαρχιώτας πρὸς διόρθωσιν τῶν ἐπιφερομένων ἐγκλημάτων τῶ ἐπισκόπῳ, τότε αὐτοὺς προσιέναι μείζονι συνόδῳ, τῶν τῆς διοικήσεως ἐκείνης ἐπισκόπων ὑπὲρ τῆς αἰτίας ταύτης συγκαλομένων...» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.481. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.33.

province), in a synod of bishops of the political prefecture.<sup>221</sup> These changes put an end to the absolute power of the metropolitical system and they introduced a new system of government into the life of the Church (which we can characterize as exarchial).

The new system that introduced the synodical suprametropolitical authority, confronted inefficiently the question concerning *precedence of place* (πρωτοκαθεδρία) in synods. The strong reaction of the metropolitical bishops and the main aim of the Second Ecumenical Council, which was the recovery of the unity of the Church after the great crisis of the Arian controversy, did not permit the establishment of ecclesiastical centers at the political capitals of the administrative provinces, which would take care of the implementation of the canonical decisions of the synod. Obviously, only Alexandria had this advantage, in accordance with the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council (canon 6), as we have said. The absence of established centers, however, resulted in the utilization of old forms. The *Precedence of Honour*, within the limits of the prefecture, had the potential of being combined with the ordination and adjudication of bishops; yet only the prestigious Sees could develop this combination effectively, and the historical situation made this development easy. The origination of a new system of government, wider in scope than the metropolitical system, was a fact, as was the rise of suprametropolitical precedence in the government of the Church.

The results from the canonical decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council were different in the case of the political prefecture of Constantinople,<sup>222</sup> since in

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<sup>221</sup> Only the comparison of canon 6 with canon 14 of Antioch convinced us of the previous. Of course there is a clear difference, because the greater synod is composed by the bishops of the political prefecture, although it is not defined who convokes and presides at the synod. (Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.147) F. Dvornik shows in the canon «an organization which found its culmination in the erection of patriarchates.» This opinion is wrong because the historical evolution was different. **F. Dvornik**, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.35-36.

<sup>222</sup> **Constantinople** was founded by the emperor Constantine the Great, in the ancient city of Byzantium. The inauguration of this new capital of Roman Empire took place on the 3rd of November 324. When the First Ecumenical Council was convoked, the city was under construction. For this reason, the business of the synod was held in Nicaea, where the See of the imperial government was. The opinion that the See of Constantinople was under the See of Herakleia of Thrace (see **F. Dvornik**, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, p.44), is incorrect because of the introduction of the metropolitical system took place at the First Ecumenical Council. Thus, the bishop of the city was a metropolitical bishop from the beginning.

Exceptional persons are a credit to the ecclesiastical history of the city, and they bring much to the facts. The question of the apostolic succession of the throne of Constantinople was a

all the other prefectures of the East (with the exception of Alexandria) no center (government head) was specified which could have the responsibility of implementing these canonical decisions. The political prefecture of New Rome was autonomous and has its own prefect (*Praefectus Urbi*).<sup>223</sup> According to the canonical decisions of the synod, the church of New Rome was identified with an autonomous ecclesiastical unity - prefecture. The church of New Rome acquired the whole canonical rights that derived from these decisions, as every political prefecture. At the same time, the governmental head of this prefecture was the throne of Constantinople itself. Of course, the mention of New Rome directly after the determination of the ecclesiastical prefectures in canon 2, is logically followed by canon 3 (the particle «μέντοι» connects Constantinople with the

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problem because of the late foundation of the city. It became a problem in its relations with other churches and in contemporary research because the criterion for apostolic succession was developed in the West. Apostolic succession had been understood mainly in the West as succession of order, but in the East as succession of faith. The result of this was that the Church of Constantinople was not interested in presenting her founders because there was no question of this. The claim of jurisdiction was not based on the principle of the apostolic succession of order. The tradition of the city concerning the mission of Apostle Andrew in ancient Byzantium appeared in the 5th century, and not after the 8th century, as **F. Dvornik** claims (*The idea of apostolicity in Byzantium, and the legend of the apostle Andrew*, Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1958). But the Apostle and Evangelist John is also one of the founders of the church of ancient Byzantium. (On the Johannine apostolic succession of the See of Constantinople see **V. Phidas**, *Ἡ Ἰωάννεις ἀποστολικότητα τοῦ θρόνου τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, in Πρακτικά τοῦ Διεθνoῦς Συμποσίου: Ἰ. Μονὴ Ἁγ. Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου - 900 Χρόνια Ἱστορικῆς Μαρτυρίας (1088-1988), Athens, 1989, pp.53-86). A Lukan succession is also preserved in the apocryphal tradition (*Doctrina Apostolorum*) for the church of Byzantium, in connection with the mission of Apostles John and Andrew (**W. Cureton**, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, London, 1864, p.34).

Of course, Constantinople as New Rome «is not a simple successor of Old Rome, as it is not a simple substitution of it. It is a renewed extension of it in the body of the Empire, because Old Rome was not abolished as capital after the foundation of New Rome. Indeed two Romes participated equally in the political content of one capital of the Empire.» (**V. Phidas**, *Βυζάντιο*, Athens, 1990, p.262). The imperial ideology of the role of the new capital had direct bearings upon the ecclesiastical order. On the political ideology of the Empire see **H. Glykatzi - Ahrweiler**, *L' Idéologie Politique de l' Empire Byzantin*, Paris, 1975, Presses Universitaires de France; **F. Dvornik**, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, vols 2, Washington, 1966; **I. Karagiannopoulos**, *Ἡ Πολιτικὴ Θεωρία τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, Thessaloniki, 1988. **S. Runciman**, *The Byzantine Theocracy*, Cambridge, 1977, Cambridge University Press.

Finally, we must mention the opinion of Francis Dvornik who said that «Constantinople does not appear to have played any marked role in the Church before the year 380» (**F. Dvornik**, *Origins of the Episcopal Synods*, p.32), which is incorrect. This is can be proved by the fact that Eusebius of Nicomedia made every effort and succeeded in moving to Constantinople. (**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.128, 131.)

<sup>223</sup>see **V. Phidas**, *Βυζάντιο*, p.164.

previous canon).<sup>224</sup> New Rome, according to the governmental system of the empire, was an autonomous prefecture. Zonaras rightly demonstrates the unity of the two canons (of course through the prism of later ecclesiastical structures).<sup>225</sup> Therefore, the ecclesiastical authority given to the prestigious throne of New Rome matched the size of the synod of the prefecture. Canon 3 secured the ecclesiastical autonomy of the church of Constantinople in practice. This recognition, in connection with the ecclesiastical situation, of the throne of Constantinople (including the Endemousa synod and the lack of subordinate to bishops), permitted the development of new forms of government, and made the canonical decisions of the Second Ecumenical council the starting point of this development.

«Ὁρίσαν οἱ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει συνεληθόντες ἅγιοι πατέρες...» (canon 1)<sup>226</sup> «Τὸν μέντοι Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον,...» (canon 3) recognizing the *Precedence of Honour* of a prestigious See to the throne of Constantinople. We see this recognition being made for all the prestigious Sees during the proceedings and at the conclusion of the Second Ecumenical Council. Already at this period canons 6 and 7 of the First Ecumenical Council were regarded as the canonical establishment of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees of Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and Jerusalem and as a canonical foundation for suprametropolitan authority.<sup>227</sup> The relative formulation of canon 2 for the church of Antioch (φυλαττομένων τῶν ἐν τοῖς κανόσι τοῖς κατὰ Νίκαιαν πρεσβείων τῆ Ἀντιοχείων ἐκκλησίᾳ) is clear proof of that. Thus, the recognized authority of the throne of Constantinople in ecclesiastical practice needed to be established by canon law, as this was believed to have been done for the other prestigious Sees by the First Ecumenical Council. The prestige

<sup>224</sup> «Τὸν μέντοι Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ῥώμην.» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.173. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees*, v.I, p.32.

<sup>225</sup> «Περὶ τῶν ἄλλων πατριαρχικῶν θρόνων τοῦ ἀνωτέρω κανόνος διαταξαμένου (δηλ. του β'), οὗτος καὶ θρόνος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως μέμνηται,...» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.173. The English translation: «whereas the above canon commanded about the other patriarchal thrones (i.e., canon 2), this canon mentions the throne of Constantinople.»

<sup>226</sup> *Syntagma*, v.2, p.165.

<sup>227</sup> Theodosius the Great temporarily made the bishops Damasus of Rome and Peter of Alexandria criteria of Orthodoxy by virtue of an edict on the eve of the convocation of the Ecumenical council. (Cod. Theod. XVI, 1,2. (380 Febr. 27) T. Mommsen, *Theodosiani Libri XVI Cum Constitutionibus Sirmundianis*, v.12, Berolini, 1905, p.833.)

of the church of New Rome was not only the result of the political importance of this city, but was also tied to its increasing ecclesiastical authority. We are aware of the great interest shown by the defenders of Arianism in the election of the bishop of this city.<sup>228</sup> «The fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council did not honour the throne of New Rome because they wanted to raise it to the rank of one of the prestigious Sees, but they adopted the prestige it already possessed and gave it the first position among the prestigious Sees of the East.»<sup>229</sup>

As a result of the historical situation which arose after the breakdown between Rome and Constantinople, the interpreters of 12th century misinterpreted the meaning of this canon. Thus, Balsamon and Zonaras do not understand the construction of the canon and its importance at the time in interpreting it. The preposition «μετά» declares the difference between equivalent or equal Sees and has to do with position of rank and not with *Precedence of Honour*.<sup>230</sup> The correct interpretation of canon 3, provided by canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, certifies that there is an equivalence or equality in the *Precedence of Honour* of the thrones of Rome and Constantinople. Besides, the more ancient *Precedence of Honour* is placed before the same *Precedence* which follows, i.e. the *Precedence* of Old Rome is mentioned before that of New Rome. We believe that in canon 3, the legislator is referring directly to the relations between the prestigious Sees of Constantinople and Alexandria. This is the reason why the holy fathers of the synod used the principle of accommodation in order to justify the preeminence of the throne of Constantinople in relation to the other thrones of the East (i.e., those of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem).<sup>231</sup> Canon 3 is concluded with the phrase «Διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ῥώμην» (*because it is New Rome*). It contrasts the Old Rome to the New Rome. Thus, in its substance, canon 3 does not make any change in the order of preeminence of any of the prestigious thrones, because

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<sup>228</sup> Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.158-159.

<sup>229</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.159.

<sup>230</sup> see Syntagma, v.2, pp.173-176 and Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.161-162.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.44-47; W. de Vries, *Orient et Occident*, pp.53 ff.

Constantinople is the New Rome and it is entitled to be equal in status with the Old Rome, whose position had been determined by Antiquity.<sup>232</sup>

The end of the 4th century finds the ecclesiastical government of the Church moving in the opposite direction from the one that had been established by the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council, that is, the metropolitan system. The system of government that now appeared could be characterized as exarchial, although the synod had not yet determined the administrative heads of the political prefectures (or exarchial provinces). The new system of organization did not establish a relationship between exceptional *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees and the exceptional authority to ordain and adjudicate disputes relating to bishops; but rather favoured the view of giving this power to the ecclesiastical government. Thus, the Second Ecumenical Council did not go on with the establishment of a permanent suprametropolitan authority. Both the internal problems of the prestigious thrones, and the strong reaction of the metropolitans, made clear that the synod of the metropolitan province was the sovereign organ of the ecclesiastical government. It is worth mentioning that the imposition of autonomous ecclesiastical units in the East has its counter part in the West. We see the development of strong ecclesiastical units endowed with autonomy from Rome in the prefectures of Northern Italy (Milan), Northern Africa (Carthage), and Gaul (Arles). This demonstrates the significance of the decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council for the tendencies of ecclesiastical government of the Church in the West. Only favorable historical developments allowed Rome to prevail in the West during the subsequent centuries.

The relations between the churches of Rome and Constantinople, or New Rome, could be generally characterized as good during the 4th century. Yet some clouds had begun to appear in the horizon. St. Basil the Great, who fought for the unity of the Eastern and Western orthodox against Arianism, showed

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<sup>232</sup>«By canon 3: a). because of its great ecclesiastical prestige the exceptional *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Constantinople is recognized, b). the second rank in the first place of the prestigious thrones is granted to the throne of Constantinople, "because it is *New Rome*" and c). the first rank in the first place is recognized to the See of Old Rome, because the more ancient is given preeminence.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.162.



impatience with the attitude of Rome<sup>233</sup> and, therefore, he did not hesitate to speak about the «western eyebrow» (δυτικῆς ἀφρούς) and the «haughty manners» (ὑπερηφάνων ἡθῶν) of Rome.<sup>234</sup> Of course, the controversy between Alexandria and Rome was the center of interest in this period, which also continued in the next century with greater intensity. The 4th Christian century occupies a crucial place in the historical life of the Church.

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<sup>233</sup>Cf. S. Papadopoulos, *Πατρολογία*, v.2, p.377-379.

<sup>234</sup>see S. Bilalis, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Παπισμός*, Athens, 1988<sup>2</sup>, v.1, p.205.

## Chapter 4

## The Institutionalization of the Precedence of Honour and the Ecclesiastical Government

The decisions of the First Ecumenical Council, as we saw, continued to be in force during the fourth century, and in spite of their weaknesses and the assaults directed against them, they kept the strength of the metropolitan system unbroken. Of course, with the passage of time, the prestigious thrones acquired in their turn very strong grounds in the system of ecclesiastical government. This situation, along with the canonical tendencies that had been formed, produced forms of government which would continue to develop over the next centuries to move towards the foundation of the patriarchal system. The throne of Old Rome used its prestige to gain an equivalent authority over the Churches in the Western empire. This is characteristic of the canonical tendencies that existed during this period in the West.<sup>235</sup> The fight of the church of Rome was not easy because she was confronted with the stubborn resistance of the metropolitan bishops of the West, who were not inclined to relinquish any portion of their power.

The church of Carthage is a clear example of this sort of resistance. It is important to note that this church had confronted great problems, because it existed in a unique atmosphere of both deep spirituality and constant controversy. It is enough to mention Manichaeism, Montanism and the Donatist schism. These dangers imposed a strict governmental organization and strengthened the rigorous function of the synodical system.<sup>236</sup> As a result, the prestige of the bishop of Carthage and metropolitan bishop of North Africa was

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<sup>235</sup> «The papal claims in the West revolved around the right to ordain and adjudicate on bishops. The bishops of Rome claimed both the right to ordain and the right to solve any problems relating to ordinations. They also claimed that the papal See had the right to decide on all questions submitted to it for reconsideration.» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.258.

<sup>236</sup> see **F. Dvornik**, *Origins of the Episcopal Synods*, pp.42-45.

strengthened.<sup>237</sup> The problems of unity in the church of Carthage, and the appearance of external assaults from the barbarian invasions in Northern Africa marked the end to the influence of this Church in the West after the Fifth century. The historical situation did not allow the local church of Carthage to realize the potential which it possessed.

The attempt by the church of Rome to use its exceptional prestige to gain governmental power over the church of Carthage was realized during the synod of 418-419, which is well known because of its important canonical work (and especially for its work on the canon of the Bible). The papal legates (the Italian bishop Faustinus of Potentia Picena and the presbyters Philip and Asellus)<sup>238</sup> tried to introduce an appeal to the bishop of Rome for the clergy of the church of Carthage.<sup>239</sup> In order to succeed in this, they falsified the canons of Nicaea with the well-known canons of Sardica, 3, 4, and 5. In doing so, papal legates tried to take advantage of the devotion to the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council by the orthodox. The reaction to the synod of Carthage was direct. They ascertained that there was no canonical establishment of a right of appeal to the bishop of Old Rome in their texts, but rather the exact opposite. For this reason, the synod asked for records of the synod of Nicaea from the churches of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, after the proposal of the vicar of the

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<sup>237</sup>The prestige of the See of Carthage was continually increasing, having an exceptional position since the third century. Causes of this evolution were the important personages who occupied the bishopric in Carthage, such as St. Cyprian, the quality of ecclesiastical life (the martyrs), and the financial and geographical position, as well as the political importance of the city. Carthage had to oppose the previous principles of ecclesiastical life to the Apostolicity of the See of Old Rome. It seemed as if the local church of Carthage belonged to the churches which we have called "daughter" churches, because the sources do not locate its founding with any of the apostles.

The metropolitan bishop of Carthage practiced a kind of "suprametropolitan" authority over the six provinces of the dioceses of Africa (*diocesis Africae*), the provinces of Tripolitania, Proconsul Africa, Numidia, Sitifecia, Mauritania. But in reality the bishop of Carthage had metropolitan power. There is much in common in the governmental structures of both Carthage and Egypt. Special rights were recognized to the bishop of Carthage with regard to the question of the right to ordain, as concluded from canon 45 (54) of Carthage, because «'Αει ὑπῆρξεν ἡ αὐθεντία αὐτῆ τῶ θρόνῳ τούτῳ, ἵνα, ὅθεν θέλει καὶ περὶ οἰουδήποτε προετραπῆ ὀνόματος, κατὰ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐκάστης ἐκκλησίας ἐχειροτόνει ἐπίσκοπον.» (Syntagma, v.3, p.445).

see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.173-174; R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.52 ff; W. Frend, *The Donatist Church*; B. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.42-44, 81 ff; C. Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage. Perpetua, Tertullian, and Cyprian*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1992, The Pilgrim Press; OBD, pp.384-385.

<sup>238</sup>Syntagma, v.3, p.286.

<sup>239</sup>Cf. Syntagma, v.3, pp.287-296.

province of Numidia, bishop Alypius of Theagasteon and the Synod.<sup>240</sup> This was not strange for the ecclesiastical tradition, because the local churches often asked for texts that they did not have, and Carthage as a daughter church, was no different. It is important here to note that the church of Carthage, as a church of the West, absolutely respected the *Precedence of Honour* and the rank of the eastern Sees, as this had been established by custom and had been institutionalized in the East by the Second Ecumenical Council.

The synod had decided to follow the records of Old Rome, until it received the other records.<sup>241</sup> The answers of Atticus<sup>242</sup> of New Rome and Cyril<sup>243</sup> of Alexandria were crushing for the claims of Old Rome. The eager dispatch of the canonical decisions from the Sees of New Rome and Alexandria demonstrated that the records were falsified.<sup>244</sup> The reaction of Carthage was direct and rigorous. It prohibited every outlandish intervention, and especially by the bishop of Rome, through canon 105 (116).<sup>245</sup> Of course, the church of Carthage is more than clear in its severe epistle to the bishop of Rome, declaring that «τοῦ λοιποῦ πρὸς τὰς ὑμετέρας ἀκοὰς τοὺς ἐντεῦθεν παραγινομένους εὐχερῶς μὴ προσδέχησθε, μηδὲ τοὺς

<sup>240</sup>Bishop Alypius of Theagasteon proposed to the synod of Carthage the followings: «ἐπειδὴ τὰ αὐθεντικά τῆς ἐν Νικαίᾳ συνόδου ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει λέγεται εἶναι, τινὰς μετὰ γραμμάτων τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγιοσύνης πέμψαι καταξιώσατε: καὶ μὴ μόνον πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν τὸν τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπίσκοπον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ Ἀντιοχείας, τοὺς προσκυνητοὺς ἱερεῖς, οἵτινες τὴν αὐτὴν σύνοδον ἡμῖν μεθ' ὑποσημειώσεως τῶν οἰκείων γραμμάτων ἀποστείλωσιν, ὥστε πᾶσαν μετὰ ταῦτα ἀμφισβήτησιν ἀφαίρεθῆναι: ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς οὕτως, ὡς ὁ ἀδελφὸς Φαυστῖνος ἤγαγεν, οὐδαμῶς εὗραμεν ταῦτα» (*Syntagma*, v.3, pp.290-291). The legate of the bishop of Old Rome tried to dissuade such an action by the church of Carthage with the excuse that «μηδέποτε φιλονικία μεταξύ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τις ἀναφυῆ, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἀδελφικῆ ἀγάπῃ βουλεύσθησθε, ἀντιγράφοντος αὐτοῦ, τί ὀφείλει κριτερόνως φυλαχθῆναι» (*Syntagma*, v.3, p.291). But this attempt came to nothing. The church of Carthage did the proper thing by obtaining the copies of the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council from the prestigious Sees of the East.

<sup>241</sup>This is shown by the similar proposal of bishop Alypius (*Syntagma*, v.3, p.291.) and the judgment of presbyter Apiarius. This judgment had been made after the invocation of the reconsideration by the bishop of Rome, according to the letter of the synod to bishop Celestine of Rome (*Syntagma*, v.3, pp.618-624).

<sup>242</sup>*Syntagma*, v.3, p.616.

<sup>243</sup>*Syntagma*, v.3, pp.615-616.

<sup>244</sup>Bishop Atticus of New Rome wrote in his relative epistle: «Καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ τὴν κοινὴν πίστιν, καὶ τοὺς ὅρους τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν Πατέρων βεβαιωθέντας, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἀρνούμενος;» (*Syntagma*, v.3, p.616). The English translation: «And who is that one, who refused his brothers the common faith and the decrees that were confirmed by the Fathers?»

<sup>245</sup>«Ὅστις δὴποτε μὴ κοινωνῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ, εἰς τὰ περὶ ματικὰ πρὸς τὸ κοινωνεῖν ὑπερπύσει, τὴν ζημίαν τῆς κληρώσεως ἀναδέχεται.» *Syntagma*, v.3, p.554. The canon punishes with defrocking those who had gone out of Africa, especially to Rome, and had been punished with excommunication.

παρ' ἡμῶν ἀποκοινωνητέους, εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ λοιποῦ θελήσητε δέξασθαι».<sup>246</sup> At the same time, the church of Rome dealt severely with the same issue concerning the laity. The falsification of the records must be condemned emphatically, because it only brings about damage to the ecclesiastical body.<sup>247</sup> The severe tone of the epistle left no doubt about the attitude of the church of Carthage towards the bishop of Rome. The results of these events was a climate of suspicion which permeated the relations of the two churches. The failure of Rome to combine the *Precedence of Honour* with the right of the adjudication on bishops in the church of Carthage, indicates the consciousness of independence which existed in the western Church at the beginning of the fifth century.

Things were more difficult for the See of Rome in the Italian peninsula. The ever rising prestige and independence of the church of Milan put even the *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Old Rome in the West into question.<sup>248</sup> The city possessed political importance because it was the capital of the Western state. Bishop Ambrose had an exceptional degree of prestige in the Catholic Church. All these things permitted the imposition of the throne of Milan on all the dioceses of Northern Italy (*Italia annonaria*). The See of Milan acted under the auspices of the prestige of St. Ambrose and his great influence over the *diocesis Italiae annonariae*,<sup>249</sup> and therefore, Western Illyricum was soon under the sphere of influence of the See of Milan. This fact is proved with the intervention in the election of bishop Anemius of Sirmium in 376, and the participation of the bishops of Pannonia (and Dacia) in the local councils convoked by the See of

<sup>246</sup>*Syntagma*, v.3, p.620. «that for the future you do not readily admit to a hearing persons coming hence, nor choose to receive to your communion those excommunicated by us», J. Stevenson, *Creeds...*, p.250.

<sup>247</sup>«Περὶ γὰρ τοῦ, τινὰς ὡσανεὶ ἐκ τοῦ πλευροῦ τῆς σῆς ἀγιωσύνης πέμπεσθαι, οὐδεμιᾶ τῶν Πατέρων συνόδῳ ὄρισθὲν εὐρίσκωμεν... ἵνα μὴ τὸν καπνώδη τύφον τοῦ κόσμου δόξωμεν εἰσάγειν τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἥτις τὸ φῶς τῆς ἀπλότητος, καὶ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης τὴν ἡμέραν τοῖς τὸν Θεὸν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῦσι προσφέρει.» *Syntagma*, v.3, p.621. For the English translation see J. Stevenson, *Creeds...*, p.251.

<sup>248</sup>It is characteristic that bishop Siricius of Old Rome did not react to the convocation of the synod of Capua (391) for the arrangement of the relation of West with the church of Antioch. But more significant is the fact that the bishop of Rome did not participate in this synod, when Capua (the capital of the province of Campania, which belonged to the *diocesis Italiae suburbucariae*) was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, according to canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.176; HCC, v.2, pp.392 ff; W. de Vries, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, p.34; Geoffrey Barraclough regards the bishops of Rome from Sixtus II to Damasus "mediocre". Ambrose of Milan was the first remarkable bishop of Italy and not a bishop of Rome (*The Medieval Papacy*, p.21).

<sup>249</sup>Cf. R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.80 ff.

Milan. The See of Milan did not hesitate intervening in the concerns of the prestigious thrones of the East, both of Constantinople and Antioch. The prestige of this See declined slowly during the fifth century because of the foundation of the metropolitan Sees of Aquileia<sup>250</sup> (400) and Ravenna (before the 425), and because of the transposition of the center of government from Milan to Ravenna (401).<sup>251</sup> The historical situation, and political evolution in the empire contributed to the weakening of another rival of Old Rome in the West.<sup>252</sup>

The attempt by the church of Rome to establish a papal vicariate in Thessaloniki in Eastern Illyricum is directly connected with the development of the prestige of the church of Milan.<sup>253</sup> The church of Rome had been attributed exceptional power in an ongoing struggle of vesting its exceptional prestige with exceptional power, within the boundaries of its governmental prefecture.<sup>254</sup> In the frame of this fight it sought ways in order to stop the developing prestige of its rival churches in the West and the reaction that her own attitude had caused. At the same time that Rome began its fight for power, the political situation of the prefecture of the Eastern Illyricum was unstable. The political solution to this

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<sup>250</sup>see **S. Tavano**, *Aquileia Christiana*, Udine, 1972.

<sup>251</sup>see **MACE**, p.227. The Mediolanum became the capital of West from the time of Diocletian, in 286, and remained so until 401. **G. Barraclough**, *The Medieval Papacy*, p.23; **F. Dvornik**, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, pp.24-25.

<sup>252</sup>Vlass. Phidas observes that «the relations of the See of Mediolanum with the See of Old Rome in West were relations of whole government independence and rivalry». For further bibliography see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.175-177 & 258-259.

<sup>253</sup>see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.258-289; **F. Dvornik**, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, pp. 25-29; **B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.63 ff.

<sup>254</sup>The political prefecture of Italy and Africa (*praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae*) was divided into the following political dioceses: North Italy (*diocesis Italiae annonariae*), South Italy (*diocesis Italiae suburbucariae*) and Africa (*diocesis Africae*). The question of the division of the prefecture of Illyricum (*praefectura praetorio per Illyricum*) became was urgently pursued by the successors of Theodosius the Great. Thus, the political dioceses of Pannonia with the political dioceses of Illyricum (*diocesis Illyrici*) were the fourth dioceses of the prefecture of Italy and were placed among the dioceses of the western state (*pars Occidentis*). The other two dioceses (*diocesis Dacia* and *diocesis Macedoniae*) made up the prefecture of Illyricum (*praefectura praetorio per Illyricum*).

The prefecture of Illyricum was established in 356/357 by emperor Constantius. It was abolished by Julian the Apostate in 361 and reestablished by Gratianus in 375 as part of the western state. Theodosius the Great annexed Illyricum during his kingdom. The dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia were given to the eastern state and became the prefecture of Eastern Illyricum in 379. This assignment was rescinded in 380 and the dioceses returned to the western state, but as was usually the case, the emperor of the East did not relinquish his right in actual practice. (**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.260). Thessaloniki was the capital of the Prefecture of Illyricum, but it was transferred to Sirmium in 437 (which was given to the eastern state this year) because of military necessity. (**IEE**, v.7, pp.94-95.)

problem occurred at the end of the fourth century with the division of this prefecture. The ecclesiastical situation was vague, which allowed for the development of various claims and forms concerning the churches of Illyricum. As we saw previously, the churches of the dioceses of Pannonia<sup>255</sup> were under the sphere of influence of the throne of Milan.<sup>256</sup> The ecclesiastical situation had been formed in Western Illyricum, while the strength of the metropolitan system in the prefecture of Eastern Illyricum was so great that it would not permit outlandish interventions.<sup>257</sup> The authority of the See of Thessaloniki occurred at the same time as the political importance of the city grew, but the suprametropolitan authority of its bishop was not recognized.<sup>258</sup> The elevation of a See to suprametropolitan status required great effort and a strong footing. There were many cities that had apostolic churches in the prefecture of Illyricum, which had been metropolises according to the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council. Thus, the metropolitan bishops of Illyricum possessed an authority equal to its prestige.

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<sup>255</sup>The dioceses of Pannonia under the name *dioecesis Illyrici* was placed into the prefecture of Italy and Africa in 395. Sirmium was the capital of the dioceses. The *dioecesis Illyrici* included the provinces of Dalmatia, Pannonia I, Pannonia II, Sauarias, Valeria, Mediterranean Noricon and Tributarian Noricon.

<sup>256</sup>Vlass. Phidas holds that «obviously the imposition of the metropolitan system was very slow» (*Pentarchy*, I, p.259) for the dioceses of Pannonia (Western Illyricum). F. Dvornik mentions the failure of bishop Zosimus (417-418) of Rome to establish a papal vicariate in Pannonia (*The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, p. 47).

<sup>257</sup>The prefecture of Eastern Illyricum (*praefectura praetorio per Illyricum*) has two dioceses, the dioceses of Macedonia (*dioecesis Macedoniae*) and the dioceses of Dacia (*dioecesis Dacia*), and the capital was the city of Thessaloniki. The metropolitan system had developed in accordance with the political provinces, because the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council had been acted decisively in Illyricum. The first throne of the dioceses of Dacia was Sardica. The dioceses had divided the provinces of Prevaes, Dardania, Myssia, Mediterranean Dacia and Tributarian Dacia. The political and ecclesiastical capital of the dioceses of Macedonia was Thessaloniki. The dioceses had been divided into the provinces of Crete (metropolis: Gortyna), Achaia (metropolis: Corinth), Thessaly (metropolis: Larissa), Old Epiros (metropolis: Nikopolis), New Epiros (metropolis: Dyrrachion) and Macedonia (metropolis: Thessaloniki). Cf. *IEE*, v.7, pp.94-95. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.259-260.

<sup>258</sup>The important ecclesiastical position of the throne of Thessaloniki between the Orthodox West and the Arian East during the Arian controversy, strengthened the geopolitical importance of this city which lay between Old and New Rome. It is a logical necessity that Thessaloniki, as an ecclesiastical center, can be characterized by great development and continuous prosperity. (see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.260). The following is characteristic of the importance of the city: The Italian bishops proposed to emperor Honorius that a synod be convoked at Thessaloniki. The purposed synod would undertake the re-examination of the case against the archbishop of Constantinople, St. John Chrysostom, and would include all the prestigious Sees, according to the principle guiding the adjudication of a bishop of prestigious throne. see Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.138.

It appears that the See of Milan had succeeded in influencing the metropolitan bishops of Pannonia and Dacia, and in practice exercised a kind of suprametropolitan authority over these dioceses.<sup>259</sup> It is not surprising that this newly formed situation in the western churches alarmed the church of Old Rome. It is clear from all the developments which took place, that the See of Rome could not react or fight against the See of Milan. Hence, the See of Rome chose to strengthen and develop the suprametropolitan authority of the See of Thessaloniki. Vlass. Phidas regards this tactic as "the most intelligent".<sup>260</sup> This policy was practised by a series of letters which the bishops of Rome sent to the bishops of Thessaloniki and which laid the foundation for the establishment of a papal Vicariate in Thessaloniki.<sup>261</sup> There are many opinions concerning the chronology of the subordination of Eastern Illyricum to the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome.<sup>262</sup> «We recognize that the question of the so-called establishment of the Vicariate of Thessaloniki is a very difficult problem to solve, not only as regards the time of its establishment, but also the relation of the bishop of Thessaloniki, as a Vicar, to the bishop of Rome.»<sup>263</sup> The question of the right to ordinations and adjudications of bishops is the basis for all the speculation concerning the ecclesiastical government of Eastern Illyricum.

Damasus (366-384) was the first of the bishops of Rome who appears to have sent an epistle to the bishop of Thessaloniki at the end of his life.<sup>264</sup> This epistle has not been preserved, but from the epistle of his successor Siricius (384-399) we can surmise what it contained. The aim of the epistle of Damasus was to curb the extension of the suprametropolitan authority of the throne of Milan, because the claims of Old Rome in Eastern Illyricum had not taken a particular form.<sup>265</sup> The epistle of Siricius of Rome (who first used the title Pope)<sup>266</sup> to Anysius of Thessaloniki gives the bishop of Thessaloniki control of all the ordinations and

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<sup>259</sup>see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.263.

<sup>260</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.264.

<sup>261</sup>Mansi, v.VIII, cols. 750 ff; E. Schwartz, *Die sogenannte Sammlung der Kirche von Thessalonich*, Festschr. für R. Reitzenstein (Leipzig - Berlin 1931) pp.137 - 159; C. v. Silva-Tarouca, *Textus et Documenta*, series theologica, 23 (Roma 1937).

<sup>262</sup>see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.261-262.

<sup>263</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.261.

<sup>264</sup>G. Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, pp.23-24.

<sup>265</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.265.

<sup>266</sup>G. Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, p.24.



the adjudication of bishops in Eastern Illyricum.<sup>267</sup> This assignment given by the See of Rome, which prior to this did not have any footing in the ecclesiastical affairs of Eastern Illyricum, was founded upon the exceptional prestige of the church of Old Rome. Of course, this was inconceivable in the East, although the whole proposal demonstrates the tendencies of the prestigious Sees of this age. The See of Old Rome claimed that in practice, Illyricum was subordinate to its jurisdiction, although the sources of the fourth century do not bear witness to this claim.<sup>268</sup>

The next letter preserved is the letter of bishop Innocent (401-417) of Rome.<sup>269</sup> This letter was sent by the bishop of Rome to Rufos of Thessaloniki in 415.<sup>270</sup> The bishop of Rome repeats in this letter the rights of the See of Thessaloniki, trying to define Thessaloniki as a Vicariate. This clearly shows us that the See of Thessaloniki did not accept the outlandish suprametropolitan intervention of Old Rome, based on the canonical decisions of the First and the Second Ecumenical Councils. The See of Thessaloniki exhibited the same reaction as the See of Carthage, and this reaction by the bishops of Eastern Illyricum must have been the same any time there was an attempt to use suprametropolitan power to intervene in the affairs of the See of Thessaloniki. Thus, there is no question that the metropolitan system was very strong in the dioceses of Illyricum. The great prestige of the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council (canons 4 and 5), that is the preeminence of the See of New Rome in the East, and the political situation (the dioceses of Eastern Illyricum belonged to the

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<sup>267</sup> **Mansi**, v. VIII, col.750.

<sup>268</sup> «The assignment of the bishop of Rome to the bishop of Thessaloniki concerning the question of the right to ordain and adjudicate bishops, declared: **either** the bishop of Rome regarded Illyricum as subordinate to his jurisdiction, and because of this he gave the right to ordain, which belonged to him, to the preeminent bishop of Illyricum, **or** he claimed them subordinate to his jurisdiction as the only prestigious See of the western state, to which Illyricum belonged. The first supposition cannot succeed because nothing hinted at the regular power of the See of Rome in Eastern Illyricum until the end of the fourth century. The second supposition is the only possible one, according to what has been said about the right to ordain during this period and from the correspondence of the bishops of Rome and Thessaloniki.» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.266.

<sup>269</sup> **Mansi**, v. VIII, cols. 751-752.

<sup>270</sup> The exact responsibility of the bishop of Thessaloniki are delineated for the first time, and they are as follows: **a.** the certification of the election and consecration of bishops (*jus ordinandi*) **b.** the adjudication of bishops and the precedence of the synod of the bishops of Eastern Illyricum. The *causae majores* must be sent to the See of Rome.» **Pentarchy**, v.I, pp.266-267.

Eastern state), gave support to the claims of the bishops of Illyricum in this period.

Examples of the independence of the bishops of Illyricum can be found in the sources. The case of bishop Perigenes of Corinth is a clear example.<sup>271</sup> The bishop of Thessaloniki did not react, and was not involved in the election of bishop Alexander of Corinth, but he was unable to impose Perigenes, bishop of Old Patras, when Perigenes succeeded Alexander of Corinth, although some of the Corinthians reacted. The reactions came to bishop Boniface I of Rome (418-422), who accepted the election of Perigenes as canonical.<sup>272</sup> During the same period, the bishops of Thessaly deposed bishop Perevius of the Thessalian Salton, and ordained Maximus to his position without the involvement of Rufus of Thessaloniki.<sup>273</sup> These examples demonstrate that the bishop of Thessaloniki did not act with suprametropolitan authority, nor did he claim it. These local reactions were the first impetus for bishop Boniface of Rome's decision to send a series of letters to the bishops of Illyricum.<sup>274</sup>

New causes were not long in coming. The evolution of the ecclesiastical government of the dioceses of Eastern Illyricum in the first quarter of the fifth century, acquired a new dimension and new rivals. Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) entrusted the solution of the disputes concerning Eastern Illyricum to the bishop of New Rome in his edict of 14 July 421.<sup>275</sup> The emperor at the suggestion of Archbishop Atticus of Constantinople put the churches of Illyricum under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. It is in this period that the imposition of the See of New Rome on the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus had been completed.<sup>276</sup> The edict was in absolute harmony with the established custom among the bishops of Eastern Illyricum of appealing to the bishop of New Rome when confronted with difficult problems which were hard to solve. The See of

<sup>271</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.368.

<sup>272</sup> Mansi, v. VIII, cols. 752-753.

<sup>273</sup> Mansi, v. VIII, col. 754; Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.268-269.

<sup>274</sup> Mansi, v. VIII, cols. 752-759.

<sup>275</sup> «Τὰς ἀναφυσόμενας κανονικὰς ἀμφισθητήσεις ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ Ἰλλυρικῷ, οὐ δεῖ τέμνεσθαι παρὰ γνώμην τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ Συνόδου, ἣτις ἔχει τὰ προνόμια τῆς ἀρχαίας Ῥώμης.» Syntagma, v.6, p. 260. The emperor published an equivalent edict for the dioceses of Asia (*ibid.* p. 90). see Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p. 192. and B. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy*, pp. 91 ff.

<sup>276</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.270-271, 274.

Constantinople did not have any reason to discourage this canonical tendency, nor the imperial decisions which encouraged it. It goes without question that the edict alarmed the See of Rome. Bishop Boniface of Rome knew better than anyone else in the West what the results of a such a decision would be, and he fought to overturn it, and with the help of emperor Honorius of the West, the edict was revoked. This did not mean that Eastern Illyricum was subordinated to the See of Old Rome, because Theodosius II protected the rights and independence of the bishops.

This evolution obligated the See of Old Rome to redefine its relationship with the churches of Illyricum. The See of Old Rome did not have anymore to confront the expansion of the prestige of the See of Milan, but *the expansion of the authority and prestige* of New Rome. Boniface, for the first time in his letters, promoted the theory of the papal primacy over the whole Church,<sup>277</sup> his primary aim being the neutralization of the reaction of the bishops of Illyricum. If papal primacy had been recognized by the whole Church, there would have been no cause for reaction by the bishops. His secondary concern was to elevate the preeminence of the See of Old Rome over the See of Constantinople. «Boniface emphasizes in his letters again and again the rights of his “Vicar” bishop of Thessaloniki by “assignment” of the papal See. His whole reasoning is presented as a theoretical, doctrinal and canonical foundation of papal primacy rather than as a strong claim of the particular and regular jurisdiction on Illyricum. The bishop of Rome claimed this authority in Illyricum, so that he might claim it over the whole Church. He argued that his claims on Eastern Illyricum were based on the tradition of the Church, but he does not use any example from the relations of Rome and Illyricum.»<sup>278</sup> The See of Old Rome claimed the recognition of the authority of the bishop of Thessaloniki as its Vicar, and as a result the subordination of Eastern Illyricum to its provinces. At the same time, it tried to curtail the imposition of the authority of New Rome on the dioceses of Illyricum.

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<sup>277</sup>In Boniface's letters, we see that he supported the petrine theory, and as a result, the notion that the See of Old Rome was the source of all power in the Church. He believed that his power was based on divine right, explicated in canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council. He supported the non-retractable decisions of the See of Old Rome and he emphasized that the bishop of Thessaloniki was the Vicar of the bishop of Old Rome. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.269-270.

<sup>278</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.271.

The fact that the sources do not prove the establishment of a papal Vicariate in Thessaloniki even though the bishops of Rome made such claims, requires careful examination. Vlassios Phidas rightly wonders: Could the repeated claims of the bishops of Rome be regarded as sufficient proof for the establishment of a papal Vicariate in Eastern Illyricum? Why did the bishops of Rome not claim direct jurisdiction by the consecration of the Vicar bishop of Thessaloniki?<sup>279</sup> The disposition of the bishops of Illyricum to react against any attempt of any imposition of suprametropolitan authority of the bishop of Thessaloniki (and the bishop of Rome), is clear from the sources, but the bishop of Thessaloniki also seems to show indifference to the assignments of the bishop of Rome, although they were favourable to his position, such as the case of bishop Perigenes of Corinth. This instance demonstrates the actual limits of the authority of the bishop of Rome. The bishop of Rome did not claim the ordination of the bishop of Thessaloniki when «the ordination of the primary bishop was, according to the canonical perceptions of this age, the safest and quickest way for the imposition of the papal See over Eastern Illyricum.»<sup>280</sup> During the same period, Innocent I incited Alexander of Antioch to consecrate the bishops of the dioceses of the Orient making use of his exceptional authority (*singularis auctoritas*).<sup>281</sup> Hence the See of Old Rome, failing to impose canonical jurisdiction on Eastern Illyricum, claimed the power which he had maintained that he possessed over the whole Church. The See of Rome, through its interpretation of the canons of Sardica (3, 4 and 5), claimed the power of adjudication of bishops, while it confined the right of consecration to the letters of enthronement.<sup>282</sup> But the letters of enthronement were used throughout the Church, and were not specific to the See of Old Rome.

This evolution strengthened the prestige of the See of Thessaloniki in Eastern Illyricum. The *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Thessaloniki was included among the preeminent places of the thrones of the Catholic Church. Flavianus of Philippi, a delegate of Rufus of Thessaloniki, signed the records of the Third

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<sup>279</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.272.

<sup>280</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.273.

<sup>281</sup> *Innocentii Papae I ad Alexandrum Antiochenum, Epistola XX, PL 20, col. 543.*

<sup>282</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.273.

Ecumenical Council (431) directly after the bishops of the prestigious Sees and Memnon of Ephesus.<sup>283</sup> In parallel to this the greater synod of the dioceses of Eastern Illyricum operated in Thessaloniki on a regular basis. Julian of Sardica submitted a "repentant libellus" to this synod because he was a follower of Nestorius of Constantinople.<sup>284</sup> The bishop of Thessaloniki was the center of unity among the churches of the dioceses of Illyricum during this age, although, no suprametropolitan authority was given to him by all the bishops of Macedonia and Dacia. Those bishops who looked toward the See of New Rome, were not a few. Among them were these bishops who followed Perigenes of Corinth, who again tried to subordinate Eastern Illyricum to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Constantinople.<sup>285</sup>

Bishop Sixtus III of Rome (432-440) reacted and fought for the rights of the bishop of Thessaloniki (to judge and to consecrate the bishops of Eastern Illyricum), and for "his right" on the *causarum majorum*.<sup>286</sup> The metropolitanical bishops reacted in their turn, and so they turned to Archbishop Proclus of Constantinople, according to the custom that had been already created. Sixtus of Rome responded with a letter to the Archbishop of New Rome.<sup>287</sup> The facts prove, beyond the results of the controversy in Illyricum, that bishops looked to the most prestigious Sees, and that the bishops of Illyricum had turned to the See of New Rome. The throne of Thessaloniki had imposed its authority over many bishops of the provinces of Macedonia and Dacia at the same time.

Bishop Leo of Rome (440-461) following the attitude of his predecessors, sent a series of letters to the bishops of Illyricum and the bishop of Thessaloniki.<sup>288</sup> According to Leo, the relations of the bishop of Thessaloniki to the metropolitanical bishops of Illyricum are determined in total accord with the relationship between a metropolitanical bishop and his bishops.<sup>289</sup> The reaction of the metropolitanical bishops Erasistratus of Corinth and Atticus of Nikopolis show the indifference of the bishops of Illyricum to the epistolary claims of the bishop

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<sup>283</sup>ACO, I, 17, p.84-85.

<sup>284</sup>ACO, I, 17, p.139-140.

<sup>285</sup>Mansi, VIII, cols. 760-761.

<sup>286</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.278; Mansi, VIII, col. 761.

<sup>287</sup>Sixti, Epist. IX. Mansi VIII, col. 762.

<sup>288</sup>Mansi, VIII, cols. 767-770.

<sup>289</sup>see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.279-280.

of Rome. Atticus of Nikopolis was compelled, by force, to accept his participation in the greater synod which the bishop of Thessaloniki convoked. The way that the bishop of Thessaloniki behaved against metropolitan Atticus of Old Epirus, provoked the reaction of Leo of Rome through an epistle.<sup>290</sup> The facts prove that bishop Anastasius of Thessaloniki believed that he had suprametropolitan independence from the bishop of Rome. He had developed this consciousness from the operation of the greater synod of the dioceses of Eastern Illyricum.<sup>291</sup> Vlassios Phidas convincingly argues that «the intervention of the political authority in the case of Atticus of Nikopolis indicates the previous establishment of the rights of the See of Thessaloniki by the sub-prefect of Illyricum through a relevant edict.»<sup>292</sup>

Clearly the See of Thessaloniki succeeded in imposing its authority on the metropolitan bishops of Illyricum and remaining independent of the claims of both the prestigious thrones of Old and New Rome. The corresponding claims of the bishops of Old Rome came to nothing, and therefore we are obligated to accept the opinion that places the subordination of Illyricum under the government of the bishop of Rome after the development of the *Justiniana Prima* to an archbishopric (535) by Justinian.<sup>293</sup> The See of New Rome demonstrated caution on the question of the jurisdiction of Eastern Illyricum. It succeeded, in the Fourth Ecumenical Council, to place its whole jurisdiction on the bishops of the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus. It would have met stronger reactions if it had attempted to impose itself on Eastern Illyricum. The See of Thessaloniki benefited from the controversy of the two most prestigious Sees because it resulted in the imposition of its *Precedence of Honour* on the ecclesiastical government of Eastern Illyricum. In practice we see the development of the dialectical confrontation of the *Precedence of Honour* of all the bishops who interfered in the controversy (Rome, Constantinople and Illyricum), and of the right (of these bishops) to participate in the adjudication

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<sup>290</sup> Leo delineates in this letter, more clearly than his predecessors, the relationship of the bishop of Thessaloniki to the bishops of Illyricum. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.281-282; Leo, Epist. XIV. Mansi, V, cols. 1278-1280.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.282-285.

<sup>292</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.283.

<sup>293</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.286.

and ordination of the bishops of Eastern Illyricum. Government systems and theories developed in the context of this confrontation, and in connection with other canonical problems of this period, such as the falsification of canons (e.g., canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council) and the famous petrine theory relating to the theory of papal primacy. These became the basis of later developments and claims which led to painful struggles for the unity of Church.<sup>294</sup>

The imposition of the See of Old Rome on the other churches of the West was realized more easily.<sup>295</sup> This happened partly because of the belated imposition of the metropolitan system on the dioceses of Spain, Gaul and Britain,<sup>296</sup> but mainly because of the rapid deterioration of the political situation from the barbarian raids, which brought about the collapse of the synodical system in the West.<sup>297</sup> The See of Old Rome successfully combined the *Precedence of Honour* of the bishop of Rome with the right to ordain and adjudicate bishops because the collapse of the synodical system did not permit the bishops of the local synods to exercise this authority. Rome imposed its will with difficulty (as the example of St. Hilary of Arles shows), even in the period when Leo was bishop of Rome.<sup>298</sup> Clearly St. Hilary tried to claim that the church of Gaul was independent of the bishop of Rome.<sup>299</sup>

In the East, the most prestigious See of New Rome was experiencing a seemingly endless rise in its prestige, which arose out of the local church of the city. The canonical decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council recognized the *Precedence of Honour* of the See and the preeminence of New Rome in the East. The See of New Rome fought in order to impose its preeminence on the East,

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<sup>294</sup>And the modern Western historians accepted the theory of the papal Vicariate of Thessaloniki. Cf. **R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.91 ff.

<sup>295</sup>**B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.73 ff.

<sup>296</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.175. The bishop of the church of Tarragona seemed to have had the *Precedence of Honour* among the metropolitan bishops of Spain. In Gaul there was a collision at the end of fourth century for the *Precedence of Honour* between the metropolitan bishops of Arles and Vienna. **F. Dvornik**, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.37, 43; **F. Dvornik**, *Origins of the Episcopal Synods*, pp. 45, 48-50; **F. Dvornik**, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, pp.32-38; Cf. **R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.97-101. **John Meyendorff** argues that «in Gaul, where the principle of primacy by provincial "metropolitans", as defined in Nicaea, was introduced only at the council of Turin (400), there occurred a Roman attempt to introduce greater centralization.» (*Imperial Unity*, p.65, pp.130 ff.)

<sup>297</sup>see **Abbé Guettée**, *The Papacy*, p.122;

<sup>298</sup>see **B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.124-129.

<sup>299</sup>**G. Barraclough**, *The Medieval Papacy*, p.27. Cf. **R. Eno**, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.105-107.

and to vest its exceptional *Precedence of Honour* with equivalent power, in the period between the Second Ecumenical (381) and the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).<sup>300</sup> The quest at the center of interest and of the fight of the throne of New Rome, was about the ordinations and adjudications of the bishops of the Eastern Prefecture (the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus)<sup>301</sup> and of the prefecture of Eastern Illyricum who were neighbours of Constantinople. It goes without saying that there were collisions and controversies in this fight for the imposition of the ecclesiastical authority of the See of New Rome. This does not mean, however, that this evolution was not based on sound ecclesiological principles. The throne of New Rome was founded upon clearly defined ecclesiastical and political rights which guaranteed eventual success.<sup>302</sup>

The *Precedence of Honour* of the See of New Rome permitted the manifestation of the exceptional authority and prestige of its bishop on questions of ordinations and adjudications of bishops. *The acts of ecclesiastical government in this direction were not an «ambitious claim of the See of New Rome, but a canonical tendency that was the result of the belief in the*

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<sup>300</sup>Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.229-258.

<sup>301</sup>The Eastern Prefecture (*praefectura praetorio per Orientem*) had the dioceses of Thrace (*diocesis Thraciae*), Asia (*diocesis Asiana*), Pontus (*diocesis Pontica*), Orient (*diocesis Orientis*) and Egypt (*diocesis Aegypti*). see IEE, v.7, pp.94-95.

<sup>302</sup>Vlassios Phidas presents a series of prerequisites which allowed for the successful fight of New Rome. He distinguishes between *ecclesiastical* and *political* ones.

The political prerequisites were:

1. The bishop of Constantinople had influence over and knowledge of the intentions of the emperor. In this period, the emperor certified the ecclesiastical actions for the ordination and adjudication of bishops, but he intervened in these areas in various ways.
2. The authority to judge (to hear appeals) by the sub-prefecture of Constantinople on many provinces of the Eastern state.
3. The importance of the capital of the Empire.
4. The emperor supported the expansion of the authority of the throne of New Rome for political reasons.

The ecclesiastical reasons were:

1. The church of Constantinople was at its acme in all areas of ecclesiastical life.
2. The brilliance of the bishops of New Rome.
3. The canonical establishment of its authority by canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council.
4. The connection between the *Precedence of Honour* and the right to ordain and adjudicate bishops according to the canonical tendencies of the period.
5. The institution of the Endemic (*Endemousa*) synod.
6. The ecclesiastical situation in the dioceses of Asia and Pontus.

Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.230-236.



*Precedence of Honour in East and West during this period.»*<sup>303</sup> This belief was part of the consciousness of the whole ecclesiastical body, and it was developed in provinces *where there was no prestigious See*. St. Ambrose of Milan addressed Archbishop Nectarius (381-397) of Constantinople in this spirit concerning the question of his ex-deacon and, at that time, bishop of Nicomedia, Gerontius.<sup>304</sup> He did not address Elladius of Caesarea, who held the first place in the dioceses of Pontus. The reaction of the Palace did not finally permit the deposition of Gerontius by Nectarius.<sup>305</sup> Similarly, the question of the bishop Vosporius of Colonia, in the province of Cappadocia, was handled in the same way.<sup>306</sup> In both cases, there is nothing to indicate that the bishop of Caesarea reacted in a way that suggests that Constantinople was acting outside the boundaries of its See. The prestige of Nectarius was so great that he decided to consecrate his brother Arsacius as bishop of their birthplace Tarsus, which was within the limits of the dioceses of the Orient (the jurisdiction of Antioch).<sup>307</sup> Nectarius of New Rome was the president of the Endemic (*Endemousa*) synod (394) which adjudicated the case of bishop Vagadius of Vostra (of Arabia) with Theophilus of Alexandria (385-412) and Flavianus of Antioch (380-403).<sup>308</sup> These facts describe the authority of the bishop of New Rome after the Second Ecumenical Council and the acceptance which its canonical decisions held in the Church.

Nectarius' successor, St. John Chrysostom (398-404), was unquestionably one of the greatest personalities to be consecrated bishop of New Rome. It is important to note that during his ministry there was a tendency for the See of New Rome to intervene in the dioceses of Asia, Thrace and Pontus. An example of this is the question of the "simoniac consecrations" of bishop Antoninus of Ephesus,<sup>309</sup> which, for the first time, was raised by bishop Eusebius of Valentinopolis at an Endemousa synod in 400,<sup>310</sup> but the accusation was

<sup>303</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.243.

<sup>304</sup> Sozomen, *Eccl. History*, VIII, 6. PG 67, col. 1532.

<sup>305</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.243-244.

<sup>306</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 184 to Amphilochius of Iconium*, PG 37, cols. 301-302. & *Epistle 185 to Nectarius*, PG 37, cols. 303-305.

<sup>307</sup> Palladius, *Dialogue*, 11. PG 47, cols. 36-37.

<sup>308</sup> Syntagma, v.3, pp.625-628. & Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.245.

<sup>309</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.246-248.

<sup>310</sup> Palladius, *Dialogue*, 15. PG 47, col. 48 ff.

confirmed by the delegates of the Endemousa synod. Of course Eusebius was deposed, but Antoninus died shortly after that. The bishops and the clergy of the province in their letter to St. John asked him to undertake, in person, the election and the consecration of a new bishop of Ephesus. Thus, St. John convened and presided over a synod at Ephesus, for the election of the new bishop of the city. There again Eusebius presented the question of the simoniac consecrations of Antoninus. The truth of the accusations was proved at the hearing of the appeal and the bishops who had been anticanonically consecrated were deposed. This last event was turned to advantage by Theophilus of Alexandria through related accusations against St. John Chrysostom.<sup>311</sup> St. John, on his return from Ephesus, deposed Gerontius of Nicomedia, and we cannot exclude the fact that he took similar action in other places too. These actions by the Archbishop of Constantinople aimed at solving the problems of Church discipline and guarding unity. This fact made the outlandish interventions of the most prestigious Sees easier to accept and did not illicit reactions.<sup>312</sup>

St. John Chrysostom's successors, Arsacius (404-405) and Atticus (406-425), strengthened the authority of their throne. The lack of reactions indicates that the imposition of the authority of the See of New Rome on the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace was an easy affair.<sup>313</sup> When the successor of Atticus, Sisinius

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<sup>311</sup>The sources and the researchers have different opinions about the number of the deposed bishops from St. John Chrysostom. About this issue see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.247-249.

<sup>312</sup>We can conclude from the facts the following thing happened during the ministry of St. John Chrysostom in report to the See of New Rome:

«a. Eusebius of Valentinopolis insisted in the service of libelous against Antoninus of Ephesus to the bishop of Constantinople, having a deep consciousness that he did not act anti-canonically.

b. Antoninus of Ephesus did not refute the judgment of the accusation against him by St. John and the synod Endemousa of Constantinople, although he wanted to very much. Thus, he did not formulate any allusion of incompetence because it was common belief that the *Precedence of Honour* gave the See of New Rome this exceptional authority. Hence, he claimed to dissuade the Archbishop of Constantinople to Ephesus by his strong friends in the Palace and not by the invocation to canon 2 of the Second Ecumenical Council.

c. The 70 bishops who participated in synod of Ephesus under St. John Chrysostom from the provinces of Asia, regarded as self-evident the intervention of the Archbishop of Constantinople not only in the judgment of the simonian bishops, but also in the consecration of the bishop of Ephesus by him.

d. The clergy of Ephesus and the bishops of the proconsul Asia called St. John Chrysostom for the ordination of Antoninus' successor, unquestionably regarded this consecration as canonical.» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.249-250.

<sup>313</sup>The cases of the bishops Silvanus of Philippoupolis and then of Troia (**Socrates**, *Eccl. History*, VII, 37. PG 67, cols. 821 ff.) and Theodosius and Agapitus of Synnada (**Socrates**,

(426-427), tried to consecrate Proclus as bishop of Cyzicus, he confronted the strong reactions of Cyzicians.<sup>314</sup> We can conclude from this fact that Atticus had succeeded by imperial edict in subordinating the three previous dioceses under his jurisdiction. Emperor Theodosius II had issued an equivalent edict for Eastern Illyricum.<sup>315</sup> Obviously, the imposition of the See of Constantinople had been completed during the first quarter of the fifth century without strong reaction.

The conviction of Archbishop Nestorius of Constantinople (428-431) by the Third Ecumenical Council was a shock for the throne, and endangered the authority of the throne.<sup>316</sup> However, the authority of the See of New Rome on questions of ordination and adjudication of bishops was unchanged, thanks to the function of the Endemousa synod.<sup>317</sup> The successor to Nestorius, Archbishop Maximianus of Constantinople (431-434), restored the authority of the See of New Rome by the decisions of the Endemousa synod of 432.<sup>318</sup> His successor, Proclus (434-446), was the master of the ordinations for the three dioceses which approved the consecrations of Thalassius of Caesarea,<sup>319</sup> Eusebius of Ancyra,<sup>320</sup> Basil of Ephesus and of other bishops of Asia.<sup>321</sup> Archbishop Proclus of New Rome seems to have deposed the bishop Indua of Smyrna,<sup>322</sup> and he was

*Eccl. History*, VII,3. PG 67, cols. 741-744.) indicate that Agapitus of Constantinople was the master of the ordinations of the three dioceses neighbouring Constantinople. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.251-252.

<sup>314</sup>**Socrates**, *Eccl. History*, VII, 28. PG 67, col. 801.

<sup>315</sup>**ibid.** p. 81.

<sup>316</sup>The teaching of Nestorius was not simply a crisis in the relations of New Rome to Alexandria, but a problem which endangered the unity of the Catholic Church. The Archbishop of Alexandria, Cyril, confronted the problem of unity with canonical consequences since a bishop of a prestigious See was judged by an Ecumenical Council. (see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.237, ft 234.)

We see that the position of Cyril of Alexandria was correct, but the relations between the two thrones met a period crisis. Alexandria accepted, with difficulty, being placed after the See of New Rome. Timotheus of Alexandria did not react against canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council, but this did not stop Theophilus (385-412) and Dioscorus (444-451) from attempting to reduce the authority of Constantinople. They were clearly motivated by a lust for power. These actions finally damaged the unity of the Catholic Church, that is, the instigators, but not the See of New Rome. (**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.236-242.)

<sup>317</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.253.

<sup>318</sup>**Mansi**, V, cols. 822 ff & cols. 864 ff; **ACO**, I,17, pp.137-138; **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.253-254.

<sup>319</sup>**Socrates**, *Eccl. History*, VII, 48. PG 67, cols. 840-841.

<sup>320</sup>**ACO**, II, 13, pp.97-98.

<sup>321</sup>**ACO**, II, 13, pp.52,53.

<sup>322</sup>**Syxti**, *Epistle LX*, PL 50, col. 613.

involved in questions relating to the Oriental dioceses.<sup>323</sup> Flavianus (446-449) who succeeded him, was not as active as his predecessor Proclus. In the end, he himself fell victim to his peace-loving attitude, being deposed by Dioscorus at the Robber council of Ephesus (449). The new Archbishop Anatolius (449-458), in the light of the decisions of this synod, and the demotion of the throne of Constantinople by it, soon acquired the consciousness of the authority of his See and was liberated by Dioscorus. The decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical council finalized the jurisdiction of the See of New Rome over the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus.<sup>324</sup>

As we previously mentioned, the See of New Rome confronted problems in its relations with the See of Alexandria. New Rome did not forget that the See of Alexandria had preeminence in the East until almost the end of the fourth century, which led to a series of allusions which culminated in the canonical decisions of the robber synod of Ephesus, and the deposition of Dioscorus by the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The condemnation of Monophysitism along with the other decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council definitely reduced the prestige of the See of Alexandria. The heresy of Monophysitism did the greatest damage to the prestige of the See of Alexandria, in the sense that it darkened the life of the local church (the connection of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees with orthodoxy of the faith was initially the criterion for the settlement of the rank of the Sees).

It is a fact that the great prestige of the See of Alexandria in the Catholic Church, during the fourth century, was due to the brilliant personalities of its bishops (like Athanasius the Great), and to the flourishing life of the local church. We know that the canonical decisions of the First Ecumenical Council (canon 6) made the Archbishop of Alexandria master of the ordinations for all the dioceses of Egypt. This allowed the bishop of Alexandria to impose his prestige without difficulties because any reactions (like those of Melitius of Lycopolis) were dealt with by the First Ecumenical Council. The non imposition of the metropolitanical system and the definitive control of ordinations and judgments of the Egyptian bishops by the Archbishop of Alexandria, allowed the bishop of this See to deal

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<sup>323</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.256-257.

<sup>324</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.258.

undistractedly with the extension of his prestige outside the limits of his church. In practice, the bishop of Alexandria was the Archbishop of the Egyptian bishops, because nobody else but he had metropolitanical power (the title metropolitan must have been given as an honorary recognition to the bishops of the Egyptian provinces).<sup>325</sup>

The epistles of bishop Synesius of Ptolemais to Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria give us important information concerning the state of relations between the Archbishop of Alexandria and his bishops.<sup>326</sup> Bishop Synesius, acting as a delegate of the Archbishop of Alexandria, was involved in the election of the bishop of Palaevisce.<sup>327</sup> He participated in the election of Antonius of Olviata, and he asked for the endorsement of the unanimous decision of the local church by the bishop of Alexandria.<sup>328</sup> The exceptional power of the Archbishop of Alexandria over his bishops is demonstrated by these cases to such a degree that «*obedience is life and disobedience, death*» (ἀκοή γὰρ ζωὴ καὶ θάνατος ἢ παρακοή).<sup>329</sup>

Obviously, the Archbishop of Alexandria was the only metropolitanical bishop in the ecclesiastical government of Egypt. We see that this situation was recognized by the edict (*sacrum*) of the convocation of the Third Ecumenical Council,<sup>330</sup> which was sent to all the metropolitanical bishops, and only mentioned the name of Cyril of Alexandria from Egypt.<sup>331</sup> The bishops of Egypt were among the signers of the records of the synod, which confirms the right judgment of the political government. The same was repeated by the Robber synod of Ephesus, because only Dioscorus was called by the imperial *sacrum*, and the bishops who escorted him, were among the signers.<sup>332</sup> The proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical

<sup>325</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.219-229.

<sup>326</sup> Synesius, *Epistles*, PG 66, cols. 1408-1432.

<sup>327</sup> Synesius, *Epistle 67*, PG 66, cols. 1412-1413.

<sup>328</sup> Synesius, *Epistle 76*, PG 66, col. 1441.

<sup>329</sup> Synesius, *Epistle*, PG 66, col. 1417. The case of the consecration by St. John Chrysostom of bishop Alexander Cyrinaeus of Vasilinoupolis in Bithynia, is characteristic. Bishop Alexander stayed faithful to St. John and lived in Ptolemais of Egypt. So bishop Synesius of the city asks the Archbishop of Alexandria how he must confront Alexander. (Synesius, *Epistle 66*, PG 66, cols. 1408-1409. & *Epistle 67*, PG 66, col. 1432.) Generally about the correspondence of bishop Synesius of Ptolemais see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.221-225.

<sup>330</sup> ACO, I, 11, pp.74,115.

<sup>331</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.225-226.

<sup>332</sup> ACO, II, 11, p.74. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.226, ft 211.

Council demonstrate the "extent" of the power which the bishop of Alexandria had over his bishops. The Egyptian bishops refused to sign the doctrinal letter of Leo of Rome, if a new Archbishop of Alexandria was not elected prior to signing. They declared that the bishops ought not to have an opinion opposite to that of the Archbishop of Alexandria.<sup>333</sup> Thus, it goes without saying, that the Archbishop of Alexandria had a great prestige in his own particular church and in the Catholic Church in general.

The dioceses (*diocesis*) which we have mentioned, until now, had either one or no prestigious thrones. But in the dioceses of the Orient, (*diocesis Orientis*) there existed two prestigious Sees: the See of Antioch and the See of the mother-church of Jerusalem. This fact was the cause for many controversies and collusions. The See of Antioch, which was the political center of the dioceses of the Orient, enjoyed great prestige. This was sorely tested by the controversies that assaulted the local church until the end of the fourth century.<sup>334</sup> The canonical decisions of the First and the Second Ecumenical Council were the canonical prerequisites for the vesting of ecclesiastical prestige with an equivalent authority (the *Precedence of Honour* of a See was recognized especially by canon 2 of the Second Ecumenical Council).<sup>335</sup> The canonical perceptions of these ages (that is, the connection of the *Precedence of Honour* with the authority of ordination and adjudication of bishops) and the misinterpretation of canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council provided the ground on which the claims of the See of Antioch moved at the beginning of the fifth century.

The epistle of Innocent I of Rome (401-417) moves towards this direction.<sup>336</sup> He bases his communication with Alexander of Antioch (408-418) concerning

<sup>333</sup> «Ἐπειδὴ οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Αἰγύπτου, οὐχ ὡς μαχόμενοι τῇ καθολικῇ πίστει, ὑπογράψαι τῇ ἐπιστολῇ τοῦ δευτέρου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Λέοντος ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἀνεβάλλοντο, ἀλλὰ φάσκοντες, ἕθως εἶναι ἐν τῇ Αἰγυπτιακῇ διοικήσει, παρὰ γνώμην καὶ διατύπωσιν τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου μηδὲν τοιοῦτο ποιεῖν· καὶ ἀξιοῦσιν ἐνδοθῆναι αὐτοῖς ἄκρι τῆς χειροτονίας τοῦ ἐσομένου τῆς τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγαλοπόλεως ἐπισκόπου· εὐλογον ἡμῖν ἐφάνη καὶ φιλόανθρωπον, ὥστε αὐτοῖς μένουσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ οἰκείου σχήματος ἐν τῇ βασιλευσῶσιν πόλει, ἐνδοσιν παρασχεθῆναι, ἄκρις ἂν χειροτονηθῇ ὁ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγαλοπόλεως. Ὅθεν μένοντες ἐπὶ τοῦ οἰκείου σχήματος, ἢ ἐγγύας παρέξουσιν, εἰ τοῦτο αὐτοῖς δυνατόν, ἢ ἐξωμοσία καταπιστευθήσονται.» **Syntagma**, v.2, pp.288-289. For the English translation see **N. Tanner**, *Decrees ...*, v.I, pp.102-103.

<sup>334</sup> About the See of Antioch see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.205-219.

<sup>335</sup> «φυλαττομένων τῶν ἐν τοῖς κανόσι τοῖς κατὰ Νίκαιαν πρεσβείων τῇ Ἀντιοχείᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ» **Syntagma**, v.2, p.169.

<sup>336</sup> **Innocentii**, *Epistle 24*, PL 20, col. 548.

the control of the ordinations of the Oriental dioceses on canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council.<sup>337</sup> It seemed that the bishop of Antioch did not have suprametropolitan authority over the metropolitan bishops of his dioceses at the beginning of the fifth century. The fight for the imposition of this See began during this period. The jurisdiction of the throne of Antioch was not recognized by all the metropolitan bishops of the Oriental dioceses. Unfortunately, we do not have witnesses of the fight of the imposition of the See of Antioch. We can conclude from the examples of the churches of Palestine and Cyprus that this fight was not easy. The See of Jerusalem had succeeded in gaining administrative independence for Palestine since the time of John I of Antioch (427-443) and it had imposed on Palestine its suprametropolitan authority. We shall examine this situation in the following pages.

The case of the church of Cyprus is an example of the attempt of vesting the *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Antioch with the right of the metropolitan consecration of bishops. We find information in the records of the Third Ecumenical Council regarding the fight of the bishops of Cyprus to stop the attempts for the control of the island's consecrations by the See of Antioch.<sup>338</sup> The See of Antioch stopped the election of a new metropolitan, after the death of metropolitan Troilus of Cyprus, and succeeded in having the issue brought before the approaching Ecumenical Council. There, the bishops of Cyprus were supported by the ancient custom, thanks to the absence of John of Antioch from the proceedings of the synod. They succeeded in securing, through the canonical decisions of the Third Ecumenical Council (canon 8), the independence of their church from any intervention from the bishop of Antioch.<sup>339</sup> But the Archbishop

<sup>337</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.206-207.

<sup>338</sup> ACO, I, 17, pp.118-122.

<sup>339</sup> «Πράγμα παρὰ τοὺς ἐκκλησιαστικούς θεσμούς καὶ τοὺς κανόνας τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων καινοσημοῦμενον, καὶ τῆς πάντων ἐλευθερίας ἀπτόμενον, προσήγγειλεν ὁ θεοφιλέστατος συνεπίσκοπος Ῥηγίνος, καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ θεοφιλέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Κυπρίων ἐπαρχίας, Ζήνων καὶ Εὐάγριος. Ὁθεν, ἐπεὶ τὰ κοινὰ πάθη μείζονος δεῖται τῆς θεραπείας, ὡς καὶ μείζονα τὴν θλάβην φέροντα, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ μὴδὲ ἔθος ἀρχαίων παρηκολούθησεν, ὥστε τὸν ἐπίσκοπον τῆς Ἀντιωχείων πόλεως τὰς ἐν Κύπρῳ ποιεῖσθαι χειροτονίας, καθὰ διὰ τῶν λιβέλλων καὶ τῶν οἰκείων φωνῶν ἐδίδαξαν οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἄνδρες, οἱ τὴν πρόσοδον τῇ ἁγία συνόδῳ ποιησάμενοι, ἔξουσι τὸ ἀνεπηρέαστον καὶ ἀβίαστον οἱ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησιῶν, τῶν κατὰ τὴν Κύπρον, προεστῶτες, κατὰ τοὺς κανόνας τῶν ὁσίων Πατέρων, καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν, δι' ἑαυτῶν τὰς χειροτονίας τῶν εὐλαβεστάτων ἐπισκόπων ποιούμενοι...» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.203. For an English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees ...*, v.I, pp. 68-69.

of Antioch must have succeeded in imposing his authority on all the other dioceses of the Orient before the Third Ecumenical Council (431).

«It is a matter of course that authority in ordinations naturally resulted in authority in adjudications of bishops. Next to ordination of metropolitanical bishops in the Oriental dioceses, the Archbishop of Antioch presided over a greater synod, which judged, on a secondary level, the appeals of those bishops who had been condemned by a provincial synod, according to canon 6 of the Second Ecumenical Council.»<sup>340</sup> The epistle of St. Jerome to presbyter Pammachius delineates the canonical order of the monks of Bethlehem.<sup>341</sup> This is the clarification demanded by the Oriental dioceses, as we spoke of earlier.<sup>342</sup> Naturally, the examples of the adjudication of bishops were not mentioned in the ecclesiastical history of Antioch. The question concerning the appeal of a bishop of the Oriental dioceses to the Archbishop of Antioch is answered by a letter from Cyril of Alexandria to Domnus of Antioch.<sup>343</sup> The case of Athanasius of Perre is of the same type, but from a different perspective.<sup>344</sup> Bishop Athanasius of Perre, after having resigned from his bishopric, went to Proclus of Constantinople and generated interest in the Sees of New Rome (relevant letter of Proclus of Constantinople)<sup>345</sup> and Alexandria (relevant letter of Cyril of Alexandria).<sup>346</sup> The Greater synod of Antioch (445) deposed Athanasius of Perre, but he succeeded in being restored at the Robber synod of Ephesus (449). The Fourth Ecumenical Council restored the successor of Athanasius of Perre, bishop Savianus of Perre, and called Athanasius to retire.<sup>347</sup>

It is obvious from the previous examples that the bishops of the prestigious Sees of New Rome and Alexandria did not miss any opportunity to get involved in the questions of the throne of Antioch. The collusion between Ivas of Edessa

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<sup>340</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.210.

<sup>341</sup> Hieronymus, *Liber ad Pammachium*, 37. PL 23, col. 407. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.210.

<sup>342</sup> «This canonical position rightly defined the relationship of the See of Antioch to the other Oriental provinces, because this was not practiced absolutely in the relations between Jerusalem and Antioch.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.210-211.

<sup>343</sup> Syntagma, v.4, pp.355-360.

<sup>344</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.211-213.

<sup>345</sup> ACO, II, 13, pp.67-68.

<sup>346</sup> ACO, II, 13, pp.66-67.

<sup>347</sup> ACO, II, 13, pp.64-83.



and some of his clergy was the reason for the involvement of the throne of New Rome. These clerics had gone to the emperor in order to ask for the reconsideration of their judgment.<sup>348</sup> A new ecclesiastical court was formed and the legate of Archbishop Flavianus of Constantinople (deacon Eulogius) participated in it. The See of New Rome had the same position in the case of the bigamous metropolitan Irenaeus of Tyre, and asked for his dethronement.<sup>349</sup> This fact permitted the election of Photius as bishop of Tyre, who was friendly to the Archbishop of Alexandria. The ground of the dioceses of the Orient was quickly proved suitable for the transmission of the collusion between the thrones of New Rome and Alexandria. The basic interest of Dioscorus was to increase the influence of the See of Alexandria. All the elements of this collusion were brought together in the person of Theodoret of Cyrus.<sup>350</sup> The initial coolness of Theodoret of Cyrus towards the See of New Rome concerning the issue of Athanasius of Perre changed under the weight of the rupture with Archbishop Dioscorus of Alexandria. Theodoret upheld, with persistence, the independence of the Oriental dioceses. The accusations of Nestorianism of Syrian monks against Archbishop Domnus of Antioch and mainly Theodoret of Cyrus were an attempt for intervention by Dioscorus.<sup>351</sup> The intervention of Archbishop Dioscorus of Alexandria was canonically justified. The "interest" of the prestigious See of Alexandria turned to the most important question, that is, Orthodoxy of faith.<sup>352</sup> In reality, the interest was directed to the increase of the authority and influence of Alexandria over the dioceses of the Orient. It seemed that Dioscorus had used the Apostolicity of the throne of Alexandria in order to increase the authority of his See. Theodoret opposed to this idea by introducing on the same level the great prestige and Apostolicity of the throne of Antioch. Dioscorus tried to "clear up" the situation in favour of the See of Antioch at the

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<sup>348</sup>The clerics Samuel, Cyrus, Maras and Eulogius were defrocked by the synod of Antioch, but they succeeded in revoking this decision through the intervention of the emperor. *ACO*, II, 13, pp. 22 ff.

<sup>349</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.214.

<sup>350</sup>see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.214-217.

<sup>351</sup>Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Epistle 86 to Flavianus bishop of Constantinople*, PG 83, cols 1277-1281. see C. Papadopoulos, *Ιστορία Ἐκκλ. Ἀντιοχείας*, pp. 386 ff.

<sup>352</sup>«The close relation of *Precedence of Honour* and Orthodoxy of faith gave to the prestigious thrones the right to intervene, if the faith was in danger.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p. 216.

Robber synod of Ephesus. The demotion of the throne of Antioch, the final dethronement of its Archbishop Domnus, and the subordination of the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia to the See of Jerusalem, prove the intentions and explain the actions of Dioscorus. The decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council overturned all the claims of Dioscorus and fortified the rights of the throne of Antioch.

The *Precedence of Honour* of the throne of Antioch was recognized. The throne was the center of the political government. The Apostolicity of the throne was prestigious, but the fight was long and difficult. Against this, the See of Jerusalem was one of the prestigious Sees, but it was not the capital of a metropolitan province. The recognition of authority of the throne was mainly the result of the fight of the strong personalities of its bishops. We have mentioned the controversy between Cyril of Jerusalem (350-386) and Acacius of Caesarea. The tension between the two thrones was reduced when Gelasius, the nephew of Cyril of Jerusalem, was elected bishop of Caesarea. The decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council did not change the structure of the ecclesiastical government in Palestine. It seemed that the See of Jerusalem influenced neighbouring Arabia,<sup>353</sup> and therefore the intervention of Cyril of Jerusalem, who deposed the metropolitan bishop Vagadius of Vostra, is explained.<sup>354</sup> This act caused the reaction of the Endemousa synod of Constantinople which prohibited the dethronement or consecration of a bishop by two bishops.<sup>355</sup>

The political division of Palestine by Theodosius the Great gave ground for the development of the suprametropolitan authority of the throne of Jerusalem.<sup>356</sup> In practice, Jerusalem was a simple bishopric. The existence of three metropolises around the prestigious See of the mother church was the *quasi* area of practice of suprametropolitan authority. The successor of Cyril, John of Jerusalem (386-417), «had full consciousness of the superiority of his

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<sup>353</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.186.

<sup>354</sup>As regards the church of Arabia see A. Yannoulatos, Archbishop of Albania, *Islam, a general survey*, Athens, 1990 (1975), pp.59-66.

<sup>355</sup>*Syntagma*, v.3, pp.625-628.

<sup>356</sup>Palestine had the provinces: Palestine A (metropolis: Caesarea), Palestine B (metropolis: Skythopolis) and Salutaria Palestine (metropolis: Petra). see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.186. IEE, v. 7, pp.94-95.

See over against the other metropolitan thrones»,<sup>357</sup> although he was involved in the controversy over Origenism.<sup>358</sup> The situation was not favourable in order to claim the imposition of the authority of his throne. The outlandish intervention and activities of St. Epiphanius of Cyprus caused a reaction by John of Jerusalem. This intervention went to Theophilus of Alexandria, who decided in its favour. St. Jerome regarded the appeal of John of Jerusalem to the See of Alexandria as anticanonical.<sup>359</sup> This reaction went against the principle of Apostolicity of the prestigious See of Jerusalem which resulted from its consciousness of exceptional prestige.<sup>360</sup> Any reaction by metropolitan Gelasius of Caesarea must have been confuted.<sup>361</sup> The end of the controversy over Origenism in Palestine (with the intervention of the political government in 396) did not dissuade its protagonists from transferring the controversy to the West. This evolution (that is the end of the controversy over Origenism) favoured the imposition of the throne of Jerusalem in Palestine. The synod of Jerusalem (400) supported the orthodoxy of the bishops of Palestine. The prestige of the See in the Catholic Church is demonstrated by the support which John of Jerusalem gave to St. John Chrysostom,<sup>362</sup> and by the interference of John of Jerusalem in the heresy of Pelagianism.<sup>363</sup>

The successor of John of Jerusalem, Praxillus (417-422), was not as forceful as his predecessor, but his successor, Juvenal of Jerusalem (422-458), was the great personality who succeeded in investing of *Precedence of Honour* of the

<sup>357</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.187.

<sup>358</sup> John of Jerusalem had to confront the enmity and the spite of the monks of Bethlehem, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus and St. Jerome. The actions and activities that come from this party developed a series of canonical speculations. All these required comprehensive answers. Finally these strengthened the prestige of the throne of Jerusalem not only in Palestine, but also in the Catholic Church. Rufinus, contrary to the previous ones, had been appointed by the party of John of Jerusalem. see C. Papadopoulos, *Ιστ. Ἐκκλ. Ἱεροσολύμων*, pp.138 ff.

<sup>359</sup> Hieronymus, *Liber ad Pammachium contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum*, 37. PL 23. col. 407.

<sup>360</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.187-189.

<sup>361</sup> The sources for this reaction are not revealing. The friendly relations of Gelasius with Flavianus of Antioch and the party of anti-origenists (as it is shown by St. Jerome, Hieronymus, *De viris illustribus*, 130, C. Siamakis, *Hieronymi De Viris Illustribus. Fontes Atque Specimina, Textus - Translatio - Annotationes.*, Thessaloniki, 1992, p.264) strength this opinion. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.188.

<sup>362</sup> John Chrysostom, *Epistle 88*, PG 52, cols. 654-655.

<sup>363</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.189-190.

See of Jerusalem with an equivalent suprametropolitan authority.<sup>364</sup> This fight was long and difficult. The combination of events demonstrates the great aims of Juvenal. The Third Ecumenical Council (431) is the beginning of this long road. Controversy had broken out between the thrones of Jerusalem and Antioch before the convocation of the synod, but the cause is not known.<sup>365</sup> Vlassios Phidas finds the cause in the question concerning ordinations in Palestine.<sup>366</sup> This meant the violation of the rights of the See of Caesarea, and as a result, of the See of Antioch by the bishop of Jerusalem. From the events we are in the position to conclude the following: Juvenal succeeded in imposing the authority of his throne on Palestine before the convocation of the Third Ecumenical Council. John of Antioch was obliged to resign from his canonical rights over the provinces of Palestine.<sup>367</sup> The position of John of Antioch is also demonstrated by his application (*Δέησις*) to the emperor.<sup>368</sup>

Juvenal succeeded in gaining authority over all of Palestine for his throne. He demanded the subordination of the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia to his jurisdiction and the Third Ecumenical Council. The bishop of Jerusalem was followed by 14 bishops of Palestine at the proceedings of the Third Ecumenical Council.<sup>369</sup> Juvenal was distinguished because of the absence of John of Antioch from the proceedings of the synod.<sup>370</sup> His prestige was reduced, however, when his claims permitted the questioning of the authenticity of the synod. In practice, these claims were intended to give the See of Jerusalem preeminence over all the dioceses of the Orient. «Juvenal did not distinguish between claims and canonical rights.»<sup>371</sup> In addition, he endangered the unity of the Church by his persistence in committing a series of anti-canonical activities. The problem was exacerbated

<sup>364</sup> C. Papadopoulos, *Ιστ. Ἐκκλ. Ἱεροσολύμων*, pp.160-169.

<sup>365</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.191.

<sup>366</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.192.

<sup>367</sup> «The retreat of John of Antioch denotes with drawal from a canonical right but not from authority which is already exercised.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.192.

<sup>368</sup> Clearly he declares that «*Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἤδη μὲν τινῶν παρὰ τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου Ἰουβενάλιου τοῦ Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν πρῶτην ἐγγχειρισθέντων ἡσυχάσαμεν, καίτοι τῶν κανόνων ὑπερμαχεῖν ὀφείλοντες, ὡς ἂν μὴ ἐόξαιμεν τιμῆς ἔνεκα οὐκείας ἀλγεῖν.*» ACO, I, 17, p.73.

<sup>369</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.190-191.

<sup>370</sup> Juvenal signed the records of the synod directly after Cyril of Alexandria and before Memnon of Ephesus. ACO, I, 12, p.55;

<sup>371</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.195.

in such a way as to cause the reaction of the other prestigious Sees.<sup>372</sup> Juvenal used false letters in order to impose his authority on the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia.<sup>373</sup> These activities were enough to bring about his dethronement and they seriously damaged the prestige of the throne of Jerusalem. Only this strong personality, this diplomatic flexibility, and the temperament of the other prestigious Sees who worked to protect the unity of the Church, saved Juvenal and the prestige of his throne.

The successor of John of Antioch, Domnus (443-450), had imposed his authority on the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia. Juvenal exploited the relationship between the bishops Photius of Tyre and Eustathius of Beirut, as the vehicle to succeed in the subjection of the province of Phoenicia to his throne.<sup>374</sup> He followed this tactic, in order to exploit every chance to increase his authority. Hence he participated in the Robber synod of Ephesus (449), where the See of Jerusalem took the third place in the rank of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees.<sup>375</sup> This success was only temporary. The change in the political situation after the death of Theodosius II (450), allowed Maximus of Antioch (450-456) to support the rights of his throne and to restore his authority in the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia.<sup>376</sup> The fact that Juvenal had a role in the Robber synod of Ephesus, made his position precarious. Maximus, in his application (*Δέησις*) to the emperor, asked for the revision of the edicts as regards the rights of the two thrones of the dioceses of the Orient during the proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.<sup>377</sup> The synod finally solved the problem in the eighth session, by recognizing the suprametropolitan (patriarchal) authority of the throne of Jerusalem over the provinces of Palestine, and it gave the throne of Antioch the jurisdiction over the provinces of Phoenicia and Arabia.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> **Cyril of Alexandria**, *Epistle 56*, PG. 77, cols. 319-320; **Leo Magnus**, *Epistle 119*, PL. 54, col. 1044.

<sup>373</sup> Vlassios Phidas believes that the false letters (*commentitia scripta*) which Juvenal used on the day following the opening of the Third Ecumenical Council, could have been falsified imperial letters. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.197.

<sup>374</sup> see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.199-200, ft 114.

<sup>375</sup> **Mansi**, VI, col. 608.

<sup>376</sup> **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.202.

<sup>377</sup> **ACO**, II, 13, p.5.

<sup>378</sup> **ACO**, II, 13, p.5; Cf. **J. Meyendorff**, *Imperial Unity*, p.179.

The question concerning the institutionalization of *Precedence of Honour* was of primary importance for the administrative system of the Church. The need for discipline, that is, practically speaking, of the protection of the unity of the Church, and the canonical perceptions of this period, led to the formation of specific relations between the bishops of the prestigious Sees and the other bishops of the Catholic Church, within the ecclesiastical content which we have seen. The prevalence of the suprametropolitan authority of the prestigious Sees of East and West promoted the emergence of the patriarchal institution. The patriarchal institution was born within the bosom of the Church, because it covered a real need. The institutionalization of *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees was a dire necessity, an unavoidable historical evolution.



## Chapter 5

## The Institutionalization of the Precedence of Honour and the Synodical System

The holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381), through their canonical decisions, chose to remove the administrative independence of the metropolitans by placing them within greater administrative units.<sup>379</sup> This canonical tendency towards a centralized administrative organization in the life of the Church favoured the imposition of the authority of the most prestigious Sees. *Precedence of Honor* was the basic principle for the harmonious operation of the Church's administrative organization. Its institutionalization was a necessary action for the life of the Church. This action was connected with the operation of the synodical system, and not simply with the imposition of *Precedence of Honour* by virtue of ancient custom, which, in any case, was saved in this way. Besides, the imposition, development and operation of the synodical system was a reality already by the beginning of the fifth century. We examined in the previous chapters the establishment of honour in the context of the organization of the most prestigious Sees, and drew a general picture of the procedure that was followed. This process led to the application of the patriarchal institution, and was realized within the context of the synodical system. The combination of *Precedence of Honour* with the right to ordain and adjudicate problems connected with bishops (ecclesiastical actions absolutely combined with the synodical system) produced the patriarchal institution in the Early Church.

The institutionalization of *Precedence of Honour* was the vehicle for the transfer to the patriarchal institution. The imposition of such an institution demanded that its decisions had universal force. Only the institutionalization of *Precedence of Honour* in the context of the Ecumenical Councils could secure

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<sup>379</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.168 ff.

the catholicity of the patriarchal institution. The fifth century is very important, because it had two Ecumenical Councils which engaged in extremely important doctrinal and canonical work. The Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431), was convened in the context of the function of the metropolitanical system,<sup>380</sup> and thus the imperial *sacra* called only the metropolitanical bishops.<sup>381</sup> The authority of the metropolitanical bishops was not reduced by the relevant decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council. Vlassios Phidas observes that the sources do not preserve any witness to the operation of a greater synod in the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace during the fifth century.<sup>382</sup> Canon 1 of the Third Ecumenical Council secured the rights of the provincial synod.<sup>383</sup> The example of the church of Cyprus also confirmed the respect of the council for the independence of the provincial synod.<sup>384</sup> The synod showed the same respect in the case of Eustathius of Pamphylia.<sup>385</sup> Hence the Third Ecumenical Council was convened and operated on the basis of the metropolitanical system. Of course, we ought to mention that the historical situation favoured this evolution. The absence of John of Antioch from the proceedings of the synod allowed for the preservation of the authority of the metropolitanical system. The authority of the metropolitanical system is also demonstrated by the convocation of the Robber synod of Ephesus (449). As in the previous synod, only the metropolitanical bishops were called to

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<sup>380</sup> P. Christou, *Ἑλλην. Πατρολογία*, v.3, pp.44-46; L. Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, pp.134-169; I. Karmiris, *Dogmatica et Symbolica*, pp.137-151; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.49 ff; B. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.106-111; G. Konidaris, *Γεν. Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.310 ff; C. Papadopoulos, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.33-71; V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.582 ff; V. Stefanidis, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.201 ff; W. de Vries, *Orient et Occident*, pp.61-100; F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.178 ff.

<sup>381</sup> ACO, I, 13, p.31; Mansi, IV, col. 1936.

<sup>382</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.171, footnote 6.

<sup>383</sup> Syntagma, v.2, pp.192-193.

<sup>384</sup> Vlassios Phidas observes that «the question of the church of Cyprus proved that the prestige of the governmental canons was absolute only when it was accompanied by equivalent practice ...» (Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.179-180). We have already referred to canon 8 (Syntagma, v.2, pp.203-204), which secures the rights of the church of Cyprus. *ibid* p. 94, see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.171, 178-183, 208-210; Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.101.

The administrative privileges of the church of Cyprus were preserved even after the administrative decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The administrative independence of Cyprus does not mean that it acquired patriarchal rights, but that it preserved its given autonomy. The fact that nobody claimed jurisdiction over the island (neither Maximus of Antioch), had as a result that it was not brought under the jurisdiction of any one of the five patriarchs. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.73.

<sup>385</sup> ACO, I, 17, p.123.



participate by the imperial *sacra* of Theodosius II.<sup>386</sup> Dioscorus of Alexandria tried to reduce the authority of the See of Constantinople, in accordance with the ecclesiastical policy which was usually followed by the bishops of Alexandria (the promotion of the See of Ephesus to the rank of the most prestigious Sees belongs to the context of this effort).<sup>387</sup>

The canonical tendencies of this age, and the imposition of the prestigious thrones, superficially placed the problem of the establishment of the *Precedence of Honour* of the See of Constantinople over the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace, against the preservation of the strength of the metropolitan system. The enforcement of the patriarchal system in the organization of the ecclesiastical system of administration during the second half of the fifth century had been already given a strong foundation during the first half of the same century. The Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), is the beginning of this age.<sup>388</sup> Moreover, this synod was convened according to the valid metropolitan system, because invitations for participation to it were sent only to the metropolitan bishops.<sup>389</sup> The convocation, formation, proceedings and decisions of the synod of Chalcedon defined the tendencies which prevailed during the production of the

<sup>386</sup>ACO, II, 11, p.74.

<sup>387</sup>Canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council put the throne of New Rome in the first place in the East. This fact was the source of many arguments between the Sees of Constantinople and Alexandria, vying for the first place in the East. Thus, we can understand the position of Theophilus of Alexandria against St. John Chrysostom. Dioscorus of Alexandria was the most dynamic, because he demoted the throne of Constantinople to the fifth place in the Robber synod of Ephesus. This decision fell on the synod that issued it, and its instigators. The Antichalcedonian Timotheus Ailourus ascended to the See of Alexandria after the murder of patriarch Proterius of Alexandria by the heretics. He elevated the throne of Ephesus to a patriarchate at a local synod at Ephesus, in order to avenge patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, because the latter did not accept in communion the former (Evagrius, *Eccl. History*, III, 6. PG 86, 2608-2609). This action, that turned directly against canon 28 of Chalcedon, was the only one in the East. Of course, this effort to damage the authority of the See of New Rome, did not bear fruit, but succeeded in having the opposite result. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.172. ff.9; v.II, pp.33-35, 104-112; N. Baynes, *Alexandria and Constantinople: A study in Ecclesiastical Diplomacy*, in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, XII, 1926, pp.145-156. Francis Dvornik locates the composition of canon 28 in the collusion of the two thrones (*Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.48-50).

<sup>388</sup>P. Christou, *Ἑλλην. Πατρολογία*, v.3, pp.46-49; L. Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, pp.170-206; I. Karmiris, *Dogmatica et Symbolica*, pp.151-167; J. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.339 ff; B. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.144 ff; G. Konidaris, *Γεν. Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.314 ff; J. Meyendorff, *La primauté romaine dans la tradition canonique jusqu'au Concile de Chalcédoine*, pp.477-481; C. Papadopoulos, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.71-86; V. Phidas, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.620 ff; V. Stefanidis, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.98 ff; W. de Vries, *Orient et Occident*, pp. 101 ff; F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, pp.178 ff.

<sup>389</sup>ACO, II, 11, p.27. Mansi, VI, col.552.

forms of the administrative organization of the Church. The fast transition from the metropolitan to the exarchal system, in continuity with the patriarchal one, are visible with comparative accuracy.<sup>390</sup> The Fourth Ecumenical Council produced important doctrinal and canonical work.<sup>391</sup> The institutionalization of the authority of the prestigious Sees was among the canonical questions which the synod was called to answer since the fight for imposing it was at its height. The question was in the first place, concerned with the See of Constantinople, since it had suffered the most up to that point by attempts which sought to reduce its authority two years earlier at the Robber synod of Ephesus. The case of the judgment of the bishops of Ephesus, Vassianus and Stefanus,<sup>392</sup> and the case of the intervention of the throne of New Rome in the controversy between Eunomius of Nicomedia and Anastasius of Nicaea<sup>393</sup> delineate the question of the rights of New Rome.

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<sup>390</sup>We understand the separation into patriarchal thrones from the ranking of the positions of members of the synod. This order, as we have mentioned, had been imposed by the consciousness of the Church (**Mansi**, VII, cols. 97, 101). This structure/ranking, that is the separation into patriarchal provinces, was in operation during the proceedings of the synod (except for the dioceses of Illyricum, which seemed to have preserved their independence). We ought to mention, with regards to the proceedings of the synod and beyond the ranking of the members of the synod, that the content of the jurisdiction of the patriarchal thrones is defined during this period, and shortly before the finalized canonical decisions of the synod, as "super-exarchal". Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.37-38, ft.52.

<sup>391</sup>The question of the formulation of the definition of the synod was the cause *for it to act for the first time*. The council examined the problem, whether it should move to the formulation of the definition of the faith, or if it should have used as a definition the doctrinal letter of bishop Leo of Rome. The synod decided on the creation of a committee for the study of the issue, after the imperial proposal. The constitution of the committee proved the canonical function of it (six delegates of the Oriental dioceses, three delegates from each dioceses of Asia, Pontus, Thrace, Illyricum and from bishops (and delegates) of the most prestigious Sees). (**Mansi**, VII, col. 101). The absence of the Egyptian dioceses was owed to the problems created after the deposition of Dioscorus (*ibid* p. 92). The question, as regards the representation of the belief of the Church was given to the committee. At the same time, the representation of the dioceses of the Orient from six bishops shows the recognition of the strengthened ecclesiastical situation (because we have mentioned that there were two prestigious Sees in the dioceses of the Orient, Antioch and Jerusalem).

Therefore, Vlass. Phidas believes that the institution of the Pentarchy had functioned even before the voting of the decisions of Chalcedon on church government. The synod was not confused about choosing an exarchal or patriarchal system, because the patriarchal system had been established in the consciousness of the church. The synod was confused about choosing between a suprametropolitan or super-exarchal jurisdiction of the prestigious Sees. Finally, the suprametropolitan content predominated. Thus canons 9 and 17 were not practiced according to their tenor. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.38-44.

<sup>392</sup>**ACO**, II, 13, p.52.

<sup>393</sup>**ACO**, II, 13, p.62.

We know that the question of the jurisdiction of the See of New Rome was finally solved by canon 28. Two other canons (9<sup>394</sup> and 17<sup>395</sup>) defined the jurisdiction of the See of New Rome before the affirmation of canon 28. They enacted the right of the Archbishop of New Rome to adjudicate on appeals of the clergy of the neighbouring dioceses. The increased judicial power of the throne of New Rome was in harmony with the ecclesiastical practice of the Church.<sup>396</sup> The interpretation of canons 9 and 17 are difficult because of the title «ἐξάρχος», which was understood in different ways by different interpreters.<sup>397</sup> We can see a variety of opinions in the Byzantine interpreters of the twelfth century. Some understood the title as referring to patriarchs, others believed that the title referred to the metropolitanical bishops, and still others thought that the title referred to the metropolitanical bishops of the dioceses only.<sup>398</sup> The canonists of the twelfth century used canon 37 (46)<sup>399</sup> of Carthage (418) and canon 6<sup>400</sup> of Sardica (342/343) as the basis for their arguments. The canon of Carthage was used by those who did not identify the metropolitanical bishop with the exarch, while the canon of Sardica was used by those who identified the two titles. The cause of the misinterpretation of canons 9 and 17 was the conflict that had broken in the ninth century between the patriarch of Constantinople and the metropolitanical bishops of the Ecumenical throne as regards the right to ordain.<sup>401</sup>

<sup>394</sup> «...Εἰ δὲ πρὸς τὸν τῆς αὐτῆς ἐπαρχίας μητροπολίτην, ἐπίσκοπος, ἢ κληρικὸς ἀμφισβητοῖ, καταλαμβάνετω τὸν ἐξάρχον τῆς διοικήσεως, ἢ τὸν τῆς βασιλευούσης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως θρόνον, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ δικαζέσθω.» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.237. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees ...*, v.1, pp.91.

<sup>395</sup> «...Εἰ δὲ τις ἀδικοῖτο παρὰ τοῦ ἰδίου μητροπολίτου, παρὰ τῷ ἐξάρχῳ τῆς διοικήσεως, ἢ τῷ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως θρόνῳ δικαζέσθω, καθὰ προεῖρηται...» *Syntagma*, v.2, p.258. For the English translation see N. Tanner, *Decrees ...*, v.1, pp. 95.

<sup>396</sup> *ibid* pp. 86 ff.

<sup>397</sup> The Greek noun «ἐξάρχος» is produced from the verb «ἐξάρχω». The verb is a compound from the preposition «ἐκ» and the verb «άρχω». The word «ἐξάρχος» means the leader, the commander, the chief, the supervisor, the first of the chore, but also the extraordinary delegate.

<sup>398</sup> The title declares the metropolitanical bishops according to Zonaras, although he mentions the opinions of those who support the view that declares the patriarchs. (*Syntagma*, v.2, pp.238, 259-260.). Valsamon believes this title as referring to metropolitanical bishops of the dioceses. «Ὁ μὲν τοῖ ἐξάρχος τῆς διοικήσεως ἐστίν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, οὐχ ὁ ἐκάστης ἐπαρχίας μητροπολίτης, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς ὅλης διοικήσεως μητροπολίτης. Διοίκησις δὲ ἐστὶν ἢ πολλὰς ἐπαρχίας ἔχουσα ἐν ἑαυτῇ. Τοῦτο δὲ τὸ πῶν ἐξάρχων προνόμιον σήμερον οὐκ ἐνεργεῖ.» (*Syntagma*, v.2, p.239). Aristenos believes that the patriarch is declared by the title «ἐξάρχος» and that the canon gives the right to the patriarch of Constantinople to judge the appeals of the clergy that belong to the jurisdiction of the other patriarchs. (*Syntagma*, v.2, p.240).

<sup>399</sup> «Ὅστε τὸν τῆς πρώτης καθέδρας ἐπίσκοπον μὴ λέγεσθαι ἐξάρχον τῶν ἱερέων, ἢ ἄκρον ἱερέα, ἢ τοιοῦτότροπον τίποτε, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐπίσκοπον τῆς πρώτης καθέδρας.» *Syntagma*, v.3, p.404.

<sup>400</sup> «...τοῦ ἐξάρχου τῆς ἐπαρχίας, (λέγω δὲ τοῦ ἐπίσκοπου τῆς μητροπόλεως)...» *Syntagma*, v.3, p.243.

<sup>401</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.291.

Later researchers also dealt with the interpretation of these canons. They followed one of the two tendencies of the Byzantine canonists.<sup>402</sup> K. Müller tried to combine both opinions.<sup>403</sup> He urged that the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch were designated by the title *exarch*, an opinion close to Aristenos. The throne of Constantinople, according to this theory, had the jurisdiction of those dioceses which did not have an *exarch*, i.e. Thrace, Asia and Pontus. E. Herman<sup>404</sup> and F. Dvornik<sup>405</sup> have the tendency to agree with this opinion. The simple external agreement of the sources cannot be judged as a strong enough foundation for this conclusion.<sup>406</sup> It seems that the title *exarch* is given either to the metropolitanical bishop of the province or to the metropolitanical bishop of the capital of the dioceses. The title Archbishop had prevailed for the bishops of the prestigious Sees in this period. But the canons of Carthage and Sardica would lead us to conclude that in the West the title *exarch* must have been given only to the metropolitanical bishops.

Vlassios Phidas rightly observes that the title *exarch* was not given independently in the text but was always accompanied by the definition «τῆς διοικήσεως» (*of the diocese*).<sup>407</sup> Through the redefinition of the center of interpretative interest, not only for the word *exarch*, but also for the whole phrase, «ἐξάρχος τῆς διοικήσεως» (*exarch of the dioceses*), it is clear that the title *exarch* defines the metropolitanical bishops of the capitals of the dioceses. This automatically changes the question to: which of the dioceses could accept the extraordinary prestige of the See of New Rome? Obviously, the holy fathers of

<sup>402</sup>For further bibliography see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.292-294.

<sup>403</sup>K. Müller, *Kirchengeschichte I* (1929<sup>2</sup>), p.625.

<sup>404</sup>E. Herman, *Chalkedon und die Ausgestaltung des Konstantinopolitanischen Primats*, in Grillmeir - Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, II, p.477.

<sup>405</sup>F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium*, p.92, ft.173.

<sup>406</sup>Vlassios Phidas gives an extensive analysis of the usage of the title *exarch* and the meaning of the word based on the sources. He observes that the use of the title *exarch* from Ibas of Edessa (ACO, II, 13, p.30.) and Stephanus of Epiphania of Second Syria (ACO, II, 13, p.79.) in reference to the Archbishop of Antioch, did not convince us of the view of E. Müller. The different use of the title in canon 6 of Sardica, in canon 37 (46) of Carthage, in apostolic canon 34 (Syntagma, v.2, p.45. & BEPES, v.2, p.175.), the use of the title for the members of the Third Ecumenical Council by Ibas of Edessa (ACO, II, 13, p.33.), and also many other examples, have convinced us that the title *exarch* was not used as a formal ecclesiastical title, but was used in reference to the metropolitanical bishops of the provinces and the dioceses. See Phidas, *Pentarchy*, 2, pp.294-298.

<sup>407</sup>Valsamon had nearly the same opinion ten centuries before. *ibid.* p. 106. ft.398. Cf. Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.294, 298-303.

the Fourth Ecumenical Council did not make any mention of the dioceses of the West in these canons. Their interest was centered on the dioceses of the East. If we suppose that all the dioceses of the East are included in the remit of the canon, then we must conclude that Constantinople acquired a broad administrative jurisdiction even over the dioceses of the Orient (the thrones of Antioch and Jerusalem) and the diocese of Egypt (the throne of Alexandria). The throne of New Rome would not have had any reason to refuse such a development, but this would have met with strong reaction not only from those affected by it, but also from Old Rome which had claimed exactly the opposite during the synod. Therefore, we should exclude those dioceses of the East that had prestigious Sees (i.e., thrones with universally recognized *Precedence of Honour*) in their limits. But we cannot absolutely exclude such a theory. Vlassios Phidas observes that «the text, as it is, does not refer to a division of the administrative jurisdiction in the dioceses of the East, but to two different jurisdictions which existed within the same ecclesiastical diocese (the Exarch of the diocese and of the throne of Constantinople)».<sup>408</sup> The canons referred to the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus. The throne of New Rome controlled the ordinations and the adjudications of bishops in them according to the established custom. The Fourth Ecumenical Council established, through canons 9 and 17, the beginnings of the exceptional authority of the See of New Rome. It granted the right of adjudication only and not of ordination. We believe that the lack of definition of the diocese which the canon intimates, proves the continuous interest of the throne of Constantinople to include in its broad judicial power the diocese of Eastern Illyricum, except for the three dioceses which we previously mentioned. We see that by the application of canons 9 and 17 judgment was issued on the metropolitan Stephanus of Larissa by the throne of Constantinople.<sup>409</sup> The throne of Constantinople, in the person of Epiphanius (520-535), called Stefanus of Larissa to resign after a report by bishops Demetrius of Skiathos and Provianus of Demetrias. The insubordinate

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<sup>408</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.299.

<sup>409</sup>The records of the synod of Rome (531) are a source of questions. There were, in the records, two letters of Stephanus and a memorial of him and the consecrated bishops of Thessaly by him. **Mansi**, VIII, cols. 741-748; **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.96-102.

metropolitan was defrocked by the Endemousa Synod of Constantinople. Stephanus, confronted with a deadlock, asked for support from the See of Old Rome. Unfortunately for him, the decisions of Rome, whatever they might have been, were not in force in Eastern Illyricum.<sup>410</sup>

We have seen, in the previous chapter, the question of the controversy of the jurisdiction of Eastern Illyricum.<sup>411</sup> It is a matter of course that the church of Constantinople, and the imperial administration, knew well the speculation of the bishops of Old Rome about this question (that is, the subordination of the churches of Eastern Illyricum to the jurisdiction of Old Rome and the efforts for the establishment of a papal Vicariate in Thessaloniki). These positions of Old Rome held serious dangers for the unity of the Church. The clergy of New Rome believed that they must protect and secure the rights of the throne of their Church, but also protect the unity of the Catholic Church, and in this period, during which the controversy of Monophysitism arose, the unity of the Church was in danger. The so-called Acacian schism (484-519) would confirmed these fears.<sup>412</sup> Therefore, they aimed to complete canons 9 and 17 with canon 28,<sup>413</sup> by

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<sup>410</sup>The question of Eastern Illyricum's jurisdiction is a thorny issue, also for the period after the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The famous theory of the papal Vicariate of Thessaloniki is not clear in the sources. The position of the bishops of Eastern Illyricum in the proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council shows their autonomy over against the See of Old Rome and of New Rome. It seemed that the church of Eastern Illyricum followed the throne of Constantinople and not the throne of Old Rome in the period of the Acacian Schism. The case of Stephanus of Larissa shows who had authority in the judgments of Eastern Illyricum. The church of Eastern Illyricum knows of autonomy equivalent with that of the church of Cyprus in this period.

It seemed that the establishment of the archbishopric of Justiniana Prima in Taurisio (535) pushed the bishops of Thessaloniki to Old Rome in their efforts to preserve their governmental autonomy (exarchial rights). Finally, this turn led to the absolute subordination of Eastern Illyricum to the jurisdiction of Old Rome until 733, when Eastern Illyricum was brought under the jurisdiction of the throne of Constantinople. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.72-104.

<sup>411</sup>*ibid* pp.77 ff.

<sup>412</sup>John Meyendorff believes that the basic cause was an effort by the emperor to reduce the power of the church of Alexandria (*Imperial Unity*, p.181).

<sup>413</sup>«Πανταχοῦ τοῖς τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων ὅροις ἐπίμνητοι, καὶ τὸν ἀρτίως ἀναγνωσθέντα κανόνα τῶν ἑκατὸν πενήτηντα θεοφιλεστάτων ἐπισκόπων, τῶν συναχθέντων ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς μνήμης Μεγάλου Θεοδοσίου, τοῦ γενομένου βασιλέως ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ῥώμης, γνωρίζοντες, τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀρίζομεν τε καὶ ψηφίζομεθα περὶ τῶν πρεσβείων τῆς ἀγιοτάτης ἐκκλησίας τῆς αὐτῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ῥώμης· καὶ γὰρ τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης, διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην, οἱ Πατέρες εἰκότως ἀποδεδώκασιν τὰ πρεσβεῖα. Καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ κινούμενοι οἱ ἑκατὸν πενήτηντα θεοφιλέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι, τὰ ἴσα πρεσβεῖα ἀπένεμαν τῷ τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ἀγιοτάτῳ θρόνῳ, εὐλόγως κρίναντες, τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ συγκλήτῳ τιμηθεῖσαν πόλιν, καὶ τῶν ἴσων ἀπολαύουσιν πρεσβείων τῇ πρεσβυτέρα βασιλίδι Ῥώμῃ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς ὡς ἐκείνη μεγαλύνεσθαι πράγμασι, δευτέραν μετ' ἐκείνην ὑπάρχουσα. Καὶ ὥστε τοὺς τῆς Ποντικῆς, καὶ τῆς Ἀσιατικῆς, καὶ τῆς Θρακικῆς διοικήσεως μητροπολίτας μόνους, ἐτι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς ἐπισκόπους τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων χειροτονεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ προειρημένου ἀγιοτάτου θρόνου τῆς κατὰ Κωνσταντινούπολιν ἀγιοτάτης ἐκκλησίας· δηλαδὴ ἐκαστοῦ μητροπολίτου τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων μετὰ τῶν τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπων χειροτονούντος τοὺς τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπους, καθὼς τοῖς θείοις κανόσι διηγόρευται χειροτονεῖσθαι

of vesting with canonical authority the right to do the ordinations in the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace. The meaning, results and reactions that this canon caused, are well known. But it is especially interesting for us because it redefined, without changing, the question of the *Precedence of Honour* of the throne of New Rome.

The *Precedence of Honour* of the bishop of New Rome is the main question addressed by the first part of canon 28.<sup>414</sup> The interest of the holy fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council to interpret the already valid canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council, arouses suspicions. The recognition of the *Precedence of Honour* of the See of New Rome was an unquestionable fact for any party. This is proved by the rank of the signatures in the records of the synods. But the papal delegates also declared their opposition to the effort of Dioscorus to demote the See of New Rome at the Robber synod of Ephesus.<sup>415</sup> Eusebius of Dorylaeum confirmed the synod and that Leo of Rome (440-461) had been informed by him about canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council and that he had accepted it.<sup>416</sup> The opposite opinions which state that the synod of Rome (382) had reacted to canon 3, are based on the third chapter of the famous *Decretum Gelasianum*, but they are judged as wrong.<sup>417</sup>

Vlassios Phidas believes that the first part of canon 28 has an obviously apologetic character. The cause of that is the refusal of the papal delegates to participate in the composition of the canon, but mainly in the expressed opinion of the bishops of Rome to the bishops of Eastern Illyricum regarding the theory of papal primacy.<sup>418</sup> The indirect disputing of the *Precedence of Honour* of the

δέ, καθώς εἶρηται, τοὺς μητροπολίτας τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων παρὰ τοῦ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἀρχιεπισκόπου, ψηφισμάτων συμφώνων κατὰ τὸ ἔθος γινόμενων, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένων.» *Syntagma*, v.2, pp. 280-281. For the English translation see **N. Tanner**, *Decrees ...*, v.1, pp.99-100.

<sup>414</sup>The canon literally and notionally is separated into two parts. The *Precedence of Honour* of the See of New Rome is mentioned in the first part (*Πανταχοῦ τοῖς τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων ... δευτέρην μετ' ἐκείνην ὑπέαρχουσιν*) and the *right of the ordinations* of the See of New Rome is mentioned in the second part of the canon (*Καὶ ὥστε τοὺς τῆς Ποντικῆς, ... καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένων*).

<sup>415</sup>**ACO**, II, 11, p.78.

<sup>416</sup>**ACO**, II, 13, p.97.

<sup>417</sup>see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, p.306; **F. Dvornik**, *The Idea of Apostolicity*, 64. ff. 56. Rome had been involved in serious controversies during this period for the election of the bishop of the city. see **B. Kidd**, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.56 ff. For the position of the canon in the ancient Latin canonical collections see **F. Dvornik**, *The See of Constantinople in the First Latin Collections of Canon Law*, in *Melanges G. Ostrogorsky I*, (*Zbornik Radova Bizantološkog Instituta 8.1*), Belgrade, 1963, pp.97-101.

<sup>418</sup>Cf. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.304-319.

bishop of New Rome undermined any sense of authority of the Archbishop of Constantinople with regards to the right to ordain which is found in the second part of the canon. Through the first part of the canon: «**a.** The council refused the claim that the bishop of Rome had primacy by divine law and the principle of Apostolicity, which had been repeatedly put forward in the letters of the bishops of Rome to the bishops of Eastern Illyricum. **b.** The council recognized the first place (πρωτοκαθεδρία) of the See of Old Rome in the Church on the basis of the political principle. **c.** The council accepted the *Precedence of Honour* of the throne of New Rome, on the basis of the same principle used by the fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council. Because of that, the council ratified this decision (of the Second Ecumenical council)». <sup>419</sup> Hence, the holy fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council established the right of the Archbishop of Constantinople to consecrate the metropolitanical bishops of the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace not only on the basis of the existing custom, but also on the basis of the *Precedence of Honour* of the throne. Thus, they saw in the *Precedence of Honour* the right to ordain, because the center of grants of canon 28 lies in the right to ordain and not in the *Precedence of Honour*. Canons 9 and 17 were not believed to be enough, because they did not establish the right to ordain for the See of Constantinople. The right to adjudicate cases of bishops of the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace had to be established upon the right to ordain, according to the canonical consciousness of the period in both West and East. <sup>420</sup>

The composition of the canon was realized after the agreement of the bishops of the East. The representatives of the emperor did not appear at the composition of the relevant act and the delegates of the bishop of Old Rome refused to follow the act. <sup>421</sup> Obviously, this situation influenced the composers of the text. The result was that canon 28 demonstrates this in its syntax and composition. <sup>422</sup> The question was discussed in the seventeenth session, when the

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<sup>419</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.305.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, pp.183 ff.

<sup>421</sup> ACO, II, 13, p.88.

<sup>422</sup> Vlassios Phidas mentioned the role of the archdeacon and primicerius Aetius of the church of Constantinople not only in the composition of the canon but also in the proceedings of the synod. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.312, ft. 426.



papal delegates<sup>423</sup> argued about anticanonical decision, but without success.<sup>424</sup> In the eighteenth session they tried to exploit the absence of the delegates of the emperor and to put the question of free agreement of the two sides (the clergy of Constantinople and the Eastern bishops).<sup>425</sup> They read the famous falsified text of canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council, instead of directly attacking canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council.<sup>426</sup> Obviously, canon 28 would be invalid through the falsified text. The reading of the text which the church of Constantinople possessed, was the answer to any attempt at misleading the council, and stopped any attempt at falsification.<sup>427</sup> Of course the canonical regulation which canon 28 presented was innovative. The church of Constantinople acquired the power over the metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace. This decision was against equal canonical decisions of this very synod. But the church of Constantinople had the advantage of its established authority concerning the right to ordain and adjudicate bishops of these dioceses. The polemic of the papal delegates raised the obvious question of whether their position was a personal one, or whether they were following orders from the bishop of Rome. The papal delegates were supplied with a letter that strengthened their position against any change.<sup>428</sup> The relative letter concerned the problems that had been created by the Robber synod of Ephesus (*Iatrocinium Ephesinum*).<sup>429</sup> The position of the East was confirmed in the face of the situation because they had already agreed. The imperial delegates had a clear position and they ratified canon 28.<sup>430</sup> On the other hand, the papal

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<sup>423</sup>Bishop Paschasius of Lilyvau, bishop Lucinsius and presbyter Boniface were the delegates of Leo of Rome (440-461).

<sup>424</sup>ACO, II, 13, p.88.

<sup>425</sup>ACO, II, 13, p.94. This argument shows the role of the imperial delegates. They secured the free expression of the belief of the bishops of the Catholic Church.

<sup>426</sup>ACO, II, 13, p.95.

<sup>427</sup>We have seen that the See of Rome had developed arguments with regard to the primacy of power of its bishop in certain letters to Eastern Illyricum. In parallel, we saw that at other times it tried to impose its position through the falsification of canonical texts (synod of Carthage), especially when it was in a difficult position. This position is, by itself, very serious for the spiritual evolution of a church, because the Church is Christ, Christ is the truth, and the truth is not a lie.

<sup>428</sup>ACO, II, 13, p.95.

<sup>429</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.313.

<sup>430</sup>ACO, II, 13, p.98.

delegates insisted against canon 28, and sent the question of validation to the bishop of Rome.<sup>431</sup>

The reaction of Leo of Rome was as acute as that of his delegates,<sup>432</sup> in that he refused to accept even the doctrinal decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which had been formed according to his doctrinal letter.<sup>433</sup> Leo of Rome tried to dismiss canon 28 in a series of letters.<sup>434</sup> The reaction of Leo even led to disputing the ecumenical character of the Second Ecumenical Council, and the strength of the principle of political accommodation, as a principle of ecclesiastical government and as direct factor of the determining rank of the prestigious Sees. Thus, he disputed the authority of canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council and presented the authority of canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council and the principle of petrine Apostolicity.<sup>435</sup> The argumentation was not new, because Boniface had used it in the well known controversy concerning the jurisdiction of Illyricum. Canon 6 had been used as the basis for the primacy of the bishop of Rome over the whole Church. The use of the falsified text of canon 6 in the proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council had the same effect and it served the same claims of the bishop of Rome. Boniface was obliged to accept the equal rights of the thrones of Alexandria and Antioch with the appearance of canon 6. The production of the form was very problematic. Leo of Rome asked that the solution to this problem be found by the introduction of the idea of the direct and the indirect petrine Apostolicity of the thrones of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It is a matter of course that only the bishop of Old Rome had direct petrine Apostolicity, where as the bishop of New Rome could not claim petrine Apostolicity. Thus, the *Precedence of Honour* of this throne was lower than that of the three prestigious Sees to which canon 6 referred. Hence, the throne of Constantinople could not claim any jurisdiction, and canon 28 was invalid, because the *Precedence of Honour* of the most prestigious Sees was connected with the right to ordain and adjudicate the

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<sup>431</sup> ACO, II, 13, p.99.

<sup>432</sup> G. Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, pp.26-27.

<sup>433</sup> Cf. R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.110 ff.

<sup>434</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.315, ft.432.

<sup>435</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, pp.314-318. v.II, pp.115-129; Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, pp. 98-102; B. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy*, pp.150 ff.

cases of bishops. Therefore, the throne of Constantinople did not have any such *Precedence* according to Leo of Rome.<sup>436</sup>

It is a matter of course that such an argument was regarded as unacceptable in Constantinople by the Palace and the local church. Leo of Rome tried to join hands with the Sees of Antioch and Alexandria against canon 28, which only showed his ignorance of the ecclesiastical situation in the East as it had been formed by the controversies of Monophysitism. Leo finally understood that his reaction was in vain, because he would not be able to impose his opinions on the Church of the East.<sup>437</sup> Julian of Kos, the spokesman of Leo in Constantinople, informed him of the ecclesiastical situation in the East, and that it did not permit any action.<sup>438</sup> Leo finally accepted the doctrinal decisions of the synod and, at the same time, could not change the ecclesiastical situation of the jurisdiction of the See of New Rome. The question of canon 28 was regarded as closed. The authority of the See of New Rome was unquestionable. The effort by anyone to dispute the *Precedence* of the See of Constantinople, would prove to be in vain during this period. In reality, the relationship of the two thrones had moved from canon 28 to the question of the primacy claimed by the bishop of Old Rome. The theoretical construction of pope Leo was the basis of an evolution the results of which were seen in the so-called Acacian schism and in the opinions which pope Gelasius expressed during this schism.<sup>439</sup>

The *Precedence of Honour* of the throne of Constantinople was at the center of the polemic of the Archbishop of Old Rome because it was exactly the principle of the conferment of suprametropolitan authority and the basis of the patriarchal practice (that is the connection between the exceptional *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious thrones with the right to ordain and adjudicate cases concerning bishops). The canonical decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council were the starting point of the evolution of the patriarchal institution in

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<sup>436</sup>Cf. F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp. 51 ff; J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, pp.151 ff.

<sup>437</sup>W. de Vries (*Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, p.34) believes that Leo regarded canon 28 as dangerous for the progressive subordination of the Church to the State. We do not agree with this opinion.

<sup>438</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, I, p.317.

<sup>439</sup>*ibid* p.110.

the life of the Church.<sup>440</sup> The inclusion of the exceptional *Precedence of Honour* of the five prestigious thrones with suprametropolitan authority gave birth to the new institution of the Pentarchy of the Patriarchs.<sup>441</sup> We have traced the development of the canonical recognition of the *Precedence of Honour* of the prestigious Sees and of the conferment of relative administrative power from the Second to the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The convocation and recognition of the five autonomous administrative provinces is a given fact. Of course, we ought to confess that the Fourth Ecumenical Council did not deal with the establishment of the new institution, the Pentarchy of the patriarchs, with issuing any particular canonical act if we stay with the letter of the Law. It is certain that a long historical period was completed with a new form of ecclesiastical government, borne through canonical decisions (canon 28 for the See of Constantinople) and canonical regulations (for the jurisdiction of the Sees of

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<sup>440</sup>The title *Patriarch* (πατριάρχης) was used in order to declare the dignity of the bishops of the five prestigious Sees that were honoured with exceptional suprametropolitan authority. This title gave the name to the new institution of the ecclesiastical government (*patriarchal system*). In parallel it had used other titles as determinatives of the Episcopal ministry:

1. The title metropolitan (μητροπολίτης) was used after the First Ecumenical Council in order to describe the bishop of the capital of each metropolitan province. We saw the evolution of the title in the parallel evolution of the metropolitan system.
2. The metropolitan system was not practiced in Egypt, as we know. Thus, the title Archbishop was used for the bishop of Alexandria. The title was also given to the other bishops of the prestigious Sees after the Second Ecumenical Council, as a determinative of their exceptional ministry.
3. Finally, the title exarch was used in order to determine the distinguished role of a particular bishop in the synodical function of the body of bishops of a given geographical unity. But the title always determines a different depth and width of ecclesiastical government. The title did not have a particular function in the period that we have examined.

None of these titles could exactly delineate the new by established ecclesiastical situation.

The title patriarch is historically charged. It is a biblical title that was reformed in order to characterize the new governmental situation. As an ecclesiastical title, it was colourless before the Fourth Ecumenical Council and it was used mainly in order to declare the orthodoxy of the faith of the honoured bishops (**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.30). The absolute connection of the Orthodoxy of the faith with the *Precedence of Honour* accommodated the establishment of the title in the ecclesiastical consciousness. Hence the title could include the new dignity bearing the meaning of the *Precedence of Honour* and of the orthodoxy of the faith. At the same time, the notion of the governmental autonomy of each throne could be easily declared. The recognition of the patriarchal right by the whole Church after the Fourth Ecumenical Council shows the deep ecclesiological presuppositions of the new institution. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.27-37; **ODB**, v.3, pp.1599-1600.

<sup>441</sup>The institution of the Pentarchy of patriarchs is a form that was created and developed within the limits of the Church. The system of the Pentarchy of patriarchs did not have any previous model which the Church took and reformed. We can see that the existence of the political system of "Pentarchy" in ancient Carthage (Aristotle preserved all information) did not coincide and did not seem to influence the institution of the Pentarchy of patriarchs. see **Aristotle**, *Πολιτικά*, 1273a, 13.

Antioch and Jerusalem) of the Fourth Ecumenical Council but also through the previous recognition of the rights of the See of Alexandria and the self-evident acceptance of the rights of the See of Old Rome in the West.<sup>442</sup>

Doubtless the enactment of the patriarchal right was in the spirit of the canonical decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The clear connection between the *Precedence of Honour* and the right to ordain (the right of adjudication arises from this right) was a special characteristic of each throne. The function of the Patriarchal synod certifies the administrative independence of these thrones. It regulates the question of ordinations and the adjudications of the metropolitanical bishops and the bishops. It expresses the orthodoxy of the faith. This reality was known in West and East by the middle of the fifth century. The canonical decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council are the canonical precedent on which the idea of the permanence and the exclusiveness of the patriarchal right of the five prestigious Sees is founded.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>442</sup>Vlassios Phidas observes, as regards the Fourth Ecumenical Council's relation with the institution of the Pentarchy, that it was not dependent on the results of the governmental decisions but on the whole meaning that the division of the suprametropolitan authority had according to the *Precedence of Honour* of the thrones. He concludes that «this position of the issue leads us to the confirmation of the unbroken connection of the Fourth Ecumenical Council with the ecclesiastical institution of the Pentarchy of the Patriarchs. The "vehicles" of the suprametropolitan authority are determined directly not only by the adoption of the principle of the *Precedence of Honour* by the synod, but also the permanence and the exclusiveness of the "vehicles" of the (suprametropolitan authority) are founded indirectly.» (Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.25)

Patrick O'Connell accepts this opinion and writes that «for the origin of the idea of the five patriarchs in the Church we must go back to the council of Chalcedon». (*The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828)*, p.29). Thus, the opinion of John Meyendorff that the «... system of "pentarchy" never really coincided with reality», is historically unfounded (*Imperial Unity*, p.58).

<sup>443</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.26-27.

## Chapter 6

## The Function of the Institution of the Pentarchy

The establishment of the operation of the institution of the Pentarchy is an important part of our position concerning the starting point of the establishment of the institution of the Pentarchy itself. We are obliged to present some evidence about the operation of the institution from the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon 451) to the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Second Constantinople 553). We do this because we have accepted in our thesis the theory of Prof. Vlassios Phidas and the fact that the earlier and later historians have not recognized, or understood, the establishment and the operation of the institution of the Pentarchy before Justinian and the Fifth Ecumenical Council. This historical period is much disordered because of the so-called Monophysite controversies and the various interventions of the emperors. It is an unquestionable fact that the emperors directly after the council of Chalcedon, tried to base their policies of unification on the authority of the five patriarchs. This had many implications for the operation of the institution of the Pentarchy in the second half of the fifth and the first half of the sixth century.

We can put limits around the periods which divide the two Ecumenical Councils. We have the period of Anti-Chalcedonism from 451 until 484.<sup>444</sup> The patriarchal thrones of the East were the theater of violent collisions after the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The life of patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem was seriously in danger. Patriarch Proterius of Alexandria was murdered by a mob (457). The elevation of Basiliscus (475-476) to the imperial throne permitted the deposed Timotheus Ailurus and Peter Knapheus the father to return to the thrones of Alexandria and Antioch. Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople (472-489) refused to sign the *Encyclical* (Ἐγκύκλιον) of the emperor through which he anathematized the council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo of Rome. The

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<sup>444</sup>Cf. V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστορία*, I, pp.659-664.

strong reaction by the patriarch obligated Basiliscus to issue the *Counter-Encyclical* (Ἀντεγκύκλιον) and revoke the *Encyclical*. Similarly, he invalidated the governmental decisions of the council of Ephesus convoked by Timotheus Aelurus against the rights of the throne of New Rome. The new emperor, Zeno (474-491), who was promoted with the support of the Orthodox, proclaimed with his edict that the church of Constantinople is «the mother of our piety and of all the Christians of the orthodox religion» (ἡ μήτηρ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐσεβείας καὶ πάντων τῶν χριστιανῶν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου θρησκείας) and its rights must be in force «obviously for ever» (ἔσαει ἀσφαλῶς).<sup>445</sup> The strong reaction of the Patriarch of Constantinople against the *Encyclical* which was praised by pope Simplicius of Rome (468-483) is very important.<sup>446</sup> Emperor Leo I tried (between 471 and 473) to get Rome recognize canon 28 which of course was absolutely valid in the East, but pope Simplicius refused.<sup>447</sup>

The second period is characterized by the so-called Acacian schism (484-519). The cause of the schism was the famous *Henotikon* (Ἐνωτικόν) of Zeno. It is certain that the Empire had an acute problem of political unity especially in the eastern provinces on the borders because of the escalation of the Monophysite controversy. The emperor tried to make a compromise through his edict, which was based on the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria and he abstained from polemical expressions from either part (the partisans and the enemies of the synod of Chalcedon). Finally, everybody could interpret the text as they wanted. The evolution of the events showed that the emperor did not succeed in solving the problem but rather magnified it.<sup>448</sup> The emperor tried to use the institution of the Pentarchy to bring about unity.<sup>449</sup> Although we see on this occasion an attempt of putting the institution of the Pentarchy to operation, this attempt was

<sup>445</sup> *Cod. Just.* I, 2, 16.

<sup>446</sup> *Mansi*, VII, col. 995.

<sup>447</sup> *Phidas*, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.134-135.

<sup>448</sup> For the historical evolution of the Acacian schism see *F. Dvornik*, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.59-67; *V. Phidas*, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.664-672; *Phidas*, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.45-58; *Abbé Guettée*, *The Papacy*, pp.192-201; *J. Richards*, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, pp.60 ff; *J. Meyendorff*, *Imperial Unity*, pp.194 ff.

<sup>449</sup> All the patriarchs of the East signed the *Henotikon* in various ways. The fact that patriarch Acacius of Constantinople accepted in communion the deposed and then restored by the emperor, patriarch Peter Mogos of Alexandria, caused a reaction by pope Felix (483-492) who deposed Acacius of Constantinople and, of course, refused to sign the edict of the emperor.

anticanonical.<sup>450</sup> The historical events and the evolution that followed, are multifaceted and very revealing about the inability of the emperors to solve the problem with political power. The problem was aggravated when the monophysite Anastasius (491-518) became emperor.<sup>451</sup> The revolution of Vitalian in Eastern Illyricum with the excuse of the defense of orthodoxy, was proof of the problem. The pressure of the political situation obliged the emperor to want a solution to this ecclesiastical question. Patriarch Macedonius of Constantinople (496-511) followed the earlier position that the five patriarchs should have participated in a synod. According to him, there was no other solution. But the emperor did not like this position because he feared the results of a such a synod.<sup>452</sup> The emperor claimed to call the synod because of the political problems. The papal delegates had come to the Royal City in 515.<sup>453</sup> The repression of Vitalian's revolution dissuaded the convocation of the synod and, therefore, the operation of the institution of the Pentarchy was difficult, or rather impossible, during this period.

The ground during the period of the so-called Acacian schism was suitable for the development of multiform allusions. The polemic of the two sides was at its height in this period with regards to canon 28 and the so-called papal primacy of Rome. This allusion has an exceptional interest because it directly referred to the sense of the ecclesiastical administrative system.<sup>454</sup> Pope Gelasius (492-496)

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<sup>450</sup>The reasons which attest to the anticanonicity of the institution during this period, according to Vlass. Phidas, are the following:

1. The emperor tried to impose his edict through the authority of the five patriarchs, thereby isolating the patriarchs from their ecclesiastical body. That is, the patriarchs could sign expressing the belief of the patriarchal synod under them, as the metropolitical bishop expressed the belief of the provincial synod of the bishops under them.
2. The violation of the principle of the unanimity of the five patriarchs is a part of the pathology of the practice of the institution.
3. But also the majority of the Eastern patriarchs were succeeded through the violent removal of the dissenter patriarchs and their replacement by persons who were "reprehensible in the faith". The last reason especially led to the breaking of the common unity even among the patriarchs of the East.

see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.46-47.

<sup>451</sup>**F. Dvornik**, *Pope Gelasius and Emperor Anastasius I*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 44, München, 1951, pp.111-116. Cf. **W. de Vries**, *Ορθοδοξία και Καθολικισμός*, pp.35-37.

<sup>452</sup>**Theodoros Anagnostes**, *Eccl. History*, II, 24. PG 86, col. 196; **Theophanes**, *Chronography*, a.m. 6002. PG 108, col. 360.

<sup>453</sup>It seemed that the opinion for the convocation of a synod in Heracleia of Thrace was not valid. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.53, ft.97.

<sup>454</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.134.



demonstrated himself to be a protagonist through his letters. He was the instigator of the acts of pope Felix (i.e., of the schism between the two thrones). The top priority question of this period was: Who judges the bishops of the patriarchal thrones?<sup>455</sup> This question was the ground on which the relationship of the two thrones was built. The question was solved for the East and, because of this, the decisions of Rome did not have any practical result. The one-sided judgment of patriarch Acacius from the bishop of Rome was anticanonical. It asserted that all patriarchs and their delegates must participate in the unusual case of the adjudication of a patriarch.<sup>456</sup> The position of pope Gelasius (as it seemed from his relative letters to the bishops of Dardania) was diametrically opposed to this.<sup>457</sup> He argued against the patriarchal right of the See of Constantinople (obviously disputing the *Precedence of Honour* of the throne), and he developed the well known theory of the petrine Apostolicity of his throne. He based this argument on canons 6 of the First Ecumenical Council and 3, 4 and 5 of Sardica (342/343), and he claimed that the papal See had primacy over the whole Catholic Church. As we have seen, these positions were not new because Leo had presented them in his polemic against the throne of Constantinople. Of course, pope Gelasius added new things to it. He claimed more for the bishop of the “**Cathedrae Petri**”, claiming not only the attribute of the “**vicarii Petri**” but also the attribute of the “**Vicarii Christi**” with all the implications that this has for the government of the Church.<sup>458</sup> These claims were unacceptable for the East, and as a result, they reduced the prestige of the bishop of Old Rome (although some assignments for the unity of the Church had been made in condescension). Thus, the East acquired *the consciousness of the weight of the ecclesiological deviations of the papal See* made for the first time in this period.<sup>459</sup> The schism was so deep that the bridging of it could not occur during

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<sup>455</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.139-155; Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, pp.197-200; R. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, pp.121 ff.

<sup>456</sup>Vlassios Phidas recomposes the arguments of the East for the anticanonical judgment of patriarch of Constantinople, from the relative letters of Gelasius I of Rome. see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.140-142.

<sup>457</sup>Gelasius I, *Epist. XIII ad episcopos Dardaniae*, PL 59, col. 65C ff.

<sup>458</sup>It is a matter of course that these opinions did not prevail in this period, but were preserved in the famous *Pseudo-Isidorian decretals* and influenced the evolution of the theory of papal primacy of the papal See.

<sup>459</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.156.

the mediocre successors of Gelasius, Anastasius II (496-498) and Symmachus (498-514) and the orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople Eufimius (490-496) and Macedonius (496-511).<sup>460</sup>

The failed attempts at reunification by the emperors increased instead rather than decreased. The death of Anastasius in 518 and the promotion of the orthodox emperor Justin (518-527) were the starting point of a new ecclesiastical policy. Justinian (527-565), the nephew and successor of emperor Justin, played an important role in its formation. The persistence of the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council was the fundamental difference in the policy of the new emperor. The new Archbishop of New Rome, Ecumenical patriarch John II the Cappadocian (518-520),<sup>461</sup> was called by the people of the Royal City to declare the recognition of the synod of Chalcedon and to write in the diptychs the names of his predecessors, patriarchs Eufimius and Macedonius and of pope Leo. The patriarch anathematized the monophysite patriarch Severus of Antioch.<sup>462</sup> The scenes that followed in the church of St. Sophia are very important because they demonstrate the belief of the people of Constantinople.<sup>463</sup> The Endemousa synod of St. Sophia (518) deposed the patriarch Severus of Antioch after it examined the request (Δέησις) of the clergy of the patriarchate of Antioch. The orthodox Paul II (519-521) was elected patriarch of Antioch.<sup>464</sup> The restoration of the common unity between Old and New Rome was eased by the decisions of the Endemousa synod.

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<sup>460</sup>We must mention that two rival parties had been created in Old Rome which we can call pro-Eastern (*Romanitas*) and anti-Eastern (*Christianitas*). The limits and claims of these two parties changed according to the situation. Their existence characterizes the ecclesiastical and political life of Rome. The different position of the parties was evident in the ecclesiastical policy of the popes who were promoted by them, towards the East. This situation also continued after the end of the so-called Acacian schism. Cf. **J. Richards**, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, pp.69 ff; **R. Davis**, *Introduction*, in *Liber Pontificalis*, Liverpool, 1989, pp.5 ff; **J. Meyendorff**, *Imperial Unity*, pp.158 ff.

<sup>461</sup>The title *Ecumenical* (Οἰκουμενικός) was given to the patriarch John II Cappadocian of Constantinople the first time by the clergy and the monks of the Antiochian patriarchate. (**Mansi**, VIII, col.1038). The title was established in the consciousness of the East and was connected with the honour that was given to the throne of New Rome. For the development of the title see **V. Phidas**, *Βυζάντιο*, pp.275-277; **J. Meyendorff**, *Imperial Unity*, pp.305-306; **C. Papadopoulos**, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.129 ff.

<sup>462</sup>“... Σεβῆρος χωρίσας ἑαυτὸν τῆς ἁγίας ταύτης ἐκκλησίας ἑαυτῷ κρῖματι ὑπέβαλε, πρόδηλον πᾶσιν.” **ACO**, III, p.74.

<sup>463</sup>**ACO**, III, pp.74-75.

<sup>464</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.57.

The papal delegation in the East was successful with the letters of the emperor<sup>465</sup> and the patriarch<sup>466</sup> of Constantinople in order to intend the communion between the two thrones. The legates of pope Hormisdas (514 - 523) carried with them a Libellus of faith (*Formula Hormisdas*).<sup>467</sup> This text, as it was, could not be signed by patriarch John. He made important changes and sent the text as a personal letter to the pope.<sup>468</sup> The content of the letter protected the rights of the See of Constantinople without being polemical, in the spirit of the canonical institution of the Pentarchy.<sup>469</sup> Pope Hormisdas accepted the letter of the patriarch of Constantinople with satisfaction, and correctly interpreted the changes that the patriarch had made.<sup>470</sup> This appears in the letter of the same pope to patriarch Epiphanius of Constantinople (520 - 535).<sup>471</sup> The end of the Acacian schism (519) did not lead to the unity of the Church, because it deeply scarred the East.<sup>472</sup> The problems did not cease to exist because the escape of Severus to Egypt moved there the center of the fight of the Antichalcedonians. The institution of the Pentarchy was preserved strong and its proper function was the only way that the unity of the Church could be realized.

The efforts of all the parties turned in this direction, that is, the unity of the Church. This period, until the Fifth Ecumenical Council, was called

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<sup>465</sup> PL 63, cols. 426 ff.

<sup>466</sup> PL 63, col. 429.

<sup>467</sup> Mansi, VIII, cols. 451 ff. This text has many similarities with the *Libellus* of faith (*Regula fidei*) which the same pope had sent to the bishops of Eastern Illyricum (*Indiculus per Pullionem*. Mansi, VIII, col. 408). see V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστορία*, I, p.673.

<sup>468</sup> Mansi, VIII, cols. 451-452.

<sup>469</sup> The patriarch stressed the equality of the *Precedence of Honour* of Old and New Rome. Hence he stressed the equal participation in the privileges of the first throne. He recognized the validity of the doctrinal and administrative decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, thereby recognizing the canonical validity of canons 3 of the Second Ecumenical council and 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Finally, he removed the derogatory phrase referring to the person of the patriarch Acacius "by the apostolic throne condemned" (see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.58, ft.116). Cf. J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, p.214: Thus, the belief that the patriarch condemned his predecessor Acacius, is incorrect (Cf. J. Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, p.104).

<sup>470</sup> V. Phidas, *Εκκλ. Ιστορία*, I, pp.677-678.

<sup>471</sup> ACO, III, p.57.

<sup>472</sup> Vlassios Phidas observes that the long period of acerbity between Old and New Rome with mutual concessions declined with the end of the Acacian schism. «The papal See recognized the patriarchal rights of the See of Constantinople, without resigning from its claims regarding the primacy of power. The See of New Rome recognized the "preference of the witness" of the papal See in the questions of the faith, without accepting the claims of Gelasius as regards the primacy of power.» Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.159.

Neochalcedonismus,<sup>473</sup> and there were many attempts made to find a solution with the party of the antichalcedonians, but all these ended in failure. We see once more the operation of the institution of the Pentarchy during these dialogues, in the case of patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople. He was deposed because of his anticanonical transposition from the See of Trebizond, but in reality he was condemned because of his turn to Monophysitism (during the dialogues that we have just mentioned). The dethronement was made by the Endemousa synod in which pope Agapetus of Rome (535 - 536) presided.<sup>474</sup> Menas (536 - 552) was elected patriarch and was consecrated by pope Agapetus.<sup>475</sup> This event of the consecration of the bishop of the Royal City by the bishop of Old Rome was welcomed with great pleasure by the latter, and he directly recognized the patriarchal right of the See of Constantinople.<sup>476</sup> The unexpected death of pope Agapetus (22 April 536) did not prevent the continuation of the proceedings of the Endemousa synod under the presidency of patriarch Menas, including the participation of all the delegates of the patriarchate, except for Alexandria.<sup>477</sup> In the end, the institutional and orthodox patriarchal thrones of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem accepted the unanimous decision for the renewal of the anathematization of Severus, Peter and Zooras and the dethronement of Anthimus. This emphasizes the function of the institution of the Pentarchy. The participation of delegates from all the patriarchates was not symptomatic because all the patriarchates had to participate in the adjudication of a bishop of a patriarchal (prestigious) throne.<sup>478</sup> The unanimous decision was necessary for the authority of the decision (any

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<sup>473</sup>The effort for the restoration of the unity of the Church was based on a series of edicts which Justinian issued. He issued the Theopaschitic edict (5 March 533) which caused the Theopaschitic controversy (which finished in the Endemousa of Constantinople in 536 with the victory of orthodoxy). He also issued the edicts against Origenism (543) and against the Three Chapters (544), that is against Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa. **V. Phidas**, *Εκκλ. Ιστορία*, I, pp.678-708; **J. Meyendorff**, *Imperial Unity*, pp.216 ff.

<sup>474</sup>**Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.64; **J. Moorhead**, *Justinian*, London, 1994, pp.127.

<sup>475</sup>**C. Papadopoulos**, *Τὸ Πρωτεῖον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Ρώμης*, pp.111-112; **J. Richards**, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, p.128.

<sup>476</sup>**ACO**, III, p.153.

<sup>477</sup>Patriarch Theodosius of Alexandria did not take part in the proceedings by the synod because he was deposed and was isolated in Derka of Constantinople.

<sup>478</sup>The case of the judgment of patriarch Paul Tabennesiotes of Alexandria in the synod of Gaza (540) is equal (**Mansi IX**, col. 706). The delegates of all the patriarchates participated there. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.185-186.

absences were covered from the *common letters*). The Endemousa synod, in 536, is a manifestation of the canonical function of the institution of the Pentarchy.<sup>479</sup>

Emperor Justinian, in his legislative work validated the canonical function of the institution of the Pentarchy as he also validated the whole canonical work of the Church.<sup>480</sup> Novel 109 was regarded as a substantial enough argument in order to show that Justinian had introduced the institution of the Pentarchy of the patriarchs into the Church.<sup>481</sup> The earlier and later researchers (who also uncritically copy the older ones) repeat this opinion as we have mentioned.<sup>482</sup> Hence, not only the historical evolution, which came before, but also the foundations of the legislative work of Justinian have been neglected.<sup>483</sup> Any conclusions have been based on the misinterpretation of the meaning of Justinian's legislative work.<sup>484</sup> As a result, this led to the Pentarchy being interpreted under the prism of the whole legislative work. The sources and the facts of the Fourth and Fifth century proved that the emperors favoured the creation of centralized administrative structures in the organization of the Church.<sup>485</sup> This position was preserved in the ecclesiastical policy of the emperors of the sixth century. Of course the problem was that, in certain ways, the emperors tried to use the institution of the Pentarchy, and thus violated the synodical character of the Church and led to the disunity of the Church, rather

<sup>479</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.67.

<sup>480</sup> «τάξιν νόμων τοὺς ἁγίους ἐκκλησιαστικοὺς κανόνας τοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων τεσσάρων συνόδων ἐκτεθέντας ἢ βεβαιωθέντας» Novel 131 (PAA' Νεαρά), Z. von Lingenthal, *Imp. Justiniani Novellae*, II, pp.266-267. The same position was held by emperor Zeno and he had validated canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council with a law (see Abbé Guettée, *The Papacy*, p.191). Emperor Valentinian III (425-455) made the pope the unquestioned patriarch of the West (see G. Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, p.27) through his famous edict (455) (J. Stevenson. *Creeds ...*, pp.328-329) during the controversy between St. Hilary of Arles and Leo I of Rome (*ibid* p. 86). So, clearly the state had recognized the rights of the patriarchal thrones before Justinian. Justinian summarized with his work the legislative work of his predecessors of West and East.

<sup>481</sup> «πάντες ὁμοφώνως οἱ ἁγιώτατοι πάσης τῆς Οἰκουμένης πατριάρχαι, ὃ τε τῆς ἑσπερίας Ρώμης καὶ ταύτης τῆς βασιλίδος πόλεως καὶ Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ Θεουπόλεως καὶ Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ πάντες οἱ ὑπ' αὐτοὺς τεταγμένοι ὑσώτατοι ἐπίσκοποι τὴν ἀποστολικὴν κληρύττους πίστιν τε καὶ παράδοσιν» Z. von Lingenthal, *Imp. Justiniani Novellae*, II, p.154.

<sup>482</sup> F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.75-76.

<sup>483</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.161-207. F. Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, pp.71-75.

<sup>484</sup> There is the opinion of a caesaropapism in the ecclesiastical policy of Justinian (Cf. W. de Vries, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Καθολικισμός*, pp.41-43) but also other opinions assert that the emperor was subordinated to the Church.

<sup>485</sup> Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.163, ft.5.

than the unification which they derived. Justinian ascertained that the results of this policy were tragic for the political unity of the Empire itself, and adopted, in his relations with the Church, the principle of mutual agreement (*consonantia*). The emperor-theologian had «a consciousness of the coincidence of the state with the ecclesiastical community in Byzantium».<sup>486</sup> The “*principle of consonance*” was based on the theory of the God-given royal and sacerdotal power, which demanded the agreement of the two vehicles of power (political and spiritual) because a divergence between these two powers was inconceivable. The whole legislative work of Justinian does not refer to the Church, because the state legislates for itself (for the state itself). The Christian empire had to confront the event that composed its spiritual reality with legislative consistency.<sup>487</sup> The strength of the canon was obligated for the state to such a degree, that canons would predominate over the law in situations where there were disagreements between them. The political ideology of Justinian was the political ideology on which the historical continuity of the Empire moved. The principles of this political ideology stand up today and continue to influence the political thought of the orthodox world to a certain degree.

Justinian’s law also encloses the institution of the Pentarchy. This institution had been established by the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, but also by the exceptional authority of the prestigious Sees and the established ecclesiastical practice and consciousness. Therefore, Justinian does not innovate but rather legalizes what was in force. Vlassios Phidas comments on a related passage of a letter of emperor Justinian.<sup>488</sup> He ascertains the consciousness of the emperor concerning the Pentarchy and its acceptance as an ancient ecclesiastical institution that guarded the order and orthodoxy of the faith.<sup>489</sup> The emperor recognizes the five patriarchs as the highest administrative authority with which

<sup>486</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.165.

<sup>487</sup>see V. Phidas, *Βυζάντιο*, pp.218-223.

<sup>488</sup>«...ἐπειδὴ ἀγνοοῦντες τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν τάξιν τε καὶ παράδοσιν καὶ τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν, τοιαύτην ἀσέβειαν ἐκδικεῖτε... ὅτι ἐτολμήσατε καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ἑαυτοὺς ἐξισῶσαι καὶ τοὺς πατριάρχας καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἐνυβρίσαι. Τσοῦτον δὲ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν κατάστασιν οὐκ ἐφυλάξατε, ὅτι τὸ ἐν μηδενὶ χρόνῳ γενομένον ὑπὸ χριστιανῶν ἐτολμήσατε ποιῆσαι. Πάντων γὰρ μακαριωτάτων πατριαρχῶν τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐνωσιν ἐχόντων οὐδεὶς ἑαυτὸν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐχώρησεν, εἰ μὴ φανερώς αἰρετικῆ μανίᾳ κατείχετο, ὅπερ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος ποιεῖν ἐσπουδάσατε.» **Justinian, Epistle [Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς τινὰς γράψαντας καὶ ἐκδικήσαντας Θεόδωρον τὸν εὐσεβῆ (549)], PG 86/1, col. 1043; Mansi IX, col. 592 A.**

<sup>489</sup>Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.176-177.

the state ought to collaborate. This position gave a certain slant to all the laws that referred to ecclesiastical questions.<sup>490</sup> Justinian, through his legislative work, secured the Church from outward interventions without changing anything in her canonical operation.

But this does not mean that Justinian always respected the institution of the Pentarchy. The emperor, despite the fact that in his legislative work refuted the policy of his predecessors, often fell into the temptation of making arbitrary interventions by the state in the life of the Church, with the edict of the "Three Chapters" (circa 544) and with the edict for the imposition of Aphthartodocetism (563). Thus, he tried to impose his will on the patriarchs in trying to unite them with the party of the antichalcedonians. The famous edict against the "Three Chapters" caused many problems and reactions. The convocation of an Ecumenical Council was necessary to overcome the acute crisis among the orthodox without destroying the unity of the Church, and because the Ecumenical council could express the faith of the Catholic Church with exactness. The dispute lasted a long time. Finally, Pope Vigilius (537-555)<sup>491</sup> in response to the bitter reaction of the Western bishops was obligated to invalidate the *Judicatum* (12 April 548) though he was in favour of the condemnation of the "Three Chapters".<sup>492</sup>

All parts agreed that a Great Synod should be convened. The way the synod was convened, and the formation of the synod itself, was of the most importance, though these questions have not been satisfactorily investigated from the beginning. This question is at the center of our interest, because it is directly connected with the administrative organization of the Church. The first proposal of Vigilius for the participation of a great number of Western bishops (five or six from each province) was proved incongruous with the established practice because the Western bishops did not come to Constantinople. This proposal

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<sup>490</sup>for the regulations of Justinian concerning the ecclesiastical questions see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.171-176. Cf. **P. O'Connell**, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828)*, pp.30 ff; **J. Moorhead**, *Justinian*, pp.117-120.

<sup>491</sup>Pope Vigilius had been promoted to the See of Old Rome because of the direct support of Justinian and the help of the Roman army of Italy. **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.212; **J. Kelly**, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, p.60; **J. Richards**, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, pp.129 ff.

<sup>492</sup>Cf. **J. Meyendorff**, *Imperial Unity*, pp.239 ff; **J. Moorhead**, *Justinian*, p.131.

referred to the beginning of the metropolitan system, which had lost its strength after the canonical decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Pope Vigilius knew the strength of the new situation well, and intended with his proposal, as well as with others that followed, to strengthen his position, not only against the Eastern but mainly against the Western bishops.

Pope Vigilius answered the proposal of patriarch Eutychius (552-565 & 577-582) to participate in the synod, with a warm letter in which he put a prerequisite for his participation in the synod, that is, the practice of the “principle of *aequitas*”.<sup>493</sup> The vagueness of the Greek, or other translations, (the guarded right) did not allow for a complete understanding of the proposal of the pope.<sup>494</sup> Vlassios Phidas<sup>495</sup> and Eu. Chrissos<sup>496</sup> prefer to translate “equality” as meaning “*aequitas*”. The proposals which pope Vigilius made, gave credence to this position, because the pope requested an equal number of Western and Eastern bishops in the formation of the Ecumenical synod.<sup>497</sup> This evolution in the position of the bishop of Rome can only be interpreted because of the inability of a great number of Western bishops to participate. Pope Vigilius (moving in the same direction) proposed the convocation of a synod of the Western bishops in Sicily.<sup>498</sup> It is a matter of course that the emperor and the East were opposed to this proposal because it undermined the participation of the pope in the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Justinian, in return, proposed the calling of the bishops that the pope wanted to participate from the West.<sup>499</sup> The pope, in return, proposed that a council be called made up of equal number of Eastern and Western bishops.<sup>500</sup> Justinian again did not accept the proposal because he was not deeply interested in the formation of an Ecumenical Council.

<sup>493</sup> **Mansi**, IX, cols.185-188; **Meletios of Nikopolis (Metr.)**, *Ἡ Πέμπτη Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύνοδος*, pp. 177-179.

<sup>494</sup> **Mansi**, IX, col. 189; **Meletios of Nikopolis (Metr.)**, *Ἡ Πέμπτη Οἰκ. Σύνοδος*, p.182.

<sup>495</sup> **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.213.

<sup>496</sup> **E. Chrissos**, *Ἡ Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Πολιτικὴ τοῦ Ἰουστινιανοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἔριν περὶ τὰ Τρεῖς Κεφάλαια καὶ τὴν Ε΄ Οἰκουμενικὴν Σύνοδον*, p.93. Metropolitan Meletios of Nikopolis has the opposite opinion and prefers the meaning of “justice”. see **Meletios of Nikopolis (Metr.)**, *Ἡ Πέμπτη Οἰκ. Σύνοδος*, p.182, ft.55.

<sup>497</sup> Cf. **J. Richards**, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, p.152.

<sup>498</sup> **Mansi**, IX, col. 64 C.

<sup>499</sup> see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.215.

<sup>500</sup> Pope Vigilius proposed the cancellation of the formation of an Ecumenical Council whose convocation he had agreed to. He proposed the formation of a council of a few members from an equal number of Eastern and Western bishops. He accepted as delegates of the East the



Finally, Justinian proposed the committal of the disagreement to an arbitration (*contradictio*). The emperor would determine the judges (the umpires), and therefore, the dissenters would not have been the judges. The emperor only accepted the proposal of the pope for a council (in practice having reversed the conditions that the pope had put with this precondition). In the beginning, the emperor proposed a council at which all the patriarchates would participate with an equal number of delegates. He did not accept, as foundation of this council, an equal number of delegates from East and West. Of course the practice of the *contradictio* did not refer to the synodical system and did not solve any doctrinal disagreement. The state tried to intervene in the question of ecclesiastical unity, in the context of understanding the positions of rival parties. Justinian's proposal did not confuse the meaning of the synodical institution with the meaning of the *contradictio*.<sup>501</sup> The proposal of pope Vigilius was dangerous to the function of the synodical institution itself through introducing a geographical separation between East and West, and the "principle of equal delegation" among rival parties in the formation of a synod. These positions were directly opposed to the synodical tradition of the Church. The real purpose of the bishop of Old Rome was demonstrated by the efforts of the emperor and other patriarchs to convince him to participate in the council. The stubborn refusal of Vigilius to participate in the synod led to the temporary restoration of the prestige of the pope in the West but in reality it weakened the papal claims to primacy.<sup>502</sup> It is obvious that the

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three patriarchs who were in Constantinople and the delegate of the patriarch of Jerusalem. He accepted with this proposal the patriarchal honour of the See of New Rome and the function of the Pentarchy. But he did not accept with these proposals the institution of the Pentarchy as a principle of convocation of an Ecumenical Council. (see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, p.216)

<sup>501</sup>Vlassios Phidas believes that the proposal for the practice of the *contradictio* is not an expression of emperor Justinian's perceptions as regards the synod because:

1. This proposal was a counter-proposal to the pope's position for the formation of a council of equal delegates from East and West.
2. The first counter-proposal of Justinian foresaw isometric counsel of all the patriarchates.
3. The second proposal (the *contradictio*) was a solution of necessity.
4. The question that the *contradictio* should have examined was the unity of the Church, because all the patriarchs had accepted the condemnation of the "Three Chapters".
5. If Justinian had regarded the synod as *contradictio*, he would have sent his delegates (as umpires) in the Fifth Ecumenical Council, which he did not do.

(Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.220-221). The events show that Justinian had a clear understanding of the function of the synodical institution in the life of the Church.

<sup>502</sup>«This position of Vigilius was not in favour of the claimed papal primacy. The claim of it was easier in the context of the canonical institution of the Pentarchy, because the center of the

only possible solution was the formation of the Ecumenical Council on the basis of the institution of the Pentarchy, according to the standing canonical tradition.<sup>503</sup>

The Fifth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople (553), was the first to be convoked after the establishment of the institution of the Pentarchy.<sup>504</sup> How the Ecumenical Council was to be formed, was clear to the emperor and to the East, in as much as it had to be done according to the institution of the Pentarchy. At the same time there was no concern over the number of patriarchal delegates from each See. Therefore, the proposal of Pope Vigilius arguing for equal number of delegates (from East and West) failed. Historically, only very small papal delegations participated at previous synods without reducing the authority of the council. In practice the weight of the representation of the faith of the church fell on the patriarchs and their delegates. The patriarchs shared the responsibility of the decisions of the synod. This did not involve the co-presidency of the council, because the one who had the first place according to the *Precedence of Honour* was the one who presided. Patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople had the presidential chair at the synod, because pope Vigilius of Rome did not participate in the proceedings of the council.<sup>505</sup>

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weight was put on the body of the Western bishops and not on the papal See through the equal delegation of East and West.» **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, p.224.

<sup>503</sup>The question of the canonical tradition about the formation of the Ecumenical councils is equally interesting with that of the administrative organization of the Church. It is a fact that they "walk" in parallel (we can say that they adjoin) with the historical evolution of the administrative organization (which we followed). Thus the invitation to all the bishops of the Catholic Church for the formation of the First Ecumenical Council shows the form of the administrative organization of the Church at the beginning of the fourth century. The imposition of the metropolitan system during the formation of the next Ecumenical councils (II, III, and IV), by carrying the relation of the Ecumenical council with the bishops from the level of the Episcopal province to the level of the metropolitan province. But each bishop did not stop being the vehicle of belief in his local church in which the synodical system was formed. The evolution that was realized in the fifth century through the prevalence of the centralized tendencies in the ecclesiastical administration, led to the imposition of the patriarchal system in the function of the administration. The five prestigious Sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were put as the highest administrative heads after the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The new administrative reality had as result the formation of the Ecumenical Council during the sixth century. see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.225-240.

<sup>504</sup>**P. Christou**, *Ἑλλην. Πατρολογία*, v.5, pp.32-35; **L. Davis**, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, pp.207-257; **Abbé Guettée**, *The Papacy*, p.201-206; **I. Karmiris**, *Dogmatica et Symbolica*, pp.168-181; **G. Konidaris**, *Γεν. Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.449 ff; **V. Phidas**, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, pp.708 ff; **V. Stefanidis**, *Ἑκκλ. Ἱστορία*, pp.235 ff; **W. de Vries**, *Orient et Occident*, pp.161ff.

<sup>505</sup>see **Phidas**, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.245-248. According to Vlassios Phidas «in the proceedings (of the synods) a definite process, equivalent to the senate and the political courts, was not

The refusal of pope Vigilius to participate in the council, was not an impediment for the convocation and the proceedings of the synod. The pope had the intention of presenting his own positions separately and declaring that the Fifth Ecumenical Council was an Eastern synod in order to succeed in the equivallance that he claimed. Hence, he issued the *Constitutum I* before the end of the proceedings of the Fifth Ecumenical council.<sup>506</sup> He condemned the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia, but did not accept the condemnation of Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa. At the same time he presented papal primacy with emphasis and proved that he knew the similar claims of his predecessor Gelasius.<sup>507</sup> The reaction of Justinian and his synod against the actions of the pope was direct. Justinian, in his letter to the synod, asked for the removal of Vigilius' name from the diptychs, but not to cut off communion with the papal See.<sup>508</sup> This proposal had all the canonical prerequisites, according to the institution of the Pentarchy, because the pope had fallen into erroneous beliefs about the Church. The opinion of the emperor was in harmony with the position of the synod. The problem for pope Vigilius was that the decisions of the synod were also practiced in the West, because the expedition of General Nerses in Italy had succeeded.<sup>509</sup> Therefore, pope Vigilius in his letter to patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople accepted the decisions of the council and invalidated all his texts which were contradictory to them.<sup>510</sup> This letter was the official text of the acceptance of the synodical decisions, and was incorporated into the records. Thus, unanimity succeeded among the five patriarchs.<sup>511</sup> Pope Vigilius died during his return to Rome, in Syracuse of Sicily, on 7th June 555.

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strictly followed, because the direction of the debates was rudimentary.» V. Phidas, *Ἐκκλ. Ἱστορία*, I, p.246.

<sup>506</sup> Mansi, IX, cols. 61 ff. see J. Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476-752*, p.152.

<sup>507</sup> see Phidas, *Pentarchy*, II, pp.248-251.

<sup>508</sup> Mansi, IX, col. 367B.

<sup>509</sup> IEE, v.7, p.198; J. Moorhead, *Justinian*, pp.72-88.

<sup>510</sup> Mansi, IX, cols. 413-417.

<sup>511</sup> Pope Vigilius composed the *II Constitutum* (Mansi IX, cols.455 ff) of 22 February 554, which explained his position and he accepted the decisions of the council. Vlassios Phidas preserved the very important witness of the biographer of patriarch Eutychios (P.G. 86/2, cols.2308-2309) according to which pope Vigilius participated in the Fifth Ecumenical council and which is interpreted only under the sense of the final agreement of the pope through the *II Constitutum*. see *Pentarchy*, v.II, p.253; J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, p.243; J. Moorhead, *Justinian*, pp.135-136.

His successor Pelagius (556-561) received the brunt of the reactions which continued in the West. The question of the authority of the Fifth Ecumenical Council was not disputed by any pope and continued to prevail in the West, though there were some reactions.

The formation of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, according to the institution of the Pentarchy, was the result of the imposition of this institution on the ecclesiastical government during the century following the Fourth Ecumenical council. The institution was tested in this period by the arbitrary interventions of the state (of emperors), which attempted to use the institution as a vehicle of uniting the Church. Of course, the agreement of the patriarchs was not enough on an issue of faith. To express the faith of the Catholic Church, convocation of a synod, was necessary. This also happened in the case of the "Three Chapters". Convocation of an Ecumenical council was judged as necessary for the solution of the issue, because the agreement of the patriarchs was not enough. The position of the Western bishops obviously proves their opposition to any notion of papal infallibility and primacy, because they demanded and succeeded in the synodical solution of the question concerning the three Chapters. The Fifth Ecumenical Council was a canonical tradition and a model for the Church. The following Ecumenical Councils were convoked according to the established institution of the Pentarchy.

## EPILOGUE

The synod of Carthage (418) sent the well-known epistle to the bishop of Old Rome at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>512</sup> The synod, in a strict tone, asked from the bishop of Rome in a prophetic way, «ἵνα μὴ τὸν καπνώδη τύφον τοῦ κόσμου δόξωμεν εἰσάγειν τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἥτις τὸ φῶς τῆς ἀπλότητος, καὶ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης τὴν ἡμέραν τοῖς τὸν Θεὸν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῦσι προσφέρει.»<sup>513</sup> The evolution of the events unfortunately confirmed the fear of the fathers of the synod of Carthage. The East became conscious of the meaning of the ecclesiological deviations of Rome which had first been diagnosed by the church of Carthage, at the end of the fifth and at the beginning of the sixth century. The historical evolution allowed the bishops of Old Rome to claim and impose their positions (about papal primacy of power over all of the bishops of the Catholic Church). The recovery of Italy from the Roman army buried these theories for centuries. Later in the ninth century, Old Rome brought the theory of the papal primacy again to the fore. The attempt to put to practice these serious ecclesiological deviations by the bishop of Old Rome had tragic consequences for the relations between the West and the East during the Second Christian millennium. This reality led historians of the Early Church to draw conclusions based upon their “party” affiliation. The Reformation was especially important in leading the partisans of Roman primacy to what we might call a “committed theology”. This explains the serious deviations (which we have seen) among the ecclesiastical historians whom we have presented. Therefore, we attempted to discern in our thesis the accuracy of interpretation of the sources, in order to do away with any disfigurement or falsification of historical reality.

It is a fact that the canonical decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) established the institution of the Pentarchy, which had already been established in the consciousness of the ecclesiastical body. The elevation of five of the most prestigious Sees to patriarchates was not self-determined, but was rather the result of the prerequisites that made up the *Precedence of Honour* of

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<sup>512</sup> *ibid* pp. 73 ff.

<sup>513</sup> *Syntagma*, v.3, p.621; For the English translation see **J. Stevenson**, *Creeeds...*, p.251.

these Sees. Witness of faith, political importance, Apostolicity, position in synods, the whole ecclesiastical life of each throne and its connections with others were some of the prerequisites (principles of ecclesiastical administration) which made up the *Precedence of Honour* during the first three Christian centuries. The combination of the *Precedence of Honour* with the right to ordain and adjudicate bishops was gradually realized during the fourth century in the context of the metropolitan system. It was completed during the fifth century in the context of the function of patriarchal institution. This situation produced the forms that allowed the five most prestigious See to impose their jurisdiction. The meaning of canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council was determinative because the question of the jurisdiction of the throne of Constantinople was finally and absolutely established with it. Only the question of the jurisdiction over Eastern Illyricum, where the thrones of Old and New Rome were bound up in controversy was unsolved. On the other hand, the See of Old Rome did not impose itself on the bishops of the West until the sixth century. Besides this situation, the East never disputed the role of the bishop of Rome as patriarch of the West. Of course, it must be said that the East oftentimes gave authority to Old Rome that it did not have.

The patriarchal institution had been established in the consciousness of the ecclesiastical body, so as to function during the proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The institution functioned following the synod, despite difficulties that arose from the policy of unification of the emperor, and from the so-called Acacian schism. The emperors claimed the use of the institution in favour of their policy, outside the context of the synodical system, and thereby damaged the unity of the Catholic Church. The institution of the Pentarchy had to serve the unity and protect the orthodoxy of the faith. It is a fact that all the Ecumenical Councils after the Fifth Ecumenical Council were convoked and established on the basis of the institution of the Pentarchy. Also, all of the questions that occupied the Catholic Church (such as the adjudication of bishops of patriarchal thrones) were dealt with within the limits of the institution. Thus, the legislative work of emperor Justinian had a ratifying character for an already canonical order of the Church.

The institution of the Pentarchy of the patriarchs had the confidence of the ecclesiastical body by the fifth century. The function of the institution was based on authentic ecclesiological presuppositions, devised for the church and defined by it in accordance with the historical necessities of the period. Hence, the function of the institution, in spite of schisms, is still active today, and therefore, this thesis has a direct reference to our own period. This period of the Early Church is characterized by many great and important persons. Many of them played an important role in the formation of this institution. In the end of this thesis we would not like to extend any more our conclusions and analysis, because this is done in the previous pages. Our aim was to serve in the level that our ability allowed the theological researchers and the contemporary age of dialogues and communications, and to question the sources about the historical truth. For that matter this thesis was not for us just an academic exercise, but an exercise of body and spirit as this understood in the Church.

Τέλος  
καὶ τῷ Θεῷ δόξα  
*indeed!*

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