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“SOME MINOR WORDS”: THE DEBATE ON *SYMPHONIA* AT THE MOSCOW CHURCH COUNCIL OF 1666/67¹

Although principles were, as a rule, not a matter of debate in Muscovite political culture, experiences of crisis, such as the Smuta or the conflict between Patriarch Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, did instigate pertinent fervent discussions on how the God-given order was best to be perceived and restored. This paper outlines the debate on the relationship between and the mutual dependency of secular and ecclesiastical power that erupted after Nikon's ambiguous abdication in 1658 and culminated at the Moscow Church Council of 1666/67. It focuses on a crucial but somewhat enigmatic episode during the Council, when two Russian bishops, Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy and Bishop Ilarion of Riazan, protested against the formulation included in the *Tomos* of the four Eastern patriarchs (1663) concerning the primacy of the emperor. Their objection led to the Council issuing a revised statement, reformulating the classical notion of *symphonia* (the emperor is responsible for political matters, the patriarch for spiritual ones), although the two prelates had to face disciplinary sanctions. The paper draws mainly on the writings of the debate's main protagonist, the infamous Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligaridis, in order to clarify what we may reasonably deduce from the account of the self-righteous Greek prelate and certain further evidence concerning, on the one hand, the protagonists' motives, and on the other, the whole episode's actual significance.

Keywords: Orthodox Church, Moscow, Council of 1666/67, symphonia, Paisios Ligaridis

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Principles were, as a rule, not a matter of debate in Muscovite political culture.² Experiences of crisis, such as the Smuta or the conflict between Patriarch Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, did, however, instigate pertinent fervent discussions. Even if collectively accepted axioms were never questioned, there was enough ground for controversy on how the God-given order was best to be perceived and restored. Such was the debate on the relationship between and the mutual dependency of secular and ecclesiastical power that erupted after Nikon's ambiguous abdication in 1658 and culminated at the Moscow Church Council of 1666/67. In what constitutes a somewhat enigmatic episode during the last stage of the Council, when it came to ratifying the definite deposition of Nikon, two Russian bishops – Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy, locum tenens of the patriarchal throne, and Ilarion, bishop of Riazan – unexpectedly objected. Their protest was in regard to the formulation included in the written answers, the *Tomos* of the four Eastern patriarchs (1663) concerning the primacy of the emperor, or, at least, in regard to its translation into Russian. This objection led, after lengthy disputes moderated by the protagonist of the Council, the infamous Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligaridis, to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch issuing a revised statement reformulating the classical notion of *symphonia* (the emperor is responsible for political matters, the patriarch for spiritual ones), although the two Russian prelates had to face disciplinary sanctions. The first part of the paper provides an overview of the historiographical discussion regarding the inherited Byzantine and Russian traditions as well as the Nikon affair. The second, taking into account the various interpretations of the incident in historiography, attempts its own interpretation, on the one hand of the protagonists' motives, and on the other, of the whole episode's actual significance. There is a special focus on terminological aspects, since faulty translation of Greek terms, whether deliberate or not, seems to have played a not insignificant role in the whole affair.

It is a common insight that the Byzantine ideal of concord and harmony or *symphonia* between the Empire and the Church is not to be interpreted as an elaborated, coherent constitutional theory or as a single doctrine. Byz-

2 ALFONS BRÜNING, „Symphonia, kosmische Harmonie, Moral. Moskauer Diskurse über gerechte Herrschaft im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert“, in *Gerechtigkeit und gerechte Herrschaft vom 15. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur historischen Gerechtigkeitsforschung*, ed. STEFAN PLAGGENBORG (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter-Oldenbourg, 2020), 23–52, here 25. STEFAN PLAGGENBORG, „Gerechtigkeit und gerechte Herrschaft in Fürstenbelehrungen Altrusslands“, in *Die gute Regierung. Fürstenspiegel von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, eds MARIANO DELGADO and VOLKER LEPPIN (Fribourg/Stuttgart: Academic Press/Kohlhammer, 2017), 141–161, here 144.

antine political culture relied much less on abstract theoretical texts than on practices and representations.³ In other words, "Political Orthodoxy", as Hans-Georg Beck termed the complex, unstable and ambivalent relation between the Christian Emperor and the Church,⁴ remained notoriously undefined and conditioned more by personal constellations and ad hoc arrangements than by normative prescriptions. Nevertheless, a delineation, even if only "a slight legal distinction"⁵ was drawn between empire and priesthood (*imperium* and *sacerdotium*, *basileia* and *hierosyne*), otherwise the unending debates on their relation and mutual interdependence would have been pointless.⁶ To be sure, from the classic formulation in the Preamble to Justinian's *Sixth Novel*, which introduced the notion of an "excellent harmony" between *basileia* and *hierosyne*, to the "hierocratic" theories of self-confident late Byzantine churchmen,⁷ the emphasis was always on unity and synergy, not on separation and rigid demarcation. It was primarily in cases of dissension that the distinction was articulated and debated. Nonetheless, one may roughly distinguish pertinent Byzantine literature into one strand promoting ecclesiastical autonomy, most prominently represented by Patriarch Photios' *Eisagoge* (886) with its quasi-diarchic assertions, and another strand favouring imperial prerogatives, whose most articulate spokesman has been the 12th-century canonist Theodore Balsamon.⁸ For the context of this paper it is important to bear in mind that both strands provided authoritative texts or rather available passages for later, post-Byzantine uses.

3 MARIE THERES FÖGEN, „Das politische Denken der Byzantiner“, in *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, ed. IRING FETSCHER, HERFRIED MÜNKLER (Munich-Zurich: Piper, 1993), vol. 2, 41–85, here 15. PAUL MAGDALINO, „Basileia: The Idea of Monarchy in Byzantium, 600–1200“, in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. ANTHONY KALDELLIS, NIKETAS SINOSSOGLOU (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), 575–598, here 576.

4 HANS-GEORG BECK, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1994²), 87–108. JOHN A. MCGUCKIN, „The Legacy of the 13th Apostle: Origins of the East Christian Conceptions of Church and State Relations“, *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 47, no. 3–4 (2005): 251–288.

5 DONALD M. NICOL, „Byzantine Political Thought“, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–1450*, ed. J. H. BURNS (Cambridge: CUP, 1988) 51–79, here 67.

6 FÖGEN, „Das politische Denken“, 65.

7 DIMITER ANGELOV, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium 1204–1330* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 351–416. Angelov defines "hierocratic" in the late Byzantine context as follows: "The hierocratic thesis at the core of all these ideas, no matter how different they were in origin and specific argumentation, was a simple one: the church held superior position in regard to the emperor and the imperial office.", *ibid.* 351.

8 GILBERT DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, transl. JEAN BIRRELL (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 229–235 (on the *Eisagoge*), 255–267 (on Balsamon's *Commentaries*).

Equally important is what kind of issues were actually contentious. Without oversimplifying overtly complex material, it is safe to assert that it was never the emperor's sole responsibility for "secular", i.e., political, worldly matters, that was seriously questioned. What was debatable was his right or obligation to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs, as in the administration of the Church (e.g., the question whether an emperor was authorized to depose an intransigent patriarch) as well as his exclusion from regulating "spiritual," i.e., dogmatic issues. The "quasi-sacerdotal" status of the emperor in Byzantine ecclesiology drew on the Old Testament tradition of imperial priesthood. According to Balsamon – the foremost champion of this "rhetoric of as if" – it was further legitimized by the power of sacred unction.⁹ Thus, it was precisely this "double occupation of and claim on religion by Church and emperor"¹⁰ upon which both synergy and dissent rested. However, even if the emperor's challenges to the independence of the Church used to cause dispute, it is equally important to keep in mind that, as Gilbert Dagron has noted, it was actually the position of the patriarch that was ill-defined in the context of Byzantine ecclesiology.¹¹

As for the Russian adaptations of Byzantine models, research has long moved away from an essentialist understanding of this legacy. Scholars insist on the selective partaking of Muscovy in the Byzantine political tradition as well as on the functional and flexible appropriation of available models.¹² It is probably fair to say that, in terms of power politics, in Muscovy the grand prince/tsar enjoyed an even more enhanced position vis-à-vis the church than had been usually the case in Byzantine times. However, in terms of textual tradition it was rather the "hierocratic" strand that was known via translations into Church Slavonic. The most telling passages of Photios' *Eisagoge* as included in the widely diffused *Syntagma* of Matthew Blastares (1335) were received in Muscovy not as parts of a distinct work, let alone as representing a certain, controversial strand, but as part and

9 DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest*, 259, 281.

10 FOEGEN, „Das politische Denken“, 59.

11 DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest*, 310.

12 EDGAR HÖSCH, „Byzanz und die Byzanzidee in der russischen Geschichte“, *Saeculum* 20 (1969): 6–17; HELMUT NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Autokratie in Rußland* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964), 140; ALEKSANDR LAVROV, „Le Tsar, le patriarche et les autres. Les relations entre l'État Moscovite et l'Église russe au XVIIe siècle dans la perspective de la réforme pétroviennne“, *Istina* 50 (2005): 163–181; OLGA TSAPINA, „The 1721 Church Reform and Constructing the Orthodox Tradition of Church-State Relations in Russia“, in *The State in Early Modern Russia: New Directions* ed. PAUL BUSHKOVITCH (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2019), 305–334, here 331–333.

parcel of a coherent sacred tradition of laws, canons, axioms and precedents.¹³ The fourteenth-century Serbian redaction of the *Kormchaia Kniga* (Pilot Book) presented, moreover, a version of Justinian's formula on symphony (*soglasie*) that favoured a pro-priesthood interpretation.¹⁴ It was this version that dominated manuscript circulation and that was finally printed in Moscow in 1653. On the contrary, Balsamon's *Commentaries* were not part of this translation corpus and practically unknown in Muscovy. They were translated as late as the last decade of the 17th century, so to say *post festum* for our concerns, by Evfimii Chudovskii. It is therefore no surprise that the entire theme of imperial priesthood was largely absent in Russian perception.¹⁵

Yet, in any case, symphonia, the ideal of harmonious and complementary coexistence and interaction between *sviashchenstvo* (or *sviashchenichestvo*) and *ts[c]arstvo* was indeed an undisputed axiom, all the more so, since it was the Russian churchmen who almost exclusively undertook the task of articulating the legitimization of the Muscovite ruler, "fashioning", in Donald Ostrowski's words, "the Khan into Basileus".¹⁶ In official works, such as the mid-sixteenth century *Stepennaia Kniga* (Book of Degrees), the ideal of symphonia constituted more or less a golden thread running through the narrative offered.¹⁷ As a central postulate, in formulations that recall but also transcend those of the *Eisagoge*, it is referred to in the introductions of the key publications printed in Moscow under patriarch Nikon in 1655 and 1656 (the Acts of the 1654 Council, the *Sluzhebnik* (Missal)

13 LAVROV, "Le Tsar", 167. Е. В. Скрипкина, «„Алфавитная Синтагма” Матфея Властаря как источник по истории церковно-государственных отношений во второй половине XVII в.», *Вестник Томского Государственного Университета. История* 19, no. 3 (2012): 64-68. A translation of Blastares' *Syntagma* was printed in Moscow in 1661 that is anything but *in tempore non suspecto*. See НЕУБАУЕР, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 148.

14 Г. В. БЕЖАНИДЗЕ, «Преамбула шестой новеллы св. Юстиниана Великого в русской письменной традиции», *Вестник ПСТГУ ser. I*, 80 (2018): 26-36; LAVROV, «Le Tsar», 170.

15 LAVROV, "Le Tsar", 175; Е. В. Скрипкина, *Церковно-государственные взаимоотношения в России во второй половине XVII в.* (С.-Петербург: Издательство С.-Петербургского Государственного Экономического Университета, 2018), 135, 140-141; Владимир Вальденберг, *Древнерусския учения о пределах царской власти* (Петроград, 1916), 395.

16 DONALD OSTROWSKI, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 164-218; BRÜNING, „Symphonia, kosmische Harmonie”, 30.

17 ENDRE SASHALMI, *Russian Notions of Power and State in a European Perspective, 1462-1725: Assessing the Significance of Peter's Reign* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022), 193; Н. В. СИНИЦИНА, «Основные этапы симфонии священства и царства: XV-XVII вв.», в *Вопросы религии и религиоведении* вып. 2, кн. 1 (Москва: МедиаПром, 2010), 77-89.

and the *Skrizhal* (Tablet):¹⁸ The “all-wise dyad” (*premudraia dvoitsa*) consists of two “great sovereigns” (*velikie gosudari*), Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon, two great gifts God bestowed to his faithful people for their leadership.¹⁹

This is not the place to discuss the split of the *dvoitsa*, the conflict between Tsar Aleksei and Patriarch Nikon, its contingent causes and its structural origins, as well as the various, controversial historiographical interpretations. The patriarch and the tsar actually shared the vision of reclaiming the Byzantine imperial heritage in Moscow as well as the imperial scenarios they put forward to legitimise this vision of an orthodox utopia shaped by the notion of *symphonia*.²⁰ Moreover, court and church faced similar challenges and espoused agendas of reform which to some extent overlapped, at times ran in parallel and occasionally clashed, as was the case with the founding of the *Monastyrskii Prikaz* in 1649 and the controversy about its jurisdiction over churchmen.²¹ Historians disagree on whether Nikon held hierocratic views incompatible with any understanding of *symphonia* from the very beginning or whether his later most explicit statements about the supremacy of the ecclesiastical over the secular authorities were the results of a radicalisation after 1658 due to the various harassments and growing isolation. In other words: was it Nikon who “stretched the elastic notion of *symphonia* beyond the breaking point”²²

18 CATHY JANE POTTER, *The Russian Church and the Politics of Reform in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (PhD, Yale University, 1994), 139, 140, 161; G. V. VERNADSKY, „Die kirchlich-politische Lehre der Epanagoge und ihr Einfluss auf das russische Leben im XVII. Jahrhundert“ *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 6 (1928): 119–142, here 127, 133–135.

19 Н. Ф. КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон и Царь Алексей Михайлович* (Сергиев Посад, 1909–1912), v. II, 127.

20 KEVIN M. KAIN, “Before New Jerusalem: Patriarch Nikon’s Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries”, *Russian History* 39 (2012): 173–231, here esp. 179–182, 212, 229; JAN KUSBER, “Autocracy as a Form of Political Theology? Ruler and Church in Early Modern Muscovy (1450s–1725)”, in *Orthodoxy in the Agora: Orthodox Christian Political Theologies Across History*, ed. MIHAI-D. GRIGORE, VASILIOS N. MAKRIDES (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024), 83–100, here 98.

21 PAUL BUSHKOVITCH, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1992), 51; POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 19, 184–185; DAVID GOLDFRANK, “Probing the Collapse of Nikon’s Patriarchate”, in *Russia’s Early Modern Orthodox Patriarchate*, vol. II. *Foundations and Mitred Royalty, 1589–1647*, ed. KEVIN M. KAIN, DAVID GOLDFRANK (Washington: Academica Press, 2020), 97–127. WOLFRAM VON SCHELIHA, *Russland und die orthodoxe Universalkirche in der Patriarchatsperiode 1589–1721* [Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte, 62] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 89–94.

22 ROBERT O. CRUMMEY, “The Orthodox Church and the Schism”, in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. I: *From Early Rus’ to 1689*, ed. MAUREEN PERRIE (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 618–

or was he simply attempting to defend the traditional balance against assaults of an "absolutist" reforming state?

Most significant for the context of this paper is the observation that the crisis after Nikon's ambiguous resignation in 1658 was initially not about a 'constitutional' conflict of "church vs state." To be sure, opponents of the Nikonian reforms had implicitly raised the power issue in seeking the tsar's support, as had the Council of 1660. But it was especially the (ex-) metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligaridis, from the island of Chios, an expert on Canon Law and Byzantine history, who after his arrival in Moscow in 1662 and his ascent to the "principal promoter"²³ of the tsarist agenda, attempted and succeeded in shifting the whole dispute onto 'constitutional' terrain, a trap Nikon fell into immediately, even if the bulk of his fatal *Vozrazhenie* (Refutation) deals rather with the patriarchs' power within the Church.²⁴ Ligaridis was also the one who, in line with the standard tendency of Greek prelates in their dealings with Moscow to render themselves as indispensable as possible, suggested entrusting the verdict to the Constantinopolitan patriarch or to the four patriarchs of the Eastern Church as a whole. Tangible outcomes of these suggestions were, on the one hand, the *Tomos*, the written answers of the four Eastern patriarchs (1663) to a Muscovite catalogue of questions prepared by Ligaridis,²⁵ and, on the other hand, the Council of 1666/67 with the participation of two patriarchs, Paisios of Alexandria and Makarios of Antioch, as well as Ligaridis acting as their counsellor.²⁶

639, here 635. For an overview of the contesting interpretations see POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 6, 121-131.

23 LAVROV, "Le Tsar", 175. For the main data and bibliography on Ligaridis' works and days see OVIDIU OLAR, "Paisios Ligarides", in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 10, ed. DAVID THOMAS, JOHN CHESTWORTH, (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 282-291; GERHARD PODSKALSKY, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821). Die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 251-258.

24 POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 127, 164-166, 190-200. For the Greek original of Ligaridis' letter to Nikon (July 12, 1662) with explicit pertinent statements ("The Emperor judges the ecclesiastical affairs") see KALLINIKOS DELIKANIS, Τα εν τοις κώδιξι του Πατριαρχικού Αρχιεπισκοπικού σωζόμενα επίσημα εκκλησιαστικά έγγραφα, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1905), 73-87.

25 *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov* = SGGD IV, 84-117. Other editions: DELIKANIS, Τα εν τοις κώδιξι, vol. 3, 93-118; MANOUIL GEDEON, Κανονικά Διατάξεις, vol. I (Istanbul, 1888), 341-368.

26 E. V. BELJAKOVA, "Synod of Moscow 1666-1667", in *The Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches: Decisions and Synodika. From Moscow 1551 to Moscow 2000*, ed. ALBERTO MELLONI [Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta IV/2] (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 689-693; ead., «К изучению истории Собора 1666 и 1666-1667 гг.», *Исторический курьер*, no. 2 (2019), art. 5: <https://istkurier.ru/data/2019/ISTKURIER-2019-2-05.pdf>

During the last stage of the Council, after the condemnation of Nikon at the session of January 14, 1667 when the prelates assembled in the Patriarchal Palace in order to sign the official act of Nikon's deposition, the incident occurred that is said to "have brought forth a kind of an ecclesiastical-political constitution" in Muscovy.²⁷ The debate that erupted after the protest of certain Russian bishops against the formulation included in the act – in fact a citation from the second chapter of the *Tomos*, concerning the relationship between emperor (tsar) and patriarch – did not enter the official decrees of the Council. This is hardly surprising, given the rather embarrassing impressions it would have evoked. Thus, the practically unique source for the reconstruction of the debate remains its narration in the "Report" (Ἐκθεσις) or "History of the Condemnation of Patriarch Nikon" by Ligaridis, in particular the sixth chapter of the third book.²⁸

There is no need to recount it here, since this has been already done *in extenso* in older Russian publications,²⁹ apart from the available English translation by William Palmer.³⁰ In brief: Ligaridis introduces the incident as a regrettable misunderstanding caused by "some minor words" (τινὰ ρηματίκια).³¹ Pavel, the metropolitan of Krutitsy and locum tenens of the

27 NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 172. Cf. КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон*, II, 207–208.

28 State Historical Museum, Moscow (Gosudarstvennyj Istoricheskij Muzej=GIM), Vlad. 409 (=Sinod. 469). Cf. Б. Л. Фонкич, «Греческое книгописание в России в XVII в.», in: idem, *Греческие рукописи и документы в России в XIV-начале XVIII в.*, (Москва: Индрик, 2003), 275–322, here 301; П. А. Рылик, «Сочинение Паисия Лигарида О Суде над Патриархом Никоном: Проблемы перевода», в VI. *Международная научная конференция по эллинистике памяти И. И. Ковалевой. Тезисы и материалы конференции* (Москва: МГУ, 2021), 54–61; С. К. Севастьянова, П. А. Рылик, А. Г. Бондац, «Сочинение Газского митрополита Паисия Лигарида о суде над патриархом Никоном: проблемы исследования и перевода», *Сибирский филологический журнал*, no. 3 (2022): 65–78; С. К. Севастьянова, «Рукописная история русского перевода Книги о Соборе Газского митрополита Паисия Лигарида», *Каптеревские Чтения* 21 (2023): 127–149.

29 КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон*, vol. II, 227–250; id., «Суждение большого московского собора 1667 года о власти царской и патриаршей (К вопросу о преобразовании высшего церковного управления Петром Великим)», *Богословский вестник*, no. 6 (1892): 483–516, 8: 171–190, 10: 46–74, here: esp. 189, n. 1; П. ШАРОВ, *Большой Московский Собор 1666–1667 гг.* (Киев, 1895), 173–194; Н. ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона*, 2 vols. (С.-Петербург, 1881–1884), here vol. II, 440–449; Митрополит МАКАРИЙ (Булгаков), *История Русской церкви*, vol. 12, (С.-Петербург, 1883), 754–759.

30 WILLIAM PALMER (ed.), *History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon by a Plenary Council of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church held at Moscow A. D. 1666–1667, written by Paisius Ligarides of Scio* (=The Patriarch and the Tsar, vol. 3] (London, 1873), 207–251.

31 GIM 409, f. 304v. («τινὰ ρηματίκια κείμενα ἐν τῇ αναφορᾷ, κακῶς νοοῦμένα τε καὶ παραλαμβανόμενα») Palmer translates the phrase as "certain little expressions contained in the report, which were misunderstood": PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 207.

patriarchal throne, together with Ilarion, the archbishop of Riazan, as well as “some other bishops who followed them”, refused to sign the act, because they misinterpreted the phrase in question about the patriarch being obedient to the emperor. They “feared not a little” that in future a less pious tsar than Aleksei Mikhailovich might take advantage of the contentious formulation.

These prelates’ boldness and firmness distressed both the tsar and the two patriarchs. Hence, it was decided that all the bishops should examine the pertinent phrases “in their several cells, and an answer be given by each in writing as succinctly as possible after two days.”³² It appears that most of the answers “seemed to favour the honour and reverence of the episcopate.”³³ Ligaridis countered with loquacious exegeses analyzing one by one the hierocratic statements of church fathers invoked by the Russian bishops, first and foremost John Chrysostom’s verdict on priesthood being greater than royalty.³⁴ He also delved extensively, if unnecessarily, into the subject of imperial priesthood, only to conclude that the dilemma of priesthood vs empire is actually a false one, as are those between logic vs rhetoric, art vs history, letters vs arms, agriculture vs livestock, praxis vs theory. Both are to enjoy the greatest honor, the priesthood in ecclesiastical matters, the empire in the political domain. That was also the essence of the subsequent declaration by the two patriarchs that rounded out the debate and was received with unanimous enthusiasm by the Council. Pavel and Ilarion repented, if not honestly and sincerely; they signed the act, but this did not rescue them from disciplinary sanctions, although they had visited the patriarchs separately in order to beg them to intercede with the tsar and ask him to pardon their audacity.

Regardless of the plausibility of Ligaridis’ account and the readability of his reflections, a few aspects are worth mentioning in passing, especially when bearing in mind that his work was addressing both Greek- and Russian-speaking audiences,³⁵ and that it is not devoid of interest in terms of the multiple processes of knowledge transfer during the last years of Aleksei Mikhailovich’s rule. In the exegetical field, Ligaridis offers his readers a demonstration of non-literal interpretation. He opts to neutralize patristic hierocratic statements using hermeneutics of contextualization: “We must

32 «τα δοκούντα συντείνειν προς το σεμνολόγημα και κάλλος της πανιέρου αρχιερωσύνης», GIM 409, f. 305; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 208.

33 GIM 409, f. 322; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 213.

34 See NICOL, “Byzantine Political Thought”, 70.

35 For the history of its translations in Russian see СЕВАСТЬЯНОВА, «Рукописная история».

first examine what was in the mind of that great master [Chrysostom], and to what purpose he was speaking when he said this and then proceed to the examination of the words themselves.”³⁶ When rejecting Nikon’s argument that the anointing of the emperor by the patriarch demonstrates the latter’s supremacy, Ligaridis shows remarkable historical accuracy and insight, since he correctly dates this Byzantine unction ceremony to the time after the Fourth Crusade and attributes it to Latin influence.³⁷

More significantly, Ligaridis’ justification of imperial prerogatives and of Tsar Aleksei’s immaculate conduct in particular, concludes with the asseveration that the tsar is only aiming for the “common good” (προς πάγκοινων ὄφελος).³⁸ On this occasion Ligaridis provides his readers with a brief introduction to Classical Greek political concepts, quoting Aristotle’s definition of a “polity” (“the order of a city or state”), Plato’s concept of “democracy” as “a polity constructed for the common weal” as well as Thucydides’ distinction of “tyrant and tyranny from a kingship or kingdom.” The latter “look to the common good, while tyranny looks to its own interest.”³⁹

Returning to the debate and to the question, what are we to deduce from its account in the “Report”: nearly every scholar who has dealt with this source has expressed warnings about Ligaridis’ reliability, given the

36 GIM 409, f. 324; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 215. Ligaridis had displayed a similar method in his “Book of Prohecies” (1655) dedicated to Tsar Aleksei. For the pertinent passage see NIKOLAS PISSIS, “Epistemic Entanglements in Seventeenth Century Books of Prophecies”, in *Wissensoikonomien. Ordnung und Transgression vormoderner Kulturen*, eds. NORA SCHMIDT, NIKOLAS PISSIS, GYBURG UHLMANN [Episteme in Bewegung. Beiträge zur einer transdisziplinären Wissensgeschichte, 18] (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2021), 301–320, here 307. In the “Book of Prohecies” he opted to interpret the double-headed eagle as a symbol of universal imperial rule over East and West, while in the “Report” – as well as in his answers to the questions of the boyar Streshnev – he interpreted it as “implying” (“ο δικέφαλος αετός τούτο υπαινίττεται”) the priestly and royal quality of the imperial office. See, PISSIS, *Russland*, 281–283.

37 GIM 409, f. 319–321 v.; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 212–213. For the imperial unction in Byzantium see ANGELOV, *Imperial Ideology*, 384–392.

38 GIM 409, f. 365; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 250. The concept of the “common good” was evoked also in the *Tomos*, in a quotation from the *Eisagoge* (definition of the imperial office). For its conventional, not revolutionary, content see TSAPINA, “The 1721 Church Reform”, 317 and for its function in the context of Greek encomia to the tsars see PISSIS, *Russland*, 372–373.

39 GIM 409, 347v; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 236–237. Ligaridis had touched upon the distinction between tyrant and true ruler in his epistle to Nikon: DELIKANIS, Τα εν τοις κώδιξι, vol. 3, 83. On the introduction in Russian of the Aristotelian concepts of “monarchy” and “aristocracy” by Nikolai Spafarii, a collaborator of Ligaridis see PAUL BUSHKOVITCH, “The Vasilologion of Nikolai Spafarii Milescu”, *Russian History* 36 (2009): 1–15.

apologetic or rather self-adulating and narcissistic character of his writing.⁴⁰ However, in my view, only Cathy Jane Potter has in fact provided a plausible alternative reconstruction of the incident, exposing the author's contradictions. In reality, Ligaridis created a smokescreen of eloquence only to cover his culpability for the faulty Russian translation. Pavel and Ilarion did not repent; they persisted and sought an interview with the patriarchs not in order to beg for forgiveness, but only in order to persuade them of the fatal error. In sum: faced with the danger that the traditional balance, the symphonia, might suffer irreversible demolition, owing to the Greeks' imposing their definition of the conflict between Nikon and Aleksei and some of the boyars embracing it out of self-interest, two of the leading, most learned Russian churchmen, who were supporters of the Nikonian reforms and loyal to the tsar, defended the inherited order. Instead of Ligaridis acting as his master's, the tsar's, voice, "it is likely that the Tsar supported his bishops and was as displeased as they that the issue had been raised in such a fashion".⁴¹ It is no coincidence that the interdict imposed on the two bishops by the foreign patriarchs was immediately annulled by the new patriarch of Moscow, Ioasaf.⁴²

This interpretation has the merit of being a critical revision of the evidence and of a raised awareness concerning anachronisms and preconceived stereotypes. It also accords with the current tendency in Early Modern Russian Studies that stresses the complementary functions of state and church, tsar and patriarch, as the two arms of the body politic, committed to shared projects such as "*prosveshchenie*", instead of sharp demarcations and the narrative of the church becoming "the handmaiden of the state."⁴³ However, a number of remarks with regard to a scrutiny of the available sources is in order.

The first concerns the *Tomos*.⁴⁴ It is generally held to present a radical position favoring imperial prerogatives, if not giving the tsar a free hand

40 Ligaridis' immodesty provokes the indignation of the copyist in a marginal note to the Moscow manuscript: "The author praises himself in several places and here even more. Is he not to be blamed for his naivety?" (Αυτός ο συγγραφεύς εαυτὸν πολλαχού επαινεί κανταύθα δε μάλιστα. Πώς οὐ μεμπταῖος τῆς ἀφελείας"), GIM 409, f. 460.

41 POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 214.

42 POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 213.

43 DONALD OSTROWSKI, *Russia in the Early Modern World: The Continuity of Change* (Laham et al.: Lexington Books, 2022), 313-359.

44 "Tomos" bearing not the later connotations of book/volume, but of a variant of a synodical letter, one that "resolves doubts and contestations", according to the Prooimion. See ΑΡΟΣΤΟΛΟΡΟΥΛΟΣ, Το Μέγα Νόμιμον. Συμβολή στην έρευνα του μεταβυζαντινού δημοσίου δικαίου (Athens, 1978), 25-26.

in order to deal with Nikon as he pleased. Aleksei must have shied away from this enhanced empowerment and preferred to convoke a council.⁴⁵ This may explain the decision of Nektarios, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who had signed the *Tomos*, to send a separate letter to the tsar in March 1664, recommending his reconciliation with Nikon.⁴⁶ It is known that the actual author of the *Tomos* was Ioannis Karyophyllis, a lay official, theologian and a pivotal figure at the Patriarchate of Constantinople for decades.⁴⁷ He was also a confidant of Ligaridis and the person who had helped him out of several troubles and who had promoted his effort to attain the appointment as exarch (an authorized representative) of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Moscow.⁴⁸ It is likely that he had made sure that the answers accorded with Ligaridis' wishes. Dositheos, later on patriarch of Jerusalem (1669-1707), who was bound to Karyophyllis in life-long enmity, commented in his *Dodekavivlos* or *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (written in the latter part of the 1680s) that in composing the answers Karyophyllis "argued with a fighting spirit and rambled on a lot."⁴⁹ However, Dositheos was more annoyed about the anticanonical elevation of the Constantinopolitan see over the other patriarchates.

In any case this reading of the *Tomos* as overtly tendentious is favored by the heading accompanying the Russian edition of the patriarchal answers: "on the infinite power of the tsar and the limited one of the Patriarch."⁵⁰ This heading, which has been interpreted as anticipating the following content,⁵¹ stems nonetheless from the 19th-century editors and is naturally missing in the Greek original. Indeed, the controversial second chapter, both in the question posed and the answer given, states the obvious when declaring that what is debated is the patriarch's obedience

45 ВАЛЬДЕНБЕРГ, *Древнерусския учения* 392-395; NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 159-160, VON SCHELIHA, *Russland*, 108.

46 SGGD IV, 134-141 (March 20, 1664) and again six months later (September 20, 1664): ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗΣ ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, Ο κώδιξ υπ'αριθμ. 393 της Αλεξανδρινής Πατριαρχικής Βιβλιοθήκης ο λεγόμενος του πατριάρχου Αλεξανδρείας Παΐσιου (Alexandria: Library of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, 2010), 172-174.

47 PODSKALSKY, *Griechische Theologie*, 305-311.

48 RICHARD SALOMON, „Paisius Ligarides“, *Zeitschrift für Osteuropäische Geschichte* 5 (1931): 37-65, here 54-55.

49 “αγωνιστικώτερον διαλεγόμενος πολλά ερραψώδησε” 235. DOSITHEOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, Ιστορία περί των εν Ιεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων, διηρημένη εν δώδεκα βιβλίοις. Άλλως καλουμένη Δωδεκάβιβλος Δοσιθέου [Bucharest 1715 (= 1722)] (repr. Thessaloniki: V. Rigopoulos, 1983), vol. 6, 235.

50 “о власти Царской безпределной, а Патриаршей ограниченной”, SGGD IV, 84.

51 СКРИПКИНА, «Алфавитная Синтаγμα Матфея Властаря», 65.

to the emperor "in political affairs and judgements". In the contemporary translation, which was possibly quoted in the act of Nikon's deposition, this clarification is disguised as "*veshchi blagodostoiny*" as well as "*vseia veshchi blagougodnyia*." Directly beneath this passage it is said that the patriarch is not allowed to act contrary to the emperor's will "in political matters", which is now rendered as "*v' veshchekh mirskikh*." A second contemporary translation, published by Gibbenet, renders the terms in question instead much more aptly as "*vo vsiakikh' grazhdanskikh' veshchekh' i preniikh*,"⁵² while a third one, kept in RGADA, reads "*vo vsiakie grazhdanskije dela i sudy*."⁵³ During the debate it was disclosed that the translation of the *Tomos* had been conducted in the rather awkward manner of Ligaridis translating the Greek original into Latin and an unknown Russian interpreter, perhaps a certain Lucian,⁵⁴ translating the Latin into Russian. All the while the work could have been assigned to none other than Pavel and Ilarion, the two learned bishops who had mastered Greek and were assigned by the tsar as official interpreters to the two patriarchs.⁵⁵ It was therefore to be expected that they would scrutinize the translation with a critical eye.

What had happened? Ligaridis, who had insisted on the laborious translation procedure in order to retain control, had either deliberately distorted the original meaning, trusting that no one would notice, or perhaps he had translated "political matters" with the Latin *in rebus civilis*, which the Russian interpreter miscomprehended and conveyed as "*veshchi blagodostoinnye*."⁵⁶ Unless in the translated version the crucial phrase "in all political matters" was simply omitted, as Ligaridis' apologies appears to suggest: "For such interpreters generally leave out here and there words which are of importance, as not knowing how to render exactly into another tongue expressions which have not their exact equivalents."⁵⁷ Ligaridis

52 ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование* II, 669-697. Gibbenet asserts that Pavel and Ilarion had access to both translations but without providing any evidence, *ibid.*, 446.

53 Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents = RGADA f. 52, op. 1, 1663, d. 20, l. 2-29, as quoted by А. Б. Дубовицкий, «Паисий Лигарид и его участие в деле Патриарха Никона» *Вестник Московского Университета*, сер. 8, no. 3 (2001): 88-111, here 105.

54 ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование* II, 453, n. 3; POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 211, n. 50.

55 POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 207. On Pavel of Krutitsy see also BUSHKOVITCH, *Religion and Society*, 207, n. 42, 43.

56 Palmer suggests that the Latin might have been *secundum rationem et res condecetes* for «κατά πάσας τας πολιτικός υποθέσεις και κρίσεις», which implies Ligaridis' culpability, PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, liv, n. 65.

57 PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 252.

blamed on several occasions the incompetent Russian translators, but this is far from a proof of his innocence.⁵⁸

Assessments of the incident and generally of the Council's outcome regarding the relationship between Church and tsar vary considerably. While some scholars deem the effective resistance of Pavel and Ilarion as well as the abolition of lay jurisdiction over churchmen great, albeit temporary, victories for the Church,⁵⁹ the interpretation of the Council as a major step on the way to the subordination of the Church to the State prevails.⁶⁰ For the context of this paper it appears more promising to undertake an interpretation of the motives of the debate's protagonists.

The motives of Pavel and Ilarion, as well as the other two Russian bishops who agreed to sign the act of Nikon's deposition only with the telling addendum "for the deposition of Nikon, conducted according to the holy Canons, I signed," (Lavrentii, metropolitan of Kazan and Sviazhshk and Arsenii, archbishops of Pskov and Izborsk),⁶¹ do not really pose a riddle. In the context of the ongoing tensions concerning the *Monastyrskii Prikaz* and the jurisdiction of state officials over churchmen, it is hardly surprising that certain Russian bishops would grow suspicious over a dubious formulation that could create a pretext. Besides, the existence of a faction of self-confident Russian bishops advocating hierocratic views or insisting on enhanced ecclesiastical autonomy before and after Nikon – those whom Kapterev termed "*svobodnye arkhierei*" – is more than a historiographical myth.⁶²

58 GIM 409, 366v; IHOR SEVČENKO, "A New Greek Source concerning the Nikon Affair: The Sixty-One Answers by Paisios Ligarides given to Tsar Aleksej Mixajlovič", in ΓΕΝΝΑΔΙΟΣ. *Κ 70-ετηνία ακαδημικά Γ. Γ. Λιταβρίνα* (Москва: Индрик, 1999), 237–263, here 243–245; CHRYSOSTOMOS ΡΑΡΑΔΟΡΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οι πατριάρχαι Ιεροσολύμων ως πνευματικοί χειραγωγοί της Ρωσσίας κατά τον ΙΖ' αιώνα* (Jerusalem, 1907), 102. Patriarch Nektarios of Jerusalem had also accused Ligaridis of deliberate mistranslations of his letters to the tsar, ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, *Ο κώδιξ υπ'αριθμ. 393*, 52.

59 КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон*, vol. II, 249–250; А. В. КАРТАШЕВ, *Очерки по истории Русской Церкви* (Москва-Берлин: DirectMedia 2020), vol. II, 186–187; СКРИПКИНА, *Церковно-государственные взаимоотношения*, 183–184.

60 NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 178; VON SCHELIHA, *Russland*, 116. SASHALMI, *Russian Notions*, 229–235. Cf. the balanced assessment of POTTER, *The Russian Church*, 222.

61 SGGD, IV, 182–186. The crucial quotation from the *Tomos* is, expectedly, not included in the document. The date of its issuing (December 12, 1666) precedes its signing by more than a month, at least according to Ligaridis' account, ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование II*, 441–448.

62 КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон*, vol. II, 209–223; id., «Суждение», 67–71; ВАЛЬДЕНБЕРГ, *Древнерусская учения*, 391. Cf. SVETLANA K. SEVASTYANOVA, "The Newly Discovered Treatise on Patriarch Nikon in the Cultural and Historical Context of Its Epoch", *Scrinium* 12 (2016): 126–179.

By comparison, the role of the Greeks or, to be more accurate, the foreign representatives of the Eastern Church, constitutes a more complex issue, since, as Paul Bushkovitch has noted, "the story of the Greeks' participation in these events is poorly known and almost entirely from the Russian side."⁶³ Although Vladimir Solov'ev had already observed that the Greeks who judged Nikon condemned him for his "un-Byzantine ways" (questioning the tsar's authority) but exculpated him for following "Byzantine" customs,⁶⁴ in other words they displayed a certain consistency, this insight has not been pursued further.⁶⁵ As a result, contradictory interpretations such as that of Kapterev and Kartashev, who on the one hand blamed the arrogance of the Greeks and their contempt for the Russian Church for the decisions of the Council, while on the other they denounced their servility towards the tsar and their willingness to anticipate his will and impose it on the Russian bishops,⁶⁶ remain unresolved.

Ligaridis is not unreasonably the usual culprit, although historiographical revisions of the typical charges, albeit contradicting each other,⁶⁷ are to an extent convincing. Whether he was a persuaded advocate of the ruler's primacy (the Balsamon stance) or he simply played his cards skillfully, or both at once, he followed through with it, until the point of resistance.⁶⁸ In fact, it seems that his predilection for the subject of imperial priesthood – not unlike other Greek ideological offers to Tsar Aleksei – did not pass unnoticed, judging by the tsar's depiction in a quasi-priestly function in the contemporary icon *Tree of the Muscovite State* by Simon Ushakov.⁶⁹ Similar considerations apply to Ligaridis's staging of the Palm Sunday Ritual in

63 BUSHKOVITCH, *Religion and Society*, 203, n. 40.

64 As quoted by SEVČENKO, "A New Greek Source", 246.

65 See, however, NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 178.

66 КАПТЕРЕВ, *Патриарх Никон*, vol. II, 263–264, 406–407, 458–464; КАРТАШЕВ, *Очерки*, vol. II, 151–157; 178–187.

67 SALOMON, „Paisius Ligarides”, 46 (Ligaridis was not simply the tsar's instrument, he was far too intelligent, learned and unscrupulous for such a humble role); Н. П. ЧЕСНОКОВА, «Газский митрополит Пайсий в России: заметки к биографии», *Вестник ПСТГУ* ser. II, 96 (2020): 11–28, here 12–15 (Ligaridis cannot be blamed for decisions and judgements predetermined by the tsar).

68 CHARALAMPOS K. PAPASTATHIS, "Paisios Ligaridis et la formation des relations entre l'église et l'état en Russie au XVII^e siècle", *Cyrrilomethodianum* 2 (1972/73): 77–85. For Ligaridis' theories one does not have to assume neither a Western nor an Ottoman model, as supposed by MATTHEW SPINKA, "Patriarch Nikon and the Subjection of the Russian Church to the State", *Church History* 10 (1941): 347–366, here 366 and LAVROV, "Le Tsar", 174, respectively.

69 SASHALMI, *Russian Notions*, 229–235. On the context of ideological offers by the Greek clergy to the Russian tsars and their eventual adoption, see PISSIS, *Russland*, 229–231.

spring 1667.⁷⁰ But even Ligaridis, as Aleksandr Lavrov has observed, did not push his argument to the point of an explicit recognition of the tsar's right to depose the patriarch, since this would eventually curtail his and the Greek prelates' precious mediatory and advisory function.⁷¹

The final statement of the two patriarchs on the relations of emperor and patriarch, in fact an explicating comment on the *Tomos*' second chapter, is indeed a remarkable document.⁷² Regardless of who its actual author or authors have been – certain passages are strongly reminiscent of Ligaridis' style, others not at all⁷³ – it summarizes notions included in the latter's *Report*, with a stronger accent towards enhancing the prerogatives of the patriarch. The latter is called – as in Photios' *Eisagoge* – “animate law” and “living voice of the canons.” The text also evokes the figure of the two luminaries, sun and moon, but without defining the attribution to each office. It explicates further the distinction introduced with the phrase “in all political matters,” setting apart ecclesiastical, dogmatic issues as well as issues of canon law from political, secular and moral ones.⁷⁴ The patriarch should not meddle in the affairs of the latter, which pertain to the good government of the polity, while he must not obey the emperor in the former domain. What is more, he is obliged to resist a heretic emperor and indoctrinate him, since in matters of faith, every person no matter how great or minor, should be censured without any hesitation. Only under these terms is the “much-desired concord and peace that unites earthly and heavenly, divine and human things”,⁷⁵ to be preserved. The explicit justification of resistance in matters of faith responded, to be sure, to the anxieties expressed by the Russian bishops. However, it also conformed with both the ecclesiastical understanding of Byzantine history (prece-

70 OVIDIU OLAR, “*The Father and his Eldest Son. The Depiction of the 1667 Muscovite Palm Sunday Procession by the Metropolitan of Gaza Paisios Ligaridis and its Significance*”, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 235 (2018): 5–36.

71 LAVROV, “Le Tsar”, 174.

72 ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, Ο κώδιξ, 115–117; ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование II*, 1039–1041.

73 The writer of the Alexandrine codex, belonging to Patriarch Paisios of Alexandria has been identified as Ioannis Sakoulis, who stayed in Moscow from 1666 to 1669, attached to the two patriarchs and Ligaridis, ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, Ο κώδιξ υπ' αριθμ. 393, 35. On Sakoulis see Б. Л. Фонкич, «Иоанн Сакулис. (Страничка из истории участия греков в Деле патриарха Никона)», in: idem, *Греческие рукописи и документы в России в XIV-начале XVIII в.*, (Москва: Индик, 2003), 323–332.

74 „άλλα μεν εισί τα εκκλησιαστικά, τα δογματικά και τα νόμιμα, άλλα δε εισί τα πολιτικά, τα εξωτερικά και τα ηθικά”. ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, Ο κώδιξ υπ' αριθμ. 393, 116.

75 „διά την τριπόθητον ταύτην ομόνοιαν και ειρήνην, οπού κρατεί αντάμα τα επίγεια όλα και τα ουράνια”, ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, Ο κώδιξ υπ' αριθμ. 393, 116.

dents such as Iconoclasm or Church Union) as well as with the prospects and aspirations of Greek prelates in Russia. From a "heretic" tsar who would, e.g., impose Union with Rome or a protestant confession of faith onto a defenseless Russian Church, they would have nothing to expect.

What is more striking is that, as is manifest in the final passages, the declaration actually addresses the tsar.⁷⁶ He is, as a matter of fact, instructed about the resolution of the dispute. This instance raises the question of how the tsar actually perceived the episode. Was he insulted by the Russian bishops' protest or did he as a matter of fact support their views? A piece of evidence, long ago published but recently unearthed by Nadezhda Chesnokova, might shed some light on this, though not providing definitive answers.⁷⁷ Artamon Sergeievich Matveev's petition from his exile to Tsar Fedor Alekseevich, where he evokes his past services to the late Tsar Aleskei Mikhailovich. Matveev, who had been attached as something between an assistant and a guard to the two patriarchs during their stay in Muscovy,⁷⁸ declares that the patriarchs had introduced together with the bishops "two articles" bearing content harmful to the tsarist authority and that he, Matveev, did his best not to let them be signed and issued, efforts that earned him the enmity of Pavel and Ilarion. Finally, it was the tsar, who, informed about their content, ordered their suppression, in other words their removal from the official Acts.⁷⁹

As evidence for the biased or unbalanced character of the *Tomos* it has been observed that the patriarchal answers nowhere evoke the concept of symphonia.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, precisely this instance allows a more perceptive approach to the Greek prelates' stance. Symphonia should actu-

76 The patriarchs declare that despite all the difficulties they obediently conformed to the tsarist order and travelled to Moscow for the settlement of paramount Church issues.

77 ЧЕСНОВА, «Газский митрополит Пайсий», 14.

78 ГИББЕНЕТ, *Историческое исследование* II, 962–963.

79 For what it is worth, it should be noted that Dionysios Iviritis, one of the key figures at the Council, close collaborator of the patriarchs and of Ligaridis, in a letter (April 1670) addressed to the latter from Bucharest (where he settled after leaving Moscow, eventually becoming metropolitan of Wallachia) asks Ligaridis to pass on his greetings to their common "friends", naming first Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy and Bishop Ilarion of Riazan (!). (He then goes on to mention Ioakim, the future patriarch of Moscow, then still archimandrite of the Chudov Monastery, Epifanii Slavinskii, Simeon Polotsky, the "most gentle and prudent" Artamon Matveev, Meletios the Greek as well as his ex-colleagues at the Pechatnyi Dvor), Б. Л. Фонкич, «Письмо Дионисия Ивирита Паисию Лигариду», in: idem, *Греческие рукописи и документы в России в XIV-начале XVIII в.*, (Москва: Индрик, 2003), 433–445, here 438, 442.

80 ВАЛЬДЕНБЕРГ, *Древнерусския учения*, 392; СКРИПКИНА, «Алфавитная Синтагма Матфея Властаря», 68.

ally describe the ideal relation between the Russian tsar, as head of the Orthodox confessional community and the Eastern Patriarchs as spiritual leaders – not their colleague in Moscow, whom they never really regarded as equal. If one may discern in their policies vis-à-vis Moscow a long-term political agenda, this would then foresee a kind of condominium of the temporal power of the Muscovite tsar and the spiritual guidance of the Greek hierarchy by totally circumventing the Russian Church.⁸¹ When the second chapter of the *Tomos* urges the patriarch to be obedient to the Emperor and to ecclesiastical tradition and the canons, this could be read as a reminder of to whom the patriarchs of Moscow owed their elevation and whose tutelage they were expected to acknowledge.⁸² The exaltation of the tsar as the heir of the Eastern Roman emperors did not in any way imply an elevation of the status of the Russian Church – this was the actual source of the Greek prelates' discontent with Nikon⁸³ – nor of Moscow as a new capital of Orthodoxy. It is therefore no wonder that the two patriarchs rejected the proposed labeling of the Moscow Council of 1666/67 as ecumenical.⁸⁴

Occurrences during the Council, as recorded or even invented by Ligaridis, further illustrate this stance. When, e.g., the two patriarchs punished Pavel and Ilarion for their disrespect, the two “not without tears, went out of the patriarch’s apartment,” leaving the other Russian bishops “struck with fear at their unlooked-for punishment (...) then they learned that they now had heads and superiors over them, to rule them.”⁸⁵ Even Ligaridis’ exclamation that the Russians are not worthy of such a great emperor as Aleksei Mikhailovich should be read not just as one (more) piece of flattery addressed to the tsar, but also as an illustration of the discrepancy between the status of the tsar and the Russian bishops in the Eastern Church.⁸⁶

81 NIKOLAS PISSIS, “The Image of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Eastern Church: Status and Legitimacy”, in *Russia’s Early Modern Orthodox Patriarchate*, vol. 1. *Foundations and Mitred Royalty, 1589–1647*, ed. KEVIN M. KAIN, DAVID GOLDFRANK (Washington: Academica Press, 2020), 49–69.

82 Nektarios of Jerusalem referred to this precondition as well as to the precondition that Nikon respect the directives of the *Tomos* in his two letters advising Tsar Aleksei to make peace with Nikon, SGGD, IV, 136; TZOUMERKAS, Ο κώδιξ υπ’αριθμ. 393, 173.

83 VERNADSKY, „Die kirchlich-politische Lehre“, 141; KAIN, “Before New Jerusalem”, 229–230.

84 NEUBAUER, *Car und Selbstherrscher*, 177.

85 „...οι δε λοιποί άλλοι έμφοβοι γεγόνασι επί τη απροσδοκήτω ποινή (...) πλην αλλ’ έμαθον αυτοί τε και άλλοι ως εσχήκασι και προϊσταμένους και αρχηγούς και υπερτέρους προεστώτας, προέχοντας...” GIM 409, 370v; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 256.

86 GIM 409, f. 346; PALMER, *History of the Condemnation*, 235.

However, the best expression of this attitude, as well as of the perception of symphonia in the context of early modern Orthodoxy, stems from Dositheos of Jerusalem. Dositheos' testimony is also indicative of the interpretation of the Nikon affair that would eventually prevail, contrary to the actual accusations raised during the Council: namely, that Nikon had "aspired to meddle in the ruler's affairs".⁸⁷ Already in a letter to Tsar Fedor Alekseevich in May 1682 – written in the context of Nikon's posthumous rehabilitation, conducted primarily by Dositheos himself – he had advised the young tsar to delegate only minor affairs to the local, Russian Synod, and for major issues always to seek the opinion and consent of the Eastern patriarchs.⁸⁸ In one of his last letters to Moscow in June 1706, addressed to Chancellor Fedor Alekseevich Golovin, Dositheos stated: "If the divine emperor [i.e., Peter I.] wishes to ask something in such great things [i.e., breaking oaths in foreign affairs] here he should ask, those who have spiritual knowledge and political praxis, and principally those who know the symphonia between the state and the church."⁸⁹

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87 DOSITHEOS, Ιστορία, 233. And in his letter to Peter the Great in June 1702, concerning the profile of the future patriarch of Moscow, who should, unlike Nikon, stay away from politics: „να είναι πατριάρχης και όχι βασιλεύς αυτοκράτωρ (...) να μην ημπορεί να ανακατώνεται εις τα πολιτικά (...) ωσάν ο Νίκων όπου ετάραξε την οικουμένη", RGADA f. 52, op. 1, 1702, nr. 1, f. 16–19 (June 2, 1702). For the tsar's charges against Nikon and the fact that they did not include usurpation of imperial prerogatives, see Potter, *The Russian Church*, 206–208.

88 RGADA f. 52, op. 2, nr. 658 (May 1682).

89 „...ο θειότατος εις τοιαύτα μεγάλα πράγματα αν έχη να ερωτήση τίποτες, εδώ ας ερωτά, εκείνους οπού έχουν πνευματικήν γνώσιν και πολιτικήν πράξιν, και μάλιστα εκείνους οπού γινώσκουσι την συμφωνίαν της πολιτείας και εκκλησίας", RGADA f. 52, op. 1, 1706, nr. 1, f. 28v (June 1706).

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