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LOCAL AND AUTOCEPHALOUS CHURCHES: CANONICAL JUSTIFICATION AND TRADITION

The article considers the basic principles and mechanisms of functioning of the church-administrative system of government of the Ecumenical Church. It is established that two opposing ecclesiological traditions (Greek and Slavic) were gradually formed, which testify to the lack of Unity and Conciliarism. The formation of two approaches to understanding the structure of the system of universal Orthodoxy was the reason for only a partial presence at the Great All-Orthodox Council in 2016. The article argues that in the Orthodox tradition there is no generally accepted interpretation of the interdependence of the principle of locality and the autocephalous status of churches. It is proved that the autocephalous church is always local, but the modern ecclesiological interpretation of locality does not automatically lead to the acquisition of autocephalous status.

It is proved that the apostles and their closest disciples did not know and did not foresee any other principle of the existence of the Ecumenical Church than autocephaly. It is emphasized that such a mechanism of church government was based on the territorial principle. It is pointed out that such a division underlies the concept of locality in the Ecumenical Church.

It is established that the study of the problem of autocephaly today is a key task of world Orthodoxy. Since the founding of Christianity, autocephaly has been a basic principle of apostolic preaching, which took into account the national and ethnic characteristics of the population of the Roman Empire. Autocephaly is one of the oldest institutions of the Church, which is a defining feature of Orthodoxy today. For two thousand years, this phenomenon remained unchanged, but there were different, even radically opposite approaches to understanding it. Because the theory of autocephaly emerges with Christianity, it is not an imposed or borrowed institution, but the very essence of Orthodoxy, the way it exists.

It is claimed that the Ecumenical Church, being united in essence, is divided into independent Local Churches on an administrative and national basis. On a universal scale, the Orthodox Church testifies to the unity of the churches through the Eucharist. Every Local Church is already self-sufficient, for it has the fullness of the grace of the Holy Spirit, but through the Eucharist and the Councils the unity of the Universal Scale is expressed.

Keywords: cathedral, church, autocephaly, ecclesiology, canon law, patriarch, parish, metropolitan.

Андрій Кобетяк. Помісна й автокефальна церкви: канонічне обґрунтування та традиція

У статті розглянуто основні принципи та механізми функціонування церковно-адміністративної системи управління Вселенською церквою. Установлено, що поступово сформувалось дві протилежні еклезіологічні традиції (грецька та слов'янська), які свідчать про відсутність Єдності та Соборності. Формування двох підходів до розуміння структури системотворення Вселенського православ'я стало причиною лише часткової присутності на Великому Всеpravославному соборі у 2016 р. Обґрунтовано, що в православній традиції відсутнє загальноприйняте трактування взаємозалежності принципу помісності та автокефального статусу церков. Доведено, що автокефальна церква – завжди Помісна, однак сучасне еклезіологічне трактування помісності автоматично не призводить до набуття автокефального статусу.

Аргументовано, що апостоли та їх найближчі учні не знали й не передбачали іншого принципу існування Вселенської церкви, крім автокефалії. Підкреслено, що такий механізм церковного управління базувався на територіальному принципі та лежить в основі поняття помісності у Вселенській церкві.

Ключові слова: собор, церква, автокефалія, еклезіологія, канонічне право, патріарх, парафія, митрополит.

Andrii Kobetiak. Kościoły lokalne i autokefaliczne: uzasadnienie kanoniczne i tradycja

W artykule omówiono podstawowe zasady i mechanizmy funkcjonowania kościelno-administracyjnego systemu władzy Kościoła Ekumenicznego. Ustalono, że stopniowo ukształtowały się dwie przeciwstawne tradycje eklezjologiczne (grecka i słowiańska), które świadczą o braku Jedności i Jedności. Powstanie dwóch podejść do rozumienia struktury systemu powszechnego prawosławia spowodowało jedynie częściową obecność na Wielkim Soborze Wszechprawosławnym w 2016 roku. Twierdzi się, że w tradycji prawosławnej nie ma wspólnej interpretacji współzależności lokalizm i autokefaliczny status kościołów. Udowodniono, że kościół autokefaliczny jest zawsze lokalny, ale współczesna eklezjologiczna interpretacja lokalności nie prowadzi automatycznie do uzyskania statusu autokefalicznego. Udowodniono, że apostołowie i ich najbliżsi uczniowie nie znali i nie przewidywali innej zasady istnienia Kościoła ekumenicznego niż autokefalia. Podkreśla się, że taki mechanizm władzy kościelnej opierał się na zasadzie terytorialnejta leży u podstaw koncepcji lokalności w Kościele ekumenicznym.

Słowa kluczowe: katedra, kościół, autokefalia, eklezjologia, prawo kanoniczne, patriarcha, parafia, metropolita.

Formulation of the problem. The signing of the Tomos for the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and the related church and political events once again drew attention to the autocephalous issue. The Ecumenical Church has repeatedly tried to solve the problem of granting autocephalous status to the people of a particular country. Whenever the question of the independence of the new church was raised, leading theologians and hierarchs paid attention to this question. However, today there is no single document that would regulate the process of signing the Tomos and granting autocephalous status. The definitions of «local» and «autocephalous» churches, as well as the interdependence of these concepts, remain vague. Thus, autocephaly was periodically granted to various churches, the last of which for the Ukrainian Church in 2019, but a generally accepted mechanism with a clear algorithm of action has not been adopted. Moreover, the document «Autocephaly and ways to proclaim it», which was to be signed in 2016, was one of the main reasons for the failure of the Great All-Orthodox Council in Crete. Thus, the world scientific and religious community has once again intensified the study of the autocephalous principle of the existence of the Universal Orthodoxy, in connection with the discussion of the Local Churches on the recognition of the newly proclaimed OCU. It is important to study the early Christian period, in which the main principles and mechanisms of the Church's existence in general were formed.

Leading theologians, hierarchs and great fathers of the Church addressed the issue of autocephaly and the structure of the Ecumenical Church. There were certain «bursts» of theological thought, as in the era of the Ecumenical Councils and periods of decline. Today, scholars, hierarchs and theologians are once again actively discussing the church situation, which is connected with the crisis of Orthodoxy in general and the intensification of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. The Great Cretan Council of 2016 and the granting of the Tomos to the Ukrainian Church were especially noteworthy.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The state of scientific development of the chosen topic today is ambiguous. On the one hand, there are hundreds of public statements, speeches and official letters from hierarchs and theologians from various Local Churches regarding autocephaly. Most of them are polemical. On the other hand, the scientific substantiation of autocephalous topics has been significantly intensified. Accordingly, it is important to develop and understand the basic terminology on this topic. The works of researchers of Ukrainian church

history and the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church are especially valuable. I. Vlasovsky, O. Kyridon, O. Lototsky, Y. Mulyk-Lutsyk and others, who repeatedly drew attention to the period of early Christianity, when the basic principles of the modern church system were formed, and the emergence of the institution of autocephaly and the principle of locality.

Among the scholars who studied the early period of Christianity, it is necessary to single out world-renowned researchers of church history: V. Asmus, A. von Harnack, J. Robertson, A. Kartashev, E. Caesarea, I. Kryvushen, N. Milash, A. Melkov, E. Smirnov, S. Smirnov, K. Skurat, F. Uspensky and many others. The works of the mentioned authors reveal the main periods of development and the objective-situational conditionality of the autocephalous principle of the church's existence.

The importance and relevance of the chosen topic is evidenced by a number of modern dissertation research, for example, V. Butynsky, M. Gergelyuk, A. Didkivsky, E. Zaremba. Particularly important and thorough are the works of Archimandrite Kirill (Govorun), a national scholar who is one of the best theologians in modern Orthodoxy. He clearly reveals the essence of the transformation of the ecclesiological conditionality of the modern church system and the problem of the limits of jurisdiction.

Despite considerable scientific and secular interest in the topic of research, today there are a number of unresolved issues regarding the autocephalous system and the canon law of Christianity of the Eastern rite in relation to the unified system. In addition, the autocephalous principle of the existence of the Ecumenical Church in the period before the Ecumenical Councils is not clarified. The presence of a number of unresolved scientific problems concerning the autocephalous structure of the Ecumenical Church and the need to clarify the relationship between the concepts of locality and autocephaly significantly highlights the chosen topic.

The purpose of the article is to shed light on the question of the boundaries of the jurisdiction of a particular Local Church in the context of the ecclesiological conditionality of the autocephalous system of world Orthodoxy. It is necessary to establish non-compliance with the mechanisms of governing the church structure laid down by the apostles, the modern arrangement of the Ecumenical Church. The main question is whether the principles and ideals of the early Christian church correspond to the current division of the United Church into Local Autocephalous Organizations.

Presenting main material. Due to the events surrounding the signing of the Tomos for the PCU, fundamental differences in the ecclesiology of the Local Churches became apparent. Most ordinary citizens, and sometimes scholars, consider Orthodoxy to be a monolithic entity. The doctrine of all the Orthodox world is one, but functional, for ease of management and coordination, the Ecumenical Church is divided into separate local entities that are independent. In this way, the national interest of religious citizens can be taken into account. Thus, the idea is formed that the general doctrine is unified, and the Local Churches form a single whole of one common church. Indeed, this is a conditional ideal of the life of the Orthodox Church, which was laid down from the first centuries, but today there are significant differences in theological teaching, especially ecclesiology (the science of church structure). As a result, the theological debate and the loss of church unity in 2020, which manifested itself in the severance of the Eucharistic communion as a symbol of the homogeneity of the Church. Ecumenical Orthodoxy is on the verge of a great schism, which significantly actualizes the study of the period of early Christianity as an «ideal» stage of the church's existence. Differences in the teachings of the Local Churches also affected the fundamental doctrine of church structure. For some of the Local Churches (of Greek origin, which focus on Constantinople) in the Ecumenical Church there is a «meeting point». It was once the Roman chair, as the first among equals and the capital of the empire. After the division in 1054, the prerogative of the primacy was taken over by the throne of Constantinople. The «collection point» has special rights and responsibilities, and this is primarily due to the right of the arbitral tribunal of the highest instance and the gift of autocephaly.

To confirm this, in 1950 the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras published a circular message stating that the Local Churches «communicate» only through the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

This is the only way they have a connection with each other. The break with Constantinople for any reason means a break with Orthodoxy in general [15, p. 213]. This document certifies the official ecclesiological position of the structure of world Orthodoxy. From it follows the model of the relationship of Constantinople with the Local Churches. Although officially the Local Churches are completely independent and self-governing, the Ecumenical Hierarchy can act as the supreme arbiter and overseer of canonical precepts. This is made possible by the exercise of the right of appeal to him by hierarchs from all over the world, as well as through the leadership and feeding of the diaspora of other churches.

For the rest of the churches (mostly Slavic, Moscow-oriented) there can be no single point of contact. Each of the Local Churches is completely independent, in no way accountable to anyone and has the right to grant autocephaly to its autonomous part (daughter-Church). The Local Church is subject only to the Ecumenical Council [13, p. 93]. The second point of view is much newer in time, as the Slavic churches appeared after the era of the Ecumenical Councils, so this position is not reflected in the canons of the church. Instead, some Local Churches, such as the ROC, in 2013 adopted a document on the primacy of the Orthodox world [11]. The decision of the Holy Synod denies the salty status of the Cathedral of Constantinople as one that has administrative advantages over other Local Churches. The system of local churches is presented in the form of a confederation of equal sister churches. At that time, the Constantinople chair was endowed exclusively with the spiritual advantages of honor during worship and ceremonies.

To objectively understand the problem of the autocephalous structure of the Ecumenical Church, it is necessary to carefully consider the period of formation of Christianity as a world religion and the related principle of church government in the first centuries. It is important to understand the terminology, which was largely transformed in 2000.

In the Slavic tradition, the etymology of the word «church» changed from Gothic. It marks the church as a building, or rather the cathedral. In Greek, its equivalent is considered to be the word βασιλική – «royal house», and in Latin – basilica. This term conveys the «external» sign and refers to the church as a building, in the modern sense – the temple [1, p. 10]. Other European nations besides the Slavs and Germans learned the term «Ἐκκλησία» (ecclesia) from the Greek people's assembly. It is in this interpretation that it is appropriate to use the concept of church in the understanding of church organization. In this case, the concept of the church means a specific parish (ecclesia), which in terms of canon law is already self-sufficient, especially if headed by a bishop. On the other hand, the church (ecclesia) is a large administrative unit of the general system. For example, Ecumenical Orthodoxy is divided into Local Churches, recognized and unrecognized.

The basic rules and norms of life in Orthodoxy were formed during the Ecumenical Councils. The understanding of the essence of the Church has been transformed over centuries of history, the basic teaching has remained unchanged. Therefore, ecclesiology as a science of the Church today is one of the fundamental theological disciplines. The secularized society of the postmodern era needs a thorough understanding of the essence, role and mission of the Church in human life. The problem of the autocephalous status of an individual Local Church is inextricably linked to the science of the church as a whole. The church, like any other social institution, must have its own earthly form of government and administration. It is clear that the Church is a God-man organism, which is guided directly by the Lord, because Orthodox teaching unequivocally states that the head of the Church is Christ [10, p. 137].

The ecclesiology of the early Christian period does not provide for any other ecclesiastical structure of the local church than autocephaly. Each of the independent churches, and ideally since apostolic times all the parishes where the service is held, are already self-sufficient in themselves, are part of the general structure of the Universal Orthodoxy. Autocephaly guarantees freedom, and the main thing is the equality of local churches. And this is the basis of the Conciliarism, the basic dogma of the Orthodox faith. Thus, autocephaly is a basic system-forming factor in the internal organization of the church structure. The apostolic men simply did not envisage another version of the church-administrative system. Each parish was already self-sufficient, and the church of a

separate province, headed by a bishop, is the Local Autocephalous Church in the modern sense. It was in the pre-Nicene period that a three-level institute of the priesthood was formed, the canon of the Holy Scriptures was formed and the primary administrative-territorial division according to the state model was recorded [13, p. 50]. The institute of the Council appears (Apostolic Council of 51, a number of Local Councils). Therefore, the study of this period and an example of resolving the church contradictions of the time (the celebration of Easter, the baptism of heretics) is an important historical precedent for the pacification of modern church life.

In the pre-Nicene period, the concept of «κατ οίκον ἐκκλησία» of the «house church» appeared, which has no unambiguous definition among modern canons. Based on the opinion of the authoritative theologian J. Zizioulas, the author believes that the home church goes beyond purely family relationships. Rather, the adjective indicates the location rather than the social nature of the church meeting. After all, in the early period of the church there was a rule «one Church – one Eucharist – one city», ie in one city there was only one «home church» [6, p. 252]. Today, no testimony from church historians has been found that would indicate any problems with the organization of «home churches» into a single church. At the same time, this very concept is rapidly disappearing from the historical arena.

The term «local church» in our understanding has Church Slavonic origins. The Greek equivalent of «τοπική ἐκκλησία» should be translated as «local church», one that is located in a certain place. Therefore, the adjective «τοπική» indicates the territorial structure of the Orthodox Churches. In English, the equivalent of «local church» is known. Today, some theologians, including Russian and Ukrainian, are trying to separate the concept of «local» (small) and «local» church. In the framework of this study, as well as in general, it has no scientific basis, because in other languages there is no such division [3, p. 40].

The concept of locality is clearly early Christian, because it was understood as the first church formations in the place of their founding by the apostles, they were united by one linguistic and cultural characteristics of a particular ethnic group. In the first centuries, when it came to churches in the plural, we meant local, ie local communities, but the Church remained one and the same, it was expressed in the Eucharist – communion [7].

In Orthodox ecclesiology, the concept of the local church is used in relation to a single church in a limited area (such as the state) as opposed to the concept of the Ecumenical Church. A local church usually means an autocephalous Church in a certain territory, which usually coincides with the territorial boundaries of a certain state. Modern Orthodox theologians, such as Metropolitan John (Zizioulas), Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) and others, testify that the local Church is not just part of the Ecumenical Church, but also its full manifestation. Universal unreduced manifestation in a particular place. The local church is a Catholic church in a certain territory, identical to the Ecumenical Church, which exists only in its local manifestations, but at the same time is not identical to the Catholic Church, different from it. This antinomic paradox to some extent reflects the dogma of the Holy Trinity. The only difference is that there are three divine incarnations, but they are one and the same God, and there are many Local Churches (15). Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) notes that the fundamental and decisive problem of the relationship between the «local» and the «Ecumenical» Catholic Church must be solved without applying any notion of unity in the collective, but only in the spirit of unity as identity. Schematically speaking, in the first case the various local Churches are parts that unite with each other and thus form a whole, while in the second the local Churches are complete circles that cannot be added to each other but only coincide with each other and, ultimately, with the Body of Christ itself and the original apostolic Church [4, p. 160]. The famous theologian of the twentieth century Hamer Jerome, who agrees, points out that «the whole community that makes up the Church is not born when all the local communities are united, but every community, no matter how small, is the whole Church» [17, p. 38].

The universal character of the church is that it unites all communities (local churches) without divisions (linguistic, cultural, national, class), and the local principle – in the location in a certain area. The universal church can be realized only through the local, local.

On the other hand, every local church (in the narrow sense) is already Ecumenical, because it is endowed with the fullness of God's grace. Orthodox ecclesiology views the local church not just as part of the Ecumenical Church, but as the entire Ecumenical Church in one community. God is one and indivisible, and He is present in the Eucharist. Another issue that is a sign of unity with the Ecumenical Church is the fulfillment of certain conditions (canonicity of the clergy, the structure of worship), ie unity in doctrine and rites with other churches [8, p. 91].

The universal character of the local church is expressed in the prayer of the bishop for his first hierarch. In addition, there are local councils, where bishops and laity testify to unity by making common decisions, and most importantly, a common Eucharist. Thus, the Ecumenical Church is the only one in the Eucharistic communion, it determines the boundaries of the church on a global scale, and local, ie local churches are the expression of the Ecumenical scale in a particular area [4, p. 201]. In the Gospels this principle can be compared to the words of Jesus Christ that He is the Vine (ie the One Church) and the apostles are the sprouts (Local Churches) (Jn. 15: 5).

Today, the term «local church» is used not only in the original meaning of an individual community, but also as a synonym for autocephaly, which is more common. A local church is a set of dioceses in a certain country or population of a certain nationality that have their own self-government (in addition to autocephaly, there may be an autonomous church that has its own rights in governance, but in some way depends on the patriarchal church).

Another term that actually refers to the object of study is autocephaly (from the Greek *αυτός* – himself and *κεφαλή* – head). This term refers to the administratively independent Orthodox Church, which is part of the Universal Orthodoxy, but nominally accountable to no one. Traditionally, the autocephalous division of churches coincides with the territorial division of the state. It is the autocephalous status that regulates the relationship between the Local Churches. In modern theological understanding and practice, an ecclesiastical organization can be called autocephalous, which has the right to decide independently, independently of other churches, its internal affairs, as well as to elect and ordain its bishops, including the first hierarch. The phenomenon of autocephaly is unique to the Orthodox Church. Autocephaly is a basic principle of apostolic preaching, which took into account the national and ethnic characteristics of the population of the Roman Empire of the early Christian period. It is no coincidence that the apostles received the gift of glossolalia (*γλωσσο* «language» and *λάλέω* «I speak») - the opportunity to preach in different languages (Acts 2: 6-11). At the same time, autocephaly is a purely administrative and territorial division of the single Ecumenical Church into smaller religious organizations for the convenience of governance and coordination. It is important that the autocephalous church can be only through mutual recognition and the Eucharist with other Local Churches [8, p. 91].

In modern theological and religious studies there is no well-defined single source of definition of autocephaly, this is one of the main reasons for the lack of consensus on the possibility of gaining autocephalous status in modern Orthodoxy. On the one hand, this complicates scientific research, and on the other – significantly actualizes it, because the study of autocephaly today is a key task of world Orthodoxy at the level of the formation of objective tools for further research. Today, the only constant authority and source of church teaching is the Holy Scriptures and the Rules of the Holy Apostles, the canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils and the rules of the Church Fathers [6].

Autocephaly is one of the oldest institutions of the Church, which is a defining feature of Orthodoxy today. Moreover, it is around autocephaly that the main controversies and misunderstandings on a global scale unfold. The very phenomenon of autocephaly remained unchanged, but throughout the history of the Christian church there were different, even radically opposite approaches to its understanding. The very theory of autocephaly emerges with Christianity. That is, it is not some imposed or borrowed institution from the outside, autocephaly is the very essence of Orthodoxy, the way of its existence. Apostolic communities are autocephalous entities that did not report to each other. Each of the established parish churches was equivalent [5, p. 110].

It is important that since the founding of the church were autocephalous, ie it is not an acquired status, but the basic imperative of their existence. Higher ecclesiastical institutions were formed several centuries later, as evidenced by the rules of several Local and Ecumenical Councils, such as Rule 6 of the Council of Nicaea. State delimitation in the provinces or dioceses (hence the church name) mainly fell on the borders of ethnic settlements of the peoples conquered by the empire. Therefore, the administrative basis of the church was not national but territorial division [2, p. 176]. The same opinion is defended by a well-known Ukrainian church figure of the twentieth century in the pages of the two-volume «Autocephaly» Professor O. Lototsky.

Russian canonist V. Tsypin unequivocally defends the idea of territorial rather than national principle of creation of Local Churches. He testifies that the current state of universal Orthodoxy has been based on the first centuries. It was in the first and third centuries that the structure of Orthodoxy was formed, which is unchanged today. Christianity preaches the principle of the absence of national characteristics, because the Apostle Paul says that there is no Greek, no Jew, no slave, no free man (Colossians 3:11). That is, ideally, people of different nationalities living in a given city should be members of one Orthodox community under one bishop. Thus, the state-administrative division is the basis for church delimitation. On the one hand, a state, or even an empire, can have a large number of nationalities, and they must be united in one church, on the other – one nation can be divided into several states. This means that there should be several independent churches. As for the 34 Apostolic Rule, which states that every nation, not country, should know the first hierarch, Father Vladislav explains this by the fact that in the first centuries the term «people» meant a certain country [14, p. 276].

Professor O. Lototsky believed that the canons of the Orthodox Church provide for the autocephalous status of the church for some independent peoples. When a new state is created with a predominant Orthodox population and asks for autocephaly for its church, it is impossible to refuse according to canonical norms. But the independence of the church of disparate tribes and national minorities living in a non-Orthodox country is unacceptable [9, p. 462].

The territorial principle has had exceptions since the first centuries. First of all, this was due to the presence of certain «representations» (apocryfs) of the ancient Primates, especially the Patriarch of Constantinople in other autocephalous churches to maintain communication between the churches. A similar situation was with monasteries and courtyards. Another example is stauropigia, when a church, monastery or bishop is located on the territory of one Local Church, and is subordinated to the Primate of another [14, p. 277].

Another important exception in matters of autocephaly during the Ecumenical Councils was Cyprus. According to the canons, the Church of Cyprus was to be subordinated to Antioch because it was administratively dependent on it, but at the Council of Ephesus in 431 the Cypriot hierarchs opposed and the Council retained the ancient tradition of independence. Other autocephaly arose purely as a result of the political transformations of the empire.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Summing up, we note that autocephaly is the basic imperative of the Orthodox Church, it is the basic principle of its functioning. The Ecumenical Church, which is essentially the only one in the administrative and national context, is divided into separate autocephalous churches, which are independent in management but have a limited character in the field of doctrine and canonical creativity. The Autocephalous Church is not only one of the parts of the Ecumenical Church, but its full realization in a specific place (therefore it is called the Local Church).

Orthodox ecclesiology has its own approach to the process of systematizing the structure of the Ecumenical Church. First of all, it has to do with the very understanding of the Church as a living God-man organism that is not permanent. The church is always changing, because generations of people are changing. That is, the Church is first and foremost a gathering of people. On the other hand, the Church is the Eucharist, where it is celebrated and is local, ie the Local Church, which includes representatives of all classes, professions and nationalities who live in a particular place and are Orthodox. Thus, the Church must have a strong local character, because the

Eucharist is celebrated in a specific place at a certain time. And according to the 34th apostolic rule, one Primate, ie the leader of local communities, can be in one place. Thus, according to the ecclesiological doctrine of the Church and its structure, the autocephalous system is the basic principle of the existence of the Universal Orthodoxy.

With the development of the Church in the epoch of the Councils, autocephaly turned from a purely ecclesiastical formation and the uniform existence of communities into a political instrument. It was because of its autocephalous status that the Byzantine Empire often pursued foreign policy. The emperor sought the elevation of the capital's patriarch, which was expressed in the cathedral rules, which give the Church of Constantinople significant privileges. Today, the problem of autocephaly is gaining a new wave of scientific research and theological discussions worldwide as a result of the signing of the Tomos for the Ukrainian Church. If the problem of acquiring autocephaly is not canonically resolved in the near future, Ecumenical Orthodoxy may find itself on the verge of a great schism.

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