

## **A CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PHRASE OF THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL: “THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ACCEPTS THE HISTORICAL NAME OF OTHER NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND CONFESSIONS THAT ARE NOT IN COMMUNION WITH HER”**

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**ABSTRACT.** In this paper I will try to emphasise the genesis and the development of the phrase: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions*”, by finding how this highly controversial formulation emerged and who were its promoters. Surprisingly, the direct promoter of this formulation of the final document of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference is none other than *Theodoros Zisis*, at that time a consultant member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The main question that we have addressed is the following: is there in the patristic, synodal and canonical Tradition of the Church any example where certain heterodox communities were called “Churches” without recognizing their ecclesiality or an ecclesial status? I have emphasised the diachronic development of the use of the word “church/ἐκκλησία” applied to other Christian communities in some synodal decisions and works of the Holy Fathers in order to designate certain communities that ceased the communion with the Orthodox Church and departed from it, but by the use of the word “Church” they did not give an ontological ecclesial status to other Christian communities.

**Keywords:** historical name, Church, confessions, reception, contestation, Theodoros Zisis, Hierotheos Vlachos, Holy and Great Council.

The most controversial phrase from all the decisions of the Holy and Great Council is found in the sixth chapter of the document: “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World”, where it is stated that: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian*

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*Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her*<sup>1</sup>. This statement is considered by the detractors of the Holy and Great Council as an innovation, a betrayal of the Orthodoxy and Ecclesiology of the Holy Fathers of the Church, by granting ecclesial status to other Christian communities, recognizing the existence of other Churches, or of several bodies or brides of Christ outside the Orthodox Church<sup>2</sup>. Even the Orthodox Church of Georgia stated in its decision on May 25, 2016 that “the Holy Synod found that this document contains ecclesiological and terminological errors and requires important changes”. If those changes are not made in the document, the Georgian Church will not sign it<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Georgia said nothing more about those errors that they have found in this document<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The French translation is “l’Église orthodoxe accepte l’appellation historique des autres Églises et Confessions chrétiennes hétérodoxes qui ne se trouvent pas en communion avec elle”, the Russian translation is: “Тем не менее Православная Церковь признает историческое наименование других не находящихся в общении с ней инославных христианских церквей и конфессий,” the Greek translation is: “Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀποδέχεται τὴν ἱστορικὴν ὀνομασίαν τῶν μὴ εὐρισκομένων ἐν κοινῶνίᾳ μετ’ αὐτῆς ἄλλων ἑτεροδόξων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ Ὁμολογιῶν”. As we can see, there is a difference between the English word: “non-orthodox” and the word used in the other official translations: “инославных”, “hétérodoxes” and “ἑτεροδόξων”. For a brief overview of the document, see: Rade Kisić, ‘Die Fundamente stärken. Ein Kommentar zum Dokument des Konzils von Kreta über die “Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche zu der übrigen christlichen Welt’, *Catholica* 71, no. 1 (2017): 52–59; Evgeny Pilipenko, ‘Zum Ökumene-Dokument der Orthodoxen Synode auf Kreta. Einige Überlegungen in Reaktion auf das Referat von Rade Kisić’, *Catholica* 71, no. 1 (2017): 60–63; Eva Maria Synek, *Das ‘Heilige und Grosse Konzil’ von Kreta* (Freistadt, Verlag Plöchl Freistadt, 2017), 75–80.

<sup>2</sup> Τσελεγγίδης, Κ. Δημήτριος. “Μπορεῖ μία Σύνοδος Ὁρθοδόξων νά προσδώσει ἐκκλησιαστικότητα στοὺς ἑτεροδόξους καὶ νά ὀριοθετήσῃ διαφορετικά τὴν ἔως τώρα ταυτότητα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας;” <http://www.impantokratoros.gr/dat/storage/dat/E9DAC65B/tselegidis.pdf>. For the Romanian translation see: Dimitrios Tselenghídis, ‘Poate un Sinod al ortodocșilor să acorde caracter de Biserică eterodocșilor și să definească diferit identitatea de până acum a Bisericii?’, in *‘Sfântul și Marele Sinod’ (Creta, 2016). Între providență și eșec*, ed. Tatiana Petrache (Oradea: Editura Astradrom, 2016), 99–100. Hierotheos, Vlachos. “Intervention and Text in the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece” (November 2016 Regarding the Holy and Great Council of Crete: <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>; Metropolitan Hierotheos, “The term ‘Churches’ as a ‘technical term’” <http://www.parembasis.gr/index.php/holy-great-council-menu/4887-ni-the-term-churches-as-a-technical-term>

<sup>3</sup> On 25 May 2016, the regular plenary session of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Georgia said about this document: “It was noted that the document had been from its inception unacceptable for the representatives of the Church of Georgia and that it had only been signed at the preliminary meeting because the following sentence was written in the text: “The Orthodox Churches of Georgia and Bulgaria left the World Council of Churches; the first of them left it in 1997 and the latter – in 1998, since they have their own opinions on the activity of the World Council of Churches which is why they do not participate in the events of the mentioned Council and other activities of the inter-Christian organisations”. <http://basilica.ro/en/georgian-orthodox-church-communicate-on-the-holy-and-great-council/>

<sup>4</sup> Mirian Gamrekelashvili, ‘Warum die Georgische Kirche der Synode auf Kreta fernblieb’, *Religion und Gesellschaft in Ost und West. Die Orthodoxe Kirche nach dem Konzil* 11 (2016): 20–21.

The ecclesiological basis of the document and its statements are very clear and just a tendentious interpretation might change its claims. The first article of the document clearly states that the Orthodox Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, and no other Christian community can possess these four attributes<sup>5</sup>. The Orthodox Church is the only one that has the apostolic succession and the whole truth, its dialogue with the other Christian communities relying precisely on the necessity of expressing this truth, which gives to the Orthodox Church its catholic character, as we can read in the second article of the document<sup>6</sup>. The third article of the document emphasises the indissoluble bond between true faith and sacramental communion and the sixth article states that: “In accordance with the ontological nature of the Church, her unity can never be perturbed”. Even the most conservative Orthodox theologians, such as Anastasios Gotsopoulos, agree with these positive aspects of the document that are expressing the authentic faith of the Church<sup>7</sup>. The Orthodox Church does not recognize the ecclesial status of other Christian communities, just the name they have given to their communities over time and only under certain conditions. The recognition of the historical name of “churches and confessions” is totally different from the recognition of the ecclesiality of a community. If the Council of Crete had accepted the ecclesial status of other Christian communities, the first canonical manifestation of this recognition would have been the *Communicatio in sacris*, or the common receiving of the sacraments, a fact absolutely and unequivocally condemned by the document, by Orthodox theology and by the participating bishops. These Christian communities are considered heterodox, or not in accordance with the doctrine of the Orthodox Church, being different from Orthodoxy in terms of doctrine<sup>8</sup>. The Orthodox Church is not in Eucharistic communion with them. However, some theologians, such as Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, are militating against this formulation by dedicating some papers to this problem<sup>9</sup>, trying to contest any use of the word “church” for other Christian communities.

<sup>5</sup> “The Orthodox Church, as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in her profound ecclesiastical self-consciousness, believes unflinchingly that she occupies a central place in the matter of the promotion of Christian unity in the world today.” <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/rest-of-christian-world>

<sup>6</sup> “The Orthodox Church finds the unity of the Church on the fact of her establishment by our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the communion in the Holy Trinity and in the sacraments. This unity is expressed through the apostolic succession and the patristic tradition and is lived out in the Church up to the present day. The Orthodox Church has the mission and duty to transmit and preach all the truth contained in Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, which also bestows upon the Church her catholic character.” <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/rest-of-christian-world>.

<sup>7</sup> Αναστάσιος Γκοτσόπουλος, *Σχολιασμός στο κείμενο της Ε΄ Πανορθόδοξου Προσυνοδικής Διασκέψεως (Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης 11-17.10.2015) «Σχέσεις της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας προς τον λοιπόν Χριστιανικόν Κόσμον»*, (Πάτρα, Φεβρουάριος 2016), 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> For the meanings of the word *ετερόδοξος* in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, see: Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 552.

<sup>9</sup> Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καί Ἁγίου Βλασίου Ἱεροθέου “Παρέμβαση καί κείμενο στήν Ἱεραρχία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος (Νοέμβριος 2016)”, <http://parembasis.gr/images/anakoinoseis/>

First of all let us see the genesis and the development of the phrase: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions*”, by finding how this highly controversial formulation emerged and who were its promoters. The pre-conciliar document “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World” was drafted at the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference on October 15, 2015, and was signed by representatives of all 14 Autocephalous Orthodox Churches<sup>10</sup>. It is composed of the two documents of the Third Pan-orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference held in Chambésy (1986): “The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement” and “Relationships of the Orthodox Church with the Christian World”<sup>11</sup>. The Pre-conciliar draft text from 2015<sup>12</sup> and even the final document of the Holy and Great Council are nothing else than a restructuring of these two documents with some clarification and the modification of certain articles<sup>13</sup>. Of the 24 final articles

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2016/NAYPAKTOY\_IERARXIA-NOE-2016.pdf. The English translation: Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlassios, *Intervention and Text in the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece (November 2016) regarding the Cretan Council*, <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>

<sup>10</sup> Metropolitan John of Pergamon, (Ecumenical Patriarchate); Archbishop Sergios of Good Hope (Patriarchate of Alexandria); Metropolitan Damaskinos (Patriarchate of Antioch); Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias (Patriarchate of Jerusalem); Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk (Church of Russia); Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral (Church of Serbia); Honorable Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviște (Church of Romania); Metropolitan John of Varna and Veliki Preslav (Church of Bulgaria); Metropolitan Gerasimos of Zoukdidi and Tsaissi (Church of Georgia); Metropolitan George of Paphos (Church of Cyprus); Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristeri (Church of Greece); Bishop George of Siemiatycze (Church of Poland); Metropolitan John of Korçë (Church of Albania); Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice (Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia). For a full list of the members of all delegations, see: Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, ed., *Ε' Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 10-17 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015*, Synodika, XIII (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2016), 9–10.

<sup>11</sup> For the two decisions of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, see: Viorel Ioniță, *Hotărârile întrunirilor panortodoxe din 1923 până în 2009: spre Sfântul și Marele Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe* (București: Basilica, 2013), 215–226; Anastasios Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil: ein Quellen- und Arbeitsbuch zur orthodoxen Ekklesiologie* (Münster: Theophano-Verlag, 2013), 534–538.

<sup>12</sup> A description of the document is made by: Viorel Ioniță, *Sfântul și Marele Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe: documente pregătitoare* (București: Basilica, 2016); Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *Ε' Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 10-17 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015*, 383–388.

<sup>13</sup> If we compare the final document of the Holy and Great Council of Crete (2016) with the two documents of the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference (1986), the following similarities can be found: the first article of the final document is the same as the first article of the Document: “The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement (OCEM 1986) adopted in 1986; the second article is equivalent to the first part of the second article from OCEM 1986. The third article is equivalent to the second part of the second article from OCEM 1986. The fourth article is a development of the third

of the document, only 5 articles are totally different from the document drafted at the Third Pan-orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference from Chambésy in 1986. The sixth article of the final document of the Holy and Great Council, where it is stated that: *“the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her, is almost the same as the second article of the document “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Christian World” from the Third Pan-orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference held in Chambésy in 1986, with small changes, as we will see. The accusations brought against this document, that it was secretly composed in certain Pre-conciliar Conferences with the aim of betraying Orthodoxy, or that it was written without the knowledge of the Church’s *pleroma* or bishops, are totally unfounded<sup>14</sup>. The Orthodox Church had 30 years for the doctrinal analysis of a document published in 1986 in the official journals of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches and in other journals<sup>15</sup>. Although at the second pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox*

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article of OCEM 1986, retaining the same wording. The fifth article is a development of the last sentence of the second article of OCEM 1986, being drafted at the 5th Pre-Conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference. The sixth article is equivalent to the second article of the document “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Christian World (ROCWCW 1986), with some changes. The seventh article almost the same as the fourth article of OCEM 1986. Article 8 is taken from article 3 of ROCWCW 1986; Article 9 is taken directly from the fifth article of ROCWCW 1986. The first part of the tenth article is taken from the fifth article of ROCWCW 1986, and the second part is added afterwards. Article 11 is taken from the sixth article of ROCWCW 1986; Article 12 is taken from seventh article of ROCWCW 1986; Article 13 is taken from article 8 of ROCWCW 1986; article 14 is taken from article 9 of ROCWCW 1986; Article 15 is equivalent to article 10 of ROCWCW 1986; Article 16 is a development of the fifth article of OCEM 1986, to which are added the withdrawals of the Churches of Georgia and Bulgaria from the World Council of Churches. Article 16 is a development of the last part of the fifth article of OCEM 1986, plus the addition of some historical development; Article 18 is taken from article 6 of OCEM 1986. Article 16 is a development of the fifth article of OCEM 1986. Article 19 is a takeover of article 7 of OCEM 1986, article 20 is a new article; article 21 is a development of article 8 of OCEM 1986; articles 22-24 are new articles added to the draft texts of the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference (1986).

<sup>14</sup> See for example the paper of Fr. Peter Heers: “However, not only was the body of the Church kept in the dark but even much of the hierarchy itself. The majority of the bishops and even synods of the Local Churches were uninvolved in the preparation of the “Council,” including the drafting of its texts. In this regard, we recall the painful cry of protest issued by Met. Hierotheos of Nafpaktou months before the “Council” that the pre-conciliar texts “were unknown to most hierarchs and to myself, remain held-up in committee and we don’t know their contents.”

<https://orthodoxethos.com/post/the-council-of-crete-and-the-new-emerging-ecclesiology-an-orthodox-examination>

<sup>15</sup> The document “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World” was published in the official journal of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the same year: *“Biserica Ortodoxă Română, CIV nr. 9-10, (1986): 65-70, translated by Fr. Prof. Dr. Ștefan Alexe, a member of the Romanian delegation at the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference in 1986 and the document “The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement” was published in the same Journal: Biserica Ortodoxă Română, CIV, nr. 9-10 (1986): 62-75, translated by Constantin Coman.*

Conference it was decided that no pre-conciliar document has validity and canonical applicability until after its approval by the Holy and Great Council, this 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference established that the document should be immediately applied due to its importance and necessity. If the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions was a heresy, why did Orthodox theology need 30 years to see this doctrinal error and why was no Orthodox theologian able to expose this “error” of the Holy and Great Council – and here we can mention great theologians who participated in these Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conferences – until Hierotheos Vlahos, Theodoros Zisis, Dimitrios Tselengidis, Gheorgheos Metallinos or others? However, an overview of this formulation can show us that there is no heresy in the final document of the Council of Crete regarding this phrase, the accusations being, in most of the cases, without any theological foundation.

Let us see the genesis and development of this phrase in the draft documents of the Holy and Great Council. This formulation appears for the first time in the draft text of the First Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission organised at the Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy from July 16 to 28, 1971, in the paper about ecclesiastical economy in the Orthodox Church, a theme prepared by the Romanian Orthodox Church. At the end of this document it is written that: “the Orthodox Church recognizes the ontological existence of all these Christian Churches and Confessions”.<sup>16</sup> In this Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission participated some of the great theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>17</sup>. Fifteen years later, as we can see from the acts of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, held in Chambésy 1986, naming and defining other Christian Communities was one of the most important tasks of the debates. Taking the floor, metropolitan Parthénios of Carthage said:

“Quand je dialogue avec les Catholiques romains - c’est là le point critique - est-ce que je reconnais qu’ils constituent une Église ou non? Il s’agit d’un problème important. Il s’agit de dire ce que sont ces hommes. L’Église orthodoxe est-elle la seule Église et tous les autres sont-ils en dehors de l’Église? Ou détiennent-ils eux

<sup>16</sup> “Unsere heilige orthodoxe Kirche ist sich daher der Bedeutung und des Gewichts der Struktur des heutigen Christentums bewusst und erkennt die ontologische Existenz all dieser christlichen Kirchen und Konfessionen an, obwohl sie die eine, heilige, katholische und apostolische Kirche ist. Ebenso glaubt sie positiv, dass ihre Beziehungen zu all diesen Kirchen auf der möglichst schnellen und objektiven Klärung der ekklesiologischen Frage und der bei diesen Kirchen vorhandenen dogmatischen Lehre insgesamt beruhen”. Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 398. For the Romanian translation see: “Iconomia bisericească”, *Orthodoxia*, XXIV, no. 2 (1972): 294.

<sup>17</sup> For example: Chrysostomos of Myra, Panteleimon Rodopoulos, professor of Canon Law, Prof. Gerasimos Konidaris, Justinian of Moldavia, Antonie of Ploiesti, the future Metropolitan of Transylvania, Prof. Grigorij Skobej, Prof. Nikolaj Sivarov, Prof. Ioannis Karmiris and others. For all the members of the delegations see: Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 359.

aussi quelque chose de l'Église? Que sont les Catholiques romains et qu'est-ce que les anciennes Églises orientales? Si j'admets qu'il s'agit d'Églises, je commencerai au moins à dialoguer avec elles de manière plus fraternelle. Voilà le sujet de mon embarras et j'aimerais qu'on y trouve une solution. Pas immédiatement. Mais que nous nous attachions à la question au cours de nos dialogues<sup>18</sup>”.

In the final document of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference attended by all delegations of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, the formulation was that the Orthodox Church “recognises the actual existence of all Churches and Christian confessions” (Fr: “reconnaît l'existence de fait de toutes les Églises et Confessions chrétiennes”; Gr.: “Αναγνωρίζει την πραγματική ύπαρξιν όλων τῶν χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καί Ὁμολογιῶν”)<sup>19</sup>. The phrase from the document of the Inter-Orthodox Commission held in Chambésy in 1971 was changed. The direct promoter of this formulation of the final document of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference is none other than *Theodoros Zisis*, at that time a consultant member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate<sup>20</sup>. The working committee for the elaboration of the text “Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Christian World”, whose chairman was Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală and its secretary Vlasios Phidas, presented on November 4, 1986, a draft text in order to become the subject of debate in the plenum of the Conference. In this text it was stated that the Orthodox Church “recognizes the ontological existence of all Christian Churches and Confessions<sup>21</sup>”, taking the text from the

<sup>18</sup> Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, ed., *IIIe Conférence panorthodoxe préconciliaire. Actes (28 octobre – 9 novembre 1986)*, Synodika, X (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2014), 102; For the Greek translation see: Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, ed., *Γ' Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 28 Ὀκτωβρίου-9 Νοεμβρίου 1986*, Synodika, IX (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2014), 105.

<sup>19</sup> Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, ed., *IIIe Conférence panorthodoxe préconciliaire. Actes (28 octobre – 9 novembre 1986)*, Synodika, X (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2014), 297; Ionita, *Hotărârile întrunirilor panortodoxe din 1923 până în 2009: spre Sfântul și Marele Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe*, 219; Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 534; Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, ed., *Γ' Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 28 Ὀκτωβρίου-9 Νοεμβρίου 1986*, Synodika, IX (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2014), 305.

<sup>20</sup> Theodoros Zisis participated in other Pre-conciliar Conferences and in the Preparatory Inter-Orthodox Commission held in Chambésy, between February 15-23, 1986, a Commission that analysed the draft documents for the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference held in Chambésy, between October 28 – November 6, 1986. Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 463.

<sup>21</sup> “Notre sainte Église orthodoxe, pleinement consciente de sa responsabilité dans la voie vers l'unité du monde chrétien, ne se contente pas de reconnaître l'existence ontologique de toutes ces Églises et Confessions chrétiennes, bien que représentant elle-même l'Église une, sainte, catholique et apostolique; elle est fermement convaincue, également, que toutes les relations qu'elle entretient avec ces dernières

document of the first Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission drafted in 1971. The next day, on November 5, 1986, during the debates on the document, Theodoros Zisis took the floor and states: “A little further is the question of “ontological recognition” of other Christian churches. Here is a contradiction. We can recognize the “existence” of other Christian churches, but not the “ontological existence”<sup>22</sup>. The text proposed by Theodoros Zisis, according to which the Orthodox Church “recognizes the existence of all Christian Churches and Confessions” was endorsed by Bishop Jeremiah of Wroclaw<sup>23</sup>, the delegate of the Church of Poland and accepted by the Commission and placed in the final text of the document “Relation of the Orthodox Church with the Christian Word” drafted and signed by all the members of the delegations of the Third Pan-orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference from Chambésy (1986).

How is it possible that Theodoros Zisis, the herald of Orthodoxy and the defender of orthodox faith against the heresy of ecumenism, the “pan-heresy” of heresies, who, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy 2017, ceased communion with his own bishop considering him fallen from the orthodox faith<sup>24</sup>, not only say thirty years ago that the Orthodox Church can recognize the existence of all Christian Churches

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doivent se fonder sur la clarification, le plus rapidement possible et le plus objectivement possible, de toute la question de l'ecclésiologie et de l'enseignement général...” Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *IIIe Conférence panorthodoxe préconciliaire. Actes (28 octobre – 9 novembre 1986)*, 210. “ἀναγνωρίζει, καίπερ αὐτή οὐσα ἡ Μία, Ἁγία, Καθολικὴ καὶ Ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία, τὴν ὄντολογικὴν ὑπαρξιν ὅλων αὐτῶν τῶν χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ Ὁμολογιῶν” Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *I<sup>re</sup> Προσυνοδικὴ Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 28 Ὀκτωβρίου-9 Νοεμβρίου 1986*, 217.

<sup>22</sup> “Un peu plus bas, il est question de reconnaissance de «l'existence ontologique» des autres Églises chrétiennes. Il y a là contradiction. Nous pouvons reconnaître «l'existence», mais non «l'existence ontologique» des autres Églises chrétiennes. Plus bas, nous parlons de: «clarification... de la question ecclésiologique». Je propose de compléter, «la clarification de leur part...» pour éviter toute mauvaise interprétation et tout malentendu.” Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *IIIe Conférence panorthodoxe préconciliaire. Actes (28 octobre – 9 novembre 1986)*, 231. “Ὀλίγον περαιτέρω γίνεται λόγος περί τῆς ἀναγνωρίσεως τῆς «ὄντολογικῆς ὑπάρξεως» τῶν ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν. Πρόκειται περί ἀντιφάσεως. Δυνάμεθα ἀναγνωρίσωμεν τὴν «ὑπαρξιν», ἀλλ' ὄχι τὴν «ὄντολογικὴν ὑπαρξιν» τῶν ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν”. Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *I<sup>re</sup> Προσυνοδικὴ Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 28 Ὀκτωβρίου-9 Νοεμβρίου 1986*, 238.

<sup>23</sup> “Émin. Président, une courte proposition. Hier, en petit groupe, nous avons discuté et sommes tombés d'accord sur le fait qu'il suffit de remplacer le mot «ontologique» par le mot «réelle». Ceci au moins rendra clair le texte russe. Réellement, dans son existence terrestre, nous la reconnaissons. Mais pas «ontologique».” Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L'Église Orthodoxe, *IIIe Conférence panorthodoxe préconciliaire. Actes (28 octobre – 9 novembre 1986)*, 231.

<sup>24</sup> For the “Letter of Protopresbyter Theodore Zisis to Metropolitan Anthimos of Thessaloniki (March 3, 2017)”, entitled: “Defense and Declaration of Cessation of Commemoration of Bishop on Account of the Teaching of Heresy”, see: <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/defense-and-declaration-of-cessation-of-commemoration-of-bishop-on-account-of-the-teaching-of-heresy>



and confessions, but also through his proposals at the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference held in Chambesy (1986) can be the direct promoter of this phrase?

At the fifth Pan-Orthodox Pre-conciliar Conference the formulation proposed by Theodoros Zisis is taken into the document with small changes. Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain proposed in the plenum of the Conference not to use the word "Church" for other Christian communities<sup>25</sup>. The solution is rejected by Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka, who in 2016, at the Holy and Great Council refused to sign the documents for various reasons<sup>26</sup>. Taking the floor, Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka said: „Well, we can not talk to other people with "brackets", and we need to recognize them as a historical entity, but not a doctrinal one (Λοιπόν, καί ἡμεῖς δέν δυνάμεθα νά ὀμιλῶμεν πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους μέ εἰσαγωγικά καί πρέπει νά τοὺς ἀναγνωρίζωμεν κάποια ἱστορικήν ὄντοτητα, ἀλλ' ὄχι δογματικήν)... So we should not be afraid, because we have a careful formulation. We recognize the historical existence, not the ontological existence. These are two different things. (Ἐπομένως, δέν πρέπει νά φοβῶμεθα, διότι ἐδῶ ἔχομεν μίαν προσεκτικήν διατύπωσιν. Ἀναγνωρίζομεν τήν ἱστορικήν ὑπαρξιν, ὄχι ὄντολογικήν ὑπαρξιν. Ἐτερον ἐκάτερον.)”<sup>27</sup> So, the proposed

<sup>25</sup> "Σεβασμιώτατε, θέλομεν νά παρακαλέσωμεν εἰς τήν § 6 νά ἀλλάξῃ ἡ λέξις: «χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν» καί νά εἴπωμεν «Κοινοτήτων» – ὅπως λέγεται – «Ὁμολογιῶν». Ἡ λέξις «Ἐκκλησία» ἀναφέρεται μόνον εἰς τήν μίαν καί ἐνιαίαν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν. Ἐδῶ νὰ ἀφεῖται εἰς τόν πληθυντικόν ριθμόν, πρᾶγμα, τό ὁποῖον λλοιώνει τήν ἔννοιαν τήν Ἐκκλησίας.” *Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L’Église Orthodoxe, ed., E’ Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 10-17 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015, Synodika, XIII (Chambésy-Genève: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Œcuménique, 2016), 125.*

<sup>26</sup> For the reasons see his letter: Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka, "Why I did not sign the document of the Council of Crete about the relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world" <http://www.romfea.gr/images/article-images/2016/07/romfea2/ba.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> "Ὁ Σεβ. Ἐπίσκοπος Μπάτσκας κ. Εἰρηναῖος. Εὐχαριστῶ, ἅγιε Πρόεδρε. Ἐχω πλήρη κατανόησιν διά τοὺς λόγους, διά τοὺς ὁποῖους ὁ ἀδελφός Μᾶρκος προβαίνει εἰς τήν πρότασιν αὐτήν, ἀλλά πρέπει νά εἴμεθα νομίζω προσεκτικοί, ἀφ’ ἐνός μὲν πρέπει νά ἀκριβολογῶμεν εἰς αὐτό τό κείμενον, ἀλλά τό κείμενον τοῦτο δέν εἶναι ἀκριβῶς τό προηγούμενον δογματικόν καθαρῶς ἐκκλησιολογικόν κείμενον, τό ὁποῖον, κατά τήν ἄποψιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Σερβίας, ἀπουσιάζει καί πρέπει νά προστεθῇ εἰς τό ὅλον ὑλικόν διά τήν μέλλουσαν Σύνοδον. Τό κείμενον τοῦτο ἀναφέρεται εἰς τόν ὑπόλοιπον χριστιανικόν κόσμον. Δηλαδή τό θέμα τοῦ ὑπό ἐξέτασιν κειμένου τήν στιγμὴν ταύτην, εἶναι αἱ σχέσεις ἡμῶν τῶν τέκνων τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τό πᾶν ὄνομα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας εἶναι Καθολική, ὄχι μόνον Ὁρθόδοξος. Λοιπόν, καί ἡμεῖς δέν δυνάμεθα νά ὀμιλῶμεν πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους μέ εἰσαγωγικά καί πρέπει νά τοὺς ἀναγνωρίζωμεν κάποια ἱστορικήν ὄντοτητα, ἀλλ' ὄχι δογματικήν. Καί οἱ Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ποιοῦνται διάκρισιν μεταξὺ λόγου δογματικοῦ, λόγου ἀγωνιστικοῦ ἢ ἀντιφρονητικοῦ, καθώς ἔλεγον, δηλαδή λόγου πολεμικοῦ καί λόγου ἐπίσης ἀβροφροσύνης. Ὁ ἅγιος Μᾶρκος Ἐφέσου ὁ Εὐγενικός εἰς τόν χαριετισμόν καί τήν προσφώνησίν του πρὸς τόν πάπαν Εὐγένιον κατά τήν ἔναρξιν τῆς ἐνωτικῆς Συνόδου τῆς Φλωρεντίας ὠμίλησε τοιοῦτοτρόπως, ὥστε σήμερον οἱ παρ’ ἡμῖν «φανατικοί» ὅπωςδὴποτε θά τόν ἐποποθετοῦσαν εἰς πυρκαϊάν διά νά καῖ ζωντανός. Ἐλεγε λοιπόν

formulation of Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka was „historical existence” and „other heterodox or non-Orthodox Christian Churches”. Archbishop Konstantinos Aristarchos, delegate of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, said in the plenum of the Conference that it should be added the phrase „that are not in communion with her (μή εὐρισκομένων ἐν κοινωνίᾳ μετ’ αὐτῆς)”<sup>28</sup>.

The final draft document of the Fifth Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference asserts that the Orthodox Church: “acknowledges the historical existence of other Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her”<sup>29</sup>. After this Conference the text is sent directly to the Holy and Great Council.

How can the bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church be against this phrase, if the final text of the document of the Holy and Great Council: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her*” was a proposal submitted to the plenum of the Council by the Greek Orthodox Church<sup>30</sup>? Furthermore it can be seen that the final document of the Council of Crete is more conservative than the previous documents regarding the name of other Christian communities and confessions.

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«ἀγιώτατε πάτερ, δέξου εἰς τὰς σὰς πατρικὰς ἀγκάλας τὰ μακρόθεν ἐξ Ἀνατολῶν ἦκοντα τέκνα σου. Ἄρον πᾶν σκάνδαλον ἐκ μέσου. Δύνασαι γάρ...», καὶ οὕτω καθ’ ἐξῆς. Ἐπομένως, δέν πρέπει νά φοβώμεθα, διότι ἐδῶ ἔχομεν μίαν προσεκτικήν διατύπωσιν. Ἀναγνωρίζομεν τήν ιστορικήν ὑπαρξίν, ὅχι ὄντολογικήν ὑπαρξίν. Ἐτερον ἐκάτερον. Λοιπόν, ἡ πρότασίς μου θά ἦτο, διά νά ἐμίεθα ὅλοι ικανοποιημένοι, νά διατυπωθῆ ἡ πρότασις αὕτη κατά τόν ἐξῆς τρόπον: «Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀναγνωρίζει τήν ιστορικήν ὑπαρξίν ἄλλων ἑτεροδόξων, ἢ μή Ὁρθοδόξων», μίαν ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐκφράσεων, «χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καί Ὁμολογιῶν». Οὕτω, μέ τήν διατύπωσιν, «μή ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία» ἢ «ἑτεροδόξος Ἐκκλησία», ὅρος ὅχι ἄγνωστος εἰς τήν πατερικήν γραμματείαν, δέν προσβάλλομεν εὐθέως τοὺς ἄλλους, ἀλλά ἐμμέσως καί πλαγίως θέτομεν ἐρωτηματικόν περὶ τῆς ὄντολογικῆς ἐκείνων ὑποστάσεως καί τονίζομεν ὅτι εἰς τήν ὄντολογικήν αὐτῆς ὑπόστασιν μόνον ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Καθολική Ἐκκλησία εἶναι: «Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἢ κατ’ ἐξοχήν Ἐκκλησία». Διότι, ἐάν συνεχίσωμεν αὐτήν τήν λογικήν ἔχει, ὅπως εἶπον, ἐν τινι βαθμῶν δίκαιον ὅπως δῆποτε ὁ ἀδελφός Μᾶρκος, τότε καί τὰς σχισματικές παραφυάδας, δέν πρέπει νά ὀνομάζωμεν Ἐκκλησίας, μέ τὰς ὁποίας διεξάγωμεν Διάλογον. Δηλαδή, ἐξ ἐπόψεως ἐκκλησιολογικῆς, παῦσις τῆς κοινωνίας, εἴτε ἐν εἴδει αἰρέσεως, εἴτε ἐν εἴδει σχίσματος, εἶναι ἐν καί τό αὐτό ὡς πρός τό ἀποτέλεσμα. Ἐπομένως, ἂν δέν εἶναι Ἐκκλησία, καί δέν εἶναι μέ τήν ἴδιαν ἔννοιαν, ὅπως ἡμεῖς αἱ ἄλλαι, δέν εἶναι οὔτε αἱ σχισματικά ἐκκλησία πραγματικά ἐκκλησία, ἢ τῶν Σκοπίων, ἢ τῆς Οὐκρανίας, ἢ οἰασδήποτε ἄλλης, παλασημερολογίται κλπ. Διά τοῦτο προτείνω μίαν μέσιν λύσιν, νά προστεθῆ ἀντί τῶν ἄλλων Ἐκκλησιῶν ἡ ἔκφρασις «ἑτεροδόξων» ἢ «μή ὀρθοδόξων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν» καί οὕτω, νομίζω ὅτι τρόπον τινά ικανοποιεῖται ἡ ἀνάγκη αὐτή”. Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L’Église Orthodoxe, ed., *Ε’ Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 10-17 Οκτωβρίου 2015*, 127-128.

<sup>28</sup> Secrétariat pour la préparation du Saint et Grand Concile de L’Église Orthodoxe, ed., *Ε’ Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης, 10-17 Οκτωβρίου 2015*, 129.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/preconciliar-relations>

<sup>30</sup> <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>

First Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission (1971)	Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (1986) Text proposed by Theodoros Zisis	5th Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (2015)	Final document of the Holy and Great Council (2016)
<i>“the Orthodox Church recognizes the <b>ontological existence</b> of all these Christian Churches and Confessions”</i>	<i>“The Orthodox Church recognises <b>the actual existence</b> of all Churches and Christian confessions”</i>	<i>“The Orthodox Church acknowledges the <b>historical existence</b> of other Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her”</i>	<i>“The Orthodox Church accepts <b>the historical name</b> of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her”</i>

The main question that we have to address is the following: is there in the patristic, synodal and canonical Tradition of the Church any example where certain heterodox communities have been called “Churches” without recognizing their ecclesiality or an ecclesial status?

Let us see the diachronic development of the use of the name applied to other Christian communities. If we analyse the Tradition of the Church we can see that the word “church/ἐκκλησία” has also been used in other synodal decisions and works of the Holy Fathers to designate certain communities that ceased communion with the Orthodox Church and departed from it, but by the use of the word “Church” they did not give an ontological ecclesial status to other Christian communities<sup>31</sup>.

Clement of Alexandria used the word “ἐκκλησία” for other communities than the Orthodox ones in *Stromata VII.16.98.2*, by saying: “rather than be removed from the honours of the heresy and the boasted first seat in their churches”<sup>32</sup> (τὰς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῶν πρωτοκαθεδρίας) and by saying about the

<sup>31</sup> Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 432.

<sup>32</sup> “αὐτίκα οὐκ ἀναγκαίως ἀρχὰς πραγμάτων καταβαλλόμενοι δόξαις τε ἀνθρωπίναις κεινημένοι, ἔπειτα ἀναγκαίως τέλος ἀκολουθοῦν αὐτοῖς ἐκποριζόμενοι, διαπληκτίζονται διὰ τοὺς ἐλέγχους πρὸς τοὺς τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν μεταχειριζομένους, καὶ πάντα μᾶλλον ὑπομένουσι καὶ πάντα, φασί, κάλον κινουσι, κἂν ἀσεβῆν διὰ τὸ ἀπιστεῖν ταῖς γραφαῖς μέλλωσιν, ἥπερ μετατίθενται, ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας τῆς αἰρέσεως καὶ τῆς πολυθρυλήτου **κατὰ τὰς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῶν πρωτοκαθεδρίας**, δι’ ἣν κάκεινην τὴν συμποτικὴν [διὰ] τῆς ψευδωνύμου ἀγάπης πρωτοκλισίαν ἀσπάζονται”. (PG. 9, 536B) “Not laying as foundations the necessary first principles of things; and influenced by human opinions, then making the end to suit them, by compulsion; on account of being confuted, they spar with those who are engaged in the prosecution of the true philosophy, and undergo everything, and, as they say, ply every oar, even going the length of impiety, by disbelieving the Scriptures, rather than be removed from the honours of the heresy and the boasted first seat in their churches; on account of which also they eagerly embrace that convivial couch of honour in the Agape, falsely so called.” *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria: Vol. 2* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), 479–480. For the Romanian translation see: Clement Alexandrinul, *Scrieri, partea a II-a, Stromatele*, col. PSB 5, trad., cuvânt înainte, note și indici de Pr. Dumitru Fecioru, (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii

heretical communities in Stromata VII.16.99.2 “so do these shut out the prophecies from their Church”<sup>33</sup>.

In *Expositio in Psalmum LXVII.16.*, a work attributed to St. Athanasius the Great<sup>34</sup>, we can find this phrase: “the churches of the heretics (τὰς τῶν αἰρετικῶν ἐκκλησίας)”<sup>35</sup>. Theodoret of Cyrus uses the expressions “the churches of the heretics (τὰς τῶν αἰρετικῶν ἐκκλησίας)”<sup>36</sup> in several places, and he used the word “church” even for the communities of some heretics<sup>37</sup>.

Basil the Great, speaking about schismatics in his first canon<sup>38</sup>, accepted their baptism because he considered them as “still belonging to the Church (τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀποσχισάντων, ὡς ἔτι ἐκ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὄντων, παραδέξασθαι)”<sup>39</sup>. In

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Ortodoxe Române, 1982), 538. For the context of this text and more details see: Paul Fike Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast: Broadening Our Eucharistic Celebrations* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 81–82.

<sup>33</sup> “καὶ καθάπερ τὰ πονηρὰ παιδία τὸν παιδαγωγὸν ἀποκλείει, οὕτως οὗτοι τὰς προφητείας εἴργουσιν ἑαυτῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ὑφορώμενοι δι’ ἔλεγχον καὶ νοουθεσίαν (PG. 9, 537A)”. “And just as knavish boys bar out the teacher, so do these shut out the prophecies from their Church, regarding them with suspicion by reason of rebuke and admonition”. Alexander Roberts, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325 Volume II - Fathers of the Second Century - Hermas, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenago*, (New York: Cosimo, Inc.) 2007, 552

<sup>34</sup> For the authenticity of this work see: Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, *Psalms 1-50, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 7* (InterVarsity Press, 2008), xx.

<sup>35</sup> “Ὅρος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὄρος πῖον. Ὅρος μὲν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ὀνομάζει, πῖον δὲ, ὅτι εὐτραφεῖς καὶ λιπαρὰς τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπεργάζεται. Ὅρος τετυρωμένον; ὄρος πῖον· ἵνα τί ὑπολαμβάνετε ὄρη τετυρωμένα; Καὶ μὴν καὶ τετυρωμένον, τουτέστι γάλακτος μεστὸν, ἀπλουστέρου δηλαδὴ λόγου, κατὰ τὸ· Γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα. Ἐπιτιμᾶ οὖν τοῖς τὰς τῶν αἰρετικῶν ἐκκλησίας ὑπολαμβάνουσιν εἶναι τετυρωμένας. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν αὐταῖς τὸ δυνάμενον τρέφειν εἰς ἕξιν πνευματικὴν. Ἴνα τί τοῖνυν ὑπολαμβάνετε, ὡς οὗτοι, ἕτερα ὄρη εἶναι ἔξω τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τετυρωμένα, καὶ μὴ μᾶλλον τοῦτο μόνον τὸ ὄρος, ἐν ᾧ ὁ Θεὸς ἠδύοκησεν κατοικῆσαι ἐν αὐτῷ; Ὅτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ κατοικεῖ, δηλοῦν ἐξ ὧν αὐτὸς ἔφη· Ἴδτε κατοικήσω, ὅτι ἡρετισάμην αὐτήν” PG, 27, 297.

<sup>36</sup> Theodoretus, *Explanatio in Canticum canticorum 2.2*: “Καὶ ἔοικεν ἐνταῦθα τὰς τῶν αἰρετικῶν ἐκκλησίας θυγατέρας καλεῖν, διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ κλησιν, καὶ οὐ διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων προαίρεσιν”. PG, 81, 88.

<sup>37</sup> Theodoretus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos. LXVII. 17*: “Πρὸς Ἰουδαίους ὁ προφητικὸς ἀποτείνεται λόγος, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς παρανόμους τῶν αἰρετῶν συλλόγους· οἱ Ἐκκλησίας σφᾶς ἑαυτοὺς ὀνομάζουσι· καὶ φησι, Τί ποτε ἐρίζειν καὶ παρισουῖσθαι ἀλαζονεύεσθε τῷ ὄρει, ὃ οἰκητήριον ἀπέφηνεν ὁ Θεός” PG 81, 1385: “The inspired word is addressed against Jews and against the lawless assemblies of heretics, who class themselves as churches, it says, Why do you contend and claim to rival the mountain, which God has made his dwelling?” Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms, Psalms 1-72* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 386.

<sup>38</sup> For a review of the first canon of Basil the Great, see: André de Halleux, “Oikonomia” in the first canon of Saint Basil, in: *The Patristic and Byzantine review* vol. 6 (1987): 53-64; Constantin Rus, “Canoanele 1 și 47 ale Sfântului Vasile cel Mare și problema iconomieii”, *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, 2 (2011): 255-270.

<sup>39</sup> For the Greek text of the canons of Basil the Great, see: Périclès-Pierre Joannou, *Discipline générale antique / 2. Les canons des pères grecs*, Codification canonique orientale, Fonti, Série 1, (Roma: Grottaferrata, 1963), 85-86; ARCHIM. GRIGORIOS D. PAPATHOMAS, *Le Corpus Canonum de l’Église (1<sup>er</sup>-9<sup>e</sup> siècle). Le texte des Saints Canons ecclésiastiques*, (Epectasis, 2015), 403-405; GEORGIOS A. RHALLIS, MICHAEL POTLES, EDS., *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* vol. 4 (Athena, 1854), 88-89; Y. COURTONNE, *Saint*

his letter 114, written in 372, he said: “I think then that the one great end of all who are really and truly serving the Lord ought to be to bring back to union the Churches now divided from one another (οἶμαι προσήκειν μίαν ταύτην εἶναι σπουδὴν τοῖς γνησίως καὶ ἀληθινῶς δουλεύουσι τῷ Κυρίῳ τὸ ἐπαναγαγεῖν καὶ πολυτρόπως ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων διατμηθείσας)”<sup>40</sup>. This text is used by the Russian Orthodox Church in the chapter: “2. The quest for the restoration of the unity” of the document “Basic Principles of the Attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church Toward the Other Christian Confessions”, adopted by the Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church August 14, 2000.

In the 5th century, the Church historian Socrates Scholasticus uses the phrase “the bishop of the Arian Church” (ὁ τῆς Ἀρειανῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπίσκοπος), for the Arian bishop Eudoxios, who occupied the throne of Constantinople for 19 years<sup>41</sup>.

These are just some of the texts from the documents of the first centuries in which the word “church” is used for other Christian community than the Orthodox Church. We can find more evidences of the use of the word “church” in the writings of the second millennium, after the Great Schism.

Germanus II, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1223 until his death in June 1240, used in his work the word Church in the following phrases: “Latin Church (τῆ λατινικῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ)”<sup>42</sup>, “Meletian Church” (τῆς τῶν Μελιτινιωτῶν ἐκκλησίας)”<sup>43</sup> or “the Church of Rome (ἡ Ῥώμης ἐκκλησία)”<sup>44</sup>.

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*Basile, Lettres II*, (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1961), 120. For other translations of the Canons of Basil the Great, see: Henry R. PERCIVAL, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, together with the Canons of all the Local Synods which have Received Ecumenical Acceptance*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 14, (New York, Oxford, 1900), 604-611; D. Cummings, trans., *The Rudder (Pedalion) of the Metaphorical Ship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Orthodox Christians*, (Chicago, 1957), 771-773; R. J. DEFERRARI, *St. Basil: The Letters, with an English Translation*, vol. I-IV, (London: William Heinemann, 1926-1934); W.-D. Hauschild, *Basilus von Caesarea*, Briefe, 3, col. *Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur* 32, Vol. 3, (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1973), 100-101.

<sup>40</sup> Y. COURTONNE, *Saint Basile, Lettres II*, (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1961), 18.

<sup>41</sup> “Εὐδόξιος {οὗτος} ὁ τῆς Ἀρειανῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπίσκοπος εὐθὺς μετὰ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἔξοδον τέλει τοῦ βίου ἐχρήσατο ἐν ὑπατείᾳ Οὐάλεντινιανοῦ τὸ τρίτον καὶ Οὐάλεντος τὸ τρίτον, δέκα καὶ ἕνα ἐνιαυτοὺς τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἐκκλησίας τὸν θρόνον κατεσχηκῶς”. P. Maraval, P. Périchon, *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique (Livre IV. 14, 4)*, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 505, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006; PG 67, 497. “Eudoxius the bishop of the Arian church who has been in possession of the seat of the Constantinopolitan church for nineteen years, died soon after the emperor’s departure from that city, in the third consulate of Valentinian and Valens”. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series Volume II Socrates, Sozomenus* (Cosimo, Inc, 2007), 103.

<sup>42</sup> “Καὶ οἱ ὑπ’ αὐτοὺς κληρικοί, ὅσοι τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀσπάζονται ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τῆς πατροπαραδότου πίστεως ἀντέχεσθαι βούλονται, οὐχ ὑποκείσονται τοῖς τὴν ὑποταγὴν ποιησαμένοις ἀρχιερεῦσιν αὐτῶν, οὐδὲ ἀφορίζοντων αὐτῶν ἕνεκα τοῦ πείθεσθαι τῇ λατινικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, μικρὸν τι ἐπιστραφήσονται, ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ἀφορισμὸς ἄκρως ἐστὶ, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀφορίζοντας μᾶλλον ἐπαναστρέφει, ὅτι καὶ σκανδάλων γεγόνασι πρόξενοι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καταπατήσαντες τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων ἀκρίβειαν,

Theodor Agallianos<sup>45</sup>, one of the theologians who opposed the unionist Council of Ferrara-Florence, a follower of Mark Eugenikos of Ephesus, who wrote two treatises against the Latins, in one of them “Dialogue cum monacho contra Latinos” written in 1442, he condemned the dogmatic deviations of the Latins, but he used the phrase “the Latin Church (ἡ λατινικὴ ἐκκλησία)<sup>46</sup>” to designate the Catholic Church, showing that it created new customs and dogmas and thereby a third Testament<sup>47</sup>.

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καὶ τοὺς ἐπιβήτορας καὶ ἄλλοτριεπισκόπους δεξάμενοι, καὶ χεῖρας δόντες αὐτοῖς, σημεῖον εὐπειθείας καὶ δουλώσεως, κἂν διίσχυρίζωνται λέγοντες, ὡς οὐ καταπροεδώκαμεν τὰ πάτρια ἡμῶν ἔθνη, οὐδέ τι τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων ἔξωπεπράχαμεν”. Germanus II, *Epistulae duae ad Cyprios*, K.N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, Vol. 2, (Venice, 1873), 18.

<sup>43</sup> S.N. Lagorates, *Γερμανὸς ὁ Β Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως—Νικαίας (1222-1240) Βίος συγγράμματα καὶ διδασκαλία αὐτοῦ*, (Athens, 1913), 353: “αὐτῇ καὶ μακρόστιχα στρώματα καὶ μητροπολίτην ὑψηλόθρονον τῆς τῶν Μελιτινιωτῶν ἐκκλησίας ἀπέστειλε, πιστεύσασα τῇ τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας γραφῇ τοῦ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγαπητοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος καὶ τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ ὁσίου καθηγουμένου τῆς ἐν τῷ Σκοπέλῳ μονῆς τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς μεγαλομάρτυρος Θεοδοσίου, τοῦ κυροῦ Θεοδωρήτου”.

<sup>44</sup> “Οὐκ ἀγνοοῦμεν, ὦ θεοτάτε δέσποτα, ὅτι καθάπερ ἡμεῖς οἱ Γραικοὶ διίσχυρίζομεθα κατὰ πάντα ὀρθοδοξεῖν τε καὶ εὐσεβεῖν, καὶ εἰς μηδὲν παρασφάλ्लεσθαι τῶν ἀποστολικῶν δογμάτων καὶ πατερικῶν, τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον καὶ ἡ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης ἐκκλησία περὶ ἑαυτῆς, διανίσταται, καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ οἶσθαι κατὰτι σφάλλιν, οὐδὲ θεραπείας χρῆζειν λέγειν καὶ διορθώσεως· τοῦτο καὶ παρὰ τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν ἐκκλησίας καὶ παρὰ τῆς τῶν Λατίνων λεγόμενον οἶδαμεν.” Germanus II, *Epistula ad Gregorium papam*, K.N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, vol. 2, (Venice, 1873), 45.

<sup>45</sup> For papers on the writings and life of Theodor Agallianos, see: Marie-Hélène Blanchet, ‘Bilan des études sur Théodore Agallianos: 1966-2011’, *Ο Ερανιστής* 28 (2011): 25–48.

<sup>46</sup> “Ἴνα τί γοῦν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, αὐτὰ τε τὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ῥήματα παριδῶν καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ μαθητῶν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ῥήσεις πατέρων καὶ πρὸ τούτων τοὺς ἱεροὺς καὶ θεῖους κανόνας τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας, σαυτὸν τε παρέδωκας τῇ πλάνῃ καὶ ἡμᾶς συνέπεσθαι βιάζῃ; Οὐκ ἔσται τοῦτο. Ἀδυνάτων ἐπιχειρεῖς· φρενῶν ἂν ἐκσταίημεν πρότερον ἢ τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τοῦ ζήλου τούτου. Τρίτης διαθήκης ὑφηγητῆς καθέστηκεν ἡ λατινικὴ ἐκκλησία, βασιλεῦ· πᾶσαν τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ τὴν καινὴν ἀνασκεύασσας, ξένα δόγματα καὶ ἔθνη τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτὴν ἐνομοθέτησε.” For this work we use the edition: M.-H. Blanchet, Théodore Agallianos, *Dialogue avec un moine contre les Latins (1442)*, Textes et Documents d’Histoire Médiévale 9, Byzantina Sorbonensia 27, (Paris: Sorbonne, 2013): 31-97.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*: “Ἡ γὰρ λέξις συνάθροισιν ἐρμηνεύει, ἔνθεν τοι καὶ ἡ τῶν ἑτεροδόξων αἰρετικῶν καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις τῆς δόξης καὶ τῆς γνώμης **ἐκκλησία** καλεῖται, ὡς τὸ ἐμίσησα ἐκκλησίαν πονηρευομένων καὶ μετὰ ἀσεβῶν οὐ μὴ καθίσω.” “Πολλῶν γὰρ ὄντων τεκμηρίων ὅσα πληροφορεῖ σαφέστατα ὡς τὴν μὲν ὀρθοδοξίαν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἐκκλησίας προσίεται Θεός, **τὴν δὲ λατινικὴν ἐκκλησίαν** οὐκ ἔχει τῆς ἰδίας αὐλῆς, οἷον τοῦ περι τοῦ ἀγιάσματος λόγου, τοῦ περι τοῦ ἀφορισμοῦ· οὐδὲ γὰρ εὐρίσκεται παρ’ ἐκείνοις δεδεμένος τις ἐπιτιμία μετὰ θάνατον, ὅπερ θαυματουργῶν ὁ Κύριος δείκνυσιν ἐν τῇ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀπειθεῖς αὐτῆς φανέντας κατὰ τι, καίτοι τοῦ πάπα πολλοὺς ὀσημέρα καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἀφορίζοντος”. “Τὸν γοῦν τῶν τοιούτων λόγων οὐ δοκεῖ σοι πρὸς παράστασιν εἶναι ἀξιοχρεῶν τοῦ ὅτι Θεὸς πρόσκειται μὲν τῇ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἐκκλησίᾳ, καὶ τὸθεῖον αὐτοῦ Πνεῦμα ἐπαναπέπνυται τοῖς ὑπ’ αὐτὴν τελοῦσιν ἀγίοις, καὶ τὴν αὐτῶν πίστιν καὶ τὰ ἔργα προσδέχεται καὶ ἀντιμετρεῖ τὰς ἀμοιβὰς πλουσιῶς, τὴν δὲ **λατινικὴν ἐκκλησίαν** ἀποδιοπομπεῖται καὶ ἀποστρέφεται, καὶ ξένην ἡγεῖται καὶ ἄλλοτριόφρονα καὶ τοὺς ὑπ’ αὐτὴν τελοῦντας ἄλλοτριας αὐλῆς πρόβατα καὶ ὑπ’ αὐτῷ τελεῖν ποιμῆνι μὴ καταδεχόμενα, ἀνοδίαις δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ

There is even a passage from the work of Saint Mark Eugenikos of Ephesus, who rejected the unionist Council of Ferrara-Florence, where he is quoting the 15<sup>th</sup> question of bishop Mark to Theodoros Balsamon (1195) speaking about the “Western Church of Rome (τῆς δυτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ῥώμης)” that had separated itself from the Orthodox Church through different dogmatic teachings.

”Ἐπει οὖν πρὸ χρόνων πολλῶν ἀπεσχίσθη τῆς δυτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τῆς Ῥώμης φαμέν, τὸ περιώνυμον ἄθροισμα ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἐτέρων τεσσάρων ἀγιωτάτων πατριαρχῶν κοινωνίας, ἀποσχοινοσθὲν εἰς ἕθνη καὶ δόγματα τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἀλλότρια (διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε ἐν ταῖς θεαῖς ἱεροτελεστείαις κοινῆς τῶν πατριαρχικῶν ὀνομάτων ἀναφορᾶς ὁ πάπας ἠξίωται), οὐκ ὀφείλει γένος λατινικὸν ἐκ χειρὸς ἱερατικῆς διὰ τῶν θείων καὶ ἀχράντων μυστηρίων ἀγιάζεσθαι, εἰ μὴ κατάθῃται πρότερον ἀποσχέσθαι τῶν λατινικῶν κατάθῃται πρότερον ἀποσχέσθαι τῶν λατινικῶν δογμάτων τε καὶ συνηθειῶν καὶ κατὰ κανόνας κατηχηθῆ καὶ τοῖς ὀρθοδόξοις ἐξισωθῆ”<sup>48</sup>.

The title refers to the Church of Rome fallen into heresy, because this Church is considered as „being separated by foreign customs and dogmas from the Catholic Church and the orthodox people (ἀποσχοινοσθὲν εἰς ἕθνη καὶ δόγματα τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἀλλότρια)”. If the phrase „τῆς δυτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τῆς Ῥώμης” had referred to the Church of Rome that guarded the true faith then Saint Mark of Ephesus would not have called her a Church fallen into heresy.

Another indirect evidence of the use of the word “Church” for the Roman Catholic Church by Saint Mark of Ephesus can be found in the memories of Silvestros Syropoulos from his participation in the council of Florence: “Ἐῖπεν οὖν ὁ Ἐφέσου, πρῶτον μὲν ὅπως ἐστὶν ἀναγκαιωτάτη ἡ εἰρήνη, ἣν κατέλιπεν ἡμῖν ὁ δεσπότης ἡμῶν ὁ Χριστός, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη. Δεύτερον, ὅτι παρέβλεψεν ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἐκκλησία τὴν τότε καταλειφθεῖσαν ἀγάπην, ἐσπούδασεν ἵν’ ἐλθωμεν ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐξετάσωμεν τὰς μεταξὺ ἡμῶν διαφορὰς”<sup>49</sup>. If Saint Mark of Ephesus had considered the Catholic Church from the beginning as fallen into heresy, even before the Council of

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ἀβάτοις κρημοῖς φερόμενα, ἐσκορπισμένα καὶ ἀποίμαντα καὶ λύκοις εὐάλωτα, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ὄσῳραι ὑπ’ αὐτῶν διαφθειρόμενα, ὅθεν καὶ τὴν οἰανδήτινα παρ’ ἐνιωντούτων διῆθεν ἐνεργουμένην ἀρετὴν οὐ προσδέχεται καὶ οὐδὲ ἀντιδιδωσινάμοιβὰς διὰ τὸ τὰ ἔργα εἶναι δίχα πίστεως εὐσεβοῦς νεκρά;”.

<sup>48</sup> L. Petit, *Marci Eugenici Metropolitae Ephesi opera anti-unionistica*, 10/2 [*Concilium Florentinum documenta et scriptores*], (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1977), 145; Sf. Marcu Evghenicul, *Opere*, I, Paters, 2009, p. 252.

<sup>49</sup> Silvestros Syropoulos, *Les mémoires du grand ecclésiarque de l’Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le Concile de Florence (1438-1439)*, ed. Vitalien Laurent (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1971), 326.

Ferrara-Florence, how is it possible to address the Pope of Rome, a community that ceased the communion with the Orthodox Church by „foreign customs and dogmas”, with these words: „ ἀγιώτατε πάτερ, ὑπόδεξαι τὰ σὰ τέκνα μακρόθεν ἐξάνατολῶν ἤκοντα περίπτουσαι τοὺς ἐκ μακροῦ διεστῶτας τοῦ χρόνου, πρὸς τὰς σὰς καταφυγόντας ἀγκάλας”<sup>50</sup> and not calling him a heretic?

Gennadius Scholarius, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (the first under Turkish rule) from 1454 to 1464, the one who accompanied his Emperor to the Council of Ferrara-Florence, but abandoned the Council early on and never signed its decree of union (horos), under the influence of Mark Eugenikos, he developed an anti-Latin theology. Despite this fact, he was speaking about “the Latin Church (τὴν λατινικὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ δόξαν)” or the “Roman Church (καὶ ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἐκκλησία)”<sup>51</sup>.

The Synod of Constantinople (1484), attended by representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, being the first Synod to condemn the Council of Ferrara-Florence and its heresies, uses in the service (Acolouthy) for the reception of the Latins into the Orthodox Church the word “church” for the Western Church of Rome:

<sup>50</sup> „ἀγιώτατε πάτερ” is the official address of bishop Mark of Ephesus to the pope of Rome, 400 years after the Great Schism. Marcus Eugenicus, “Oratio ad Eugenium papam quartum”, in L. Petit, *Marci Eugenici Metropolitae Ephesi opera anti-unionistica, 10/2. Concilium Florentinum documenta et scriptores* (Rome, 1977): 28-33.

<sup>51</sup> “Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ περὶ οἰκονομίας γέγονε λόγος, ἀναφέρομεν καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὸ οἰκονομεῖν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐστὶ, συμφώνων τε οὔσης καὶ ἀστασιάστου πρὸς ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἐχούσης τὸ κράτος καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν αὐτῆς, οὐχ ἑνὸς ἢ δύο τινῶν ἢ τεσσάρων, οὐδὲ τῶν τυχόντων προσώπων, ἀλλὰ ἀρχιερέων, ὡς ὁ ἱερός τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας εἶπεν Εὐλόγιος· ἐὰν γάρ τινες ἀφ’ ἡμῶν οἰκονομίαν καταδέξωνται ἄνευ τοῦ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἐλευθερίαν ἐπανελθεῖν, οἱ τοιοῦτοι οὐκ οἰκονομίαν ποιήσουσιν, ἀλλὰ μετατεθῆσονται πρὸς τὴν λατινικὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ δόξαν· τότε γὰρ τὰς οἰκονομίας ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος μεταχειρίζεται, ὅτε τὸ δόγμα τῆς εὐσεβείας οὐδὲν παραβλάπτεται, ὁ προειρημένος εἶπεν Εὐλόγιος”. Gennadius Scholarius, *Renuntiatio antiunionitum ad imperatorem contra concilium Florentinum*, M. Jugie, L. Petit, and X.A. Siderides, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadius) Scholarios*, vol. 3, (Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1930), 192: “Ἐἰ δὲ καὶ δοκοῦμέν τισι προσίστασθαι τῷ τῆς εἰρήνης καλῷ, ἀλλὰ τούναντίον μᾶλλον ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθινῆς εἰρήνης ἡμῖν ἢ ἔνστασις ἐστὶ πᾶσα, ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς εἰρήνης πρυτάνει σαλεύουσι τὰς ἐλπίδας, ὅτι οὐ περιόψεται τὴν ἐκκλησίαν αὐτοῦ ξαινομένην οὕτω δεινῶς καὶ σπαραττομένην, ἀλλ’ εἰς ἕν φρόνημα συναΐξει πάντας ἀληθινόν· καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιαύτην εἰρήνην γενέσθαι, φεύγομεν ἀπὸ τῆς εἰρήνης εἰς ἣν νῦν προσκαλούμεθα.” *Ibidem*, 190. “Οὗτος ὁ Θωμᾶς, Λατῖνος μὲν τῷ γένει καὶ τῇ δόξῃ καὶ διαφερόμενος πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἐκκλησία πρὸς ἡμᾶς διαφέρεται ἐξ ὀλίγων χρόνων νεωτερίασα, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα σοφὸς καὶ τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ὠφέλιμος· καὶ πολλὰ μὲν βιβλία συνεγράψατο εἰς τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ νέαν Γραφὴν ἐξηγητικά, πολλὰ δὲ εἰς ὅλην τὴν φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἐξηγήσεις καὶ κείμενα, ὧν πολλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν μετεγλωττίσαμεν· ὧν ἕν καιτοῦτο ἐστίν, πᾶνυ χρησιμεῖον εἰς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, καὶ μάλιστα τὴν θείαν”. Gennadius Scholarius, *Commentarium Thomae Aquinæ De Ente et Essentia*, M. Jugie, L. Petit, and X.A. Siderides, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadius) Scholarios*, vol. 6, (Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1933): 177.



“Do you want, o man, to become Orthodox, and do you renounce all the shameful and alienated dogmas of the Latins, i.e. concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit, namely that they think and declare erroneously that he also proceeds from the Son; and besides, concerning the azymes which they use in the liturgy, and the rest of the customs *of their Church* (καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐθῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκείνων), which are not in agreement with the Catholic and Orthodox Church of the East?”<sup>52</sup>.

Not only can we find the word “church” used for the Latin Church in a document adopted by a General Council of the Orthodox Church, but it appears in a liturgical text, used in the Church for centuries, that was the service for reception of the Latins into the Orthodox Church. Unfortunately in his paper Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos refused to mention the use of the word „Church” in this question addressed by the priest to the Latins, who were coming to the Orthodox Church<sup>53</sup>. In light of this, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos fails in his own accusation: “I consider it unscientific and ultimately misleading to claim as some do that even at the Council of 1484 which condemned the Council of Ferrara-Florence, there is reference to Western Churches.”<sup>54</sup>

Anastasios Gordios (1654 - 1729), another Orthodox Theologian with writings against the Latins, used the word “Church” for several times to describe the “Roman Church”<sup>55</sup> „Western Church”<sup>56</sup> of „Latin Church”<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> I. KARMIRIS, *Τα Δογματικά και Συμβολικά Μνημεία της Ορθοδόξου καθολικής Εκκλησίας*, τόμ. II, (εν Αθήναις, 1953), 988”. For the English translation of the service, see: George D. Dragas, ‘The Manner of Reception of Roman Catholic Converts into the Orthodox Church with Special Reference to the Decisions of the Synods of 1484 (Constantinople), 1755 (Constantinople) and 1667 (Moscow)’, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44, no. 1–4 (1999): 235–71 (239).

<sup>53</sup> The only example that Metropolitan Hierotheos is giving in his paper is the following: „In another question the Latin is prompted to turn away “completely from the gatherings of Latins in their churches, or of those who are Latin-minded”. Here the phrase “the gatherings of Latins in their churches” obviously means the gatherings in church buildings, without attaching an ecclesiological meaning. The Latins are heretics and the gatherings in churches are the gatherings in church buildings, and it does not mean the Church of the Latins, as advocated by some.” Hierotheos, Vlachos. “Intervention and Text in the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece” (November 2016 Regarding the Holy and Great Council of Crete: <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>;

<sup>54</sup> Hierotheos, Vlachos. “Intervention and Text in the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece” (November 2016 Regarding the Holy and Great Council of Crete: <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>;

<sup>55</sup> “Τὰ ὅμοια ἔπαθε καὶ ἡ δυτικὴ Ἐκκλησία διὰ τὴν μεγάλην τῆς ὑπερφήανειαν καὶ ἀνταρσίαν, καὶ διὰ τὴν βλασφημίαν τῆς προσθήκης. Καὶ μὲ τὸ νὰ ἡρνήθη τὸν Χριστὸν νὰ τὸν ἔχη κεφαλὴν καὶ ἀνδρατῆς καὶ ἐπρόκρινε τὸν πᾶπαν ὑπὲρ τὸν Χριστὸν, διὰ τοῦτο ὑστερήθη παντελῶς τῆς θείας χάριτος καὶ ἐνεργείας. Καὶ ἂν δὲν τὸ πιστεύης, ἄκουσον καὶ ἄλλα φανερά.” Anastasius Gordius, *Περὶ Μωάμεθ καὶ κατὰ Λατείνων*, A. Argyriou, *Sur Mahomet et contre les Latins*, Association scientifique d’études sur la Grèce centrale: Textes et études 3, (Athens, 1983): 29-120.

The Patriarch Jeremias II (Tranos) of Constantinople, in his correspondence with Lutheran theologians of the University of Tübingen, used the word “Church” not just for the Catholics<sup>58</sup> but for the Lutherans as well. In the end of his first letter sent on May 15, 1576 he wrote to the Lutheran theologians: “In this way the two

<sup>56</sup> „Καὶ πῶς δι’ αὐτὴν τὴν προσθήκην τὸν ὠργίσθη ὁ Θεὸς καὶ τὸν ὑστέρησεν ἀπὸ τὴν χάριν τοῦ παντελῶς καὶ ἀπόμεινεν ἔρημος ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Δύσεως πάσης πνευματικῆς ἐνεργείας. Καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι πρῶτον πτῶμα, ὅπου ἔγινεν ἐχθρὸς θανάσιμος τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Δεύτερον εἶναι ὅτι δὲν τὸν ἔσωσε νὰ εἶναι πάπας καὶ πατριάρχης ὅλης τῆς Δύσεως, ἀμὴ ἠθέλησε νὰ ἐξουσιάσῃ ὅλην τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, Ἀνατολῆς καὶ Δύσεως, καὶ νὰ εἶναι ὁ μόνος ἄκρος ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ κεφαλὴ καθολικὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καθὼς ἦτον καὶ ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Χριστὸς. Καὶ νὰ μὴν ἔχη ὁ Χριστὸς καμμίαν ἐξουσίαν εἰς τὴν ἐπίγειον Ἐκκλησίαν, μόνον ὁ πάπας. Αὐτὸς νὰ λύῃ καὶ νὰ δένη εἰς ὅλας τὰς Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ κόσμου”. *Ibidem*.

<sup>57</sup> “πζ”) Ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῶν λατίνων, ἀφόντις ἐχωρίσθη ἀπὸ τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν ἀνατολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ὑστερήθη παντελῶς τῆς θείας χάριτος καὶ ἀγιαστικῆς ἐνεργείας Ἐλα τώρα νὰ ἰδοῦμεν καὶ τὴν δυτικὴν, παπιστικὴν ἢ λατινικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν-νὰ ἰδοῦμεν ποῖα ἔχει καὶ ποῖα τῆς λείπονται ἀπὸ τὰ ἐνεργήματα ὅπου φανερώνουν τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν τῶν χριστιανῶν. (89) πθ) *Σχελιαστικὸν πρὸς τὴν τῶν λατίνων ἢ δυτικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Ἀλλ’ οὐαί σοι ἀθλία Ἐκκλησία λατινικὴ ἢ ῥωμαϊκὴ, ἢ μᾶλλον δυτικὴ!* Τί τὸ περὶ σὲ μέγα καὶ φοβερὸν πτῶμα καὶ δυστύχημα; ... Καὶ σχεδὸν ἔστησε καινούργιαν πίστιν καὶ Ἐκκλησίαν δυσικὴν, ἀντίθετον κατὰπάντα τῆς ἀνατολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ δικαίως λέγεται ἀποστάτης καὶ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ θηρίον καὶ δράκων, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Μωάμεθ... Καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦτο εἶναι ἕνα βέβαιον πρᾶγμα νὰ γνωρίσῃ τινὰς τὴν χάριν τῆς ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τὴν ἐγκατάλειψιντῆς θείας χάριτος καὶ στερῆσιν παντελῶς τοῦ θείου φωτὸς ἀπὸ τὴν δυσικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.” “Ἐλα τώρα νὰ ἰδοῦμεν καὶ τὴν δυτικὴν, παπιστικὴν ἢ λατινικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν-νὰ ἰδοῦμεν ποῖα ἔχει καὶ ποῖα τῆς λείπονται ἀπὸ τὰ ἐνεργήματα ὅπου φανερώνουν τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν τῶν χριστιανῶν”. “Καὶ ἐπερίλαβεν ὅλον τὸ σῶμα τῆς δυσικῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἔγινεν ἀνεπιχείρητος παντελῶς ἕως τοῦ νῦν”. “Αὐτὸς εἶναι λοιπὸν ὁ διώκτης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὅπου τὴν ἐδίωξε καὶ θέλει τὴν διώξῃ ἕως τῆς συντελείας”. „Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι αὐτὸς. Αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ προδότης καὶ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν Ῥωμαίων καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας”.

<sup>58</sup> “Ὅρατε πόσα ἄτοπα ἔπεται πανταχόθεν τοῖς λέγουσι τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς Υἱοῦ τε ἐκπορεύεσθαι; Μὴ διὰ τὸν Κύριον κακῶς φρονεῖν θέλετε. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ Λατῖνοι, ἢ τῆς Ῥώμης Ἐκκλησία καὶ ἄλλοι, εὐπαράδεκτους δῆθεν παράγουσι μάρτυρας, Αὐγουστῖνον, Ἀμβρόσιον, Ἰερώνυμον καὶ ἄλλους τινὰς, ἀλλ’ ἔχομεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀναπαραγαεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας πολλῶ πλείονας καὶ ἀξιοπιστοτέρους. ποῖους τούτους;” Ἰωαννῆς Ν. Karmirēs, *Τα δογματικὰ καὶ συμβολικὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, Ekdosis deuteria epeuthemene, vol. 2 (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1968), 442. “See how many absurd conclusions from every side trail those who say that the Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son! Do not desire to think incorrectly concerning the Lord. For if the Latins, that is, *the Church of Rome*, and others can produce witnesses who are acceptable such as Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and some others, we also can produce many more and even more trustworthy Fathers to speak up for the truth. Who are they?” George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople: The Correspondence between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople on the Augsburg Confession* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982), 162. Patriarhul Ieremia face diferența între Vechea Biserică apostolică a Romei și Biserica Romei de după Schismă: “Ο αὐτὸς δὲ Λέων καὶ τὸ θησαυροφυλάκιον τῆς ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας Ῥωμαίων ἀνοίξας, ἀσπίδας δύο, τοῖς ἱεροῖς κειμηλίοις συναποτεθησαοισμένας”. Karmirēs, *Τα δογματικὰ καὶ συμβολικὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, 2:449. “Moreover, this same [Pope] Leo opened the treasury of the apostolic church of the Romans and drew forth two plaques which were stored in the treasury together with the sacred “treasures.” Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, 172.

churches will become one by the grace of God, we shall live together hereafter and we will exist together in a God-pleasing way until we attain the heavenly kingdom”<sup>59</sup>.

Likewise, in the Encyclical Letter of the Eastern Patriarchs written in 1848 in reply to Pope Pius IX’s *Epistle to the Easterns* the Western Catholic Church fallen into heresy after the Great Schism is called: “The Roman Church (Ῥωμάνα Ἐκκλησίᾳ)”<sup>60</sup>, “The Church of Rome”, “The Western Church”<sup>61</sup>. Moreover, this Encyclical letter states: “we have a right to expect from the prudent forethought of his Holiness, a work so worthy the true successor of St. Peter, of Leo I, and also of Leo III, who for security of the orthodox faith engraved the divine Creed unaltered upon imperishable plates—a work which will unite the churches of the West to the holy Catholic Church, in which the canonical chief seat of his Holiness, and the seats of all the Bishops of the West remain empty and ready to be occupied. For the Catholic Church, awaiting the conversion of the shepherds who have fallen off from her with their flocks, does not separate in name only, those who have been

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<sup>59</sup> “Καὶ ὑμῶν, οὖν, ὧ ἄνδρες Γερμανοὶ σοφώτατοι καὶ τέκνα ἀγαπητὰ τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, βουλομένων, ὡς νουνεχῶν, ὀλοψύχως τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ προσελθεῖν ἀγιωτῆ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἡμεῖς, ὡς πατέρες φιλόστοργοι, προθύμως τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀγάπην καὶ φιλοφροσύνην ἀποδεξόμεθα, ἐὰν θελήσητε τοῖς ἀποστολικοῖς καὶ συνοδικοῖς συμφώνως ἡμῖν ἀκολουθήσειν καὶ τούτοις ὑπέξειν. Τηνικαῦτα γὰρ τῶ ὄντι συγκοινοὶ ἡμῖν ἔσεσθε, καὶ ὡς παρρησίᾳ ὑποταγέντες τῇ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἀγίᾳ καὶ καθολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, παρὰ πάντων τῶν νουνεχῶν ἐπαινεθήσεσθε καὶ οὕτω ταῖν δυοῖν ἐκκλησίαιν μᾶς σὺν Θεῷ γενομένης, τοῦ λοιποῦ συζήσομεν καὶ συμβιοτεύσομεν ἐν Χριστῷ θεαρέστως, ἕως οὗ καὶ τῆς ἐπουρανίου τύχοιμεν βασιλείας”. Karmiris, 1960, Vol.1, p. 503. “O most wise German men and beloved children of our humble self, since, as sensible men, you wish with your whole heart to enter our most Holy Church, we, as affectionate fathers, willingly accept your love and friendliness, if you will follow the Apostolic and Synodal decrees in harmony with us and will submit to them. For then you will indeed be in communion with us, and having openly submitted to our holy and catholic church of Christ, you will be praised by all prudent men. In this way the two churches will become one by the grace of God, we shall live together hereafter and we will exist together in a God-pleasing way until we attain the heavenly kingdom”. Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, 103.

<sup>60</sup> Article 13: “Father, Sr. Irenaeus, were alive again, seeing it was fallen from the ancient and primitive teaching in so many most essential and catholic articles of Christianity, he would not be himself the first to oppose the novelties and self-sufficient constitutions of that Church which was lauded by him as guided purely by the doctrines of the Fathers?” Article 16: „From these things we estimate into what an unspeakable labyrinth of wrong and incorrigible sin of revolution the papacy has thrown even the wiser and more godly Bishops of the Roman Church, so that, in order to preserve the innocent, and therefore valued vicarial dignity, as well as the despotic primacy and the things depending upon it, they know no other means shall to insult the most divine and sacred things, daring everything for that one end”; „He will find, also, flow many modern papistical doctrines and mysteries must be rejected as “commandments of men” in order that the Church of the West, which has introduced all sorts of novelties, may be changed back again to the immutable Catholic Orthodox faith of our common fathers.” Article 17: „How becoming and holy would be the mending of the innovations, the time of whose entrance in the Church of Rome we know in each case; for our illustrious fathers have testified from time to time against each novelty”.

[http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/encyc\\_1848.aspx](http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/encyc_1848.aspx)

<sup>61</sup> I. KARMIRIS, *Τα Δογματικά*, II, p. 915, 918, 920.

privily introduced to the rulership by the action of others, thus making little of the Priesthood.<sup>62</sup> The Encyclical also uses the expression “the apostate churches”: “But until there be this desired returning of the apostate Churches to the body of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of which Christ is the Head”.

These are only a few patristic texts and synodal documents recognized in the Orthodox Church that have used the name “church” for other Christian communities, but they have in no way given any ecclesial status or recognised their ecclesiality. Therefore, the Holy and Great Council of Crete, by accepting “*the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her*” follows the patristic and synodal Tradition of the Orthodox Church. If we reject the use and the acceptance of the historical name of other heterodox Churches and confessions, we have to reject all the documents and texts that we have quoted.

Even Hierotheos Vlahos in his recent book, “Old and New Rome”, after analysing the Encyclical Letter of the Eastern Patriarch (1848), the text that condemned the wrong teachings of Catholicism, he himself uses the term “Church” to designate the other Christian confessions, by saying:

“This Encyclical - the Pan-Orthodox decision - shows that the Church is the Body of Christ, that it remains united and preserves the dogmas and sacraments given to it, while the churches that have departed from the true faith are apostate Churches”.<sup>63</sup>

What does the phrase “apostate Churches” used by Hierotheos Vlahos mean? Why did Hieroteos Vlachos, the protector of the orthodox faith, name other Christian communities with the word “Church”, and after that he condemns the Holy and Great Council because the Council used the term “Church” for other Christian communities and that it is illegitimate to use the term “Church” for them, even though he himself used it? Moreover, does it offer some ecclesiality to these Christian communities when they call them “apostate Churches” using for them the word “Churches”, despite the fact that they are apostate? Is Hieroteos Vlahos falling into the same “ecclesiological nominalism” that he is accusing others of<sup>64</sup>? If he refers only to the historical name of “Church” without attributing the character of

<sup>62</sup> I. KARMIRIS, *Τα Δογματικά*, II, p. 918. For the English translation see: [http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/encyc\\_1848.aspx](http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/encyc_1848.aspx)

<sup>63</sup> Ierótheos Vlachos, *Vechea și Noua Romă. De La Tradiția Ortodoxă La Tradițiile Apusului*, trans. Teofan Munteanu (Iasi, 2016), 410 Romanian translation of: Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου καί Αγίου Βλασίου Ἱεροθέου, *Παλαιά καί Νέα Ρώμη. Ορθόδοξη καί Δυτική Παράδοση*, (Πελαγίας, Ἱερά Μονή Γενεθλίου τῆς Θεοτόκου) 2009.

<sup>64</sup> “The phrase “the historical existence” was replaced by the phrase “the historical name”. There is no name without existence, because otherwise an ecclesiological nominalism is expressed”. <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/intervention-and-text-in-the-hierarchy-of-the-church-of-greece-november-2016-regarding-the-cretan-council>

ecclesiality to these communities, as can be seen from its entire exposure, then Ierotheos Vlahos also is in full agreement with the decision of the Holy and Great Council. Furthermore, the words of Hierotheos Vlahos are more “ecumenist” and more permissive than the document of the Holy and Great Council. If the Council states that it “*accepts the historical name*”, Hierotheos Vlahos said that “they are”, and if the Synodal document identifies two realities: “non-orthodox Churches and Confessions”, Hierotheos Vlahos calls all of them “apostate Churches”, but still “Churches”. Likewise, even the other supporters of the writings of Hierotheos Vlahos and detractors of the formulation of the Holy and Great Council, such as Gheorghios Metallinos, Kotsopoulos, or Theodoros Zisis<sup>65</sup>, the promoter of the final phrase of the pre-conciliar document, used in their writings both before and after the Council of Crete the term “Church” for the Catholic Church, in the expressions: “The Latin Church<sup>66</sup>”, “The Papal Church<sup>67</sup>”. Even Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka said in his letter: “Why I did not sign the document of the Council of Crete about the relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world” that: „personally, I consider that ... the word „Church” should remain just for the Roman Catholicism (Προσωπικῶς φρονῶ, ὅτι τὸ ἐνδεδειγμένον ἐν προκειμένῳ ἦτο νὰ μείνη ὁ ὅρος Ἐκκλησία μόνον διὰ τὸν ρωμαιοκαθολικισμόν)”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Theodoros Yangou gives more quotes from the works of Theodoros Zisis where he used the word “Church” for the Roman Catholic Church. For example: “Τὴν υποτίμηση τοῦ λαοῦ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ρώμης ἐνισχύει ἐπίσης ὁ ἀποκλεισμός τῶν λαϊκῶν ἀπὸ τὴν κοινωνία τοῦ ποτηρίου ...” (Ἡθικά Κεφάλαια, Θεσσαλονίκη 2002, σ. 133). “Ὅλα αὐτὰ τα μέτρα, κατὰλοιπα τῆς ἀπολυταρχίας καὶ φεουδαρχίας μέσα στὴν Δυτικὴ Ἐκκλησία” (ὄπ.π., σ. 134). “Σύμφωνα με τὴν ἐκκλησιολογία τῶν προτεσταντῶν δὲν ὑπάρχει ἱερατικὴ δομὴ στὴν ἐκκλησία καὶ ἰδιαίτερα ἱερατεῖο ... Ἡ διδασκαλία αὐτὴ ἦταν ἀπαραίτητη στὴ μεταρρύθμιση γιὰ νὰ μπορέσει νὰ ἀπαλλαγεῖ ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκκλησία τῆς Ρώμης” (ὄπ.π., σ. 135). The book “Ἡθικά Κεφάλαια” served as a handbook for Orthodox Theology for many years. Θεοδώρου Ξ. Γιάγκου, “Πτυχές ποῦ ἀποσιωπήθηκαν στὸν δημόσιο διάλογο περὶ τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλῆς Συνόδου (Α΄ ΜΕΡΟΣ)” <http://www.amen.gr/article/ptyxes-pou-aposiopathikan-ston-dimosio-dialogo-peri-tis-agias-kai-megalis-synodou-a-meros>

<sup>66</sup> Gheorghios Metallinos, “Ἐνωτικές προσπάθειες μετὰ τὸ σχίσμα καὶ ὁ σημερινὸς διάλογος τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας μετὰ τὴν Λατινικὴ Ἐκκλησία, ἴν: *Πρακτικά Θεολογικῆς Ἡμερίδος, Πρωτεῖον, Συνοδικότης καὶ Ἐνότης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, (Ρίγερ, 2011), 73-106.

<sup>67</sup> In his article: Γεώργιος Μεταλλινός, ‘Μόνος κερδισμένος ὁ Πάπας ἀπὸ τοὺς θεολογικοὺς διαλόγους’, *Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος Ἑβδομαδιαία ἔκδοσις τῆς Πανελληνίου Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐνώσεως* 2159, no. 31 Μαρτίου (2017): 1, 7. Metallinos uses the expression “Λατινικὴ «Ἐκκλησία»”. The word “Church” is used three times with brackets and one time without brackets: “Ἡ Λατινικὴ Ἐκκλησία, χάριν τῆς ὑποταγῆς τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας, θὰ ἦταν πρόθυμη νὰ υποχωρήσει σὲ θεολογικὰ ζητήματα, ὅπως λ.χ. τὸ Filioque, ποτέ ὅμως στα περὶ πάντα δόγματα (πρωτεῖο καὶ ἀλάθητο). Καὶ ὅμως κατὰ τοὺς συντιζόντες Ὁρθοδόξους ὁ Παπισμός εἶναι ἡ Ἐκκλησία!” (p. 7). He is using the phrase “τὴν Παπικὴ «Ἐκκλησία»”: “Ὁ σημερινὸς Διάλογος μετὰ τὴν Παπικὴ «Ἐκκλησία» στηρίζεται σὲ ἓνα ψευδοεπιχείρημα, ποῦ ἀναπαράγεται συνεχῶς ἀπὸ τὴν ἐνωτικὴν παράταξη”.

<sup>68</sup> “Προσωπικῶς φρονῶ, ὅτι τὸ ἐνδεδειγμένον ἐν προκειμένῳ ἦτο νὰ μείνη ὁ ὅρος Ἐκκλησία μόνον διὰ τὸν ρωμαιοκαθολικισμόν (ὁ ὁποῖος, περιέργως, οὔτε μνημονεύεται μεμονωμένως εἰς τὸ κείμενον, ἐνῶ γίνεται κατὰ κόρον ἢ πρὸς τὸ Παγκόσμιον Συμβούλιον Ἐκκλησιῶν ἀναφορὰ), διότι ἢ ὑπερχλιετὴς δογματικὴ διαμάχη μετὰξὺ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν δὲν ἐκρίθη εἰστέτιπὶ τοῦ ἐπιπέδου Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου, εἰ μὴ μόνον εἰς τὰς ψευδοικουμενικὰς συνόδους Λυῶνος καὶ Φερράρας-Φλωρεντίας.” <http://www.romfea.gr/images/article-images/2016/07/romfea2/ba.pdf>.

Those who condemn the sixth article of the document unfortunately do not realise that they have to condemn as well the document “Basic Principles of the Attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church Toward the Other Christian Confessions, adopted by the Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, August 14, 2000, in which the text of the document of the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference (1986) is cited. In the Russian Document we can read in the chapter: “The Orthodox Church has always sought to draw the different Christian Churches and confessions into a joint search for the lost unity of Christians, so that all might reach the unity of faith.”<sup>69</sup> The detractors of the Council of Crete have to ask themselves why is the Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church using the word “Church” for other Christian communities. The answer can be found in the same document of the Russian Orthodox Church:

“1.15. The Orthodox Church, through the mouths of the holy fathers, affirms that salvation can be attained only in the Church of Christ. At the same time however, communities which have fallen away from Orthodoxy have never been viewed as fully deprived of the grace of God. Any break from communion with the Church inevitably leads to an erosion of her grace-filled life, but not always to its complete loss in these separated communities<sup>70</sup>”. “2.4. The Orthodox Church cannot accept the assumption that despite the historical divisions, the fundamental and profound unity of Christians has not been broken and that the Church should be understood as coextensive with the entire “Christian world”, that Christian unity exists across denominational barriers and that the disunity of the churches belongs exclusively to the imperfect level of human relations. According to this conception, the Church remains one, but this oneness is not, as it were, sufficiently manifest in visible form. In this model of unity, the task of Christians is understood not as the restoration of a lost unity but as the manifestation of an existing unity. This model repeats the teaching on “the invisible Church” which appeared during the Reformation”<sup>71</sup>.

In the Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia signed in Havana on February 12, 2016, the term “Church” is used not only for the Orthodox Church but also for the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics. We can even find the expression “Christian Churches”<sup>72</sup>. Does this mean that the Russian Orthodox Church recognizes by signing this statement the ecclesial character of the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Church? An affirmative answer would be totally meaningless, since Eucharistic communion was not restored

<sup>69</sup> <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/attitude-to-the-non-orthodox/iii/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/attitude-to-the-non-orthodox/i/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/attitude-to-the-non-orthodox/ii/>

<sup>72</sup> Art. 1 “to discuss the mutual relations between the Churches”, Art. 11: “so that fraternal co-existence among the various populations, Churches and religions may be strengthened”, art. 12: “these martyrs of our times, who belong to various Churches”, Art. 18: “The Christian churches”; Art. 24: “to pass from one Church to another”; Art. 26: “our Churches in Ukraine”

between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Those who reject the document of the Holy and Great Council unfortunately do not comment on this Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill.

After the Holy and Great Council all the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, with the exception of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria signed the document „Synodality and Primacy during the first Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding on Service to the Unity of the Church” of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, held in Chieti, September 21, 2016<sup>73</sup>. If the Orthodox Church had refused to call other Christian communities „Churches”, all the 13 Orthodox Autocephalous Churches should have refused to take part in a Commission with a Christian Community that considers itself a „Church” and to sign the Chieti Document.

## Conclusions

In this paper I have emphasised the genesis and the development of the phrase: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions*”, by finding that this highly controversial formulation emerged in the pre-conciliar debates and that the direct promoter of this formulation of the final document of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-orthodox Conference was none other than *Theodoros Zisis*, at that time a consultant member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the paper we gave a lot of quotes from the patristic, synodal and canonical Tradition of the Church where certain heterodox communities were called “Churches” without recognizing their ecclesiality or an ecclesial status. By emphasising the diachronic development of the use of the word “church/ἐκκλησία”, we saw that the word “Church” was applied to other Christian communities in some synodal decisions and works of the Holy Fathers in order to designate certain communities that ceased the communion with the Orthodox Church and departed from it, but by the use of the word “Church” they did not give an ontological ecclesial status to other Christian communities.

In conclusion we can affirm that the phrase: “*the Orthodox Church accepts the historical name of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions*” is not in contradiction with the doctrinal Tradition of the Orthodox Church, but it can be extended and improved.

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<sup>73</sup> For the Chieti Document see:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/ch\\_orthodox\\_docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20160921\\_synodality-primacy\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/ch_orthodox_docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20160921_synodality-primacy_en.html)

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