

Calendar... This calendar, in fact, corresponds to the Gregorian Calendar until the year 2800, when a difference of one day will occur in leap years, which, nonetheless, will even out in the year 2900. What an amazing discovery! Thus, it becomes possible to “celebrate the major Christian Feast Days” simultaneously with the heterodox; at the same time, tradition-minded Orthodox can be assured that they have not adopted the Papist Calendar.<sup>43</sup>

The Synod of 1593 is also noteworthy for confirming the elevation of the See of Moscow to the rank of Patriarchate (which Patriarch Jeremiah had effected in 1589) and for placing it in fifth position of honor after the ancient Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, respectively. Saint Job of Moscow was the first to serve the Russian Church as Patriarch.

### *The Synod of Iași of 1642 and the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672*

**I**n their methods and goals, the Synod of Iași (Jassy) of 1642 and the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 were closely related and thus belong together conceptually. These Synods sought to defend Eastern Orthodoxy *vis-à-vis* Western Christianity, and, to do so, both adopted the tactic of “fighting fire with fire,” *viz.*, of counteracting the doctrinal errors of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism by presenting Orthodoxy in the theological language of the West. Unfortunately, the subtleties, nuances, and paradoxes of Patristic thought cannot be fully captured in the theological language of the West, so that, while recognizing their valuable contribution to the defense of the Faith, Orthodox generally view these Synods with much less enthusiasm than Western Christians do. Ironically, it is the latter who, while perhaps disagreeing with their message, nonetheless, feeling comfortable and conversant with the terminology that they employ, have come to accept these Synods as authoritative expressions of the Orthodox Faith, and it is

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.

for this reason that the Synods of 1642 and 1672 have come to attain an unusual kind of quasi-Œcumenical character.

The Synod of Iași was convened in 1642 by order of Vasile Lupu, Voivode of Moldavia, who had previously petitioned Patriarch Parthenios I of Constantinople for permission to hold a Synod, which permission the Patriarch had granted. The Voivode was concerned because Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries had been active in his country, trying to undermine the Faith of the Orthodox Moldavians. Specifically, he wished the Synod to formulate and issue a declaration of faith that could be used to instruct the Orthodox more fully in their religious beliefs. The document unpropitiously chosen for this purpose was *The Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East* by Metropolitan Peter Mogila of Kiev, a work that reflected the theological decline in Orthodox thought of that period; it was “modeled on the Tridentine Catechism,”<sup>44</sup> with Latin-style categories of thought and Scholastic terminology. However, as Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia remarks, Metropolitan Peter’s *Confession* was generally accepted

only after it had been revised by a Greek, Meletius Syrigos, who in particular altered the passages about the consecration in the Eucharist (which Peter attributed solely to the Words of Institution) and about Purgatory.<sup>45</sup>

Yet even after its most egregious errors had been eliminated, *The Orthodox Confession* of Metropolitan Peter, though basically Orthodox in content, “is still the most Latin document ever to be adopted by an official council of the Orthodox Church”<sup>46</sup> and “[t]herefore...has a very relative authority.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> George A. Maloney, S.J., *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Co., 1976), p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 97.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453*, p. 35.

The Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 (also called “The Synod of Bethlehem” because it was convened in the Church of the Nativity) was called by Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem to examine a *Confession of Faith* attributed to a former Patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril I, who had been murdered by the Turks in 1638. That *Confession* contained theological notions drawn from the writings of the Protestant leader John Calvin. It is not absolutely clear that Patriarch Cyril I, who had earlier studied in the Calvinist stronghold of Geneva (but who had also studied in Roman Catholic Venice and Padua), even wrote this infamous *Confession*. “Some insisted, by citing his sermons, that Cyril could not have been the author of such an heretical document; others wanted to condemn him as a heretic.”<sup>48</sup> In any case, the Synod of Jerusalem examined this *Confession*, refuting “point by point with concision and clarity”<sup>49</sup> assertions such as, that by God’s will certain men are predestined to Heaven and others to Hell; that free will plays no rôle in the process of salvation; that the Mysteries are limited to two, Baptism and the Eucharist; that there is no need for an Episcopacy; that Holy Communion is not truly the Body and Blood of Christ; that we are justified by faith alone; and so forth, condemning these and other such ideas as manifestly heretical. The acts of the Synod (usually called *The Confession of Dositheos*) were signed by Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem and by representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Moscow. Summing up the significance of the Synod of Jerusalem, Metropolitan Kallistos states:

On the whole..., the *Confession* of Dositheus is less Latin than that of Moghila, and must certainly be regarded as a document of primary importance in the history of seventeenth-century Orthodox theology. Faced by the Calvinism of [Patriarch Cyril I] Lukaris, Dositheus used the weapons which lay nearest to hand—Latin weapons (under the circumstances it was perhaps the only thing

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>49</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 97.

that he could do); but the faith which he defended with these Latin weapons was not Roman, but Orthodox.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, the Synod of Jerusalem is remembered for its defense of the ancient Orthodox Canon of Holy Scripture, which includes a number of Old Testamental books that detractors have

foolishly and ignorantly, or rather maliciously, called “Apocrypha”: The Wisdom of Solomon, Judith, Tobit, the History of the Dragon [Bel and the Dragon], the History of Susanna, [the three (or four) books of] the Maccabees, and the Wisdom of Sirach.<sup>51</sup>

These words were particularly intended for those of a Protestant mind-set, as the Septuagint scholars Karen H. Jobs and Moisés Silva make clear:

Recognizing the esteem given these books by ancient Jews and Christians, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches consider them to be (deutero)canonical. The Protestant churches, however, refer to them as apocryphal; while they may be helpful and interesting reading, they play no authoritative role in the spiritual life of the church. Because the apocryphal books are not normally bound in the Protestant Bible, most Protestant Christians have, unfortunately, never heard of them, much less read them.<sup>52</sup>

Jobs and Silva further explain the significance of the difference between the terms “apocryphal” and “deuterocanonical”:

The term *apocryphal* means “hidden,” that is, unrecognized. Roman Catholics reserve this adjective for a large number of additional Jewish books otherwise known as *pseudepigraphic*.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “The Confession of Dositheus, or the Eighteen Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem,” in *The Greek and Latin Creeds, With Translations*, Vol. II of *The Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Philip Schaff, rev. Davis S. Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), p. 435.

<sup>52</sup> Karen H. Jobs and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 31.

The term *deuterocanonical* reflects the fact that the Roman Catholic Church officially declared such books as canonical on a “second” occasion, that is, in the sixteenth century after a period of debate [at the fourth session of the Counter-Reformation Council of Trent (1545–1563)].<sup>54</sup>

In its own way, then, the Synod of Jerusalem, not unlike the Council of Trent, bestowed “deuterocanonical” status on these books (which are more typically referred to by Orthodox as “ἀναγιγνωσκόμενα” [*anagignōskόμενα*], “things that are read,” a term that implies their acceptability for ecclesiastical use) by stating explicitly what was already the long-standing unwritten tradition of the Orthodox Church regarding them.

### *The Synod of Constantinople of 1819*

The movement known by the name “Κολλυβάδες” (*Kollyvades*) was centered primarily around the monks of Mount Athos, and “[n]o single debate, after the Hesychastic Controversy in the fourteenth century, had such an impact on the life of the Holy Mountain as the *Kollyvades* Controversy.”<sup>55</sup> This movement emphasized reliance on the Hesychastic theology and spirituality of the Church Fathers, and opposed Latinizing or Westernizing influences in the Orthodox Church and in Greek society. The activities of the Κολλυβάδες, who “called for the strict observance of the Sacred Tradition of the Church,”<sup>56</sup> marked the beginning of a Patristic renaissance in the Orthodox East. In accordance with canonical strictures,

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81, n. 26.

<sup>55</sup> Hieromonk Patapios and Archbishop Chrysostomos, *Manna from Athos: The Issue of Frequent Communion on the Holy Mountain in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, Vol. II of *Byzantine and Neohellenic Studies*, ed. Andrew Louth and David Ricks (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 28.

<sup>56</sup> Constantine Cavarinos, *St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite*, Vol. III of *Modern Orthodox Saints* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1974), p. 22.