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(1375-1406)**

Dimitri Obolensky

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A PHILORHOMAIOS ANTHROPOS:
METROPOLITAN CYPRIAN
OF KIEV AND ALL RUSSIA
(1375-1406)

DIMITRI OBOLENSKY

The following paper is substantially the same as that delivered at a public lecture at Dumbarton Oaks on 3 May 1977.

IT has become a commonplace of Late Byzantine studies to comment on the striking contrast during the last century of the Empire's existence between its growing impotence as a political body and the astonishing vitality of its culture, exemplified in the achievements of Byzantium in art, scholarship, and theology. The "last Byzantine Renaissance" was indeed, in the words of a contemporary scholar, a time when "the State was collapsing but learning never shone more brightly."¹ This light was visible far beyond the political boundaries of the now greatly shrunken Empire. Indeed, except for Constantinople, Mt. Athos, Mistra, and, during the periods when the Empire held it, Thessalonica, the fairest flowers of this late Palaeologan blossoming were to be found in the non-Greek-speaking lands of Orthodox Eastern Europe—in Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Russia. Except for the two centuries between 850 and 1050, the spread of Byzantine culture throughout Eastern Europe was never so marked, nor so successful, as during the last hundred years of the Empire's history.

This cultural expansion was, of course, part of a wider network of multiple relations—political, diplomatic, economic, and ecclesiastical—established for centuries past between Byzantium and the peoples of Eastern Europe. These relations owed their origin to two convergent impulses: the needs, usually defensive, of the Empire's foreign policy; and the desire of those East European peoples who were drawn into the Empire's orbit to "reach out" for the fruits of its civilization, and to tap the sources of its technological expertise.

This paper is concerned with the life of a man who played a crucial role in this encounter, a role which, I believe, has not yet been sufficiently appreciated. During the last quarter of the fourteenth century and the opening years of the fifteenth, when the Byzantine Empire was on the verge of collapse, when only its ecclesiastical arm—the ecumenical patriarchate—remained to champion its interests abroad, and when it seemed that it might lose the allegiance even of its East European satellites, he strove to withstand the local forces of separatism and nationalism, to gain friends for the Empire in its hour of need, and to unite the Slav Orthodox peoples through a newly found loyalty to their mother church of Constantinople. Successively a Bulgarian monk trained on Mt. Athos, a confidential agent of the Byzantine patriarch, the latter's representative as metropolitan in Kiev, a victim of the political rivalry between Muscovy and Lithuania, and, in the end, the unchallenged incumbent of the see of Moscow which had eluded him for so long, Kyprianos, or Kiprian, or Cyprian, epitomizes in his far-flung journeys, in the breadth of his mental horizon, and in his multiple loyalties the rich cosmopolitan culture which flourished in Eastern Europe during the late Middle Ages. It is strange that no comprehensive monograph has yet been published on the career of

¹ S. Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1970), vii.

this remarkable man.² The present paper cannot, of course, fill this gap; it is no more than a very preliminary sketch.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

(ca. 1330–ca. 1370)

The first forty years or so of Cyprian's life are poorly documented. In text books, unfortunately, the early phase of his biography is often recounted with quite spurious precision. In fact, very little is known for certain. We can probably accept the general view that he was born about 1330.³ He was certainly a Bulgarian, for his distinguished contemporary Gregory Tsamblak, a reliable source, says so explicitly.⁴ It was once commonly believed that Cyprian was Gregory's uncle, on the sole evidence of a passing remark in Gregory's Church Slavonic encomium on Cyprian that "he [i.e., Cyprian] was the brother of our father."⁵ The Tsamblaks were a distinguished family with branches in Bulgaria and Byzantium,⁶ and historians have supposed that the young Cyprian's career was advanced by his highly placed family connections. These agreeable possibilities, however, have little basis in fact. In 1968, in a paper presented to the International Congress of Slavists in Prague, the German scholar Johannes Holthusen argued cogently that the words "the brother of our father" should be understood in a spiritual, not a physical, sense: the "brotherly" relationship was that between two episcopal colleagues, Cyprian, head of the Church of Russia, and his contemporary, the Patriarch Euthymius, primate of Bulgaria. To a Bulgarian churchman such as Gregory, Euthymius would indeed have been "our father."⁷ There can be

² See, however, the brief but perceptive study by A.-A. Tachiaos, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Ῥωσίας Κυπριανός Τσαμπλάκ, in Ἀριστοτέλειον Πανεπιστήμιον Θεσσαλονίκης, Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς, VI (Thessaloniki, 1961) (hereafter Tachiaos, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός). Except for the first paragraph, it is reprinted in *idem*, Ἐπιδράσεις τοῦ ἡσυχασμοῦ εἰς τὴν ἔκκλησιαστικὴν πολιτικὴν ἐν Ῥωσίᾳ (Thessaloniki, 1962) (hereafter Tachiaos, Ἐπιδράσεις).

³ E. Golubinskij, *Istorija russkoj cerkvi*, II,1 (Moscow, 1900), 298–99 note 2; P. A. Syrku, *K istorii ispravlenija knig v Bolgarii v XIV vekē*, I (St. Petersburg, 1899; repr. London, 1972), 254; Tachiaos, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 172; *idem*, Ἐπιδράσεις, 70.

⁴ *Pohvalno slovo za Kiprijan*, in B. St. Angelov, *Iz starata bŭlgarska, ruska i srŭbska literatura* (Sofia, 1958), 181: егѡ же убо наше ѡчѣво изнесе. Cyprian is described as a Serb in two Russian sixteenth-century chronicles: *Patriaršaja ili Nikonovskaja Lëtopis'*, s.a. 1407, in PSRL, XI (St. Petersburg, 1897), 194; and *Kniga Stepennaja Carskogo Rodoslovija*, in PSRL, XXI,2 (1913), 440. Attempts have been made to explain the reasons for this mistaken attribution; see *Afonskij Paterik* (Moscow, 1889), II, 188; Tachiaos, Ἐπιδράσεις, 62 note 1; *idem*, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 164 note 1; and, for the most extensive discussion of this problem, J. Ivanov, "Bŭlgarskoto knižovno vlijanie v Rusija pri Mitropolit Kiprian (1375–1406)," *Izvestija na Institutata za bŭlgarska literatura*, 6 (1958) (hereafter Ivanov, "Bŭlgarskoto knižovno vlijanie"), 29–37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 185: братъ бѣаше нашему оцѣю.

⁶ G. I. Theocharides, Οἱ Τζαμπλάκωνες, in Μακεδονικά, 5 (1961–63), 125–83.

⁷ J. Holthusen, "Neues zur Erklärung des Nadgrobnoe Slovo von Grigorij Camblak auf den Moskauer Metropolitan Kiprian," *Slavistische Studien zum VI. Internationalen Slavistenkongress in Prag 1968*, ed. E. Koschmieder and M. Braun (Munich, 1968), 372–82. Holthusen's arguments may find further support in the fact that on two occasions Cyprian, then metropolitan of Kiev and Lithuania, referred to the recently deceased Alexius, primate of Muscovy, as "my brother"; see Cyprian's letter to St. Sergius of Radonež and Theodore, abbot of the Simonov monastery: *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI (St. Petersburg, 1880), cols. 173–86. Ivanov ("Bŭlgarskoto knižovno vlijanie," 36) doubted whether Cyprian belonged to the Tsamblak family, but his view that the fathers of Cyprian and Gregory were half-brothers is not supported by the sources.

little doubt that Holthusen is right and that Cyprian must therefore be stripped of the surname Tsamblak, so confidently given him by most historians (myself included). We must be prepared to admit that we know nothing about his family background. We do not even know his baptismal name, for Cyprian was his name in religion.

The same uncertainty surrounds the time and place of his monastic profession. We know from a Byzantine document that in 1373 Cyprian was a monk who enjoyed the close confidence of the Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople, and was the patriarch's *οικεῖος καλόγηρος*.⁸ Presumably, to have gained such a position of trust, he must have been in Philotheos' immediate entourage for at least a few years, which pushes the date of his arrival in Constantinople, and probably of his monastic profession as well, at least as far back as *ca.* 1370.⁹ We may, though with less certainty, go back even further. We possess a letter, written by the Patriarch Euthymius of Bulgaria and addressed, in the words of its superscription, "to the monk Cyprian, who lives on the Holy Mountain of Athos."¹⁰ It contains Euthymius' replies to various questions of a disciplinary and liturgical nature which this monk had addressed to him. The identification made by the letter's editor and by modern scholars of the addressee as our Cyprian seems to me to raise chronological difficulties. Euthymius was patriarch of Bulgaria from 1375 to 1393. During those years Cyprian was commuting between Constantinople, Lithuania, and Muscovy, and could not conceivably have "lived on the Holy Mountain of Athos." So we must conclude that if Euthymius wrote the letter during his patriarchate (as the superscription in the manuscript says that he did) it must have been addressed to another Cyprian. It is possible, however, that the words "Patriarch of Trnovo" were appended to Euthymius' name by the fifteenth-century scribe,¹¹ and that Euthymius, in fact, wrote the letter before he became patriarch. If so, we must look for a time when he could have written the letter and when Cyprian could have been on Mt. Athos. Between about 1365 and 1371 Euthymius was himself on Mt. Athos,¹² and would obviously have had no need to write this letter; and by 1371 Cyprian was presumably already in Constantinople. If we assume that the letter was indeed addressed to our Cyprian, we may conclude that it was probably written before 1363 (the date of Euthymius' departure from Bulgaria to Constantinople), at a time when its writer was a monk in the famous monastery of Kilifarevo in northern Bul-

⁸ *Acta et diplomata Graeca aevi mediæ sacra et profana. Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani*, ed. F. Miklosich and J. Müller, II (Vienna, 1862) (hereafter *APC*), 118.

⁹ A number of scholars believe that Cyprian had spent some time in Constantinople before going to Mt. Athos, and that he worked for Philotheos during his second stay in the city. See Syrku, *op. cit.*, 254; E. Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare du XIV^e siècle et sa diffusion dans les pays roumains* (Paris, 1947) (hereafter Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare*), 115; Tachiaos, 'Επιδράσεις, 71; L. A. Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie mitropolita Kipriana v istorii drevnerusskoj literatury (k russko-bolgarskim literaturnym svjazjam XIV-XV vv.)," *TrDrLit*, 19 (1963) (hereafter Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie"), 216; I. Dujčev, "Centry vizantijsko-slavjanskogo obščeniia i sotrudničestva," *ibid.*, 113. There is no evidence to support such an early visit by Cyprian to Constantinople.

¹⁰ *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius (1375-1393)*, ed. E. Kałużniacki (Vienna, 1901; repr. London, 1971), 225-39.

¹¹ Vladislav the Grammarian: see *ibid.*, ciii; Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare*, 115-19.

¹² See Turdeanu, *ibid.*, 68; *Istorija na bŭlgarskata literatura*, I, ed. P. Dinekov et al. (Sofia, 1962), 286.

garia.¹³ This seems a perfectly acceptable solution: the letter's tone and contents show that there was a strong spiritual bond between writer and recipient; Cyprian and Euthymius were compatriots; and we know from Gregory Tsamblak's encomium that the relationship between them was indeed a close one.¹⁴ We have the best possible reason for knowing that Cyprian did go to Athos: in a letter he wrote much later to the Russian monk Afanasij Vysockij, Cyprian mentions "the Holy Mountain, which I have seen myself."¹⁵

We may thus conclude with a fair degree of certainty that by the time Cyprian entered the inner ranks of the patriarch's civil service he had been a monk for some years, and that he received his monastic training on Mt. Athos.¹⁶ Both conclusions will help us understand his subsequent outlook and career. In the fourteenth century Mt. Athos underwent a great spiritual and cultural renaissance. The revival of contemplative prayer, the cultivation of Christian learning, and the newly acquired prestige of the theology of Gregory Palamas attracted men in search of the spiritual life from all parts of the Orthodox world. Many were Slavs; and through them the theory and practice of Byzantine hesychasm spread between 1350 and 1450 to the farthest confines of Eastern Europe.¹⁷ Another feature of this Athonite world of the late Middle Ages was its cosmopolitanism: in the cenobitic houses of Athos Slavs and Rumanians lived and worked alongside their Greek companions, studying, copying, and translating Greek spiritual (and sometimes secular) writings and relaying the new Slav versions back to their native countries. It proved of great importance to Cyprian's future development that these two features of fourteenth-century Athos, allegiance to the hesychast tradition of contemplative prayer and a broad cosmopolitan outlook, were imprinted upon him so early in life. Both were soon reinforced by his move to Constantinople and by his association with the Patriarch Philotheos.

THE YEARS OF STRUGGLE

(ca. 1370–90)

If Cyprian's biographer suffers from a dearth of information regarding the first period of his life (i.e., until 1370), he may justly complain of a superabundance regarding the second (the next twenty years). It is hard not to

¹³ Different dates for Euthymius' letter have been proposed: between 1360 and 1369: Archimandrite Leonid, "Kiprijan do vosšestvija na moskovskuju mitropoliju," *Čtenija v Imperatorskom Obščestve Istorii i Drevnostej Rossijskikh pri Moskovskom Universitetě*, 1867, pt. 2, p. 19; between 1372 and 1375: Syrku, *op. cit.*, 575 note 2; between 1371 and 1373: Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare*, 115. The last two of these datings are obviously too late. Tachiaos, 'Επιδράσεις, 75 note 50, is unwilling to commit himself.

¹⁴ Gregory uses the possessive pronoun to describe the relationship between Cyprian and Euthymius: своего же и великаго(о) Евѣиміа; cf. *Pohvalno slovo za Kiprijan*, ed. Angelov (note 4 *supra*), 184.

¹⁵ *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, col. 263.

¹⁶ It is widely believed that Cyprian had earlier been a monk in the Bulgarian hesychast monastery of Kilifarevo; cf. V. Sl. Kiselkov, *Sv. Teodosij Tŕnovski* (Sofia, 1926), 34; Turdeanu, *La Littérature bulgare*, 115; Tachiaos, 'Επιδράσεις, 68; and *idem*, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 170. Others believe this view is probable; cf. Syrku, *op. cit.*, 253; Dmitriev, "Ro' i značenie," 216. In the absence of any evidence, this cannot be regarded as more than a possibility.

¹⁷ See Dujčev, *op. cit.*, 121–26; *idem*, "Le Mont Athos et les Slaves au Moyen Âge," in *idem*, *Medioevo Bizantino-Slavo*, I (Rome, 1965), 487–510.

feel overwhelmed by the plethora of contemporary evidence, often highly tendentious, derived from the acts of Church councils, chronicles, pamphlets, biographies, and letters. Sometimes the sources give diametrically opposite versions of the same event, and modern historians, taking up these medieval cudgels, have tended to divide into rival parties, often defined on national lines, in accordance with their own ethnic prejudices. No wonder that, faced with this welter of passion and bias, the prospective biographer of Cyprian must at times have felt discouraged.

It would need more than one lecture to explore this forest of conflicting testimony. My aim in this paper is simply to look at some of the evidence with a critical eye and, as far as possible, to consider Cyprian's career against the background of the ecclesiastical, political, and cultural history of his time.

In the early 1370's, it will be recalled, Cyprian was residing in Constantinople as an οἰκεῖος καλόγηρος of the Patriarch Philotheos. The epithet οἰκεῖος, applied to him in an official Byzantine document, seems significant. In Late Byzantine society it had become something of a technical term. The οἰκεῖοι were trusted and influential officials who served the emperor or sometimes other highly placed persons, and who were bound to their employers by a particularly close professional relationship.¹⁸ There can be no doubt that in his capacity of patriarchal οἰκεῖος Cyprian would have been entrusted with confidential and important missions. Though, for lack of evidence, we must resist the temptation, to which several historians have succumbed,¹⁹ to suppose that he took part in the negotiations which led in 1375 to the restoration of full communion between the Byzantine patriarchate and the Churches of Serbia and Bulgaria, we can certainly accept that by 1375, when he was appointed envoy to Kiev, Cyprian enjoyed the reputation of an able and experienced diplomat. Both his hesychast training on Mt. Athos and the experience he had gained as Philotheos' *homme de confiance* were a good preparation for this mission. In the fourteenth century, as the imperial government proved increasingly impotent in its foreign policy, the Byzantine patriarchate assumed the role of chief spokesman and agent of the imperial traditions of East Rome. The hesychast patriarchs of the second half of the fourteenth century were particularly determined and successful champions of these traditions; and among them Philotheos was preeminent.²⁰

¹⁸ On the οἰκεῖοι, see J. Verpeaux, "Les 'Oikeioi.' Notes d'histoire institutionnelle et sociale," *REB*, 23 (1965), 89-99; G. Weiss, *Joannes Kantakuzenos—Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch—in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 143-45 and *passim*; Lj. Maksimović, *Vizantijska provincijska uprava u doba Paleologa* (Belgrade, 1972), 14-15, 18-19, 33, 35, 117.

¹⁹ See, in particular, P. Sokolov, *Russkij arhieriej iz Vizantii* (Kiev, 1913), 434-35, who advances the fanciful suggestion that in 1366 Cyprian was the abbot of the monastery of Brontocheion at Mistra; and Tachiaos, Ἐπιδράσεις, 100 note 66. It is by no means impossible that Cyprian took part in the negotiations which led to the healing of the schism between the Serbian Church and the Byzantine Patriarchate: during part of the time when these negotiations were proceeding he was an οἰκεῖος of the Patriarch Philotheos; and a key figure in these negotiations, Metropolitan Theophanes of Nicaea, seems to have been a close friend of Cyprian. See Tachiaos, *ibid.*, 100, 115; and *infra*, p. 90. But here again direct evidence simply does not exist.

²⁰ See O. Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome. Vingt ans de travail pour l'union des Eglises et pour la défense de l'Empire d'Orient 1355-1375*, *Rozprawy Historyczne Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego*, VIII (Warsaw, 1930), 235-42; J. Meyendorff, "Alexis and Roman: A Study in Byzantino-Russian Relations (1352-1354)," *Byzantinoslavica*, 28 (1967), 278-88.

In this period the patriarchate's ecumenical claims were often defined in documents issued by its chancellery as κηδεμονία πάντων (literally "solicitude for all" or "guardianship of all"). Save for a larger dose of rhetoric and the patriarchate's manifest inability to enforce this doctrine for more than brief spells, there was little to distinguish it, *mutatis mutandis*, from the more forceful declarations of papal supremacy which emanated from the Roman Curia. Here is a sample, among many: "God," wrote the Patriarch Philotheos to the princes of Russia in 1370, "has appointed our Mediocrity (τὴν ἡμῶν μετριότητα) as the leader (προστάτην) of the Christians in the whole world and the guardian (κηδεμόνα) and curator (φροντιστήν) of their souls; all are dependent on me, as the father and teacher of all. Since, however, it is not possible for me to go myself the round of the cities and countries of the earth and to teach the word of God therein...our Mediocrity chooses the best men most distinguished in virtue, and appoints and consecrates them pastors and teachers and bishops, and sends them to the different parts of the world."²¹

Naturally enough it was to the Slav churches of Eastern Europe that the efforts of the patriarchate to maintain and strengthen its authority were primarily directed in the fourteenth century. For centuries these churches had maintained a wavering yet real loyalty to their mother Church; and it was hoped in Constantinople that the rulers of these lands could be persuaded to provide money or troops to the embattled Empire. The patriarchate's chosen instruments in this imperial and pan-Orthodox policy were mostly monks, not a few of them Slavs, who by conviction and training could be counted upon to propagate throughout Eastern Europe the belief that Orthodox Christendom was a single body whose spiritual head was the ecumenical patriarch. One of their tasks was to resist the growth of local forms of ecclesiastical nationalism. It is not surprising to find that the leaders of the pro-Byzantine "pan-Orthodox" parties in the different Slav countries in the second half of the fourteenth century all belonged to the hesychast movement. Of this movement I will attempt no comprehensive definition beyond suggesting that it drew its spiritual force from the Athonite tradition of contemplative prayer, was sustained on the administrative level by the "ecumenical" policy of the Byzantine patriarchate, had a wide impact upon the cultural life of Eastern Europe in the late Middle Ages, and was fostered by an international brotherhood of men with close personal links with each other and a strong loyalty to Byzantium.²² It was the hesychasts who healed the schism which in the third quarter of the fourteenth century had separated the churches of Bulgaria and Serbia from the Byzantine patriarchate. Their most promising opportunities, however, seemed at that time to lie further north, in Russia. Of all the ecclesiastical satellites of Byzantium, the Russians had been consistently the most loyal since the early Middle Ages. And now that the Empire was

²¹ *APC*, I (1860), 521; cf. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 280; *idem*, "O vizantijskom isihazme i ego roli v kul'turnom i istoričeskom razvitii Vostočnoj Evropy v XIV v.," *TrDyLit*, 29 (1974), 302-3.

²² See A.-A. Tachiaos, "Le Mouvement hésychaste pendant les dernières décennies du XIV^e siècle," *Κληρονομία*, 6,1 (1974), 113-30; D. Obolensky, "Late Byzantine Culture and the Slavs. A Study in Acculturation," *Acts of the Fifteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (forthcoming).

facing financial ruin and, with the Ottoman invasions, beginning to fight for its very life, aid, whether in money or in kind, from the populous and rich Russian lands was becoming almost a necessity. However, the political situation in that sector presented the patriarchate and the imperial government with an awkward dilemma.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, in the area between the Carpathians and the upper Volga, two states had emerged competing for the allegiance of the Eastern Slavs: the grand duchy of Lithuania and the principality of Moscow. The former had gradually absorbed the greater part of western Russia: by 1375 the grand dukes of Lithuania had replaced the Tatars as overlords of the middle Dnieper valley and had advanced their eastern frontier to within a hundred miles of Moscow. Muscovy, still the lesser of the two states, was emerging as the leader of the principalities of central Russia and was claiming to embody the political and cultural traditions of early medieval Kievan Rus'. The most potent symbol of this continuity was the metropolitan-primate of Russia. Though his residence had been moved from Kiev to Vladimir in 1300 and thence to Moscow in 1328, he still retained his traditional title of "metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia." In practice, most of the fourteenth-century metropolitans, whether they were native Russians or Byzantine citizens, tended to identify themselves with the policies and aspirations of the princes of Moscow. This was scarcely to the liking of the grand dukes of Lithuania, Moscow's rivals for political hegemony in Eastern Europe, who naturally sought to deprive their opponents of the considerable advantages derived from the presence within their city of the chief bishop of the Russian Church. Their best hope lay in persuading the Byzantine authorities either to transfer the seat of the metropolitan to Lithuania, or at least to set up a separate metropolitanate in their country.

The dilemma which faced the Byzantines was the following: could the authority of the patriarchate best be maintained by the traditional policy of keeping the Russian Church under the jurisdiction of a single prelate appointed from Constantinople? And if so, should he reside in the historic see of Kiev, which from the early 1360's was in Lithuanian territory, or in Moscow? Or alternatively, on a realistic assessment of the power structure in eastern Europe, should there now be two separate metropolitanates, one in Moscow and the other in Kiev?²³

Most of the hesychast patriarchs of Constantinople in the second half of the fourteenth century favored a unified pro-Muscovite solution, none more so than Philotheos, who in June 1370 wrote a spate of letters to Moscow fulsomely praising its primate, Metropolitan Alexius of Kiev and All Russia. He went as far as to solemnly excommunicate several princes of Russia who, breaking their agreements with the prince of Moscow, allied themselves against him with Olgerd, the pagan grand duke of Lithuania,²⁴ and in so doing

²³ See Meyendorff, "Alexis and Roman," 281. D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971), 262-63.

²⁴ *APC*, I, 516-25.

acted against "the holy commonwealth of Christians" (τῆς ἱερᾶς πολιτείας τῶν χριστιανῶν).²⁵

By 1371, however, Philotheos began to have second thoughts about the wisdom of supporting Alexius. Serious complaints about the metropolitan's behavior had begun to reach the patriarchate. Michael of Tver', a Russian prince at loggerheads with Muscovy, had been treacherously arrested in Moscow, undoubtedly with the metropolitan's connivance, after having been promised safe conduct; he now wished to cite Alexius before the patriarch's tribunal in Constantinople.²⁶ More ominous still was a letter received by Philotheos from the grand duke of Lithuania, in which he bitterly accused Alexius of showing no interest in his western Russian dioceses and of inciting the Muscovites to attack his subjects. In peremptory tones Olgerd demanded a separate metropolitan for the Orthodox of the Grand Duchy.²⁷

Philotheos was caught on the horns of a dilemma: to accede to Olgerd's request was to divide the Russian Church in two and to risk the displeasure of the prince of Moscow. To ignore the request might result in the Patriarchate losing control over the Church of Lithuania. So he decided to play for time. He wrote to Alexius, rebuking him for never visiting his Lithuanian dioceses and reminding him that "when we consecrated you, we consecrated you metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, not of one part, but of all Russia."²⁸ However, since his repeated injunctions were having no effect, Philotheos decided in 1373 to send to Russia a confidential envoy charged with restoring peace between Muscovy and Lithuania and with persuading Alexius to visit the western Russian part of his metropolitanate. This envoy was Cyprian.²⁹

Probably during the winter of 1373-74 Cyprian arrived in Kiev and established contact with the Lithuanian authorities. These then sent an embassy to Constantinople, reiterating their former request for a separate metropolitan, independent of Moscow. Philotheos could no longer sit on the fence; he hit on an ingenious solution which, though of dubious canonical propriety, at least satisfied Olgerd's immediate demands without sacrificing the principle of the unity of the Russian metropolitanate. He appointed Cyprian metropolitan of Kiev and Lithuania, with the proviso that after Alexius' death he would reunite under his authority the whole Russian Church.³⁰ Cyprian's consecration took place in Constantinople on 2 December 1375.³¹

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 524.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 582-86. As A. S. Pavlov rightly noted, the letter addressed to the Metropolitan Alexius (*ibid.*, 320-21) was wrongly ascribed to the Patriarch Kallistos I (1350-53, 1355-63) by the editors of the *Acta Patriarchatus*. In reality it was written by Philotheos and belongs to the collection of letters which he sent to Russia in 1371: *Russkaja Istoriceskaja Biblioteka*, VI, Appendix, cols. 155-56. For two other letters wrongly ascribed to the Patriarch Kallistos, see J. Darrouzès, *Le Registre synodal du Patriarcat byzantin au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1971), 105.

²⁷ *APC*, I, 580-81.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 321.

²⁹ *APC*, II, 118.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14, 120. The sources disagree over the title granted to Cyprian in 1375. According to the Acts of the Patriarchal Synod of 1380 it was μητροπολίτης Κυέβου και Λιτβῶν (*APC*, II, 14). The Acts of the Synod of 1389, on the other hand, give it as μητροπολίτης Κυέβου, Ρωσίας και Λιτβῶν (*APC*, II, 120). F. Tinnfeld ("Byzantinisch-russische Kirchenpolitik im 14. Jahrhundert," *BZ*, 67 [1974], 375) believes the evidence of the Synod of 1380; I put more trust in that of the Synod of 1389.

³¹ There can be little doubt that Cyprian's appointment as prospective successor of Alexius was uncanonical. The Acts of the Patriarchal Synod of 1380, so frequently at variance with the truth,

This much regarding Cyprian's first mission to Russia is uncontroversial. The rest, and notably his own role in these events, provides the student of medieval documents with an interesting exercise in textual criticism. Our knowledge of these events is derived mainly from two Byzantine sources, the Acts of the Patriarchal Synods held in Constantinople in 1380 and 1389. They are in total disagreement on every point of substance. The Synod of 1380, presided over by the Patriarch Neilos, painted Cyprian as a villainous intriguer who wormed his way into Olgerd's confidence, grossly deceived Alexius, and himself wrote and delivered to Constantinople the letter in which the Lithuanian authorities requested his appointment as their primate.³² In the Acts of the Synod of 1389, convened by the Patriarch Antony, the blame is laid squarely on the shoulders of Alexius, who as acting regent of the Muscovite realm forsook the government of the Church for politics, provoked Olgerd by his aggressive behavior, and wholly neglected his Lithuanian dioceses. Cyprian, on the other hand, is said to have done his best to reconcile Olgerd and Alexius, and is described as "a man distinguished in virtue and piety."³³

It stands to reason that at least one of these Synodal Acts is blatantly lying. Most Russian Church historians, apparently unwilling to admit any blemish in the character of Metropolitan Alexius, a national hero and a popular saint, prefer to believe the Synod of 1380. Hence, even if they occasionally tone down the harshness of the Synod's strictures on Cyprian (who, incidentally, was also canonized by the Russian Church), their description of his behavior is less than edifying.³⁴ Time unfortunately does not allow a proper *Quellenkritik*. I will say, however, that a careful study of these two documents has convinced me that the Synodal Act of 1380 contains far too many evasive statements, inconsistencies, and factual distortions to merit

rightly point this out: τῆν αὐτοῦ [Κυπριανοῦ] δὲ χειροτονίαν, ὡς ἰωάννης ἐπι τοῦ μητροπολίτου Ἀλεξίου γεγεννημένην, ἀκανόνιστον ἡγουμένην (*ibid.*, 15). Even the signatories of the Synodal Act of 1389, who were entirely favorable to Cyprian, sounded uncomfortable when referring to his appointment in 1375 as Alexius' successor: they appointed him, they state, as metropolitan of All Russia "as though beginning afresh" (ὡς ἐξ ἄλλης ἀρχῆς: *ibid.*, 128). This prospective appointment was certainly a far-reaching example of the exercise of ecclesiastical *oikonomia*. However, it was not wholly unprecedented: Philotheos' predecessor, the Patriarch Kallistos, soon after Alexius' appointment as metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, seems to have consecrated in 1354 a Lithuanian candidate in terms sufficiently vague to enable him to claim jurisdiction over at least some of Alexius' dioceses: see Meyendorff, "Alexis and Roman," 284–87. Only a small fragment of the Synodal Act of 1375 by which Cyprian was appointed has survived, cited in the Act of 1389: *APC*, II, 120. For modern views on the uncanonical nature of Cyprian's appointment in 1375, see N. Glubokovskij, "Kiprian," in *Pravoslavnaja bogoslovskaja enciklopedija*, X (St. Petersburg, 1909), col. 42; C. Mango, "A Russian Graffito in St. Sophia, Constantinople," *Slavic Word*, 10,4 (1954), 437.

³² *APC*, II, 12–18.

³³ *Ibid.*, 116–29.

³⁴ Cf. Metropolitan Makarij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, IV,1 (St. Petersburg, 1886), 59–63; Glubokovskij, in *Pravoslavnaja bogoslovskaja enciklopedija*, X, col. 42; Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, II,1, 211–15; and A. V. Kartašev, *Očerki po istorii ruskoj cerkvi* (Paris, 1959), I, 321–23. A more fair and convincing picture of Cyprian's actions in 1375–78 is given by I. N. Šabatin, "Iz istorii Ruskoj Cerkvi," *Vestnik ruskogo zapadno-evropejskogo Patriaršego Ekzarhata*, 13, no. 49 (1965), 42–44. Another, earlier exception to this chauvinistic bias against Cyprian is the judgment of Archimandrite Leonid, *op. cit.* (note 13 *supra*), 28 note 28.

serious credence.³⁵ There is reason to believe that in several respects the Synod echoed the view of official Muscovite circles, which the government of John V and Manuel II, having regained power in Constantinople the previous year, was concerned to placate.³⁶ By contrast the Synodal Act of 1389, though not wholly free of disingenuousness and special pleading,³⁷ gives an account that is coherent and convincing, and which in several particulars agrees with the evidence of other sources. I believe there are no valid grounds for imputing any dishonorable action to Cyprian during the events of 1373–75.

The first three years of his tenure of the See of Kiev seem to have been uneventful.³⁸ In a letter he later wrote to St. Sergius of Radonež he listed some of his achievements, which were no more than one would expect of a competent and conscientious administrator.³⁹ However, Cyprian's life soon entered a new phase filled with variety and drama, beginning with the death of the Metropolitan Alexius on 12 February 1378 and lasting for twelve years.

You will recall that in 1375, when Cyprian was appointed metropolitan of Kiev and Lithuania, it was stipulated that, on Alexius' death, he would reunite under his authority the Lithuanian and the Muscovite parts of the metropolitanate and become primate of All Russia. Trusting in this promise, Cyprian set out for Moscow as soon as the news of Alexius' death reached him.

³⁵ Here are a few samples: (1) The Act of 1380 alleges that on one occasion when Alexius was visiting his Lithuanian dioceses he was arrested on Olgerd's orders and almost killed (*APC*, II, 12). This allegation is contradicted not only by the Act of 1389, which states that by 1373 Alexius had not set foot in his Lithuanian dioceses for nineteen years (i.e., since his appointment as metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia in 1354) (*ibid.*, 118), but also by the Patriarch Philotheos' letter of 1371, in which he rebukes Alexius for refusing to visit both Kiev and Lithuania (*APC*, I, 321; see note 26 *supra*). (2) The statement that in 1379 the Russian envoys asked the patriarchate to appoint Pimen as metropolitan (*APC*, II, 15) is outrageously disingenuous. For the true facts, see *infra*, p. 90. (3) The Act of 1380 claims that the Orthodox Church of Lithuania had so many bishops that there was no need for Alexius to come to Kiev, and simultaneously that Alexius considered it unnecessary to undertake this journey for "the small remains (μικρὸν λείψανον) of his Kievan flock" (*ibid.*, 13)—a remarkable instance of the wish to have one's cake and eat it! (4) Cyprian is accused of establishing close relations with Olgerd upon his arrival in Kiev (*ibid.*, 13–14), as though it were not his plain duty to do this.

³⁶ See G. M. Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaj-Mihaile i ego literaturnaja sreda* (Diss. Institut Russkoj Literaturny [Puškinsky Dom], Leningrad, 1968), 10.

³⁷ Thus the Synod seems unduly concerned with whitewashing the Patriarchs Makarios and Neilos by minimizing the extent to which Makarios acted under pressure from Moscow over the acceptance of Michael-Mitjaj's candidature (*APC*, II, 120–21) and by alleging that Neilos acted innocently in consecrating Pimen (*ibid.*, 121; cf. *infra*, p. 90).

³⁸ In one passage of the sixteenth-century *Nikonovskaja Lëtopsis'* (s.a. 1376: PSRL, XI, 25), it is alleged that soon after his arrival in Kiev Cyprian went to Moscow in an attempt, thwarted by Prince Dimitri, to seize and occupy Alexius' metropolitan see. This would have been an act as senseless as it was uncanonical; and a later passage in the same Chronicle (s.a. 1380: *ibid.*, 49) makes it clear that until Alexius' death in 1378 Cyprian resided in Kiev and made no attempt to go to Moscow. See also *Voskresenskaja Lëtopsis'*, s.a. 1376, in PSRL, VIII (1859), 25. There can be no doubt that Cyprian did not go to Moscow before 1378; see Golubinskij, *Istorija russskoj cerkvi*, II, 1, 214 note 2; A. E. Prěsnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikorussskago gosudarstva* (Petrograd, 1918), 316 note 1. Nevertheless, somewhat inconsequentially, both Golubinskij (*ibid.*, 212–15) and Kartašev (*Očerki po istorii russskoj cerkvi*, 322) accuse Cyprian of unlawfully attempting to seize Alexius' see. The most Cyprian can be accused of is an attempt, soon after his arrival in Kiev, to detach the Novgorod archdiocese from Moscow and to establish his own jurisdiction over it. The Novgorodians, who were then on good terms with Moscow, replied that they would accept Cyprian's jurisdiction if he were first acknowledged as primate of Russia by the grand prince of Moscow; cf. *Voskresenskaja Lëtopsis'*, *loc. cit.* Šabatın ("Iz istorii Russskoj Cerkvi," no. 49, pp. 43–44; *ibid.*, no. 50, p. 110) has convincingly rebutted the charge that Cyprian intrigued against Alexius. Cf. Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie," 226–27.

³⁹ *Russskaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, cols. 181–83.

He seems to have had some intimation of trouble ahead, for on the way he wrote to two distinguished Muscovite abbots on whose support he clearly counted. One of them was St. Sergius of Radonež, and the other was Sergius' nephew Theodore, abbot of the Simonov monastery. When he reached Muscovite territory he realized that he was, in the eyes of the government, an undesirable alien. Prince Dimitri of Moscow had placed armed guards on the road to the capital, with orders not to let him through. By a round-about route Cyprian managed to reach Moscow. He was promptly arrested, subjected to gross indignities, and expelled from Muscovy. We learn these facts from Cyprian's own vivid account in a letter he wrote to Sergius and Theodore on his way back from Moscow in June 1378, while still under the emotional shock of his experience. He sternly rebukes the Russian abbots for failing to stand up before the Muscovite authorities for their lawful metropolitan, and announces his intention of going to Constantinople to seek defense before the Byzantine authorities. They, he adds with a note of bitterness, "place their hope in money and the Franks [i.e., the Genoese]. I place mine in God and in the justice of my cause."⁴⁰

The reason for Prince Dimitri's hostility to Cyprian can be inferred from the latter's letter to Sergius and Theodore. "He imputes it to me as a crime," he complained, "that I was in Lithuania first."⁴¹ Since Cyprian had resided in Kiev for the past two years the Muscovite government no doubt chose to regard him as little more than a Lithuanian agent. Although the hated Olgerd had died in the previous year, the political relations between Muscovy and Lithuania were still tense. And Dimitri had little use for the idea of a single metropolitanate of All Russia unless he could control it himself. In his eyes the patriarchate's decision of 1375 to sever western Russia from Alexius' jurisdiction and to place it under Cyprian's authority was a breach of faith and an act of gross pro-Lithuanian favoritism. This explains the complaint in Cyprian's letter that the Muscovites "were abusing the Patriarch, the Emperor and the Great Synod: they called the Patriarch a Lithuanian, and the Emperor too, and the most honorable ecumenical Synod."⁴²

Cyprian traveled to Byzantium across the Rumanian lands and his native Bulgaria. His reception in the Bulgarian capital of Trnovo, probably early in 1379, is described in conventionally rhetorical terms in Gregory Tsamblak's encomium of him.⁴³ In Constantinople a fresh disappointment awaited him.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, cols. 173–86; G. M. Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaje. Rus' i Vizantija v èpohu Kulikovskoj bitvy* (Leningrad, 1978) (hereafter *Povest' o Mitjaje* [1978]). Cyprian states that after his arrest he was insulted, mocked, robbed of his possessions, locked up hungry and naked for a whole night, and on the evening of the next day brought out of prison, not knowing whether he was being led to his execution. He complains of still suffering from the effects of that freezing night. It is interesting that, no doubt for security reasons, several passages of this letter are written in cipher; see *ibid.*, col. 173 note 3, col. 175 note 1, col. 183 note 4, col. 186 note 3. Cf. N. S. Borisov, "Social'no-političeskoe soderžanie literaturnoj dejatel'nosti mitropolitov Kipriana," *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, Ser. 9, 1975, no. 6, pp. 60–62; and Prohorov, *op. cit.*, 56–59.

⁴¹ *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, col. 182.

⁴² *Ibid.*, col. 185.

⁴³ *Pohvalno Slovo za Kiprijan*, in Angelov, *op. cit.* (note 4 *supra*), 183–85.

The new Patriarch Makarios, under pressure from the Muscovite authorities and no doubt from his patron, the Emperor Andronikos IV, declined to honor his predecessor's pledge to Cyprian and declared his intention of appointing the Russian cleric Michael (Mitjaj), the candidate of the grand prince of Moscow, to succeed Alexius.⁴⁴ The outcome of this deal was one of the most sordid and disreputable episodes in the history of Russo-Byzantine relations. Michael, the Muscovite candidate, died on board ship within sight of Constantinople. His Russian escort, thoughtfully provided by the prince of Moscow with blank charters adorned with his seal and signature and with a considerable sum of money, used the charters to substitute the name of one of their party, the Archimandrite Pimen (Ποιμήν), for that of the deceased Michael and distributed the money as bribes to officials in Constantinople.⁴⁵ With the help of these forged documents they persuaded Makarios' successor, the Patriarch Neilos, to appoint Pimen as "metropolitan of Kiev and Great Russia,"⁴⁶ while Cyprian, by the Synod's special "condescension" (συγκαταβάσει),⁴⁷ was allowed to retain jurisdiction over the Orthodox Church of Lithuania. This was the very decree which, as I suggested earlier, so blatantly tampered with the truth and dishonestly slandered Cyprian.

When the Synod issued the decree in June 1380, Cyprian had already left Constantinople for Kiev. We can imagine his anger and frustration: to judge from his letter to St. Sergius, written after his expulsion from Moscow, he was a man easily roused to anger. Slowly, however, things began to move in his favor. He had influential friends in Constantinople; one of them was Theophanes, metropolitan of Nicaea, who did not hesitate to express to the Synod his view that Cyprian was fully entitled to the See of Kiev and All Russia which he was promised in 1375. It is significant that Theophanes was a noted hesychast who had been used by Philotheos to restore communion with the Serbian Church.⁴⁸ Cyprian's chances were improving in Muscovy, too. His former enemy, the Grand Prince Dimitri, was falling increasingly under the influence of the group of Russian hesychast monks who were strong supporters of Cyprian.⁴⁹ Their leaders were his former correspondents, St. Sergius of Radonež and his nephew, the Abbot Theodore, who was now the grand prince's confessor. Their influence probably became greater still after Dimitri's victory over the Tatars at the battle of Kulikovo in September 1380, which finally established Moscow's hegemony among the central Russian

⁴⁴ APC, II, 120–21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 121. Cf. Golubinskij, *Istorija russskoj cerkvi*, II, 1, 242–47; Kartašev, *Očerki po istorii russskoj cerkvi*, 328–29; Tachiaos, Ἐπιδράσεις, 113–15; *idem*, Ὁ μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 215–17; cf. Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaje* (1978), 82–101.

⁴⁶ APC, II, 12–18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16–17. On Theophanes of Nicaea, see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 746; and note 19 *supra*. Cf. Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaje* (1978), 97–98.

⁴⁹ See Prěsnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikorussskago gosudarstva*, 360; Šabatin, "Iz istorii Russskoj Cerkvi," no. 50, p. 110; G. M. Prohorov, "Etničeskaja integracija v Vostočnoj Evrope v XIV veke (Ot isihastsskikh sporov do Kulikovskoj bitvy)," *Doklady Otdelenija Etnografii*, II (Leningrad, 1966), 104–6; *idem*, *Povest' o Mitjaje* (1978), 101–5.

principalities. In the spring of 1381 Theodore was sent to Kiev to invite Cyprian to take over the leadership of the Muscovite Church.⁵⁰

When Cyprian entered Moscow on 23 May 1381 there was much popular rejoicing, if the Russian chronicles are to be believed;⁵¹ it seemed that justice had finally prevailed and the policy of his late mentor and protector, the Patriarch Philotheos, had at last been vindicated. Except for Galicia on the northeastern slopes of the Carpathians, which in deference to the wishes of its new sovereign, the Polish king, had been given a metropolitan of its own in 1371,⁵² the entire Russian Church was now united under Cyprian's authority. Yet his relations with Prince Dimitri remained uneasy. The Muscovite sovereign may have tempered the rigor of his views under the influence of the Russian hesychast monks; but he remained at heart an unrepentant nationalist interested in the aggrandizement of his domains and in freeing his country from Tatar rule. He could not be expected to entertain much sympathy for the opinions of his primate, who believed that the Church should be independent of secular control and that the metropolitanate of Kiev and All Russia was not a national institution, let alone an instrument of Muscovite state policy, but a constituent part of the ecumenical patriarchate. No doubt feeling the need to strengthen his position in Moscow, Cyprian took to the pen. It was probably in 1381 that he wrote his *magnum opus* in Church Slavonic, the life of his predecessor but two, the Metropolitan Peter (1308–26).⁵³ It is a work of considerable sophistication, both literary and ideological. Although it is based on an earlier, anonymous biography of Peter, as much as Cyprian's letter to the abbots Sergius and Theodore it affords us more than a glimpse of its author's personality, motives, and outlook. It was noticed long ago that Cyprian's Life of St. Peter of Moscow has strong autobiographical overtones.⁵⁴ In order to detect them it is scarcely necessary to read between the lines. The careers of the two prelates had indeed a number of striking similarities: both had close connections with western Russia; each had a rival who tried to supplant him unlawfully; both were slandered by their Russian enemies before the authorities in Constantinople; both eventually overcame these obstacles and were enthroned as metropolitans in Moscow. Cyprian, without naming himself, pointedly highlights these similarities. He repeatedly eulogizes the city of Moscow and what he calls "the high throne of the glorious metropolitanate of Russia"; and, the better to drive home his message to Prince Dimitri and his government, he paints an idyllic picture of the relations between the Metropolitan Peter and the Muscovite ruler of the time, and condemns attempts by laymen to divide the Russian metropolitanate and to interfere in ecclesiastical appointments.

⁵⁰ M. D. Priselkov, *Troickaja letopis'* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), 421.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 421; the *Nikonovskaja Lëtopis'* (PSRL, XI, 41) misdates the event to 1378.

⁵² *APC*, I, 577–80.

⁵³ Published in Angelov, *op. cit.* (note 4 *supra*), 159–76; and Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaje* (1978), 204–15. For a discussion of the dating, see Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie," 251–52.

⁵⁴ See V. Ključevskij, *Drevnerusskija žitija svjatyh, kak istoričeskij istočnik* (Moscow, 1871), 82–88; Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie," 236–50, who provides a detailed analysis of the work.

If the autobiographical element is latent in Cyprian's *Life of Peter of Moscow*, it is quite explicit in his encomium to the same saint, probably also written in 1381.⁵⁵ He writes of his own initial appointment as metropolitan of Russia in 1375; of his ill-fated attempt to come to Moscow in 1378 when he was so brutally treated on the prince's orders—an event over which he slides, with tactful euphemism, by merely saying "something adverse happened, on account of my sins"; of his failure to obtain justice in Constantinople at the patriarchal court of "the wickedly appointed senseless Makarios"; and of his stay in Constantinople in 1379–80, which lasted for thirteen months because, he says, "it was not possible to leave the imperial city: for the sea was held by the Latins [an allusion to the Chioggia War between Venice and Genoa, fought mainly in Byzantine waters from 1377–81] and the land by the godless Turks." This autobiography, which ends with an account of his second, triumphant arrival in Moscow in 1381, includes a lengthy eulogy of the Patriarch Philotheos. The encomium and also the *Life of St. Peter of Moscow* are indeed precious documents for Cyprian's biographer. Mgr. Louis Petit once wrote: "A Byzance, un hagiographe qui se respecte ne manque jamais de parler un peu de lui."⁵⁶ One can only add that Cyprian went a good deal further in this direction than was normally considered proper in that age.

These tactful literary exercises, however, availed him little in the short run. Another severe trial lay in store for him. In August 1382 the army of Tohtamyš, a Mongol vassal of Tamerlane, approached Moscow, and before the Tatars captured and looted the city Cyprian slipped out and made his way to the town of Tver'. The circumstances of his departure from Moscow remain obscure, as the Russian chronicles give discordant versions.⁵⁷ It is possible, though not certain, that he displayed a certain failure of nerve and leadership. Whether because Cyprian had behaved pusillanimously or, more probably, because he had sought refuge in Tver', Moscow's traditional enemy, Prince Dimitri was furious. Cyprian was again expelled from Muscovy, and returned to Kiev. The egregious Pimen, fraudulently appointed metropolitan in Constantinople and then imprisoned by Dimitri on his return to Russia, was hauled out of jail and solemnly deposited on the primate's throne in October 1382. There is reason to believe that this was done under pressure from Constantinople, where the Patriarch Neilos had been whipping up a campaign in favor of Pimen and consistently maligning Cyprian in his letters to the Muscovite government.⁵⁸

These discreditable maneuvers were almost at an end. In 1385, after Pimen had been abandoned by Moscow and excommunicated by the patriarch,⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Velikhija Minei Četii*, December 21 (Moscow, 1907), cols. 1642–46.

⁵⁶ *Vie et office de Michel Maléimos, suivis du Traité Ascétique de Basile le Maléimote*, Bibliothèque hagiographique orientale, IV, ed. L. Clugnet (Paris, 1903), 3. I owe this reference to the kindness of Professor Ihor Ševčenko.

⁵⁷ See L. V. Čerepnin, *Obrazovanie russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva v XIV–XV vekah* (Moscow, 1960), 636–37.

⁵⁸ *APC*, II, 121–22.

⁵⁹ In 1384 Prince Dimitri of Moscow, having withdrawn his support from Pimen, sent the Russian Archbishop Dionysius of Suzdal' to Constantinople, apparently with the intention of persuading the

Cyprian was summoned to Constantinople for a final decision on his future. While awaiting the outcome, he lived in the monastery of Stoudios which, along with Mt. Athos, was then a prominent center of scholarly collaboration between Byzantine and Slav monks. A note in a manuscript of St. John of the Ladder in Cyprian's own hand states: "On 24 April 1387 this book was completed [i.e., copied] in the Studite monastery by Cyprian, the humble metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia."⁶⁰ It is worth noting that, despite all his misfortunes, he still regarded himself as the lawful incumbent of that see. The same year he was sent to Lithuania by the Emperor John V on a political mission (διὰ δουλείας βασιλικάς).⁶¹ We do not know its purpose, but it is hard to resist the impression that it was connected with the personal union concluded between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland in the previous year (1386), which threatened to jeopardize the entire future of the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy. Whatever its purpose, Cyprian's imperial mission is evidence of the esteem in which he was then held by the Byzantine government. In February 1389, under the new Patriarch Antony IV, the Synod met to decide the future of the Russian Church and to put an end to the disgraceful anarchy of the past ten years. The Acts of the Synod admit that the Russians were pouring on the Byzantines a flood of "insults... and reproaches and accusations and grumblings" (ὕβρεις πολλάς... καὶ μώμους καὶ κατηγορίας καὶ γογγυσμούς).⁶² This was no doubt an understatement. After the villainy perpetrated by their envoys in Constantinople and the brutalities and vacillations of Prince Dimitri, the Russians for their part had scarcely a better press in Byzantium. The Synod wisely opted for reconciliation. It appointed Cyprian metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, and decreed that the unity of the Russian metropolitanate be maintained for all times (εἰς τὸ ἕξῃς εἰς αἰῶνα τὸν ἅπαντα).⁶³

THE YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT (1390–1406)

Early in 1390, after a stormy passage on the Black Sea in which he nearly lost his life, Cyprian, escorted by a retinue of Byzantine and Russian prelates, made his solemn entry into Moscow via Kiev.⁶⁴ Prince Dimitri had died the previous year and his son and successor, Basil I, seems to have accepted his new primate readily. For fifteen years Cyprian had reached out for the metropolitanate of All Russia, this glittering prize promised him by his patron

patriarch to consecrate him metropolitan. Neilos declined to be forced into hasty action, and sent a commission of inquiry to Moscow with power to appoint Dionysius if it thought fit; cf. *ibid.*, 122–24. Before any decision was reached, however, Dionysius was arrested in Kiev by Olgerd's son, Prince Vladimir, and died in prison on 15 October 1385; cf. Priselkov, *Troickaja Letopis'*, 427–29; *Nikonovskaja Lëtopis'*, PSRL, XI, 86. The two Russian Church historians distinguished by their bias against Cyprian, Golubinskij (*Istorija russskoj cerkvi*, II, 1, 253) and Kartašev (*Očerki po istorii russskoj cerkvi*, 332) do not hesitate to charge him with this crime, though there is no evidence of his involvement in it. Šabatini ("Iz istorii Russskoj Cerkvi," no. 50, p. 115) comes somewhat hesitantly to Cyprian's defense.

⁶⁰ Ivanov, "Bŭlgarskoto knižovno vlijanie," 48; Mango, *op. cit.* (note 31 *supra*), 437.

⁶¹ *APC*, II, 124.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁶⁴ Priselkov, *Troickaja Letopis'*, 435–36; *Nikonovskaja Lëtopis'*, PSRL, XI, 101, 122.

Philotheos and so rudely denied him by Dimitri of Moscow and by Philotheos' two successors on the patriarchal throne. Now, with the final obstacles removed, he could at last put into practice the program for Eastern Europe he and Philotheos had devised together in the early 1370's: its aim was to attach the South Slav and Russian Orthodox Churches more firmly to the ecumenical patriarchate by the concerted action of a group of men, bound to each other by ties of friendship or discipleship and owing a common loyalty to the hesychast tradition and to the Mother Church of Constantinople. The linchpin of this program of ecclesiastical diplomacy was the undivided metropolitanate of Kiev and All Russia, with its effective center in Moscow. Though we lack detailed information about these last sixteen years of Cyprian's life, there is reason to think that they were not unproductive.

Much of his administrative work during those years is of little interest to anyone save the historian of the Russian Church.⁶⁵ Two areas of his activity, however, impinged on the wider field of European history. The first was Lithuania. In 1386 one of the most fateful marriages in the history of Eastern Europe took place when Olgerd's son Jagiełło, grand duke of Lithuania, married Queen Jadwiga of Poland. Jagiełło, who had earlier undertaken to marry the daughter of Prince Dimitri of Moscow and to become a member of the Orthodox Church,⁶⁶ had to promise to convert his subjects to the Roman faith and to unite his Grand Duchy with the Kingdom of Poland. Fortunately for the Orthodox, who formed the majority of the population of the Grand Duchy, Jagiełło was unable to enforce this conversion to Rome. His cousin Witold, who became grand duke of Lithuania under Jagiełło's suzerainty in 1392, was an Orthodox and the father-in-law of the grand prince of Moscow. A period of peaceful relations thus began between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian federation, which lasted until 1406.

There can be no doubt that Cyprian played a major role in fostering this *rapprochement*. According to the Russian chronicles, he paid two further visits to Lithuania—in 1396⁶⁷ and in 1404⁶⁸—and each time stayed there for some eighteen months. On both occasions he met Witold, and in 1405 he had a long and very friendly encounter with King Jagiełło.⁶⁹ He must have got to

⁶⁵ For Cyprian's ecclesiastical activity between 1390 and 1406, see Golubinskij, *Istorija russskoj cerkvi*, II, 1, 302–56; Prěsnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikorusškago gosudarstva*, 363–73; Kartašev, *Očerki po istorii russskoj cerkvi*, 333–38; Šabatin, "Iz istorii Russskoj Cerkvi," no. 51, pp. 192–94, no. 52, 237–57.

⁶⁶ See F. Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1962), 221–22.

⁶⁷ The date of Cyprian's first visit varies in the different chronicles: 1396: *Voskresenskaja Lětōpis'*, PSRL, VIII, 69; 1397: *Nikonovskaja Lětōpis'*, PSRL, XI, 166; 1398: Priselkov, *Troickaja Letōpis'*, 449. The correct date is presumably 1396, since in January 1397 the Patriarch Antony wrote both to Cyprian and to King Jagiełło in reply to their joint proposal for a church council, no doubt made after a personal meeting (see *infra*). It was doubtless in 1396 that Cyprian wrote to the patriarch from Lithuania complaining of overwork. In his reply dated January 1397, the patriarch refers to Cyprian's "many exertions and travels" (τῶν πολλῶν κόπων καὶ περιόδων) and attempts to console him by pointing out that they are but the professional duty of every true bishop (*APC*, II, 282).

⁶⁸ Priselkov, *Troickaja Letōpis'*, 458; *Voskresenskaja Lětōpis'*, 77; *Nikonovskaja Lětōpis'*, 191.

⁶⁹ This summit meeting took place in the Lithuanian town of Miloljub, lasted for a week, and was also attended by the Grand Duke Witold: Priselkov, *Troickaja Letōpis'*, 459; *Voskresenskaja Lětōpis'*, 77; however, *Nikonovskaja Letōpis'*, 192, claims that the meeting lasted for two weeks.

know him on an earlier occasion, for in a letter written to Cyprian in January 1397 the Patriarch Antony IV remarks: "as you have written yourself, the King [of Poland] is a great friend of yours" (φίλος σου πολὺς ἐνὶ ὀκράλῃς).⁷⁰ It was doubtless in 1396 that Cyprian and Jagiello thought up their remarkable scheme for the reunion of the Byzantine and Latin churches, to be effected at a council, presumably on Lithuanian soil. Both sent their written proposals to the patriarch, who showed a cautious interest in the project but pointed out in his replies, dated January 1397, that "Russia" (i.e., presumably Lithuania) was an unsuitable venue for such a council, and that in any case the blockade of Constantinople by the Turkish armies of Bayazid made its summoning inexpedient. Let the kings of Hungary and Poland organize another crusade against the Turks; then, said the patriarch, a council could be held, for the roads would be open. As for Cyprian, it was his bounden duty to use his influence with the Polish king to secure this desirable end.⁷¹ It is with justice that John Barker, commenting on Antony's letter to Jagiello, remarks: "This passage makes clear that the Byzantines regarded union as the cart and aid as the horse, and that they had very strong opinions as to which should come first."⁷²

The second aspect of Cyprian's activity which is of general interest is the role he played as a representative of the Byzantine authorities in Russia. There has been some otiose speculation about his attitude to the notorious decree of Basil I ordering the deletion of the Byzantine emperor's name from the commemorative diptychs of the Russian Church, on the grounds that in Russia "we have the church but not the emperor." The Patriarch Antony, in a letter he wrote to the Muscovite ruler in 1393, roundly rebuked him for this nationalistic revolt against the authority of "the universal emperor," "the Lord and Master of the *oikoumene*."⁷³ He makes it clear that Basil actively "prevented" (ἐμποδίζει) his metropolitan from commemorating the emperor. In my view it is inconceivable that Cyprian would have complied with such an order except under the strongest protest and duress.⁷⁴ He seems,

⁷⁰ *APC*, II, 283.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 280–85.

⁷² J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), 150–54. On this project of union, see also Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, 337–39; Prěšnjakov, *Obrazovanie velikoruskago gosudarstva*, 370; O. Halecki, "La Pologne et l'Empire byzantin," *Byzantion*, 7 (1932), 49; Kartašev, *Očerki po istorii ruskoj cerkvi*, 336–37; Tachiaos, 'Επιδράσεις, 127–30; *idem*, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 229–32; Šabatin, "Iz istorii Ruskoj Cerkvi," no. 52, pp. 250–52.

⁷³ *APC*, II, 188–92; abridged English trans. E. Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957), 194–96; and J. W. Barker, *op. cit.*, 105–10. For the correct dating of this letter to 1393, not 1394–97 (as G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* [Oxford, 1968], 554 note 1, argued), see J. W. Barker, *op. cit.*, 109–10 note 31; and Darrouzès, *Le Registre synodal*, 125 note 34.

⁷⁴ There are no valid grounds for accepting the view, implied in Hildegard Schaefer's book (*Moskau das dritte Rom*, 2nd ed. [Darmstadt, 1957], 1–12), that Cyprian sympathized with Basil I's revolt against the emperor's suzerainty, or Šabatin's belief ("Iz' istorii Ruskoj Cerkvi," no. 52, pp. 238–39) that he agreed to drop the emperor's name from the Russian diptychs as the price for the grand prince's noninterference in Church affairs. Much more convincing are the arguments advanced by Tachiaos to show that Cyprian could not possibly have countenanced Basil I's attitude in this matter ('Επιδράσεις, 130–39; 'Ο μητροπολίτης Κυπριανός, 232–41). There is no evidence to support the opinion of Sokolov (*op. cit.* [note 19 *supra*], 572–73) and Prěšnjakov (*Obrazovanie velikoruskago gosudarstva*, 365 note 1) that it was not Basil I but his father, Prince Dimitri, who discontinued the practice of commemorating the emperor's name in Muscovy.

in any case, to have persuaded the Russian monarch fairly rapidly to recognize once more the emperor's nominal suzerainty over the Muscovite realm; for in a letter written by Cyprian between 1395 and 1406 to the clergy of Pskov he states explicitly that the emperor is commemorated liturgically in the churches of Moscow.⁷⁵

As a Byzantine agent in Russia, Cyprian was also useful as a fund raiser. His good offices were repeatedly sought by the Byzantine government and Church during the Turkish siege of Constantinople which lasted from 1394 to 1402.⁷⁶ According to Russian sources, in 1398 he helped collect a considerable sum of money which, perhaps surprisingly, reached Constantinople safely.⁷⁷ The patriarchal archives preserved the draft of a letter addressed to Cyprian and dated to 1400, in which the Patriarch Matthew urged him, "as a Byzantine-loving man" (ὡς φιλορρῶμαιος ἄνθρωπος), to start another fund-raising campaign; he was to assure his Russian flock that it was more meritorious to contribute money for the defense of Constantinople than to build churches, to give alms to the poor, or to redeem prisoners. "For this holy city," wrote the patriarch, "is the pride, the support, the sanctification, and the glory of Christians in the whole world."⁷⁸

Cyprian's efforts as a φιλορρῶμαιος ἄνθρωπος should not obscure his services to his country of adoption during this last and more serene period of his life. There is time to enumerate them only briefly. In 1375, when the armies of Tamerlane were approaching Moscow, Cyprian had the famed icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, Russia's palladium, transferred to Moscow in order to instill courage in the inhabitants of the threatened city. On that very day, according to a Russian chronicle, Tamerlane ordered a general retreat.⁷⁹

Cyprian has also a secure and not undistinguished position in the history of Russian letters. I have already referred to some of his writings. Russian archival collections have preserved manuscripts copied by him, mostly Church Slavonic translations from the Greek. Among them are the Psalter, St. John Climacus' *Ladder*, and works of the Pseudo-Dionysius.⁸⁰ He inserted into the Russian version of the Synodikon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy the new articles of the Byzantine Synodikon which endorsed the theological teaching of the hesychasts, thus contributing to the subsequent spread of hesychasm

⁷⁵ *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, col. 239. This commemoration appears to have been the imperial *polychronia* which formed part of the Synodikon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy. See J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie. Edition et commentaire," *TM*, 2 (1967), 93-95, 253-56. Cf. F. Uspenskij, *Očerki po istorii vizantijskoj obrazovanosti* (St. Petersburg, 1891), 109-45.

⁷⁶ On the siege of Constantinople, see J. W. Barker, *op. cit.*, 123-99.

⁷⁷ *Troickaja Letopis'*, 448; *Nikonovskaja Lëtopis'*, 168; *Sofijskaja vtoraja lëtopis'*, PSRL, VI (1853), 130; *Voshkresenskaja Lëtopis'*, 71. Cf. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, V (Munich-Berlin, 1965), 85 (no. 3267). Neither the Byzantine appeal for help nor the Russian response merit the epithet "supposed" (J. W. Barker, *op. cit.*, 153 note 45).

⁷⁸ *APC*, II, 361.

⁷⁹ See G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven, 1953), 275-76; Čerepnin, *op. cit.* (note 57 *supra*), 673-78.

⁸⁰ For general studies of Cyprian's literary work, see Ivanov, "Bŭlgarskoto knižovno vlijanie," 25-79; Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie," 215-54. Cyprian's literary, liturgical, and historical work fall outside the scope of this article, and merit a separate study.

in Russia.⁸¹ He also played an important role in the development of Russian liturgical practice,⁸² making new translations into Church Slavonic of Greek liturgical texts, introducing into Russia the *ordo* of the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in current use in late medieval Byzantium,⁸³ issuing detailed instructions on liturgical problems,⁸⁴ and generally attempting to bring the ritual of the Russian Church fully into line with Constantinopolitan practice of the late fourteenth century.⁸⁵ Finally, he is believed to have played an active part in the compilation of the first comprehensive Muscovite chronicle, which included material collected from different parts of the country and which was completed in 1408, two years after his death.⁸⁶

A modern scholar has attributed to Cyprian the following statement: "I seek peace and ecclesiastical unity between north and south."⁸⁷ I have not been able to find these exact words in any of Cyprian's published works, though I believe them to be a none-too-faithful rendering of something he did, in fact, write in one of his letters to St. Sergius.⁸⁸ Genuine or not, this quotation seems an appropriate epitaph for a man who, drawing his spiritual and intellectual inspiration from the hermitages of Athos and the example of his mentor, the Patriarch Philotheos, devoted the greater part of his active life to the task of keeping together the disparate fragments of the Byzantine commonwealth. He fought hard, and in the end achieved a large measure of success.

A Russian chronicle, in its account of Cyprian's death, tells us that his favorite place of residence was his country estate near Moscow. "The place," we are told, "was quiet, silent and free from noise, between two rivers . . .

⁸¹ *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, cols. 239, 241.

⁸² The standard work on Cyprian's liturgical activity is still the very thorough study by I. Mansvetov, "O trudah Mitropolita Kiprijana po časti bogosluženija," *Pribavlenija k izdaniju tvorenij svjatyh otcv v ruskom perevodě*, 19 (1882), 152–205, 413–95; *ibid.*, 30 (1882), 71–161. Cf. Ivanov, "Bulgar-skoto knižovno vlijanie," 37–47, 52–67.

⁸³ This was the Διάταξις τῆς Θείας λειτουργίας, attributed to the Patriarch Philotheos; see P. N. Trembelas, *Αἱ τρεῖς λειτουργίαι κατὰ τοὺς ἐν Ἀθήναις κώδικας* (Athens, 1935), 1–16. Cf. Beck, *op. cit.* (note 48 *supra*), 726. Cyprian made available in Russia the Church Slavonic translation of this διάταξις, made by the Patriarch Euthymius of Bulgaria: *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius (1375–1393)*, ed. E. Kałužniacki (Vienna, 1901; repr. London, 1971), 283–306.

⁸⁴ *Russkaja Istoričeskaja Biblioteka*, VI, cols. 235–70.

⁸⁵ The contrast is worth noting between the high praise meted out to Cyprian in a Russian document dated 1403 for his "correction of the [Church] books" (cf. A. I. Sobolevskij, *Perevodnaja literatura Moskovskoj Rusi XIV–XVII vekov* [St. Petersburg, 1903], 12–13 note 3) and the storm that broke over a similar issue in Russia three centuries later, when the decision of the Russian Patriarch Nikon to enforce upon his Church the liturgical texts and practices of the contemporary Greek Church caused millions of "Old Believers" to go into schism. In this area also it is remarkable how the hesychast, pro-Byzantine party was able in the late Middle Ages to offer a viable alternative to the growth of religious nationalism.

⁸⁶ See M. D. Priselkov, *Istorija russkogo letopisanija XI–XV vv.* (Leningrad, 1940; repr. The Hague, 1966), 128–40; *idem*, *Troickaja Letopis'*, 3–49; D. S. Lihačev, *Russkie letopisi i ih kul'turno-istoričeskoe značenie* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1947), 296–97; Dmitriev, "Rol' i značenie," 226–28.

⁸⁷ Archimandrite Leonid, *op. cit.* (note 13 *supra*), 29.

⁸⁸ "I seek neither glory, nor riches, but my metropolitanate, which the holy Great Church of God [i.e., the Patriarchate of Constantinople] entrusted to me": *Pravoslavnyj Sobesednik*, 1860, pt. 2, p. 104. Prohorov, *Povest' o Mitjaje* (1978), 202.

beside a pond, and there was much forest around.”⁸⁹ There he would retire to pray, read, and indulge in his favorite pastime, the copying of manuscripts. One is reminded of Peter the Venerable’s account, written to Héloïse, of the last years of Abélard’s life: *libris semper incumbibat*.⁹⁰ There he died, probably in his late seventies, on 16 September 1406. Four days before his death, seriously ill, he dictated a farewell letter to his friends and his enemies, begging forgiveness and sending to all his “peace and blessing and last embrace.” He asked that it be read at his funeral, while his body was being lowered into the coffin. The Russian chronicler, who cites in full the text of the letter, tells us that many were in tears as they heard it read.⁹¹

We may perhaps best take leave of Cyprian in the quiet surroundings of his Russian country home which he loved so much. A southerner by birth, he must have found the scenery very unlike the rolling hills of his native Bulgaria and the dark blue sea, the sun-baked cliffs, and the chestnut groves of Mt. Athos. It is pleasant to think that in his adopted northern home, where in the autumn and on long summer days the translucent sky falls gently on the silent waters, he may have found peace at last.

Dumbarton Oaks
May 1977

⁸⁹ *Nikonovskaja Lětapis'*, 194–95.

⁹⁰ *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. G. Constable, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 307 (Letter 115).

⁹¹ Priselkov, *Troickaja Letopis'*, 462–64; *Nikonovskaja Lětapis'*, 194–97. Two sixteenth-century chronicles state that some of Cyprian’s successors on the metropolitan throne had the text of his letter read at their funeral and placed in their coffins: *Nikonovskaja Lětapis'*, 197; *Kniga Stepennaja Carškogo Rodoslovija*, PSRL, XXI,2 (1913), 443–44.