



## **The Participation of Athonite Monks in church and cultural processes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth territories**

### **Udział mnichów atoskich w procesach kościelnych i kulturowych na ziemiach Rzeczypospolitej w XVII wieku**

**Key words:** Mount Athos, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Union of Brest, Ivan Vyshenskyi, Cyprian Ostrozhanyn, Iov Knyahynskyi, Isaiah Kopynskyi, Petro Mohyla

**Słowa kluczowe:** Góra Athos, Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów, Unia Brzeska, Iwan Wyszeński, Hiob Kniahynicki, Cyprian Ostrozanin, Izajasz Kopiński, Piotr Mohyla

#### **Abstract**

The article studies the participation of Athonite monks in the church and cultural life of the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards into and during the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Attention is drawn to the participation of Athonite clergy in literacy, educational and other activities after the tragic events of the Union of Brest. Evidence for the stay of the Ukrainian monk and polemicist Ivan Vyshenskyi in the Zograf Monastery on Mount Athos is an early printed book issued in 1595 kept at the monastery library, which contains a gift inscription by Vasyl Surozhskyi to Ivan Vyshenskyi. The presence of archimandrite Leontii, the abbot of the Peresopnytsia Monastery, who also

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spent some time there, is confirmed by remarks in several early printed books from the Zograf library. A considerable number of Ukrainian-Belarusian early printed books from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, preserved in the libraries of Zograf, Hilandar and other Athonite monasteries, attest to their close contacts with the clergy and monks of the Kyiv Metropolis during this period. The tradition of Athonite participation in the spiritual, cultural, and political life of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks gradually became a well-established practice from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. This, in turn, contributed to the intensification of spiritual and cultural life in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands, the revival of Orthodoxy and monasticism, and the restoration of ties between the Orthodox of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Holy Mount Athos and the Orthodox world.

### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł analizuje udział mnichów ze św. Góry Athos w życiu kościelnym i kulturalnym na ziemiach ukraińsko-białoruskich w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów od końca XVI i w XVII wieku. Uwaga została skoncentrowana na udziale duchowieństwa atoskiego w działalności literackiej, oświatowej i innej po tragicznych wydarzeniach Unii Brzeskiej. Podkreślono, że cennym świadectwem pobytu ukraińskiego mnicha i polemisty Iwana Wszeńskiego w klasztorze Zografskim na św. Górze Atos jest wydanie z 1595 roku przechowywane w bibliotece klasztornej, które zawiera zapis ofiarodawcy Wasyla Surożskiego Iwanowi Wszeńskiemu. Przebywał tam również przełożony klasztoru peresopnickiego, archimandryta Leoncjusz, o czym świadczą zapisy na niektórych starych drukach z biblioteki zografskiej. Znaczna liczba ukraińsko-białoruskich wydań z XVI i XVII wieku, przechowywanych w bibliotekach w Zografou, Chilandarze i innych klasztorach św. Góry Atos, świadczy o ich bliskich kontaktach z duchowieństwem i mnichami Metropolii Kijowskiej w tym okresie. Tradycja udziału atonitów w duchowym, kulturalnym i politycznym życiu Ukrainy i ukraińskich Kozaków stopniowo stawała się ugruntowaną praktyką począwszy od XVII wieku. To z kolei przyczyniło się do intensyfikacji życia duchowego i kulturalnego na ziemiach ukraińsko-białoruskich, odrodzenia prawosławia i monastycyzmu oraz przywrócenia kontaktów między prawosławnymi Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów i św. Górą Athos oraz światem prawosławnym.

Holy Mount Athos and its ascetics played an important role in the revival of the Orthodox monastic movement within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This revival of the spiritual and

cultural influence of Athos became possible after the events of the Union of Brest in 1596 due to the fact that the Orthodox hierarchy appointed by Polish kings by “right of patronage” – mainly from the noble magnates and gentry of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – entered into union with Rome, so that the Orthodox movement was led mainly by ascetic monks who were guided by Athos and its hesychastic traditions (Šumylo 2014, 120–128; Šumylo 2015b, 13–16). Under their influence, the Orthodox movement began to revive within the Rzeczpospolita.

The Union of Brest and the discussions around it contributed to the awakening and intensification of cultural life in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands. It sparked a debate between Orthodox and Greek Catholics, prompting both sides to produce many new literary works, establish schools, and rewrite and print books. Ties with foreign ecclesiastical and cultural centres and figures were strengthened.

In particular, Prince Vasyl-Kostiantyn Ostrozkyi and the teachers of the Ostroh Academy, which he founded, including the Athonite monks Iov Knyahynytskyi, Cyprian Ostrozhanyn, Isaak Boryskovych, and others, began to maintain even closer contacts with Athos. The Ostroh graduate, abbot Isaiah Kopynskyi, who founded the Kyiv Brotherhood School in 1615, also maintained close ties with Athos ascetics and was strongly influenced by them. Later, when he became Metropolitan of Kyiv, Galicia, and all of Little Russia, he continued to follow the Athonite hesychastic prayer and ascetic practices, retiring to a cave for unceasing prayer (Šumylo 2019, 631–649).

Representatives of the Holy Mount Athos – archimandrite of the Panteleimon Monastery Matthew and archimandrite of the Athos Monastery Simonopetra Makarios – took an active part in the 1596 Orthodox anti-Union Council convened with the support of Prince Vasyl-Kostiantyn Ostrozkyi and chaired by Ecumenical Patriarch Exarch Nikephoros (Šumylo 2019, 631–649). Another Athonite elder, Joseph, a preacher and protosangel of the Patriarch of Alexandria, helped with translations from Greek (Nikitin 1997, 87).

Athonite archimandrites Matthew of Panteleimon and Macarius of Simonopetra Monasteries are among the first to have undersigned the decision of the anti-Union Council of Brest of 9 October 1596, known as the *Apophasis* (*Apofasis* 1903, 329–376; Tymošenko 2004, 29–35). Soon after with their participation, apparently Ivan Vyshenskyi composed one of his first anti-Union epistles, “From the Holy Mount Athos to the Wanderers”. It was published in the Ostroh Book at the expense of Prince Konstantyn-Vasyl Ostrozkyi (Ivan Višenskij 1955, 7, 293) in 1598, along with the messages of Patriarch Meletios (Pigas) of Alexandria. According to Ivan Franko, this message of the elder Ivan Vyshenskyi was a response to the act of the anti-Union Council of Brest issued in 1597 on the withdrawal of the authority of the bishops who had joined the Union (Franko 1980, 318–326), signed, among others, by the aforementioned hegumens Matthew and Makarios of Athos.

The Athonite monks Fikara, the compiler of the Vilna collection *Spiritual Vertograd* (1620), and Joseph, who participated in the publication of *Discourses on the Acts of the Apostles* in 1624, also took an active part in the Orthodox spiritual and cultural life of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Pelešenko 2004, 229; Nikitin 1997, 87).

It is also known that Bishop Gideon (Balaban) of Lviv, who remained faithful to Orthodoxy, also ordered corrected books from Athos at this time for their reprinting (Nikitin 1997, 87). Also, on 5 January 1614, the former Moldovan Metropolitan Mardarius wrote to the Lviv Orthodox Brotherhood from Athos, urging the brothers to firmly preserve the Orthodox faith and asking them to send new books published in the brotherhood’s printing house to the Holy Mountain (CDIAL, f. 129, op. 1, spr. 446).

Vasyl Shchurat emphasises that many documents of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries concerning church issues in Ukraine often bear the signatures of both Ukrainian and Greek Athos monks (Šurat 1895, 12–13). Many Ukrainian literary works of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries reflected the influence of Athos in particular, in Christopher Filalet’s Apocryssis,

Zacharias Kopystensky's *Palinodia*, Isaiah Kopynsky's *Spiritual Alphabet*, and many others.

The ties between the Orthodox clergy and monastics from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Athos monasticism became so intense at this time that one may speak of a kind of *Ukrainian hesychastic revival* of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Due to the so-called "Athonite expansion" in the Ukrainian and Belarusian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Union of Brest, an active revival of Orthodox monasticism and monasteries began. While before the Union, Orthodox monasteries had been in decline, mostly turning into large landowning estates, the situation gradually changed after the Union.

The most prominent among the Ukrainian Athonite Hesychast monks of that time was elder Ivan Vyshenskyi (Šumylo 2016). Originally from Galicia, he spent nearly 40 years on Mount Athos. After the Union of Brest, at the insistence of Patriarch Meletios (Pigas), Vyshenskyi moved to Ukraine. There he became involved in the active struggle for the revival of Orthodoxy and the reform of Orthodox monasteries according to the Athonite statutes. His polemical works, about twenty of which are known, left an important mark on Ukrainian culture (Franko 1981, 178–184; Gruševs'kyj 1995a, 91–163.234–266; Ševčuk 1986, 4–15). They became an adornment of a new trend in Ukrainian literature – the polemical strand that developed after the Union of Brest (Šumylo 2016, 17).

Ivan Vyshenskyi cooperated closely with another famous Athonite, hieromonk Iov Knyahynytskyi, founder of the famous Manyava Skete in the Carpathian region, which was organised according to the model and statutes of the monasteries of Athos. A network of several dozen monasteries and hermitages in western Ukraine was formed around the Manyava Skete in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under its direct influence (Dolotko 2005, 35–41; Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 273). Among his companions and followers were Monk Job (Zhelizo) of Pochaiv, Monk Theodosius of Manyava

and many others. The restoration of the famous Pochaiv Monastery by Job Zhelizo may also be considered a continuation of the experience of monastic asceticism brought from Athos (Ogiênko 1999, 94–95; Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 264–266; Kartašev 1992, 276; Šumylo 2016, 85–90).

It is worth noting other Ukrainian Athonites of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the famous companion of Ivan Vyshenskyi, Abbot Isaak (Boryskovych), spent about 14 years on the Holy Mountain (Šurat 1895, 12–13.46–47; Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 118; Florâ 2011, 32–35). Upon returning to Ukraine, he revived the Derman Monastery, founded the Lutsk Brotherhood and a printing house. He lived in asceticism together with the Athonite elder Iov Knyahynytskyi, founder of the Manyava Skete in the Carpathian region, who helped him revive monasticism and the traditions of hesychasm in Volyn. In 1620, Isaak Boryskovych became one of the first bishops of the Orthodox hierarchy restored in the Kyiv Metropolis by Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem.

Another Athonite who was ordained by Patriarch Theophanes was the abbot of the famous *Cossack* Trakhtemyriv Monastery, Joseph (Prince Koriyatovych-Kurtzevych, a descendant of Grand Duke Koriyat of Lithuania), who had been ascetic for some time on Mount Athos (Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 120; Hyžnâk, Mankivs'kyj 2003, 27; Maštarov, Florâ 2011, 634–636). The Trakhtemyriv Monastery, which was established according to the Athos model and statutes, was the main shrine of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. It had a school and a hospital for wounded and sick Cossacks. It was this monastery that provided spiritual guidance to the Zaporozhian Sich, trying to imbue the Cossacks with the church's religiosity (Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 120; Žarkyh 2013, 140; Kuz'muk 2006, 23, 30, 65; Šumylo 2014, 117). Another famous Zaporozhian monastery, the Samara Wilderness-Nicholas Monastery which was also considered a *parish of the Zaporozhian Sich*, was subordinate to the Trakhtemyriv Monastery. It also ran a school and a hospital for Cossacks, and the monastery's clergy played an important role in the spiritual and political life of the Zaporozhian Sich. This monastery was founded by hermit

monks on a deserted island in the middle of a dense forest in the Sich's possession, and it also "introduced worship and prayer according to the statutes of the Holy Mount Athos" (Makarevskij 1880, 57; Âvornic'kyj 1990, 224–225; Âvornic'kyj 1995, 90; Lyman 1998, 14–15; Kuz' muk 2006, 42).

After the devastation of the Trakhtemyriv Monastery, the Samara Wilderness-Nicholas Monastery came under the control of the Kyiv Mezhyhirya Monastery, which from that time on was considered the "patron of the Zaporozhian Sich" (Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 267; Kuz' muk 2006, 14–15). From that time until the liquidation of the Sich in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the clergy of the Samara Wilderness-Nicholas Monastery and the parish churches of the Zaporozhian Sich were sent mainly from the Mezhyhiria Monastery, which preserved the Athonite traditions.

The revival of the Mezhyhirya Monastery near Kyiv was also carried out by former Athonite ascetics, the elders Athanasius and Joasaph, "who came from the holy mountain of Athos" (Gustynskaâ letopis' 2003, 153). The Hustyn Chronicle states that after returning from Athos in 1600, they received the blessing of the archimandrite of the Kyiv Pechersk Monastery, Elisei (Pletnetskyi), to revive the Mezhyhirya Monastery (Gustynskaâ letopis' 2003, 153–169). Later, Abbot Athanasius sent the Athonite *blessed elder* hieromonk Joasaph to the Chernihiv region, where he founded the famous Gustyn Monastery from where the disciples and companions of the Athonite elder Joasaph founded the famous Ladyn and Mhar monasteries on the Left Bank of Ukraine (Gustynskaâ letopis' 2003, 153–169; Bilokin', Mycyk 2009, 21; Bilokin' 2009, 567).

An interesting fact is that a delegation of Athos elders Makariy, Isaac, Cyprian and Isaiah who had ties with the hegumen of St Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, Iov Boretskyi, the future first metropolitan of the renewed hierarchy (Rasprosnye reči 1875, 630–632) arrived in Kyiv from Athos in late 1619 – early 1620 – shortly before the start of the campaign to renew the Orthodox hierarchy in Ukraine. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, apart from Athos, many Orthodox monks and priests came

to Ukraine from the Moldavian-Valachian lands, where several dozen metochs of Athos monasteries were active at the time and who also acted as intermediaries in relations between the Ukrainian clergy and the monasteries of Athos.

A close relationship with the Athonite elders Athanasius and Joasaph was maintained by Abbot Isaiah Kopynskyi, a follower of the Ostroh circle of traditionalist scribes, who founded the Kyiv Brotherhood School and the Kyiv Epiphany Brotherhood in 1615. He persuaded Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi and the entire Zaporozhian army to join this brotherhood and act as and defenders of the Orthodox Church (Šumylo 2019). It was Isaiah, together with Sahaidachnyi, who initiated the restoration of the Orthodox hierarchy in the Kyiv Metropolis by Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem in 1620. It is thus not surprising that the first bishops of the restored hierarchy were the monks Isaiah Kopynskyi, Isaak Boryskovych, and Joseph Koriatovych-Kurtzevych, as they were oriented towards the Athonite traditions and led the movement for the revival of Orthodoxy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Subsequently, when Isaiah Kopynskyi became Metropolitan of Kyiv, he continued to practise the Athonite hesychastic prayer and other ascetic traditions, withdrawing to a cave for unceasing prayer. In addition, it was Isaiah Kopynskyi who was one of the first to legitimise the struggle of the Cossacks under the slogan of defending the Orthodox faith. In 1632, he and a delegation of priests and monks arrived at the Cossack Rada (Council), where they knelt before the Cossacks and tearfully called for them to stand up for Orthodoxy to the end (Gruševs'kyj 1995, 151–152.154–155; Gruševs'kyj 1996, 132). He also inspired a series of armed Cossack uprisings in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under slogans of “defence of the Orthodox faith” in 1630, 1637 and 1638 (Šumylo 2019). These uprisings served to prepare the ground for the Ukrainian national revolution led by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648, which also received the blessing of both the Eastern patriarchs



and the ascetics of the Holy Mountain (Kuleš 1888, 229; Kapterev 1995, 24–29).

In addition to being a prominent church and socio-political figure, Isaiah Kopynskyi was also a talented spiritual writer, leaving a number of very valuable literary works to posterity, the most famous of which is the “Spiritual Alphabet” (Kostomarov 1998, 149–151; Gruševs’kyj 1996, 137–156; Hyžnák, 280–281; Bulgakov 1996, 479–480; Voznák 1992). This work, written in the tradition of Athonite hesychastic literature, had more than 20 editions, even in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and has become a reference book for many ascetics, including St Paisius Velichkovsky, St Demetrius Tuptalo, St. Seraphim of Sarov and others (Gruševs’kyj 1996, 137–156). All of this may also be considered echoes of Athonite and Hesychastic spiritual and cultural influences in Ukraine.

At the initiative of the Ukrainian Athonite Hesychastes Ioan Vyshenskyi, Iov Knyahynytskyi, and Isaak Boryskovych together with the support of Prince Vasyl-Konstantyn Ostrozky, a kind of monastic reform was carried out in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Union of Brest. Its purpose was to convert Orthodox monasteries to the Athonite charter, so that they would not be church-feudal economic corporations, but true spiritual centres of Orthodoxy and the mystical and hesychastic tradition. In particular, as part of the monastic reform in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Derman, Ugornytsky, Univ, Poचाiv and other monasteries were renewed according to the Athonite model, and the famous Manyava Skete was also founded. Later, the same kinds of reforms were carried out by Athonites in Trakhtemyriv, Samara, Mezhyhirya and many other Orthodox monasteries (Šumylo 2016, 70–90).

The fruits of this activity were not long in coming. Under the influence of the Athonites, the monasteries that remained faithful to Orthodoxy gradually turned into national spiritual and cultural centres. The monasteries that were revived with the participation of Athonite ascetics

became the centres around which the spiritual, cultural, and political revival of the nation began (Vlasovs'kyj, 1956, 265–266).

Despite persecution and harassment, many Orthodox monasteries in the Kyiv Metropolis during the 17<sup>th</sup> century grew in number of residents to 100-200 monks, up to 55 new monasteries were founded, and a significant number of them were organized according to the Athonite Statute (Vlasovs'kyj 1956, 265–266; Kartašev 1992, 275). They revived Athonite hesychastic traditions, opened schools, and rewrote or printed books. So, this period can rightly be called the “Ukrainian Hesychastic revival” of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Šumylo 2016, 70–90).

It is quite characteristic in this regard that the Orthodox Council of the Kyiv Metropolis in 1621 approved a kind of *programme of activity* for the revived Orthodox Church, known as *Sovitovanie o blagočestii*. It was written in the Athonite and Hesychastic style, calling on the hierarchy, clergy and flock to internal purification, repentance and even martyrdom for Orthodoxy. One of the paragraphs of the Resolution proposed to invite Cyprian Ostrozhany, Ivan Vyshenskyi and other Athonite ascetics from Athos to Ukraine, as well as “to send Rusyns inclined to piety to Athos as a spiritual school” (*Sovetovanie o blagočestii* 1845, 247–248). This conciliar decree shows how much importance the Kyivan Church attached to the restoration of ties with Athos.

Speaking of the Athonite ascetics who had a significant impact on the spiritual and cultural processes in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it is worth noting the following fact: in 1619-1620, Father Cyprian Rusyn was listed as the abbot of the Rusyn Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos. In particular, the act of the Synaxis of Athos of November 1619 which has been preserved, contains the signatures of the abbots of 14 Athos monasteries, including the signature of Κυπριανός Ρούσος (Oikomonides 1979, 229). Most likely, this Father Cyprian Rusyn was the hieromonk Cyprian Ostrozhany mentioned in the 1621 *Sovitovanii o blagočestii* (Šumylo 2019, 645–649).

It is known that Father Cyprian Ostrozhanyn was sent to study at a Greek school in Venice under the patronage of Prince Ostroh, after which he enrolled to the University of Padua (Harlampovič 1896, 274–275; Gruševs'kyj 1995, 487; Myc'ko 1990, 94–95; Āsinovs'kyj 2015, 298–300). As a translator from Greek, in 1596 he took an active part in the anti-Union Orthodox Council in Brest, where he undoubtedly communicated with the abbot of the Ruthenian Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, archimandrite Matthew. Several times he visited the Eastern patriarchs Meletios Pigas and Cyril Lukaris to coordinate anti-Union activities, then went to Athos, where he remained. Cyprian is credited with translations from Greek into Slavonic of the Conversations of Macarius of Egypt (1598), a collection of aphorisms *The Bee* (1599), Metropolitan Gabriel Sevyr's *Syntagmation on the Seven Holy Mysteries* (1603), and John Chrysostom's *Discourses on the Gospel* (1605) (Šumylo 2019, 645–649).

Patriarch Kirill Lukaris of Constantinople called Father Cyprian “educated, skilled in language and Greek studies” (Āsinovs'kyj 2015, 300). Archimandrite Zacharias Kopystenskyi of the Kyiv Pechersk Monastery also described him in the same way (Titov 1924, 57).

From the *Sovitovanie o blagochestii* and the report of Archimandrite Zacharias Kopystensky, it can be assumed that in 1621–1623 Father Cyprian was still ascetic on Athos, which suggests that he was the hegumen of Panteleimon Monastery, mentioned in the aforementioned Athos act of November 1619 (Šumylo 2019, 645–649).

Thus, presumably, the ancient Rusyn Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos was an important spiritual centre in the period from 1596 to 1623, headed by the outstanding Ukrainian ascetic and educator Cyprian Ostrozhanyn, and this monastery itself, with the support of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, was one of the coordinators of the movement for the revival of Orthodoxy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Šumylo 2019, 645–649).

In addition to the Monastery of St Panteleimon, Ukrainian monks also asceticised at Zograf, Vatopedi, St Paul, Hilandar, and other monasteries on Athos. Representatives of the Bulgarian Zograf Monastery on Mount Athos took an active part in the struggle for the revival of Orthodoxy in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, a significant number of monks of Ukrainian origin were among its brethren (Turilov et al 2009, 301–313). Here they transcribed church-teachings and anti-Latin literature to send to their homeland. It was at this monastery that the Ukrainian polemicist and elder Ivan Vyshenskyi spent the last years of his life (Ivan Višenskij 1955, 208, 210; Šumylo 2016, 99–109). There is a well-known Ukrainian two-volume list of the Triumphant (*Торжественник*) sent from Athos in the 1610s by the same elder Ivan Vyshenskyi (Šapov 1959, 82–83; Smetanina 1964, 371; Turilov et al 2009, 301–313). The presence in Zograf’s library of a calligraphic Tetraevangelion of 1550, transcribed by his countryman (possibly a relative) Luke, archpriest of Vyshenskyi, may also be connected with this ascetic (Kodov et al 1985, 78–80; Turilov 2005, 152, 165; Turilov et al 2009, 301–313).

A valuable testimony to Ivan Vyshenskyi’s stay in Zograf is a copy of the Margaritarion of St John Chrysostom (Ostroh, 1595) preserved in the monastery library, which contains a dedicatory inscription by Vasyl Surozhsky: “To John Vyshensky on the Holy Mount Athos I give [this book], Vasyl Andriyovych” (Žabov, Šumylo 2023).

In addition to Ivan Vyshenskyi, his friend and companion (and later bishop) Isaak Boryskovych of Lutsk was also associated with the Zograf Monastery. We learn about this fact from the testimony recorded in his own words in 1624: “Bishop Isaak, before becoming a bishop, visited Mount Athos, and that Zograf monastery on more than one occasion” (RGADA, f. 52, op. 1, d. 9, f. 22–23).

Some of the Ukrainian-Belarusian early printed books from the library of the Zograf Monastery attest inscriptions of the abbot of the Peresopnytsia Monastery, archimandrite Leontyi, the founder of the

Polonsky Monastery in Volyn. These notations date back to 1605-1612 and 1622. Based on them, we can confirm that this Ukrainian church and cultural figure also lived on Mount Athos at the Zograf Monastery for some time, together with Ivan Vyshenskyi and Isaak Boryskovych, worked in the monastery library, and later continued to maintain close ties with this monastery (Žabov, Šumylo, 2023).

Since all the trips of Athonite monks to Moscow in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Snegarov 1953, 30–31; Turilov et al 2009, 301–313; Merdzimekis 2008, 251) to collect donations led through Ukrainian lands, we have reason to assume that the Zograf Monastery as well as other Athonite communities had close contacts with Ukrainian Cossack officers from the time of Ivan Vyshenskyi and Petro Sahaidachny. Delegations of Zograf monks had been visiting Kyiv since the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Their meetings in Kyiv with Kyiv Metropolitan Iov Boretskyi and Isaac Boryskovych, bishop of Lutsk, are very well known (Čencova 2017, 164–186).

According to Vera Chentsova, it was in Kyiv under Metropolitan Petro Mohyla that the Zograf monk Meletiy studied printing techniques and who later became the first printer in Wallachia (Čencova 2017, 164–166). He visited Ukraine on more than one occasion and even lived in the Zaporozhian Sich for several months in 1624, for which he received written permission from hetman Maksym Hryhorovych (Čencova 2017, 182). At the same time, another Zograf monk, hierodeacon Stefan, lived at the Kyiv Pechersk Monastery for seven years (from 1624 to 1631) (Čencova 2017, 178–182). It is possible that due to such close contacts with the Athonites that Kyiv metropolitan Petro Mohyla commissioned new paintings of the Church of the Savior on Berestov in Kyiv in 1643-1644, which were executed in the characteristic Athos-Post-Byzantine style by icon painters from northern Greece whom he invited (Kondratiuk 2017, 147–152; Pitateleva 2016, 73–381). Petro Mohyla also ordered a translation and reprint of the Chetia-Minea of Simeon Metaphrastus from Athos (Nikitin 1997, 85).

According to Anatolii Turilov's findings, the stories of Athos monks served as the source of much information about various saints in Zacharias (Kopystensky's) *Palinodia*. The scholar also proved that when preparing the *Book of the Lives of the Saints* (Kyiv, 1700), St Demetrius (Tuptalo) used a source "from the library of the Serbian Lavra of Hilandar" (in particular, an extract from the 1626 *Minea Chetia*) (Romanenko, Turilov 2002, 153).

Among the prominent Athonites whose fate was closely linked to Ukraine was St Athanasius III (Patelarios; 1597-1654), the former Patriarch of Constantinople, whose life ended in the "Cossack" Mgarskyi Monastery in Lubny. Twice he met with Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, giving him and the entire Cossack Zaporozhian Army his blessing and legitimation for a "holy war" under the auspices of defending the Orthodox faith. He also mediated Bohdan Khmelnytskyi's negotiations with Moldovan ruler Vasyl Lupu and Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich of Moscow, urging the latter to ally with the hetman and, in alliance with Moldova and the Zaporozhian Army, to start a war with the Ottomans in order to jointly liberate the enslaved Orthodox peoples in the Balkans and Asia Minor (Kapterev 1889, 358–385; Hofmann 1938, 19; Ammann 1951, 7–16; Grečeskie dokumenty 1995, 24–29).

Later, the Athonite monks influenced Yurii Khmelnytskyi, who took up monasticism with the name Gideon. It is known that in Chyhyryn he came into contact with the archimandrite of the Athos Iviron Monastery, Isaac (RGADA, f. 52, op. 1, d. 10, f. 36–38). Later, another Athonite archimandrite even acted as mediator in negotiations to reconcile Yurii Khmelnytskyi with the left-bank hetman Ivan Samoylovych (Kostomarov 1882, 605–606). Yurii died in Turkish exile in the city of Helibolu, probably in a local monastery (Šumylo, Lastovs'kyj 2022, 155). Other members of the Khmelnytskyi family also maintained contacts with Athos monks (Šumylo 2021, 109–110). After the repose of her husband, Tymosh Khmelnytsky's wife Roxana (Roxandra) donated three of her estates with villages on the Dnister River to the Athos Vatopedi Monastery

for eternal commemoration, as is known from her will of January 15, 1667 (AVMA, Man. 8, f. 1–1v.; Factorul feminin 2012, 197–214).

Among the Ukrainian Athonites of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is also worth noting Gabriel of Mount Athos and Samuel Bakachych. The latter, who signed his name “Rusyn,” became famous for his translations from Greek into Slavonic of many patristic, theological, and polemical works (Sobolevskij 1900, 14; Nikitin 1997, 86). He also translated the famous work of Ioannikije Galatovsky *The True Messiah*, which was very popular among Serbs in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries into Serbian (Radojčyc 1960, 199–200; Angelov 1968, 293–299).

During several expeditions to the archives and library of the Zograf Monastery on Athos in the years 2013–2015, the author of this publication studied many Ukrainian early printed books issued in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and kept in the monastery’s book repository, which also attest to the close relations between the Zograf and various Ukrainian monasteries of that period. Some of them contain inscriptions of donations. For example, the 1653 edition of Pamva Berynda Lexicon Slavenorosky, which is kept in Zograf’s library, contains a Latin inscription made by a representative of the Chernihiv Cossack-officer family, Gregory Zvonkevych: “Gregorius natus, Zwonkewicz vocatus” (“Born with the name Gregory, nicknamed Zvonkevich”). From this we can conclude that this edition was probably presented to the Zograf Monastery by this representative of the Ukrainian Cossack-officer family.

The library of the Zograf Monastery, among other things, holds the following Ukrainian-Belarusian early printed books: Gospel (Vilno, 1575); Ostroh Bible (Ostroh, 1581) – 3 copies; *On the One True Faith* (Ostroh, 1588); *Adelzphotes* (Lviv, 1591); *Words of St. Basil the Great* (Ostroh, 1594) – 3 copies; *Margarit of Chrysostom* (Ostroh, 1595) – 2 copies; *Didactic Gospel* (Krylos, 1606 – edition by bishop Gideon Balaban); *Instruction of John Chrysostom* (Ostroh, 1607); *Grammar* by Meletii Smotrytsky (Ev’e, 1619); *Vertograde of Soul* (Vilno, 1620) – 2 copies; *Interpretations of Chrysostom on the Apostle Paul* (Kyiv, 1623);

*Abba Dorotheus and the Lemonarass* also known as *Flower Garden* (Kyiv, 1623); *The Lives of Barlaam and Joasaph* (Kuteyninsky Monastery, 1637); *The Didactic Gospel* (Kyiv, 1637); *Gospel* (Vilna, 1644); *The Trebnik of Peter the Great* (Kyiv, 1646); *The Lexicon Slavenorosky* (Kuteyninsky Monastery, 1653); *Dioptra* also known as *Spiritual Mirror* (Kuteyninsky Monastery, 1654, in one book with *Paradise of Thought*, Monastery of Iviron, 1659); *The Pechersky Otechnik* (Kyiv, 1661); *New Heaven with New Stars* (Lviv, 1665); *Peace to God and Man* (Kyiv, 1669); *The Life of St John of Ryla* (Kyiv, 1671), and many others (Šumylo 2021, 157; Žabov, Šumylo 2023).

The library of the Athos Monastery of Hilandar also contains, among other works, the following early printed books: *Medicine for the Mind* (Ostroh, 1607); *Dioptra or Mirror* by Vitalii Dubensky (Vilno, 1612); *Works of John Chrysostom* (Lviv, 1614); *Vertograd of the Soul* by monk Fikara of Mount Athos (Vilno, 1620); *Conversations* by John Chrysostom (Kyiv, 1623 and 1624); *Lexicon* by Pamva Berynda (Kyiv, 1627); *Triodion* (Kyiv, 1627 and 1632); *Abba Dorotheus* (Kyiv, 1628); *Nomokanon* (Kyiv, 1629); *Akathistnik* (Kyiv, 1629 and 1677); *Octoechos* (Lviv, 1630); *Anthologion* (Lviv, 1632); *Book of Hours* (Lviv, 1642); *Gospel* (Lviv, 1644); *Trebnik* of Petro Mohyla (Kyiv, 1646); *Akathistnik* (Lviv, 1660); *Paterik of the Pechersk* (Kyiv, 1661); *The Spiritual Sword* by Lazar Baranovych (Kyiv, 1666); *Innocent Gisel* (Kyiv, 1669); *Sermons* by Anthony Radyvilovsky (Kyiv, 1676 and 1688); *Anthologion* (Chernihiv, 1678); *Book of the Lives of Saints* by Dymyr Tuptalo (Kyiv, 1689 and 1700); *The Apostle* (Kyiv, 1695).

Numerous Ukrainian-Belarusian early printed books of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, kept in the libraries of some Athos monasteries, attest to their close contacts with the clergy and monks of the Kyiv Metropolis.

Many Ukrainian monasteries including Kyiv-Pechersk, Mezhyhirya, Trakhtemyriv, Samara, Manyava, Pochaiv and many others maintained close spiritual and cultural relations with Athos. The Ukrainian Cossacks also maintained contacts with Athos, invited experienced mentors and elders from there, made generous donations to the monasteries of the



Holy Mountain, and occasionally some Cossacks took monastic vows and even practised ascetism in the monasteries of the Holy Mountain (Šumylo 2013, 371.377; 2015, 34–41).

The tradition of the Athonites' participation in the spiritual and political life of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks gradually became a well-established practice from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Makarevskij 1880, 92; Evarnickij 1915, 87–88; Âvornic'kyj 1990, 190, 193; Ogiênko 1999, 228–232; Lyman 1998, 119). From the 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century memorial books from Athos monasteries, we know that Ukrainian hetmans and representatives of the noble Cossack officers were the trustees, patrons, and donors of Athos monasteries (Šumylo 2023, 164–175; 2016, 7–16). In general, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the largest number of contributions to many monasteries on Holy Mount Athos came from the Left Bank of Ukraine, “where large donations were made by high representatives of the Cossack regiments up to the general secretary and hetman” (Šumylo 2021, 108–112).

Thus, from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Athonite monasticism played an important role in the church and the cultural revival as well as preservation of Orthodoxy in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Union of Brest and the discussions around it contributed to the awakening and intensification of cultural life in the region. Thanks to the close relations between representatives of Athos and the Orthodox Church and secular circles of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Ukrainian monks from Athos began to reform the Orthodox monasteries of the Kyiv Metropolis. They also contributed to polemical, literary, spiritual and educational activities, supported the Orthodox movement in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands, and involved the Ukrainian Cossacks in it.

Among the Ukrainian-Athonite figures of this period, the most famous are Ivan Vyshenskyi, Iov Kniahynytskyi, Cyprian Ostrozhanyn, Isaak Boryskovych, Iosyp Koriatovych-Kurtzevych, Athanasius Mezhyhirskyi, Joasaph Gustynsky, and others. The anti-Union Orthodox

Council of 1596, convened with the support of Prince Vasyl-Kostiantyn Ostrozkyi, was attended by the archimandrite of the Panteleimon Monastery, Matthiew, and the archimandrite of the Simonopetra Monastery, Makarii. Athonite monks Theodulos, Christopher, Fikara, Joseph, and others took part in polemical and translation activities. In 1619-1620, Cyprian Rusyn, who was probably the hieromonk Cyprian Ostrozhanyn, became the abbot of the Panteleimon Monastery on Athos.

In addition to the monastery of St Panteleimon, Ukrainian monks also lived at Zograf, Vatopedi, St Paul, Hilandar, and other monasteries of Athos at that time. A valuable testimony to John Vyshenskyi stay in Zograf is a copy of the *Margaritarion* (Ostroh, 1595) preserved in the monastery library, which contains an inscription by Vasyl Surozhskyi to Ivan Vyshenskyi. The abbot of the Peresopnytsia Monastery, archimandrite Leontii, also lived here for some time, as is known from the notations in some Ukrainian-Belarusian early printed books from the library of the Zograf Monastery. The Athos monks of the Iviron Community had an influence on Yurii Khmelnytsky, who took up monasticism with the name Gideon.

Numerous Ukrainian-Belarusian Cyrillic early printed books issued in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, that are preserved nowadays in the libraries of Zograf, Hilandar, and other Athos monasteries, attest to close contacts of these spiritual centres with the clergy and monks of the Kyiv Metropolis during this period.

Spiritual and cultural ties with Athos were maintained by many Ukrainian monasteries, including Kyiv-Pechersk, Mezhyhirya, Tra-khtemyriv, Samara, Manyava, Pochaiv and many others. The Ukrainian Cossacks also began to maintain ties with Athonite monks. The tradition of Athonite participation in the spiritual and political life of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks gradually became a well-established practice from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Ukrainian hetmans and representatives of the noble Cossack officers often became patrons, trustees and donors to Athos monasteries, which was considered evidence of their elite status.

This, in turn, contributed to the intensification of spiritual and cultural life in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands, the revival of Orthodoxy and monasticism, and the restoration of ties between the Orthodox of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth not only with the Holy Mountain but also with the entire Orthodox world, and mutual spiritual and cultural influences and borrowings.

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