

The Concept of Primacy in the East and West

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Abstract

One of the many factors that contributed to the schism produced very early in the Church is the struggle for power or, theologically said, the struggle to have "primacy". The controversial and extensive analysis of the first "Florentine issue", analyzed in various forms: as primate, honour primate or jurisdictional, is the subject of present study. This custom, which began in the fifth century and consumed along with the others in 1054, under the fateful effigy of the "Great Schism", made relations between the Eastern and Western Church be even more cumbersome as before. Further discussion of attempt to restore dialogue between the two have resulted in meetings and councils that were not successful. Although this topic is of ecclesiastical origin, during disputes, it turned into one of political origin that led to the aggravation and dogmatizing of "Pope primacy". The Church tried over time to establish a bridge of communication between the two ecclesial worlds, but this issue will not be completed because the matter must be treated in the light of the Gospel saying: "But among ye shall not be so, but he who wants to become great among you must be your servant. And he who wants to be first among you must be the slave of all."

Key words

Primacy; East and West; Schism; Ecclesiastical Power; Yaer of 1054.

Most of the controversy that instigated the Greeks against the Latins in the Middle Ages would have been easily solved if both Churches had recognized a common authority, able to solve the inevitable differences created by divergent

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cultures and historical situations. Unfortunately, behind these differences likely doctrinal, disciplinary, liturgical there is an ecclesial dichotomy¹. Any modern historian would recognize today that medieval papacy is the result of a long doctrinarian and institutional process that the Church had never officially presented willingness to participate. This process is discussed further between the two Churches, if it was legitimate in terms of Christian revelation or not.

To understand the *concept of primacy* in the East and West, we must start by defining what the word *primate* means and how important is this term within the ecclesial sphere. The definition is *primate, primates* = the highest rank in the ancient Orthodox Church and the Catholic hierarchy². To this definition of *primate*, we may add the usual term that denotes a Church personality as father from the Greek *πάππας / πάπας* (father), from which the Latin *pope* derives, a term specific to family language that was used by the first Christian communities to appoint their own bishop, thus highlighting the subsidiary relationship between the believer and his "minister". According to a signification occurring during Pope Liberius' ruling (352-366) and, which, in time, was adopted in the West, the term ended up by being applied exclusively to the Bishop of Rome. This corresponded to a ministerial preeminence, already recognized earlier.

The concept of primacy was distorted over time gaining dogmatic forms especially within the Western Church. One may observe this in the proclaiming of pope primacy dogmatization in the nineteenth century, namely in 1870, July 18, in Vatican Council I, dogma found in the constitution "Pastor Aeternus" and renewed in the constitution "Lumen Gentium", chapter 18 in Vatican Council II, according to which the bishop of Rome holds the position of supreme minister and guarantor of the unity of the universal Church, as *vicar* of Christ on earth and *unique successor* of Apostle Peter³. This decision of pope primacy dogmatization is made due to the prolonged and interminable battles waged by the two Churches to acquire primacy, motivated by apostolic succession by the Church of Rome and by pragmatism by the Eastern Church. This claim, through which the West supports honorific, legal and divine primacy to the other Churches, especially to Constantinople, must be analyzed in order to establish the principles of forming this idea that, behold, there came to be inscribed among Western dogmas and which generated, finally, the rift between the two ecclesiastical empires.

¹John Meyendorff, *Teologia Bizantină tendințe istorice și teme doctrinare*, trad. Vasile Adrian Carabă, Ed. Nemira, Bucharest, 2013, p. 143.

²DEX, Editura, Univers Enciclopedic Gold, Bucharest 2012, p. 874.

³Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan Bria, *DTO*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1981, p. 305.

A. The Concept of Primacy in the West

Underlying the *primacy concept* in the Western Church we find the apostolic tradition that is the basis and foundation of apostolic succession, which makes the Church up to now existent or non-existent, thereby guaranteeing its deepest essence, that is its relationship with Christ. With a view to arguing on the idea of "primacy" in analysis, the text from (*Matthew 16. 18*) "*And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*", lays at the foundation of this primacy concept theory. Starting from this text, with a view to supporting honorific primacy in the Church of Rome, primacy detained by Holy Apostle Peter among the other Apostles since the time of Jesus Christ, a lot of other texts will highlight the role that Apostle Peter had.

In this context, it is said that Peter appears as The First, as spokesperson. A second argument is the oldest list of those who collaborated with Jesus Christ: "*While walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, who had just cast their nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them: Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men! They immediately left their nets and followed Him*". This list has Peter among the first five whom Jesus called from the beginning. Together with Holy Apostle Andrew, his brother, Peter made the first pair of Apostles who joined the Lord (*Mark 3. 16*). Although interpreters of the New Testament did not come to share a unitary idea about the name of *Kephas* = *Petros*, or if that word is a reference to the promise of Christ, or the fundamental importance which was destined for Peter to be the first of the apostles whom Jesus appeared after the Resurrection, we do not know.

The word *Logion* from Matthew, twisted so strongly in terms of origin and authentic meaning, contains a special task entrusted to Peter which was confirmed by other words.⁴ (*Luke 22. 31-32*) "*The Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and after you have turned again, strengthen your brothers*" and (*John 21. 15*) "*when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than they? ' " Yes, Lord, "Peter replied, " you know that I love you "Jesus said," Feed my lambs*" For Paul, too, Peter was the spiritual leader of mother-community in Jerusalem. Along with James, brother to the Lord and John, Peter chaired the first Council called Apostolic after the apostles in the year 50 in Jerusalem.

To historically date the foundations of the Church of Rome, one must descend to the first celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem in the year 30 where

⁴A. Franzen, R. Bäumer, *Istoria papilor, Misiunea lui Petru și realizarea ei istorică în Biserică*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 17-18.

Jews from Rome were present (*Acts* 2. 10). After their expulsion from the city of Rome by Emperor Claudius in the year 50, Rome is coated in the love of Christ's ministry. This sacrificial love was manifested especially during the first persecution of Emperor Nero, in which the Roman bishop Linus or Lin was martyred, and along with him many Christians.

Formation of the Church in Rome and the mere groundless assertion of historian Eusebius of Caesarea that Peter had pastored it as Apostle and first bishop of the Church of Rome for 25 years, do not point justification in support of a primate in the Western Church. The texts presented above are meant to guide contextualizing this text out of context, made with interest by the Western Church to support the idea of primacy as such and divine primacy of the Church of Rome. But this is not so, if we analyze in context, the famous Matthew text. It can be seen that the text refers to faith, which is the foundation and the stone on which Christ founded the Church, faith that He assumes by taking it beyond suffering, death and resurrection, and even more by taking it right in Trinity bosom.

Origen, common source of patristic exegetical tradition, commented on the above text, explaining the word *logion* through which Jesus answers Peter's testimony as follows: Simon became *the stone* which founded the Church because he (Peter) gave expression to true faith in the deification of Christ. The same writer continues: "*If we say, too, <<You are Christ, the Son of the living God>>, then we become Peter ... because everyone, Christ incorporated, becomes a stone. And does Christ give only Peter the keys to the kingdom, that other blessed people cannot get?*"⁵. According to Origen, Peter is therefore the first "believer" and the keys of heaven that he had received opened the gates of heaven to him alone, and they who want to follow him can imitate Peter and will get the same key, which leads us to conclude that the words of Jesus Christ have soteriological value, not institutional. Meyendorff stresses that within the whole body of patristic exegesis, this is the main meaning of "Petrine" *logias* and it remains valid throughout the Byzantine literature.⁶

The idea of papal primacy was born within the bosom of the Church in Rome gradually reaching the expression it has today. In addition, in time, some new meaningful loads were added to it, conditioned by historical evolution that did not seem to be related to its original role. During Constantine age, the Church is assigned some political, cultural and social tasks, that, in principle, did not make its competence.

⁵Origen, *Omilii la Matei* , XII, 10, ed. Klostermann, GCS 40, Leipzig, 1953, p. 85-89.

⁶John Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

Papacy partook to this drastic Church transformation. It is obvious that in the first centuries of Christianity, general awareness about the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was relatively undeveloped, although it was present in different ways. Medieval papacy emphasized certain claims of worldly possession, which must pose a worrying question to ourselves whether or not it represented too earthly a reality, too linked to the secular world, or even estranged from the mission entrusted to it. Rome's authority began to increase noticeably through followers of the Holy Apostles. It should be noted that St. Irenaeus of Lugdun (202) and Tertullian (222) recognize Rome's proper greatness. Further on, Bishop Callistus of Rome is taunted by Tertullian's wording of (*Matthew* 16. 18), "Thou art Peter ...", who asks whether he should or should not be "*episcopus episcoporum?*"⁷, and Bishop Victor is criticized when he tends to give orders on the celebration of Easter.⁸

The idea that the primacy of the first Christian centuries was not promoted may be seen in St. Cyprian of Carthage (-258), clearly showing that each bishop jointly holds ecclesiastical power: "*episcopatus unus est, a cuius in singulis pars tenetur*". St. Cyprian shows, further on, that the idea of *primacy* in the person of one bishop is arrogance and it breaks the unity of the Church, because each Apostle in part enjoys the honor and power of Peter, and the latter enjoyed the honor of "*primus inter pares*" (*De unitate ecclesia*, 3. 4 and letters 43. 61).⁹ Another aspect of raising Apostle Peter to an unusual esteem is due to the moral decay encountered at that time in Rome, because it can be seen that the cult of goddesses Isis, Kibele and of god Mithras got to popularize among the masses of the Roman state.¹⁰ Christians in Rome come to enhance the tradition about St. Peter as a coryphaeus "*fortissimus et maximus inter Apostolos*", who organized the Church of Antioch, and then came to Rome, where he pastorally attended believers for 25 years, according to Eusebius of Caesarea (-340), who recorded events in his chronicle (II, 2058), around the year 44.

The influence of politics on the church was so great that shortly the politics established the order also within the Church. Therefore, people could not conceive to see where the emperor had his seat, without the hierarchical one and by this, the

⁷Haralambie Cojocaru, *Este primatul lui Petru un Privilegiu de drept divin după Noul Testament?*, Tipografia Arhidiecezana, Sibiu, 1940, p. 104 șu.

⁸AlexeȘtefan, "Acte de autoritate ale episcopului Romei", in: *MM* 9-12/1959, p. 555, și; Lupșa Ștefan, *Primatul Sf. Ap. Petru în primele trei veacuri*, Iași, 1942.

⁹Mălin Nicolae, "Sfântul Ciprian nu recunoaște episcopului Romei prerogativa primatului", in: *ST* 3/1930.

¹⁰Pr. Prof. Dr. VasileMuntean, *Istoria creștină generală* (abinitio-1054), EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2008, p. 137-145.

worldly leader was given the honor of Ecumenical Patriarch as would later be observed. In our case a primate, be it *de facto*, is granted to Rome, from the outset, on the basis of seniority and apostolicity. Beginning with the year 330, when Emperor Constantine the Great moved the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople, the latter enjoyed all the privileges of a leading Church from a political point of view. After this year, the importance of Rome falls, peace and understanding is over. The fierce battle, which was only beginning to take shape, wore from the beginning the discord that would lead to the disintegration of the two.

Constantine the Great, indeed formed a new Rome, a new capital, but effectively and not nominally.¹¹ Rome was losing its political importance, remaining isolated in time and vulnerable to the invasions of migratory peoples.¹² This act of foundation of the new political, military and religious center will have an unexpected result on the historical scene as Constantinople and Rome, Eastern and Western religious and political centers, will have an important role not only in the act of spreading Christianity, but also in an attempt to preserve their influence in already christened areas.

By associating things, referring especially to how Christianity attempted to solve various problems that occurred inside it, we remember the fact that the whole Christianity recognized the Ecumenical Councils the competence to enact rules, laws and canons admitted by the whole Church and, therefore, each of these meetings was to have certainty and unquestionable value in this direction.¹³ Certainly, there were different positions, which will affect, in time, relations between East and West. The Bishop of Rome, through several canons given by the whole Church, was recognized primacy by all the other autocephalous Church leaders. This recognition, from a canonical point of view, took place gradually on several grounds. We note that by the time when all churches had recognized the Bishop of Rome's primacy, he constituted a major reference for them.¹⁴

¹¹ Erwin Fenster-Laudes *Constantinopolitanae*, Institut für Byzantinistik und Neugriechische Philologie der Universität München, München, 1968, p.22.

¹²Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicole Chifăr, *Istoria creștinismului*, vol. III, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2002, p.83.

¹³ Ernst Christoph Suttner, "Auf der Suche nach gesamtchristlicher Anerkennung für den Dienst des Bischofs von Rom als erstemunter den Bischöfen", in: *Kirche in einerzueinanderrückenden Welt*, herausgegeben von Wolfgang NikolausRappert, AugustinusVerlag, Würzburg, 2003, p.174.

¹⁴Sf. Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Opuscule teologice și polemice*, XII, PG 91, 144C.

Rome's Church authority was strengthened by Canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325, that mentioned the seat of Rome as being the first seat among the seats of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. In centuries III-IV, Rome was a mediator for the Western bishopric in what church unity organization and teaching is concerned. The same canon vaguely mentioned old habits, which recognized an exceptional prestige to the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, but their selection was not appropriate on apostolic grounds but due to the fact they were located in major cities of the empire. If apostolicity were a basic criterion for granting honoring primacy as would later be apparent, the Church of Alexandria, which had been founded by an apostolic character like that of St. Mark, could not have been higher in rank than Antioch, where Peter's presence is confirmed by the New Testament.

Honorific priority is also respected by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 through Canon 3, which provides that the honorific enumeration includes first the old Rome seat, followed by the New Rome - Constantinople, guardian of the Orthodox church, which was defended then in the East and West¹⁵. Another author, historian Vasiliev, shows that placing in honor the seat of Constantinople after the seat of Rome, as shown in canon 3, is due to the political superiority of the city as the capital of the empire. One thing to note is that the patriarchs of the old chairs in the East objected to raising the rank of the Constantinople patriarch¹⁶. Even in these hostile conditions, Constantinople receives reverence because at the moment, it was the metropolis of the Byzantine Empire, which would revoke any attitude contrary to this primacy.

What is clear is that the Constantinople bishopric Seat is raised to a rank which for three centuries it had not had, specifying that it is the "New Rome". Motivation for this canon 3 is based on the fact that since the Council of Nicaea, through canon 4, a principle was founded that the metropolitan field of action and religious center corresponds to the political one¹⁷. This foreign policy regarding unity, that was pursued by the Eastern Church, found a result right into the political and dogmatic unit. Unfortunately, this and the different development in Latin and Greek, regarding terminology, led to the fight for primacy between Rome and Constantinople, dispute that had several prior milestones. From all these texts referring to canons, it is abundantly clear that the primacy of Rome was kept

¹⁵ Șesan Milan, "Papalitatea și ortodoxia", in: *O* 2-3/1949.

¹⁶ A. A. Vasiliev, *Istoria Imperiului Bizantin*, trans. Ionuț Alexandru Tudorie, Vasile Adrian Carabă, Sebastian-Laurențiu Nazărau, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 210, p. 121.

¹⁷ Axel Bayer-*Spaltung der Christenheit. Das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln-Weimar-Wien, 2002, p.9, 10, 13.

due to the fact that it was the imperial capital¹⁸, "which granted it a natural core function"¹⁹ and when Constantinople takes its place, Rome retains its reputation of being the old Rome²⁰.

The primacy concept in centuries III, IV and V, is absolutely rejected linguistically, not to add the legal and dogmatic implications that this name incorporates in itself. Blessed Augustine, along with St. Cyprian of Carthage, stated that: *only the general synod of bishops has supreme authority in matters of doctrine and discipline*. Therefore, they are foreign to a Roman primacy during that time, although for them, St. Peter is the Apostles' typical exponent and Rome is "an apostolic chair". In support of the above, Augustine shows support in favour of a centralization in the early Church through the memorable words: „*extra ecclesiam salus non est*” (Bapt. IV, 17)²¹.

By this we can say that only participation in the Church, which he calls "Catholic" is soteriological and not Rome or her bishop with all perennial traditions. Similarly, St. Augustine is the first to use the word "Catholic" in the Nicene symbol, where his ancestors had used "universalis or generalis".

Another remark made during those times is that *the concept of primacy* was not accepted by any of the churches of the West. The clearest example is the Church of Mediolanum leading an independent life from the Roman bishop. At the end of four century, St. Ambrose shared the same idea, believing in the equality of all bishops in the unitary episcopate. Although he recognized the Church of Rome the quality of a head of the Roman world and recognized that Peter is the Church, however, he states that the primacy of Peter is a matter of faith testimony and not one of honor or law.

Many of the cities of the West as Aquileia, Lugdun, Areli, Vienne, Elvira, Toledo kept their own local councils, thereby showing local autonomy, also the British church would relate its autonomy to Joseph of Arimathea traditions. All this multiple presentation of Western church autonomy comes to refute any idea of Roman centralism from the very beginning.

¹⁸John Meyendorf, *Saint Pierre, sa primauté et sa succession*, în N. Afanassieff, N. Koulomzine, J. Meyendorffși A. Schmemmann, *La Primauté de Pieere*, Neuchatel, 1960, p. 95, 107; K. Schatz, *La Primauté du pape. Son histoire des origines á noujours*, Paris, 1992, p.41-42.

¹⁹K. Schatz, *La Primauté du pape. Son histoire des origines á noujours*, Paris, 1992, p. 42.

²⁰Ioan Ică, jr. "Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul... și tovarășii săi într-u martiriu: Papa Martin, Anastasie Monahul, Anastasie Apocrisiarhul", in: *Vieți, Actele procesului, Documentele exilului*, Sibiu, 2004, p. 175-178.

²¹Șesan Milan, "Nașterea Ideii Papale", in: *MA7-8/1962*.

The first mention of primacy in the Western Church begins with Pope Innocentius I of Rome (402-417), who supports this jurisdiction through the Romanization of local liturgies and cult. He is also the one that requires in many places to have a vicar and demands that the right of appeal of each bishop should be in Rome, also he claimed rights in Illyrian and Thessaloniki.²²

At the insistence of the same pope, Emperor Honorius sent letters to the East requesting leniency in the name of St. John Chrysostom exiled in 404 by Emperor Arcadius. It should be emphasized that, in these conditions, this gesture would hide the idea of recognizing a primate or authority of the Bishop of Rome, but all this dirty approach is shattered by the emperor by rejecting any interference with the West. The explanation is simple, Empress Eudoxia, wife of the Emperor, was behind the exile, unhappy with the intransigent attitude of St. John Chrysostom²³. Emperor Valentin II (423-455), issued, on July 8, 445, the Edict reminding that the apostolic seat rule is based on the merit of Apostle Peter, on the importance of Rome, and the recommendations of the Holy Synod. It is to be noted that nobody could revolt against this seat, and none of the bishops could do anything without the knowledge of the Pope, and the bishops who failed to appear voluntarily to the judgment should be brought by public power²⁴.

Another influence on the Western line, in support of the concept of primacy, comes from Bishop Leo the Great (440-461). He takes advantage of the weakness and incompetence of emperor Valentinian II, and declares Rome to be the apostolic seat, linked to the primacy of Peter, arrogating Rome's legal authority over the entire West, and the emperor approves it. The Pope's authority makes its presence felt in 452 when, due to him, Rome is saved from Athila's robbery, and similarly, he is the one that manages to mitigate the effects of Genseric's attacks, king of the Vandals in the year 455.²⁵ The whole life of Pope Leo the Great appears to be subdued to the text (Matthew 16, 18): "*You are Peter ...*" and through these words he would see himself as their only beneficiary, and would stress on the management rights based on the primacy of St. Peter. He also stated that through the "*Prince of the Apostles, Peter*"²⁶: the Apostolic Church of Rome rules over all churches throughout the world, claiming to rule over the seats of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, all this authority being attributed to the Nicene Synod

²²Idem, "Ortodoxia și catolicitatea", in: *O* 1/1951.

²³Borcea Liviu, *Bisericile Ortodoxe Răsăritene până la 1453*, Ed. Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2006, p.41.

²⁴*Ibidem*, p. 42.

²⁵A. Franzen, R. Bäumer, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

²⁶Harald Zimmermann, *Papalitatea în Evul Mediu. O istorie a pontifilor romani din perspectiva istoriografiei*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2004, p.21-23.

by Canon 6 saying: "Old customs should be preserved, those in Egypt and Libya and Pentapolis, so that the bishop of Alexandria have dominion over them all, because this is customary to the bishop of Rome".

To Antioch and the other dioceses (provinces), keep their Church "primacy"²⁷. Leo the Great takes to the extreme the importance of the Bishop of Rome saying: an unworthy bishop ascended to the throne of Rome, cannot alter the authority of this throne and its tradition. But the power to appoint chairpersons and to convene councils remains in the authority of the emperor. Leo the Great, wishing to have access to the emperor, when the Bishop of the Byzantine capital strengthened his authority and became a rival to the West, he appointed an appraiser by the side of the Patriarch of Constantinople, wishing to show unjustified authority to the seat of Constantinople. Pope Leo submitted the statement of faith in the Fourth Ecumenical Council (*The Dogmatic Epistle addressed to Bishop Flavian and Epistle addressed to the Synod Participants*) by the two papal legates who do not find support among the synod participants, but they are not even read in the council, but, even more, they were to be investigated in terms of the orthodox content.

Another opinion referring to Pope Leon's statement of faith is given by Hans-Gregor-Beck, who states that: Tomus Leonis receives general recognition in Chalcedon and the work itself contributes substantially to the terminology of the council. Leo the Great does not recognize the work of this council, because of canon 28²⁸. Finally, the line Rome-Alexandria, had led, since 431, essentially, the religious policy and dogmatic development and politically justified claims of a primacy had been shaken by the conviction of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople.

Another appearance of the idea of a primate belongs to Pope Gelasius (492-496), but this time it is a "primatus jurisdictionis". Although before him Pope Simplicius had the joy of seeing the fall of the Empire in the West and, therefore, he could be considered the only unifying Western force. However, Constantinople would call, as he said, everyone a "barbarian" in the bishopric seat. Roma fights back this time again, without delay, by usage of some pagan traditions in the Roman Empire, giving the Church a character of worldly legal institution, in which the Roman bishop becomes a "*pontifex imperator*" who, as a monk surrounds himself by "*cardinals*".

²⁷Arhid. Prof. Dr. Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe Note și Comentarii*, Sibiu 2005, p. 59.

²⁸Hans Georg-Beck, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe din Imperiul Bizantin*, trans. Vasile Adrian Carabă, Editura Nemira, Iași, 2012, p. 43.

Pope Gelasius, by asserting *the jurisdictional primacy*, requested from the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius to obey him, and he also required for the first time in the West "*the Roman Mess*" as an expression of unity around Rome. Clovis of the Franks (511), once with his Christianization imposes the formula "*dual authority*" of the Church and State in the world, both powers with the authority of God. This formula recognized to the emperor the imperial "*potestas*" and reserved to himself spiritual "*autoritas*", but without seeking a universal primate²⁹.

Bishop Symmachus (498-514), based on *Constitutum Silvestri*, formulated by deacon Ennodiu of Pavia, said that: "Prima Sedes anemone iudicatur" that the Roman bishop will be judged by God alone and no one else³⁰. Therefore, ideas of Blessed Ieronimus, found in tradition with reference to the Apostle Peter, had been found useful, so that "*cathedra Petri*" imposes its authority over the whole Patrimony of St. Peter, so that the *honorific primacy* be transformed in the basis of *Petrine primacy* into *jurisdictional primacy* of the Roman bishop.³¹

A new desire to emphasize the Petrine primacy is seen in "Liber Pontificalis of the year 530", where St. Peter is called "*Princeps Apostolorum*" and it is reminded again that Peter had served seven years the Church of Antioch, and then he came to Rome where he served for 25 years. It also reminds about the argument between St. Peter and Simon Magus, and about the fact that he ordained as bishops Lin, Clet and Clement. Under Pope Hormisdas (514-523) the long-awaited peace was made between East and West because the throne was given to Justinian I (527-565), who estranged himself from the church policy of his predecessors.

Meanwhile, the Pope presented the emperor a rule of faith drawn by him containing a faith testimony of the articles of faith of the Chalcedon Council and condemnation of *Henotikon*. The emperor accepts it and takes Emperor Zeno, Anastasius I and the last five patriarchs out of Diptychs.

Caesar-Papism, manifested under Emperor Justinian I, left no issue of any claim to the Roman primacy. The close ties created between the seat of the West and the Byzantine emperor were regarded with suspicion by Theodoric, the King of the Ostrogoths. Pope John I (523-526) is suspected by the French King of oppositionist policy because he crowned Emperor Justinian in the capital of the Byzantine Empire in 526. He was constrained by Theodoric to go to the capital Constantinople, for various political issues. John returns without a positive result, a fact determining the king to take action against him meeting him at Ravenna with hostility, being indicted and exiled until his death in 526.

²⁹Dvornik Fr. "Pope Gelasius and Emperor Anastase I", in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*44 (1951).

³⁰ Augustus Franzen, Remigius Bäumer, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

³¹Şesan Milan, "Naşterea ideii Papale", in: *MA* 7-8/1962.

Meanwhile, Emperor Justinian manages to restore the imperial power over Northern Italy, where there was created an Exarchate of Ravenna and over part of Visigoth Spain. The emperor recognized through Novellas of 534 and 545 that: "*papa vetris Romae primus omnium sacerdotum sit*", but „*beatissimus arhiepiscopus Constantinopolis, novae Romae, posts. Apostoliciam sedem vetris romae scundum locum habeat*" after the decision of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. This decision was apparently pleasing Rome favoring the Western patriarchy definition. During the rule of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), the idea of primacy had been set aside. This it witnessed by the Pope's staunch position before the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, taking the title of "Ecumenical Patriarch" in 595. The Pope dismisses it as arrogance, even conspiracy against God and pride of the Antichrist, sinning against the Christ's ordination (Matthew 16, 18).

This arrogance amid the sad events of the time, were not suitable, for while "plague and sword haunts the world, people rise against other nations, the entire earth is shaken, the world crumbles and the King of Pride (Antichrist) is close (...) an army of priests are mobilizing for this haughty Antichrist"³². Due to this proud title in contrast to him, the Pope henceforth *Servus servorum Dei*, Servant of the servants of God. In his writings he admits the purgatory met at Ambrose and Origen, admits *filioque*, met at Augustine, Fulgentius and Leo, after the Toledo formula at the proposal of Bishop Pastor³³. Followers of Gregory, Boniface III and IV, require the emperor on the basis of Petrine tradition to recognize the rights of heads to all churches, a fact which shows a personal pride developed within the Western Church to the primacy proclaimed and supported by Biblical texts and canons, a thing leading to the increasing disintegration between the two ecclesial empires.

In the next period, Rome intensifies mission to Aleman, Bavarian, Swiss, Anglo-Saxon, Thuringia, Friesland, German, in order for everyone to obey the all-powerful pope in the West. The Cvinisext Council of 692 reaffirms through canon 36, the Pentarchy principle, and also criticizes some Latin usage, a fact for which Pope Sergius the Syrian disclaims this canon. Also, to note is that in the early seventh century, even 20 bishops had succeeded to the papal throne, which has brought about the decline of papal authority. But on the other hand, the Byzantine influence increased with another thirteen popes who had ruled until the middle of the seventh century, eleven were of Eastern origin, five Syrians, four Greek, three Sicilian and one Dalmatian. From now on papacy is willing to do anything to

³²Ep. 5, 18, PL, 77, 741B, apud Augustus Franzen, RemigiusBäumer, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³³V.Rodzianko, "Filioque in Patristik", in: *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957).

remove this influence through Pope Zacharias (744-749), this being the last Pope who was accepted by the Byzantine emperor.

The whole West is now moving towards the Frank-Norwegians. Pope Zachariah's successor, Stephen II (752-757) concluded a treaty with Pipin the Short of the Franks and he concedes Lombardy to him, from which the Pope makes his first papal state in 754, a place where, for the first time, foundations are laid for the cornerstone of *Saint Peter's Heritage*, ruled directly by the pope, who was the last pope who took his strengthening from Byzantium, and had gone westward.

From this alliance up to creating an empire lasted very little, since Pope Leo III (795-816), being filled with imperial papocracy, creates, through the coronation of Charlemagne of the Franks on December 25, 800, the empire in the West and the Roman emperor had the mission to also acquire the Byzantine Empire through his marriage to Empress Irene. The papal power was now a highly influential factor in European politics, though the king did not agree with this situation. The Pope feeling this, begins by acclaim him with epithets like "*orthodoxus rex adiutor apostolicae sedis*" (sword of papacy) and, of course, the answer to the gratitude comes from the king on theological ground. Carol's answer was compiling the collection *Libri Carolini* in 790 with moderate iconoclastic character. He is also constrained by the Donation and in 804 he responds to the Council of Aachen, by requiring the *filiaque addition* to the symbol of faith. The Pope takes serious attitude by engraving the decision taken by Charlemagne, saying that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan symbol should not be changed, it being the guarantee of the Orthodox religion and imposes the Latin rite in francs. Now a "fides catholica" also begins to be born in the West with some differences from traditional orthodoxy.

Lothair I, of the Roman-Franc Empire, state by "Constitutio romana" of 824 that the canonical choice of Popes depends on the Roman voters and the chosen one shall be bishop only in the presence of the imperial delegates. As regards the empire, only that prince shall be considered the legal sovereign, that the Pope shall anoint as king in Rome and he will be forced to defend the Pope from all outside and inside enemies. Now the new relationship between the state and the priesthood establishes, but that will generate higher future unrest and fighting in medieval times.

Thus, in the next period, the Byzantine Empire was tested by the iconoclastic dispute created from within them. Meanwhile relations with Rome were quite fragile, so that after two disputes they make their presence felt deepening the breakup of the relationship with the Western Church almost completely. It is the mission undertaken at the Slavic peoples, intended to evangelize them (primarily the acceptance of Constantinople for the use of Slavonic in the work of preaching

the gospel, together with Byzantine missions outside the borders to Khazars, Bulgarians and Moravians, but especially with the attempt of Rome to place Bulgaria under its own ecclesiastical authority)³⁴, and on the other hand his re-election as patriarch in Constantinople between Ignatius (847-858, 867-877) and Photios³⁵, an election where papacy wished to have something to say in terms of papal primacy, claimed not only honorary, by the Latin Church. From another perspective the Church of Rome was concerned, during this period, not only of strengthening the alliance with the French Empire, but also of increasing its universal prestige, as a natural consequence of the doctrine on papal primacy finding inflections also in the judicial area.

This claim the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Church, and the right to manifest a dogmatic authority over the whole Church, contradicted entirely the principle of Pentarchy a principle that was completed in the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451, by canon 28, when practically the fourth period of the reorganization of the church shall be recorded, directly concerning the Christian Church.³⁶ However, Pope Nicholas I (858-867) speaks of the rights of the Latin Church, in his letter to Emperor Michael III (842-867) in 865, about the papal primacy and the true patriarchates in the response letter to Bulgarians in 866 (in which the Eastern Church appeared in an obvious state of inferiority), of course in an effort to combat Photios in this direction³⁷, that actually he was trying to discredit not only theologically but also sacramentally (this direct by recognizing it).

B. The Concept of Primacy in East

In apostolic times, the Christian community with the highest importance was in Jerusalem, being considered the Mother Church or the center of early Christianity. Jewish riots and wars of 66-70 AC., respectively the ones in the years 132-135³⁸ resulted in the abolition of this first oases of Christian spirituality. After the year 135 another community of Christians begins to form, but the nearest community is to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where since 3rd Century, there is

³⁴Karl Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, zwölfte Auflage, J.C.B. Mohr Verlag, Tübingen, 1960, p.175-176.

³⁵Ernst Christoph Suttner-*Die Christenheit aus Ost und West auf der Suche nach dem sichtbaren Ausdruck für ihre Einheit*, Augustinus Verlag, Würzburg, 1999, p.36-37.

³⁶Milan Šesan, "Iliricul între Roma și Bizanț", in: *MA* 11-12/1959, p.212.

³⁷Adolf Martin Ritter, Bernhad Lohne, Volker Leppin, *Mittelalter*, Neukirchener Verlag, 2001, p.65-66.

³⁸M. Konopnicki, E. Ben Rafael, *Ierusalimul*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 14-15.

mentioned that a catechetical school had been operating founded by Origen and a library founded by Father Pamfil.³⁹

In these circumstances the Church of Rome has become particularly important in detriment of spiritual center in Jerusalem, because Rome was the capital city of the empire and the world, while being the only Apostolic Church in all the West. Along with it, the Church in Jerusalem is replenishing its prestige only three centuries later, thanks to the growing interest shown by Empress Helena and her son Constantine the Great to the Holy Land and the increasing number of pilgrims coming to worship in places where our Savior Jesus Christ lived and worked.

Based on the same axiomatic values until 3rd century, the idea to claim any primacy in the Church was alien to the Eastern Church because it has seen Christ the crucified as the founder of the Church, and not Peter, as in the Western Church, in this case Rome, in those centuries. Emperor Constantine's desire to protect the Christian faith resulted in the construction of a new Christian imperial capital. If the Emperor Diocletian (284-305) established the new capital of the empire at Nicomedia, Asia Minor⁴⁰, Constantine completely leaves old Rome, building the new capital of the city located on the European shores of the Bosphorus Strait, located halfway between the Aegean and Black Sea.

The new city was adorned not with pagan temples but with churches and Christian buildings, which he inaugurated on May 11, 330 giving the name of Constantinople. Moving capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople had great religious and political importance. By this Constantine showed strategic, economic, and also religious interest, overshadowing ancient Rome, and raising later, the rivalry between the bishops placed to the level of equality in canons 3 (Second Ecumenical Council) and 28 (Fourth Ecumenical Council)⁴¹, where "Ancient Rome was followed by New Rome - Constantinople, guardian of church orthodoxy..."⁴².

Raising the honor by these canons correspond to what historian F. Dvornik called *adaptation principle* applied in other forms of development of the administrative structure of the Church, according to which this structure accommodated to the political and administrative structure of the empire. As noted J. Meyendorff, at a deeper level it corresponds to the fact that "within the Byzantine theocracy, the Bishop of the capital inevitably possessed a real and

³⁹Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Chifăr, *Istoria Bisericii Universale*, vol I, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2001, p. 83.

⁴⁰H. C. Matei, *O istorie a Romei antice*, Bucharest, 1979, p. 183.

⁴¹Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Chifăr, *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁴²Milan Şesan, "Papalitatea și Ortodoxia", in: *O 2-3/1949*.

decisive influence⁴³. There is no doubt that this argument has prevented the Seat of Alexandria, which had until then the second place, to protest against downgrading it. (because during preconstantinian period Alexandria had been the most important city of the empire after Rome).

Therefore, in order to understand this mystery of lifting the seat of Constantinople, to such great honor, we further present the selection criteria:

- a. Apostolicity of the foundation of that Church;
- b. Age of the Bishop;
- c. Authority of local tradition in Christianity;
- d. Cultural importance of that city.

However, the emperor Constantine brings a certain novelty, because now the order of Churches was politically established, while before, as presented, other criteria were taken into account such as the apostolicity and age. Theodosius I, Constantine's successor to the throne, was the last Caesar and reigned over the whole Empire. After his death (395), the Empire was divided between his sons Arcadius (at 17 years old) he received half possession of the Eastern Empire, and Honorius (at 10 years old) was placed to Milan to reign over its mid Western part. This *separation* that in the contemporaries' eyes had only to be temporary became permanent.

The division of the empire in 395 by Theodosius the Great to his sons, did not remain without repercussions. Even if the Empire was present at the time in an establishment in one State, it was ruled by two kings, but in practice both the West and East have followed different paths sometimes divergent.⁴⁴ Most Christians in Egypt and Syria, who until then had accepted subordination to the Greek culture, decided to break away from the rest of the historic church because of the decisions taken at the Councils (Councils) of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), which established the primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The fact that the Arabs conquered these provinces was interpreted by some people as a divine punishment, but led further to weakening social influence of this eastern side. The Eastern Roman Empire has stood still about a thousand years as what historians call the *Byzantine Empire*. The Patriarch of Constantinople rose above other regional patriarchs as a *primus inter pares* (the first among several equals), becoming the ecumenical head of the Church. However, as the citizens' subject before imperial kings with full powers, this patriarch has never taken an

⁴³ J. Meyndorff, "Le Primauté romaine dans la tradition anoniquejusqu' au concile de Chalcedoine", in: *Orthodoxie et catholicité*, Paris 1965, p. 72.

⁴⁴ Pr. Emanoil Băbuș, *Introducere în Istoria Bisericească Universală*, Editura Sophia, Bucharest, 2003, p. 86.

independent authority like the Pope of Rome. Even today, patriarchs' obedience to political authority of the nation-state is a Byzantine feature.

A special attention must be given to the originality and depth of the solution brought by the Byzantine Empire to the relationship between Church and State. According to it, the Church and the State are not united by a legal contact type, but by the only truth, that is by the faith of the Church that the king and his entire Empire recognized God as the own truth, placing it above them.

The confirmation of Canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council, by canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, was not a mere reiteration because by then Canon 3 of the Second Council had no ecumenical recognition as it was not recognized by Rome. By this canon direct jurisdiction over civil dioceses of Thrace, Pontus and Asia is granted to bishops of Constantinople, assigning them the task to enthrone metropolitans. Thus a situation was clarified that had been amplified by which the Bishop of Constantinople, manifested by frequent interference in the affairs of the three dioceses mentioned above; thus, the bishops of these dioceses, present at the council, voted ruthlessly Canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council, and in their letter addressed to Pope Leo I, the Synod Fathers said that thus a custom practiced for a long time has been confirmed.⁴⁵

Outside the jurisdiction of the three dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, the council recognized the Seat of Constantinople in canon 9⁴⁶ and 17, the quality of the court of appeal, the former in the case of a conflict between a clergyman and his bishop, and the latter in the event of a conflict between bishops, with exarchs dioceses, who until then were the only qualified to judge such disputes, thus giving him privileges not only similar to those recognized to Rome from the council of Sardica, but even superior to them, because as we have seen, that made from the Seat of Rome a court of review rather than a court of appeal.

The battle scene to acquire primacy makes its presence felt more and more in the Eastern Church too, this can be inferred from the protests of Pope Leo I, who by all means tried to rectify the decisions of the council of Constantinople, but with no response. In his invocations he was relying on apostolic authority and pride expressed by Patriarch Anatoly.

Amputation of apostolic authority of Constantinople is questionable, because in addition to the two cities of Rome and Antioch, which enjoyed such authority, we must mention Jerusalem, which enjoyed the presence of the Holy Apostles,

⁴⁵ S. Melaş, *Nouveau grand recueil de saintsconciles de l' Eglisecatholiqueréunis de par le monde entier, oecuméniques et loacux*, t.2, 1771, p.23, apud. Jean-Claude Larchet, *Biserica Trupul lui Hristos*, Ed. Sophia, Bucharest, 2013, p. 99-100.

⁴⁶ Jean-Claude Larchet, *Biserica Trupul lui Hristos*, Ed. Sophia, Bucharest, 2013, p. 101.

and- was also able to enjoy the same powers as Rome and Antioch. So we may see that the idea of primacy began to take shape in the East upon receipt of insignia as capital of the Empire, which distorted thinking and wrong zeal of the vast majority of bishops standing on the seat of Constantinople, forgetting monastic vows and their purpose as servants of Christ and of the holy shrines.

These vanities of *primacy* were bearing the mark of local conditions and the specific features of progress of the Church in different parts of the Empire. Rome as we have shown had its unique privileged place. This foreign unity policy that the Eastern Church was following, found a result just into the political and dogmatic unity. Unfortunately this, and different development in Latin- the West and Greek- the East, therefore the order of terminology, led the fight for primacy between Rome and Constantinople, a dispute that had several benchmarks. Thus the dispute between Rome and Constantinople deepened, when Emperor Zeno (474-491) and patriarch Acachios (472-488) favoured Monophysitism. Pope Felix III (483-492) excommunicates Acachios in 484, while in Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople Pope's name was erased from the diptychs.

Only in 519 ecclesial communion was again restored, but separation is felt. 100 years later another dispute arises. This time it is about taking the title of Ecumenical Patriarch by Patriarch John the Faster (582-595), a term used since 588. Meyndorff says that this title, which he had been given before, without being formalized, would only emphasize the political foundation of his privileges, closely related to those of the leader of Christian *oikoumene*.

The title of *ecumenical* was not awarded only to synods with pan-imperial value, but also to the functionaries of the capital, as it was mainly the ecumenical scholar, the leader of the University of Constantinople.⁴⁷This is easily understood that was limiting its importance, but it was also enhancing the political, state, administrative of the place recognized to the patriarch within the institutions of the Byzantine Empire.

Likewise, the West protests categorically through Pope Gregory the Great in 593, showing that the bishop of Rome takes care of the whole Church⁴⁸, this argument through which the Pope identifies himself with Peter was implausible to the political solution on which the jurisdiction universality of the Patriarch of the Byzantine Empire was founded. The powers of Constantinople Patriarchate were consolidated in the East, after the Council of Chalcedon and took the form of authority, even of a certain restraint in fact, because of the weak condition of the other patriarchal seats. Exercising the powers that the seat in Constantinople had

⁴⁷J. Meyndorff, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁴⁸ Michael Whelton, *Papi și Patriarhi . O perspectivă ortodoxă asupra persecuțiilor romano-catolice*, trans. Virgil Baidoc, Ed. Theosis, Oradea, 2010, p. 99.

compared to the other patriarchal seats is manifested by the convening of general councils, most gathered in Constantinople. This ordinance was promulgated by Emperor Justinian, leaving the same duties to his followers, moreover decisions made in the councils had the same validity as imperial laws.⁴⁹

As shown in the first part, the struggle for primacy was disputed between the two Churches, the Eastern and the Western, because after Justinian confirms and strengthens the powers of bishopric of Constantinople, and awarded the title of *ecumenical* to the bishop of the capital, a situation in terms of ecclesial out of control in detriment of the whole church. Meanwhile the Eastern Churches accepted, as we have seen, moreover they support by confirming the civil authority, by confirming by the ecclesiastical authority through Ecumenical Councils.

In order to obtain a primacy in the Church, especially after the 4th century, along with moving the imperial capital, the ascension to the papal throne, of Pope Nicholas I in the West, and Patriarch Photios in the East, was an omen for what would happen to the church and political scene of the two empires. The struggle for primacy of honor turns into a battle of jurisdiction over the Bulgarian Church, which ends by breaking the communion of the two churches and anathematizing each other and removing them from the diptychs.

With these grim realities a period ends of the church common to both religious empires, following that this break be finished off through the Great Schism of 1054.

⁴⁹ Hans Georg-Beck, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe din Imperiul Bizantin*, trans. Vasile Adrian Carabă, Editura Nemira, Iași, 2012, p. 98.