

The book cover features a highly detailed, ornate border. At the top, two cherubs hold a crown above a central cross. The sides are flanked by large, standing religious figures, possibly saints or popes, each holding a staff or scepter. The bottom features a central shield with horizontal stripes, flanked by two more cherubs. The entire border is composed of intricate line work and shading, giving it a woodcut or engraved appearance.

The Ukrainian Patriarchate of Pope Gregory XVI

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The problem of establishing a Ukrainian Catholic Patriarchate arose at the end of the 16th century. In 1583, during the earliest negotiations of the Kievan Metropolitanate with the Roman Apostolic See about their Union, some Ukrainians and White Ruthenians demanded the creation of a patriarchate in the place of the old metropolitanate.¹ And in 1584, the Apostolic See itself advanced the idea of the transfer of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to Ukraine in case the whole Eastern Church decided to join the Union with Rome.²

After the Union of Brest (1596), during the tenure of Metropolitan Velamin Rutskyi (1613-1637), the erection of a Ukrainian Patriarchate became more relevant. In 1623, the Orthodox, non-Uniate Ukrainians promised to join the Catholic Church upon the creation of a Kievan Patriarchate. Metropolitan Rutskyi became enthusiastic about their proposal, and after lengthy negotiations with the Orthodox hierarchy he drafted several joint proposals and sent them to Rome on May 4, 1624.³ Unfortunately, in Rome, the proposals were shelved for the time being, since nobody knew how to approach them.⁴ The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith deliberated on these proposals only in 1629 and after three sessions (4.I, 22.I, and 6.VII) positively commented on the erection of a Kievan Patriarchate.⁵ These affirmative comments encouraged Metropolitan Rutskyi to new negotiations, but in the course of five years the situation for the Union with Rome became unfavorable. The Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, Iov Boretskyi, with whom Rutskyi conducted his negotiations, died in 1631 and his associate and colleague Archbishop Meletii Smotrytskyi already became a Uniate in 1627.⁶ Actually, there was nobody among the Orthodox who could negotiate with Metropolitan Rutskyi. In addition, during the rule of the new Polish king, Wladyslaw IV (1632-1648), the Orthodox became more favoured than the Uniates and wanted neither a Union nor a Patriarchate.⁷

However, this negative attitude of the Orthodox did not last long. In 1635, by the efforts of the Palatine of Volynia, Prince A. Sanguszko, the negotiations for a final Union were renewed and they raised again the questions of the Kievan Patriarchate.⁸ The new Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, Petro Mohyla, favoured a Union with Rome with the erection of the Kievan Patriarchate, but he had to tread carefully, so, as not to antagonize the Cossacks.⁹ The Roman Curia was also very careful when it came to the question of the Patriarchate. They did not want to estrange the Greeks against the Holy See since there was hope also for their reunion with Rome.¹⁰ Therefore, the question of a Ukrainian Patriarchate was not solved positively, even though negotiations continued for a long time between Catholics and Orthodox through the efforts of the Uniate Kievan Metropolitans and King Wladyslaw IV.¹¹

Finally in 1673-74, the question of the erection of a Kievan Patriarchate became actual again. The Polish king of that time, Jan Sobieski, was very concerned with the constant religious antagonism and polemics between the Catholics and Orthodox in his Ukrainian and White Ruthenian provinces. To eliminate the whole religious controversy and to achieve the total reunion of his Orthodox subjects with Rome, he himself proposed to the Holy See the creation of a Patriarchate in place of the old Kievan Metropolitanate.¹² However, at that time the Holy See was completely occupied with the Turkish danger and would not act on the king's request. As a result the Kievan Catholic Metropolitanate remained merely a metropolitanate until its liquidation by the Russian Empire in 1839.

Unexpectedly, the question of a Ukrainian Patriarchate was raised again in the middle of the 19th century by the Roman Apostolic See itself.

The Ukrainian Renaissance in Galicia in the first half of the 19th century influenced the entire political, religious and social life of the country. National consciousness awakened by the "Rus'ka Triitsia" began to animate also the conservative priests of the Greek Catholic Church. But the real stimulus for the national awakening of the clergy was the persecution of the Uniates in the Russian Empire and the abolition of the Union on the Right Bank Ukraine. The Church in Galicia realized that it represented the persecuted and oppressed nation, which could be revived only with the elevation of its free Church under the Austrian Empire. The Roman Curia was also concerned about the persecution of Ukrainian Catholics in the Russian Empire and wanted to have detailed information about the status of the free Greek Catholic Church in Galicia. For this reason, at the request of Father Augustine Theiner, an expert on Eastern Churches at the Roman Curia, Father Mykhailo Malynovskyi, the prefect of studies for the Galician Metropolitanate, wrote a long report to the Curia in the spring of 1842. Therein he specified that to raise the Greek Catholic Church from its depressed status it was necessary to elevate the Metropolitan of Galicia to the dignity of a Cardinal or a Patriarch. In addition, Father Malynovskyi requested that the Galician Ukrainian Church be further subdivided into more eparchies, but also that it be more centralized under a strong administrative authority.¹⁴

After two months Father Theiner replied positively to Malynovskyi and he himself admitted the need to elevate and centralize the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Austrian Empire.¹⁵ Through Theiner's efforts, in early 1843, Malynovskyi's report was given to Pope Gregory XVI; it influenced the Pontiff favorably to fulfill its desiderata.