

# THE OFFICIAL RESPONSE OF HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS III OF JERUSALEM TO HIS BEATITUDE JOHN X OF ANTIOCH CONCERNING THE CANONICAL JURISDICTION OF THE EMIRATE OF QATAR

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Your Beatitude, Your Most Godly and Your Holiness, Patriarch of the Great God City of Antioch and all the East, in Christ our God, Most Beloved and Dearest Brother and Concelebrant of Our Humility, Mr. Mr. John. We embrace Your Most Beloved Reverenced Beatitude in the Lord and We greet You with exceeding joy.

Being at the doors of Holy and Great Lent, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month of March, We received the letter (Decision No. Ref. 7) of Your most beloved and profound Beatitude, in which it expresses the heartfelt wish through Our experience in prayer and humility the devout period of the fast and Our participation in the joy of the glorious Resurrection, and yet through favorable times toward an exchange of loving embrace and Our meeting of peace and the diligence of the topics concerning the Apostolic Thrones of Jerusalem and Antioch and mainly after the recent worthy election and enthronement ceremony, to which our Patriarchate beared the joy and honor of its participation.

We accept these blessings as an expression of sincere love of the soul of Your most beloved Beatitude, distinguished for many years in theological knowledge, ecclesiastical education

and monastic life. We desire to offer to Your Beatitude, the appropriate clarifications for the main topic touched upon in Your Beatitude's letter, such as the presence of our Patriarchate in Qatar, towards Your reassurance and Her dear to God shepherded sister Church of Antioch and Her preservation and strengthening from the beginning of Christianity full communion and cooperation between Our two Churches.

Firstly, we would like to mention that the Emirate of Qatar is an integral geographical continuation of Arabia, pastoral jurisdiction of our Patriarchate, as the set out points exhibit in continuation:

1) From out of Our title: "*Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine, Syria, Arabia, beyond the Jordan, Cana of Galilee and Holy Zion*" distinctly exhibits that We are the Patriarch of all Palestine, in whom are included the three Palestines, as exhibited from the eighth Act of the Proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (see Ralli & Potli, "*Constitution of the Divine and Holy Canons,*" vol. 2, Athens 1852, p. 131).

2) From Our Title also exhibits, that We are the Patriarch of Syria, which shows the above regions of Porphyroupolis (present day Haifa), in other words the Metropolis of Ptolemais and the above region of Skythopolis, in other words the present-day mountains of Golea until the bases of Mount Ermon. This clearly exhibits to the interpretation of Theodore Balsamon to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> canons of the First Ecumenical Synod, where it is mentioned synoptically: "*The Patriarch of Jerusalem has the eparchies of Palestine, Arabia and Phoenicia*" (see, *ibid.*, p. 129).

3) From Our Title also exhibits, that We are the Patriarch of Arabia, which has already been mentioned in the above interpretation of Theodore Balsamon, but also from the fact that the Arabian peninsula is a natural continuity of the

third Palestine. In confirming this, We quote the ancient published catalogue by Veverigios, in whom all the eparchies of the Patriarchates are mentioned, just as our Patriarchate of Jerusalem. For reasons of brevity, We omit here the Metropolises and Dioceses of the three Palestines and We mention the disputed point, such as in the Arabian eparchy of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which has as follows:

1. Bostra, Metropolis – 2. Adrasos. – 3. Dia. – 4. Madaba. – 5. Gerasa. – 6. Nevi. – 7. Philadelphia. – 8. Esvous. – 9. Neapolis. – 10. Phillipoupolis. – 11. Fenoutos (Isos Fino). – 12. Constantina. – 13. Dionusias. – 14. Pentakomia. – 15. Trikomia. – 16. Kanothas. – 17. Salton. – 18. Vataneos or Kataneos. – 19. Eksakomia. – 20. Enneakomia. – 21. Komi Gonias. – 22. Komi Herous. – 23. Komi Stanes. – 24. Komi Xaveras (or Maxaveras). – 25. Komi Koreathis. – 26. Komi Vilvanous. – 27. Komi Kapron. – 28. Komi Pirgoareton. – 29. Komi Setnis. – 30. Komi Ariahton. – 31. Neotis. – 32. Klima Anatolikon and Dismon. – 33. Komi Ariathas Trahonos. – 34. Komi Vevdamous (see Ralli & Potli, *“Constitution of the Divine and Holy Canons,”* vol. 5, Athens 1852, p. 472).

The above list confirms and in the work of Deacon Gregory Palamas: *“Jerusalem.”* (see *“Jerusalem, a concise history of the Holy City of Jerusalem from its foundation until the newer years”* by Deacon Gregory Palamas, professor of History in the Theological School of the Patriarchal Throne of Jerusalem, in Jerusalem, out of the Printing Press of the All-Holy Tomb, 1862, pp. 376-382).

This same is confirmed and out of the report of Neilos Doxopatres: *“On The Five Patriarchal Thrones”*, which mentions the following: *“And after these things he was honored the throne of Jerusalem, broken away of the parish and power of the Alexandrians, and become autocephalous, and head, and equal in rank to three thrones. Yet, declared itself after Antioch in honor of seating. And he was called Patriarch of*

Jerusalem, and verily previous bishop being of Caesarea and of Palestine. Palestine had Caesarea as its metropolis, in which includes Jerusalem, and Jerusalem became the diocese of Caesarea. It had other metropolises, having of them different dioceses, that is to say, second is Skythopolis, or Bashan, third is Petra, fourth is Bostra, or Arabia. It also has twenty-five autocephalous dioceses, not having dioceses within them, which are subject to the throne of Jerusalem; 1. Diospoleos 2. Askalon 3. Jaffa 4. Gaza 5. Anthidona 6. Dioklitinianoupolis 7. Eleftheroupolis 8. Neapolis 9. Sebasteia 10. Jordan 11. Tiberias 12. Diokaisareia 13. Maximianoupolis 14. Kapitoliada 15. Myra 16. Gadara 17. Nazareth 18. Mount Tabor 19. Kyriakoupolis 20. Adrias 21. Gavalades 22. Aelia 23. Farao (Pharoah) 24. Elenoupolis 25. Mount Sinai (see Ralli & Potli, "Constitution of the Divine and Holy Canons," vol. 5, Athens 1852, p. 486-490).

Especially concerning Mount Sinai, with whom the relations of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem are not dissentious witnessed by the sources, which must be into consideration by everything written in the Synodical epistle of Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople (1565) because of Synodical fortification of the privileges of the monastery: "...synodically meeting the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Patriarch of Antioch...and the Patriarch of Antioch has given two of his subjected metropolises which lie under his Throne, Caesarea of Palestine and Skythopolis, now detached from the metropolis Tyre of Porphyroupolis, and put on the boundary the river in between Ptolemais and Mount Carmel Zabulon in like manner four dioceses from the metropolis Bostra of Damascus, Cadiz, Kapitoliada, Avilla, and Gibeon, and dedicated those to Jerusalem, and a boundary was put until the country of Afsitis. The Patriarch of Alexandria has given as well metropolises that lie under His throne, Bostra of Arabia and Petra, and six dioceses, Gaza, Askalon, Eleftheroupolis, Faran, Ailia and Sinai. Particularly secure was the throne of Mount Sinai, in order that no one sits upon

*it, and make a jurisdiction until the Red Sea.*

It is expressed in this text the confidence of Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople that the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem spreads out towards the side of Arabia.

Furthermore We quote Your Beatitude and an excerpt from Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem's "12 Volumes" ("History of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem"), Second Book, Chapter 4, Paragraph 7: "Concerning the answers about the six oppositions against the patriarchal value of Jerusalem, and through many witnesses and the proof of appositions, that the ancient Patriarch of Jerusalem was also and is to be": "Concerning the fifth one must mention that it is daring to say that the Patriarch of Jerusalem did not have, before the Council of Chalcedon, neither eparchy nor administration, because he had both. The Patriarch of Antioch and here the Patriarch Jerusalem to differ on some eparchies and concerning their administrations (in the first Synod according to Gelasius locum tenens were Jerusalem, Caesarea, Phoenicia and Arabia, so that the power of Jerusalem spreads and to Phoenicia and Arabia) and in the first Synod out of agreement of these partitioned Eparchies, the Synod confirmed their agreement. If the Patriarch of Jerusalem is to not first receive the eparchy or administration, and if indeed this was true, how did the Emperor, the Archons and the large Ecumenical Synod not disagree with the Patriarch of Jerusalem? Moreover in the extortionate Council of Ephesus, which took place before the Council of Chalcedon, Iouvenalios had the accustomed ranks, in other words he sided with the Patriarch of Alexandria, as shown in the first act of the Council in Chalcedon, wherefore Patriarch Tarasios in the Seventh Ecumenical Council called him (Iouvenalios) patriarch and that, according to his value, he become Exarch of the Synod, first act..." (see Dositheos Jerusalem, "Dodecabiblos", According to the Jerusalem Patriarchs, vol. A & B, ed. Rigopoulos, Thessaloniki 1982,

pp. 324-325).

The jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem likewise exhibits and out of the address of Patriarch Neophytos VI of Constantinople (1734-1740 & 1743-1744) in his introductory letter (Decision Number 77), concerning: *“Moravicans, the so-called God-protecting who came to the eastern church, as agreeing with us concerning the piety, composition to the Patriarchs to accept them as pious and orthodox.”* In this letter the Patriarch of Constantinople addresses the Patriarchs as follows:

*“Your Beatitudes and Holinesses, the Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria and all of Egypt, Mr. Mr. Kosmas (it is about Kosmas III 1737-1746), and the Patriarch of the Great God City of Antioch and all the East (the name of the Patriarch of Antioch is not noted here, at that time it was Sylvester 1724-1766), and the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine and Syria and Arabia Mr. Mr. Parthenios (1737-1766), and their consisting holy metropolitans and their most graced bishops, the in Christ our God beloved fellow brothers and concelebrants the embrace in Christ (see Manuel Gedeon, “Canonical Provisions” vol. A, Constantinople. 1888, pp. 219-220).*

It is true that out of the sources emerge some historical news tidings, through which declare relations of the Christians of the region of Arabia and especially of Yemen with Syria, but this relationship only cultivated in the circles of the Syro-Jacobites (Syriac Christians), the heretics, to which other jurisdictional criteria existed. However the consolidating canonical order of the Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate of Antioch did not have such pastoral responsibility in Arabia, but in the eastern eparchies, which is also expressed by Neilos Doxapatres (see below).

In the aforementioned references, stating its undoubted jurisdiction Our Patriarchate was not able to exercise

pastoral work, due to the historical developments in this region, until where upon our days given to it the cause, which is exposed in order:

We submit to the command of the Holy and Great Synod, under the presidency of my late predecessor Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem, We went to Qatar during the feasts of Pascha 1997 and from then We have unceasingly served as an archimandrite the liturgical and pastoral needs of our flock in the specified region. The deceased Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem fulfilled there, during the month of November in the year 1999, a pastoral visit with an entourage of hierarchs and other clergy of our Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in which he was received by the flock and celebrated the service of agiasmos (sanctification of water) in the hall of the Sheraton Hotel, because there didn't exist a church.

From Pascha in the year 2001, We were replaced temporarily, by the then Very Reverend Archimandrite Makarios, presently the Archbishop of Qatar (Kattaron), who canonically succeeded Us by Synodical decision in October 2004.

From that time our Patriarchate asked and received from His Majesty Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani an area of land, in which began similar sponsorships from him and from pious Christians, to erect a church of the Blessed Isaac who practiced asceticism in Qatar and the Great Martyr St. George the Trophy-Bearer, finishing day by day the Bishop's quarters for the residence of the at that time representative of our Patriarchate, erected and was already inhabited.

This church is the liturgical and parish center of the Orthodox Christians found in Qatar, independent of any racial criterion, inasmuch that racial discrimination was condemned by the Synod of the Patriarchs – Primates of the Orthodox Church in the year 1872 (*see History of the Greek Nation, ed. Publishing Athens, vol. M, 1977, Modern Greek, from 1833 until 1881, p. 305*), in other words independent of their ethnicity,

Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, Lebanese, Greeks, Cypriots, Russians, Serbians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Georgians, Africans and others.

We as Patriarch, with an entourage of hierarchs and other clergy of our Patriarchate, fulfilled from the 12<sup>th</sup> until the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, in like manner formal pastoral visit to Qatar, in which We met with members of our flock, and later with His Majesty Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who had sent a representative to Our Enthronement, and later to other formal factors of the state of Qatar. After the end of the Patriarchal Concelebration, We laid the foundational stone from the erection of the holy Church of the Blessed Isaac the Syrian who practiced asceticism in Qatar and the Great Martyr St. George the Trophy-Bearer.

This pastoral concern of our Patriarchate opened the road and through the other Christian confessions, which received, following our example, the approval of an area of land from the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, -may his years be many and God-fruitful, and each of them erected a church in favor of their Christian flocks in Qatar. Enduring these aforementioned actions of our Patriarchate, no presence of the Patriarchate of Antioch has existed there and no protest from it has been heard.

Likewise in brotherly love We remind Your Most Beloved Beatitude, that Your Metropolis of Baghdad does not include the Arabian Gulf, but is limited to the limits of the present state of Iraq, as exhibited of the essay of Neilos Doxapatres: *"The Patriarch of Antioch holds all of Asia, and the East, and India, where until the present day, catholic who ordained catholics, sends the so-called Romogyreos, and Persia. Now and this Babylon, the now-called Bagda; and from there the Patriarch of Antioch was sending a katholikon to Eirinoupolis, the so-called Eirinoupoleos and the Armenians, and Avasgian, and Ivirian, and Midian, and the Chaldeans, and Parthian, and*



Elamites, and Mesopotamia" (see Ralli & Potli, "*Constitution of the Divine and Holy Canons.*" vol. 5, Athens 1852, p. 488).

From this clearly exhibits that no mention exists for the Patriarchate of Antioch in the present day Arabian Gulf and the present day Arabian Peninsula. The title of Metropolitan Mr. Constantine has always been known as Metropolitan of Baghdad only. He received this title at his ordination, and as his predecessor the memorable Photios Khoury, who likewise was the metropolitan of Baghdad only.

As concerning the addition of Kuwait to his title, it deals with verbal permission, which was given on behalf of Our memorable predecessor, Patriarch Benedict of Jerusalem, when at the end of January in the year 1964 our representation, consisting of the then Archbishop of Hierapolis and later Patriarch of Jerusalem Diodoros, the then deacon and present Metropolitan of Kapitoliada Hsychios, the Oikonomos Rev. Fr. Constantine Karmas travelled to Damascus and met with the then Patriarch of Antioch Theodosios VI, present also was the at that time Metropolitan of Baghdad Photios. In that meeting the at that time Patriarch of Antioch Theodosios pleaded with the at that time Archbishop Diodoros of Hierapolis to relay to the at that time Patriarch Benedict of Jerusalem his entreaty to allow Metropolitan Photios of Baghdad to travel to Kuwait for the pastoral care of the Christians there. Archbishop of Hierapolis Diodoros conveyed this entreaty to the Patriarch of Jerusalem Benedict, who accepted it.

Otherwise and already from 1967 our clergyman, now memorable Very Reverend Archimandrite Avramios Aouad, abbot in Lydda and in continuation in Haifa, traveled to Kuwait for the service of the Christians there, and also the Agiotafitis (Guardian of the All-Holy Tomb) Archimandrite Anatolios, later Archbishop of Tiberias and Exarch of our Patriarchate in Athens, traveled to Yemen for the service of our flock there, as it is shown by the archives of our Patriarchate.

For this reason our Patriarchate fulfilled for a long period of time the vacant Holy Metropolis of Bostra in Arabia with the election of the memorable Metropolitan Ymenaios of Bostra in the year 1985, in which he was succeeded in 1989 by the present Metropolitan of Bostra Timothy.

No juxtaposition existed during the entire past period 40+ years between our Patriarchate and the ever-memorable Patriarchal predecessors of Antioch Theodosios, Ilias and Ignatios, but on the other hand, We always maintained good and brotherly relations with them close collaboration within the framework of rehabilitation of the Middle Eastern Council of Churches and in general.

We are truly sorrowful and do not hold any grudge for the fact that the Patriarchate of Antioch protested and asked from Us the non-execution of the decision of Our Holy and Sacred Synod, since the promotion for the many years of devoted service of Our Patriarchal Representative to the Emirate of Qatar Very Reverend Archimandrite Makarios to Archbishop of Qatar (Kattaron).

We are not able to proceed with the postponement or nullification of such a decision for the above-mentioned reasons, which confirms Our canonical jurisdiction and Our canonical actions in the aforementioned region.

From all the above it is exhibited that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem sowed and watered in the land of Qatar, which is under His canonical jurisdiction.

Toward the corroboration of the fact that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem acts in full respect toward ecclesiastical order and the in Christ preservation of communion and unity of the brother Orthodox Churches, We mention similarly, that We, in the grace of peace and unity of the Churches, withdrew Our decision which was taken by Our predecessor the memorable Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem, for the pastoral care after

the persistent request of the faithful from Palestine and the Orthodox from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which reside in the United States of America.

Having through hope that the true and brotherly above mentioned in Our brotherly letter, will be sufficient to convince Your most beloved and profound Beatitude for the justified continuation of the pastoral work of our Patriarchate in the Emirate of Qatar, the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabian Gulf, We insist on the in Christ continuation of close collaboration of the brother Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch for the benefit of Our Orthodox flocks and for the glory of Our Triune God and mainly during the passing time of the present coincidence, in which the people of Syria, mainly the Christ-named flock of the sister Orthodox Church of Antioch which is being severely tested.

For this, We offer to Your Beatitude Our embrace in the Lord from the All-Holy and Life-Giving Tomb, We remain.

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2013.

To Your Honored Beatitude

Beloved Brother in the Lord,

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem