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THE SPECIFICS OF ATHONITE PERCEPTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Background. *This article explores the peculiarities of Athonite monks' perception of two global crises – the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war – through a comparative religious-studies lens. Mount Athos, though geographically isolated, has responded vividly to external shocks that touch upon spiritual integrity. The research highlights how the pandemic was primarily interpreted in mystical and eschatological terms, whereas the war triggered visible polarization within the Athonite community, reflecting broader ecclesial and geopolitical fractures in the Orthodox world. The study sheds light on the theological, moral, and canonical dimensions of Athonite responses, emphasizing their role as a spiritual barometer amid global uncertainty.*

Methods. *The authors employ a comparative, interdisciplinary methodology grounded in theology, religious studies, and political sociology. The empirical basis includes public statements of Athonite elders, digital media outputs, and doctrinal commentaries. Scholarly works on religious responses to crises provide the analytical foundation. This method allows the authors to trace the dual vector of Athonite consciousness – tradition-rooted detachment and increasing involvement in transnational Orthodox conflicts.*

Results. *Findings show that the pandemic was largely viewed as divine chastisement and a call to repentance, with strong resistance to changes in Eucharistic practice or state health protocols. In contrast, the war in Ukraine exposed deep divisions among monasteries, with some aligning with Russian narratives and others expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. This divergence correlates with geopolitical dependencies and varying loyalties to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church. The study demonstrates that Mount Athos, traditionally regarded as neutral and apolitical, is undergoing a transformation that mirrors broader ecclesial-political tensions.*

Conclusions. *The research concludes that Athonite responses to COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine reflect a tension between eschatological worldview and pastoral responsibility, between mystical detachment and geopolitical entanglement. While the Holy Mountain retains spiritual authority, its internal polarization questions its unifying role in contemporary Orthodoxy. The study contributes to understanding the dynamic interrelation between monasticism, global crises, and the evolving religious-political landscape.*

Keywords: *Mount Athos, COVID-19 pandemic, Russian-Ukrainian war, Orthodox Church, monasticism, religious perception, ecclesial conflict, theological response.*

Background

Mount Athos is a unique monastic enclave that has preserved the tradition of Eastern Christian monasticism for over a millennium. Although Athonite monks live in seclusion from the world, they remain sensitive to global events that threaten the spiritual or physical integrity of humanity. In a contemporary world experiencing profound crises – both global (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and regional (such as the Russian-Ukrainian war) – the study of religious perception of such events becomes particularly significant. These two events, in particular, posed spiritual and ethical challenges that received ambivalent evaluations within the Athonite community. Their perception, reactions, and public statements call for a distinct religious studies analysis.

This research is especially relevant in the context of ongoing tensions within the Orthodox world, intensified by the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the position of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), and ruptures in Eucharistic communion. Athonite attitudes toward the war in Ukraine reveal not only geopolitical sympathies but also a deeper crisis of intra-Orthodox unity. In contrast to the pandemic – largely interpreted as a spiritual trial – the war has sharpened internal divisions between monasteries aligned with different ecclesiastical centers. This challenges the traditional neutrality of Mount Athos and calls for a deeper analytical investigation.

The aim of this study is to analyze how Athonite monasticism perceives the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, with a view to identifying the theological, ideological, and geopolitical factors that shape their assessments and public positions.

This aim entails the fulfillment of the following research tasks:

1. to examine the forms, methods, and content of Athonite interpretations of the COVID-19 pandemic, with attention to theological approaches, moral evaluations, and the impact on monastic life;

2. to analyze the reactions of Athonite monasteries to the Russian-Ukrainian war, identifying poles of opinion, influencing factors (canonical, political, spiritual), and implications for intra-Orthodox discourse.

Sources. The analysis of sources reveals several thematic directions that illustrate the transformations in Orthodox thought, religious experience, and cultural behavior under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In the works of Carroll, Lackenby, and Gorbanenko (2022), as well as Grigoriadis (2021), the internal church, theological, and communicative responses to the pandemic are examined – particularly the ambivalence between apophatic tradition, public safety, and state control. In contrast, the studies by Hovorun (2023), Karakolis (2022), and Mabile (2022) focus on the war in Ukraine, exploring both moral-theological dilemmas and geopolitical consequences for the Orthodox world, including the crisis of the Moscow Patriarchate's authority. Meanwhile, research on spiritual tourism and pilgrimage (Christou et al., 2023; Tsironis et al., 2021; Rooij et al., 2022) demonstrates how the pandemic influenced religious mobility, individual practices of faith, and risk perception in sacred places – especially on Mount Athos. Finally, the work by Aina et al. (2023) opens a perspective on the digital modernization of

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religious environments, showing how smart technologies in Mecca contribute to the resilience of urban religious practices in the post-pandemic era. Collectively, these sources outline a multidimensional picture of changes in religious life under the impact of global crises – from theological reconsiderations and ecclesiastical diplomacy to transformations of pilgrimage routes and the digitalization of faith.

Some studies explore how religious spaces, practices, and experiences have adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian invasion to Ukraine, particularly in relation to pilgrimage, risk perception, and technological transformation. A number of researchers analyze Orthodox Christian responses to the pandemic, focusing on the tension between apophatic theology, public health measures, and state surveillance (Carroll et al., 2022). Other foreign scientists examine how spiritual and heritage tourism were affected by pandemic-related fears, emphasizing shifts in individual behavior, risk perception, and the resilience of religious tourism (Christou et al., 2023; Rooij et al., 2022). Aina et al. (2023) extend this discussion to the case of Makkah, exploring how digitalization and smart technologies have been used to enhance urban religious services and post-pandemic adaptability. Together, these works highlight a broader transformation in religious mobility and governance, showing how traditional spiritual practices intersect with modern risk management and digital infrastructure in times of global crisis.

Methods

The methodology of this study is based on a comparative and interdisciplinary approach that integrates theological, religious, and socio-political analysis. The authors draw on a diverse body of empirical material, including public statements by Athonite elders, official monastic communiqués, digital media content, and analytical commentaries from Orthodox thinkers. The study also incorporates secondary sources from contemporary scholarship on religious responses to crisis. This methodological framework allows for the examination of Athonite perceptions within both local monastic contexts and broader global processes, revealing the interplay between doctrinal tradition, institutional loyalty, and geopolitical influences.

Results

Perception of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Mystical and Eschatological Interpretations. First and foremost, it should be noted that Mount Athos belongs to the territory of the Hellenic Republic but enjoys autonomy, which governs both spiritual and everyday life in accordance with the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church. All Athonite monasteries are under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. At the same time, a significant number of monasteries are historically connected with other Orthodox nations – particularly with Russian monasticism, which has established influential traditions in the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon. These factors shape the specificity of Athonite responses to various socio-political events.

The COVID-19 pandemic became one of the most acute external challenges for Mount Athos in recent decades. Its perception by the Athonite monastic community was not uniform: responses ranged from mystical-apocalyptic interpretations to moderate pastoral assessments that combined spiritual insight with appeals to discernment and responsibility.

Although Athonite monks live in a condition of spiritual seclusion, they are not detached from reality. Through external (Carroll et al., 2022) and internal pilgrimage to the monasteries' sacred sites, spiritual correspondence, mass

media, and theological periodicals, the monasteries of Athos respond promptly to global events. The pandemic proved to be a unique phenomenon in this context: it affected not only bodily health but also directly impacted religious practices – especially participation in the Divine Liturgy, communion, pilgrimage, and ecclesial fellowship.

During the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the prevailing interpretation regarded it as a "sign of the times" – an event pointing to the moral and spiritual downfall of humanity. Many Athonite elders, in their public addresses, emphasized the need for deep repentance. In their worldview, the pandemic was not perceived merely as a biological disaster but rather as a consequence of spiritual degradation: secularization, consumerism, pride, and the devaluation of religious life. Elder Gavriil of Koutloumousiou Monastery, for example, stated that "God has permitted this tribulation to awaken humanity".

This position echoes a traditional Athonite ascetic idea of the "spiritual cause of physical affliction". In this framework, illness is viewed as divine mercy, calling people to reevaluate their lives. Such rhetoric intensified especially in light of the suspension of public liturgical services in Greece, which deeply disturbed the Athonite community: from their perspective, the inability to participate in the Liturgy was perceived as a threat to salvation (Grigoriadis, 2021, p. 38).

It is worth highlighting that one of the most contentious topics that provoked a strong response among Athonite monks was the issue of Eucharistic communion during the pandemic. In several countries (including Greece), public health authorities insisted on temporary changes to the practice of Holy Communion – for instance, using individual spoons or even abstaining from the Sacrament altogether. The Athonite monks categorically rejected such measures.

In official statements from Athonite monasteries and elders, it was emphasized that the Body and Blood of Christ cannot be a source of infection and that the very notion of contagion through the Sacrament constitutes an expression of "little faith" or even "blasphemy against God". This became a point of theological contention with certain representatives of the "modernist" Orthodox milieu who called for medical flexibility. In this regard, Mount Athos became a stronghold of a profoundly traditionalist stance.

The issue of vaccination provoked a significant division among Athonite monasteries and monastics. Some monks perceived vaccination as interference with human nature that could have not only medical but also spiritual consequences. In the rhetoric of certain Athonite ascetics, there were claims about "microchipping", an "Antichrist system of control", and "totalitarianism under the guise of medicine". These narratives were especially prevalent among brotherhoods oriented toward Old Rite or pro-Russian traditions, particularly in the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon.

By contrast, other monasteries – including Docheiariou, Simonopetra, and Iviron – adopted a more moderate stance. They recognized that vaccination was a matter of personal conscience, but insisted it should not be absolutized within spiritual life. These monasteries followed the line of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who openly called for vaccination as an act of love toward one's neighbor. Ultimately, some Athonite monks were vaccinated, which sparked intense debates both on Mount Athos and among pilgrims.

In 2020, Mount Athos was closed to pilgrims for an extended period – an unprecedented occurrence in the modern history of the Holy Mountain. For the Athonite monks, who are accustomed to playing an active missionary

role through spiritual conversations, receiving pilgrims, and hearing confessions, this represented a profound trial.

The closure of Athos provoked mixed evaluations: on the one hand, it was regarded as a necessary precaution; on the other, some perceived it as a "symbol of spiritual isolation", which led to a loss of connection between the monasteries and the world. This was especially strongly felt by monasteries that traditionally maintained active contact with laypeople and spiritual children. In public statements by Athonite monks, there were tones of sorrow over the fact that pilgrims were deprived of communion and spiritual support (Tsironis et al., 2021, p. 7).

Despite the ban on mass gatherings in Greece, the full cycle of liturgical services continued on Mount Athos. In the closed monasteries, the services were performed exclusively with the participation of the monastic brotherhood, leading to a return to the ancient model of liturgical life – more focused, ascetic, and centered on interior prayer.

For many monks, this was an opportunity for deeper solitude, spiritual concentration, and a reassessment of their approach to the typical "service rhythm", which in peaceful times had been heavily influenced by the presence of large numbers of pilgrims. In this sense, the pandemic was received as a "time of blessed silence" – a moment to be used for personal transformation.

It should be emphasized that one of the distinctive features of the Athonite perception of the pandemic was the active use of media and social networks to voice the positions of the monasteries and elders. Platforms such as YouTube channels of Orthodox communities, pilgrims' Telegram channels, and websites affiliated with Athonite brotherhoods became arenas for expressing criticism of governmental measures, reflections on the Sacraments, and apocalyptic rhetoric.

Some video messages by Athonite elders – for example, Elder Gavriil or Elder Eulogios – reached hundreds of thousands of views. This reflects the growing media role of Mount Athos in the Orthodox world and simultaneously indicates a shift in the style of communication between the monasteries and the outside world: even during periods of isolation, Athos retained its authority as a spiritual beacon but could not avoid controversy and polarization.

Thus, the Athonite perception of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed a multifaceted spectrum of responses – from theological rejection of restrictions and vaccination to calls for humility, repentance, and responsible care for the health of others. On Athos, two tendencies intersected: a traditionalist distrust of the "worldly" realm and a striving for adaptation under uncertain conditions. The pandemic brought to the fore the longstanding tension between eschatological consciousness and pastoral responsibility. In these reactions, one can discern the profound spiritual conflict of contemporary monasticism – between contemplative detachment and engagement in global processes.

The Athonite Response to the Russo-Ukrainian War: Division and Canonical Tensions. The full-scale aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, confronted Mount Athos with a difficult choice – whether to maintain "spiritual neutrality" or to evaluate the events from the standpoint of Christian morality. A portion of the Athonite monastic community – particularly representatives of the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon – directly or indirectly supported the Russian interpretation of the conflict, calling for the "preservation of Orthodox unity" and condemning the "schismatic autocephaly".

At the same time, several Greek monasteries – including Esphigmenou (anti-patriarchal but politically pro-Ukrainian), Docheiariou, and Xenophontos – expressed sympathy for the Ukrainian people, including the monasteries of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which have faced persecution. Some elders described the war as a "fratricidal tragedy" resulting from geopolitical ambitions rather than the will of God.

This division on Athos is rooted in a prolonged ecclesiastical and canonical crisis triggered by the Ecumenical Patriarch's recognition of the autocephaly of the OCU and the sharp reaction from the Moscow Patriarchate, which led to a break in Eucharistic communion. The response to the war has revealed not only theological and moral assessments of the situation but also an underlying struggle for influence within the Orthodox world – a struggle that unfolds on both ecclesial and geopolitical levels.

Following Constantinople's granting of autocephaly to the OCU in 2019, many Athonite monasteries supported the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Monasteries such as Iviron, Simonopetra, Xenophontos, Pantokrator, and the Great Lavra affirmed his canonical authority and recognized the Ukrainian Church's right to independence. In response, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) severed Eucharistic communion with these monasteries, effectively prohibiting its faithful from receiving communion in them.

In this context, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked another escalation of the crisis. Despite the overt aggression, some Athonite communities continued to adhere to a stance of formal "neutrality", refraining from making public pronouncements about the war. This posture was presented as "prayerful detachment from the world", but in practice it contributed to a silencing of the events and even to the legitimization of the aggressor's actions.

The most striking example of affinity toward the Russian side remains the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon, or "Russikon". The monks of this monastery have traditionally aligned themselves with the ROC and, during the war, adopted a notably pro-Russian position, at times even viewing Vladimir Putin as a kind of new "Orthodox Tsar" (Hovorun, 2023, p. 303). After the outbreak of hostilities, they avoided publicly condemning Russia's actions; instead, in private conversations and on media channels close to the monastery, they employed tropes such as "internal conflict", "Western efforts to divide Orthodoxy", and "protection of the Russian-speaking population".

This position was also supported by individual Greek elders affiliated with conservative Russian circles. In their statements, the war was framed as a consequence of the "schismatic actions" of Constantinople – that is, as divine punishment for the autocephaly of the OCU. Such an interpretation not only denies the reality of aggression but also seeks to legitimize it from a theological perspective.

Alongside this, several Athonite monasteries adopted an openly pro-Ukrainian or at least a humanitarian-Christian position by condemning violence. Notable instances include monasteries such as Xenophontos, Esphigmenou (anti-patriarchal yet anti-imperialist in rhetoric), and Docheiariou, which expressed support for suffering Ukrainians, prayed for an end to the war, received Ukrainian pilgrims, and even sent humanitarian aid.

Particular attention should be given to letters and public appeals from individual Athonite monks in which they openly referred to the war as "fratricide", a "tragedy for Slavic Orthodoxy", and a "temptation of demonic character". In this context, calls were made not only for the repentance of the

aggressor but also for the spiritual mobilization of the entire Orthodox world to stop the bloodshed.

The Athonite response to the war was determined not only by ecclesiastical and canonical circumstances but also by direct geopolitical influences. Mount Athos is a pilgrimage destination for Orthodox believers from around the world, including many from Russia. Over the past two decades, investments by Russian businessmen and state institutions in Athonite monasteries have been substantial. This created financial and cultural dependencies for certain monasteries, which were reflected in their political loyalty.

Even in the media domain, support for "spiritual Russia" was promoted on Mount Athos through numerous religious online platforms that represented the perspectives of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and its allies. These publications propagated narratives about a "united people", a "civilizational struggle against the West", and "sacralization through war". Such narratives led some Athonites to believe that Russia was acting "in defense of the faith", despite the clear evidence of aggression.

It is also important to note that the outbreak of war further exacerbated the situation concerning the breakdown of Eucharistic communion between the ROC and a portion of the Athonite monasteries. By refusing communion with those monasteries that recognized the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the Russian Church called into question the very foundation of Orthodox life on Athos – a life built on shared prayer and liturgical unity.

Some Athonite monks view this situation as a tragedy that undermines the unity of the Church more deeply than the war itself. They interpret it not merely as a result of political conflict but as a spiritual crisis, in which ecclesiastical structures are being used as tools of political influence. In this light, Athos becomes a place not only of prayer but also of spiritual struggle for truth.

The reaction of Ukrainian monastics, many of whom have spiritual ties to Athos, must also be acknowledged. Numerous Ukrainian Athonites, who had undergone obedience in Greek monasteries, became vocal witnesses to truth within the Orthodox world. As F. Mabile notes: *"Putin has adopted a broader view of security than military security alone and has made use of the potential influence of Orthodoxy through the association that exists between his regime and the Moscow Patriarchate. The difference between this approach and the Soft Power one is precisely the fact that religion is used to an end that is clearly in conflict with it and potentially military in nature"* (Mabile, 2022) Their testimonies regarding war crimes, spiritual letters, and appeals became a stimulus for rethinking the situation – even among some previously neutral Athonite communities.

For instance, Ukrainian monks affiliated with the OCU organized liturgies with prayers for Athos and appealed to Athonite monks not to remain silent in the face of evil. This contributed to an awakening of conscience, especially among younger generations of Athonite monastics.

Despite polarization, the Holy Mountain still retains the potential to serve as a spiritual space for reconciliation. Some elders call for "silent prayer", which they believe must become the force capable of healing the wounds of Orthodoxy. They recognize that war is, above all, a failure of Christian consciousness in a society where "Orthodox are killing Orthodox".

These voices are often quiet, without publicity, but they preserve the true spirit of Athos – the spirit of humility, prayer, and inner discernment that places spiritual truth above geopolitics.

An analysis of Athonite reactions to the Russo-Ukrainian war reveals a profound crisis within the Orthodox world. On the one hand, Athos has become a battleground of ideological confrontation between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian forces. On the other hand, it has emerged as a source of spiritual resistance and a humanitarian voice. The polarization of the Athonite community mirrors broader processes in global Orthodoxy: the crisis of Eucharistic communion, the politicization of faith, and the instrumentalization of ecclesiastical authority for state interests.

Nevertheless, Athos retains the potential for spiritual renewal. It is here that voices still echo, calling for *metanoia*, for truth, and for the uncompromising denunciation of evil – regardless of its origin. And in this lies the enduring hope that Athos may once again serve as a moral compass for the Orthodox world in times of spiritual turbulence.

Discussion and conclusions

The comparative analysis of Athonite responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war reveals a complex interplay between theological tradition, spiritual identity, and geopolitical reality. The two crises, although different in nature and scope, acted as catalysts that exposed the internal dynamics, tensions, and transformative processes within the Athonite community.

Firstly, the perception of the COVID-19 pandemic on Mount Athos was largely shaped by mystical and eschatological frameworks. Many Athonite monks interpreted the pandemic not merely as a biological threat, but as a divine admonition – a spiritual wake-up call highlighting humanity's moral and religious decline. This view was supported by ascetic interpretations of bodily affliction as a consequence of spiritual fallenness. Theological resistance to changes in Eucharistic practice and vaccine hesitancy were dominant among more traditionalist communities, whereas moderate voices emphasized pastoral discernment and invoked the principle of love toward one's neighbor, aligning themselves with the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The pandemic also prompted renewed emphasis on contemplative monastic life, while simultaneously accelerating Athonite engagement with digital platforms for spiritual messaging.

Secondly, the reaction to the Russian-Ukrainian war uncovered deeper and more divisive fractures within the Athonite world. While some monasteries aligned with the Moscow Patriarchate continued to propagate narratives of canonical disruption and geopolitical victimhood, others voiced clear condemnation of violence and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people. The war intensified long-standing canonical tensions resulting from the Ecumenical Patriarchate's recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), further dividing Athonite allegiances along ecclesial-political lines.

In both cases, Mount Athos serves as a microcosm of larger processes affecting the Orthodox world. The juxtaposition of mystical detachment with practical engagement in global affairs – whether public health or armed conflict – illustrates the ongoing reconfiguration of Orthodox monasticism in the twenty-first century. While the Holy Mountain continues to exert spiritual authority, its unity and neutrality are increasingly contested. Yet within this turbulence also lies potential: Athonite calls for repentance (*metanoia*), truth, and the prophetic denunciation of evil, regardless of origin, signal the enduring vocation of the monastic tradition to serve as a moral compass for the Orthodox Church and wider society.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that Athonite monasticism, far from being a passive observer of global

crises, functions as a theologically and politically responsive actor. The inner contradictions and diverse reactions of its monastic communities not only reflect the complex realities of modern Orthodoxy but also invite deeper reflection on the responsibilities of spiritual institutions in times of moral uncertainty and ecclesial fragmentation.

Authors' contributions: Vitaliy Turenko – conceptualization, methodology; Vladyslav Bogdashovsky – empirical basis, conclusions.

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СПЕЦИФІКА СПРИЙНЯТТЯ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ ТА COVID-19 АФОНІТАМИ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

Вступ. Досліджено особливості сприйняття двох глобальних криз – пандемії COVID-19 та російсько-української війни – афонськими монахами з позицій порівняльного релігієзнавчого аналізу. Незважаючи на географічну ізольованість, Свята Гора Афон активно реагує на зовнішні виклики, що стосуються духовної цілісності. Підкреслено, що пандемія переважно інтерпретувалася в містико-есхатологічному ключі, тоді як війна спричинила помітну поляризацію всередині афонітської спільноти, що відображає ширші еклезіальні та геополітичні розломи в православному світі. Висвітлено богословські, моральні та канонічні аспекти афонітських реакцій, підкреслено їхню роль як духовного барометра в умовах глобальної невизначеності.

Методи. Застосовано порівняльну міждисциплінарну методологію, що поєднує підходи теології, релігієзнавства та політичної соціології. Емпіричну основу становлять публічні звернення афонських старців, цифрові медіаматеріали та богословські коментарі. Аналітичний каркас забезпечено сучасними дослідженнями релігійної реакції на кризи. Такий підхід дозволяє простежити подвійний вектор афонітської свідомості – одночасно зануреної в традицію та залученої до транснаціональних православних конфліктів.

Результати. Установлено, що пандемія сприймалася переважно як Боже покарання та заклик до покаяння, а також викликала опір змінам у практиці Сххаристії та державним санітарним заходам. Натомість війна в Україні виявила глибокі розбіжності між монастирями: частина з них поділяє російські наративи, інші виражають солідарність з українським народом. Така розбіжність корелює з геополітичними залежностями та різним ступенем лояльності до Вселенського Патріархату й Російської Православної Церкви. Засвідчено, що Афон, традиційно сприйманий як нейтральна і аполітична структура, переживає трансформацію, яка віддзеркалює ширші еклезіально-політичні напруження.

Висновки. Зроблено висновок, що афонітські реакції на COVID-19 та війну в Україні репрезентують напруження між есхатологічним світоглядом і пастирською відповідальністю, між містичним усамітненням і геополітичним залученням. Попри збереження духовного авторитету внутрішня поляризація ставить під сумнів об'єднавчу функцію Афону в сучасному православ'ї. Дослідження сприяє глибшому розумінню динамічного зв'язку між чернецтвом, глобальними кризами та релігійно-політичними трансформаціями.

Ключові слова: Свята Гора Афон, пандемія COVID-19, російсько-українська війна, православна церква, чернецтво, релігійне сприйняття, церковний конфлікт, богословська реакція.

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