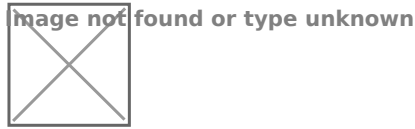


Presentation of degrees to the graduates of the Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete



On Monday, 3 July 2023, in the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Evgenios of Crete and other Hierarchs, the graduation ceremony was held for the new graduates of the Higher Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete. Present also for the graduation ceremony in the packed-out ceremony hall of the Academy were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Irenaios of Lampi, Syvritos and Sfakia, Metropolitan Georgios of Thebes and Livadeia, His Grace Bishop Methodios of Knossos, The Grand Protosyncellus of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Archimandrite Theodoros (Professor at the Higher Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete), the Protosyncellus of the Holy Metropolis of Lambi, Syvritos and Sfakia Archimandrite Athanasios, as well as the Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Megistis Lavra, Father Prodromos. The President of the Clergy Association of the Holy Archdiocese of Crete, Protopresbyter Georgios Haniotakis, also participated in the joy of the graduates, as well as its members, Academy Professors, students, parents, relatives and friends.

On behalf of the Student Association, the outgoing president and graduate, Mr. Nikolaos Kokkinos, addressed a brief greeting, who highlighted the sacrifices required to get to that particular moment.

The President of the Academic Council of Higher Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete, Associate Professor Mr. Emmanuel Doundoulakis, referred to the conscientiousness that governs professors in the carrying out of their duties and invited the new graduates to respond positively to what they were taught in terms of theological and musical knowledge, but also to what they were introduced to during their studies. He also referred to the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a solid point of reference and thanked the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Church of Crete for the support it offers to Academy all these years. The most Indicative points of Mr. Doundoulakis' speech are as following:

"... As your professors and teachers, our dear graduates, we wish to assure you that we did our best during your years of study, under special circumstances, such

as those of confinement due to the pandemic, in order to impart theological and musical knowledge to you. To introduce you to the Worship experience and our Liturgical tradition, because the Church is first and foremost, experience and life, gift and grace, transformation and sanctification. We have tried to cultivate in you the ecclesiastical ethos and priestly consciousness, fraternity and ministry of service. To also instil values and ideals, such as respect and love for fellow human beings, without discrimination and exclusion, not because this is dictated by ideologies and specific social stereotypes, but because it is based on the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Higher Ecclesiastical Education has been going through a crisis in recent years and its causes are multifactorial... As far as the Higher Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete is concerned, the academic year we passed was special, in many ways. Some may have been given the impression of introversion on our part. The truth is that a lot has changed at the Academy in recent months, even if it is not yet visible. Purposeful movements lend us what we call in the language of International Relations as “self-help” and “inner empowerment”.... Of course, we do not turn a blind eye, we are not complacent! We are called to be alert, knowing that the future of Higher Ecclesiastical Education does not depend on us alone.

At this time we turn our thoughts to the cradle of Orthodoxy, to the martyred Phanar, whose weighty title “Patriarchal”, we bear in our Academy. In the institution of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, we recognise the loving Mother who knows how to embrace, treat and be long-suffering, as well as the mighty Church, which is sacrificially emptied, in order to correct any injustice in the environment of its normal jurisdiction, with Church-centric and not secular criteria. In the person of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, all of us, teachers and students, learn in the witness of Christ in the modern world.

Your Eminence Archbishop Evgenios of Crete, Your Eminences, elected members of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Church of Crete. Allow me to thank you for your presence here today and to express, on behalf of all of us at the Academy, our gratitude for “the visible and invisible benefits that have been bestowed upon us”. And if the ancient comic poet Menander exhorts us: “Remember the favour you have received”, we “confess the grace, preach the mercy, do not hide beneficence.” Please convey to the other members of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Church of Crete the love and unfailing respect of all of us for the person of each of the Venerable Metropolitans.

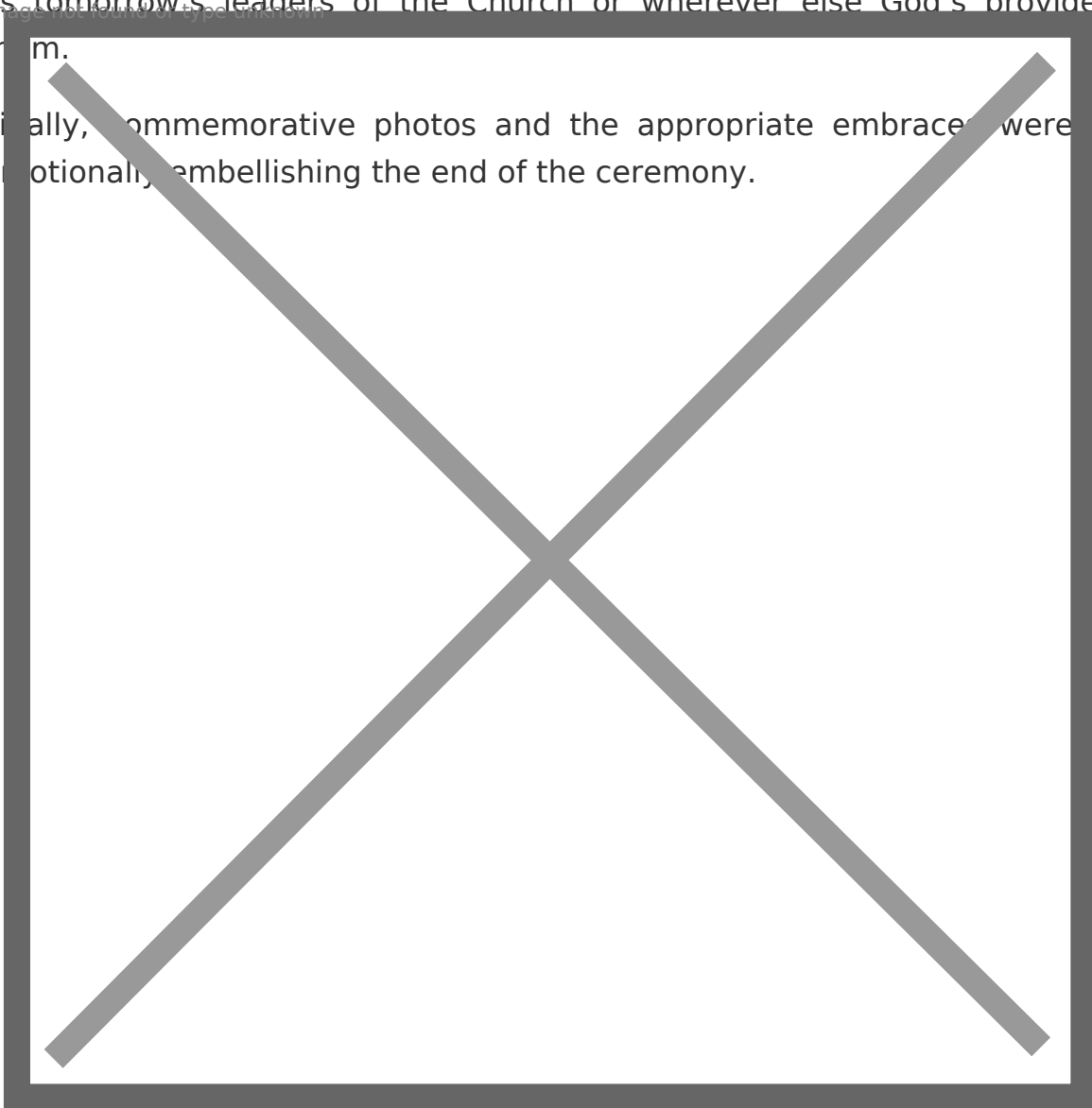
Your Eminence Metropolitan Georgios of Thebes, Livadeia and Avlida, your presence here today fills us with joy and hope, because through it, as also through

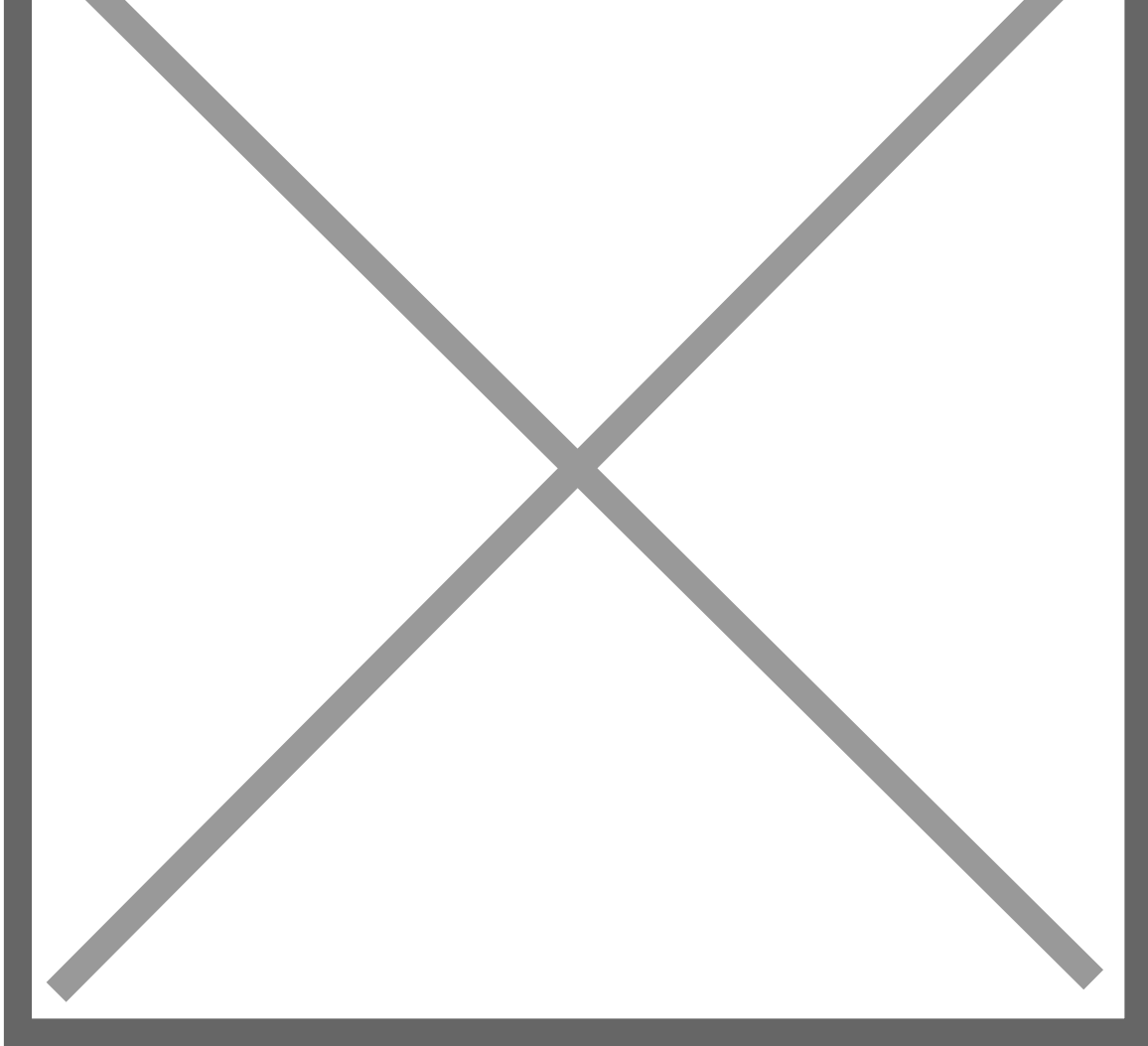
the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Evgenios and the Holy Metropolitans of Crete, we see the living Church working hard, showing interest and taking care of her children, as well as envisioning a better tomorrow for her leaders...”.

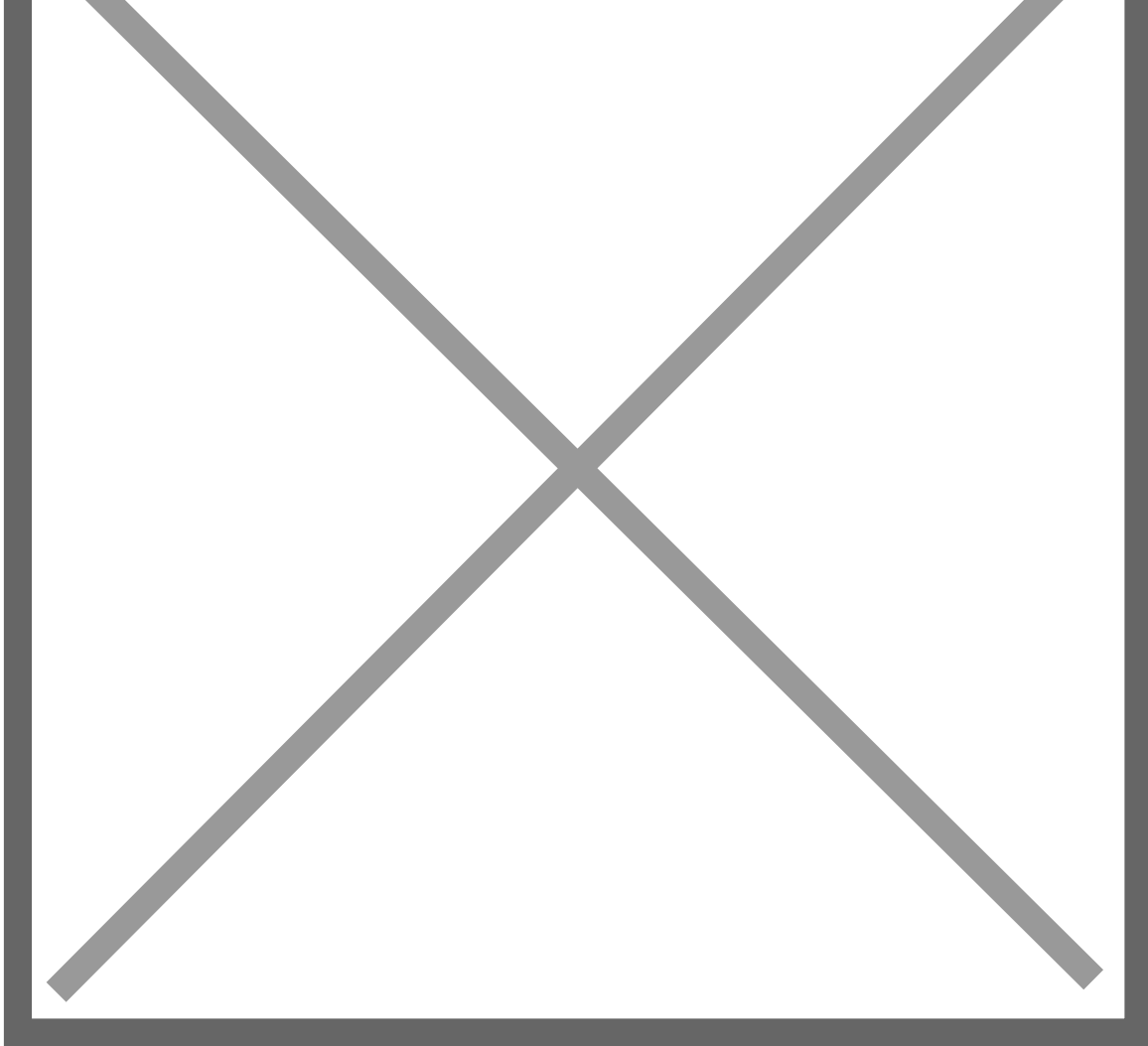
His Eminence Metropolitan Georgios of Thebes and Livadeia, expressed his joy at being at the above-mentioned graduation ceremony, while he spoke with love about the graduates, who will be called to serve in the bosom of the Church, fulfilling their goal.

The ceremony was closed with his heart-inspired, as always, address by His Eminence Archbishop Evgenios of Crete, who spoke paternally, praised the work being done at Ecclesiastical Academy, underlined the loving cooperation between the local Church and the Academy and noted that it is love which builds. With this, the graduates of the Academy were invited to minister and serve their fellow man, as tomorrow's leaders of the Church or wherever else God's providence places them.

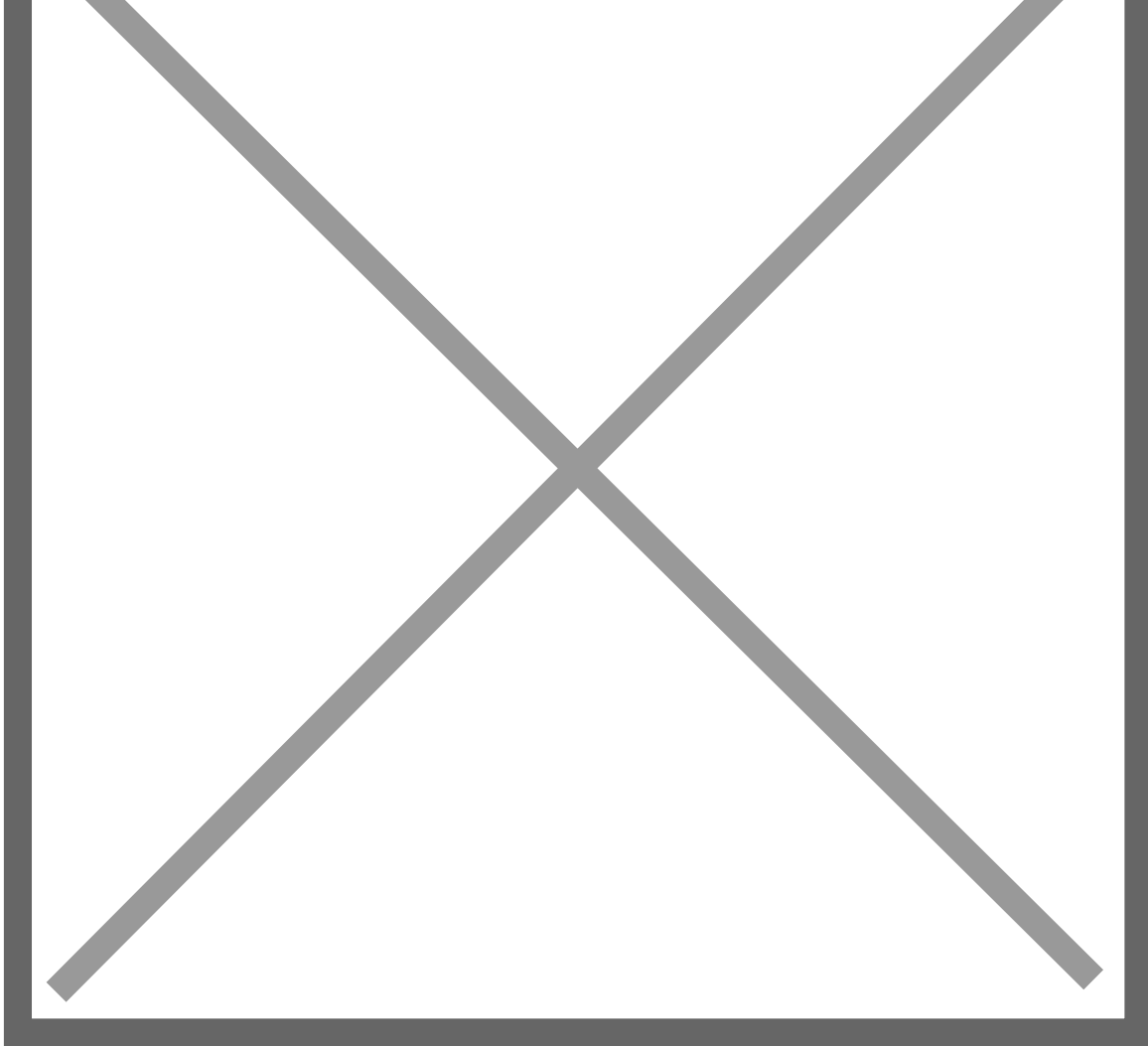
Finally, commemorative photos and the appropriate embraces were exchanged, emotionally embellishing the end of the ceremony.











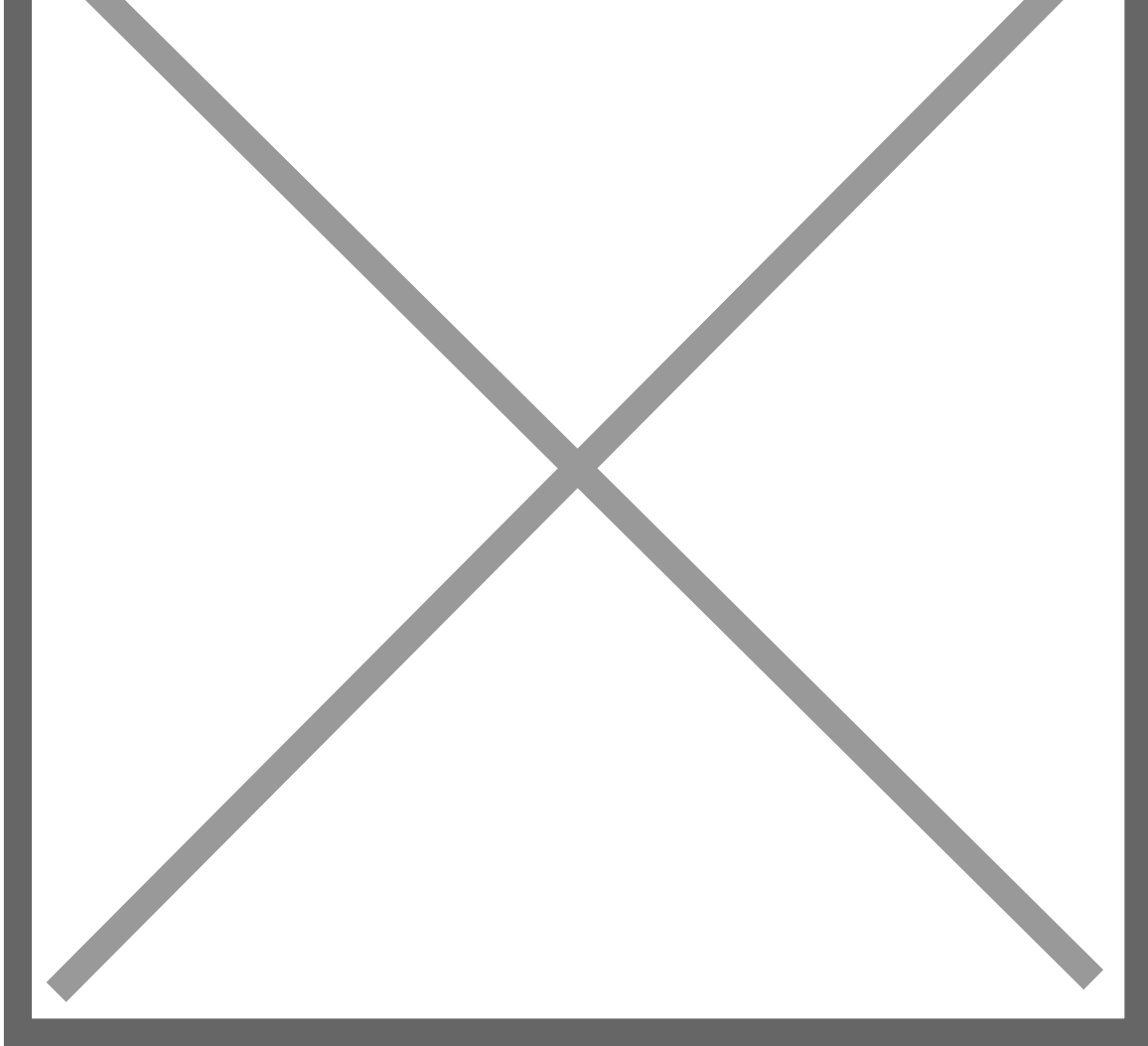
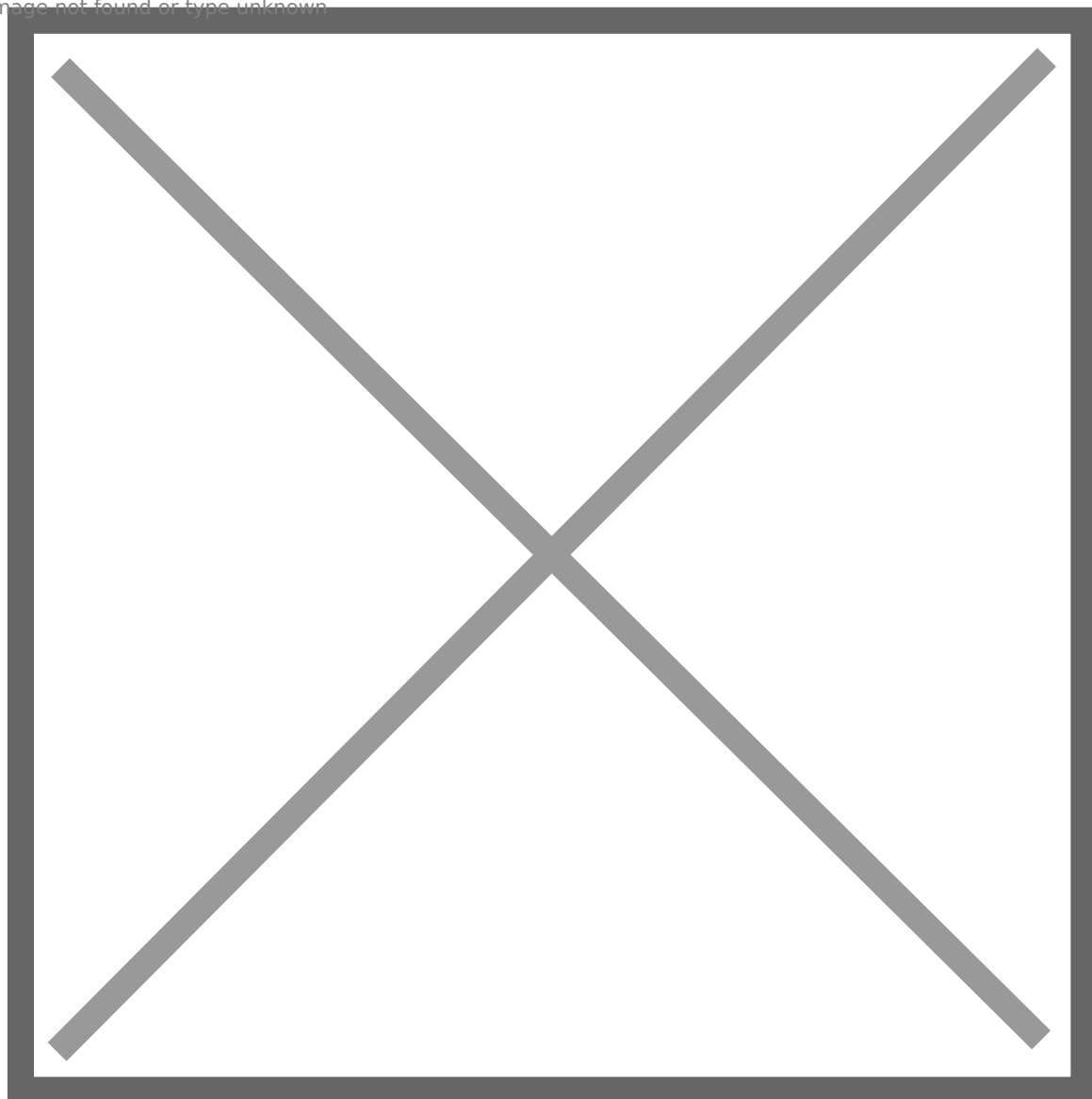


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