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THE TOME OF LEO: EASTERN AND ORIENTAL
ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES

S. Peter Cowe

This paper is presented within the framework of the current review of
issues pertaining to the historical separation of the Chalcedonian and
Non-Chalcedonian communions, the open dialogue on the
contemporary significance of those events and the exploration of
possible approaches which might assist in bringing the churches into
closer co-operation and the examination of the conditions necessary for
re-establishing full communion. It will focus on the status of Pope Leo
I of Rome and his famous (or should I say infamous) tome within the
context of the proposals for lifting anathemas issued at Chambesy in
1993 by the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. In this
document, based on the two previous agreed statements on the
theological, and more particularly Christological, questions at issue,
the representatives reached the following agreement:

... the lifting of anathemas and condemnations of the past can be
consummated on the basis of their common acknowledgement of
the fact that the Councils and their Fathers previously
anathematized or condemned are Orthodox in their teachings.

In light of this broad thesis the present paper will examine more
concretely the interpretations of Leo and his writings which have
become authoritative within the churches and will discuss a few
circumstances which suggest the possibility of a partial reappraisal.

Before discussing the tome in greater detail, it may be useful to
preface this with some comments on Pope Leo's life and works, as
these are surely not unimportant in treating questions of sainthood and
official admission to the church's sanctoral. There is no question that
(from the perspective of the Chinese proverb) Leo lived in "interesting"
times for the Western Empire, whose already overstretched and under-
maintained institutions were placed under overwhelming strain by the
continual incursions of nomads driven inexorably westwards by a
population explosion in the Central Asian steppes. Moreover, he

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1 The text of the document has been reprinted in Appendix, 1996.
2 Ibid., p. 109.
played an important public role in upholding the status quo by leading a diplomatic mission to Gaul in 440 to effect a reconciliation between Aëtius, the chief military commander of the province and the pretorian prefect Albinus. During this time Pope Sixtus III passed away and Leo was consecrated his successor in September of that year, holding the office until his death on 10 November, 461.

Another more telling example of the pope's moral authority in secular affairs is provided by his personal encounter with Attila the Hun in 452, which persuaded the latter to abandon his march on Rome and to promise to withdraw from Italy and make peace with the emperor. When the capital was sacked by the Vandals under Genseric, some three years later Leo's intercession was effective in sparing the inhabitants' lives. As a result, he enabled the papacy to emerge as the one main authoritative and stabilizing force in a period of crisis and confusion. Leo propagated the idea of close collaboration between the two authorities of church and state and emphasized the divine principles of imperial power. In this way he became quite influential with the Western emperor Valentinian III, who in 445 pronounced that in the provinces under his rule "whatever the authority of the apostolic see has enacted or may hereafter enact, shall be law for all." This situation in the West afforded the backdrop to Leo's diplomacy in the East also.

His perception of the need to maintain strict ecclesiastical discipline and examination of doctrinal orthodoxy is indicated by his handling of disputes in the province of Gaul. Moreover, he adopted a more rigorist stance over the settlement of former Pelagians in Rome, who had been admitted to communion without explicit abjuration of their heresy. He also preached a series of sermons against Manichaean adherents who had been driven from Africa by the Vandals and had established their secret community in the capital. Likewise two synods were held in Spain on another deviant group, the pope urging that bishops sympathetic to it should be excommunicated. And, as we shall see later, he offered a sharp condemnation of Nestorianism in Letter 102. In addition to these pressing doctrinal concerns, he also

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3 See JALLAND, 1941, p.53.
4 Ibid., p. 43.
5 Ibid., pp. 411-413.
6 Ibid., pp. 415-416.
8 JALLAND, 1941, pp. 113-152.
9 Ibid., pp. 98-100.
10 Ibid., pp. 43-50.
11 Ibid., pp. 152-156.
12 GRILLMEIER, 1975, p. 537.
found time and energy for other types of pastoral activity including building and restoring churches.13

These details reveal Leo as an able administrator, zealous in combating heresy, which weakened and distracted the church. However, when we consider his relations with the Church in the East, it is important to bear in mind the growing isolation of the two halves of the empire, the centrifugal forces at work between them, the developing "parochialism" on each side, the increasing difficulties of maintaining communication and the gradual decline in mutual comprehensibility in Latin and Greek, factors which were to become exacerbated over the next few centuries.14 In light of this, it appears less of a surprise that these facts of Leo's character and achievements are little documented in the East and therefore did not impact significantly on his reputation and subsequent evaluation there. His Greek *vita*, vague in its contents, was probably compiled much later on the basis of a poem in political verse.15 Of greater import at the eastern imperial court were Leo's reservations about accepting the provisions of Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon which stipulated that Constantinople, or New Rome, should enjoy parity with the old capital apart from the latter's "primacy of honor."16 Leo's stance over this question and other related issues has been interpreted as inaugurating the debate on papal supremacy which became a major area of dispute between East and West since the period of the Crusades.17

Granted, then, that neither Orthodox nor Oriental traditions accord much significance to his life and works, we observe how narrowly his ecclesiastical status in either case has been determined by varying interpretations of his Christological formulations in the relatively brief compass of a single letter. Hence the latter has received a prominence quite incommensurate with its size, amounting to barely nine printed pages.18 In this way, Leo is celebrated as a saint in churches of the Byzantine tradition with a feast day on 18 February, while subject to censure in the liturgical books of the Oriental churches. Before going on to analyze the letter and the circumstances of its origin I should like to pause a moment to consider the situation of the debate in the later

13 *Inter alia* see JALLAND, 1941, p. 31.
15 For the text see VAN DEN HORST, 1910, and, for further information, GOOSENS, 1931.
16 JALLAND, 1941, pp. 191, 204,
17 See ULLMANN, 1960 for Leo's role and PAPADAKIS, 1994, pp. 46-58, for a recent treatment of the later period.
18 For a critical edition of the original see SCHWARTZ, 1932 and, for an English translation, HARDY/RICHARDSON, 1954, pp. 360-370.
period and the exposure the Eastern churches had to this contested document.

The character of theological interchange between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox in the medieval period and beyond was largely marked by polemics in which one's opposite number was perceived less as an interlocutor than as an opponent and consequently the approach adopted seemed to be more akin to talking at the other, rather than talking to or with him. 19 Hence the Oriental ordination books, which require candidates for the various orders of ministry to condemn "the heresy of Leo and his foul tome" along with the definition of the Council of Chalcedon at which it was accepted, rank the issue along with Arianism, Sabellianism, Apollinarianism, etc., as one of those theological questions definitively settled in the early patristic period. The contrasting positions on the topic had long hardened along fault lines which were reinforced by a whole edifice of separate hierarchies and institutions, which required justification and defense. As a result, the debate often lost its purely dogmatic nature when additional "ammunition" for the dispute was garnered from divergences in liturgical practice. Whereas before these had added to the richness of the church's catholicity in glorifying the Creator of all, now legitimate diversity in worship was read as suspicious deviation. 20 As the division was perceived as irrevocable, so it became all the harder to try to understand the other position and engage it is dialogue.

At the same time, another necessity for any meaningful doctrinal discussion is the ready availability of texts which offer a reasoned exposition of a given point at issue. Thus, in view of what was said above about the fundamental significance of the tome for evaluating Leo's position in the church, it becomes important to inquire how widely that text circulated in the East in the period of formative debate over the diophysite/monophysite divide before the question became wholly polarized. It seems that no Coptic translation is extant. An Armenian version of the tome was produced by the Mxitarist Brotherhood of Venice in the eighteenth century and it may be that another translation was effected during the Crusades, at a time when Armenians were in contact with missionaries from the Franciscan and Dominican orders. 21 However, at the era under discussion, it appears that Leo's work was introduced to both Armenian and Syriac indirectly via the writings of one of his bitterest opponents, Timothy Aelurus,

20 For a recent analysis of this widespread issue see FINDIKYAN, 1996.
21 For a study on the former mission focusing primarily on its art historical impact see EVANS, 1990, pp. 16-146, and for the theological issues raised by the latter van den OUDENRIJN, 1960.
anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria (457-477). Moreover, while in a refutation of the tome preserved in Syriac Timothy cites most of the doctrinal part of the work paragraph by paragraph, so that the reader has the opportunity to consider Leo’s original statements before turning to the rebuttal which Timothy appends to each section, the situation is less fortunate for Armenian. In that language is preserved another of Timothy’s works originally entitled On the Unity of Christ which selects fourteen short passages from the tome, arguably the most contentious portions of the work emphasizing the duality of the natures, which the author then subjects to censure. These passages were subsequently extracted from Timothy’s refutation and later circulated in certain manuscripts under the misleading title of Leo’s tome. This, in turn, clearly influenced medieval Armenian theologians such as the early twelfth century apologist Ptolos Taronaci, whose citations from the tome are limited to precisely these portions. Obviously, in both cases, whether circulating independently, divorced from their original context, or within the new context of a trenchant refutation by an arch-opponent, conditions were not favorable for a balanced appraisal of the document and delineation of its merits and faults.

The following is a listing of the portions of Leo’s Tome commented upon in Timothy Aelurus’ refutation:

1) “When Wisdom was building herself a house,” the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” that is, in that flesh which he assumed from a human being, and which he animated with the spirit of rational life.

2) ... accordingly, while the distinctions of both natures and substances is preserved, and both meet in one Person, lowliness is assumed by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity.

3) For each of the natures retains its proper character without defect; and as the form of God does not take away the form of a servant, so the form of a servant does not impair the form of God.

4) [and there is no illusion in this union], while the lowliness of man and the loftiness of Godhead meet together. For as "God" is

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23 See TIMOTHY AELURUS, 1908.
24 One such example is MS 58 of the Minasian collection at UCLA copied in 1725, probably at New Julfa, in which the text occupies ff. 330v.- 333v.
25 See POLOS TARONACI, 1752.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., p. 364.
not changed by the compassion [exhibited], so "Man" is not consumed by the dignity [bestowed].  

5) For each "form" does the acts which belong to it in communion with the other; the Word, that is, performing what belongs to the Word and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh. The one of these shines out in miracles; the other succumbs to injuries.  

6) God, inasmuch as "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God"; Man, inasmuch as "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." God, inasmuch as "all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made"; Man inasmuch as he was "made of a woman, made under the law." The nativity of the flesh is a manifestation of human nature: the Virgin's child-bearing is an indication of divine power. The infancy of the babe is exhibited by the humiliation of swaddling clothes; the greatness of the highest is declared by the voices of angels. He whom Herod impiously designs to slay is like humanity in its beginnings; but he whom the Magi rejoice to adore on their knees is Lord of all.  

7) Now when he came to the baptism of John his forerunner, lest the fact that the Godhead was covered with a veil of flesh should be concealed, the voice of the Father spoke in thunder from heaven, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."  

8) To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, and to sleep is evidently human. But to feed five thousand men with five loaves, and to bestow on the woman of Samaria that living water, to drink of which can secure one from thirsting again; to walk on the surface of the sea with feet that sink not, and by rebuking the storm to bring down the "uplifted waves," is unquestionably divine.  

9) As then — to pass by many points — it does not belong to the same nature to weep with feelings of pity over a dead grave where he had lain four days, by a voice of command to raise him up to life again; or to hang on the wood and to make all the elements tremble after daylight had been turned into night; or to be transfixed with nails and to open the gates of paradise to the faith of the robber, so it does not belong to the same nature to say, "I and the Father are one," and to say, "The Father is greater than I."  

10) For although in the Lord Jesus Christ there is one Person of God and man, yet that whereby contumely attaches to both is one thing, and that whereby glory attaches to both is another: for from what belongs to us he has that manhood which is inferior to

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29 Ibid., pp. 364-365.  
30 Ibid., p. 365.  
31 Ibid.  
32 Ibid.  
33 Ibid.  
34 Ibid., pp. 365-366.
the Father; while from the Father he has equal Godhead with the Father.\textsuperscript{35}

11) Accordingly, on account of this unity which is to be understood as existing in both natures, we read, on the one hand, that, "the Son of Man came down from heaven," inasmuch as the Son of God took flesh from that Virgin of whom he was born; and, on the other hand, the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, inasmuch as he underwent this, not in his actual Godhead, wherein the Only-begotten is coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, but in the weakness of human nature.\textsuperscript{36}

12) [The Apostle Peter] who through revelation from the Father confessed the selfsame to be both the Son of God and the Christ; because one of these truths, accepted without the other, would not profit unto salvation, and it was equally dangerous to believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be merely God and not man or merely man and not God.\textsuperscript{37}

13) . . . for he [Eutyches] has not acknowledged our nature to exist in the only-begotten Son of God, by way either of the lowliness of mortality or of the glory of resurrection.\textsuperscript{38}

14) Let him [Eutyches] see what nature it was that was transfixed with nails and hung on the wood of the cross; and let him understand whence it was that, after the side of the crucified had been pierced by the soldier's spear, blood and water flowed out.\textsuperscript{39}

These issues are all the more crucial to bear in mind when we consider Leo's intention in writing the tome and the circumstances which led him to compose it. The occasion which provoked it was the condemnation of the Christological views of the aged presbyter Eutyches who, although vacillating over certain doctrinal formulations, seemed unable to accept that in the Incarnation Christ's flesh was consubstantial with human flesh.\textsuperscript{40} The impression was thus given that the Incarnation had either resulted in the transformation of the flesh that the Word had assumed from the Theotokos, leading to its divinization, or in the Word's uniting with flesh which was already by nature heavenly and hence qualitatively different from ours.\textsuperscript{41} Leo's refutation of this position, largely on the basis of a reading of scripture, echoed that of many of his contemporaries. Moreover, although Eutyches' views gained widespread, if fleeting, support in the East in

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 366.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 367.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.368.
\textsuperscript{40} GRILLMEIER, 1975, p. 531.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
the months immediately following his trial, the orthodoxy of Leo’s act of rejecting Eutyches’ position has been upheld by the Church as a whole and is therefore part of the shared heritage of both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox. Thus, for example, while querying Leo’s formulations, Timothy Aelurus never indicates any affinity with Eutyches. Similarly, although at the time of the consecration of Timothy’s supporter Severus in the next generation as patriarch of Antioch on 6 November, 518 the crowds are reported to have exclaimed “Cursed be the Council, cursed be the Tome of Leo,” Severus and his followers are careful to distance themselves from any attempt to rehabilitate Eutyches. We must conclude, therefore, that Leo’s intentions were orthodox; but what about his grasp of the situation and the methods he employed to handle it?

Certainly, the historical record demonstrates that the letter Leo wrote on 12 June, 449 was not the expression of the author’s protracted contemplation of an extensive dossier of material representing Eutyches’ views within the context of theological discussion in the East since the Council of Ephesus in 431. Also significant for our understanding of the letter is the fact that it was not penned at the pope’s own initiative, but rather in response to a tardy appeal by Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, for his support in offsetting the perhaps unexpected backing Eutyches had received since he was arraigned before an episcopal assembly in Constantinople in November 448. In this connection it is interesting to note that Eutyches, for his part, had also written seeking the pope’s good offices in spring 448 against what he considered the re-establishment of Nestorianism in the Byzantine capital. However, on that occasion the pope had merely acknowledged receipt of the letter without giving any indication of his thoughts on the subject. The hour was already late when Flavian contacted Leo, for by the end of March 449 the imperial summons had gone out convoking a council at Ephesus in August to reinvestigate Eutyches’ case. In fact the resulting synod acquitted Eutyches of heresy and deposed his judge Flavian, replacing him with Anatolius, a deacon from Alexandria. Leo had sent his tome to the council via a legate, but it had not been read. However, he has received a sort of poetic justice in that ever since that assembly has been known by his negative pronouncement as the Latrocinium, the “Robbers’ Synod.”

However, as is well known, Eutyches’ condemnation was reconfirmed and Leo’s tome accepted by the following council which met at Chalcedon in October 451. Moreover, the tome played a role in the

44 GRILLMEIER, 1975, p. 527.
formulation of the council's Christological definition, thus becoming the single most significant document from the Western Church to influence doctrinal development in the East.

Considering the above in the context of what was said earlier about the growing estrangement of the Eastern and Western halves of the Empire, one wonders how well-informed Leo was about the background to Eutyches' Christological views. The exacerbating breakdown in communication between East and West relates not only to matters of idiom, but more fundamentally to common thought patterns and common ways of posing a question. The opening of section 6 of the tome reproduced below clearly indicates how out of touch he is.

But when Eutyches, on being questioned in your examination of him, answered, "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature," I am astonished that so absurd and perverse a profession as this was not rebuked by a censure on the part of any of his judges, and that an utterance extremely foolish and extremely blasphemous was passed over, just as if nothing had been heard which could give offense: seeing that it is as impious to say that the only-begotten Son of God was of two natures before the incarnation as it is shocking to affirm that, since the Word became flesh, there has been in him one nature only. 46

His incomprehension that so little had been made by his colleague Flavian and the other judges of Eutyches' statement that Christ was of two natures before the union and one after the union reveals his lack of familiarity with the Cyrilline tradition in the East, which is also manifest in the Formula of Union of 433 A.D. that informed Flavian's own position. While acknowledging the full reality of Christ's divinity and humanity, it underscored that the incarnate One was none other than the divine Logos. Thereby there was no intention to affirm a temporal succession according to which there was a separate and independent existence of the two natures by themselves followed by their dissolution into a unity, as apparently interpreted by Leo.

Apart from the issue of temporality, terminology is of crucial importance in analyzing the contrast in conceptuality. In Latin theology the distinction between the levels of unity (i.e. agency) and duality (i.e. divinity and humanity) in Christ had been expressed by a contrast between the term persona (unity) and natura (diversity). Read in this light, Eutyches' formulation became all the less acceptable as implying some mingling or blend of Christ's divinity and humanity out of

which an amalgam was produced which seemed to deny the reality of Christ’s manhood.

Granted that Leo interpreted Eutyches’ views in this way, the general question arises of what sort of methodology to apply in order to counter this opinion. Conceiving the problem as an impairment of the reality of both Christ’s divinity and humanity, it is obvious that by appeal to tradition in scripture and the Fathers one would seek to underscore the truth of Christ as both Son of God and Son of Man and hence be drawn into a discussion of the level of duality mentioned above. At this point it is instructive to consider Leo’s approach to the opposite task of composing a response to the other extreme of Nestorianism. Since the latter was perceived as offering too loose an account of the union of natures, suggesting an association or union if good pleasure between them rather than a full hypostatic union, in response one would clearly wish to bolster Christ’s oneness. If we review Leo’s anti-Nestorian formulation taken from one of his discourses, we notice that he is even prepared to employ the image of blending to describe the process of union to make his point more effectively, even though it hints somewhat of the sort of amalgam Leo thought Eutyches was implying in his formulation.

For this wondrous child-bearing of the holy Virgin produced in her offspring one person which was truly human and truly divine, because neither substance so retained their properties that there could be any division of persons in them; nor was the creature taken into partnership with its Creator in such a way that one was the in-dweller and the other the dwelling; but so that the one nature was blended with the other.  

Similarly, whereas in his refutation of Nestorius Leo is unwilling to appeal to the image of indwelling, which might imply too great distinction or separation between the dweller and the indwelt, we have observed that, in responding to Eutyches’ position, he does not find it problematic to apply to the Incarnation the metaphor from Proverbs of Wisdom and her house. This comparison indicates something of the ad hoc character of both Leo’s refutations, as well as the more general tendency inherent in the very act of rebuttal that in reacting to what is perceived as one doctrinal extreme, one is automatically impelled to more somewhat along the axis toward the other extreme in order to reinforce the truth which appears to have been undermined.

In view of what we noted earlier concerning the distinction of levels in Western theology by the use of nature and person, Leo’s

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47 Sermo 23, 1, as cited in GRILLMEIER, 1975, p. 537.
48 For the passage in questions see the first citation of the tome by Timothy Aelurus quoted above.
exposition in sections 4-5 of the tome constitutes one of his most systematic statements on the subject:

For although in the Lord Jesus Christ there is one Person of God and man, yet that whereby contumely attaches to both is one thing, and that whereby glory attaches to both is another: for from what belongs to us he has that manhood which is inferior to the Father; while from the Father he has equal Godhead with the Father.

Accordingly, on account of this unity which is to be understood as existing in both natures, we read, on the one hand, that "the Son of Man came down from heaven," inasmuch as the Son of God took flesh from that Virgin of whom he was born; and, on the other hand, the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, inasmuch as he underwent this, not in his actual Godhead, wherein the Only-begotten is coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, but in the weakness of human nature. (emphasis added) 49

As he indicates, there is one person in two natures (also referred to as "one thing" and "another"), the differentiation between these latter being implied by the scriptural record, as in the example of the crucifixion. The Son of God is subjected to this action, and yet to suffer and die are not predicates which can be applied directly to divinity. Rather these are human attributes, which were assumed by the Word as proper to humanity. The Formula of Union cited below deals with the same issues, indicating person as the level of unity in Christ and nature as that of differentiation between divinity and humanity.

We confess, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, the unique son of God, perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and body; begotten of the Father before [the] ages according to the Godhead, the same in the last days for us and for our salvation [born] of Mary the Virgin according to the manhood; the same consubstantial with the Father in Godhead, and consubstantial with us in manhood, for a union of two natures took place; therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. 50

Obviously, the construction is much more Antiochene than Alexandrian, and yet it is important to underline that it presented a form of words to which St. Cyril willingly granted his assent. The same thought is found in his own formulation later in his letter to John of Antioch:

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50 Ibid., p. 356.
In addition we all confess that the Word of God is impassible, though in his all-wise dispensation of the mystery, he is seen to attribute to himself the sufferings undergone by his own flesh. So the all-wise Peter spoke of Christ suffering for us in the flesh, and not in the nature of the ineffable Godhead. (emphasis added)\textsuperscript{51}

Here, significantly, the terminology employed is rather different. Once again there is reference to the agency of the divine Word and the distinction of what is appropriate to divinity and humanity, however nature is referred to in the singular and Christ’s manhood is alluded to in terms of His flesh.

In view of the basic agreement between the first three texts, it is noteworthy to observe the contrast formed by Timothy Aelurus’ commentary on the above passage from the tome, which is reproduced below:

By confessing Christ as “our Lord” he [Leo] again craftily subverts the expression “God and man.” But he has subverted [this] by saying that the person is one. And again, as if he had forgotten his own words he subverts them by speaking of “one” and “another.” How, then, tell me, could “one” have become “one and another”? For “one” and “two” cannot be thought of as being the same, neither can the concept of unity be attributed to “one and another.” How can you call “lord” him who borrowed from another person his being lord as you said, “by a connection of fellowship”? Therefore, at all points you are shown to be in contradiction with what you said at the beginning. For the terminology of “one and another” belongs to those who divide, terminology which you apply to each nature, artfully using the word “unity” as its companion and safeguarder, relying, I suppose, on the force of the division being unimpaired by the unity ... Nestorius, too, in his teaching, says: “I divide the natures but unite the worship.” (Emphasis added)\textsuperscript{52}

Fundamentally, Timothy has difficulty with the material because of the terminology employed. Indeed, he seems to be suffering from the same comprehension gap as Leo was with regard to Eutyches, only in reverse. Unaccustomed to the difference of levels in the application of the terms person and nature to Christ, Timothy is more familiar with their coinherence, so that one nature implies one person. Hence, he finds Leo’s exposition of a “unity which is to be understood as existing in two natures” as an impossibility and complete contradiction.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp. 357-358.
\textsuperscript{52} EBIED/WICKHAM, 1985, p. 152.
in terms, "for," as he writes, "‘one’ and ‘two’ cannot be thought of as being the same." The breakdown in communication between Leo and Timothy is clearly at the heart of the traditional dispute between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, emphasizing yet again the importance of clarifying anew the status of Leo’s writing in the course of reconsidering relations between the two communions. Significantly, the fuller understanding by both sides which has emerged through the joint theological commission has in part been achieved by a greater willingness to seek a clearer definition of technical terms and usage, where those utilized by the other party seemed out of step with their own.

Timothy’s response to Leo’s formulation is to charge the pope with crypto-Nestorianism, obfuscating the division he is introducing into the union by means of the artful use of expressions of unity. Had not Nestorius also done the same in certain statements attributed to him? Consequently, when Leo elsewhere talks at more length on the theme of unity, Timothy withholds approbation, directing the reader instead to parallel passages in Cyril’s works. In their overview of Timothy’s output the editors Ebied and Wickham describe his extant œuvres as "pièces d’occasion," the work of a leader under attack rallying his forces to continue the struggle. There is no pretension to objectivity in judging his opponents’ doctrinal theses. He is a pamphleteer and propagandist for the cause, first and last."  

Moreover, one should recall that most of these books were composed during his long exile (460-475), one with which Leo heartily concurred, writing a second letter to the Emperor Leo for Timothy’s assent. When this was rejected, he was promptly excommunicated by the pope, who welcomed his Chalcedonian successor in one of his final letters.  

Despite personal rancor, Timothy is nevertheless willing to acknowledge the wisdom of Leo’s words in elaboration of the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds where their tenor is more reminiscent of Alexandrian formulæ. Here, for example, is a passage from section two of the tome:

This birth in time in no way detracted from, in no way added to, that divine and everlasting birth; but expended itself wholly in the work of restoring man, who had been deceived, so that it might both overcome death, and by its power “destroy the devil who had the power of death.”... For, in fact, he was “conceived of the Holy Ghost” within the womb of a virgin mother, who bare him, as she had conceived him, without loss of virginity.  

53 Ibid., p. 116.
54 JALLAND, 1941, p. 397.
Below is reproduced Timothy’s remarks on the above passage:

You have admirably expressed here the mystery of the only-begotten’s incarnate dispensation and considered the honour of the divine transcendence of him who was born of the Virgin. Hence you are recognized to be one whom it ill befits to destroy by your subsequent words what you have affirmed. For you are proved to have done one of two things: either by your subsequent words you are destroying the previous or you have not employed these even with a sound understanding but for the deception of the simple.\(^{56}\)

Hence one of his primary concerns about Leo’s thought is its lack of consistency. While, as we have seen, some of this may be more apparent than real, there are other cases, which are more troubling. We have noted that Leo refers to Christ’s humanity as manhood, and sometimes this interchanges with flesh, but at least on one occasion the substitution is made in terms of Man (section 4):

For the selfsame who is very God is also very Man: and there is no illusion in this union, while the lowliness of man and the loftiness of Godhead meet together. For as “God” is not changed by the compassion [exhibited], so “Man” is not consumed by the dignity [bestowed]. \textit{For each “form” does the acts which belong to it, in communion with the other; the Word, that is, performing what belongs to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh. The one of these shines out in miracles; the other succumbs to injuries.} (emphasis added)\(^{57}\)

In the above passage we note that both the Word and the Man are depicted as agents, each allotted a defined sphere of activity, though they act in communion.

Timothy Aelurus comments on the passage in the following manner:

Notice that he openly blasphemes by differentiating the God who loves and the particular man undestroyed by the greatness of the divine dignity. But he has stated that man and the God each persists and effects its own things. Therefore God’s Word ceases being born of a woman but continues solely in the birth from the Father whose peer he is, for according to your argument, self-emptying does not attach to him. How then does our Lord’s flesh communicate eternal life, seeing it is life-giving and he is Life, if its action succumbed to pains? How is the crucified the

\(^{56}\) EBIED/WICKHAM, 1985, p. 144.

Lord of glory? If, as we believe, he gives life to the dead, what means is left to the other person of, as you put it, sparkling with miracles? How can you be so ignorant as to imagine that the body which can raise the dead succumbed to pains? 58

In this case Timothy’s reaction is perhaps more widely comprehensible. Although Leo states at the outset that the selfsame is very God and very Man, nonetheless the subsequent statements regarding distinct agency and spheres of operation seem to suggest that the two natures are somehow principles of action and thereby undermine the role of the Logos, while at the same time being rather loosely interconnected through communion.

In terms of Leo’s impact on the development of Eastern Orthodox theology, as we have noted, not only was his tome accepted at Chalcedon, but was of importance in drafting the council’s Christological definition:

For [the Council] opposes those who try to divide the mystery of the dispensation into a dyad of Sons;...and those who imagine two natures of the Lord before the union but invent one after the union it anathematizes.

Following therefore the holy Fathers, we confess one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ, and we all teach harmoniously [that he is] the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten before ages of the Father in Godhead, the same in the last days for us; and for our salvation [born] of Mary the virgin theotokos in manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, unique; acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation—the difference of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved, and [each] combining in one Person and hypostasis—not divided or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets of old and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us about him, and the symbol of the Fathers has handed down to us. (emphasis added) 59

The first passage highlighted in bold reminds us of Leo’s condemnation of Eutyches. Moreover, while the first part of the horos resembles St. Cyril’s characteristic emphases and the phraseology of the Formula of Union, the central portion bears the clear imprint of the

58 EBIE/WICKHAM, 1985, p. 149.
tome. Nothing is stated there concerning the activity of the natures, however that section of Leo’s tome provided support for Maximus the Confessor's defense of the reality of a human will and operation in Christ in distinction to the divine. This in turn was ratified by the sixth Ecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, with direct reference to section four of the tome cited above. The precise formulation adopted by the Fathers at the Third Council of Constantinople in 681 reads as follows:

We also proclaim two natural willings or wills in him and two natural operations, without separation, without change, without partition, without confusion, according to the teaching of the holy Fathers—and two natural wills not contrary [to each other], God forbid, as the impious heretics have said [they would be], but his human will following, and not resisting or opposing, but rather subject to his divine and all-powerful will...We also glorify two natural operations in the same our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, without confusion, that is, a divine operation and a human operation, as the divine preacher Leo most clearly says: "For each form does what is proper to it, in communion with the other; the Word, that is, performing what belongs to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh." We will not therefore grant [the existence of] one natural operation of God and the creature, lest we should either raise up into the divine nature what is created, or bring down the pre-eminence of the divine nature into the place suitable for things that are made. (Emphasis added) 60

At the same time, the interpretation of the tome within the Eastern Orthodox tradition must also take into account the decisions of the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553, which largely represents a reaffirmation of Cyrilline concerns, as indicated in the following articles:

3. If anyone says that the Word of God who did wonders was one and Christ who suffered was another, or says that God the Word was together with Christ who came of woman, or was in him as one in another, but not [that he was] one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate and made man, and [that] the wonders and the sufferings, which he voluntarily endured in the flesh, were of the same, let him be anathema.

7. If anyone who says "in two natures" does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ is made known in Godhead and manhood, in order that he may indicate the distinction of the natures, from which the ineffable union took place without confusion, neither the Word being changed into the natures of the flesh not the flesh

60 Ibid., pp. 383-384.
transferred into the nature of the Word—for each remains what it was by nature, even when the union by hypostasis had taken place—but takes the phrase with reference to division into parts in the mystery of Christ [let him be anathema]. Or when [anyone] confessing the number of natures in the same our one Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word incarnate, does not take the distinction of the elements of which he was constituted, which was not taken away by the union, in contemplation only—for [he is] one of both and both [are] through one—but uses the number as if he possessed separated natures with their own hypostases, let him be anathema.

10. If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified in flesh is true God and Lord of glory and one of the holy Trinity, let him be anathema. (Emphasis added) 61

In article 3 we see the Fathers of the council rejecting the possibility of two principles of activity in Christ, one performing miracles, while the other is subject to suffering, thus meeting the objection Timothy had raised about certain formulations in the tome. This clarification then became important for the formulation of the doctrine of two operations at the sixth council by distinguishing agent and operation. Likewise article 10 restates Timothy’s Alexandrian emphasis on the salvific significance of affirming that God the Word was crucified and died for the sins of the world. Meanwhile, article 7 tempers two nature language with regard to the Incarnation to indicate that the distinction between the divine and human natures does not imply any separation within the union but is affirmed “in contemplation only.”

Turning now, in conclusion, to consider the position of Pope Leo’s tome in the light of the second agreed statement of the joint Oriental and Eastern Orthodox commission, it is important once again to interpret the letter in the light of the church’s condemnation of the Eutychian heresy.

[Both families condemn the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies in articles 1 and 2.]

3. Both families agree that the Hypostasis of the Logos became composite (πουθετος), by uniting to His divine uncreated nature with its natural will and energy, which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created human nature, which He assumed at the Incarnation and made His own, with its natural will and energy.

4. Both families agree that the natures with their proper energies and wills are united hypostatically and naturally without confusion, without change, without division, and without

61 Ibid., pp. 379-381.
separation, and that they are distinguished in thought alone (τῆς θεωρίας μόνης).

5. Both families agree that He who wills and acts is always the one Hypostasis of the Logos incarnate.\(^{62}\)

Similarly, the fifth article underscores the importance of the main Alexandrian perspective on unity of agency which Leo tended to express in terms of the person of the Word, although this was sometimes compromised in order to underline the reality of the distinction of humanity and divinity in the union. Once again the focus in the fourth on distinguishing the natures "in thought alone" echoes the formulation of the fifth council we have just remarked on in avoiding any interpretation which might suggest division or separation. Meanwhile, the third maintains the distinction between agent and energy, which was sometimes obfuscated in Leo’s account.

The above agreement indicates the possibilities of what may be achieved in terms of mutual understanding through a sober reconsideration of the documents of the faith in an eirenic spirit of Christian love and charity rather than in the hectic, confused, suspicion-ridden and increasingly estranged atmosphere in which Leo and Timothy conducted their long-distance diatribes. In reviewing the status of Leo’s tome within the contemporary dialogue, I think it is useful to recall the historical circumstances surrounding its composition, balancing the author’s moral depth, theological acumen and orthodox intention against his lack of detailed information regarding the current theological debate in the East, the partially ad hoc nature of the writing, the pressures inherent in the task of responding to an extreme heretical position, the absence of clear definitions of terminology employed and the unclear perception of fine distinctions of thought which required greater analysis than could be obtained in the time available. Within a dialogue in which Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians are becoming more aware of their common heritage and their common defense of the central truths of the faith, it may be possible for both sides to arrive at a more balanced appraisal of Leo’s place within that tradition and of the affirmation of the Fathers of the Council at Chalcedon that Cyril and Leo taught alike.\(^{63}\)

\(^{62}\) The statement may be conveniently consulted in *SNTR* 1 (1996), pp. 105-107.

\(^{63}\) JALLAND, 1941, p. 293.
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SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH: EASTERN AND ORIENTAL ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES

John Behr

Severus of Antioch (c465-538) is one of the key figures in the study of the development of post-Chalcedonian Christology and, consequently, also for our modern dialogue. It is with Severus’ place both in history and in our contemporary theological dialogue that this paper is concerned.

In his life and work, Severus struggled against two opposing tendencies. On the one hand, his first major treatise, the Philalethes (c508-511), was written against the anonymous pro-Chalcedon Florilegium Cyrillianum, a list of extracts from the writings of Cyril attempting to demonstrate that Cyril had spoken of two natures after the union. This was then followed by his treatises against the monk Nephalius, who had attempted, more thematically, to combine dyophysite and monophysite Christology, and, about a decade later, by his work Against the Impious Grammarian, that is, John of Caesarea, who was also looking for a resolution between Chalcedon and the teaching of Severus, again on the basis of Cyril. On the other hand, however, after his flight to Egypt in 518, Severus found himself in a position of having to contend against those non-Chalcedonians who, as he saw it, had misunderstood in various ways the basic Cyrillian mia physis christology, that is, Julian of Halicarnassus with his assertion that Christ’s body was incorruptible before the resurrection, and the extreme monophysitism of Sergius.

This two-sided defence, against both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian theologians, had a two-fold effect. Firstly, Severus forged, in a clear, precise and consistent manner, the terminology and expression for Cyrillian mia physis christology, in a way which thereafter became standard for the non-Chalcedonian tradition. It was Severus, more than any other, who, as Lebon put it, transformed the mia physis formula of Cyril from a battle cry to a philosophical
formula. Secondly, and perhaps unexpectedly, it was his considered attack against the Chalcedonian theologians who were tentatively trying to reclaim Cyril, that prompted the further development of what has since become known as “neo-Chalcedonian” theology. Indeed, in the estimation of Samuel, the Christology maintained by “neo-Chalcedonianism” is essentially that worked out by Severus in his two-fold activity: “If the key role which he played in this field has not been recognized by the Chalcedonian side, that is because of misunderstanding, if not of prejudice.”

In the last years of his life it seemed that reconciliation between the two sides was possible. In the winter of 534/5, Severus finally accepted Justinian’s invitations to attend the conferences which he was hosting in Constantinople. Severus and Anthimus, who had just been transferred from Trebizond to Constantinople, managed to come to an agreement on the substance of Christology. However, the arrival of Pope Agapetus in Constantinople in 536, requesting Justinian’s aid against the Goths, reversed the situation; Anthimus resigned the patriarchal throne and Menas was consecrated by Pope Agapetus in his place. At a synod from May to June of that year, Severus and his companions were condemned. The synod was then confirmed by and edict of the Emperor on the grounds that he had fallen into both Nestorianism and Eutychianism (!), his books were banned and he was banished. This was followed by his condemnation, along with Dioscorus, at the Council of Constantinople in 680-1. With the help of Theodora, Severus managed to return to Egypt, where two years later, according to Athanasius, “the Lord visited him with a light disorder, and ... he fell asleep,” joining the company of holy fathers.

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5 ACO 3, 121.5-9.
6 Ibid, lines 22-27, 30-34.
7 PO 4.716.
Although continuously revered as a Father by the non-Chalcedonian churches, it is only during the course of this century that Severus’ christology, and his place within history, has come to be appreciated anew. At the beginning of this century, the Russian church historian Bolotov acknowledged that if Severus condemned Chalcedon, he did so not because he considered that the Council’s phrase “in two natures” was itself heretical, as it was held by some more extreme monophysites, but because he regarded this as being a “one-sided, clumsy choice of dogmatic words” when compared to the more traditional expressions of Cyril of Alexandria.¹ See the use of Bolotov made by N.A. Zabolotsky, “The Christology of Severus of Antioch,” Ekklesiastikos Pharos, 58:3-4 (1976), 357-386; the quotation is given on p.358, fn.5.

J. Lebon, Le Monophysisme Sévérien, (Louvain, 1909), and “La christologie du monophysisme syrien,” in Das Konzil von Chalkedon, 425-580. Lebon, 9

The most important work on Severus in the early part of this century was the extensive and systematic investigation of Lebon.² He concluded his study by asserting that the Christology of the non-Chalcedonians, as represented by Severus, was “absolutely correct and complete,” and that there is no Westerner “who would not accept and defend, as they do, the unity of the incarnate nature after the union, if one understands by the term ‘nature’ the concrete and individual reality that is otherwise designated by the term ‘person.’”³ Nevertheless, despite acknowledging that Severus had carefully differentiated himself from the monophysitism of Eutyches and Sergius, Lebon, with a certain lack of sensitivity, continued to refer to the Christology of Severus as “monophysitism.”

The most important stage of the Chalcedonian reassessment of the Christology of Severus began, of course, in 1964 with the first of four Unofficial Consultations between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian theologians, and then in 1989 with the first of three meetings of the Joint Commission. Building upon the work of earlier scholars, and with contributions now from both traditions, the theologians present began, from the first meeting, to recognize the basic unity they shared with regard to Christology, despite the various formulae used to express the same truth. This modern consensus, as was earlier anticipated by both Severus and the “neo-Chalcedonian” theologians, was grounded upon the fundamentally Cyrilian basis and perspective of each tradition.

Already by the time of the second Unofficial Consultation,

²See the use of Bolotov made by N.A. Zabolotsky, “The Christology of Severus of Antioch,” Ekklesiastikos Pharos, 58:3-4 (1976), 357-386; the quotation is given on p.358, fn.5.

³J. Lebon, Le Monophysisme Sévérien, (Louvain, 1909), and “La christologie du monophysisme syrien,” in Das Konzil von Chalkedon, 425-580.

⁴“La christologie du monophysisme syrien,” p.575.
discussion had progressed to the point of asking about what, given this Christological consensus, was the status of the four Councils, from Chalcedon to Second Nicaea, not regarded as Ecumenical by the non-Chalcedonians, and what should be done about the various anathemas placed by each side upon the other. A further problem arising from this concerned the delicate issue of "tradition," both in the sense that it has now become a "tradition" for the non-Chalcedonians to reject Chalcedon and for the Chalcedonians to reject those rejecting Chalcedon, but more importantly in the sense of what Zizioulas, at the third Unofficial Consultation, called "the problem of traditional minimalism"\(^1\): to what extent, and in what way, are the Councils of the Church part of the tradition of the Church, such that we can now reevaluate, or historically contextualize, some of their pronouncements, in order to enter into communion with other Churches who have a different historical expression, if not theological content, for their tradition? On what basis can this be done?

Whilst the issue of the meaning of "tradition" was never further addressed directly, and this is certainly beyond the scope of this paper, the resolution of the predicament involved a careful differentiation between the Council itself and the faith that it proclaimed: both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians condemn the teaching attributed to Eutyches, but the latter do not do so on the basis of the Fourth Council; both sides have continued in the same faith, but differ in their acceptance or rejection of certain Councils, indeed, for both of them to maintain the same faith, historical circumstances have required them to speak in different terms.\(^1\) It is in this sense that section 8 of the Second Agreed Statement, issued in 1990, stated:

Both families accept the first three Ecumenical Councils, which form our common heritage. In relation to the four later Councils of


the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox state that for them the above points 1-7 [the kernel of the agreed Christological position – JB] are the teachings also of the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, while the Oriental Orthodox consider this statement of the Orthodox as their interpretation. With this understanding, the Oriental Orthodox respond to it positively.\textsuperscript{13}

That is, the four later Councils are regarded by the Eastern Orthodox Church as an interpretation of the faith of the first three Councils, which, while not adding anything to that common faith, nevertheless clarify certain points in response to particular developments within the Chalcedonian Church. As these developments were not necessarily paralleled within the non-Chalcedonian Churches, the acceptance of these later Councils is not required of the Oriental Orthodox, yet they respond favourably towards them. On the basis of this, the Agreed Statement then goes on to propose that the anathemas and condemnations against each other should be lifted, “on the basis that the Councils and fathers previously anathematized or condemned are not heretical.” (Section 10).

The point of this digression into the conclusions of the Unofficial and Official dialogues is not to comment on them themselves – this is the topic for others more competent than myself, later this morning – but to set the context for discussing a particular aspect of the Christology of Severus. Whilst the issues addressed by the Council of Constantinople in 680/1 may be particular to the Chalcedonian tradition, and as such may not need to be formally recognized by the non-Chalcedonian Churches, the question must be asked whether the theology which it affirms, that of the reality of a human will and energy together with the divine will and energy in Christ, is indeed also affirmed, at least implicitly, by those traditions which stand outside of this development?

Already in response to the first Unofficial Consultation, this question was raised by Trembelas and Verhovskyy\textsuperscript{14}. However apart from one paper giving a brief historical survey of the Monothelite controversy,\textsuperscript{15} this issue was never fully addressed. Nevertheless, in

\textsuperscript{13} Text given in \textit{St. Nersess Theological Review} 1:1 (1996), 106.
the Second Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission, it is asserted that both families affirm that the Hypostasis of the Logos became composite (οὐθετῶς), by uniting to His divine nature, with its natural will and energy, a created human nature with its natural will and energy; that these are united hypostatically, without confusion, change, division or separation, but distinguished in thought alone; and that it is the Hypostasis of the Logos incarnate who alone wills and acts (sections 3-5). This certainly reflects the Christology of Severus as it is presented by the non-Chalcedonian theologians, in particular V.C. Samuel, but, it must be admitted that this does not reflect his Christology as it is presented in the standard Orthodox textbooks on the subject nor by the latest tome in the already voluminous work Christ in Christian Tradition by A. Grillmeier. The late Fr. John Meyendorff, in his book Christ in Eastern Christian Thought, presented Severus as being a forerunner of monoenergism, thereby casting a doubt on his teaching concerning the reality of the human nature of Christ. Grillmeier goes even further: “Without a doubt Severus already contributes to the monoenergist, monothelite controversy of the seventh century.” For this particular “slant” of Severus, Grillmeier spurns Severus as offering “little help in constructing a modern Christology with a stronger appreciation of the uncurtailed humanity of Christ.” By this expression, Grillmeier seems to demand a Christology in which the human will of Christ is seen as spontaneous and autonomous, a “principle of choosing which functions by itself,” and, ultimately, possessing it’s own consciousness.

Grillmeier’s presuppositions about what constitutes an adequate Christology are all too clear from his comments. However, this acknowledgment does not soften the fact that such works now form the basic textbooks introducing students to the Christology of Severus and others. As such, and as a very practical contribution towards reconciliation and mutual understanding, it is incumbent on scholars of both traditions to investigate such issues thoroughly and to produce satisfactory, and recognized, textbooks establishing their position.

The suspicion that there might be a possible implicit monoenergism in the Christology of Severus seems, in fact, to be based

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on a misunderstanding parallel to that of earlier accusations of his “monophysitism.” In giving a brief sketch of how this is so, there is one further issue that I would like to raise, concerning the identity of the hypostasis of Christ in Severus’ Christology and in “neo-Chalcedonian” Christology.

For Severus, the term ousia, essence, applies to that which is common or generic, and hypostasis to that which is particular, while physis, nature, can apply to either: inclusively, for instance, to all mankind, or particularly to one individual human being. The ousia of a being is not simply an abstraction, it is real: it is what a particular being is; but it does not, however, have concrete existence in or of itself— for everything concrete is particular. The ousia is, as it were, the reality which is particularized or individuated as particular, individual objects or hypostases. With regard to the final important term in Christology, prosopon, Severus gives it a slightly different emphasis than hypostasis: while the individuated ousia, the hypostasis, represents the internal reality of a particular object, the prosopon designates its external aspect.

One final distinction must be drawn for a proper understanding of Severus’ Christology: that is, the distinction between a “simple” and a “composite” hypostasis. As an example of a simple hypostasis, Severus gives the three Persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and as an example of a composite hypostasis, a human being, such as Peter or John, who are composed of body and soul. In a human being, the ousia of the body and the ousia of the soul, as generic realities, are individuated together in a union of both, while each remaining what they are according to their own principle. However, it is not simply as two ousiai that the body and soul are brought together in union, but rather as hypostases— that is, as individuated ousiai, but ousiai which have been individuated by one and the same unifying act:

The body and the soul of which a man is composed, each of them preserves its hypostasis, without either being confused, or changed over to, the other. Since, however, they have come into concrete existence in composition and not separately, to neither of

21Cf. C. imp. Gram. Or.2.4, CSCO 111, p.76-77.
them can a distinct prosopon be assigned.\textsuperscript{22}

The body of a particular man has never, and never will, exist outside of the union with the soul, the union in which both ousiai are particularized or concretized; the body is not, what Severus describes as a "self-subsistent" (ιδεοσυστάτως) hypostasis, as are simple hypostases, such as the Father and the Holy Spirit, who exist in their own right.\textsuperscript{23} Only in and through this union does the composite hypostasis of man acquire a prosopon. If the body had come into existence by itself, it would be a simple self-subsisting hypostasis or nature, with its own prosopon.

A human being, as a "composite hypostasis," or alternatively a "composite nature," is the result of the union of two individuated ousiai, and as such can be described as being "from two natures" or "from two hypostases." But as these two ousiai are individuated together, through the same union, resulting in one and the same prosopon, a human being cannot be said to be "in two natures" or "hypostases." This, for Severus, is the essential characteristic of the hypostatic or natural union:

The particularity of the natural union is that the hypostases are in composition and are perfect without diminution, but refuse to continue in an individual existence so as to be numbered two and to have its own prosopon impressed upon each of them.\textsuperscript{24}

A natural or hypostatic union of two natures or hypostases results in a composite nature or hypostasis, with its prosopon; although the individuated ousiai remain undiminished and fully real, they can no longer be counted as two – they only exist in the one unity. The duality can be perceived, according to Severus, like most post-Chalcedonian Christology, in thought alone (τῇ θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ).\textsuperscript{25} In contrast to this natural or hypostatic union, a prosopic union results in

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., cited in Samuel, "The Christology of Severus of Antioch," 136.


\textsuperscript{25}In Lebon’s somewhat extreme estimation this implies that there the distinction is merely a "creation of the intellect," rather than a reality in the object itself. "La Christologie du monophysisme syrien," 500.
no more than a union of love or association between two self-subsisting hypostases, each with their own prosopa — for example the fellowship in apostleship of Peter and Paul.\textsuperscript{26}

Building upon such analyses, Severus presents his Christology in the following terms:\textsuperscript{27} When the simple hypostasis of the Word of God, who is before all things, united manhood to himself, it is not possible that a specific prosopon could be ascribed to either the Godhead of the Word nor to the manhood which is united unchangeably to the Word. Both the Godhead and the manhood are only perceived in their composition, not as having concrete existence apart from each other. It is by the coming together, in a natural or hypostatic union, of the Godhead and manhood, each remaining without change or diminution, that the one composite hypostasis of the incarnate Word receives His prosopon. As Severus writes in ep.15:

For those hypostases or natures, being in composition without diminution, and not existing separately and in individual existence, make up one prosopon of the one Lord and Christ and Son, and the one incarnate nature and hypostasis of the Word.\textsuperscript{28}

The “one” of the Cyrillian \textit{mia physis} formula cannot, for Severus, any more than it can for Cyril himself,\textsuperscript{29} be separated from the qualifying term, “incarnate.” It is a unity of two natures, or, for Severus, two hypostases, which results, not in their undifferentiated merger, but in the “one incarnate nature,” or the one composite nature or hypostasis.

That Severus speaks quite plainly of the union “from two hypostases,” is probably what gave occasion to the charge levelled at him by Justinian — that he has fallen, somehow, into the opposite errors of Nestorianism and Eutychianism. It is interesting to note that a similar charge of “sounding Nestorian” was made by Romanides in response to Samuel’s papers presenting the Christology of Severus at the Unofficial Consultations in Aarhus and Bristol.\textsuperscript{30} For those not familiar with the particularities of Severus’ language, it must indeed seem so.

\textsuperscript{26} Cf. Ep. 2, \textit{PO} 12.189-190.
\textsuperscript{27} Cf. Samuel, “The Christology of Severus of Antioch,” 137.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{PO} 12.210.
\textsuperscript{29} Cf. esp. ep.46.4 (the second letter to Successus), cited by Severus, to demonstrate this point, in ep.2, \textit{PO} 12.193.
However, a further, more important, issue was raised by Samuel in his subsequent publications, to which I alluded earlier: the question concerning the identity of the hypostasis of Christ in Severan and “neo-Chalcedonian” Christology. Samuel is emphatic that Severus draws a clear distinction between the hypostasis of the Word of God and the hypostasis of Christ: “the hypostasis of Christ is not simply the hypostasis of God the Son, but it is the hypostasis of God the Son in His incarnate state,” that is, it is the composite hypostasis formed from the union between God and man in the Incarnation. Severus states his position emphatically:

The natures and the hypostases, of which He has been composed, are perceived irreducibly and unchangeably in the union. But it is not possible to recognize a prosopon for each of them, because they did not come into being dividedly either in specific concrescence or in duality. For He is one hypostasis from both, and one prosopon conjointly, and one nature of God the Word incarnate.

In asserting that “they did not come into being dividedly,” so that one cannot recognize a prosopon for each separately, Severus is clearly not denying the eternality of the Word of God: what he is insisting upon, however, is that the one composite hypostasis of Christ, with its one prosopon, is the result of the union, the Incarnation.

In the Second Agreed Statement, it is affirmed that both families agree that “the hypostasis of the Logos became composite (ὑμηθετος)” as a result of the Incarnation, and that it is the “one hypostasis of the Logos incarnate” who alone wills and acts (section 4, 5) – statements which fully accord with Severus’ position. However, the basic axiom in modern Orthodox presentations of “neo-Chalcedonian” Christology is the complete identification of the hypostasis of union with the pre-existent hypostasis of the Word. This is, of course, worked out through the doctrine of the enthypostasia: the Word of God, at the incarnation, assumed human nature or ousia, which was without its own hypostasis, and gave it His own hypostasis, “hypostatizing

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33Cf Meyendorff, op. cit., 73.
human nature into His own hypostasis." Although John of Damascus, when discussing the hypostatic union, refers in passing to the union of the two natures "in one composite hypostasis," it is more characteristic of the post-Chalcedonian writers to deny the very possibility of a composite hypostasis, and to speak instead of the "properties" of the hypostasis of the Word as becoming more composite through the Incarnation: of the three Persons of the Trinity, the Word alone is now visible and palpable.

Samuel raises certain questions concerning this theory of *enhypostasia* as viewed from a Severan perspective: firstly, does it ensure anything more than the mere presence of an abstract human nature in Christ? And secondly, if human nature is incapable of existing by itself without its own hypostasis, does its subsistence in the hypostasis of the Word of God, who is beyond all the spatial and temporal limitations of the created world, actually make Jesus Christ a concrete reality in this world? If one really accepts what is implied by the theory of *enhypostasia*, could Jesus Christ have lived in this world at all?

Clearly these are serious questions, which it is beyond the scope of this presentation to resolve. It is possible that the problem might simply be due to continued terminological misunderstandings, or, alternatively, that it is the result of different ways of expressing the same truth. Yet the issues raised cannot be ignored.

Returning to the question of a possible latent monoenergism in the Christology of Severus. I have mentioned how Severus emphatically affirms the unimpaired continuity of the two realities out of which the

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34 As expressed by Leontius of Jerusalem, cf. Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, 74. It is perhaps pertinent to note that this understanding of "enhypostasis," stemming from the work of F. Loofs, and popularized by H. Relton, has in recent years, particularly through the work of B. Daley, been increasingly seen as a misunderstanding of the patristic texts. For discussion and references, cf. Grillmeier, *op. cit.*


36 Cf. Leontius of Jerusalem: "The natures were not composed in mixing; there is also no composite hypostasis, because it is not from hypostases; rather the *idioma* of the hypostasis of the Logos becomes more composite." *PG* 86.1485d4-7; following the emended text proposed by C. Moeller, "Textes `monophysites' de Léonce de Jérusalem," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 27 (1951), 474, fn.18.

one hypostasis of Christ is composed. It is in this sense that Severus can affirm that Jesus Christ had both a human will and a human energy, although they are no more self-subsistent than His human hypostasis: they exist within, and are operated by, the one composite hypostasis of Christ. Using his favoured analogy, Severus explains how while a composite human being does some things which are intellectual and some that are sensible and bodily, yet it is, nevertheless, the same man who acts in both: one does not say that the body of Peter eats, if by that one means that his body eats somehow apart from Peter himself, nor that his mind prays — it is Peter himself who eats and prays. Similarly, Severus explains:

One can see the same in the case of Emmanuel. For there is one who acts, that is the Word of God incarnate; and there is one active movement which is activity, but the things which are done are diverse, that is, (the things) accomplished by activity. ... And just as no-one divides the Word from the flesh, so also it is impossible to divide or separate these activities.  

Severus is clearly concerned to exclude the possibility, which he sees in the Tome of Leo, which he cites several times, of the natures acting of themselves. 39 There are certainly, according to Severus, two types of activity, yet it is one and the same who works both:

Between the things performed and done by the one Christ, the difference is great. Some of the acts are befitting the divinity, while the others are human. ... Yet the one Word performed the latter and the former, ... Because the things performed are different, we shall [not however] on this account rightly define two natures or forms as operating. 40

This difference between the activities appropriate to each nature is simply a consequence of the fact that the two natures united are radically different: uncreated and created. Yet while the difference in the properties of the natures remains, the natures have nevertheless been united without confusion or division. As such, Severus is able to

39Cf. Ibid. 84; trans. 154; Ep. 1, PO 12.182-4.
embrace fully the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*:

When a hypostatic union is confessed, of which the fulfilment is that from the two natures there is one Christ without confusion, one prosopon, one hypostasis, one nature belonging to the Word Incarnate, the Word is known by means of the properties of the flesh, ... and again the properties of the Word will be acknowledged as the properties of the flesh, and the same One will be seen by means of both [sets of properties].

In this union without confusion, the properties and faculties distinguishing each nature are preserved, yet united without division, and are employed by one and the same Christ, the Word Incarnate. The human nature of Christ is not reduced to a merely passive instrument used by the Word in His work of salvation, for it is in, through and as a human being, endowed with will and reason, that the Word Incarnate effects our salvation.

I hope that in this paper I have managed to convey something of the importance of Severus of Antioch, both within the historical contexts of his own times and our own times, and in terms of his contribution to the development of Christology, both non-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian. It is clear, from the various Unofficial and Official Agreed Statements, that real progress has been made towards a genuine theological consensus. I hope that I have also made it clear that such statements do not, however, lessen the need to return to the sources of our theology, to study them ever more diligently and to produce the basic textbooks that are sorely needed if we are to overcome the "slanted" way in which much of patristic theology has been presented, and so also to continue to work towards increased mutual understanding.

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41 *Ep. 1 ad Sergium*, 79; trans. 151.
42 Cf. *Ep. 1 ad Sergium*, 85, trans. 154; Hom. 83, *PO* 20.415-7: "the Word of God is united hypostatically not only to flesh, but also to a soul endowed with will and reason, for the purpose of making our souls bent towards sinfulness incline towards the choice of good and the aversion to evil."
RECONCILIATION OF MEMORIES: THE MALIGNED DIOSCORUS

Krikor Maksoudian

The question—"Given that our respective churches honor as saints certain figures whom others anathematize, or anathematize those whom others honor as saints, (a) What obstacles to the reconciliation of memories do you, speaking from your own church tradition, see today? and (b) What ways forward towards reconciliation of memories do you envision?"—is not a modern one. It was confronted by the fathers of the Armenian Church in their discussions and dialogues with the Greeks and the Latins. One person whose name frequently came up in these discussions was Dioscorus, the renowned patriarch of Alexandria, who was excommunicated in the Council of Chalcedon, deposed from his position and exiled. An examination of the reconciliatory position of the Armenian Church fathers regarding Dioscorus' case in the dialogues with the Chalcedonians may be of some interest to those who wish to envision ways forward towards reconciliation of memories.

The Armenians probably first learned of Dioscorus from the correspondence between Peter, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople,¹ and Timothy Aelurus' treatise against the Council of Chalcedon.² In the sixth letter of Peter, Dioscorus is referred to as "the patriarch who was in Alexandria, the one who bore witness [to Christ] in the days of the heretical king Marcianus."³ In Timothy's treatise Dioscorus appears more than once. He is frequently referred to as "blessed."

While it is not known when the correspondence between Peter and Acacius was translated into Armenian, we have a specific reference that puts the date of the translation of Timothy's treatise in the 550s. 4 That parts of this work, including excerpts from a letter written by Dioscorus, were incorporated into a catena compiled at the beginning of the seventh century by Catholicos Komitas is very significant. The catena, known as Knik' hawatoy [The Seal of Faith], was intended as a tool for the Armenian theologians to be used in dialogues with the Greeks and particularly with the Chalcedonians of Caucasia. 5 Excerpts from Timothy's work and Dioscorus' letter in a work of this nature indicate the importance and authority assigned by the Armenians to the patriarchs of Alexandria.

The high degree of esteem enjoyed by Dioscorus in Armenia is also evident from a letter of Vrt'anēs K'ert'oł, the locum tenens of the Armenian catholicate [604-607], to Sormēn Stratelates, a general who served as the military governor of Byzantine Armenia. The Armenian prelate states that the Armenians reckon Dioscorus among the ranks "of the reverend fathers, the doctors inspired by the Holy Spirit and the martyrs." 6 Bishop Movsēs of C'urtaw, a contemporary of Vrt'anēs and the major antagonist of Kiwron, the Chalcedonian catholics of Georgia, is no less respectful of Dioscorus, who, he says, "was called a confessor of Christ." 7 Statements such as these by Armenian churchmen of high position leaves no doubt that Dioscorus was honored as a saint in the early Armenian Church.

In medieval documents, Dioscorus' name appears listed among the venerable fathers and doctors of the Church. For example, under a Profession of Faith, which appears in Ms no 364 of the library of the Mekhitarist fathers of Vienna, copied in 1295, it is stated: "We accept and gladly venerate as holy patriarchs the following who defined the holy faith: Sts. Ignatius who bears God, Dionysius the Areopagite, Julius of Rome, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory the Wonderworker, Gregory the Great of Armenia, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem,

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4 The Narratio de rebus Armeniae, edited by G. Garitte, Louvain, 1952, [§ 71], an early eighth century Armenian Chalcedonian source, specifically states that the treatise, brought to the Armenian patriarchate by the Syriac cleric Abdišoy, was translated into Armenian during the pontificate of Nersēs II, that is in the 550s. Attempts by some to push this date to the 480s is not crucial for our purposes.

5 Knik' hawatoy [The Seal of Faith], edited by K. Tēr-Mkrt'čean, republished under the title Le sceau de la foi, Louvain, 1974, pp. 112, 357.

6 Book of Letters, p. 236.

7 Book of Letters, p. 257.
Philoxenus of Mabbôgh, Severianus, Dioscorus," and so on. The manuscript that includes this information was copied in Xorin Anapat, a monastery in central Cilicia, where in 1295 the Latinophile tendencies among the Armenians were at their peak.

There is reason to believe that Dioscorus was venerated as a saint of the Armenian Church as late as the fourteenth century. This is known from a fourteenth century list of accusations against the Armenians by a group of Latinophile individuals. We also know for a fact that the _pueri_ or _mankunk_ hymn of the Holy Patriarchs—"O Holy Forefathers, always victorious in battle," which is chanted on the days of commemoration of the Patriarchs who participated in the councils of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus—included three interpolated stanzas, one of which was dedicated to Dioscorus, while the other two referred to the anathema against the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. The tradition of chanting these verses continued until 1726, when they were eliminated by Catholicos Karapot II.

In the earlier documents from the seventh to eighth centuries, the Armenian position in regard to Dioscorus seems to be apologetic. In his letter, Vrt'anes K'ert'ol, whom we cited earlier, accuses in a harsh tone the Chalcedonians of excommunicating the likes of Dioscorus and Timothy and of promoting their heretical leaders. Bishop Mowsès of C'urtaw also accuses the participants of Chalcedon of "excommunicating the blessed Dioscorus and calling him a heretic." In no uncertain terms he also charges them with spreading slander about Dioscorus as being in agreement with Eutyches. In the early eighth century, Bishop Step'anos of Siwnik', in his letter to the anonymous bishop of Antioch, is convinced that the participants of the Council of Chalcedon "excommunicated the great Dioscorus out of respect for the king [=emperor]." and later, in the same letter, he cites him as an important authority.

In documents from the tenth and later centuries, the Armenian position in regard to Dioscorus becomes less apologetic and somewhat passive. Particularly in the tenth century documents there is a tendency on the part of Armenian theologians to detach themselves from Dioscorus and Timothy and defend the faith of their church with

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8 J. Dashian, _Catalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitharisten-Bibliothek zu Wien_, Vienna, 1896, p. 816.
10 _Book of Letters_, p. 236.
11 _Book of Letters_, p. 257.
12 _Book of Letters_, p. 256.
citations from the early fathers, whose works would have been acceptable to the Greeks. The reason for this shift in their traditional position may have been due to the fact that the Armenian theologians were now directly addressing themselves to the Byzantine emperors and churchmen, whereas the earlier documents were for the most part written to local people in Caucasia and Syria.

In a letter by King Gagik Arcruni addressed to the Emperor Romanus Lecapenus, presumably written in the late 930s or the early 940s, Dioscorus' and Timothy's names appear only in passing in a passage wherein the accusations of the Greeks are cited. There is no attempt on the part of the author to defend them as pillars of orthodoxy. It must be noted that since the mid-920s King Gagik Arcruni had been in good relations with the Byzantine court and was recognized by them as archon ton archonton.

This kind of detachment is more evident in documents from the later part of the tenth century. In a letter addressed to Theodore Metropolitan of Melitene, obviously a Chalcedonian bishop, Samwel of Kamrjan, writing at the invitation of Catholicos Xačik I, asks: "In regard to the fact that you have frequently offended us, judging us by Dioscorus, let me ask you, tell me: Who is this Dioscorus? Isn't he your patriarch, the head and leader of the Second Council of Ephesus, from whom the land of Armenia has no statement of profession, nor a definition of faith, nor any other tradition. We have only heard that he refused to be in communion with those in agreement with the accursed Nestorius... For this reason we do not anathematize him but accept him, since we do not reckon him to be evil. For if he is worthy of trust, let him be accepted. But if he thinks otherwise, we do not care, since he is yours." He adds that the Armenians learned of Chalcedon not from Dioscorus but from the canons of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo, which they consider to be contrary to the teachings of the earlier councils. In his letter to the Metropolitan bishop of Sebaste, Catholicos Xačik I poses a similar question: "Since you reproach us for Dioscorus and Peter, [tell us] when have we ever contended against you, against the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo with their formulations? We have never received a profession of faith from them, but only [know] that they, like other lands, cities and many nations, did not consent to Chalcedon."

This kind of an attitude towards Dioscorus perhaps reflects the concern of the Armenian prelate for his flock living in the eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire. Catholicos Xačik is said to have established new episcopal jurisdictions in those regions.

By 1045 most of Greater Armenia had come under Byzantine rule and the Armenian Church had become the target of Byzantine hostility. In c. 1048 the Byzantine administration banished Catholicos Petros and after his demise it decided to terminate the line of the Armenian
catholicoi. Petros' successor Xačik II was never allowed to return to Armenia and was never given official recognition. Under such circumstances, Gagik, the hereditary king of Ani who was now a Byzantine official, went to Constantinople in the mid-1060s and presented a treatise on the faith of the Armenians. Obviously under pressure, he added Dioscorus' name to those of other heretics but with hesitation, saying: "if he ever espoused such heretical ideas, let him be anathematized..."  

The Byzantines knew well that such a declaration by an Armenian prince had no ecclesiastical significance. They, as well as the churchmen in the Latin West, were convinced that the Armenians venerated Dioscorus and Timothy and followed their teachings. For that reason, various prelates, writing to the Armenians at different times, made sure to include in their writings a word of precaution about this matter.  

In 1172 when the dialogue between the Byzantines and the Armenians during the reign of Manuel Comnenus and the pontificate of St. Nerses the Graceful had reached the point where reconciliation was indeed in sight, the Greeks presented the Armenians with a list of nine demands for complete union. The first among these was: "Pronounce anathema against those who say that Christ has one nature, namely Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severianus, Timothy Aelurus and those who are of the same opinion." The Armenians had no problem with the anathema against Eutyches, whom they had rejected at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century, but Dioscorus and Timothy were different. The Byzantine demand gave rise to some disagreement among the Armenians, since Catholicos Grigor Tlay (1173-1193), Nersès the Graceful's successor and an ardent supporter of union with the Byzantine Church, in his letter to the Armenian bishops and doctors in eastern Armenia, states: "Why should we be called by the name of Eutyches, Timothy and Dioscorus and call them saints and be bound to their words as if to iron [fetters]? Are we related to them in words; are we citizens of the same city; are we related to them by

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15 A good example of this is to be found in a letter of 1080 by Pope Gregory VII Hildebrand, addressed to a certain Gregory bishop of Siannada, a town in Phrygia. This bishop and his flock were presumably Armenian, since the letter is about the faith of the Armenians. *See* the discussion of this letter in M. Ormaneane, *Azgapatum [National History]*, vol. 1, Constantinople, 1912, § 898.

blood; are we their spiritual progeny?" The Catholicos suggests that the Armenians defend their own teachings and stand by their fathers and let the non-Armenians deal with the likes of Nestorius, Eutyches and so on. Despite this passive attitude, in 1179 when the same catholicos convened a council in Hromklay to consider the nine demands of the Byzantines for union, the Armenian fathers were cautious about Dioscorus. They stated that until now they had never heard of his being in agreement with Eutyches, and cited the letter of the eighth century Byzantine patriarch Germanus who had asked the Armenians to anathematize only Eutyches and no one else. They stated that their predecessors had already anathematized Eutyches but insisted that the Greeks provide the texts of Dioscorus' and Eutyches' writings for examination, and added that if there were any doctrinal similarities, then they would be willing to anathematize Dioscorus with those in agreement with Eutyches.

The issue of Dioscorus seems to have remained dormant after the Council of 1179. Although in 1197 the Armenian bishops had been forced to swear an oath in order to put the Armenian Church in union with Rome, in the correspondence and dialogues with the Latins Dioscorus' name does not appear. The Armenians must have continued their veneration for him, since in a letter of the medieval jurist Mxit'ar Goş, addressed to the Georgians and written at about 1200, Dioscorus is mentioned in connection with the Second Council of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Mxit'ar refers to him as "Saint Dioscorus" and states that he was banished to Araklia where "he nobly confessed and bore a perfect wintess to Christ." Such a statement by Mxit'ar Goş, the greatest authority on church regulations and religious matters in eastern Armenia at the end of the twelfth century is very significant.

It was only in the early 1340s that Dioscorus' name became an issue in a list of 117 errors or accusations against the Armenians compiled by a group of Latinophile Armenians and presented by them to Pope Benedict XII. In the third accusation it is stated that the Armenians in a council that took place 612 years earlier—presumably the Council of Manazkert in 726 where the Armenian and Syrian fathers met—the Armenians rejected the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome

18 The Acts of the Council of Hromklay are cited in A. Palčean, Patmut’ iwm kat’ołike vardapet’ean i hays [History of the Catholic Faith in Armenia], Vienna, 1878, pp. 260 ff. The Council of Hromklay did not produce any results because after the battle of Myriokephalon the Byzantines lost Asia Minor to the Sultanate of Rum.
of Leo and declared Dioscorus a saint and presently commemorate him three times a year. In the answer to these errors, which was composed in a council that met in Sis in 1343, it is stated that the Armenians have taken out of the hymnal the stanza in honor or Dioscorus and replaced it with a stanza wherein the doctrine of the two natures is declared. The hymn in question is probably the one dedicated to the Holy Patriarchs. We must assume, on the basis of the cited evidence, that it was indeed replaced by another stanza during the Cilician period in order not to offend Rome. Yet, as seen above, the stanzas honoring Dioscorus and anathematizing Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo were still in use in the eighteenth century, and their presence in the Armenian hymnals indicates that their disuse was restricted only to Cilicia.

The final removal of the stanza honoring Dioscorus from the Hymn of the Patriarchs took place under very trying circumstances. After the demise of Catholicos Astuacatur in October 1725, the political situation in Eastern Armenia made it difficult for the Armenians to hold an election for a new catholicos in Holy Etchmiadzin. Yovhannes Kolot, the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, succeeded in getting a permission from the Ottoman court to hold the election in Constantinople. In February 1726 Bishop Karapet of Ulnia was elected catholicos of All Armenians and was consecrated in the cathedral of Constantinople. He remained in the Ottoman capital for over a year because of difficulties that stopped him from going to his see. During that period, he and the patriarch were forced to deal with the Armenian Uniates whom the Ottoman court still considered to be under the jurisdiction of the patriarch. The court put pressure on the Armenian prelates to stop the Uniates from attending Latin churches. Under such circumstances, the Catholicos and the Patriarch gave in to the demands of the Uniates in order to reconcile them. The major demand of the Uniates was the removal of the three stanzas in the Hymn of the Patriarchs wherein Dioscorus was praised and the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo were anathematized.

Even after their removal, these stanzas must have been chanted in the churches, since the same demand by the Uniates was presented during the discussions for unity in 1819-1820. As the hope to reconcile the Uniates did not die until 1830, the date when a Uniate

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22 M. Ormaneian, Azgapatum, vol. 3, Jerusalem, 1927, § 2371, where only the elimination of the anathema on Chalcedon and the Tome in the hymn are mentioned. This leads us to assume that the stanza with Dioscorus' name was also chanted until 1820.
patriarchate was established in Constantinople, these stanzas were left out of the new editions of the Armenian hymnal.

Today, Dioscorus' name appears neither among the commemorated nor the remembered saints of the Armenian Church. On the basis of the removed stanza from the Hymn of the Patriarchs, we must assume that Dioscorus was originally commemorated with the Holy Patriarchs. Well aware of the veneration assigned to him by the early fathers of the Armenian Church and the objections against him by the Western churches, the prelates of the Armenian Church took a very cautious stand in regard to him. The present position is still the same, one that does not reject him as a heretic and presumably still accepts him as one of the orthodox bishops of the church, on the basis of the early Armenian evidence. But any mention of his name is avoided, except in historical context.

Realizing the importance of church unity above all other considerations, the fathers of the Armenian Church, as cited earlier, have on more than one occasion taken positive steps towards reconciliation. The elimination of the anathema on Chalcedon and the tome of Leo and the removal of the name of Dioscorus from the Armenian hymnal can indeed be cited as primary examples of the spirit of ecumenism that prevailed among the Armenians. The same spirit is still alive in the Armenian Church.

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23 Prelates in eastern Armenia as well had to be on guard in order not to offend the Russians who had completed the conquest of the Caucasus in 1828. The upper classes of the Armenian communities in St. Petersburg and Moscow in particular were extremely sensitive to such matters, especially because of statements in Russian publications wherein the Armenian Church was accused of being heretical. As a reaction to these, in 1841 they prepared a memorandum to the Tsar in the name of the Catholicos and the Synod of Etchmiadzin and sent it to the Holy See. Catholicos Yovhannes VIII put his signature under this document, which claimed that the Armenians accepted the first seven Ecumenical Councils. As a result, the Russian government censored remarks in Russian publications about the heterodoxy of the Armenian Church. See M. Ormanean, Azagpatum, vol. 3, § 2559. Yet, despite this, the Armenian Church refused to accept the councils after Ephesus.

24 The last edition of the Yaysmawurk' [Menologion] in 1834, attributed to the bishop Tër Israël, was unfortunately based on the compilation of the late fourteenth century Latinophile Catholicos Grigor of Anawarza.
ST. DIOSCORUS OF ALEXANDRIA: A COPTIC ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

Jacob N. Ghaly

Introduction

The eminent American Scholar Cyrus Gordon once commented on the Copts’ behavior at Chalcedon by saying, “When the Egyptians went to Chalcedon, they were proud of their Pharaonic Heritage, and rightly so; they were proud of their Alexandrian Fathers, and rightly so; they frankly told the whole world what they believed, and when the world refused to listen, they walked out, and rightly so.” (Masri vii).

In the history of the Christian Church, there have been many cases where a figure is regarded as Saint by one group and a heretic by another. Such is the case when the subject of Dioscorus of Alexandria arises. He has been accused of being everything from being a violent man to being ambitious to being violent. This is not surprising, considering the accusations made in modern, usually Western, scholarship against his predecessors.

Though he is considered the foundation of the faith of the Apostolic churches and is known as the “Apostolic” or the “Thirteenth Apostle,” St. Athanasius has been accused in modern, Western scholarship of “(1) the deliberate forging of documents which [he] later included in his historico/apologetical works as genuine; (2) the strong possibility that the consecration of him as bishop of Alexandria was irregular, if not invalid; and (3) the use of intentional and often brutal violence in the suppression of the Meletian schism in Egypt.” (Arnold 3).

Likewise St. Cyril of Alexandria has come under the scrutiny of modern Western, rationalistic scholarship and, like Athanasius and Dioscorus, has been viewed from an almost purely political perspective – without viewing him as a shepherd who was beloved by the flock entrusted to him. He is described by H. C. Sheldon at the end of the nineteenth century as being “ambitious, unscrupulous, vengeful....” (Sheldon 428).

No doubt such a view has been taken with regard to many Eastern fathers. To understand why this is, it may be helpful for us to look
across the spectrum of theological thought in the Christian world. On the extreme left we have the Arians and their modern day counterparts, the Jehovah's Witnesses; and all the way on the right we have the Apollinarian or Eutychian type of Christological view. To be sure both are considered heretical; nonetheless, they represent the outer boundaries within which acceptable Christology must be kept.

Western, primarily Protestant scholars tend to fall closer to the left, for they naturally scorn what they perceive as the over-spiritualizing of the Egyptian church, out of which Christian monasticism developed. Unfortunately, a certain degree of ignorance regarding the Coptic Church often accompanies this bias. For example, the above mentioned Sheldon calls Copts “schismatics” and accuses them of “hatred towards Catholics.” He goes on to add about the Copts, “One particular feature of this communion is its strong Jewish tinge. Circumcision is practiced and the Mosaic distinction of meats is observed.” He also suggests that Copts, besides other monophysite groups, are in dire need of spiritual reform.

As a result of the figures and events we are about to examine, the Copts have been termed “schismatics” and “dissenters.” But when referring to the Oriental Orthodox Churches Bishop Kallistos Ware of Dioklea prefers not to use terms like the “lesser” and “separated” Eastern Churches, “implying as they do a value judgment” which, he feels, is inappropriate (Ware 4).

Dioscorus was a man who was zealous for the faith handed down from Nicaea and Ephesus and for the heritage he received as a successor of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril. Zealous as he was, he was nonviolent in his means and thoroughly orthodox in his faith.

The Difference between the Two Schools Led to the Christological Controversy

**Emphasis and Vocabulary**

In the Orthodox study bible, it is written that the apparent difference between the teachings of St. Paul and St. James is not a contradiction of teaching concerning the way to salvation. Paul was teaching among people who were threatened with the prospect of enslaving themselves to the letter of the Law, and so he emphasized faith over against the works of the Law. James, on the other hand, had to concern himself with good works as an expression of true faith. While they both taught the same faith, it is clear that the difference was one of “emphasis and vocabulary.”

Can’t we say the same thing concerning the Christological differences between the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools? Isn’t it
just a matter of a difference of emphasis and vocabulary while adhering to the same faith?

The Antiochene School "was distinguished by its bend to sober and critical exegesis." Therefore, they saw in the New Testament how Christ was ascribed very human and very divine characteristics. They, therefore, emphasized the human aspect and the distinction between the two natures in Christ (Sheldon 428-429). Whereas the Alexandrian school understood Holy Scripture in a mystical and allegorical way. It held that besides the literal meaning, there is a mystical and allegorical meaning. Concerning the Trinity, the Alexandrian school emphasized the transcendence of God, the essential Godhead of all three hypostases of the triune God and the Divine Nature of the incarnate Logos. The Alexandrians were adamant about the union between the Godhead and Manhood in Christ. In their view it is a real and perfect union. It is a union of hypostasis and nature. This view is exemplified in the words of Bishop Gregorius, bishop in Cairo for Higher Theological Studies and Coptic culture and research work: "This union is unique and has no equal in the material world. It is therefore a mystery, and is beyond the reach of [the] human mind and conception. It is thus inconceivable, incomprehensible and ineffable, beyond description and too great for words" (Gregorius 7-8).

Bishop Kallistos made an important observation concerning these two schools: "Either approach, if pressed too far, could lead to heresy, but the Church had need of both in order to form a balanced picture of the whole Christ. It was a tragedy for Christendom that the two schools, instead of balancing one another, entered into conflict" (Ware 24). As we examine the events leading up to, during, and in the aftermath of Chalcedon, we discern great value in his words, especially during times when the Christian Church is trying to uncover the misfortunes of the past and achieve true unity.

*Mia-physite, Not Monophysite*

One of the most common misconceptions about the Coptic Church is that we are a monophysite church. In our view, the term monophysite is too dangerously close to the Eutychian heresy, which we reject. Rather, we find it more appropriate to explain our Christology. That is, we believe in St. Cyril's formula of "one incarnate nature of the Word of God." This belief in one nature does not mean a "single one" or "numerical one" but is rather an expression of unity (Malaty 63-64). It may be noted that the term "monophysite" was not used during the 5th-7th centuries but was used in a polemical spirit against the non-Chalcedonians in subsequent times (Malaty 84).

We believe that (1) Jesus Christ is at once consubstantial with God the Father and consubstantial with the human race; (2) He is at once God and at once Man; (3) the Word became truly Man, that this Manhood was perfect and that Jesus has a body and a soul; (3) there
was no Manhood of Christ before the incarnation — that is, the Godhead did not come to dwell in an existing man; (4) there was no confusion between the natures of Christ; (5) the Godhead is impassable: God did not suffer, nor did he die (Malaty 63-64)

St. Dioscorus and the Council of Chalcedon

In this section, we shall discuss the Coptic Orthodox Church’s view concerning the events leading up to this council, what transpired during this council and the effects of this council on the Copts. We shall also point out St. Dioscorus’ role in these events.

The Road to Chalcedon

The troubles began around the time when a pious and well-known archimandrite by the name of Eutyches, in his zeal to oppose the Nestorian heresy went too far and denied the reality of Christ’s humanity. Bishop Flavian of Constantinople tried to gently bring Eutyches back into line, but was eventually forced to convene a local council to discuss the matter. At the council Flavian and Eusebius among others condemned and deposed Eutyches (Masri 230).

Council at Ephesus, 449

After much effort Eutyches was able, through a high-placed eunuch in the emperor’s court named Chrysaphius, to have Emperor Theodosius II convene a council to examine this matter. Theodosius asked Dioscorus to preside over the council, with Juvenal of Jerusalem and Domnus of Antioch acting as co-presidents. The letters asking Dioscorus to preside over this council survive to this day. It was because of the events of this council that the trouble began for St. Dioscorus (Masri 231).

After the reading of the imperial letter of convocation, the delegates requested that the message of Leo be read. The chief notary responded that there were other letters of the emperor that should be read first and the Roman legates agreed. Eutyches claimed that the minutes of the Flavian council had been falsified to condemn him. Dioscorus suggested reading the Flavian council minutes. Consent was given, except from the western legates who wanted the message of their own bishop to be read first (Masri 232-233).

As a result of this council Eutyches was rehabilitated and Flavian and his supporters were condemned and deposed. At this council, Eutyches moved from his former position and professed the Nicene Creed and the formula of St. Cyril the Great. For this reason his
condemnation was revoked and he was reinstated to his former position (Attiya 56-57).

Chalcedonians blame Dioscorus for the troubles that occurred in this period, for two major reasons related to the council at Ephesus in 449. We would like to discuss them both here.

(1) The omission of the Tome of Leo. One might note that the Tome was not written as a document addressed to the council, but as a letter to the emperor. Moreover, it was being circulated widely in the East, even before the council at Ephesus had met. Professor Florovsky says,

The Tome of Leo, if taken alone by itself, could have created the impression of an excessive opposition of two natures especially by its persistent attribution of particular acts of Christ to different natures, without any adequate emphasis on the unity of Christ’s Person, although the intention of the Pope himself was sound and orthodox. However, the interpretation of the Tome by the Roman Catholic historians and theologians in modern times quite often transfer a certain quasi Nestorian bias, to which attention has been called recently by some Roman Catholic writers themselves (Malaty 72).

(2) The second accusation is that Dioscorus used violence in order to obtain his desired end at Ephesus and that he wanted to gain personal advantage through this council.

The most important point to note is that this council was not held upon Dioscorus’ demand – he did not call for this council to be held. As has been stated above, it was Emperor Theodosius who called for this council and appointed Dioscorus and others to preside over it. It was Eutyches, by means of his friend Chrysaphius, who pushed for this council to be held. Secondly, the decisions were reached through voting, and we do not hear of any bishops who withdrew or opposed the proceedings of the council except for Flavian and Eusebius, the two men who were condemned by it (Malaty 72).

**Pulcheria**

We as Copts, do reflect on these events and are convinced that political factors were the major factors that led up to the schism of 451. One of the chief figures we put the blame on is Pulcheria, the sister of Emperor Theodosius. She had taken a vow as a virgin, but renounced it at the death of her brother. She married Marcian, a former military general who had recently quelled a rebellion in upper Egypt. Together they ascended to the head of the imperial hierarchy of Constantinople. They managed to accomplish this by August 28, 450, just one month after the death of Theodosius.
She eliminated Chrysophius by execution and banished Eutyches to Doliche in Northern Syria. She then moved to support “Rome” against “Alexandria” since a rivalry had been supposedly brewing between the two sees. At the same time, she was calculating her moves carefully. To keep Rome from exercising influence, she refused Leo’s request to have a council held somewhere in Italy, a council in which he hoped to correct the errors he felt were made in the Lactrocinium or “robber’s council” of Ephesus in 449. She was the empress and it was her prerogative to have the council held in the East (Malatya 74-75). Hence, on October 8th, 451 the Council of Chalcedon commenced.

Events of the Council of Chalcedon

Session 1: October 8, 451

At the very start of the council, Paschasinus, one of the two Roman legates declared that he had orders from Rome that Dioscorus should not be allowed as a member of the synod. When asked what it was that he did, the response was that he dared to convoke a council without the authorization of the Apostolic See (i.e. Rome).

At the end of the first session Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalasius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus, and Basil of Seleucia in Isuria were all deposed (Malatya 75).

Session 2: October 10, 451

Despite the fact that the Illyrians begged that mercy be shown to the heads of the Ephesian Council, they were ignored. At the end of this session it was decided that five days be taken so that the bishops who had questions about Leo’s Tome could read it over and meet with Bishop Anatolius of Constantinople to clear their misgivings (Malatya 78-79).

Session 3: October 13, 451

The five days’ recess was not respected and the council suddenly met after three days under the direction of Paschasinus, the Roman legate. Neither the commission nor the six condemned men attended this council. There is no mention of the number of bishops who attended this session, which does not even deserve to be considered a session. It was held in the martyrion of St. Euphemia (a small chapel), instead of in the church where the regular sessions had been held.

Those who formed this session wanted it to be considered legitimate, so they summoned Dioscorus who said that he could not come unless allowed by the authorities. He also set a condition under which he would attend: the presence of the commissioners and those who were condemned with him.

In his absence, it was easy also to make personal attacks against him, which were not related to doctrinal issues. It was said that there was disaffection for him in Alexandria and that he prevented the
sending of corn to Libya. Such accusations were false. He was warmly
loved by the vast majority of Copts, as later events will show. As for
the accusation about the corn, this was contrived to excite the anger of
the emperor. Even his staunchest enemies did not accuse him of
misconduct in his personal life.

At the end of this session the Roman legates announced that his
deposition had been issued by Leo and that the assembly merely had to
approve the decision.

The following sentence was then pronounced against St.
Dioscorus:

From the great and ecumenical holy synod, convoked by the grace
of God in compliance with the decree of our pious God-fearing
kings at Chalcedon at Bithynia, in the church of St. Euphemia the
triumphant martyr, to Dioscorus: Be it known unto you that
because of your disdain of church canons, and the disobedience
you have committed with regard to the holy synod by refusing to
appear after our triple summons without counting all your other
crimes (which were not specified) you have been, on the
thirteenth of October, 451 AD, deposed of your Episcopal
dignity by the Holy Synod, and declared incapable of fulfilling
your ecclesiastical functions (Masri 248).

Summary of the Events of the Council of Chalcedon
With the death of Theodosius II and the rise of Marcian and his wife
Pulcheria, the tables turned quickly on Alexandria. By the flexing of
imperial muscles, the council was summoned at the city of Chalcedon
and more than 600 bishops gathered there in 451.

The council was called less to discuss Christological issues than
to try Dioscorus "for what was regarded as a conciliatory attitude
towards the Eutychian thesis." This was despite the fact that the
council at Ephesus in 449 had been in accordance with all legalities
and had been summoned by an emperor and also despite the fact that
the Copts had been faithful to the Nicene Creed and the formula of St.
Cyril.

The Tome of Leo was read, Dioscorus was quickly condemned
without a hearing, deposed and in 454 was banished to the island of
Gangra in Paphlagonia (Attiya 57).

There were those who opposed the actions of the council. The
civil judges, who were imperial commissioners, opposed the sentence,
declaring it illegal because it was passed in their absence. In addition,
Mar S. Ya’kub, Antiochene patriarch and historian opposed the actions
of the council at Chalcedon for the following reasons: (1) Dioscorus
was Orthodox in his faith; (2) no deviation from integrity was found
in the council of Ephesus in 449; (3) the verdict was passed in his absence
and he was given no chance to defend himself; and (4) the session was
held before the date set for it and without notification given to all those who should have been there.

The Orthodoxy of St. Dioscorus
Of the people in the Church, eastern and western alike, who still have not acknowledged St. Dioscorus’ sainthood, few argue against his orthodoxy. For his faith was exactly that of St. Cyril the Great: “One nature of the incarnate Word of God.” The term “Word” acknowledges the reality of his divinity and the term “incarnate” acknowledges the reality of his humanity. The term “one nature” is used to signify the reality of their union. The two families of Orthodoxy simply have different understanding of the term nature (physis), but their faith is the same.

When asked to declare his faith concerning the nature of Christ, Dioscorus responded with the famous analogy of St. Cyril of Alexandria who is an acknowledged pillar of orthodoxy:

If a piece of iron, heated to white heat, be struck on the anvil, it is the iron which receives the blows and not the white heat, even though the iron and the white heat form one indivisible whole. And though indivisible, the heat mingleth not with the iron, nor is it changed by it. The same is true of the iron, and is, in a measure, symbolic of the incarnation of our Lord where the divine and human natures united without mixing, fusion, nor change, though neither parted from the other – not even for a moment or the twinkling of an eye (Masri 245).

Conclusion
St. Dioscorus died in exile on the island of Gangra where he had won many for Christ before his departure. In his place, the emperor placed Proterius, an alien patriarch, over the people in Alexandria. When they refused to accept him and remained loyal to Dioscorus, the imperial soldiers who were sent to enforce Proterius’ authority began to use force against them. Sadly, this was the first time in history that Christians were dying at the hands of their fellow Christians. An estimated 30,000 people died during that period.

In our view, as well as in the view of many prominent members of the church, East and West, the claims that St. Dioscorus was a violent man are simply false. We have attempted to show that he was not guilty of many of the deeds he was accused of. As for his orthodoxy, that also has been attested to by his statements and by those who knew him and have studied the events related to the Council of Chalcedon. It would be a shame if the whole unity of the church were to be prevented from occurring simply because of failure to acknowledge a misjudgment in history.
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THE AGREED STATEMENTS:
ORIENTAL ORTHODOX RESPONSES

Bishop Youssef

Prior to speaking of the reactions or the reservations of the Oriental Orthodox Church regarding the "Agreed Statements," I would like to bring forth what these statements reflect in general.

The theological dialogues between the Oriental Orthodox and the Eastern Orthodox churches unofficially began in Aarhus, Denmark in the year 1964. This was followed by similar dialogues in Bristol in 1967, Geneva in 1970, then Addis Ababa in 1971. In addition, other dialogues took place at regional levels at locations such as the Middle East.

At the initial conference, a report was issued expressing the unity of both families regarding the Christological dogma and stated the following: "We have spoken to each other in the openness of charity and with the conviction of truth. All of us have learned from each other. Our inherited misunderstandings have begun to clear up. We recognize in each other the one orthodox faith of the church. Fifteen centuries of alienation have not led us astray from the faith of our fathers."¹

The report also stated:

In our common study of the Council of Chalcedon, the well known phrase used by our common father in Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria, mia physis (or mia hypostasis) tou Theou Logou sesarxomenē (the one physis or hypostasis of God's Word Incarnate) with its implications, was at the center of our conversations. On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full agreement. Through the different terminologies used by each side, we saw the same truth expressed. Since we agree in rejecting without reservation the teaching of Eutyches as well as of Nestorius, the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon does not entail the acceptance of either heresy. Both sides found themselves fundamentally following the Christological teaching of the one

¹ The Agreed Statements, Aarhus 1964.
undivided church as expressed by St. Cyril.\textsuperscript{2}

The dialogue progressed throughout the four initial conferences. The result confirmed our unity in faith and the common inheritance that we have shared from our fathers.\textsuperscript{3} This also led the participants to discuss the lifting of anathemas in anticipation of bringing about a full unity between both Orthodox families\textsuperscript{4}.

The official theological dialogue between the two Orthodox families began in 1985. An official council of church delegates was formed and met several times. The outcome of their meetings was based upon the conclusions of their predecessors’ unofficial meetings, in addition to the many discussions and research documents which took place and were produced between 1985 and 1993. Their official “Agreed Statements” reflected the following:

1. Both Orthodox families have inherited from their fathers in Christ the one apostolic faith and tradition, though as churches, they have been separated from each other for more than 1500 years.

2. The common ground of their agreement was based on the teaching of their common father and teacher, St. Cyril’s “the one nature of God’s Word Incarnate”: \textit{mia physis (hypostasis) tou Theou Logou seseaxomenê}.

3. Both families agreed that the term “Theotokos” is used for our Lady the Virgin Mary.

4. Both families agreed that the Logos, the only-begotten of the Father before the ages, became man through His second birth in the fullness of time from the Virgin Mary. Therefore, the Word has two real births, that which is eternal from the Father and the other which is at the fullness of time from the Virgin Mary\textsuperscript{5}.

5. Both families agreed that both Human and Divine natures were united into one Divine-Human being. Also, He who wills and acts is always the one \textit{Hypostasis} of the Logos incarnate (i.e. the one will and act of Jesus Christ).\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{2} The Agreed Statements, Aarhus 1964.
\textsuperscript{3} The Agreed Statements, Bristol 1967: paragraph 4; The Agreed Statements, Geneva 1970: paragraph 2.
\textsuperscript{4} The Agreed Statements, Addis Ababa 1971.
\textsuperscript{5} The Geneva Agreement 1990: paragraph 3
\textsuperscript{6} The Geneva Agreement 1990: paragraphs 3-5.
6. Both families reject the teachings of Nestorius and Theodoret, as well as totally renounce the Eutychian heresy. They likewise reject the interpretations of Councils which do not fully agree with the teachings of the Third Ecumenical Council (431 A.D.) and the letter of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch (433 A.D.). The Statement also cleared the difference between the early Catholic interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), which was somehow similar to that of the Nestorian, and the interpretation of the same Council by the Eastern Orthodox Church (Byzantine), which was primarily based on the Fifth Council (Constantinople 553 A.D.). The teaching of the Fifth Council depended on the teachings of St. Cyril and his famous terminology of the one nature of God's Word incarnate. This Council affirmed that the Hypostasis of the Logos became composite by the union of His divine, uncreated nature, with its natural will and energy, which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and of the created human nature, which He assumed at the Incarnation and made His own, with its natural will and energy. It also acknowledged that the distinction between the two natures is in thought alone, according to St. Cyril's teaching. So when the Byzantine Orthodox speak about the two natures of Christ, they do not mean any distinction between these two natures, except in thought alone (in keeping with St. Cyril's letters to Succensus and Acacius of Melitene, in addition to the other letters written by him).

7. Both families agree that all the anathemas and condemnations of the past, which now divide us, should be lifted by the churches in order that the last obstacle to the full unity and communion of our two families can be removed. Both families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations will be consummated on the basis that the Councils and the fathers previously anathematized or condemned are not heretical.

The historical agreement in the Christological dogma achieved at the meeting held at the Anba Bishoy Monastery in 1989 was widely accepted among all the Orthodox churches. This agreement was the basis for the 1990 Geneva agreement regarding the lifting of anathemas. The first positive reaction supporting the 1989 historical agreement was evidenced during the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Coptic

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9 Letters to Acacius, Eulogius, and Succensus.
Orthodox Church held on June 2, 1990 and led by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. A report of the "Agreed Statements" was presented by His Eminence Metropolitan Bishop, Secretary of the Coptic Holy Synod and co-president of the Theological Dialogue. This report was unanimously accepted and adopted.

In another meeting of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church held on November 12, 1990, the Geneva agreement regarding the lifting of anathemas was also accepted and adopted.

This was then followed by a series of positive reactions regarding the "Agreed Statements" by the Holy Synods of the different Oriental Orthodox Churches. These "Agreed Statements" were accepted and adopted by the Syrian Orthodox Church of India, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, and the Armenian Orthodox Church of both Etchmiadzin and Cilicia.

In the Holy Synod meeting of the Coptic Orthodox Church, on June 2, 1990, the "Christological Agreement" which was a product of the 1989 Theological Dialogue at the Anba Bishoy Monastery was adopted. In this meeting the Coptic Holy Synod also agreed to accept the sacrament of the Holy Baptism of the other Orthodox Churches that accept our Baptism. This decision by the Coptic Holy Synod was based on the teaching of St. Paul the apostle "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). So if the faith is one, the Baptism also should be one as long as this Baptism is based on the true Orthodox faith. This was truly evidenced by the common faith which all the Orthodox churches have inherited from our holy fathers. The agreement of the acceptance of the Baptism was another positive step by the Coptic Holy Synod in supporting the recommendations made by the Pastoral Joint Sub-committee in its meeting in 1990 at the Anba Bishoy Monastery and which stated the following: "Clear official acceptance and recognition of the Baptism performed by the two families through the spirit of the common tradition and the unity of the mysteries ... we can not separate Christ of the mysteries from Christ of the faith."

Another recommendation made by the Joint Sub-committee addressed the need for regular attempts in our joint theological work to benefit from the fruits of the theological dialogue in the writings and publications of each of the two families, towards a farther objective of creating ecclesiastical relations. This can be realized through exchanging of theological writings, professors and students of the Theological Institutes. Also, preparation of publications to the congregations of the two families in order to be acquainted with what is taking place in the theological dialogue, and the relations existing between us.

In this respect, the Coptic Orthodox Church assumed a vital
leadership role by having the department of Ecumenical Studies of the Coptic Center in Cairo prepare a major Panel Discussion expounding on the Theological Dialogue between the two families. Many shared in this discussion, including His Eminence Metropolitan Bishop (Secretary of the Coptic Holy Synod and Co-president of the Dialogue Committee). Also present were His Grace Bishop Serapion of Los Angeles, Fr. Tadros Malaty, and Dr. Joseph Morris (members of the Theological Dialogue who represented the Coptic Orthodox Church), along with a host of clergymen and the public. The discussion covered the ‘Agreed Statements’ and answered all questions relating to all parts of the agreement.

The department of Ecumenical Studies had then prepared a documented publication in Arabic detailing all the official and informal statements discussed at the session. It was then made accessible to all individuals. In addition, several of the letters of St. Cyril (4th letter = 2nd to Nestorius in 430 A.D.; 17th letter = 3rd to Nestorius in 430 A.D.; 39th letter to John of Antioch in 433 A.D.) were translated into the Arabic language and made accessible to all, along with a short summary of the steps taken in an effort to unite both churches from 451 A.D. to the present. All documents were given out at no cost to the public.

A series of articles were written by His Grace Bishop Serapion and published in El-Keraza (the official magazine of the Coptic Orthodox Church). The series discuss the Theological Dialogue and its impact on the Orthodox churches in the world. Also, many of the Youth Retreats and Camps’ programs include discussion about the Theological Dialogue and its results.

Meetings are being held all over the Middle East for the purpose of consolidating the relationships between the young people of our Orthodox Churches to prepare them for a comprehensive spiritual life. The latest of these meetings was held in Amman, Jordan in August of 1996. The Coptic Youth Association is also a member of the world Association of Orthodox Youth.

Students of Theological Institutes are also being exchanged. Egyptian students have joined Athens and Thessaloniki Universities. A Greek student is presently studying the Coptic language and the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt.

For the second time, conferences for the study of the Fathers of the church were held jointly with the Theological Seminary in Athens. In 1990, Pope Shenouda III called for the first convention which jointly met to study the Fathers of church, specifically St. Athanasios the Apostolic. His Holiness hosted the members of the conference at St. Bishop Monastery. The 35 participants were Professors, Post Graduate students and Theologians from Athens and Thessaloniki universities. In 1996, the second conference was also held at the same place under
the title of "St. Gregory the Theologian: His Life and Writings." There were 11 papers submitted by both parties of 60 participants. Everyone enjoyed the benefits of these conferences, which included constructive dialogues that laid a solid base for mutual understanding.

Also, the Theological Seminary in Athens, under the auspices of the University, invited a Coptic delegation for a conference on St. Gregory. The Coptic Orthodox Church participated by two papers, one was prepared by His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy of Demit and the other by Dr. Joseph Faltas. All this reflected the positive response to the "Agreed Statements."

In addition, a meeting like the one we are in attendance now, is another step towards consolidating the Dialogue, explaining its dimensions and results to the congregations involved. Hence I have to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who was instrumental in convening this conference. I am hoping that it can be done again in the future. Thank you.
A RESPONSE
(Romanian Orthodox Tradition)

Nicholas Apostola

While I have been asked to speak from the perspective of the Romanian Orthodox tradition, I can't really say that there is a specifically or uniquely Romanian Orthodox outlook on this issue. Historically, there has been a sizable Armenian community in Romania. The relations between the two Churches have been warm and friendly. Many Oriental Orthodox theologians have studied in Romania. A Catholicos of the Armenian Church was born and educated in Romania. Throughout, the Romanian Church has been an enthusiastic supporter of the dialogue. So, rather than restate the obvious, I would like to make two observations and proposals about how to proceed from this point.

There is a real need for a common understanding of our history. Usually, when we enter into a dialogue, there is a period when each side presents its perspective on the issues at hand. This is normal. It is in fact what a dialogue is. A kind of parallel documentation is made. This is the process that we have used here today.

However, there comes a time - and I believe we are at that time - when each side sufficiently understands the issues, the history, and the mistakes that might have been made, and decides to move forward. How do we do that?

It is not even for us to present a parallel historical and dogmatic account. We must begin to prepare a common historical account. This means that we would no longer present the Eastern Orthodox version and then the Oriental Orthodox version. Rather, we would present one version, one account. The history would be a unified history.

This requires a shift in cognitive location. We stop thinking of ourselves as representing two separate Churches with two separate Traditions. And we begin thinking of ourselves as one Church with one Tradition. This process will have a subtle, but powerful effect. It will create in the consciousness of a new generation of theologians and faithful a different way of viewing what now we take for granted are two separate Churches. This approach has been tried in other
Ecumenical settings and has had remarkable results. For our two Churches who share so much, I can only see this as a real method for healing.

The second issue I would like to raise is that of our different liturgical traditions. As theologians and clergy we recognize the rich and varied liturgical rites that the Church has used throughout the centuries. For most people, however, the lex orandi in a very real way is the lex credendi. In the minds of many, both clergy and faithful, the particular liturgical tradition they celebrate becomes the only proper way in which to celebrate. In other words, a community’s liturgical rite becomes equated with its dogma.

This is not a problem in places where one Church tradition dominates, or where ethnic/religious communities have an essentially segregated existence. But in a society such as ours that is pluralistic, and where we have a decidedly minority status, there will be two opposing pressures. One will be increasingly to conform both to the larger society and the greater tradition. The other will be to push each of us further into a kind of sectarian mindset in order to reaffirm our identity. To be sure, this is a superficial generalization, but we can see elements of this already operating in our Churches.

As we work toward fully restoring the unity of our Church, we must be focused on not only the larger theological and historical questions, but how the resolution of these questions will be understood at the parish level and integrated into the life of the Church.
A RESPONSE
(Syrian Orthodox Tradition)

John Meno

On the question of reconciliation of the theological writings of the Fathers of both the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches as well as the position of controversial saints within these two families of Eastern Christendom, I believe that certain steps can be taken to hopefully lead to reconciliation of differences and the lifting of anathemata. First, it should be understood that much distortion of the character of various saints has occurred in the accounts handed down to us from both parties in the theological conflict. For example, an individual like St. Jacob Baradaeus or St. Severus of Antioch (d. 538) is a source of great spiritual and historical importance in the life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in general and most specifically for the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. Though often vilified by Byzantine writers, Jacob Baradaeus is considered a great Church Father and indeed a hero in the life of both the Syrian Church of Antioch as well as the Coptic Church of Alexandria. Thanks to his ceaseless efforts, indefatigable energy and dedication, both the Syrian Church of Antioch as well as the Coptic Church were spared from near annihilation. By 544, only three bishops remained free to serve the needs of the Holy Church of Antioch. During this extremely critical period, Jacob visited Constantinople and won the support of the Empress Theodora. Consecrated as a general metropolitan and granted extraordinary powers, Jacob was authorized to strengthen and restore the persecuted Churches of both the Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria. Motivated by tremendous Christian zeal, St. Jacob, assisted by his three fellow bishops, visited the faithful throughout the entire Middle East, Asia Minor and even Ethiopia, rebuilding, and expanding the Church. Due to his many efforts to preserve and strengthen the Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church has been and is often referred to as the Jacobite Church, a title especially utilized and highly respected by the Church in India.

To help in the reconciliation of the two Eastern Christian families mentioned above, it is most important that the Church Fathers shared in common by both the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches be
reexamined and studied more carefully as precious witnesses to the apostolic faith. These Fathers, venerated by the Church Universal, testify in a most dynamic and living way to the oneness of Christ and His Holy Church. In addition, the later Fathers of both the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox traditions should be read and studied as objectively as possible and in light of the religious, cultural and political circumstances of their times. Though matters of theology were of obvious importance regarding Chalcedon and the aftermath of the Council, of significant influence were also the political and cultural factors at play upon the parties to the controversy.

In this regard, it must be said that too much reliance has been and is still being placed on secondary sources related to the writings and teachings of these later Church Fathers. All too often erroneous information is provided in these sources whereby various Church Fathers are condemned by individuals who have never taken the time to carefully read or study the writings of the Fathers concerned. To read in such sources that the Oriental Orthodox Churches profess and teach the heresy of Eutyches is most disturbing as it presents a totally false view of the situation. It is especially disheartening to find such works still being written today by supposed scholars and utilized in seminary training as well as to instruct the laity. I personally find this completely unacceptable and even appalling in the light of the many efforts which have been made over the years to achieve the degree of understanding and mutual appreciation that today exists between both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox. These misleading texts should be immediately amended to reflect the correct positions of the various Churches concerned.

To facilitate the study and appreciation of the various Fathers of the Church, more work needs to be done in the area of translations. Still many of Church Fathers have not been translated into English and remain a closed book to readers in general. Priority should be given to undertaking both accurate and readable translations of these Fathers. In this regard, we have been most encouraged to learn that St. Vladimir's Press will soon be issuing an English translation of selected writings of St. Jacob of Sarug (d. 521), one of the great Fathers of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. It is hoped that this volume will help to introduce many readers to the writings and theological insights of a very influential and important Father of the Oriental Orthodox Church. More such works are needed, and such translation efforts should be encouraged and professionally undertaken to make other Church Fathers accessible to a wide audience of readers. By better understanding the Fathers of the
Church one can come to better appreciate the faith they lived by and the dynamics of Oriental Orthodoxy and its witness to Christ.

In addition, much more needs to be done to inform the faithful of the various Churches concerning what has been accomplished in the area of Christian reconciliation between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. All too often this information is only enjoyed by a select few theologians and scholars. I believe that it is absolutely essential for all our brothers and sisters in Christ to know and appreciate the present status of interchurch relations. I believe this would in turn help to foster mutual appreciation and deeper respect among the faithful of our two Orthodox families, hopefully leading to a greater shared witness in Christ. This would further encourage our faithful to pray and work toward reconciliation and unity with their brothers and sisters. The information provided our laity should be as clear and in as simple terms as possible to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Such information should be continually updated with each new step toward reconciliation to help all the Church to put into practice that love and commitment to one another proclaimed in the Gospels and carried out to its fullness by Christ upon the Cross. Over the centuries, the faith of our Lord has been lived and witnessed to by the simple faithful of our Churches, both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, through times of great challenge and persecution. In many ways they have been the means by which the apostolic faith has not only survived, but flourished. However, all too often the specific expressions or formulas to explain the faith have taken upon themselves a life of their own and have tragically divided rather than united the members of the Body of Christ. In our search to heal wounds and to restore the Church to her oneness in Christ, let us realize that the apostolic faith has indeed survived despite the efforts of individual theologians and rhetoricians to the contrary. May we all have the wisdom and the faith to prayerfully struggle with those matters which divided us and so cooperate with the grace of God to help bring about a reconciliation of memories and a restoration of the Church's unity in the fullness of the stature of Christ.
ANATHEMA: AN OBSTACLE TO REUNION?

John H. Erickson

Few Christian divisions have been more long-lasting or painful than that between the Eastern, or Chalcedonian, Orthodox Churches and the Oriental, or non-Chalcedonian, Orthodox Churches. The separation of these church families began during the Christological controversies of antiquity, in the wake of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This separation has now lasted over 1500 years. Yet developments over recent decades, beginning with informal dialogue in the 1960s and continuing with formal dialogue in the 1980s and 1990s, have brought these two families of churches close to reunion. In 1990 the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the churches could go so far as to declare: "In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology..., we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways" (1990 Chambesy Agreed Statement, para. 9). Indeed, as the documents of the dialogue point out, "Our mutual agreement is not limited to Christology, but encompasses the whole faith of the one undivided church of the early centuries" (1989 Anba Bishoy Agreed Statement, para. 11), including, for example, the veneration of icons.

But if there is full unity of faith, what more is needed? We face a moment of truth. In their official statements on ecumenism, both Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches have insisted vigorously on the necessity of unity of faith, that unity of faith is the essential precondition for communion. In so doing our churches have at least implied that, when unity of faith is present, full communion is not only the logical but even the necessary consequence. But at this point the dialogue of our churches has hit an unexpected snag. What is to be done about the anathemas which each side hurled against its opponents during our many centuries of estrangement? The 1990 Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission went on to say: "Both families agree that all the anathemas and condemnations of the past which now divide us should be lifted by the Churches in order that the last obstacle to the full unity and communion of our two families can be removed by the grace and power of God. Both families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations will be consummated on the basis that the Councils and fathers previously anathematized or condemned are
not heretical.” (para. 10) But so far this has not been done. In fact, from both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian quarters, criticism—sometimes quite strident—has come to focus precisely on this issue. How can we lift these anathemas without betraying our holy fathers who imposed them in the first place? How can we enter into communion with those who honor as saints precisely those whom our holy fathers in the past anathematized as heretics?

One can read statements from both Oriental and Eastern Orthodox arguing precisely this. For example, according to a popular presentation of the position of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church:

...to lift the anathemas imposed in the past upon those Chalcedonian Fathers and to accept them as saints would dishonor those Oriental Orthodox Church Fathers who condemned the Chalcedonians.... Since these anathemas have been observed for about 1500 years by our Holy Fathers as inscribed in our liturgical texts and hymnody, they shall not be lifted.1

Much the same attitude can be seen in a memorandum from the monks of Mount Athos, which vigorously objects to “purging the liturgical books of texts which refer to the Anti-Chalcedonians as heretical.” As the memorandum continues:

The sacred services of many confessors of the Faith, of many righteous Fathers, and especially the Holy Fathers of the Fourth Council in Chalcedon will be mutilated.... We ask: Are all the texts referred to above simply ornamental elements in Orthodox hymnology so that they can be painlessly and harmlessly removed, or are they basic elements of Orthodoxy, whose removal will cause the eradication of what we understand as Orthodoxy.2

The memorandum from Mount Athos also rejects that line of thinking which “considers that the anathemas were laid upon the heretics by the Ecumenical Councils in a spirit lacking love, while today, since love now exists, union can be accomplished.” “Such a way of thinking,” the memorandum states, “directs a profound blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, through Whose inspiration these decisions were made, and against the sacred memory of the Holy Fathers, whom the Church calls God-bearers, Mouths of the Word, and Harps of the Spirit....”

Practically inseparable is the question of the meaning and authority of ecumenical councils. The Oriental Orthodox regard three

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1 The Ethiopian Tewahido Church (New York?, n.d.)108.
councils as ecumenical, the Eastern Orthodox, seven. It was in councils four through seven that Oriental fathers like Dioscorus of Alexandria and Severus of Antioch were condemned; and it was in these councils that Leo of Rome, condemned as crypto-Nestorian by the Orientals, was hailed as a pillar of right belief. According to the Joint Commission for dialogue, a sufficient basis for reconciliation is the fact that both families of churches confess the faith of all seven of the councils recognized as ecumenical by the Chalcedonians, even though they do not accord the same ecumenical authority to all these councils. But is this sufficient? According to some Eastern Orthodox, the Orientals must indicate their full and unqualified acceptance of seven ecumenical councils; they must accept not only the substance of the faith of these councils but also their disciplinary norms and terminology – and presumably also their anathemas. For example, Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem in 1997 wrote a letter to Patriarch Ignatius of Antioch protesting, among other things, the latter’s eagerness to move forward to reunion on the basis of the work of the Joint Commission for dialogue. “According to Holy Tradition,” Patriarch Diodorus avers, “the Non-Chalcedonians ought to accept absolutely and completely all the terms and canons of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, in its entirety, as well as the following Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Ecumenical Councils, also in their entirety.”

For the Chalcedonian Orthodox, can the anathemas pronounced at councils four through seven be lifted? If so, how? This question sometimes has been approached from a juridical perspective: Who has the authority to lift an anathema? In this perspective, the answer would appear to be clear: An anathema can be lifted, but only by a body of the same or greater authority as the one which imposed it. According to this line of thinking, it was possible for Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI in 1965 to lift the anathemas of 1054, since these had involved only the local churches in question – indeed only the heads of these churches, the distant predecessors of the current patriarch and pope. So also, according to this line of thinking, it was possible for a plenary council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1971 to lift the anathemas which had been leveled against the Old Believers by the Moscow Council of 1666-67. But what about an anathema pronounced by an ecumenical council? The Joint Commission in 1993 urged that “the lifting of anathemas should be made unanimously and simultaneously by the heads of all churches of both sides.” But are “the heads of the all the churches” the juridically competent body? Not according to the memorandum from Mount Athos, which denounces this “decision of the Joint Commission concerning the possibility of lifting an anathema

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placed by an ecumenical council.” According to the memorandum, this is “alien to the sound mind of the Church” and “offends the fundamental consciousness of the Church concerning the authority of the ecumenical councils.” From this juridical perspective, only another ecumenical council would have the authority to lift the anathemas imposed by councils four through seven, though in a pinch presumably a Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church would do – when and if such a council meets.

But the issue of the anathemas is not simply a juridical question. It is a question of the historical consistency of Orthodoxy itself, a question of the unity of the Church not only in space, with other professing Christians here and now, but in time, with the holy fathers and mothers of all ages. In this perspective, it becomes a matter of considerable significance whether one labels a given individual a saint or a heretic. As Metropolitan John Zizioulas has pointed out, membership in the Church does not mean simply the enjoyment of an a-temporal communion with Christ. It implies entering into communion with the saints of all the ages, as expressed among other places in the diptychs, the calendar, and liturgical observances. And here by “saints” we should not think simply of those conspicuous for their personal sanctity. As Zizioulas points out, “saints are signs of the glory of God in this world not so much as individuals as in the context of the communion of saints, the advance guard of the One Body. ‘Saint’ therefore is a relational term; if relationship is broken – if unity is broken – the meaning of sanctity itself dramatically shifts.” Can any body, even an ecumenical council, attempt to overturn the decision of a previous ecumenical council concerning who is a holy father and who is a heretic without calling into question the unity and continuity of the church through time? This is the question which the memorandum from Mount Athos raises when it denounces “the attack upon the validity and authority of the Holy Ecumenical Councils by the decision of the Joint Commission that the Anti-Chalcedonian heresiarchs Dioscorus, Jacob, Severus, etc. be considered not heretical but Orthodox in their thinking.” As the memorandum continues, “The consciousness of the Orthodox Church recognizes that infallibility and authority in the Holy Spirit is in the ecumenical councils and refuses to accept the possibility of revising the decisions of an ecumenical council by another ecumenical council without the latter council being considered as an heretical conventicle…”

How can one respond to such denunciations? Here it is important to consider what kind of authority we ascribe to ecumenical councils.

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The memorandum from Mount Athos uses the word "infallibility." This may be an unfortunate choice of words, the result of an understandable but regrettable reaction to Roman claims of papal infallibility. It would be more accurate simply to say that the ecumenical councils have innately defined the faith and delineated the boundaries of true piety. But even if we speak of the "infallibility" of ecumenical councils, certainly this infallibility does not imply full and direct divine inspiration for each and every statement made in the course of these councils. It does not, for example, mean that councils and council fathers cannot be mistaken concerning matters of fact or inconsistent in their terminology. Councils bear witness to the faith of the Church, and the adequacy of their words for this faith—and the appropriateness of their terminology and of their anathemas—must always be evaluated in the light of this faith.

Let us turn specifically to anathemas as these have been pronounced by successive ecumenical councils. These show an interesting progression as we move from earlier councils to subsequent councils. At the time when a given error or heresy is most pressing, an anathema, if pronounced, is usually quite specific about the position that is being condemned. The first ecumenical council at Nicea, for example, reacting against the heresy which subsequent generations have called Arianism, concluded its creed with the following words: "And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a difference substance (hypothesis) or essence (ousia) [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion—all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them." As we come to later councils, the formulation becomes much less specific about the errors in question. Instead, it tends to be attached specifically to the person of Arius rather than to the position which he espoused: Anathema to Arius! We see a similar progression when it comes to other heresies. In the early stages of the Christological controversies, St. Cyril's Twelve Anathematisms directed against the theology of Nestorius are quite specific. For example, the fourth anathematism reads: "If anyone shall divide between two persons or subsistences those expressions which are contained in the Evangelical and Apostolical writings, or which have been said concerning Christ by the Saints, or by himself, and shall apply some to him as to a man separate from the Word of God, and shall apply others to only the Word of God the Father, on the ground that they are fit to be applied to God: let him be anathema." These anathematisms were included verbatim in the acts of the third

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6 Ibid. 211.
ecumenical council, Ephesus (431 A.D.), but thereafter, formulations generally are content simply to anathematize Nestorius. In other words, a kind of theological “short-hand” develops. Instead of anathematizing a heretical position, which may be rather cumbersome to summarize and explain, we give this position a name and anathematize it as a heresy – Arianism or Nestorianism – or, more often, we associate it with a specific person and anathematize him – Arius or Nestorius.

In the case of Arius or Nestorius, the meaning of this “short-hand” is reasonably clear to the point of being self-evident. By saying “anathema to Nestorius” we are saying “anathema” to the positions enumerated by St. Cyril and repeated at the council of Ephesus. But in some cases this “short-hand” can deceive. If we are very clear about what is being condemned, well and good. But if we rely simply on the “short hand” of later councils, we may be misled. This point may be illustrated by reference to what Chalcedonian Orthodox regard as the sixth ecumenical council, III Constantinople (681 A.D.), which proclaimed anathema to Dioscorus “hated of God” and to the “impious” Severus of Antioch. This council was faced by the heresies of monotheletism and monenergism, which held that there was but one will and one natural energy in Christ. As frequently the case when faced with a new challenge, orthodox churchmen on the one hand denounced these heresies as dangerous innovations, but on the other they tried to demonstrate that the new heresies were simply old, long-condemned heresies in disguise. Like the monks of Mount Athos, like the fathers of the ancient councils generally, and for that matter like the heretics who assembled in the various ancient pseudo-councils, the fathers of III Constantinople wished to demonstrate the historical consistency of their position and at the same time, the coherence of their opponents’ position with that of earlier heretics. Thus at III Constantinople the contemporary monotheletites were seen as holding, among other things, the heresy of Apollinarius, who had held that Jesus Christ did not possess a human rational soul (nous) – a heresy which, according to III Constantinople, was condemned at I Constantinople (381 A.D.). In fact the story of I Constantinople is much more complex than a reading simply of the acts of III Constantinople would suggest; at I Constantinople itself, the question of Apollinarius’ teaching seems to have been tangential at most. 7 So also, at Constantinople III the monotheletites were seen as holding the heretical positions condemned at Chalcedon and II Constantinople (553 A.D.), which the council associated respectively with Dioscorus and Severus, among others.

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Hence, in the course of a long series of anathemas pronounced at the final session of the council, we find the names of Dioscorus (elsewhere described by the council as "hated by God") and Severus (elsewhere characterized as "impious"). Clearly, by the time of III Constantinople popular opinion did associate these names with heretical positions condemned at earlier councils. And this tendency continues in later centuries. For example, hymnography for the Feast of the Seven Ecumenical Councils (July 16) can exhort the orthodox to "abhor" Dioscorus and Severus along with a multitude of other heretics. But these formulations—these "short-hand" notes from later times—in fact are very misleading.

Let us first consider the case of Dioscorus. While III Constantinople can say anathema to Dioscorus and regard him as a progenitor of the monothelite heresy, this does not accurately reflect the views and activities of Dioscorus or how the Council of Chalcedon actually dealt with him. At the council Dioscorus was indeed deposed, but as the acts of the council indicate, "it was not for the faith that Dioscorus was deposed but because he had excommunicated the lord Leo, archbishop [of Rome], and that summoned three times, he did not come. This is why he was deposed." He did not in fact espouse the teaching of Eutyches, whose teaching concerning Christ and whose person was condemned at Chalcedon. To use the words of John Romanides, an Eastern Orthodox theologian deeply engaged in the theological dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox: "The backbone of the Orthodox tradition is the fact that the Logos became consubstantial with us. There can be no doubt that Dioscorus agrees with this fact and so could never be accused of being a monophysite along with Eutyches."

Let us also consider the case of Severus. He clearly affirms the basic Christological truth that Jesus Christ is consubstantial with His Father in his divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity. In other words, he does not fall into the heresy of Eutyches condemned at Chalcedon, which denied Christ's consubstantiality with us and thus his

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8 On the this and other issues related to our subject, see now Dorothea Wendebourg, "Chalcedon in Ecumenical Discourse," *Pro Ecclesia* 7 (1998) 307-32.

9 Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople, in Session 5, quoted by L’Huilllier, *op. cit.* 189, with further discussion of the case of Dioscorus.

10 Leo of Rome’s Support of Theodoret, Dioscorus of Alexandria’s Support of Eutyches, and the Lifting of the Anathemas," paper (as yet unpublished?) presented at the November 1993 meeting of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Geneva), 6.
full humanity. But Severus uses technical terms like *hypostasis* and *physis* in ways very different from the later formulations of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. If read on his own terms, he is not guilty of either the heresy of monophysitism or the heresy of monotheletism as these have been condemned by the ecumenical councils. His terminology may seem idiosyncratic, but it is hardly less so than that of most of his contemporaries, whether Chalcedonian (like Leontius of Byzantium) or non-Chalcedonian. In other words, he was misunderstood, perhaps deliberately, perhaps inadvertently, by the time that Constantinople III labeled him "infamous" and anathematized him as one of the progenitors of monotheletism.

Here a further question may be posed. What weight should be given to an objection raised by Patriarch Diodorus in his letter to Patriarch Ignatius: "Are we to believe that they [viz., the theologians of the period in question] did not correctly understand those present in the Synods with whom they communicated in a common language and education?" But while it certainly is true that these theologians were working in the same language, Greek, it does not follow that they used technical terms — especially those with a philosophical coloring — in the same way. We sometimes face the same problem today. English now serves as an international language in much the way that Greek did in antiquity, but as a frequent participant in international meetings once remarked, "We live in a world in which everyone knows English — bad English!" A concrete word like "shoe" will be understood in the same way by virtually every speaker of the English language, even by those for whom English is a second language, but a word like "existential" or "natural" will mean different things to different people, even to those whose only language is English. And of course the problem becomes even more complicated in the case of theologians who worked in different languages.

The faith of the ancient councils — I Nicaea, I Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, II Constantinople, III Constantinople, II Nicaea — is consistent, whether one labels all seven or only the first three as ecumenical. But their terminology is not always consistent. I Nicaea, for example, used the words *hypostasis* and *ousia* as synonyms, while the later councils took great pains to distinguish them. So too, the anathemas of the ancient councils are not always consistent. Too often we have mistaken the "short-hand" of later periods for historical fact. The conclusion of the Joint Commission therefore is quite appropriate:

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“Both families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations will be consummated on the basis that the Councils and fathers previously anathematized or condemned are not heretical” (1990 Chambesy Agreed Statement, para. 10). Let us hope that this mutual lifting of anathemas occurs soon!
THE ANATHEMAS IN THE ARMENIAN
ORDINATION EUCHOLOGION

Abraham Terian

The purpose for the current session in our occasional dialogue is to
address the problematics of the anathemas and to see how they could be
resolved. Obviously, much of what we believe intersects, and dialogue
becomes possible not just because of our concurring upon most of the
same things, but more so because of our differing about some of the
same things as well. My objective in this paper is to document the
comparatively late development of liturgical anathematization of
heretics in the Armenian Church. Thus I wish to lay the groundwork
for the possibility of moving from the basic comprehension of the
problematics to resolutions leading to the lifting of the anathemas,
beginning with those in liturgical usage. The very meaning of the word
"resolutions" presupposes prior solutions or realizations that may have
been either abandoned or forgotten and which may be recalled, rephrased
if necessary, and reconsidered. This word gives us much hope since it
also conveys a sense of determination.

Without a doubt, the major hurdle for the Armenian Church
regarding the issue at hand is the anathematization in certain rituals
originating at the turn of the 15th century, foremost of which is the
ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" associated with the rite of
ordination of priests (not to be confused with the ordination rite). ¹
When this ritual was introduced, however, it did not have the major part
of the anathematization consisting of a list of heresarchs with their
disavowed teachings and countered with a parallel list of Orthodox
doctriaires. The same lists appear verbatim in two related rituals
pertaining to priestly promotions in rank, likewise originating at the
turn of the 15th century. This paper is limited to analyzing the inherent

¹ Presented at the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Symposium:
"Anathemas: Obstacles to Unity," co-sponsored by St. Vladimir's
Orthodox Seminary and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, March 17,
1998, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

² For an Eng. translation of the received text of the Armenian rite
of ordination of priests, see H. Tchilingirian, "Ordination to the
Priesthood in the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church," unpublished
M.Div. thesis, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary,
problems of the interpolated text of the anathemas in the "Calling to the Priesthood" and to establishing its origin in the two other rituals of the same period. This is but a preliminary interpretation through text, source, and redaction criticism. At a later time, I would like to provide a hermeneutic of the same, with the understanding that interpretation itself is an essential, primary action.

Although the origin of the Armenian rite of ordination of priests is attributed to St. Sahak the Great, the last patriarch of the Gregorid house (in office 386-438), there were several redactions in the ordination manuals for all the clerical ranks ever since. A cursory survey of manuscripts and published texts compels one to speak more accurately of recensions of the respective rites of ordination. The canon of ordination of priests is part of the Episkoposakan Matoc' (Episcopal

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3 For the most thorough and detailed description of euchologion manuscripts, beginning with the oldest in existence, see Barsel Sargisian and Grigor Sargisian, Mayr c'uc'ak hayerên jeragrac' matenadararan Mxitareanc' i Venetik. Hator G: Maštoc'-Girk' jernadruteanc' (Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Library of the Mekhitarists in Venice. Vol. 3: Euchologion – Ordination Manuals) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1966); cf. the detailed contents, beginning with the earliest manual in existence, in E. Fogolean, Maštoc' jernadruteanc' Hayastaneayc' Ekelec'woy est 33 jeragrac' i matenadarani S. ëazaru (The Ordination Euchologion of the Armenian Church according to 33 Manuscripts in the Library of S. Lazar) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1966-1974). See also F. C. Conybeare, Rituale Armenorum (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), pp. ix-xxv and 231-242; Claudio Guggerotti, I riti ordinazione e la Cilicia Armona. Diss. Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium (Rome 1996), pp. 22-27, utilizing Conybeare's A (Venice no. 457, dated 9th-10th centuries) under the signum E, and another manuscript, Venice no. 1657, dated 1248, under the signum Z. Of interest also are Jerusalem nos. 2027 and 2156, dated 1266 and 1370, respectively.
Euchologion), the manual containing the rites performed by bishops. Not surprisingly, older manuscripts dating from before the 15th century do not contain the ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" on the eve of ordination; and those of later date that do contain the ritual are silent about "the renunciation of the heretics," the part anathematizing certain heresiarchs by name, and its sequel, "the affirmation of church fathers," the counterpart recommending the teachings of certain orthodox theologians and of the three General Councils by name.

A look at the printed editions is equally enlightening — if not more so. An episcopal euchologion, A Book for the Bestowal of Ranks upon Clerks, Deacons, and Priests, and for the Granting of the Staff to Doctors (Girk' astiçan taloy dprac' ew Sarkawagac' ew k'ahanagic', ew gawzan taloy vardapetac'n) issued in 1752 at the press of Astuacatur in Constantinople, with the assent of the Catholicos Minas (in office 1751-1753), includes the evening ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" but without the anathemas and the affirmations by name (pt. 1, pp. 50-91; note the omission at p. 84). Later in this edition, however, the anathemas and the affirmations appear twice, in conjunction with two related rituals: at the beginning of the four-stage "Granting the Doctoral Staff" or the crocia (Gawzan Vardatakan) and at the beginning of the ten-stage "Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor" (Cayragoyn Vardapat) (part. 2, p. 7, pointing to the ensuing text, pp. 59-65). However, in the next printed edition of a broader euchologion, Book Called Grand Euchologion (Girk' Mec Maštoc' koçec'cal) issued in 1807 at the Yohannisean press in Constantinople, with the assent of the Catholicos Daniel (in office 1804-1808) and his contemporary Armenian patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, the "Calling to the Priesthood" appears with the anathemas and the affirmations (pp. 255-262; note especially pp. 259-261) and, as expected, at the beginning of granting...

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4 It is sometimes referred to as Jernadrutean Maštoc' (Ordination Euchologion) in the manuscripts. When it is combined with the K'ahanayakan Maštoc' or P'ok'ir Maštoc' (Priestly or Lesser Euchologion), the manual containing the rites performed by priests, it is referred to as Mayr or Mec Maštoc' (Mother or Grand Euchologion). These larger euchologias at times include also the Hayrapetakan Maštoc' (Patriarchal Euchologion), the manual for the rites performed only by the Catholicos, even the canon for the anointing of kings upon their coronation.

5 Unaccounted for by Conybeare in his list of printed editions of the Euchologia with ordinals; Rituale, pp. xxiv-xxv.

6 See the study by Babğen (Catholicos) Kiwlèsêrian, Vardapetut'ean astiçannerê Hay Ekeleć'woy mej (The Ranks of Vardapet in the Armenian Church) (Antilias: See of the Great House of Cilicia, 1980).
the staff as well as at the beginning of granting the rank of supreme doctor. Thus, there are three rituals where the recitation of the anathemas with the accompanying affirmations is called for in this edition (cf. pp. 282 and 295, both pointing to the text provided earlier, pp. 259-261). An epilogue (p. 423) by a predecessor Catholicos, the influential Siméon Erewanec'î (in office 1763-1780) who is known for his commitment and contributions to liturgical reforms,\(^7\) acknowledges “that the texts were freely supplemented, emended, or abridged, as seemed good to the editors,” as Conybeare sums it up (for a translation of the full text of the epilogue intended for the ritual of priestly burial, see Appendix I at the end of this article).\(^8\) It is this edition that forms the basis for the *editio princeps*, the *textus receptus* presently used for the ordination of priests: the *Ordination Euchologion (Jernadrutean Maštoc’)* published in 1876 at Vaĥaršapat / Ėjmiačin (pp. 26-63 for the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood,” note especially pp. 32-36 for the anathemas and the affirmations; cf. pp. 65-80 for granting the staff, and pp. 81-115 for that of supreme doctor, note especially pp. 67 and 82, both pointing to the text of the anathemas and the affirmations at pp. 32-36).

The comparative columns below illustrate the development of the “Calling to the Priesthood” ritual in published texts (as noted above, the development is not attested in manuscripts prior to these published editions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1752 ed., p. 84</th>
<th>1807 ed., p. 259</th>
<th>1876 ed., p. 32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Bishop) Do you profess the orthodox confession of faith in the Holy Trinity and in the incarnation of Christ our God and do you renounce all heretics? (Candidate) Yes, holy father, together with the holy fathers</td>
<td>(Bishop) Do you profess the orthodox confession of faith in the Holy Trinity and in the incarnation of Christ our God and do you renounce all heretics? (Candidate) Yes, holy father, together with the holy fathers</td>
<td>(Bishop) Do you profess the orthodox confession of faith in the Holy Trinity and in the incarnation of Christ our God according to the three councils and do you renounce all heretics? (Candidate) Yes, holy father, together with the holy fathers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^8\) Conybeare, *Rituale*, p. xxiv.
I profess the orthodox faith and I confess the Holy Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and the incarnation of Christ our God; and I anathematize all the ranks of heretics: Arians, Macedon, and Nestor, and all the ranks of Diophysites.

The *terminus post quem* of this comparatively late ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" on the eve of ordination is invariably linked with the reforms of St. Gregory of Tat’ev (c.1344-1409), the last saint of the Armenian Church and chronologically the last of the orthodox fathers and theologians named in the insertion, whose teachings are to be followed. A lengthy preface to this ritual, cautioning the ordaining bishop of the worthiness of the candidate, has the following attribution: "In accordance with the necessary counsel of the great educator Gregory

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9 For their names and identity, see "Appendix II" in Tchilingirian, "Ordination to the Priesthood," pp. 104-108. The given identity of James Surpéc'i is absurd (p. 107); he is none other than Jacob of Serug (c.451-520/1), the famous Syrian father, here mentioned right after St. Ephrem.
the rhetor." The cautionary preface has much in common with a co-authored treatise entitled *Curriculum for Educating Infants Who Are Called to the Rank of Priesthood: Necessary and Useful Advice Written by Lord Arak'el, Bishop of Siwnik', and Grigor [of Tat'ew], the Great Rhetor.* Moreover, the ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" concludes with a confession of faith found also in this co-authored work. Lord Arakel (c.1356-c.1422), bishop of Siwnik' from 1407 and later rhetor at Tat'ew, is a maternal nephew and a disciple of St. Gregory of Tat'ew, and he could well be the primary figure behind the "Calling to the Priesthood" ritual introduced on the authority of his uncle, the great rhetor (as distinguished educators were called then). But this ritual was without the list of anathemas and its corresponding list of affirmations, the authorship and derivation of which shall be addressed in the sequel.

It is important to note that the candidate's response just before the insertion (see the columnar excerpts above) anathematizes only three individuals by name (Arius, Macedonius, and Nestorius). The insertion creates an immediate duplication of these three already anathematized individuals. Curiously, the anathematization of these three alone have the formulaic, recurring phrase "who did not confess" in the insertion and, more importantly, only these three are singled out by name in Book II of the *Quaestiones* (Girk' hare'manc') by Tat'ewac'i, where he comments at length on heresy, heretics, and heretical movements. The duplication of anathematizing Arius, Macedonius, and Nestorius was noticed after the publication of the 1807 euchologion and was duly fixed.

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10 Arm. text in Girk' astičan taloy... (Constantinople: Astuacatur, 1752), pt. 2, pp. 237-272; Girk' Mec Maštoc' Koččel' (Constantinople: Yohanniasean, 1807), pp. 337-342; for an Eng. translation of this work, see A. Aljalian et al., "Curriculum for Educating Infants Who Are Called to the Rank of Priesthood: Necessary and Useful Advice Written by Lord Arak'el, Bishop of Siwnik', and Grigor [of Tat'ew], the Great Rhetor," *St. Nersess Theological Review*, 1 (1996) 233-245. Most likely, the Bishop of Siwnik' is the sole author of the "Curriculum," to which he seems to have appended the name of Tat'ewac'i for added authority. For a discussion, beginning with the question of authorship, see Kiwlēsērian, Vardapet'et'ean astičannerē, pp. 83-92.


12 (St.) Grigor Tat'ewac'i, Girk' Hare'manc' (Book of Questions) (Constantinople: Mahtesi Astuacatur, 1729; reprinted Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1993), pp. 31-101; note especially pp. 36, 55 (Arius), pp. 52, 55, 59 (Macedonius), and p. 66 (Nestorius).
in the 1876 edition by eliminating the first mention of these three from the candidate’s response. These observations make it clear that the ritual of “Calling” has undergone a couple of changes since its inception in the 15th century, with three distinct versions attested in the above cited editions (the first of which mirrors the manuscript tradition before the published editions). Obviously, the received text of the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood” could not have come from the hands of the great rhetor in its present form; nor could he be the author of the interpolated text, lifted from either the four-part ritual of “Granting the Doctoral Staff” or the additional ten-part ritual of “Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor.” The cumulative knowledge of Tat’ewači regarding heresiarchs and their teachings, as reflected in his Quæstiones, cannot be reconciled with the blunders found in the interpolation which names him as the last of the saintly doctrinaires.

We shall continue to look for the author of the lists of anathemas and affirmations and shall consider the historical circumstances under which the anathematization was introduced in the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood.” In the meantime, we have come to observe an aspect of the legacy of the reforms initiated by the great rhetor of Tat’ew, who is often considered the most decisive contributor to the present form of the Armenian priesthood. This is most noticeable in the ritual of “Granting the Doctoral Staff” and that of “Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor” in the Armenian Church. Although the introductory ascriptions name the great rhetor of Tat’ew as the progenitor of these rituals, we should not discount the role played by his nephew in expanding on them and in perpetuating these and possibly other rituals introduced at the turn of the 15th century. Interestingly, Conybeare observes that euchologion codices after 1400 include many later rites not found in codices prior to this date.13

The eclectic list of anathematized individuals and their teachings in the ritual of “Calling” is rather embarrassing, and that for more reasons than the duplication of certain names and the non-applicable teachings attributed to some. There are 17 names of which 2 are repetitive corruptions of previously named heretics (Sabel[ius] [10] [cf. Sabel Libiac’i (5)] and Manik’eš [14] [cf. Mani (8)], each denounced a second time for yet another heresy); a third name, obviously corrupt, remains unidentifiable (Antrovitos [16], whose stated heresy offers some help as to the identity of the movement - but not of any individual by that unheard of name).14 Others are not even Christian to begin with (Mani

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13 Conybeare, Rituale, p. xxv; cf. Fogolean, Mastoc’ jernadruteanc’, passim.

14 Gugerotti, I riti di ordinazione, p. 398 (§ 248), has “Antroito” in the Italian translation and no explanatory note. The stated heretical
[8]; Epicurus [9]; Socrates [11]; Galen [12]; and, conceivably, the Gnostic Carpocrates [13]). The renunciation of the three figures from classical antiquity (Epicurus, Socrates, and Galen) may have some justification in the Armenian confessional tradition, thanks to Eznik’s (5th century) *Refutation of the Sects* in four parts, the third part of which is directed against the Greek philosophers. But it is doubtful that the author of the insertion or the interpolating redactor had Eznik’s work in mind, since Galen (whose work exists in a 6th-8th century Armenian translation attributed to the so-called Grecophile School of translators) is never ranked among the philosophers; nor is Marcion mentioned in the list, against whom the fourth part of Eznik’s treatise is aimed. The list of 17 is thus reducible to 9 acknowledged heresiarchs, yet not all of them are renounced for what they actually stand for or represent in the history of Christological controversies. I do not wish to belabor the inherent contradictions in the insertion and the problems stemming from it. It would be enough to enumerate the 9 only of those anathematized by name with the reasons for which they are denounced, followed by some further remarks on content.

(1) Arius, “who confessed neither the union of the natures in the incarnate Word of God nor the same as one Christ.”

(2) Macedon[ius], “who did not confess the Holy Spirit as consubstantial with the Father and the Son, but as a created being.”

(3) Nestor[ius], “who does not confess the Holy Virgin Mary as Theotokos and the one born of her as fully God, but mere man.”

teaching is that “the body of Christ was brought from heaven and passed through the Virgin as through a conduit.” This was the teaching of an extreme Monophysite sect, the Julianists or the Aphthartodocetae, who held that the earthly body of Christ was incorruptible from the first momement of the incarnation (mainstream Monophysites hold that it was incorruptible after the resurrection). I am therefore tempted to suggest that Antrovitos is a likely corruption not of a personal name but most likely of *apthartodocetos*, one who believes in the teachings of the Aphthartodocetae.


16 For a list of heretical movements mentioned in the Armenian Canon Law, q.v. “*Herjuæ*” (Heresy) in Hakobyan, *Kanonagirk’ Hayoc‘*, 1:713.
(4) Paul of Samosata, "who divided the one Christ into two hypostases and two prosopons, and rendered to him merely proximity, honor and privilege, and not the union of nature."

(5) Sabellius of Libya, "who did not differentiate the two hypostases and the two powers of the Word of the holy Scriptures — the prophets, the apostles and the holy evangelists — who have taught about Christ, what Jesus himself said of himself. Do you also renounce those who know Him only as a man in the flesh, and others only as the Word who is from God the Father?" In the second anathematization of Sabellius (10) it adds, "who denied the hypostatic character of the Trinity and he called the Trinity one hypostasis."

(6-7) Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Samosata (rather, Mopsuestia) and all those "who do not confess the joining of the Word with the body and do not confess the same as one Lord, one Jesus, one Son of God, perfect God and perfect man, Son of God and Son of Man."

(15) Eutyches, "who denied justification through the grace of Christ."

(17) (Pope) Leo I and his tome, "who wrote that the one nature is divided into two."

It is hardly surprising that most of the specified reasons for anathematization pertain to implications for Monophysite Christology. The heresy of Arius (1) is here defined narrowly and poorly in Monophysite terms, and strictly from that perspective. This is indeed a far cry from the reasons for which he was condemned at Nicaea. The rejection of the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit by Macedonius (2) is well stated; whereas the implication of the rejection of the term Theotokos by Nestorius (3) is stretched too far, to a point of denial of Christ's divinity. 

The first part of the statement on Paul of Samosata (4) likewise indicates a limited Monophysite perception of him; the second part is nonsensical. In the condemnation of Sabellius (5) there is a clear amplification of the first part of the preceding statement on Paul of Samosata and a misunderstanding of the two "powers" (dunameis) often mentioned in Trinitarian definitions of the Godhead, (mis)taken here as referring allegorically to the two Testaments. While condemning the Sabellian opposition to Johannine Christology, the end part of the statement also denounces those who seem to have read too much into the Johannine Logos. So also the second part of the statement against Diodore and Theodore (6-7), where the latter is said to be from Samosata (instead of Mopsuestia): it attempts to explain the

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17 Yet for Nestorius, the rejection of the term Theotokos was because of its insufficiency to distinguish the human from the divine in Christ, "for that which is born of flesh is flesh," a notion which he rejected.
implications of the first part; and like the previous statement against Sabellius, condemns both extremes. Given the facts of Armenian Christology, finding the name of Eutyches (15) among the heresiarchs is somewhat paradoxical but not surprising; however, the condemnation of his heresy denotes a stretched and distorted understanding of the soteriological implication of his Christology. Except for Pope Leo I and his tome (17), no reference is made to heterodox writings.

The absence of Armenian names in the list of heretics is conspicuous, since native writings by ecclesiastical do not spare them from the harshest criticism and the anathemas. Moreover, in the anathema on “all the ranks of Diaphyrites” the Armenian Church seems to be contradicting its acknowledgment of two Diaphysite saints memorialized in the Armenian Menologion: Pope Gregory I the Great (590-604) and Germanos I, Patriarch of Constantinople (715-730).

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18 Eutyches denied the consubstantiality of the manhood of Christ with ours to the point of making Him virtually untouched by it as a Savior. The polemical literature of the Armenian Church on Christological matters, codified in Girk' T'hc' (Book of Letters) (ed. N. Polarian [Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1994]), has much against Eutyches (passim). Some modified elements of Euchitianism, however, are discernible in Armenian Christology (e.g., The Teaching of St. Gregory, 378 [ed. and transl. by R. W. Thomson]; St. Nersēs Šnorhali, Ėndhanrakan Tūtik' [General Epistle] [Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1871], p. 89). Be that as it may, it could be said with certainty that in the Armenian Church we do not find Euchitianism in its extreme form, “involving the almost entire disappearance of the human nature” (Malachia Ormanian, The Church of Armenia, 3rd rev. ed. [New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988], p. 31). Eutyches was anathemized at the Council of Chalcedon (451); Euchitianism was denounced by the Armenians at the Fifth Council convened in Vālaršapat (506).

19 See M. Awgerean, ed., Liakatar Vark' ew Vkayutayn Srboc' (The Complete Lives and Testimonies of Saints) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1810), pp. 1115, 1117 (cf. p. 651). This edition is based on the the Yaysmavurk' (Menologion) of the Latinophile Catholicos Grigor of Anawarza (in office 1293-1307), whose compilation seems to have influenced those of his near-contemporaries: Tēr Israel and Kīrakos of Ganjak. In recent scholarship, some have argued with considerable but not quite persuasive evidence that Movses Xorenaci, the acclaimed “father of Armenian history,” was a Chalcedonian; see S. Malxasyan, “M. Xorenaci'ın K'alkedonakan ēr” (M. Xorenaci'i Was a Chalcedonian), Te'kakagir Haykakan SSR Gitutyunneri Akademiayi (1944/3-4) 27-52 (on the basis of the concluding laments in his
The Western father was venerated mainly because of the popularity of his Greek vita, and the Eastern father for his stand againstIconoclasm. Other contradictions abound in the insertion; e.g., St. Step'anos Siwnc'i (c.680-735), named among the orthodox fathers, cherished a decidedly Julianist or Aphthartodocetic Christology, similar to the kind for which the hitherto unidentified Antrovitos (16) is charged.20

It is highly probable that the inserted text originated with an ill-informed hierarch whose prerogatives included the exacting of an affirmation of orthodoxy and a denunciation of heterodoxy from a candidate either for ordination or for promotion in ecclesiastical rank. Thus, what was done in a particular region and was readily available for others to use, was apparently borrowed elsewhere and in time gained gradual acceptance and was fixed. Yet Armenian sources are not lacking in lists of Christian and non-Christian heresiarchs from which a better form of anathemas – were they needed – could have been extracted or construed. One such source is the Girk' herjuacoc' (Book of Heresies), a translation of the lengthy table of contents of St. Epiphanius' Panarion (Refutation of All the Heresies), from which other, shorter extractions are known in Armenian, translated, it seems, from Greek abridgements of Epiphanius’ work, the Anacephalaiosis.21 Yet our insertion, deficient in its inclusions as it is in its omissions, does not rely on these extractions from the Panarion.22

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history). In passing, the author refers to several extant Georgian translations from Diophysite Armenian sources long eradicated.


22 One finds no commonality except for these names: Epicureans (9), Carpocratians (13), Sabellians (5, 10), Manichaean (8, 14), and Arians (1), in this order; however, descriptions of these heresies differ vastly from our insertion.
It could be argued apologetically that the emphasis in the anathemas is not so much on the persons as it is on the heterodox teachings that they embody. Some justification for this view may be found in the fact that anathemas by name are often secondary to the more generic anathemas preceding them, as attested also in the "Calling" ritual before the problematic insertion. A good example of the generic anathemas is found in the pronouncement following the creed in the Armenian Divine Liturgy, without naming the Sabellians, the Modalistic Monarchians who were decidedly opposed to the doctrine of the Logos presented in the Gospel of John and the rest of Johannine Christology. But as for our insertion, the discrepancies between names and teachings and other inaccuracies reduce its credibility to the point of leaving it in need of apologetics for its content. It is embarrassing, to say the least, and clearly depreciates the significance of the rituals wherein it is imbedded.

In the statements of the ancients abstract terms are often used for concrete and concrete for abstract. The ancients themselves had difficulty with these statements, especially the Christological formulations. Some continued to simplify them at the risk of loosing their place within Orthodoxy. Others were dragged into them unwillingly. Some avoided them by resorting to allegorization. Others chose to be silent so as to keep the imperial favors granted to them. Politics and polemics aside, in our effort of elucidating the particularity and comprehensibility of past eras of Christological controversies we try hard to understand how some earlier "Orthodox" positions were themselves credible. Even then, seldom in our interpretation do we allow room for ambiguity, forgetting that even our everyday meanings harbor some complexity. We are constrained, none the less, by our commitment to Orthodoxy to interpret the Christological statements rightly, i.e., if we can, even creatively – given our different world-view and circumstances of today, and to heal the divisions created by old disputations. As regards the historical anathemas resulting from these controversies, we have to ask ourselves whether it is appropriate to perpetuate them liturgically (and in a flawed manner at that) in this age of renewed Ecumenism.

This question, however, creates further problems to very traditional churches with strong historical consciousness, which has long been

23 "As for those who say there was a time when the Son was not or there was a time when the Holy Spirit was not or that they came into being out of nothing or who say that the Son of God or the Holy Spirit be of different substance and that they be changeable or alterable, such doth the catholic and apostolic Church anathematize" (transl. by [Abp.] T. Nersoyan, Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church [New York: Delphic Press, 1950], p. 49).
recognized as an impediment to hermeneutics. But since the liturgical anathematization by name in the Armenian Church is of late origin and limited to the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood,” the ritual of “Granting the Doctoral Staff” and its sequel, that of “Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor,” the issue for Armenians is simpler and easier perhaps than for those who have named anathemas in more parts of their liturgy.

For churches deeply imbued in tradition and historical consciousness and for whom there may seem to be no foreseeable departure from these entrenchments, there may still be found certain elements within their respective, rich traditions that could be retrieved and dwelt upon. Resurrecting voices that once cried in the wilderness, so to speak, and granting them a new hearing should be a desirable step within the tradition and respective of it. In the Armenian tradition, for example, one can make a case of having come a long way from the uncompromising Catholicos Movsès Elvardeč’i (in office 574-604), known for his refusal “to eat the baked bread of the Greeks [or] drink their hot water,” to the accommodating position of Esayi Nēec’i, successor to Nersès Msec’i, founder of the monastery of Glajor, who writes in the early 1320’s to a certain Mattēos, bishop of Tabriz, that if the Eucharist is celebrated “with perfect faith and piety, both (diluted and undiluted wine) would be acceptable and pleasing to God.” More importantly, in the same letter Esayi manifests a spirit of toleration on Christological issues and recommends that questions about the one or two natures of Christ should not be used to anathematize others. Such spirit of toleration, in effect, is just as much part of the Armenian tradition as is its opposite (this, in addition to the ecumenical gems to be quarried from the writings of Catholicos [St.] Nerses the Graceful [in office 1166-1173], the patron saint after whom our seminary is named).

In this century three Armenian hierarchs have addressed the problem of the liturgical anathemas, focusing on the bungled insertion that has become part of the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood.”

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In a pamphlet published in 1932, Archbishop Torgom Gušakian, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1931-1939), comments briefly on each of the identifiable persons anathematized, without ignoring the fact that there are rampant confusions and corruptions in the text (see Appendix II). Very insightfully, the learned Patriarch, who wrote the pamphlet probably for the edification of candidates he was about to ordain, entitled his study "Nzoves" with a question mark, meaning "Do you [singular] anathematize?"; that is to say: "Do you really anathematize?" or that "Do you really know who you are anathematizing?" The not-so-tacit dimensions of his question encapsulate more than the deficient nature of the text or the scanty knowledge of its author. The ramifications of the question extend to both ancient author and modern reader, to ordaining bishop and candidate for ordination.

Among the ordination eulogia at the Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Library at St. Nersess is the personal copy (1876 edition) of Patriarch Mašak'ia Ormanian of Constantinople (d. 1918), presented anonymously to Archbishop Nersoyan in 1945, the year of his ordination as bishop. In this copy, Patriarch Ormanian has made overwhelming emendations, including substantial deletions and marginal notations around the anathemas, to the point of nearly rewriting the text (see Appendix III). He also parenthesized the words "and all the ranks of the Diophysites" from the candidate's response to the bishop's initial inquiry about heresy and heretics – just before proceeding to the list of heresiarchs in the interpolation. Far more radical, and justifiably so, is Archbishop Nersoyan's approach to the interpolated text. In the same copy of the ordination eulogion, he indicated drastic deletions by the word ÖE (“No”) in red, in the margin opposite to the deleted paragraphs – all except the first three. He thus limited the anathemas to the first three heresiarchs, in keeping with the historical tradition of the Armenian Church (Arius, Macedonius, and Nestorius, marking them with the word Ayo ["Yes"] in red). He even deleted the first of the affirmations of Orthodox teachers, namely, the vague statement on Dionysius the Areopagite and his virtually unknown teacher Hierotheus (see Appendix IV).27

In conclusion, suffice it to say that the liturgical anathematization of the heresiarchs in the Armenian Church is a post-Tat'ewac'i development, beginning with the subsequent appearance of the

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27 The latter saint is commemorated in the Armenian Monologion as the teacher of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Paul's venerated convert/disciple (Acts 17:34); feast day, October 1. He is cited as the progenitor of Christian Theology and the systematizer of Christology (cf. Dionysius, Divine Names, 2.9; 3.2-3). See Awgarian, Liakatar vark' ew v'kayabinutuwn srboč', pp. 650-653.
convoluted insertion in the related rituals of "Granting the Doctoral Staff" and "Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor." These rituals were authored by Tat'ewac'i in 1397.\textsuperscript{28} However, the authorship and subsequent interpolation of the generally ill-informed insertion remain entangled in obscurity. As stated earlier, this insertion which names Tat'ewac'i as the last saint whose teachings are to be followed does not coalesce with his Book II of the \textit{Quaestiones}, which treats the subject of heresy and heretical movements.\textsuperscript{29} At a much later time, the puzzling interpolation became part of the ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" which, although attributed to "the great rhetor of Tat'ew," appears to be the work of Aṙak'el Bishop of Siwnik', his nephew and successor at the monastic school.\textsuperscript{30} This latest development may be traced to the

\textsuperscript{28} See (Abp.) N. Poharean, \textit{Hay Groñer} (Armenian Writers) (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971), p. 398. Poharean cites Jerusalem no. 600B as a representative manuscript. This undated, two-part manuscript includes the anathematizing insertion (pp. 250-256). The author's name appears three times in the manuscript with different attributes, but without the word "Saint" among them (pp. 19, 238, and 249; in idem, \textit{Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts}, 11 vols. [Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1966-1991] 2:645-646). In the absence of a formal process of canonization of saints in the Armenian Church, I am inclined to think that the "sainthood" of Gregory of Tat'ew was drawn, \textit{de facto}, from the defective interpolation. Of course, later scribes are usual contributors to the notion of "sainthood" in their attributions of authorship to titles copied by them.

\textsuperscript{29} The list of heresiarchs could not have been gleaned from any known Armenian source – not even the canon book which contains several lists of heretics anathematized at various councils (the names of some well known heresiarchs mentioned in the canon book are conspicuously absent in our list, and vice versa); see the index in Hakobyan, \textit{Kanonagirk' Hayoc'}, 1:713.

\textsuperscript{30} Poharean does not mention this last ritual among the works of Tat'ewac'i; see \textit{Hay Groñer}, pp. 398-399; cf. Venice no. 838 (Maštoc' 115, dated 1773), fols. 63r-81v, attributing the ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" to Aṙak'el Bishop of Siwnik' (see the editors' note in the Venice catalogue, 3:618). The bishop, who propagated his uncle's teachings and monastic reforms, is better known for his religious lyrics than for his pastoral writings – to which he was not slow to add the name of his much revered uncle as co-author so as to guarantee acceptance. Among such writings are the \textit{Curriculum for Educating Infants Who Are Called to the Rank of Priesthood} (for an English translation, see above, n. 10), which has strong reminiscences to the counsel given to the ordaining bishop at the beginning of the ritual of "Calling to the Priesthood" and which contains the same
ecclesiastical reforms initiated by Catholicos Simēon Erewanecʿi, who is known for his zeal to reconcile methodically nearly all perceived liturgical and canonical discrepancies.\(^{31}\) Judging from the published editions, and from the epilogue of the 1807 edition especially, Catholicos Simēon Erewanecʿi seems to have been somewhat instrumental in having the anathematization inserted in the “Calling to the Priesthood.” Further research in euchologion manuscripts from the 15th-17th centuries is needed, however, for additional and hopefully conclusive evidence to establish more narrowly the time when the insertion containing the anathemas appeared in the two “doctoral” rituals authored by Tatʿewacʿi – from where it made its way into the ritual of “Calling to the Priesthood” authored by his nephew, the Bishop of Siwnikʿ. The eventual interpolation of this convoluted text in the “Calling to the Priesthood” is not so odd when considering the earlier use made of it in works attributed to the rhetor of Tatʿew. Moreover, the mounting and bitter rivalries with the Greeks over sacred sites in the Holy Land, especially during the turbulent 17th-18th centuries, may have contributed to the ensuing development.\(^{32}\)

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confession of faith as that found in the latter ritual; cf. the three compilations of Adamgirkʿ, which transmit in verse quite a few of the traditions on Adam, both Armenian and non-Armenian (in the manuscripts, the name of St. Grigor Tatʿewacʿi follows that of Arakʿel Siwnecʿi, sometimes as the requester of the work; see e.g., Erevan no. 83, in O. Eganyan, A. Zeytunyan, and Pʿ. Antabyan, Cʿucʿak jeragracʿ Maštocʿi anvan matenadarani (Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library Named after Maštocʿ), 2 vols. (Erevan: Arm. Academy of Sciences, 1965-1970) 1:245; currently being revised with expanded descriptions, cf. idem, Mayr cʿucʿak hayaerēn jeragracʿ Maštocʿi anvan matenadarani (Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Library Named after Maštocʿ) (Erevan: Arm. Academy of Sciences, 1984) 1:337. It is unlikely, however, that the Bishop of Siwnikʿ is the author / interpolator of the two lists (the anathemas and the affirmations) in the rituals of “Granting the Doctoral Staff” and “Granting the Rank of Supreme Doctor.”

\(^{31}\) Ormanian, Azgapatun, 2/3:3065-3070 (§§ 2101-2103).

\(^{32}\) I am indebted to Rev. Dr. Alexander Goltzin of Marquette University, a participant at the symposium, for a question that reminded this part of history. See Ormanian, Azgapatun, 2/2:2512-2529 (§§ 1729-1739), on the pathetic Patriarchate of Astuacatur Taronecʿi (in office 1645-1670), when the St. James monastery was taken over temporarily by the Greeks (1657-1659); and 2/3:3073-3074 (§ 2106), on the Patriarchate of Karapet Ganjakecʿi (in office 1762-1768).
The presence of the anathemas in these three rituals is to be seen as relatively recent expansion, unrelated to the reforms initiated by St. Gregory of Tat’ew and propagated by his nephew. The authorship of the interpolation remains dubious and the convoluted text serves neither instructive nor any constructive purpose in any of the rituals of which it has now become a part. Not much more could be said when the major and only text for anathematizing is flawed and does not seem to be rooted in its documentary locus. Adherence to this incredulous text of the anathemas only diminishes the significance of the rituals, and this is not fair to their venerated authors in the first place. Moreover, persistence in the liturgical use of these anathemas — marking a clear departure from the earlier and more authentic Armenian tradition — is certainly not conducive to the spirit of the dialogue we are engaged in. Short of lifting the anathemas, efforts should be made to discontinue their liturgical use and thus halt the perpetuity of an ill-advised practice — the sooner the better.  

33 The questions raised by Patriarch Guşakian certainly warrant such an action. As for the corrections by Patriarch Ormanian and the deletions and additions by Archbishop Nersoyan, they leave us at best with something better than simply reiterating these anathemas with rather incomplete or partial understanding (or with no understanding in certain cases).

Ultimately, the important subject with which we are dealing requires moving from purely analytical reason to dialectical reason, from the exegetical (including the historical background and the liturgical development as context) to the hermeneutical, more so in the current “ecumenical situation.” Those hidden constants of the self-formative practices which constitute religious tradition require more than a serious look — at least occasionally. More often than none, for churches rooted in tradition, greater viability is found in the earlier or older strata of that tradition than in its later development. When dealing with this subject, a guiding principle for the Armenian Church may be found in the following canon attributed to St. Gregory the Enlightener: “A priest who anathematizes needlessly shall be anathematized by Christ.”

34 We should be encouraged by the absence of such practice in the other Oriental Orthodox churches (e.g., the Coptic Church, thanks to a remark by His Grace Bp. Surial of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Cedar Grove, NJ, a participant at the symposium).

34 Canon 29 (Kanonagir*, 1:249); however, one may argue that anathematization was not yet in vogue in his days.
Appendix I

Epilogue to the Mec Maštocʻ by Catholicos Šimēon Erewanecʻi (1807 ed., p. 423; published posthumously)

It is proper for philologists to ponder the accuracy of words and, especially, to leave out what is not consonant with veracity and, with sound judgment, to supply what is missing – so that the expressed word would find its right position and fall nicely in place. In this manner and in all practicality, the good is to be preferred, in accordance with which the holy apostle Paul admonishes: “Be zealous for the (spiritual) gifts that are good.” So we took upon ourselves this urgency, which we have known for a long time, to correct our grand euchologion, into which so many corruptions and errors have been introduced by careless people, in both manuscripts and published texts. This is obvious to critical observers. Thus, having amassed into one place numerous manuscripts, with great effort, yes, by the grace of the Lord, we accomplished the corrections that were made, removing the additions that were later insertions and supplementing the omissions that were carelessly left out of their places in several copies, both by scribes and by printers. And in sundry places, where the meanings of words were distorted, or seemed to be unsuitable, we changed them into accurate and befitting expression, leaving the author’s thought intact. As for the present (edition), we are publishing only the ritual of priestly burial, since this ritual has been much corrupted and distorted, as it is clear to those who know from experience. As for the other (burial) rituals, although corruptions exist, they are not as plentiful as those in the ritual of priestly burial. Moreover, the others are to be found elsewhere (in print), but until the present (edition) this ritual was scarcely to be found. Therefore, we hastened to publish it first, and if the Lord wills, we shall publish the others also, at the proper time.

Now, anyone could detect by comparing this (edition) with the earlier ones, how many of the rituals are here corrected and improved upon, whether in the readings, or in the prayers, or in the titles. Where we deleted the unnecessary and newly introduced, unsuitable words, we put in their place significant and mighty prayers, in the manner of the ancients. And the readings also, having changed them in sundry places, we replaced them with older ones which seemed to be the best in thought, and we made many other corrections in accordance with these. This we now present for the delight of all the clergy of our blessed Armenian people, of the Illuminator’s faith and of the same confession.
Therefore as you, without doubt, delight yourselves handily with this (publication), remember us in the purity of your prayers; and you shall be remembered by Christ, our Lord. Amen.
Appendix II


The catalogue we find in the Ordination Euchologion as a name-list of sectarians to be anathematized and renounced, stands in need for a critical reassessment.

It is a thoroughly careless work, devoid of chronological order, where there are inaccuracies in the presentation of the opinions even of the most renowned and familiar heretics, where there are noticeable omissions of several sectarians familiar (to us) in (our) national literature and history: for example, Marcion, Tondrakians and Paulicians, Mełneakanq', etc.; and on the other hand, surprisingly superfluous names, which could have nothing whatsoever — or very remote relationship — with Christian theology; for example, Socrates, Galen, etc. Of course, some are repeated because of misunderstanding or ignorance: for example, Sabel and Manik'és. We do not know the bibliographic source of the list. From the allusion to "hundred and fifty-nine heresies" it may be concluded that perhaps our list was a catalogue gleaned from a Book of Heresies and (then) possibly abridged gradually, and after corruptions took the present form. In any case, however, the various sectarians renounced by national-ecclesiastical councils ought to have been particularly mentioned, with special deliberation.

A collation of euchologion manuscripts could provide sufficient correctable elements for the restructuring of our catalogue.

The list should be so prepared as to have next to each name a specific summary of the character of the respective deviation or position. And the candidate (for ordination should) express not in the church but in the presence of a religious board orally and in written explanations his contrary-mindedness regarding each sectarian and sect.

3 August 1932.
Appendix III

The text of the anathemas as revised by Patriarch Małak'ia Ormanian in his personal copy of the Ordination Euchologion (1876 ed.), pp. 32-34.

The text is in Armenian and contains the revised anathemas. The text is not transcribed here.
Do you denounce and anathematize Arius of Alexandria who did not confess God the Word?

Do you denounce and anathematize Macedonius the blasphemer who did not confess the Holy Spirit as of the same essence of the Father and the Son but derived and created?

Do you denounce and anathematize Nestorius who confessed (Him) as man (only) by not confessing the holy Virgin Mary as the Bearer of God and (thus) the One born of her as not fully God but only man?

Do you denounce and anathematize Paul of Samosata who divided the one Christ into two opposites and two images? In keeping with this he divides into two powers the words of the holy Scriptures: those of the prophets, of the apostles, and of the holy Gospels that were said about Christ – even those of Jesus Himself about Himself, taking some of these as pertaining to (Jesus) the Man, who is from Mary, and others as pertaining to the Word, who is from God the Father.

Do you anathematize Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia and those who do not confess the union of the Word with body, yet confess the same as one Lord, one Jesus, one Son of God, perfect God and Man, Son of God and Son of Man?

Do you anathematize the heretic Mani who said there are two gods: one good and the other evil, and who also said that the Incarnation of the Word was an apparition?

Do you anathematize Epicurus who said that creatures came to be on their own, and Sabel of Libya who denied the personhood of the Trinity, calling the Trinity one person?

Do you anathematize Carpocrates who said of the visible things that their existence and creation was by angels; and of Christ, by Joseph and Mary?

Do you anathematize Eutyches who said that the greatness of the humanity of Christ is like a drop only, diluted in the waters of the ocean; and the Aphthartodocetae who say that the body of Christ was brought from heaven and passed through the Virgin as through a conduit; and Leo and his “Tome,” which he wrote for personal glory and not for the sake of truth, and thus brought schism to the Church?

The remaining two paragraphs of the anathemas have no emendations.

As for the affirmation of Orthodox teachers, only the first and the second paragraphs have been emended, and we give them here in full. Appropriately, Ormanian begins with the Apostolic teaching.
Do you heed and do you follow the Twelve Apostles of Christ and the thirteenth, Paul, and the four Evangelists, and the seventy-two disciples of Christ, and the disciples of the Apostles: Saint Dionysius the Areopagite and his teacher Hierotheus?

Do you heed Saint Gregory, our second Enlightener, and his sons and grandsons, and Saint Nerses, our great patriarch?
Appendix IV

The text of the anathemas as revised by Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who owned Patriarch Ormanian’s personal copy of the Ordination Euchologion (1876 ed.), pp. 32-34. 35

To the first anathema emended by Ormanian, Nersoyan adds: ...

Like Ormanian, Nersoyan then follows the next two anathemas verbatim, as found in the 1876 edition.

Unlike Ormanian, Nersoyan deletes all other anathemas after the third, as well as the first of the affirmations – Ormanian’s corrections notwithstanding.

Just as strikingly, Nersoyan adds further Armenian elements to the affirmation of the Orthodox fathers, as follows:

Do you heed our Holy Translators Sahak and Mesrop, the Leondean priests, and our holy doctors of the Church: Elišê, Mòvôsès K'ert'ot, the philosopher David the Invincible, Grigor of Narek, and Nerses the Graceful?

Moreover, following the affirmation of the decrees of the Three Councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus), Nersoyan adds a paragraph on the Armenian Church Councils, as follows:

35 I wish to thank Rev. Fr. Arshen Aivazian of St. Mary Armenian Church in Livingston, NJ, for verifying Archbishop Nersoyan’s deletions and additions from an yet another copy of the Ordination Euchologion used by the late Archbishop and given by him to its current owner. The transcribed deletions and additions in this subsequent copy are identical with those of the copy in the Special Collection at the Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Library, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.
Do you heed and follow the decrees and canons of the councils of the Armenian Church convened in Ašišat, for the reformation of our Church; in Šahapivan, where the twenty canons were defined; in Artašat, where the Persian evil was denounced; in Dwin, thrice, against the Council of Chalcedon, the Nestorians, and the sect of the Paulicians; in Partaw, where the twenty-four canons were defined; in Širakawan, again against the Council of Chalcedon; in Hark', against the sect of the T'ondrakeans; and in Vadaršapat, where the oath for the monastic orders was established and where too the Patriarchal See was transferred under the auspices of Holy Ejmian?
ANATHEMA! SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ATHONITE STATEMENT OF MAY, 1995

Alexander Golitzin

On May 27th, 1995, the Sacred Community of the monastic republic of Mt. Athos issued a formal warning against "hurried union" with "the Anti-Chalcedonians." While I shall deal with the contents of the statement shortly, I would like first to address the question of its existence. What is it that prompts a group of monks, several or most of whom are not ordained clergy, let alone bishops, to pronounce on a question of doctrine? The Athonite fathers are indeed quite explicit about "our responsibility for the protection and preservation, without innovation, of the doctrine and ecclesiology of the holy Church." What is the basis of this claimed responsibility which is neither episcopal nor, I think, simply equivalent to that general responsibility for the truth which is shared by all the people of God, as affirmed a century and half ago by the Eastern Patriarchs? More specifically for our purposes, what does the Athonite document, both in its content and in what the fact of its existence presupposes, signify regarding the future of a dialogue which has been underway now for nearly forty years?

From its beginnings, Christian monasticism has seen itself as in continuity with the prophets and apostles. The Lives of the founders, of Anthony the Great and particularly of Pachomius, make a point of linking their heroes with the great figures of Israel's past, with Moses and Elijah. In Abba Besa's Life of Shenute, for example, the titles

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1 Hypomnēma tēs Hieras Koinotētōs tou Hagiou Horous peri tou Dialogou Orthodoxōn kai Antikhalkedonōn. I am indebted for the Greek text to Ms. C.K. Contopoulos of the Ecumenical Affairs office of the Greek Archdioceses of America, and for the text of the English translation to the librarians of St. Vladimir's Seminary, Ms. Elaina Silk and Ms. Karen Jermyn.
2 Hypomnēma, English text p. 2.
3 Quoted by the Hypomnēma, p. 5 (ET: p.4).
4 See, for example, the Life of Antony, for comparison with
“prophet” and “apostle” appear together and are routinely attached to the great abbot’s name, while John Rufus’ Plérophories and Cyril of Scythopolis’ several Lives of the luminaries of Palestinian monasticism, at the beginning and end respectively of the sixth century, deploy the language of prophecy and apostolic authority with respect to their subjects. I believe myself that these claims in connection with Christian ascetics go back to Christian beginnings, indeed even into certain strains of later Second Temple Judaism. And the line of claims carries on past the early monastic centuries to the present. Symeon the New Theologian certainly argued for charismatic authority and, indeed, embodied prophetic endowment in the eleventh century, while in the fourteenth Gregory Palamas’ Tomos of the Holy Mountain bases its opening argument on a parallel between the Old Testament prophets and “the saints made worthy of mystical revelation,” i.e., predominantly (if never in theory exclusively) the holy hesychasts, the hermit monks. In our own day and in the recent past of

Elijah, and the Greek Vita Prima of Pachomius, chps. 1-2, for the line of the martyrs, John the Baptist, and Elijah, and chp. 126 for comparison with Moses. For comment, see P. Rousseau, Ascetics, Authority, and the Church (Oxford: 1978), esp. 18-67.

See the translation of D.N. Bell, The Life of Shenute by Besa (Kalamazoo: 1983), from the opening words of the first chapter on “our holy father, the prophet Apa Shenute,” to chp. 20 (p.48) comparing him with “the first prophets and apostles,” and so throughout the work.


Athos and nineteenth century Russia, one may point to sainted elders gifted with clairvoyance and even prophecy as part of their extraordinary intimacy with the things of heaven. The charismata claimed for certain outstanding monks venerated by the Christian laity, again from the time of Anthony (if not before) to the present, have resulted in a certain real weight accorded the monks’ witness in doctrinal debate. Athanasius, for example, thinks it important to enlist Anthony in the struggle against Arianism; crowds of monks provide formidable – to say the least! – backing for the later Alexandrian popes, Cyril and Dioscurus, while Theodoret and Severus differ over the doctrinal allegiance of Symeon Sylites.10 John Rufus, Cyril of Scythopolis, and John Moschus – all three of whom we shall hear from again – provide accounts of the holy ascetics’ testimonia to the different sides of the Chalcedonian debate. In the next century, Maximus the Confessor, a lay monk, will defend his position against imperial Monotheletism, literally contra mundum, and will be ultimately vindicated (if, unfortunately, only posthumously).11 Subsequent Byzantine Church history sees the monks leading the way against the Isaurian Emperors’ iconoclasm, against the Emperor Leo VI’s marital arrangements, against Michael the VIII’s disposal of the Lascarid dynasty and summary retirement of the Patriarch Arsenius, and against the false unions of Lyons and Florence championed by, respectively, the same emperor and his descendent, John VIII. Positively, it is the monk Maximus who frames the more or less definitive shape of Byzantine Christology and anthropology, the monks John Damascene and Theodore Studites who supply fundamental


11 Thus the famous portrait of Maximus on trial before emperor, senate, and episcopacy. See the translation provided in Maximus the Confessor: Selected Works, trans. G. Berthold (NY:1985), 17-28.
articulations of iconodule theology, the monk Symeon who witnesses to the living God of Christian revelation in the face of a conservative and complacent society, and who also thus supplies basic elements for that Hesychast renewal which, in one historian’s phrase, “lit up the whole Orthodox world” on the eve of the millenial empire’s destruction at Ottoman hands. Nor was that last flash of Byzantine Christianity the end of the story, since it was the monks again, in the eighteenth century and especially in the persons of SS Nicodemus Haghiorites and Paissy Velichkovsky, who initiated the recovery of patristic thought and spirituality whose effects are still being felt today, two hundred years later.

This extraordinary and extraordinarily powerful continuity of protest and positive witness lends force and persuasiveness to some otherwise rather startling remarks by Bishop Kallistos Ware. “There are,” the bishop writes, “in a sense two forms of apostolic succession in the life of the Church. First, there is the visible succession of the hierarchy, the unbroken series of bishops in different cities...Alongside this, largely hidden, there is secondly the apostolic succession of the spiritual fathers and mothers in each generation of the Church, the succession of the saints.” What normally remains “largely hidden” emerges, as the summary above just indicated, front and center during periods of crisis. It could be argued that our own era, which has seen ancient monarchies collapse, death and martyrdom on a scale unprecedented save perhaps for the worst outrages of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, and the confusions of contemporary secularism (to which many would attach the ecumenical dialogues), is just such a period. Hence it is not surprising that we find an Athonite hieromonk emphasizing the particular importance of the Holy Mountain and its witness: “This incontestable authority held by Athos in the Orthodox Church...is not a rival to the legitimate teaching authority of the hierarchy, but rather constitutes the latter’s prophetic and eschatological complement.” The monks, he continues, “hold themselves as lookouts, like the prophet from his watchtower (Hab. 2.1),” and this watchfulness is, exactly, “one of their responsibilities regarding the Church.”

We have thus returned to the language of the recent Athonite statement, which it is now time to summarize. The Memorandum opens with three statements of principle, proceeds to eleven

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denunciations, and concludes with a plea and a warning. The three principles are: "the unconditional acceptance [anepiphylaktos apodoche]" by the non-Chalcedonians of the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, the necessity of a conciliar decision on the issues of union (as opposed to the secretive conventicles of the "experts," technai), and, once more, Athos’ responsibility for the protection of holy Church. The eleven denunciations, which I will not list in detail, expand on the first two principles, which the fathers feel are threatened by the dialogue, in particular by the joint statements issued in Egypt in 1989, and in Geneva in 1990. Five times, in denunciations two through four, six, and ten, the Memorandum raises, directly or indirectly, the status of the anathemas against Dioscurus, Severus and Jacob launched by the last four Ecumenical Council, affirmed by different Fathers, and commemorated liturgically by the Synodikon of Orthodoxy. The principle the Athonites see threatened here is "the infallibility and authority of the Holy Spirit" (Denunciation II). The Rumanian Synod’s recent statement to the effect that these anathemas were pronounced without a "spirit of love" is, in Denunciation X, labeled "a profound blasphemy against the Holy Spirit through Whose inspiration these decisions were made." Thus, in Denunciation XI, the proposal by the joint commission to amend the liturgical books in order to eliminate the accusations of heresy comprises "a mutilation" of the witness of the Confessors, and the silencing of both the Synodikon and the Synaxaria, the lives of the saints. We are not, the Athonites conclude, to regard these texts as "ornamental elements [diakosmetika stoicheia]," but rather as "foundational [themelioide]." Their removal would be an "unacceptable innovation [aparadektos kainotomia]" leading to the "eradication of Orthodoxy."

In addition to the divine inspiration of the anathemas, we find two complaints, in Denunciations VII and VIII, about vagueness concerning the "Anti-Chalcedonians" necessary recognition of all seven Councils. "We ask," say the Athonites in VIII, "which Orthodox bishop, who has given an oath to defend the Ecumenical and Local Councils, will accept intercommunion with bishops who want to discuss whether or not the Ecumenical Councils are ecumenical?" In Denunciation IX we find the assertion that those involved in the dialogue have tended to conceal the discussion and provide misleading information about its

15 Hypomnēma, pp. 1-2.
16 I am referring to the communiques of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches which were issued at Anba Bishoy Monastery in Egypt, 20-24th June, 1989, and from the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Geneva on September 23-28th, 1990.
progress, in order to arrive, unimpeded by synodical review, at
decisions like the mutual lifting of the anathemas. Thus the fathers cite
with evident approval both the recent (February, 1994) decision of the
Church of Greece to require "Anti-chalcedonians" to submit to all
seven Ecumenical Councils "without interpretive statements," and the
in fact much less categorical statement of the Russian bishops
(December, 1994) asking for time to study the matter. These two local
responses are then held up (a little bit disingenuously in view of the
Russians' caution), against the "blasphemy" of the Rumanian synod
(Denunciation X again).

Only twice does the actual matter of Christology arise, that is to
say, why the anathemas might or might not be justified, but in each
case the nature of the "heresiarchs" heresy is left unexplored. Denunciation V lists two expressions from the Geneva statement as
susceptible to monophysite interpretation: "one united theanthropic
nature," and "the natures are distinguished by thought [theoria] alone."
Denunciation VI follows this up with the assertion that the Fathers did
not anathematize merely the "extreme Monophysitism" of Eutyches,
but the "moderate Monophysitism" of Dioscorus and Severus as well.
Just what that "moderate Monophysitism" signifies, however, is not
specified, and over all we are left with the fact of the patristic and
conciliar anathemas. At no point in the document are the contents of
the "monophysite heresy" ever explored. I do not know myself whether
this is because the Athonite fathers simply assumed some unstated
mental picture of the heresy in question, or whether because, knowing
from recent studies (the last forty years of the dialogue, in fact) that
there is no substantial difference between the two Christological
formulations, they have chosen to focus on the liturgical and traditional
elements they feel are at risk, i.e., seven councils (not three!), the
Synodikon, Synaxaria etc. The Memorandum's basic point in any case
is that the Holy Spirit has spoken, and that whoever rejects the divine
inspiration of all the councils in every detail is not of the Church. Thus
both the first Denunciation and the Memorandum's conclusion bring up
the issue of ecclesiology. To say, as the Geneva statement has it
(paragraph nine), that "both families of churches have always preserved
the same authentic Christological faith" is for the Athonites to question
the nature itself of the una sancta. Presupposed throughout, I believe,
is the neo-Cypriancic ecclesiology advanced with such force by St.
Nicodemus Hagiorites in the late eighteenth century and defended by
Mt. Athos - and most Greek Orthodox - ever since as the perennial
teaching of the Orthodox Church.\footnote{On the problematics involving St. Nicodemus' ecclesiology, see
the articles by J. Erickson, "Divergences in Pastoral Practice in the
Reception of Converts," in Orthodox Perspectives on Pastoral Praxis,
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lines the fathers therefore plead for a "re-establishment [epanatopothetesis]" of the dialogue on "correct foundations" — presumably those enunciated by the Church of Greece — in order both to preserve Orthodoxy unspoiled, and to allow the "anti-Chalcedonians the possibility of return to the true Church ...from which they have been cut off [apokekommeno] for over fifteen centuries." Mt. Athos will absolutely reject, they add, any union which — God forbid! — would take place "outside of the only Truth."

I shall return to the Memorandum in my concluding section, but in order to get there I would like to take us on a little historical detour which, I hope, will serve to place in some context the Athonite fathers' attitude toward anathemas and raise some questions about the fruitfulness of recourse to the monks' claims to prophetic office when confronted with, as it were, the fine print of doctrinal controversy. What I also hope will emerge is a challenge to the ecclesiology which the Memorandum presupposes, and therewith perhaps a chink or two in the solid wall which the Athonites see as separating our two communities.

So we shall go back a millenium and a half in order to ask how monks then dealt with the doctrinal debate which still separates us today. Not being an expert on the Christological controversies, allow me to limit myself to four texts: Jacob of Serug's correspondence with the monks of Mar Bassus, John Rufus' Plerophories, Cyril of Scythopolis' Lives of the Monks of Palestine, and John Moschus' Spiritual Meadow. The first two represent the protest against Chalcedon, the second pair the pro-Chalcedonian side. All four are written by, or deal with, monks. I think we shall find a remarkable similarity to the tone and spirit of the Athonite Memorandum, together with a couple of subtle but very significant — and I hope eventually liberating — differences.

It is the similarities with the Athonite statement which must strike us immediately about Jacob of Serug's correspondence with the monks of Mar Bassus. The date is around 512, when Severus is about to be, or has already been, installed as Patriarch of Antioch and, together with Philoxenus of Mabbug, is lining up the opposition to Chalcedon. The

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broadly generous interpretation of Emperor Zeno’s *Henotikon*, hitherto prevailing, is now at an end. The abbot of Mar Bassus, a certain Lazarus, has written a letter (no longer extant) to Jacob, the famous circuit inspector and preacher, asking him to make his own position clear. Jacob replies that he has detested the Christology of Diodore of Tarsus and his ilk ever since the first time he ran across it forty-five years before as young student in the famous school of Edessa. He cheerfully adds Theodore (of Mopsuestia), Theodoret (of Cyrus), Nestorius, and Eutyches to his spontaneous anathema, together with “those who count and clarify the natures after the union and recognize their properties and characteristics,” a clear if unspecific reference to the *Tome* of Leo of Rome.\(^\text{19}\)

That lack of specificity – vagueness, if you will – does not please the good monks at all. Jacob’s letter, they tell him, was “weak and sickly, dead, lifeless, subversive and dangerous,” and they have sent it back by return post, ordering him instead to:

... write us explicitly and anathematize in writing ... Diodore, Theodore, Theodoret, Nestorius, Eutyches, the *Tome* of Leo, bishop of Rome...the additions made at Chalcedon, whoever has refuted the ‘Twelve Chapters of Cyril’... in short, all the heretics.

If Jacob does not agree to do this, they will include him in their anathemas! “Here is our true faith,” they conclude, “we anathematize the people and the headings we have briefly mentioned. Without embracing this true faith and anathematizing the heretics, peace will never be re-established in the Church.”\(^\text{20}\)

The equation of anathematization with orthodoxy certainly has a familiar ring, as does the overall rigorism of these monks. One difference from the Athonite *Memorandum* is notable, however, and that is the hope for the “re-establishment of peace in the Church.” The fathers of Mar Bassus were quite as zealous for anathema as the fathers of Athos today, but with a difference (other than, of course the slightly different list of anathematizes). For the Athonites, the Church is a “closed shop,” while for these Syrian monks of the early sixth century, the *una sancta* still appears to include, somehow, the adherents of the other side. This is a note which will also show up in the other documents from the period.

First, though, we should cast a brief glance at Jacob’s replies to his daunting correspondents.\(^\text{21}\) He protests his treatment as a heretic,

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\(^{19}\) “Lettre 1,” pp. 224-226, esp. 1.4, p. 226 for the reference to Chalcedon.

\(^{20}\) “Lettre des moines,” p.228.

\(^{21}\) “Lettres,” 246-265.
repeats his loathing of Nestorius (better that he had never been born!), emphasizes for the monks’ benefit his veneration of the “Twelve Chapters” and of the *Henetikon*, and dutifully includes Pope Leo’s *Tome* along with the others responsible for denying the Lord’s unity (making “two Christs”) and refusing the title, Theotokos, to the Blessed Virgin. So Jacob does give way and bow to the pressure, both in this letter and even more in his next one, where he adds praises of the Emperor Anastasius and heaps execration on Chalcedon and that “friend of Nestorius,” the Emperor Marcian. Yet in both epistles, and much more strongly than in the letter of the monks, there is clearly the presence of deep regret for the divisions appearing within the Church, “the tearing of the body of Christ,” and for the lack of love that produced them. Indeed, Jacob typically adds “those who proceed without love” to his list of required anathematizations, and pointedly troubles to remind his monastic inquisitors of St. Paul in Phil. 2:6-8 on the subject of the divine love that had led the Son of the Father to empty Himself on our behalf. It is also undoubtedly to underscore his distaste for the hubris and alarms of abstract theology that he concludes both his replies with characteristic meditations on the paradoxes of the Incarnation, the wonder that One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh, which paradox, to be sure, both he and his examiners felt had been betrayed at Chalcedon.

The betrayal and prevarication of Chalcedon is certainly the message of a contemporary of Jacob’s, the sometime bishop of Maiouma and disciple of Peter the Iberian, John Rufus. Right around or shortly after Jacob’s exchange with the fathers of Mar Bassus, John edits a collection called *Assurances [Plerophories] and Witnesses and Revelations against the Council of Chalcedon*, or more briefly, *The Plerophories*. The “witnesses and revelations” of the title come

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22 “Deuxième reponse,” p.262.
23 Ibid., p.262, for the “tearing” of the body of Christ.
24 “Première reponse,” p.249.


26 For the dating of the *Plerophories*, see Nau’s introduction, pp. 6-7, and also Jansma, “Credo,” 350-351.
chiefly from monastic sources, particularly from elders and prominent ascetics known to John’s master, Peter. The linkage between monks and prophets with which I began is thus quite clear. John in fact begins his collection with a series of prophecies set in the years immediately prior to Chalcedon. Their content is all essentially the same: warnings of the disaster to come. Thus, for example, the story of an unnamed ascetic who rejects the devil’s demand that he be worshipped: “Why don’t you want to worship me?,” the evil one asks, “After all, soon I’m going to be gathering a council of all the bishops where I’ll have all of them worshipping me!” 27 Other stories, set in the period of Chalcedon itself or afterwards up to John’s own time, provide accounts of visions where heaven’s displeasure with the council is made crystal clear, such as the hermit Paul’s heavenly voice anathematizing the “two natures” and “dividing of Christ,” or Bishop Pamprepios’ vision of a heavenly parchment, on which is written, twice over for good measure: “Anathema to this council! They have denied me! Let them be anathema!” 28 When Archimandrite Romanus, south of Jerusalem, is told by a voice “to stay true to the faith of the three hundred and eighteen [i.e., at Nicea],” and his monks point out to him that this was also the stated intention of Chalcedon, the voice obligingly provides clarification by way of a list of patristic authorities concluding with Cyril, Celestine, and Dioscorus, and then again, just in case he did not get the point, a heavenly letter to inform him explicitly that: “Those of Chalcedon are apostates. Anathema!” 29 John the Baptist and the Patriarch Jacob appear to ascetics worshipping at their shrines in order to warn the holy monks that their respective presences will soon be departing the premises due to impending Chalcedonian tenancy. 30 The Theotokos and company of the saints, in one vision, and the Holy Spirit, in another, are seen departing the liturgy of a Chalcedonian celebrant. 31 A trial by fire adjudicates between the Chalcedonian horos and a decree of Timothy Aleurus condemning it, with by now unsurprising results: the first is consumed while the second remains untouched. 32 A dying Chalcedonian woman is converted by a vision and made well by receiving the Eucharist from Peter the Iberian’s hands. 33 Elsewhere the consecrated elements of the orthodox reveal the truth of the resistance by appearing as bloody flesh, 34 while those of the

27 Plerophories 9 (pp. 21-22).
28 Ibid. 20-21 (pp. 43-45), and cf. 22 (pp. 47-54).
29 Ibid. 25 (pp. 58-61).
30 Ibid. 29-30 (pp. 70-73).
31 Ibid. 74-75 (pp. 128-130); cf. also 80-83 (pp. 136-138).
32 Ibid. 46 (p. 98); and cf. 47 (pp. 99-100).
33 Ibid. 38 (pp. 87-89).
34 Ibid. 10 (p.24).
Chalcedonian heretics crumble into spoiled bread and vinegar.\textsuperscript{35} John defends his stories. They have come to him, he tells his readers early on, from “pure men, aged and worthy of trust... holy monks.”\textsuperscript{36} In the middle and at the end of the \textit{Plerophories} he explains at some length the reason for these signs and portents. Chalcedonians are liars, for they teach what before at Ephesus they had condemned, i.e., Nestorius, and their invocation of the universal creed is thus pure hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{37} Chalcedon’s betrayal is a matter of genuinely apocalyptic proportions. Leo’s \textit{Tome}, John says at his book’s end, brought in its train the fall of elder Rome and opened the door to the coming of Anti-Christ.\textsuperscript{38} While the fact that John’s side of the debate was in the minority, at least in Palestine, might account for the high pitch of his alarm, higher than in Jacob or the fathers of Mar Bassus, it also leads him into a comparison of the faithful with the remnant of Israel.\textsuperscript{39} This is interesting, for it presumes again the idea that the struggle is taking place within the one people of God. If, on the one hand, the bishops and abbots and other leaders are obliged to declare their anathema to the betrayal at Chalcedon, this is because it was on their level that the betrayal occurred. For the laity, on the other hand, things are different. As the story of the dying woman indicates, the believer has only to turn to the Eucharist of the faithful remnant and commune. Nothing else is required. Presumably thus all the laity are still “of Israel,” with their obligation confined to aligning with the shepherds who have not divided Christ and denied the Mother of God.

In Cyril of Scythopolis’ \textit{Lives of the Monks of Palestine}, and much more so in John Moschus’ \textit{Spiritual Meadow}, the same thinking is at work and, I would add, the same faith is being defended. Cyril himself does not provide us with many accounts of wonders and visions, at least in connection with the dispute over Chalcedon. Indeed, the one vision which does deal with the Christological debate begins with the great Sabbas’ displeasure at finding out that the monks living up the hill from his lavra are Nestorians. Then, Cyril continues:

He had a vision of himself in the holy church of the Resurrection during the celebration of the Eucharist and these monks [i.e., the Nestorian neighbors] were being thrown out by the vergers while he was pressing the vergers to allow them to receive communion. In a stern voice they replied to him: ‘They cannot receive communion, for they are Jews in not confessing Christ to be true

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. 65 (pp. 122-123).
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 10 (p. 22).
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 59 (114-118).
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. 89 (150-154). For other references to the Antichrist, see 7 (p.20), 13 (p.29), 17 (p.34), and 26 (p. 67).
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. 55 (pp. 109-110), and cf. also 89 (pp. 142-150).
God or holy Mary to be the Mother of God."

Eventually, the great ascetic wins the recalcitrants over and so to communion. 40 When the references to the Chalcedonian controversy do appear, Cyril is as predictable as John Rufus was. Severus is "the source of all the evils" among the monks, says Sabbas at one point (apparently forgetting for the moment his problems with the Origenists), while on the occasion of a trip to Constantinople to request a tax break for Palestine, he refuses - politely - the Empress Theodora's request that he pray she have a child, "lest," as he remarks to his disciples later, "it suck up the doctrines of Severus and cause worse upheaval to the Church." 41 It is in the Vita Euthymii, though, that we find Cyril's positive teaching on Christology where, in fact, he sounds very like Jacob or John Rufus above. Euthymius convinces the sceptics about Chalcedon by preaching the three hypostases of the Trinity and - somewhat anachronistically - the "one composite hypostasis" of the Incarnation. 42 Here, clearly at work, is the sixth century's interpretative gloss on Chalcedon, pace the Church of Greece's prohibition on "interpretations"!

John Moschus' collection of tales is neither in the service of a single definite purpose, as were John Rufus' Plerophories, nor certainly in the disciplined and sober hagiographical tradition of Cyril's Lives, but the Spiritual Meadow does provide us with an often stunning mirror image of the former, particularly with respect to miracles and revelations touching on the Christological controversy. "Why," John asks at one point, "are there so many prodigies and miracles in the Church?" "Most of all," he answers, "because of the heresy of Severus Akphalos," and thus for the sustaining of "weaker souls." 43 The "miracles and prodigies" in question are fewer than John Rufus supplies, only about thirteen which bear directly on the factions fighting over Christology, but they are of exactly the same kind. One is not to commune in any church save one that recognizes the four councils, as an angelic visitation warns one ascetic, and a heaven-sent dream another monk. 44 The Chalcedonian Eucharist survives boiling water, and even cools the pot right down, while the Severian Eucharist disintegrates. 45 A Nestorian receives a vision of hell, at the behest of Abba Cyriacos, wherein he sees Nestorius in the flames, together with an unlikely and doubtless quarrelsome crowd of other villains:

40 Life of Sabbas 38 (Price, p. 137).
41 Ibid. 57 (p. 164) and 71 (p. 183), respectively.
42 Life of Euthymius 26-27 (pp. 36-40).
43 The Spiritual Meadow 213 (Wortley, p. 191).
44 Ibid. 178 and 188 (pp. 147-148 and 160-162).
45 Ibid. 29 (pp. 20-21).
Theodore, Theodoret, Eutyches, Apollinaris, Evagrius, Didymus, Dioscurus, Severus, Arius, and Origen. The Duke of Palestine, a man of Severian persuasion, is convinced of Chalcedonian orthodoxy when an angelic ram prevents him from entering the Anastasis, while in a preceding story a patrician’s wife is persuaded by the Mother of God herself to conform to the Fourth Council. The Emperor Anastasius’ dreadful end, struck down in the gloom of a thunderstorm, echoes John Rufus’ account of the dark portents heralding Marcion’s reign. Obviously, the polemical miracle story is fully in play here, too, and likewise it has been transmitted chiefly by the holy ascetics, but we find some other familiar – and more promising – features as well. The Duke’s heresy is cured by communing at the Chalcedonian altar, and likewise a Severian is convinced of Chalcedonian truth on beholding another miracle involving the Eucharistic elements and ends his opposition by communing. John Moschus emphasizes Mary Theotokos, as in the story of her refusing to enter Abba Cyriacos’ cell because, unbeknownst to the good father, a few writings of Nestorius were secreted away in an otherwise innocuous codex. I cannot, finally, resist including the haunting words Moschus ascribes to Abba Palladius, with their – doubtless unconscious – echo of Jacob of Serug’s anathema against the loveless: “Believe me, children, heresies and schisms have done nothing for the holy Church except to make us love God and each other very much less.”

Our historical detour completed, we can perhaps begin to place the Athonite Memorandum in a kind of context. The fathers of the Holy Mountain are clearly and classically within a monastic continuum. They reproduce, in places almost verbatim, the demands of Abbot Lazarus and the monks of Mar Bassus. Doubtless, neither group would much appreciate being compared with the other, but the likeness – not to say functional identity – is undeniable. Identity also applies to the substance of the faith that both communities sought and seek to defend. The “one composite hypostasis of the Incarnation,” which Cyril of Scythopolis places in Abba Euthymius’ mouth and which the Athonite fathers as well would have to acknowledge as their own faith, is clearly the same as the Geneva Statement’s “one united theanthropic nature” – with the physis of the latter equating to the hypostasis of the former – to which the good fathers objected, while both formulae answer to the objections the ancient monks of Mar Bassus raised against “two Christs.” The Memorandum itself does not appeal to “miracles and

46 Ibid. 26 (pp. 17-18).
47 Ibid. 48-49 (pp. 39-40).
48 Ibid. 31 (p. 22); cf. Plerophories 10 (pp. 25-26).
49 Ibid. 46 (pp. 37-38).
50 Ibid. 56 (p. 56).
revelations,” but it clearly assumes the same sort of milieu as produced our four sixth century writers: heaven has decreed; the Holy Spirit has spoken. But how clear is it that the Spirit inspired these anathemas, I wonder, when two communities who have been condemning each other for over fifteen centuries realize that their faith and piety are functionally identical, and moreover have been so all along? This is an admittedly uncomfortable question, and the fathers on Athos are understandably unwilling to ask it, but ask it, I think, we must. One thing in any case does seem certain, and that is that if recourse to the prophetic charismata of holy ascetics did not work especially well fifteen hundred years ago, it is not likely to be particularly helpful today, either.

The key discontinuity between the Memorandum and the ancient writers lies in their views of the Church. All four of the ancients share a common understanding. For them Israel, the Church, still includes those faithful who are under the leadership of erring bishops. True, none of the four seems to feel that divine grace is active on the other side of the divide, thus the spoiled Eucharists and dramatic exits of heavenly figures, but all of them appear to understand its recovery as a very simple thing: just come on over to divine services on our side of the fence, they say. There is no mechanism of reception other than that, no adaptation of the sacraments of initiation, no anointing of any kind, not even a formal statement of faith save, perhaps, for the clergy. If I may draw a comparison between them and other figures from the patristic era, then I would point to Augustine’s conclusions from the Donatist controversy or, if in somewhat less detail, Basil the Great’s distinctions in his letters to Amphilochius. In the Memorandum, however, the ecclesiology presupposed is of much more recent vintage. It reflects the decree of Constantinople in 1755 ordering the Baptism of all other Christians seeking to enter the Orthodox Church, a position supported most notably by the commentaries of Nicodemus Haghiorites on the Pedalion. The historical circumstances which precipitated this change are not my business here, but the difference from the sixth century writers is obvious. It is here, in the adoption of this closed ecclesiology, built on neo-Cyprianic lines, by both the contemporary Church of Greece and an increasingly vocal element in Orthodoxy outside of Greece, that we find a real challenge for the self-understanding of the worldwide Orthodox Church, and, until that challenge is confronted and put to rest, there is little, I fear, that we can reasonably expect from an attempt at formal union between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox except – God forbid! – the likelihood of schisms within the former.

The Athonite Memorandum has therefore done us all a considerable

service in pointing to a dangerous situation within the Orthodox Church. Without addressing that situation, for example if the Constantinopolitan hierarchy were simply to attempt silencing the fathers of the Holy Mountain with the sort of clumsy bluster that has become all too common in recent years, we could have a schism that might well lead to another fifteen hundred year exchange of “inspired anathemas.” Rather, the holy fathers there, together with virtually the entire hierarchy of the Church of Greece and others in the Orthodox world, need themselves to be challenged to think again on the issue of ecclesiology in general and, specifically with respect to the matter of the Ecumenical Councils and church traditions, to reflect on the nature of the anathemas and their relation to the teaching they were intended to protect. I would myself suggest that the anathemas served almost as caricatures, that is, as exaggerated presentations of the figures they ostensibly delineated which thus brought into relief elements of doctrine that all of us today would reject: e.g., the in fact inaccurate pictures of Leo as teaching “two Christs” and of Severus as effectively obliterating the humanity of Jesus. Surely, the final issue, the “bottom line,” must always be the actual faith that all of us, I believe, hold in common. To see that common faith in the other, however, requires that we look past the caricatures. It requires in fact an act of ascesis, an exercise of sober, reflective, and above all charitable attentiveness. Sadly, both in our ancient sources and in the Athonite Memorandum, there seems to have been precious little effort to listen carefully, and virtually no room at all for the same charity which was recently invoked by the Synod of Rumania, and whose absence long ago was lamented by Jacob and Abba Palladius.

What then does the Memorandum mean for the dialogue between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox? Negatively, I fear it means a slowdown, at least in the progress toward a formal union (as opposed to the informal arrangements which are already in place in many areas). It signals an incoherence within the Eastern Orthodox themselves, one which must be addressed before real progress – again, of a formal kind – can continue. Positively, the Athonite fathers have indeed been true to their vocation of witnessing to the faith once received, and in raising, however unwittingly, the issue of our ecclesiological self-consciousness so sharply. They are in effect asking all of us who are vitally interested in seeing the end of our millenial schism to persuade them that, while they are right to be concerned for the defense of the faith, they are wrong in failing to discern its presence in our brothers.
THE MONASTIC CONCERNS REGARDING
UNITY AND RECONCILIATION OF TRADITIONS

Bishop Suriel

I wish to thank St. Vladimir’s and St. Nersess Seminaries for their kind invitation to attend this symposium and to speak to you today.

What are the Oriental monastic concerns regarding unity and reconciliation of traditions?

I truly believe that this is a very important subject that perhaps has not been discussed very much so far in the dialogue between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox. We need to know what the monastic tradition teaches us in this regard and what is its viewpoint with regards to unity.

We need to remind ourselves of the aim of monasticism. Monasticism was meant to unite man with God, man with his fellow man, and also man with nature. This was the ideal that the early fathers were aiming for and succeeded in achieving. It was St. Arsenius who said, “Strive with all your might to bring your interior activity into accord with God, and you will overcome exterior passions.” He also said, “If we seek God, he will show himself to us, and if we keep him, he will remain close to us.” Unity and reconciliation between man and God is what those early monastics sought. They also sought unity with their fellow man. Abba Isaac said, “I have never allowed a thought against my brother who has grieved me to enter my cell; I have seen to it that no brother should return to his cell with a thought against me.” Also Saint Anthony the Great said, “Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.” We also see that these monastics were living in harmony with the nature that surrounded them. Saint Paul the hermit had a crow bring him half a loaf of bread each day and on the day that Saint Anthony visited him, the crow brought them one whole loaf of bread. They also ate from whatever the nature around them provided, for example dates. They also used the
palm trees for their living; to weave baskets, to keep themselves busy, and for these baskets to be sold in the cities to provide for their bread. It was a harmonious life indeed.

Another important way that monasticism should be a way to unity is through prayer. Even though the monk leaves the world, its troubles and wars, yet he prays for peace. He prays for unity and for the healing of schism. It is the life of prayer without ceasing. As Saint Paul tells us to pray at all times. The power of prayer especially by those who have consecrated their lives for it definitely has the effect to solve many disputes.

So then, the point I am trying to make here is that monasticism should be a point of unity in all aspects of life and not something that divides. It is the source of spirituality and piety in the Church. We need to remember also that we have many common monastic fathers whom we revere and honour in both of our Orthodox families. Great fathers such as Saint Anthony the Great, Saint Macarius the Great, Saint Pachomius, the Syrian fathers Saint Isaac and Saint Ephrem, Saint John Cassian and Saint Palladius, just to name a few. We really have so much to unite us in monasticism, and it is these roots that can bring our traditions closer together and unite us once again by God’s grace. These fathers that came from different backgrounds were also willing to learn from each other. We see for example Saint John Cassian and Saint Palladius coming to Egypt to learn monasticism at its source. The lives of these great men and their sayings deepened the spirituality of Christian life. They were also a source of inspiration to many who repented at reading or hearing about them. One famous example was that of Saint Augustine, who was deeply affected by the biography of Saint Anthony that was written by Saint Athanasius the twentieth Pope of Alexandria.

Monasticism should also be a source of strength and a torchbearer for correct teaching and Orthodoxy. It preserves the true faith for us and fights against heresies. The monastic fathers did not remain quiet when it came to heresy. They looked for unity amongst Christians, but this unity was built upon unity and oneness in faith. This was exactly the case with Saint Anthony the Great. He defended the faith against the Arian heretics. It was said that, “he was well acquainted with their schisms,...and he even exhorted every man to withdraw himself from them, for he used to say, ‘Neither in the discussion of them nor in their result is there any advantage.’” When the Arians came to spread their poison in the desert he cast them out from the mountain like the other wild beasts and vipers. He even went down to Alexandria to defend the Orthodox faith against the Arian heresy. Of course he was so well
known and respected all over the world, and his words had their influence and confirmed the people in sound doctrine.

It was similar with Abba Agathon, who was willing to accept any type of ridicule and insult except to be called a heretic. At being called a heretic he replied, "I am not a heretic." So they asked him, 'Tell us why you accepted everything we cast you, but repudiated this last insult.' He replied, 'The first accusations I take to myself, for that is good for my soul. But heresy is separation from God. Now I have no wish to be separated from God.'"

If we look for a moment at some sad history, we see that many monks had to endure many tribulations. Several emperors attempted to force Coptic monks to accept the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. One such famous monk was Saint Samuel the Confessor. Otto Mienardus, in his book titled *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Desert*, speaks of Saint Samuel's theological activities and especially his keen opposition to the decrees of Chalcedon when an attempt was made to impose the decrees upon the monks. "Saint Samuel was imprisoned and beaten, and after severe questioning, was about to be publicly flogged when the civic authorities saved his life."

If we now move to the current situation, we see that monasticism is still playing a positive role in leading us towards unity and reconciliation. Several of the official dialogues between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox took place at Saint Bishoy Monastery in the ancient site of Scetis, which dates back to the fourth century. So, monasticism today still regards that working towards reconciliation and sharing the same faith as vital to its survival. It is also of great importance to note the work of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria. His Holiness has worked so hard in planning, attending and participating in many of these dialogues. In fact under his leadership the Coptic Orthodox Church was the first Church to accept the Agreed Statement of 1990 signed in Chambesy, Switzerland. He takes the subject of unity seriously and again this is stemming from his monastic roots. He is a great theologian, and he did not only gain a Bachelor of Theology from the Seminary in Cairo, but did extensive reading and research while he was a hermit at El-Sourian Monastery in Wadi Natrun. Even though he is the Pope and Patriarch he has not forgotten for one single instant that he is a monk first. That is why he spends approximately half of each week at the Monastery of Saint Bishoy. This time is spent in contemplation, prayer and writing.

From the Coptic Orthodox point of view, we have no reservations with regards to unity with the Eastern Orthodox. The Coptic monks as well as all of the Coptic community are well aware of all of the
agreements that have taken place so far. In the official magazine of
the Coptic Orthodox Church named El-Keraza (Preaching), His Holiness
Pope Shenouda III always publishes the latest news on the dialogue.
Also many articles are written to explain the process of the dialogue
and the decisions that have been taken by our Holy Synod with this
regard. I can say with confidence that our people are for this unity and
so are all of the monks. I know that I myself am awaiting for this
blessed day, when I can partake of the Eucharist with my brothers in
the Eastern Orthodox Church. When I was serving our parish in
Hawaii, before I was ordained as a Bishop, I had very good relations
with the Greek Orthodox priest, Fr. George Bessinas. Since we did not
yet have our own church, on many occasions he would allow us to use
his church for our services. It was a relationship of love and mutual
respect. One day he invited me to attend a liturgy of the Pre-sanctified
gifts. It was very moving experience for me and I enjoyed it so much.
But at the same time it was such a painful experience for me, because I
could not share in the Body and Blood of Christ with him. I pray and
hope that this day will come soon, when we can be fully united in
Christ the incarnate Logos.

Another important point I wish to make that is evident today, is the
effect of monasticism to unite people of non-Orthodox background.
Recently I was reading a wonderful article by Tim Vivian titled “The
Monasteries of the Wadi Natrun, Egypt: A Monastic and Personal
Journey” that was published this month in the American Benedictine
Review. At the end of his article Tim Vivian states, “For the first time
in my eight-year monastic journey, I was connecting what I had learned
from books with what I could study in the field and hold in my hands;
for only the second time in my academic career, I was teaching the
subject I care about the most, and I saw monastic spirituality connect
with my young students; visiting the Coptic monasteries of the Wadi
Natrun showed me the many strengths and beauties of ongoing
monastic tradition, I marvelled at the monastic renaissance taking place
in Egypt, and I could only admire these monks and lay Christians who
devote themselves to Christ in the face of persistent adversity.” Perhaps
monasticism will also play an important role in restoring the whole
Christian Church to one faith. One flock for one Shepherd, Who is Our
Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I think that for us Copts – and I am speaking as a monk also, if
there are any concerns with regards to reconciliations, they would be
with regards to the monks of Mount Athos and some Traditionalist
groups within the Eastern Orthodox Church. The document titled,
“Declaration of Mount Athos Against Reunion with the Non-
Chalcedonians” concerns me somewhat. To go through it in detail is
beyond this lecture, but let me mention a few brief points. In this document the Eastern monks are demanding "the unconditional acceptance of the Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and of their sacredness and universality by the Non-Chalcedonians." Well, first of all, we were not even part of these councils to begin with, and did not take part in the decision making. So, how can we just accept them as such? In a recent paper by His Eminence Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette, the Co-President of the Official Dialogue, he stated, "...the Orthodox interpretation of the teachings of the four later councils of the (Eastern) Orthodox are the same as the doctrine of the Oriental Orthodox who have always refused both the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. The two families are called to reinforce each other in their struggle against heresies and to complete each other as one body of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.”

The Eastern monks continue to say things like denouncing the Joint Commission of the dialogue, naming Saints Dioscorus, Jacob and Severus as heretics, and stating that there is radical disagreement between the Joint Commission and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. The document also questions, "Has there not been a scandalous deception in the information given to the people of God?" They are also in opposition to the removal of any texts which degrade or attack the Oriental Orthodox in Eastern liturgical books. I feel that this type of spirit on the part of our brothers the Eastern Orthodox monks of Mount Athos will only divide even further and delay reconciliation between the two families of Orthodoxy. I know that committees have been set up to produce books to explain and clarify the positions and teachings of both families of Orthodoxy. I hope that these books will be a great source of help in clarifying the Agreed Statements even further and press the move towards unity. I believe that one other important way by which monks from the different traditions can come to understand each other is through an exchange program. Monks from Mount Athos could spend some time in Oriental monasteries in Egypt, Syria or Armenia and also perhaps some Oriental Orthodox monks could spend time becoming familiar with the monastic tradition on Mount Athos. This may help to bridge the rift that has lasted for fifteen long centuries now.

There is also another group named, "The Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies," which attacks the Oriental Orthodox Churches severely, especially the Coptic Orthodox Church. They call us all sorts of names such as "The Non-Chalcedonian Heretics"; "The Copts are Monophysites and thus heretics. Their Mysteries are invalid and, should they join the Orthodox Church, they must be received as non-Orthodox." Very harsh and damaging words, indeed destructive and far from the spirit of ecumenism that we are living in the 1990's. Such a
group may be a minority, but they certainly have a loud voice and can harm relationships between the average people who do not know better. I do not wish to harp on the negatives, but they are certainly a concern for us. Please remember also that quote from Abba Agathon, "But heresy is separation from God. Now I have no wish to be separated from God." None of us could wish this upon anyone, to be separated from God, yet such people are insinuating such an idea.

Fr. George Dragas in a paper titled "The Rapprochement of the Orthodox and Orientals" also thinks that the reason for such negative reactions is lack of information. He states, "In my opinion, however, such negative reactions are primarily due to a lack of information on the recent history of constructive contacts between the two Orthodox families of Churches and especially on the very significant theological classifications and agreements which have been made from both sides in many 'consultations,' both unofficial and official, as well as in new constructive and fundamental theological researches by individual theologians." Another important point that Fr. George Dragas makes in his paper is that in the teachings of Saint Athanasius and Saint Cyril we have a common foundation for modern dialogue. He says, "It should be pointed out that Orthodox share with the Oriental Orthodox certain unquestionable patristic authorities. They share common fathers and common patristic conciliar decisions. The great Alexandrian fathers St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, as well as the great Cappadocians, St. Basil, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. John Chrysostom ... and also the first three ecumenical councils ... are wholeheartedly accepted by them. Is this not sufficient ground for orthodox rapprochement? ... Indeed I believe that these particular authorities provide all that is necessary for orthodox advance and consolidation."

There can be no doubt, then, that the monastic tradition can have an important role in bringing this dialogue to complete fruition, culminating with the lifting of the anathemas and - along with the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in His Church - the restoration of the one glorious and undivided Orthodox Church of God.
THE CURRENT STATE OF THE DIALOGUE FOR ORTHODOX UNITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Gabriel Habib

A. BACKGROUND

During the last three decades, the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Middle East realized the urgency of their Unity, mainly for the following reasons:

1. Facing the same ecclesiological and missiological challenges of the western churches in general, they considered that they should have a common contribution to make to the organized ecumenical movement to which they were called to be affiliated on international and regional levels.

2. In light of the inter-Orthodox dialogues held in Aarhus in 1964, Bristol in 1967, Geneva in 1970 and Addis Ababa in 1971, they became aware of the anomaly of their separation since the fifth century. Accordingly, they felt the need to try, through dialogue, to recover their Church unity beyond the divisive powers and principalities that intervened in their life and despite the different philosophical ways of thinking that were used by the Alexandrian and the Antiochian participants at the Council of Chalcedon.

3. Realizing, through separate dialogues, that they have similar ecclesiological problems with the Catholic Church in general and "Uniatism" in particular, they started to cease all opportunities to define common attitudes toward the Vatican and its related Churches.

4. Challenged by the same regional politico-religious juncture, they are increasingly convinced that they are called to a common witness within the Middle East monotheistic ethos.

B. MEETINGS OF MIDDLE EAST ORIENTAL AND EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

1. Meetings to form a Middle East Ecumenical Council. Between 1965 and 1972 a series of meetings took place with the participation of Bishop Ignatios, now Patriarch Ignatios IV of Antioch, Bishop Karekin now
Catholicos Karekin I of Etchmiatsin, Bishop Samuel of the Coptic Orthodox Church who was killed with president Sadat of Egypt, Archbishop Athanasios Ephrem Boulos and Gabriel Habib who, at that time, was Middle East Ecumenical Youth and Student Secretary. They explored ways of fulfilling rich and effective Orthodox witness in the Middle East ecumenical movement. In 1969 and as a result of their deliberations, they proposed to the Protestant churches of the region to form a Council of Churches, where the 16 Protestant churches will be represented by 1/3 of the members of the Council's decision making and program committees, the 4 "Chalcedonian" Orthodox Churches by 1/3 and the 3 "non-Chalcedonian" Orthodox Churches by the remaining 1/3. They thought that the work of such ecumenical Council will not be determined exclusively by the number of Church representatives but mainly by the ecclesiological nature of the constituent Churches. In that way, they considered that the Council will essentially be composed of 3 ecclesial families of Churches. In 1990, the 7 Catholic Churches of the region, joined the Council as a 4th ecclesial family of Churches. Consequently, the proportion of Church representatives became 1/4 instead of 1/3.

2. Meetings on Orthodox Unity. For the purpose of trying to overcome their historical differences and of defining their present common witness, the Middle East Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches held a first meeting at the Theological School of Balamand, Lebanon, in 1972 and a second meeting at the Pendelli Conference Center, in Athens, in 1978. The delegates to these meetings were mainly Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops representing the non-Chalcedonian or Oriental Orthodox churches of the region, i.e. the Coptic, Armenian and Syrian Church of Antioch and the Chalcedonian or Eastern Orthodox churches of Alexandria, Antioch Jerusalem and Cyprus. Their deliberations were based on the studies presented at the international meetings of Aarhus, Bristol, Geneva and Addis Ababa. They also used the statements of the Ecumenical Patriarch of June 1965 and the decisions of the Conference of the Eastern Orthodox Churches held in Chambesy, Switzerland in 1968.

a. The meeting at Balamand monastery, Lebanon, in 1972

At a meeting held in Balamand in 1972, representatives of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches reaffirmed the opinion expressed by the theologians gathered at Aarhus, Bristol, Geneva and Addis Ababa, that the "Chalcedonian" and "non-Chalcedonian" Orthodox Churches have the same Christological faith. They also declared that "all impediments will cease, every cause of division and estrangement will fail and all expression of denigration and enmity will be put aside with every suspicion which has troubled the work of true unity. Accordingly, cooperation in all pastoral areas and activities will be realized so that the words of the Apostle Paul
will be fulfilled: "Now, there are varieties of services but the same Lord... For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... (1 Corinthians 12:4-27)."

As a result of their discussions, the church representatives at that meeting made twelve recommendations aiming at increasing the awareness of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox communities in the Middle East.

These included the following orientations:

i. That cooperation be encouraged between the Orthodox Youth Movements of the various Eastern and Oriental churches within the framework of SYNDESMOS, the world Fellowship of Orthodox Youth Movements.

ii. That when the Holy Synod of any Eastern or Oriental church meets, it should devote enough time to study the topic of Orthodox unity. On such an occasion a member of a Holy Synod of a Church belonging to the other family of Orthodox churches should be invited to participate.

iii. That the Eastern and Oriental churches of the Middle East devote the first Sunday of Lent of each year to Orthodox Unity. This issue should constitute the theme of the sermons delivered on that day by their respective priests.

iv. That exchanges be promoted between the theological schools or seminaries of the Eastern and Oriental Churches, on the levels of faculty, students and libraries.

b. Meeting at Pendeli monastery, Greece, in 1978

The delegates to the meeting in Pendeli, Greece reaffirmed in 1978 the conviction expressed by the 1972 Balamand declaration, that the faith of both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches is common beyond all differences imposed by history. Accordingly, they have emphasized the need for mutual recognition conducive to full sacramental unity. However, they have regarded their meeting as a contribution to the overall efforts towards Orthodox unity facilitated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and as a culmination of the local dialogues recommended by the inter-Orthodox Conferences of Rhodes in 1962, for the "Chalcedonian" and of Addis Ababa inl965, for the "non-Chalcedonian" churches.

On the occasion of this meeting, the participants had the opportunity to meet with theologians from the Church of Greece. It was followed by an audience with His Beatitude Seraphim, the Archbishop of Athens and
Primate of Greece who blessed the work of the participants towards Orthodox unity. At the end of the meeting in Pendeli, the participants made several recommendations which included:

i. The need to publish a book which should contain a chronological account of all attempts towards Orthodox unity since 451 AD, including the reports of Rhodes in 1962, for the Eastern Orthodox and Addis Ababa in 1965, for the Oriental Orthodox. The book should also include accounts of the non official international consultations held in Aarhus, Bristol, Geneva, and Addis Ababa, as well as the statements of the Middle East meetings of Balamand in 1972 and Pendeli in 1978.

ii. The promotion of exchange of visits between priests, theologians, or lay people, belonging to the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches with the aim of increasing knowledge of each other Tradition and contextual witness.

iii. The formation of joint working groups on liturgical, pastoral, doctrinal and canonical issues.

C. CHALLENGES TO ORTHODOX UNITY

The movement towards Orthodox Unity in the Middle East is currently facing the following challenges:

1. The delay in making decisions. According to some church leaders, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is not enough urging the Synods of the Eastern Orthodox Churches to act on the statements adopted by the joint commission mainly in Chambesy, in 1985 and 1990. Some, however, consider that the time element involved is not significant when compared with the period of 15 centuries the "Chalcedonian" and "non-Chalcedonian" churches have spent in separation from each other. For instance, in light of the statements of the Joint Commission, the Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church had decided to lift its anathemas against the "Chalcedonian" Churches with the condition that these Churches would the same with regard to the "non-Chalcedonian" Churches. It seems that to this date, no Eastern Orthodox Church has taken such an action.

2. The opposition to Orthodox Unity. From certain quarters in Greece, Russia, Jerusalem and Ethiopia, there is presently, an important opposition to Orthodox Unity based on the assumption that the Oriental Orthodox Churches should not only confess the Christological belief of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but should also recognize the validity of the whole council of Chalcedon.
3. The internal politico-ecclesiastical tensions. The new political juncture, mainly in Eastern Europe is causing inter-Eastern Orthodox problems. It is also causing tensions within Oriental Orthodoxy, such as between the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches or between the Armenian Catholicosates of Cilicia and Etchmiatsin. In addition, ecclesiastical splits have recently occurred, in India, within the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

D. SIGNS OF HOPE

Despite the problems faced on the road to Orthodox Unity, one could discern the following signs of hope:

1. The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches of Antioch. In 1991, the synods of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch have approved a joint statement concerning their pastoral needs and obligations. Their joint statement called the faithful to fully respect the spirituality, Tradition and the Saints of the two Churches as well as to preserve their respective Byzantine and Syriac liturgical cycles. It also asked them to include the fathers of both Church Traditions in the Christian Education Program and the Curriculum of their theological schools which should organize, between them a program of exchange of students and faculty. It also mentioned that if only one priest, from either of the two Churches concerned, is found alone in a region which has one Church, that can administer the holy sacraments and the other pastoral responsibilities, including the holy liturgy. In the case the sacraments of baptism and marriage are administered, that priest will have to keep separate registers for the two Churches involved. If two priests from the two Churches concerned are found in one place with one Church building, they can celebrate the liturgy alternatively. However, Inter-communion and mutual proselytism remained forbidden.

2. IOCC Middle East Consultation. From April 2 to 4, 1997, the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) held a consultation in Cyprus to define its future work in the Middle East region. The Coptic Orthodox Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Armenian Orthodox Church of Cilicia were invited to send representatives. According to the recommendations of the consultation, these Churches will be asked to send there representatives to the future national committees.

3. SYNDESMOS Consultation on Orthodox Unity. In May 1997, SYNDESMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth Movements organized a conference in Douma, Lebanon, on the relation between the Eastern and Oriental Churches. It was then recommended that Orthodox youth should activate dialogue towards Orthodox Unity. In particular,
SYNDESMOS should publish booklets, in different languages, which should clarify the agreements made between the Churches involved and spread enough knowledge about their respective particularities as well as the significance of their common witness.

4. SYNDESMOS Conference in Cyprus. In July 1997, (SYNDESMOS) held a large gathering in Kikko monastery in Cyprus, to which it invited young people from the Oriental Orthodox Churches i.e. the Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Churches. The aim was the promotion of cooperation and exchange between youth from all the Orthodox Churches. 165 participants came from around the world.

5. Meeting of the official Joint Commission in Syria. In 2-5 February 1998, the Joint Commission of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches met in Damascus, Syria under the auspices of His Beatitude Ignatios IV, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and His Holiness Mar Ignatios Zakka I, Patriarch of the Syrian Church of Antioch. They agreed to reaffirm that the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches "basically maintain the old liturgical traditions in their local liturgical types, which coexisted in the undivided Church". Also, the Joint Commission formed a joint Working Group to meet, for a week in Athens, between Easter and Pentecost of 1998. It is hoped that the Joint Working Group will discover ways of facilitating the mutual lifting of anathemas towards full Orthodox Unity.

E. CONCLUSION

Through their joint meetings of Balamand in 1972 and Pendeli in 1978, the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Middle East have reiterated the conviction that they have the same Christological belief and a common understanding of ecclesiology that should make them urgently overcome the dogmatic and canonical obstacles that separated them for almost 15 centuries. Facing the same phenomenon of proselytism from foreign missions and the same politico-religious challenges, these churches have also become convinced that the fulfillment of their unity is of absolute necessity for credible witness within monotheism and in the ecumenical movement, in general. Moreover, those two meetings helped the participating Churches to fully subscribe later to the work of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue which met in Corinth, Greece in 1987, in Anba Bishoy monastery in Egypt in 1989, in Chambesy in 1990 and 1993 and recently in Damascus in 1998. All these meetings affirmed the common Christological faith and ecclesiology between the Eastern and Oriental churches and consequently envisaged the possibility of lifting the anathemas between them towards their sacramental unity.
Nevertheless, disappointments continue to be expressed with regard to the slow pace of the work for Orthodox Unity. For this purpose your contribution and prayers are highly needed.
Sources


2. Statement of the Joint Commission for the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, held in Chambesy, Switzerland, from the 10 to 15 December, 1985.

3. Statement of the Joint Commission between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, held at Anba Bishop monastery in Egypt, from June 20 to 24, 1989.

4. Statement of the Joint Commission between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, held in Chambesy, Switzerland, from November 1 to 6, 1993

5. Communiqué of the sub-committee of the Joint Commission between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, held at Anba Bishop monastery in Egypt from Jan 31 to February 4, 1990.

6. Communiqué of the sub-committee of the Joint Commission of the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches held in Damascus, Syria from February 2 to 5, 1998.


8. Report of the Middle East consultation of the International Orthodox Christian Charities(IOC), held in Limassol, Cyprus from April 2 to 4, 1997.


11. Book entitled "Towards Orthodox Unity" and Published by MECC in 1980. It includes the statement of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox
Churches meeting organized by Syndesmos at Balamand in 1972 and the statement of the meeting organized by MECC at Pendeli monastery in 1987.
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NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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