

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BYZANTIUM ON THE EVE OF THE ARAB CONQUESTS

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The three decades or so that go to make up the long and eventful reign of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641) constitute both a turning point in the evolution of the Byzantine state and a watershed in the history of Europe and the Middle East. It is difficult, therefore, though essential in the first instance for the purpose of the present analysis, to try to disentangle one aspect of this situation from the other. Nevertheless, a useful starting point for such an attempt has, I think, been provided by G. Ostrogorsky's characterization of the changes that the Byzantine state itself underwent during a stretch of time if not identical with, at least in close proximity to and inclusive of, the period in question. It should be noted, moreover, that his observations are in a sense self-contained and, what is perhaps more important, that they are offered independently of any consideration of the epoch-making significance of the more or less simultaneous rise of Islam:

The years of anarchy under Phocas were the last phase in the history of the late Roman Empire. During this time the old *imperium* finally went under and the late Roman, or early Byzantine, period came to an end. Byzantium was to emerge from the crisis in an essentially different form, able to throw off the heritage of decadent political life and to draw on new and vigorous sources of strength. Byzantine history properly speaking is the history of the medieval Greek Empire, and it is now that it begins.¹

Ostrogorsky's rose-coloured delineation of the nature and consequences of this transformation, however, was to a large extent preconditioned by his own picture of the positive and revitalizing role of Heraclius's military reforms, reforms whose scope, effectiveness, and very existence have been increasingly, cogently, and authoritatively called into question.² But what remains beyond dispute is that the reign of Heraclius and its aftermath mark the culmination in a complex series of changes — economic, social, ethnic, political, and religious — stretching back to Justinian's reconquest of the western provinces and not unaffected by the decisions, political, military, and religious, of the individual monarchs who occupied the Byzantine throne in the roughly seventy-five years that separate the death of Justinian from the death of Heraclius. It is against such a background, therefore, that the present paper sets out to examine the interaction of religious and political factors in assisting this process of transformation. As for the transformation itself, any attempt to assess its overall significance must inevitably involve a wider historical perspective than that of Byzantium and cannot escape being coloured by individual value judgments and responses to a situation that still holds obvious consequences for the present. Yet, no self-imposed limitation of treatment can justify the total exclusion of these more general considerations, nor shall such an exclusion be pursued here.

CHALCEDON AND ITS AFTERMATH

At the fifth session of the Fourth Oecumenical Council (held on the 22nd of October 451) a definition of the Faith was presented. Its formulation and official acceptance were to mark the beginning of a long and bitter theological debate, conducted with all the weapons of logic and invective, resolved as often as not by the logic of force, and destined to leave lasting scars and seemingly irreparable divisions in the eastern provinces of the Empire. The core of that definition, which is as important in the general historical perspective for the reactions it provoked and the passions it unleashed, as is its place (whatever exactly that place may be) in the general history of theology,³ runs roughly as follows:

Following, then, the holy Fathers we acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ to be one and the same Son and all of one accord emphatically teach that the Same is perfect in Divinity, the Same perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man, the Self-same [consisting] of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as to his Divinity, and the Same consubstantial with us as to his humanity; like us in all things, sin apart, before the ages begotten of the Father as to his Divinity, but in the last days, the Self-same, for us and for our salvation, [born] of Mary the Virgin Theotokos as to his humanity;

One and the Same Christ, Lord, Only-begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.⁴

The divisive effects, however, of this doctrinal assertion of unity, duality, and indivisibility were not slow to manifest themselves. Though the expression “out of two natures” would have been accepted, “in two natures” was felt to be intolerable by the majority of the clergy in the eastern provinces and to smack of Nestorianism. The Armenian bishops, who arrived too late for the Council, refused to be bound by its findings, as did many bishops in Egypt and Syria who had refused to attend it at all. Military force was needed to place the Chalcedonian, Proterius, on the patriarchal throne in Alexandria. No sooner was the emperor Marcian dead than the Alexandrians murdered Proterius and replaced him by the resolutely anti-Chalcedonian or “Monophysite,” Timothy Aelurus. Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, who had signed the decrees of Chalcedon, had to flee for his life when he tried to return to his see. A situation had, in fact, been arrived at in which irreconcilable doctrinal positions had been assumed by Constantinople and the West on the one hand and by the eastern provinces of the Empire on the other. The sequel was in many ways predictable. Justinian’s reconquest of the West served only to heighten the dilemma by adding a large body of Chalcedonian opinion to the membership of the official church. Furthermore, his convening of a Council in 553, which, as far as the Monophysites were concerned, offered too little too late, merely served to inflame passions still further. And perhaps a point of no return had already been reached in 541 with the consecration by the Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosius, of two monks as metropolitans. For it was this step which led to the creation of an independent Monophysite hierarchy.⁵ Differences that were already beginning to appear irreconcilable had now become institutionalized. And to make matters worse another and, at first sight, surprising factor is clearly discernible in the religious controversies that bedevilled the decades immediately preceding the Arab Conquests — the ever-increasing participation and involvement of the masses.

THE DOCTRINAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE MASSES

Though the phenomenon persists over a much longer time span than the one at present under consideration and raises important general questions, which themselves demand a passing mention, our principal concern here will be to answer one specific question and to do so by drawing solely on contemporary or near contemporary source material.

In an important article A.H.M. Jones⁶ drew attention to the fact that (at the time of writing) “Most modern historians of the later Roman Empire, whether secular or ecclesiastical, seem to agree that certain of the heresies and schisms of that period were in some sense national rather than purely religious movements.”⁷ “Their general line of argument is,” he points out, “that mere doctrinal differences, often of extreme subtlety, could not have engendered such powerful and enduring movements, and that their real and underlying cause must be sought in national sentiment.”⁸ After a detailed and closely reasoned discussion of the evidence, he dismisses all non-religious explanations for the motivation of mass involvement in theological issues, whether offered in terms of nationalist and separatist tendencies or of class conflict. His own conclusion is that “On the other hand there is abundant evidence that interest in theology was intense and widespread. The generality of people firmly believed that not only individual salvation but the fortunes of the empire depended on correct doctrine, and it was natural that they felt passionately on the subject.”⁹ And again,

I would contend that under the later Roman Empire most people felt strongly on doctrinal issues and a high proportion had sufficient acquaintance with theology to argue about them with zest if without any deep understanding. It does not, of course, follow that they adopted whatever doctrinal position they held from a rational evaluation of the arguments for and against it. As today and in all ages most people’s religious beliefs were determined by a variety of irrational influences. Some were swayed by the authority of a revered theologian or more often by that of a holy man whose orthodoxy was guaranteed by his austerities and miracles. The great majority accepted what they had been brought up to believe as children, or the dominant belief of their social milieu. Some doctrines made a special appeal to certain classes of society.¹⁰

Finally, in his great survey of the later Roman Empire, first published approximately five years later, he distills with admirable terseness the essence of his earlier conclusions into the following two sentences: “In general, it would seem, the religious struggles of the later empire were in reality what they appeared to be. Their bitterness demonstrates the overwhelming importance of religion in the minds of all sorts and conditions of men.”¹¹ The specific question which seems to spring from this conclusion and to be worth both asking and attempting to answer with regard to the period under discussion here is: how did religion come to assume such an “overwhelming importance in the minds of all sorts and conditions of men”? To a large extent this question has been answered by A.H.M. Jones himself in his masterly survey of the later Roman Empire, where he has assembled

with meticulous accuracy all that has been recorded and can be deduced of the enormous growth in wealth experienced by the Christian churches in the period from the beginning of the fourth century to the sixth and of the corresponding increase in numbers both of a clergy whose membership was drawn from almost every social class and of their various lay assistants.¹² Another obvious factor, of course, is the phenomenon of monasticism and its equally prodigious expansion.¹³ But contemporary sources afford us some precious, if all too infrequent, insights into what this state of affairs must have meant for the everyday lives of the inhabitants of one of the great cities of the Empire during the first two decades of the seventh century. A few of these are worth examining in view of their particular relevance to the present discussion.

Toward the end of 610 or perhaps early 611, when John the Almsgiver was appointed to the patriarchate of Alexandria, we are told that he found in the bishop's palace the sum in cash of about 8,000 pounds of gold,¹⁴ or what we know from the same source to have been 192,000 times the annual income, from which he somehow managed to support a wife and two children, of a poor man in employment.¹⁵ That, of course, is apart from the church's lands, which presumably were extensive,¹⁶ its commercial activities, which included the possession of a large merchant fleet,¹⁷ the gifts and legacies that kept pouring in,¹⁸ and the rent from business premises.¹⁹ Also at the outset of his patriarchate, indeed at the time between his election and his enthronement, the saint had a list drawn up of the city's paupers, who were said to have numbered somewhat more than seven thousand five hundred. On the basis of this list he made regular provision for their maintenance out of Church funds.²⁰

It is perhaps not without significance that the corn dole, which had been distributed to the urban poor of Alexandria since the time of Diocletian, was abolished, with Imperial approval, during the reign of Justinian by order of a certain Hephaestus, who was Augustal Prefect in 546.²¹ In other words, the once beneficent role of the State is now assumed by the Church. To the State, however, there remained the role of chief enforcer of a harsh penal code and an oppressive fiscal regime.²² But, though all these mundane and material factors must have had considerable influence in winning over the hearts and minds of the masses, it would be a mistake to leave out of account the more intangible forces of the spirit. Indeed, it is thanks to the operation of these forces that the meeting ground of social alienation and religious otherworldliness did not prove a fertile terrain for the growth of apolitical and apathetic attitudes, but more often wore the aspect of

a battlefield. If betterment of the individual's lot in society was to be despaired of, yet the precise location of the path to salvation, that one remaining and overriding goal, was hotly debated and fought over with increasing trepidation, bitterness, and fury.

W.H.C. Frend has drawn attention to the centrality in the Christological controversy, from the anti-Chalcedonian (or "Monophysite") side at least, of the Eucharist, and to its practical implications at the level of ministration, worship, and the everyday life of the faithful: "To the emperors, opponents of Chalcedon were the 'Hesitants', the *diakrinomenoi*, those who 'Had reservations' about accepting its definition. Orthodox clergy and laymen often found their position baffling. As the Patriarch John the Faster (582-95) complained in the reign of Maurice, their doctrines were irreproachable yet they would not communicate with Chalcedonians."²³ And again, after stressing the essentially religious nature of anti-Chalcedonian dissent, he continues in the same vein but with greater explicitness: "The issue at the back of their minds and those of their followers was whether the life-giving elements of the Eucharist had been dispensed by a cleric who had a truly orthodox attitude towards religion, and Chalcedon was not truly orthodox."²⁴

Elsewhere,²⁵ Frend appears to discern in a particular attitude to and emphasis on the life-giving activity of the Eucharist the logical outcome of an approach to Christology developed in Alexandria, elaborated by Cyril, and culminating in Monophysitism. Over and against all this he appears also to discern in a no less particular attitude to and emphasis on the redemptive role of Christ, as perfect man redeeming mankind by his example, the logical outcome of a Christology developed in Antioch, elaborated at Chalcedon, and culminating in diphysitism. But these theoretical considerations, however interesting in themselves, do not tell us why at a given point in time a given group or groups of people should decide to refuse communion, unless, of course, there is some suggestion of a connection between refusal to "communicate with Chalcedonians" and some inherent quality in the differences between the two approaches to Christology. Yet, not only is such a view perhaps excessively subtle and consequently difficult to substantiate but it would seem to be contradicted by abundant evidence from Chalcedonian sources at least.

A good starting point for defining the Chalcedonian attitude to the question of communicating with heretics is provided by the statement on the subject which his biographer, Leontius of Neapolis, attributes to St John the Almsgiver. The generosity, mildness, and humanity for which the patriarch was noted, his own uncompromisingly Chalcedonian doctrinal position

and the fact²⁶ that he was very far from being a professional theologian all combine to enhance the value of his words as illustrative material for the general climate of opinion and prejudice in such matters during the first half of the seventh century. What the biographer says of the saint and makes the saint declare on his own account may be rendered roughly as follows: Another thing which the blessed man taught and kept impressing on everybody was never in any circumstances to share in the communion, or rather contamination, of heretics. “Even if,” the blessed man said “you remain without receiving communion all your life, should circumstances beyond your control make it impossible for you to get to a Catholic church.”²⁷ There then follows an emphatic statement to the effect that if separation through enforced residence in a distant land is no excuse for betraying one’s lawful wedded wife, which is a punishable offence, how much less excuse is there for forsaking the bride of Christ and consorting with heretics? “If we adulterate the holy orthodox faith through communion with heretics,” says John, according to Leontius, “how can we fail to become joint sharers in the punishment which in the world to come awaits heretics?”²⁸ Finally, we are given an interesting definition of communion: “For communion,” he said, “has been so called on account of the mutual sharing and agreement of the communicant with those with whom he communicates. Therefore, I beseech you, my children, have no contact with such chapels in order to receive communion.”²⁹

The *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschos,³⁰ a compilation of monkish anecdotes and sayings put together between the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries and drawn from a wide geographical area, is an especially valuable witness in view of its low intellectual level and edifying purpose. Accordingly, it offers some precious insights into the various strands of popular Chalcedonian opinion and prejudice. In particular, the attitudes expressed there to the question of communicating with heretics are worth recording. First, a story which imparts in allegorical form the same dire warnings as those issued by John the Almsgiver: Two brothers, who are Syrians, work in Constantinople as money-changers. It is agreed between them that the younger brother should return to Syria to take possession of the family home whilst the elder brother is to stay on in Constantinople to look after the money-changing business. Not long after the elder brother has a dream in which a venerable old man says to him “Do you know that your brother has committed adultery with the tavern-keeper’s wife?” Waking up, the elder brother is filled with remorse and blames himself for having allowed his brother to return home alone. After some time the dream recurs,

and on its third occurrence the brother in Constantinople sends an urgent letter to his brother in Syria, asking him to come at once. On arrival the younger brother is taken by his elder brother to the Church of St Sophia and solemnly reproached for his adulterous liaison with the tavern-keeper's wife. All this is greeted by the younger brother with astonished and incredulous protestations of innocence. Finally, in answer to his brother's further questioning, the younger brother concludes with the following remark: "I am not aware of having done anything out of the ordinary, except that I came upon some monks of the persuasion of Severus and, not knowing that there was anything wrong about it, I had communion with them. Apart from that I do not know of anything whatsoever that I did." Lest any reader should fail to grasp the point, the narrator adds for our further enlightenment: Then the elder brother understood that this was what was meant by his committing adultery, namely that he had abandoned the Holy Catholic Church and had fallen into the heresy of Severus the Acephalus, who was the tavern-keeper, and had disgraced himself and had defiled the nobility of the orthodox faith.

This story also contains an element of something better illustrated elsewhere — the cautionary tale directed at the undiscerning and simple-minded, or perhaps one might almost say directed against "the sin of tolerance."³¹ That element comes to the fore in the story³² of an elderly monk of great standing as an ascetic, who, however, was "naïve" in matters of faith and took communion indiscriminately, wherever he found it. "One day," the story continues, "an angel of God appeared to him, saying tell me, Old man, if you die, how do you want us to bury you? After the rite of the monks of Egypt, or of those of Jerusalem? The old man answered, saying: I do not know. Whereupon the angel said to him: Think it over and I shall come in three weeks' time and you will tell me." We are told that the old man then confided his vision to another monk, who, after recovering from his initial surprise, was divinely inspired to put the following question to him: "Where do you partake of the Holy Mysteries?" On receiving the answer: "wherever I find them," his brother monk warns him against "taking communion outside of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, where the four Holy Councils are named — Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon." The upshot of all this is that, on the angel's return visit, the simple-minded ascetic asks to be buried after the rite of the monks of Jerusalem (Palestine being associated in the popular mind with Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Egypt and Syria with Monophysitism — a situation no doubt corresponding to actual numbers on the ground, though these cannot

possibly be estimated) and immediately as the angel grants his request the old man gives up the ghost. Then comes an important and revealing conclusion: "All this happened, in order that the old man might not waste his exertions and be condemned with heretics." In other words, faith and good works without orthodox belief, an essential expression of which is refusal to communicate with heretics, are as nothing and will not accomplish salvation. The next logical step in the escalation of religious intolerance is, of course, to deny the possibility for all but Chalcedonians of eternal salvation. Such a belief and mentality are well brought out in a story³³ that belongs to a different but related category and deals with the theme of the refusal of heretics (the word is used here, as elsewhere, merely as a convenient piece of shorthand) to communicate with Chalcedonians and of their triumphant conversion to doing so through the agency of some kind of celestial intervention. A foreign monk from Dara, called Theophanes, visits an aged and venerable monk of great sanctity, named Kyriakos,³⁴ who lives in the Lavra of Kalamon on the Jordan. After having received much spiritual benefit from the venerable monk's edifying discourse, the stranger says: "Father, in my country I communicate with the Nestorians and for this reason am unable to stay with you, as I would otherwise have done." Whereupon the Chalcedonian endeavours to persuade the Nestorian to abandon his heresy and join the "Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." The Nestorian's reply is revealing and, among other things, it suggests the possibility that even in such an age of unqualified dogmatic certainty there were perhaps some who were tempted to take a more agnostic view of the finer points of doctrinal disagreement. It may be rendered roughly as follows: "But truly, father, all the different persuasions say 'if you do not take communion with us, you will not be saved'. I am a humble person and so I do not know what I should do. Pray, therefore, to the Lord to make me know for sure which is the true faith."

The Chalcedonian, delighted at this opportunity, vacated his own cell, asked the Nestorian to reside in it, and went off to the shore of the Dead Sea to pray for his erring brother. A couple of days later the Nestorian experiences an apocalyptic vision in which he "sees someone of terrifying aspect standing over him and saying to him: Come and see the truth. And taking him he leads him away to a dark and evil-smelling place with fire and shows him in the midst of the fire Nestorius and Theodore, Eutyches and Apolinarius, Evagrius and Didymus, Dioscorus and Severus, Arius and Origen and others." Then, after warning him that a similar fate awaits him unless he decides to renounce the error of his ways, the mysterious escort

concludes significantly: "I tell you, even if a man should practice all the virtues and not hold orthodox opinions it is to this place that he shall come." Enlightened by this vision, the monk from Dara is, of course, converted and communicates "with the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." On the strength, therefore, of a specific statement in this story and of the cumulative evidence so far adduced it would appear that the acceptance or refusal of communion is regarded equally by all persuasions,³⁵ and for much the same reasons, as an essential mark of doctrinal assent or dissent. The act of communicating is also one of the most important visible signs of either apostasy or conversion.

THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE EMPEROR HERACLIUS

Both the close collaboration and friendship which undoubtedly existed between the Emperor Heraclius and the patriarch Sergius³⁶ and the theocratic direction taken by so much imperial policy and legislation in the course of the nearly two and three quarter centuries that separate the death of Constantine from the accession of Heraclius, a direction already determined during Constantine's own lifetime,³⁷ combine to make it difficult to distinguish between the respective roles of Emperor and patriarch in the formulation of a religious policy behind which modern historians at least³⁸ seem to concur in discerning the guiding hand of an Emperor motivated by a variety of considerations ranging from the restoration of Christian unity to the preservation and maintenance of the political cohesion and territorial integrity of the Byzantine state.³⁹ Yet, such evidence as we possess might at least suggest the possibility that the initiative came not from the Emperor but from the patriarch. Firmly dated in fact to the year 616⁴⁰ is our first piece of evidence for Sergius's involvement in that arduous quest for a peace formula capable of reversing the legacy, though not the doctrinal content, of Chalcedon, which was to occupy him for the rest of his life. We are told by Maximus the Confessor⁴¹ that Sergius a letter to a certain George Arsas, a monophysite, asking him for a list of passages from Scripture and from patristic sources supporting the belief in a single energy in Christ. Apparently the letter was intercepted by St John the Almsgiver, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, who seems to have contemplated taking drastic action, perhaps even seeking to secure the deposition from office of the patriarch Sergius. But he was prevented from doing so by the Persian invasion of Egypt, which began in the autumn of 616, and by his own death, which occurred probably about a year later on the 11th November 617.⁴²

It seems not unreasonable at this point to ask why a patriarch of Constantinople should have chosen at this date to solicit such information, why the then patriarch of Alexandria should have reacted in the way he did, and whether or not the Emperor had any hand at all in the whole business.

The answer to the first question lies, I think, partly in the nature of the challenge confronting Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the eastern provinces as a result of the Persian occupation of Syria and Palestine and partly in the awareness of Sergius himself of the possible implications of this challenge for the further evolution of the office of patriarch of Constantinople. First of all, the main events of the Persian invasion and occupation of Syria and Palestine must be taken into account, in so much as these have an obvious bearing on ecclesiastical affairs. In May — July 611 Persian armies pushed rapidly into northern Syria, capturing Apamea, Edessa, and, after fierce resistance, Antioch.⁴³ Antioch, incidentally, had lost its Chalcedonian patriarch about a year earlier, when, in the confused circumstances of a riot the causes of which are far from clear, he was accidentally killed by Imperial troops.⁴⁴ No Chalcedonian was to occupy the patriarchal throne of that city for another thirty years. Temporarily held in check, the Persian advance resumed its irresistible course a couple of years later, with Damascus falling in the autumn of 613 and early in 614 Caesarea and other cities along the coast of Palestine. But perhaps the most devastating blow to Christian morale was dealt by the sack, probably in May 614,⁴⁵ of Jerusalem, which was accompanied by a bloody massacre, the carrying off into captivity of thousands of Christians including the Chalcedonian patriarch Zacharias, and, most sensational of all, the seizure of the most treasured relic of Christendom, the Holy Cross, it too being transported to Ctesiphon. However, it appears that after an initial period of indiscriminate killing and destruction normal administration returned to the conquered lands and the Persian Emperor, Chosroes II, by a master stroke of political calculation, went to great lengths to implement a policy of complete religious toleration in all his newly-acquired domains, allowing freedom of worship and belief equally to all the various Christian sects, whilst according majority privileges to anti-Chalcedonians wherever these were clearly in the majority.⁴⁶ None of this boded well for the future of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the eastern provinces, and no patriarch of Constantinople could fail to have been well informed of the recent turn of events or to grasp its significance. Moreover, there were other equally grave causes for alarm elsewhere. In Egypt, the civil and military governor, Nicetas, by an inherited dispensation which fell to the secular power alone,⁴⁷ had from the outset in his conduct of the

government of that province pursued with regard to its anti-Chalcedonian inhabitants a policy of thinly-disguised toleration, which culminated in the autumn of 615⁴⁸ with an act of benevolence toward one's religious opponents altogether unprecedented in the annals of the Christian Roman Empire. He actually encouraged and presided over a meeting of the monophysite patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, which aimed at effecting, and eventually did achieve, the reunion of their respective Churches, after a temporary estrangement between Alexandria and Antioch that lasted about twenty-eight years. Nicetas, who must have been acting with the support and approval of the Emperor, was motivated by calculations of political expedience and not, of course, by any desire to bring about the unity of the Monophysite Church. In the face of an impending Persian attack on Egypt ordinary prudence dictated that the Government should present itself as the guardian and promoter of the welfare of the majority of the population. To Sergius, however, viewing matters from the perspective of the patriarchate of Constantinople, that may not have been so apparent. At the same time, the failure in August 615⁴⁹ of an embassy from the Byzantine Senate, which had been sent in a last and desperate bid to secure a negotiated peace between Byzantium and Iran, meant that there was now no alternative to the indefinite extension and continuance of the existing state of war between the two great empires. It must also have been clear that the struggle now entered could end only with the extinction of the Byzantine state, which was unthinkable, or with the total destruction of Sasanian power and eventual reconquest of the eastern provinces. In the meantime, Antioch had no Chalcedonian patriarch, Zacharias of Jerusalem was languishing in captivity in Iran, and Alexandria faced the imminent prospect of invasion. Such was the general disarray of the Chalcedonian cause.

Never before had the see of Constantinople been offered such a challenge or such an opportunity.⁵⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that Sergius, himself an expert theologian, should have conceived at such a critical juncture the grand design of exploring some dimension of Christology not discussed by Chalcedon in the hope of finding therein the basis for a new formula of consensus which would explain and enshrine acceptance of Chalcedon in terms to which both Monophysites and Chalcedonians might be persuaded to give their assent. On the other hand, it is equally no surprise that the patriarch of Alexandria, John the Almsgiver, who, despite his close relationship with the governor Nicetas,⁵¹ had always pursued, and often it seems with notable success, an uncompromising policy of Chalcedonian expansionism,⁵² should

have viewed with considerable disquiet the spectacle of a patriarch of Constantinople entering into a correspondence with a Monophysite clergyman residing in the area of his own jurisdiction. That Sergius was working in isolation in 616 is made almost certain by John the Almsgiver's interception of his letter, since such a move would have been virtually impossible had Sergius been acting in concert with Heraclius and Nicetas. At this date, then, there would appear to be a marked divergence of policy between Heraclius, Sergius, and John the Almsgiver. But first enemy action and then death were to remove John from the scene and the future course of events was to bring the policies of Sergius and Heraclius closer and closer together.

Three to four years later, in fact, that is to say in 619–20,⁵³ by which time the whole of Egypt had come under Persian control, we find Sergius actively engaged in raising a huge loan to help finance the military and other preparations required for Heraclius's long-awaited offensive against Persia. All the sacred vessels and other precious objects of gold and silver used in the churches of Constantinople were melted down and turned into money.⁵⁴ Now it was only four to five years before this, be it noted, that John the Almsgiver had refused to contribute any of the Church of Alexandria's money to help Nicetas and the Imperial government at a time of severe military and economic crisis.⁵⁵ The contrast between the behaviour of the two patriarchs is perhaps not without significance for the eventual direction Heraclius's religious policy was to take. But, be that as it may, it seems probable that some time before 622 Sergius entered into correspondence with the Chalcedonian bishop, Theodore of Pharan, whom some consider to have been the leading theologian of the monothelite movement.⁵⁶ Before considering the few remaining recorded instances, however, of Sergius's continuing quest for a dogmatic solution to the problem of the religious divisions created by Chalcedon, we must first, I think, try to define as accurately as possible the term "monothelitism," or the doctrine of a single will in Christ, for it was to this doctrine via the expression of "monoenergism," or the doctrine of a single activity in Christ, that Sergius's efforts were eventually to lead.

An interesting attempt to characterize the essential features of monothelitism and its earlier manifestation, monoenergism, is that of V. Grumel.⁵⁷ It may be translated as follows:

It will always be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to determine at what precise point in time monothelitism may properly be considered a distinctive form of heresy in its own right. The doctrine of a single operation and a single will is already to be found among the monophysites, particularly in the case of Severus and his followers, but only as the logical consequence of

their monophysitism. One does not, therefore, normally apply the name of monothelites to them. It was only when an attempt was first made to isolate this particular doctrinal feature in order to harmonize it with Chalcedonian orthodoxy that monothelitism itself came into being. Monothelitism was a system which occupied a middle position between dyophysitism on the one hand and monophysitism on the other. From the former it retained the two natures; from the latter it took over the single energy and the single will. The aim was to get both parties to settle all outstanding differences and misunderstandings in the light of their acceptance of this common element of religious belief and so move forward towards the goal of eventual reconciliation.

But what Grumel does not explain is how this artificially contrived doctrinal hybrid did not rapidly become extinct after the failure of both Sergius's and Heraclius's plans for Church unity and once death had removed both patriarch and Emperor from the scene of action. Indeed, Grumel's view of the nature and origin of monothelitism fails to account for a number of important facts. Why, for instance, did Constans II find it necessary to publish an edict in 648, the famous "Type of Faith" as it was called, which forbade any discussion of the problem of the divine will as well as that of the divine energy? Why did Maximus the Confessor decide to switch all the powers of his formidable activity from the defence of orthodoxy against monophysitism to the defence of orthodoxy against monothelitism, against which doctrine he waged a relentless struggle until his death in 662?⁵⁸ Why, for that matter, did another emperor, Constantine IV, in 680 throw all the weight of his authority behind the convening of an Oecumenical Council to condemn a doctrine the number of whose adherents ought by all reasonable calculations to have dwindled into insignificance? But positive evidence for the strength of monothelitism is not lacking either. The recent identification of a monothelite florilegium written in Syriac, which accompanied the publication in 1973 of an early Syriac life of Maximus the Confessor⁵⁹ written from the monothelite point of view and entitled "the narrative concerning the wicked Maximus of Palestine, who blasphemed against his Creator and his tongue was cut out," would suggest that "almost the entire Chalcedonian community in Syria and Palestine" remained monothelite until the third decade of the eighth century.⁶⁰ It would seem, then, that our picture of the genesis of monothelitism needs to be modified, if we are to relate it satisfactorily to all the known facts that attended its subsequent development.

Let us, therefore, take a closer look at some of the implications of Grumel's hypothesis. In order to prove that monothelitism really is a composite doctrine of the type envisaged there, one must first establish that its

Chalcedonian elements are both distinctively and exclusively Chalcedonian and that its monophysite elements are equally monophysite. Now, since the Council of Chalcedon in its definition of faith made no mention of either energies or wills, that would appear to be rather difficult to do, unless one interprets the orthodoxy of the time solely in terms of later events and on the assumption that all those who accepted Chalcedon somehow came to form a single monolithic block of uniform theological opinion. On the other hand, the possibility that there was in fact a considerable diversity of opinion on this matter among Chalcedonians themselves before the patriarchate of Sergius is perhaps confirmed by the statement of Maximus the Confessor, according to which Anastasius I, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch from 559 to 598, conceded in a work directed against the monophysite John Philoponos that “we also speak of one activity in Christ.”⁶¹ At any rate, the obvious conclusion to be drawn from such an assertion is that the belief in a single energy had already become widely diffused among the Chalcedonian population of Syria.⁶² Monothelitism, then, ought perhaps to be understood not as a composite doctrine specially devised to reconcile Chalcedonians and monophysites, but rather as the natural result of a conscious effort to achieve reconciliation by emphasizing such common ground as already existed between *all* monophysites and *some* Chalcedonians.

But to return to the progress of events, it was against such a background of increasing collaboration between patriarch and Emperor in what was to become a common war and propaganda effort and of incessant theological activity and consultation on the part of Sergius that on Easter Monday, 5th April 622, Heraclius set off for his first campaign against the Persians. Hopes must have been high and indeed many of them were to be fulfilled. One of the civilians accompanying the expedition was a mutual friend of Sergius and Heraclius, the poet George of Pisidia, deacon of St Sophia and referendarius or “patriarchal nunzio” to the Imperial Court. He has left us an account of the campaign, which though written in elaborate classicizing iambic trimeters and in a language that is often difficult and obscure, is nevertheless a valuable source of first-hand information. He opens his poem with an invocation to the Trinity in which he asks for inspiration to help him rise to the magnitude of his theme and for a plentiful store of invective to use against the heathen enemy. He then embarks upon a tirade against the godless practices of the wicked, idolatrous, fire-worshipping Persians.⁶³ Incidentally, it is interesting to note in connection with the invocation to the Trinity that Trinitarian theology to a large extent constituted at this stage a common basis on which the rival Christologies of both the opponents and

the upholders of Chalcedon had been built.⁶⁴ And it is perhaps not fanciful to suppose that at so critical a juncture in the Empire's history there were at least some grounds for entertaining the hope that theological differences might somehow be patched up and perhaps even settled in the face of the common enemy — the idolatrous fire-worshippers who had sacked the Holy City and taken into captivity its patriarch Zachariah, many Christians of all shades of opinion, and the True Cross.

Probably to the end of 622 belongs our first piece of evidence for Heraclius's active participation in the doctrinal question with which Sergius had been busying himself for the past six years. It is contained in a letter of Sergius to Pope Honorius, preserved in the acts of the Sixth Oecumenical Council.⁶⁵ It is stated there that when Heraclius was in Armenia he conducted a theological discussion with a certain monophysite leader named Paul, in the course of which discussion the Emperor, in pursuance of his defence of Chalcedon and refutation of Paul's arguments, made mention of "the single energy."

In 626 Sergius conducted a correspondence on the subject of monoenergism with Cyrus, the metropolitan of Phasis on the Black Sea, whom Heraclius had already met in the course of military operations against Persia and had sought to influence in favour of his religious policy. This correspondence was eventually successful in securing the adherence to monoenergism of Cyrus. Despite the Avar siege of Constantinople, which occurred in the same year, the tide of war was now turning against the Persians. Heraclius's invasion of Iran late in 627 brought about the overthrow, by an internal coalition of forces anxious for peace with Byzantium, of Chosroes II, who was deposed on the 25th of February 628 and executed four days later, on the 29th. Some three years later there occurred what for the Byzantine monarch was perhaps the greatest and most memorable of his many victorious exploits. On the 21st of March 631⁶⁶ Heraclius restored the Cross to its resting place on Golgotha amid scenes of unprecedented pageantry and rejoicing. At this moment of supreme success it must have seemed as though no obstacle could stand in the way of one in whose august person were combined the powers and functions of Christ-loving Emperor and generalissimo of victorious and apparently invincible armies. The Persian Empire lay in ruins and all enemies had been scattered far and wide.

But what of Sergius's plans for achieving religious uniformity throughout the eastern provinces by means of a doctrinal formula capable of bringing all dissenters back into the Chalcedonian fold through the imposition of an enforceable consensus? In what spirit would Heraclius, who for nine

years had openly supported these plans, now address himself, from his position of near omnipotence, to the question of how to implement them? The poet panegyrist of the exploits of Heraclius, George of Pisidia, recaptures the mood of that time in a poem ostensibly directed against the long-dead monophysite theologian and patriarch of Antioch, Severus. What he says there⁶⁷ does much to answer both questions. In an elaborate comparison the Acephali (i.e. Monophysites, but the word literally means “headless ones”) are likened to the Hydra, since they flourish on division and the more their heads are cut off the more heads they grow. But we have the Heracles the Benefactor (i.e. “Heraclius,” by a long-familiar pun) to deal with the situation. Heraclius “by the cautery of burning faith” cuts off these serpent heads. Moreover, the wise and efficacious strategy of this peacetime Galen (the pun in the original here cannot even be adequately paraphrased) has now turned from the barbarians to the Scriptures in order that “He who has induced barbarians to keep the peace might likewise cause the heretics to hold their peace!” The policy which Heraclius is now being invited, with fulsome flattery, to adopt could hardly be in stronger contrast to that which we know to have been pursued in Egypt by Nicetas, acting no doubt in concert with the Emperor, from the beginning of the reign right up to the time of the Persian conquest. No question here of toleration, only of an imposed solution backed up, if necessary, by maximum force. So much then for Heraclius’s attitude as reflected in one contemporary source. As for his motivation, that is seen by the general consensus of modern historians as a genuine desire to bring about reconciliation among strife-torn populations (Butler describes Heraclius’s religious policy as “a scheme to root out sectarian hatred by an edict”),⁶⁸ reinforced by a no less genuine fear that the territorial integrity of his empire was at risk from the internal subversion of religious dissidents in the eastern provinces, who might conspire to aid any would-be aggressor from without.

But which aggressor, when the only other great power lay in ruins?⁶⁹ As for the religious dissidents, Butler proved conclusively as long ago as 1902, and his conclusions have been universally accepted, that the Christians of Egypt, in particular, of all denominations showed unswerving loyalty to the Empire at the time of the Persian Invasion.⁷⁰ So, what possible grounds for fear could Heraclius have had at that point in time? It would appear, then, that the commonly accepted view of Heraclius’s motivation depends on an appraisal of the situation based on hindsight and not supported by a shred of evidence in the sources. Rather, one might suspect that he had struck a bargain of uncertain scope with the patriarch Sergius, that his own

triumphant mood now chimed in perfectly with the ambitions of Sergius, and that the Emperor himself was animated by a spirit which may not unfairly be described as "the arrogance of invincibility."

With the advent of total victory the grand design for imposing religious uniformity on the basis of acceptance of Chalcedon plus the "one activity" formula proceeded apace. By 633 the Armenian Church had joined the Chalcedonian fold on these terms. In the meantime Heraclius had appointed Cyrus, the metropolitan of Phasis, to combine the offices of Patriarch of Alexandria and governor of Egypt. The arrival of this ecclesiastical plenipotentiary in Alexandria in the autumn of 631 was the signal for Benjamin, the monophysite patriarch, to go into hiding and to instruct his bishops to follow his example. The new Chalcedonian patriarch pursued his goal with vigour and determination. The major churches in Alexandria, which had been surrendered to the monophysites during the period of Persian rule, were now taken back. Negotiations were conducted with leaders other than Benjamin, and in the summer of 633 Cyrus summoned a synod at Alexandria that succeeded in gaining considerable moderate, or perhaps timid, monophysite support. A Tome of Union was drawn up, of which chapter seven acknowledged a "single activity" in Christ. However, opposition to the idea of in any way diluting Chalcedon even in the interests of enforcing its acceptance was not slow to come. The Chalcedonian opposition to monoennergism was spearheaded by the aged monk Sophronius, who lost no time in deciding to set off at once for Constantinople and tackle Sergius in person. Though temporarily outwitted by Sergius, Sophronius was elected patriarch of Jerusalem shortly after his return there early in 634. If this appointment was part of an official plan to win over Sophronius, it must be said that it had precisely the opposite effect. With orthodox opposition mounting, Sergius was driven to write to Pope Honorius, informing him of the situation and explaining the doctrine of the single energy. In his reply Honorius urged that the "activities" of Christ should be worshipped as operating in two natures, human and divine. But then he drew the fateful conclusion "Unde et unam voluntatem fatemur" ("and so we acknowledge also a single will").⁷¹ In the next few years things went from bad to worse. Not only had the policy of enforceable consensus failed to make any real impact on the hard core of irreconcilable monophysites, but an ugly rift was developing between the Chalcedonians themselves who had become painfully aware of serious differences existing in their own approaches to Christology, which had hitherto passed unchallenged and perhaps unnoticed. In Egypt all hope of success was lost thanks to the activities of Cyrus who turned

out to be a relentless persecutor of monophysites and a sadistic butcher, whose recorded brutalities are both too numerous to repeat and too disgusting to relate.⁷² Eventually, in 638, in all probability shortly after the death of Pope Honorius on the 12th October of the same year, a new formula, drafted by Sergius and set out in the form of an edict, was promulgated by order of the Emperor under the name of *Ecthesis*, or, Exposition of Faith, and posted up in the narthex of St Sophia.⁷³ It condemned the use of the term “one” or “two” energies and enjoined belief in a single will in Christ. Clearly Sergius was clutching at a straw, the straw of a chance remark let slip by the now dead Roman Pontiff. Sergius’s old antagonist, Sophronius, had already died on the 11th of March of the same year, having witnessed the surrender of Jerusalem to the Arabs. Then on the 8th or 9th December 638, Sergius too died. On the 11th of February 641 Heraclius followed him. Only Cyrus now remained. He stayed on in Alexandria persecuting and torturing monophysites till the bitter end, until he eventually set sail for Rhodes on the 12th of September 642 and surrendered Egypt to the Arabs according to the terms of a treaty that he had been instructed to make with them. Once more the eastern provinces were in enemy hands. But this time the enemy were neither fire-worshippers nor idolaters, nor could they be misrepresented as such.

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NOTES

¹ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (Oxford 1968) 85–86.

² Cf. John F. Haldon: “Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550–950”. *Sitzungsberichte*, Philosoph-Hist. Kl., Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Bd. 357 (1979) 28–40. P. Lemerle, from a standpoint of unalloyed scepticism and with emphasis on the total historical context, has painted a very different picture of the end product of Heraclius’s activities: “Héraclius a occupé le trône pendant trois fois dix ans, et voici les germes que ces dures années ont semés pour l’avenir: la coupure et le malentendu fondamental avec l’Occident; la poussée slave en Europe; le péril musulman en Asie. C’est bien la fin du monde antique, le début du moyen-âge.” P. Lemerle, “Quelques remarques sur le règne d’Héraclius,” *Studi Medievali*, S. 3, I (1960) 355.

³ Modern critical opinion has varied considerably on this point, cf. the short discussion of Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. I, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon, 2nd rev. ed., trans. John Bowden (Oxford 1975) 581–84. A full discussion, with relevant source and bibliographical information, of theological developments after Chalcedon to ca. 600 is to be found in the same author’s volume 2, Part One, From the Council of Chalcedon to Gregory the Great, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte

(Oxford 1987). The present article is not concerned to sketch such developments but merely the unfolding of their immediate historical repercussions.

⁴ Text in T. Herbert Bindley and F.W. Green, *The Oecumenical Documents of the Faith*, 4th rev. ed. (London 1950) 193.

⁵ Cf. W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge 1972) 285 sqq.

⁶ A.H.M. Jones, “Were ancient heresies national or social movements in disguise?” *JThS*, n.s., X, Pt. 2 (October 1959) 280–98.

⁷ Jones (at n. 6) 280.

⁸ Jones (at n. 6) 280.

⁹ Jones (at n. 6) 296.

¹⁰ Jones (at n. 6) 297.

¹¹ A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social economic and administrative survey* (repr. two vols. Oxford 1973) vol. II, 970.

¹² Jones (at n. 11) 904–29.

¹³ Touched upon by Jones (at n. 11) 929–33.

¹⁴ *Leontios’ von Neapolis Leben des Heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen Erzbischofs von Alexandrien* herausgegeben von Heinrich Gelzer (Freiburg and Leipzig 1893) Cap. XLV, p. 92 line 22–p. 93 line 1.

¹⁵ Gelzer (at n. 14) Cap. I, p. 5 lines 4–7.

¹⁶ The evidence, though slight, is perhaps sufficient to suggest that this was indeed the case. Cf. Allan Chester Johnson and Louis C. West, *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies*. Princeton University Studies in Papyrology 6. (Princeton 1949) 66–72.

¹⁷ Cf. Gelzer (at n. 14) Cap. X, p. 19 lines 6–8; XIII, 28. I; XXVIII, 60. 9–17.

¹⁸ Cf. Gelzer (at n. 14) XI, p. 21. 13–16: an actual legacy of five hundred pounds of gold, XI, p. 22. 15–17, an originally intended legacy of fifteen hundred pounds of gold! Though the story is overlaid by the edifying motif of being rewarded a hundred-fold (cf. Math. 19:29), it seems not unreasonable to infer that the first figure represents a generous legacy from a wealthy person, the second an extremely generous but by no means an impossible one. John the Almsgiver himself, as an act of personal devotion, instituted a patriarchal monastic foundation in Alexandria to be financed by the revenue from lands belonging to the saint in the territory of his home town of Amathos on the island of Cyprus. For which cf. Gelzer (at n. 14) XLII, p. 85. 1–8.

¹⁹ Cf. Gelzer (at n. 14) XVI, p. 34. 20–21.

²⁰ Gelzer (at n. 14) II, 8. 16–9. 5.

²¹ Procopius, *H.A.*, ed. Jakob Haury (with additions and corrections by Gerhard Wirth) (Leipzig 1963) 26, 40–44.

²² The Life of St Theodore of Sykeon reveals cases of severe oppression in rural Galatia during the reign of Phocas with peasants fleeing to St Theodore’s monastery to escape from physical violence at the hands of both tax collectors and landowners. Cf. A.-J. Festugière, *Vie de Théodore Saint de Sykéôn*, Subsidia Hagiographica 48, Brussels 1970 c. 147–148, 151 (= Festugière vol. I, 116–118; 120–121). The Life of St John the Almsgiver tells of the plight of a landowner of presumably moderate means whose crops had failed owing to the failure of the Nile to rise to its usual level. Hard pressed by tax collectors, who demanded immediate payment, he was driven to seek a loan of fifty

pounds of gold. Cf. Gelzer, (at n. 14)) XXX, 62. 13–22. Elsewhere, in the same work (XLI, 82. 20–23) the demons of the Last Judgment are likened to “customs officials and tax collectors,” a particularly revealing touch!

²³ (at n. 5) p. XIII.

²⁴ (at n. 5) XIV.

²⁵ (at n. 5) 124–129.

²⁶ Cf. Gelzer (at n. 14) XVIII, p. 36. 1–9; XXXII, p. 64.

²⁷ (at n. 14) XLII, p. 85. 20–p. 86. 2.

²⁸ (at n. 14) 86. 9–12.

²⁹ (at n. 14) 86. 12–15.

³⁰ Text in Migne, PG 87, 3: 2852 — 3112. For a useful discussion of the background, contents and date of composition of this work, see H. Chadwick, “John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the Sophist,” *JThS*, n.s., 25 (1974) 41–74.

³¹ PG 87, Ch. CLXXXVIII.

³² PG 87, Ch. CLXXXVIII.

³³ PG 87, Ch. XXVI.

³⁴ Kyriakos was a contemporary of John Moschus, cf. PG 87, Ch. XLVI.

³⁵ Cf. for example, how, in Ch. XXXVI, when Ephraem, the patriarch of Antioch, tries to convert a stylite follower of Severus and to persuade him to accept communion, the stylite answers: “I am not going to communicate just like that with the Council (i.e. the Council of Chalcedon).”

³⁶ For a full and useful account see Jan Louis van Dieten, *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I bis Johannes VI*. (Amsterdam 1972) 3–56.

³⁷ As is clear from the excellent and abundantly documented discussion in Périclès — Pierre Joannou, *La législation impériale et la christianisation de l'Empire Romain*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 192 (Rome 1972) 19–38.

³⁸ The Sixth Ecumenical Council appears to have judged matters rather differently, as can be seen from the following: “To Sergius and Honorius anathema! To Makarios and Stephanos and Polychronios anathema! To all heretics who have proclaimed, who proclaim and who intend to teach the doctrine of a single will and a single energy in the incarnate economy of Christ our Lord anathema!” Text in J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Florence and Venice, 1759–98 (repr. Paris, 1901–27) XI, 656. No mention here of Heraclius.

³⁹ Cf. e.g., Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion* (first published in 1902, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1978 with revisions and a critical bibliography by P.M. Fraser) 137; A.N. Stratos, *Tò Βυζάντιον στὸν Ζαιῶνα*, II 733–35; van Dieten 24, n. 82, who recognizes the difficulty in assigning roles, but is in no doubt about what he regards as the essentially political nature of the whole question.

⁴⁰ Cf. van Dieten (at n. 36) 25, n. 83.

⁴¹ PG 91. 333 A 1–6.

⁴² The chronology is disputed, but that proposed by Butler (at n. 39) 498–507, seems the least unsatisfactory and has been followed consistently here.

⁴³ *Theophanis Chronographia, recensuit Carolus de Boor* (Lipsiae 1883) I. 299, lines 14–18.

⁴⁴ Cf. J.D. Frendo. “Who killed Anastasius II?,” *JQR* 72 (1982) 202–04.

⁴⁵ For the date cf. Pernice, *op. cit.*, p. 64, n. 2.

⁴⁶ Pernice, *op. cit.*, p. 74–77. Frend, (at n. 5) 336–39.

⁴⁷ Thus Justinian, despite the fact that in 529 he had ordered all pagans to accept baptism under penalty of confiscation and exile (cf. CJ I.XI.10), agreed under the terms of the treaty of 532 between Byzantium and Iran that freedom of religion for the rest of their lives should be granted to certain Pagan Philosophers, whom Chosroes I had taken under his wing after they fled to his Court following Justinian's legislation. Cf. *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque, recensuit Rudolphus Keydell*. II, 31, 4 / p. 81, lines 15–21.

⁴⁸ Cf. Frend (at n. 5) 341–421. For the date, cf. Butler (at n. 39) 504.

⁴⁹ *Chronicon Paschale*, PG 92.992sq., *Nicephorus*, ed. de Boor (Leipzig 1880) 11. Further references and bibliography in F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, Teil I: 565–1025 (Munich-Berlin 1924) 18.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the ambitions of the see of Constantinople and its growing claims to ascendancy cf. P.J. Pargoire, *L'Église Byzantine de 527 à 847* (Paris 1905) 49–51. For the considerable resentment expressed by Pope Gregory I at the assumption by John the Faster, some time between 588 and 590, of the title “oecumenical patriarch” cf. the short discussion with relevant references in Paul Goubert, S.J., *Byzance avant L'Islam*. Tome Second: Byzance et L'Occident sous les successeurs de Justinien, II Rome, Byzance et Carthage, pp. 136; 145 (Paris 1965).

⁵¹ Nicetas was his adopted brother, as we learn from the text published in 1927 by Père Delehaye from a manuscript in Venice containing material from the earlier, no longer extant, life of John the Almsgiver by John Moschus and Sophronius to which the life by Leontius of Neapolis, which has survived, was intended to serve as a supplement. Cf. Hippolyte Delehaye, “Une vie inédite de Saint Jean l'Aumonier,” *AnalBol* 45 (1927) Ch. 4, p. 21, Line I.

⁵² In the life published by Hippolyte Delehaye we hear of heretical clergy converting and being received back into the fold on condition of their “giving written declarations of their repentance, confessing the teaching of the orthodox faith, accepting the Four Holy Oecumenical Councils and anathematizing all the heresies together with the heresiarchs” (at n. 51, Ch. 5, p. 21 lines 28–32). We are also told (Ch. 6, p. 21 line 34–p. 22 line 13) how large numbers of refugees from Syria, both lay and clerical, were provided for by John the Almsgiver, who even instituted a voluntary levy on the wealthy to meet the cost of providing regular stipends for indigent refugee clergymen according to their rank. Nowhere is it stated that financial assistance was conditional upon some roof of orthodoxy, but the inference is obvious and indeed inescapable. In Chapter 5 (p. 21 lines 8–11) it is stated that on his elevation to the patriarchate he found “only seven churches observing the rites of orthodox worship” and that “by much diligence, he raised that number to seventy.”

⁵³ Cf. Stratos (at n. 39) vol. I, 313.

⁵⁴ *Theophanes* (ed. de Boor) I, 302–03.

⁵⁵ *Life of John the Almsgiver* (ed. Gelzer) Ch. XII, p. 23, lines 3–14.

⁵⁶ For his Chalcedonianism and his leading position in the monothelite movement see V. Grumel, “Recherches sur l'histoire du monothélisme” II, *EO* 27 (1928) 262–65.

⁵⁷ (at n. 56) p. 257. The basic assumptions behind Grumel's thinking go back to Harnack, whose views appear to have determined all thinking on this subject.

⁵⁸ Cf. Salvatore Impellizzeri: *La letteratura bizantina da Costantino agli iconoclasti* (Bari 1965) 201.

⁵⁹ Sebastian Brock, "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor," *AnalBol*, t. 91 (1973) 299–346.

⁶⁰ (at n. 59) 344.

⁶¹ PG 91.232B.

⁶² W.H.C. Frend, however, (at n. 5, p. 318) thinks that "Anastasius was preparing the way for the attempted Monergist compromise of the next century." Though, even so, the question still arises: was Anastasius simply giving away theological ground on his own initiative, or was he drawing attention to an already existing area of agreement, between *some* Chalcedonians and *all* monophysites?

⁶³ George of Pisidia, *Expositio Persica*, I, lines 1–34. Text in A. Pertusi, *Giorgio de Pisidia Poemi*. I. *Penegirici epici*, StPB, 7 (Ettal 1959) 84–85.

⁶⁴ Cf. Frend (at n. 5) 208.

⁶⁵ Mansi (at n. 38) XI. 529 A 10 sqq. For the date, cf. G. Owsepian, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Monothelismus* (Leipzig 1897) 41 and V. Grumel, (at n. 56) 268. Pertusi (at n. 63) (cf. n. 72) 160–61 argues against 622 in favour of 623 on the grounds that Heraclius was nowhere in Armenia during the First Campaign, but that is not borne out by Theophanes (ed. de Boor) p. 306, lines 6–8, for which cf. also the remarks of Stratos, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 353. Moreover, the redating of the lunar eclipse mentioned in George of Pisidia, *Expositio Persic*, III, lines 1–6 from 23 January 623 (hitherto accepted) to 28 July 622 now suggested by N. Oikonomides in "A Chronological Note on the First Persian Campaign of Heraclius," *BMGS* I (1975) 1–9, strengthens still further the case for retaining the date 622.

⁶⁶ For the date, see V. Grumel, "La reposition de la Vraie Croix à Jérusalem par Héraclius. Le jour et l'année." *Polychordia*. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag besorgt von Peter Wirth (Amsterdam 1966) 139–49.

⁶⁷ PG 92.1628, *Contra Severum*, lines 65–76.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 193. "It was in any case the scheme of a visionary to root out sectarian hatred by an edict."

⁶⁹ Cf. George of Pisidia, *Hexaemeron*, lines 1845–53, where the poet exultantly envisages the possibility of world domination for Heraclius, "the saviour of the world," pursuer and rescuer at the same time of Persia, whose emergence as "destroyer of the world of the Persians" has fitted him peculiarly for assuming the position of "lord of the world." Text in PG 92.1575.

⁷⁰ Cf. Butler (at n. 39) 82 sqq.

⁷¹ Mansi (at n. 38) 11, 537–44.

⁷² Cf. Butler (at n. 39) 168–93.

⁷³ With regard to the *Ecthesis* itself, I have no hesitation in accepting Grumel's view (*EO* 29, 1930, pp. 18–19) that its main purpose was to heal the divisions already existing within the Chalcedonian community.