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defining themselves in relation to the larger group. In this sense Ankori may be right in referring to Rabbanites as 'orthodox', and as the 'Mother Synagogue'.²³

We have noted that it is hard to disentangle orthodoxy from orthopraxy: they are intertwined. Throughout the mutual polemic of the various groups, an argument may easily begin with criticism of practice and move on to general condemnation of a belief, or vice versa. Since Judaism, unlike Christianity, had no official creeds (and indeed at this time no unofficial ones either), rifts between different groups could not be defined in relation to a systematic body of beliefs; rather, issues of belief tended to be raised in an *ad hoc* fashion in relation to specific groups, as for instance the issue of the divine authority of the Oral Law in Rabbanite polemic against Karaites. Precisely because of the uncoded nature of Jewish belief, as against the highly codified nature of Jewish practice, it was more usual to focus on differences of practice. The brief comment of Benjamin about the Cypriots is a good example: in calling them Epicureans he is alluding to an issue of faith, but he passes over this quickly to locate the cause of the anathema in an issue of practice.

In comparing Jewish with Christian pluralism we should always bear in mind that the status of a disadvantaged and often threatened minority imposes constraints on divisiveness. Rabbanites and Karaites at any rate reveal a consciousness of the need to present a common front, even if the façade occasionally crumbles sufficiently for either party to invoke the power of the state against the other.²⁴

To return now to the modern model described at the beginning of this essay, it is clear that the case of Byzantium is different. The relative tolerance of pluralism within the Jewish community in no way mimics or reflects the patterns of Christian pluralism. There are various reasons for this. One was mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Another important reason lies in the legal and social status of the Jewish community, which is quite different from that prevailing today. Nor was there a power structure within the Jewish community that could impose an orthodoxy along Christian lines. But the heart of the matter may well be the very different role ascribed to creeds and systematic theology in general in the two religions.

²³ E.g. Ankori, *Karaites*, 41, 293, 377, 399.

²⁴ Ankori, *Karaites*, 37 and n. 29.

The Apostolic Foundation Stone: the conception of Orthodoxy in the controversy between Photius of Constantinople and Isaac Surnamed Mrút *

Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev

The Arab expansion into the Byzantine east, reaching its limits towards the end of the 660s, cut off from the empire not only the predominantly 'monophysite' regions, but also the intellectual centres which for four centuries had generated the reflection on the person of Christ, along with the Christological controversies. The sixth œcumenical Council of 680–81 – at which the 'monophysite' communities now subjugated to the Muslim rule were not even considered – was to put an end to the era of Christological debate in Byzantium. The doctrinal debates that took place in the geographically reduced empire of the following period were to change their pattern. Later Byzantine religious thought, while resting on the acquisitions of the first six councils, had as its point of departure either liturgical rites and objects, or church discipline, or else ascetical practices. Yet each time the empire sought contacts with the east, its attempts towards church reunion inevitably took the form of Christological debates, which may seem anachronistic in the new intellectual context of Byzantium.

Was there any difference in the shape of these later Christological debates from those of the fifth–sixth centuries? The epistolary exchange between Photius and Isaac Mrút gives us a chance to examine how the Byzantine and Armenian churchmen approached each other more than two centuries after the Arab conquest. It also allows us to investigate how

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the Byzantines articulated their doctrinal positions in the period following the Triumph of Orthodoxy (843), that is in the context of the search for a new theological synthesis. As for Christological language of Photius and Isaac Mřut specifically, its analysis will enable us to check the authenticity of the 'Letter to Catholicos Zachary' ascribed to Photius.

Our scope is therefore to analyse the specificity of each one's conception of orthodoxy, to elucidate its origins and to show in what political circumstances the Armenians shaped their singular understanding of orthodoxy. We shall also inquire into the impact of this conception upon the later Armenian church history.

I. According to Vardan of Ganjak (c. 1200–71), who drew on the chronicle of Šapuh Bagratuni, a contemporary of the events he described, Isaac (Sahak) Mřut was a mid ninth-century Armenian bishop of Ašunk¹ in southern Tayk', whence the persecutions against the monophysites caused him to take refuge further east.² Isaac thus found a shelter in Širak where, by the beginning of the 860s, the Armenian Bagratid prince Ašot the Great (820?–890) had restored an Armenian principality with Širakawan³ as its capital.⁴

For centuries Tayk' had constituted a frontier region between the lands inhabited by the Armenians and Georgians. Devastated during the eighth century by the Arab–Byzantine war, it was gradually resettled by the Georgian Bagratid princes from K'lardjeti, its northerly neighbour. Under the patronage of the *curopalatai* Ašot' I the Great (813–26) and his son Bagrat' I (830–76), and, thanks notably to the activity of Gregory the abbot of Xancta (759–861), a monastic revival took place in these two regions.⁵ The settlements began in the north of Tayk', where the Georgian population was predominant, and thence proceeded towards the predominantly Armenian-populated south and south-west of the province. A number of monasteries that had been abandoned by Armenians during the previous century, were reconstructed under Georgian patronage; moreover, many new houses were founded. The new

¹ Near Lake Tortum.

² Vardan Vardapet, *Hawak' umn patmut' ean* [Collection of Histories] (Venice, 1862), 85.

³ Near the confluence of the Axurean and the Kars rivers.

⁴ Step'anos Asolik, *Patmut' iwn tiezerakan* [Universal History] (St Petersburg, 1885), 110; Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i, *Patmut' iwn hayoc'* [Armenian History] (Tiflis, 1912), 136, 140; K. Maksoudian, 'The Chalcedonian Issue and the Early Bagratids: the Council of Širakawan', *REArm* 21 (1988–1989), 335–40; N. Garsoian, 'The independent kingdoms of mediaeval Armenia', in R. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times* 1 (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), 146–49.

⁵ C. Toumanoff, 'The Bagratids of Iberia from the eighth to the eleventh century', *Le Muséon* 64 (1961), 8–14; B. Martin-Hisard, 'Moines et monastères géorgiens du IXe siècle: la *Vie de saint Grigol de Xancta*', *REB* 59 (2001), 5–6.

cenobia became centres of literary activity and also of anti-monophysite propaganda.

Gregory's *Life* was composed around 950–1 by George Merčule, a monk in the monastery of Xancta, who was acquainted with the disciples of its famous abbot. This text reveals the attitude adopted by the Georgian hierarchy towards the non-orthodox. According to the *Life*, Gregory urged the second baptism of all tainted with heresy; he excluded any social contact with them; he maintained that it was better to die unbaptized than to be baptized by heretics, and that such were unworthy of the name of Christians and were destined to eternal fire.⁶ The work of the Georgian bishop of T'beti, Stephen, dated c. 914–8, shows that 'heretics' (*mc'valebeli*) in the context of K'lardjeti and Tayk' meant precisely Armenian monophysites. Stephen's polemics against Armenians are even more virulent than those of George; for him, Armenians are more perfidious than Muslims.⁷

In the light of these two Georgian sources, Vardan of Ganjak's notice on the persecution suffered by Isaac means that by the end of the 870s the Georgian Bagratids had already affirmed their control over the region of Ašunk', and that the Georgian hierarchy had succeeded there in imposing Chalcedonian belief.⁸ Later Armenian historiography preserved the epithet attached to Isaac in his native country, but probably lost its pejorative meaning: Isaac had been surnamed *Mrudi* – 'pervert' or 'impious' in Georgian – because of his persistence in the Armenian 'heresy'.⁹

When Isaac approached Ašot of Širakawan, the latter drew him into the Byzantino–Armenian controversy that had been rekindled at the initiative of Patriarch Photius of Constantinople. Here we shall examine the two letters exchanged between Photius and Isaac.¹⁰ Besides Isaac's response to Photius, the authenticity of which will be shown below, two

⁶ *Vie de saint Grigol*, *REB* 59 (2001), 84–85.

⁷ Martin-Hisard, 'Brebis, boucs/loups et chiens: une hagiographie géorgienne anti-arménienne du début du Xe siècle', *REArm* 23 (1992), 222–29, 209, 217–19.

⁸ For the dating of Isaac's activity, see p. 188–9, below.

⁹ 'Mřut' in the local dialect, which belongs to the Western group of Armenian, probably sounded like [Mřud], with its sonorous occlusive.

¹⁰ 'Patčēn ř'it'oyñ meci hayrapetin Konstandinupolsi P'otay ař Ašot Išxanac' išxan' [Duplicate of the Letter of the Great Patriarch of Constantinople Photius to Prince of Princes Ašot], in *Handēs Amsawreay* 82 (1968), 439–50; 'Patasxani ř'it'oyñ P'otay greal Sahakay vardapeti hramanaw Ašotay Išxanac' išxani hayoc'' [Response to the Letter of Photius written by the Armenian Vardapet Sahak at the Order of Ašot the Prince of Princes of Armenia], in *Handēs*, 451–72.

other documents may be ascribed to the bishop of Ašunk'.¹¹ These three edited texts represent apologetic treatises in defence of the monophysite confession of faith. A fourth text attributed to Isaac, preserved in a manuscript of 1682 and yet unedited, represents a defence of the Armenian sacrificial rite, the *matal*.¹²

II. Photius had already commenced negotiations with the Armenians during his first patriarchate (858–67), when, in 862, he sent an emissary to the Armenian catholicos Zachary of Zagk' (855–76). The patriarch sought, in the context of his conflict with Rome, which had developed since 860, to defy Roman claims of universal jurisdiction by presenting himself as a promoter of Christian unity. The council convened by Zachary the same year in Širakawan did not achieve the canonical union of the two churches, but it formulated an agreement that allowed for the peaceful co-existence of orthodox and non-Chalcedonians in the Byzantino-Armenian borderlands in Asia Minor. In this way, both the Armenian belief and the Byzantine mission to the Armenians were admitted. At the same time, the Orthodox church was secured against a possible influx of neophytes motivated by non-religious reasons. This settlement, achieved at the climax of the Byzantine general Petronas's advance to the northern Euphrates, was apparently meant to prevent the emigration of Armenians from the territories conquered by the Byzantines and to provide bases for Armeno-Byzantine military collaboration against the Paulician state.¹³

Soon after his return to the patriarchal see in 877, Photius renewed his attempts at gaining Armenians for imperial orthodoxy. Three documents exist that can be dated with certainty to this period: Photius's letter to prince Ašot;¹⁴ Isaac's response composed on Ašot's instructions;¹⁵ and that of Nicetas the Philosopher composed, most probably on behalf of Photius, shortly after the reception of Isaac's letter.¹⁶ Although none of these is preserved in both languages, the numerous exact quotations from Photius's letter by Isaac and of Isaac's letter by Nicetas certify the authenticity of the correspondence.

¹¹ *Bac'ayaytut'iwon čšmarit ullap'ar dawanut'ean Hayastaneayc'* [Demonstration of the True Orthodox Confession of [the Inhabitants] of Armenia] and a fragment of a lost work, in Sahak Mfut, *Bac'ayaytut'iwon*, N. Polarean, ed. (Jerusalem, 1994), 1–100, 100–3.

¹² Ms. 1875, in *Grand Catalogue of St James's Manuscripts* 6 (Jerusalem, 1968), 278; N. Marr, *Soobščenia Imperatorskago Pravoslavnago Palestinskago Obščestva* 14/2 (1903), 12–13.

¹³ Maksoudian, *REArm* (1988–1989), 333–344; I. Dorfmann, 'The Royal Road and the *Via Media* at the Armeno-Syro-Byzantine Council of Širakawan', in M. Stone, ed., *Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 61–79.

¹⁴ 'Duplicate of the Letter of Photius', in *Handês*, 439–50.

¹⁵ 'Response to the Letter of Photius Written by Sahak', in *Handês*, 451–72.

¹⁶ Nicet. Byz., 'Refutatio et eversio ab Armeniae principe missae' (PG 105. 587–666).

Photius's and Isaac's letters are to be found in several manuscripts of the *Book of Letters*, an Armenian collection of official ecclesiastical correspondence relating to doctrinal matters. The existence of this epistolary exchange between Photius and Isaac is certified also by Stephen of Tarôn,¹⁷ who compiled his chronography at the very beginning of the eleventh century, by Kirakos of Ganjak¹⁸ (1200–71) and, indirectly, by Mxit'ar of Ayrivank¹⁹ writing at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.

The internal evidence of these two letters enables us to date the beginning of the correspondence with a high degree of precision. It is the 'Prince of princes Ašot' to whom Photius's letter is addressed, and on behalf of whom Isaac wrote. Nicetas's letter is similarly addressed to Ašot as Prince. This means that the correspondence took place before the latter's coronation in 884–85.²⁰ Photius refers in his letter to his recent return from exile, as well as to his restoration to the patriarchal title and responsibilities. He presents himself as 'Chief of the Bishops of New Rome and œcumenical Patriarch', and Isaac addresses him as 'High Priest [...] and Patriarch, Bishop of the great imperial city of New Rome'. Photius speaks of Rome in a conciliatory tone and, furthermore, allots a special place to the Roman see amongst the other patriarchates, thus acknowledging a certain Roman primacy. He also affirms that Rome accepted the seventh council as œcumenical.²¹

All these details suggest that the letter was written shortly after the Roman council of 879 and the 'Council of 393 bishops', which took place in 879–80 at Constantinople. The former granted conditional recognition to Photius²² and the latter confirmed his canonical restoration. The Roman legates to the Constantinopolitan council for the first time explicitly recognised the œcumenical status of the Seventh Council, which had not hitherto been acknowledged by Rome.²³ This internal evidence of the letter is confirmed by that of the colophon attached to it in the manuscript

¹⁷ Step'anos, *History*, 158.

¹⁸ Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Patmut'iwon hayoc'* [*Armenian History*] (Erevan, 1961), 80.

¹⁹ Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i, *Patmut'iwon hayoc'* [*Armenian History*] (Moscow, 1860), 55.

²⁰ Step'anos, *History*, 110, 136; J. Laurent and M. Canard, rev., *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam* (Lisbon, 1980), 327, 448.

²¹ *Handês*, 441–42, 445–46.

²² J. Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union* (Thessaloniki, 1975), 107–11; J. Boojamra, 'The Photian Synod of 879–880 and the Papal *Commonitorium* (879)', *Byzantine Studies* 9/1 (1982), 5–7.

²³ 'Actiones IV-V', in Mansi 17. 476–96; F. Dvornik, 'The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm', *DOP* 7 (1953), 96; Meijer, *A Successful Council*, 62–67, 104–5, 118–19.

of 1298–9,²⁴ and which dates the reception of this letter to the twentieth year after the investiture of Ašot as Prince of princes, that is between November 881 and October 882. This new undertaking ought to be viewed against the background of the successful military campaigns led by the Byzantine army beyond the Euphrates after the destruction of the Paulician state in 878–9.

III. This epistolary exchange between Photius, now restored to his patriarchal prerogatives, and Isaac provides evidence for the resumption of controversy concerning the *Definition* of Chalcedon, which had been avoided by the council of Sirakawan. The attitude towards the Armenian confession of faith expressed in Photius's letters however differs significantly from those of Gregory of Xancta and Stephen of T'beti. In his treatise 'Against the Heresy of the Theopaschites', addressed to Ašot around 862,²⁵ Photius draws a distinction between those whom he styles as 'disobedient amongst the heretics' (*ἀπειθείς τῶν αἰρετιζόντων*) and those 'despaired of' (*ἀπεγνωσμένοι*), on the one hand, and the Armenians on the other.²⁶ In the letter sent to Ašot about twenty years later, the patriarch declares that 'Armenia is preserved in the sublime grace'; that the Armenians are the 'people of Christ', and that 'they remain aloof from unworthy opinions'. According to Photius, the Armenian church is 'in union with the holy Catholic church in every respect save one', that is the rejection of Chalcedon, which hinders full communion between the two churches. Photius speaks of the Byzantines and Armenians as 'fellow-disciples' of Truth and fellows in preaching the Gospel and in accomplishing Christ's will that his disciples should abide in unity.²⁷

In this appreciation of Armenian belief, Photius develops the position of John of Damascus (+749) who, in his systematic presentation of heresies, points to the rejection of the council of Chalcedon as the only 'error' of the 'monophysites', a group distinguished by him from the 'Eutychians'. John also states precisely: 'In all the rest they [i.e. the monophysites] are orthodox'.²⁸ Because of the dominant impact of John's work of systematisation, his evaluation of 'monophysitism' had become normative in Byzantium.

²⁴ Ms. 431, in *Katalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Bibliothek des Klosters Bzommar 2* (Vienna, 1971), 26; P. Ananean, 'K'ani mə xndrakan harc'er Girk' t'it'oc'i' [Some Problematic Questions concerning the *Book of Letters*], *Bazmavêp* (1985), 263–64.

²⁵ J. Darrouzès, 'Deux lettres inédites de Photius aux Arméniens', *REB* 29 (1971), 138–9, 156.

²⁶ *Photius: Epistulae et amphilochia* 3, B. Laourdas, ed. and L. Westerink (Leipzig, 1985), 5.

²⁷ *Handês*, 443–46.

²⁸ Johan. Damasc., *De haeresibus* (PG 94. 739, 741a).

Gregory of Xancta's concern was to impose a clear confessional identity upon the regions inhabited by populations that had been both ethnically and linguistically mixed,²⁹ to distance his church from the Armenian hierarchy, which were still influential in the region, and to prevent the spreading of the Armenian 'heresy'. By denouncing his neighbours in this way, Gregory meant to proclaim before the Byzantines – who had conferred the title *curopalates* upon the Georgian princes – the orthodoxy of the regions in which the Georgians had gained a foothold. Photius's concern, on the contrary, was to bring the Armenians into the bosom of the imperial church; he was therefore inclined to minimize the divergences between Byzantines and Armenians. This is why he did not insist in his letter upon the recognition by the Armenians of the last three œcumenical councils. He must have judged that once the anti-Chalcedonian anathema was removed, the other councils would be accepted automatically.

IV. The terminology describing the union of the natures in the Incarnate Logos stood at the core of the debate between Byzantines and Armenians. Both Photius³⁰ and Nicetas³¹ insist in their letters to the Armenians upon the formula 'in two natures' (*ἐν δύο φύσεων/y-erku bnut'iwns*). Isaac, on the other hand, affirms the union 'from two natures' (*ἐκ δύο φύσεων/y-erkuc' bnut'eanc*).³² He follows the logic of the *Formulary of Reunion* of 433 in its Cyrillian interpretation, and by the 'two natures' he designates the two origins of Christ, without specifically identifying them with the divinity and humanity in which Christ subsists.³³

It can be noted in this respect, that within the linguistic economy of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the designation of origin is sufficient to express consubstantiality. When the Creed speaks of Christ as 'God from God' and as 'light from light', and of the Holy Ghost as 'proceeding from the Father', it affirms the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father. In the same way, when it speaks of Christ as incarnate 'from the Holy Ghost' and 'from the Virgin Mary', it affirms his double consubstantiality. In the framework of the Creed's language the origins, therefore, do not merely designate 'points of departure': the definition of the union 'from two natures', means that Christ cannot be

²⁹ Marr, 'Arkaun, mongol'skoe nazvanie xristian' [Arkaun, a Mongol Appellation of Christians], *Vizantijskij vremennik* 12 (1906), 21–24.

³⁰ *Handês*, 447–48.

³¹ Nicet. Byz., *Refutatio et eversio* 1 (PG 105. 589, 592, 636, 661).

³² *Handês*, 453–58.

³³ The origin, expressed in Greek by the particle *ek* followed by the substantive in the genitive, is rendered in Armenian by the particle *i/y* followed by the ablative case of the substantive.

thought of in discontinuity from them.³⁴ On the contrary, to qualify Christ's divinity and humanity as 'two natures' and to speak of Him as subsisting or known 'in two natures' would mean, for Isaac, effacing their ontological difference and thus erasing reference to the Creed.

Isaac's Christological language enables him to maintain that in all his human manifestations Christ remained One of the Trinity. For him, as for the Armenian divines of the previous century John of Ôjun (†728) and Xosrovik Vardapet (c. †730), the term 'nature' is linked to the identity of subject: 'Christ's nature' or 'his own nature' is divinity, because 'Christ' is the Only 'begotten before all ages'. When Isaac speaks of Christ's divinity and humanity as 'natures', in the plural, he necessarily specifies each: 'Christ has manifested to the world his *paternal* nature united to his *maternal* nature', that is the 'nature' whose subject is God the Father united to the 'nature' whose subject is the *Theotokos*. By differentiating their definitions of Christ's bond to the Father and that to the mother, Isaac and other Armenian divines link their Christological language to the *Theologia prima* of Nicaea and Constantinople I, which first defines Christ as the One 'begotten from the Father' and only later speaks of him as 'Incarnate from the Virgin'.

Unlike Photius's and Nicetas's letters, the 'Letter to Zachary', ascribed to Photius, on several occasions uses the language of the *Formulary of Reunion* of 433 while representing it as the Chalcedonian Definition.³⁵ It is one more indication confirming the judgement of G. Garitte,³⁶ B. Outtier,³⁷ R. Thomson³⁸ and N. Garoïan,³⁹ who reject the Photian authorship of this letter.

V. One of the constant features in Armenian Christological treatises from the *Catechism of Saint Gregory*⁴⁰ (end of the fifth century) and other early texts was the definition of the union of natures in the Incarnation as 'commingling'. The Armenian term *xatn-umn* is the equivalent of

³⁴ A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1 (London: Mowbray, 1975), 467–71; P. Stockmeier, 'Anmerkungen zum 'in' bzw. 'ex duabus naturis' in der Formel von Chalkedon', *Studia Patristica* 18/1 (1985), 214–19; Dorfmann-Lazarev, 'Nature et sujet après Éphèse', *Istina* 46/2 (2001), 142–47.

³⁵ 'T'ult' P'otay patriark'i af Zak'aria kat'olikos Hayoc' mecac' [Letter of Patriarch Photius to Zachary the Patriarch of Greater Armenia], in *Handês*, 93–94, 97–98, 129–30, 139–40.

³⁶ *Narratio de rebus Armeniae* (Leuven: Peeters, 1952), 374–75.

³⁷ *Photius: Epistulae* 3. 11.

³⁸ Thomson, *Chronicle. Vardan Areveltsi* (New York: Caravan Books, 1991), 11.

³⁹ N. Garoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le grande schisme d'Orient*, CSCO 574. Subsidia 100 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 140.

⁴⁰ 'Vardapetut'iwon srboyn Grigori', in *Agat'angelay Patmut'iwon hayoc'* [Agat'angelos, *Armenian History*] (Tiflis, 1909), 134–372.

numerous Greek terms used by Gregory of Nazianzus,⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa⁴² and Nemesius of Emesa.⁴³ These terms derive from the root *μίγνυμι*: *μίξις*, *ἐπιμίξια*, and from the root *κίρνημι*: *κράσις*, *σύγκρασις*, *ἀνάκρασις*, *σύνανάκρασις*. All these terms express the intimate and irreversible character of the union of natures, as well as their interaction in the Incarnate Logos. They are used by these authors side by side with the terms *συνάφεια* (junction), *περιχώρησις* (circumincession), *συμφυία* (mutual coalescence) and *συμπλοκή* (interweaving). Cyril of Alexandria, the chief authority in Christology for the Armenians, while choosing other technical terms for the definition of the incarnation, justifies the traditional patristic use of 'commingling' as an appropriate metaphor.⁴⁴

The specific sense the terms designating the commingling acquire in the patristic thought of the second half of the fourth and the first half of the fifth century is different from the *κράσις* and *μίξις* of the Aristotelian and Stoic traditions. Aristotle defines these two terms as that kind of union which is reversible and in which only the predominant amongst the initial characteristics of the ingredients are preserved.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Gregory of Nazianzus⁴⁶ and Gregory of Nyssa explain that the commingling and mutual coalescence of natures do not cause the loss of the properties of either, and make possible the *communicatio idiomatum* of the two natures. According to the latter, the Logos 'has commingled (*ἀνακιννάμενος*) with our nature [and] he receives, by the means of all the properties of our nature, commingling (*σύνανάκρασις*) with us'.⁴⁷ That is, assuming human nature, God the Son makes his own all its properties; hence he shares human life in communion with other human beings.

Following this lead, Isaac, as well as his elder Syrian contemporary Nonnus of Nisibis (c. 790–865), who was also engaged in anti-Chalcedonian polemics in Syria and in Armenia, affirm that, because of the mutual coalescence of the natures, Scripture may name Christ by both divine and human names, as well as attributing to him human properties as to the true God and divine properties as to a true man.⁴⁸ Isaac affirms that sometimes 'Scripture designates [Christ's] humanity while men-

⁴¹ *Oratio* 38.13, in *Grégoire de Nazianze, discours* 38–41 (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 132–34.

⁴² 'Contra Eunomium' 3.4.64, in *Gregorii Nysseni Contra Eunomium libri* 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 158.

⁴³ Nemes. Emes., *De natura hominis* 3 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987), 42–43; Armenian version: *Nemesiosi p'ilisop'ayi emesac'uoy Yalags bnut'ean marđoy* 3 (Venice, 1889), 56–57.

⁴⁴ Cyril. Alex., *Contra Nestorium* 1.3.3, in *ACO* I.1.6, 22.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *De la génération et de la corruption* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966), 42–43.

⁴⁶ *Epistula* 101.31, in *Grégoire de Nazianze; Lettres théologiques* (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 48.

⁴⁷ *Oratio catechetica* 27, in *Grégoire de Nysse, Discours catéchétique* (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 266.

⁴⁸ *Nanayi asoruoc' vardapeti Meknut'iwon Yovhannu awetararin* [Commentary on the Gospel of John by the Syrian Vardapet Nonnus] 3, (Venice, 1920), 59'.

tioning [his] divinity, and designates [his] divinity while mentioning [his] humanity'.⁴⁹ The result of the union of divinity and humanity is therefore their reciprocal 'transparency' allowing the beholder to observe one and perceive the other; to spell out one and imply the other.

The same terms also express the soteriological effect of the Incarnation: the entire humanity is 'commingled', that is intimately united with the divinity. Cyril follows Clement of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa when he considers the terms *κρᾶσις* and *ἀνάκρασις* on using the analogy of the Eucharist: as the Word of God participates in our humanity through the Incarnation, so we participate in his divinity through eucharistic communion.⁵⁰ In Armenian, the parallel between Incarnation and communion is strengthened because this language knows no distinction between 'body' and 'flesh': the word designating Christ's incarnation (*marmnac'umn*) stems from the word (*marmin*), which also designates Christ's (eucharistic) Body.

In Armenian, the term 'commingling', *xařn-umn*, is opposed to the terms designating 'confusion', *xařn-ak-umn* and *řp'ot'-umn*, which correspond to the Greek *σύγχυσις*, *ἀνάχυσις*, *φυρμός* and *φύρισις*. This distinction between the legitimate terms designating 'commingling' and the illegitimate terms designating 'confusion' has also been upheld in the Syriac tradition. What makes the Armenian case particular, however, is the biblical background of the term 'commingling'. In Armenian, the term *xařnumn* is used in the description of the assembling of the tabernacle of the sanctuary in Exod. 26.1–14.

In the Septuagint version of this passage, words of four different roots are used to describe the way the curtains of the tabernacle are to be coupled one to another, whereas in Armenian words of the same root *xařn-em* are found in every case – altogether six times – thus acquiring a distinctive tone. Here the Armenian text probably depends upon the Syriac version, which also uses words from the same root <*dbk*>, 'to attach, to join'. It is only to Armenian ears, however, that the terms describing the assemblage have direct Christological resonance. On the background of the Armenian discourse describing the commingling of natures can be found, therefore, the assembling of the tabernacle curtains, that is, a *mechanical* assembling of a unit whose constituent elements are integrally maintained.

Gregory of Nyssa⁵¹ and later Cyril of Alexandria⁵² saw in the tabernacle of Exodus the 'figure' (*awrinak* <*τύπος, παράδειγμα*>) of Christ. The latter

⁴⁹ Handês, 469.

⁵⁰ M.-O. Boulnois, 'L'Eucharistie, mystère d'union chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 74/2 (2000), 147–63.

⁵¹ *Life of Moses* 174–75, 183, in Grégoire de Nyse, *De vita Moysis* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 91.

interprets this specific passage of *Exodus* in the Christological sense: the Word of God is like the 'fine spun linen', of which the curtains of the tabernacle are made, in his union with the flesh. The blue linen expresses the heavenly character, the purple the royalty, the scarlet the sacrifice of the Word. Cyril sees a prefiguration of the Incarnation in the assembling of the two sets of curtains to form one tabernacle.⁵³

The Chalcedonian *Definition* introduced antinomical language to protect, on the one hand, against 'confusion' and 'alteration' (seen as an excessive form of union) and, on the other, against 'division' and 'separation' of the two natures (seen as an insufficient form of union). As a result, the term 'commingling' became superfluous and even ambiguous: in the Chalcedonian perspective, this term seemed to orientate Christological discourse in one direction only, namely that of perfecting the union, without at the same time guarding against a blurred fusion of the natures. The acts of Chalcedon therefore assimilated the terms *κρᾶσις* and *σύγχυσις*, rejecting both as implying a corruption of the natures that make up the union.⁵⁴ After Chalcedon, the various terms stemming from the root *κίρνημι* were slowly ousted from Byzantine Christological discourse. John of Damascus forbade the term *ἀνάκρασις*, assimilating it with the terms describing confusion, thus confirming the Chalcedonian prohibition.⁵⁵

In the Armenian context also, the use of the term 'commingling' often became a point of contrast between monophysites and dyophysites. The Georgian catholicos Kyrion (598–609?), who had earlier adopted the Chalcedonian confession of faith, thus withdrawing his church from the Armenian sphere of influence, assimilated the Armenian term 'commingling' with the term 'confusion' in his controversy with the Armenian catholicos Abraham of Ałba'ank' (607–15).⁵⁶ Photius follows John Damascene's lead when, in his 'Against the Heresy of the Theopaschites', he assimilates several times the term *ἀνάκρασις* with 'confusion'. In his later letter to Ařot, he also contests the term 'commingling' (*xařnumn*).

In his Response to Photius, Isaac explains the term 'commingling' as 'unification without confusion'. He justly claims that the terms 'union' and 'commingling' were used by the Fathers as complementary terms:

⁵² Cyril. Alex., *Scholia de incarnatione* (PG 75. 1380–81); *The Armenian Version of Revelation and Cyril of Alexandria's Scholia on the Incarnation* (London, 1907), 105.

⁵³ Cyril. Alex., *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* 9 (PG 68. 636).

⁵⁴ Denzinger §300 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 141.

⁵⁵ Johan. Damasc., *Expositio fidei* 47, 91, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damascos* 12/2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973), 113–14, 213–14; Id., *Contra Jacobitas* 81 (PG 94. 1480).

⁵⁶ Cf. the second 'Patasxani i Kiwriônê ar têt Abraham' [Kyrion's Response to Abraham], in *Girk' l'W'oc'* [Book of Letters] (Jerusalem, 1994), 353.

'Why have the Holy fathers resorted to these two terms, sometimes speaking of "commingling" and sometimes of "unification"?' asks Isaac. He then replies, 'Because the commingling excludes division and the unification excludes destruction'.⁵⁷ Similarly to the Chalcedonian *Definition*, in which two pairs of adverbs guarded against two opposite extremes, here, in Isaac's mind, the two terms, 'commingling' and 'unification', mutually compensate each other, securing against 'division' on the one hand and 'destruction' on the other. The impression is given that Isaac was aware of Chalcedonian concern, and therefore adopted Chalcedonian logic in order to defend and justify the traditional vocabulary of his church.

Isaac proposes the 'commingling' of light with air, of fire with gold, and of soul with body as the images of the 'commingling' of the Logos with humanity. According to him, in each of these cases the ingredients remain 'immutable' and 'inseparable'. These examples are opposed to the 'confusion' of water with wine, and to that of different metals, in which the ingredients are 'dissolved' or 'corrupted'. In this exposition Isaac closely follows Nemesius of Emesa.⁵⁸

The quotations of Isaac's letter in Nicetas the Philosopher's response to Ašot offer us the chance to confirm that ninth century Byzantine theology did not distinguish between 'commingling' and 'confusion': the former is translated as *μιξις*, the latter as *κρᾶσις*, and both are rejected.⁵⁹ The term 'commingling' is also frequently used by Zachary of Jagk'.⁶⁰ The fact that the 'Letter to Zachary' admits the language of 'commingling'⁶¹ is another indication of its non-Photian authorship: most probably, it was composed by a Chalcedonian Armenian from Tarôn.⁶²

VI. To define 'orthodoxy', Photius and Isaac resort to the etymology of this word. For each it is the direct way of passing between two diverging extremes.⁶³ This conception of orthodoxy, common to both the Chalcedonians and 'monophysites', explains also the genesis of Isaac's pejorative sobriquet. The definition of the deviations to the right and to the left thus depends upon the doctrinal point upheld by the author.⁶⁴ For

⁵⁷ *Handês*, 461–64.

⁵⁸ Nemes. Emes., *De natura hominis* 3. 38–44; *Nemesiosi p' ilisop' ayi* 3. 51–57.

⁵⁹ Nicet. Byz., *Refutatio et eversio* 18, 19, 21 (PG 105. 645–48, 651, 656).

⁶⁰ Zak'aria Jagec'i, *Čark' [Sermons]* (Venice, 1995), 4, 16, 22.

⁶¹ *Handês*, 135–36, 141–42.

⁶² Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et Byzantines à l'époque de Photius: Deux débats théologiques après le Triomphe de l'Orthodoxie* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004) (CSCO 609. Subsidia 117), 109–29.

⁶³ *Handês*, 447–48, 453–54, 467–68.

⁶⁴ For an attempt at reconstruction of the 'Royal Road' claimed by Vahan, the speaker at the council of Širakawan, cf. Dorfmann, *Armenians*, 70–71.

Isaac, the direct way of orthodoxy is that of the three œcumenical councils in rejecting three deviations, namely those of Arius, Macedonius and Nestorius. The number 'three' symbolises for Isaac the fullness of the dogmatic tradition of the Church, its sufficiency for the rejection of all heresies, past, present and future.

One of the criteria of orthodoxy to which Photius appeals is the unanimity of the patriarchal sees embodying the universality of orthodoxy. The patriarchal sees represent the 'uttermost parts of the earth' of Acts 1.8, to which the Apostles witnessed their faith. According to Photius, the faith professed by the patriarchs is the 'Rock' on which Christ's 'Church is built', and 'against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail' (Matth. 16.18).⁶⁵ Photius was to confirm this understanding of orthodoxy a year later, in his letter to the Archbishop of Aquileia, dispatched c. 883–4: 'the tradition and teaching of the great high-priestly thrones is valid everywhere'.⁶⁶

This Photian conception of orthodoxy leans upon the conviction expressed by John of Damascus, a figure of immense authority in Byzantium after the Triumph of Orthodoxy. John states that the 'Catholic Church cannot only be "apostolic"'. According to him, the 'Church is "catholic" because the different races, divided and uncivilized, [coming] from all the [parts] of the world and speaking myriads of languages, abide there in one sole faith and [one sole] knowledge of God'. In the Church – claims John – all these races have 'one sole manner of conceiving the most authentic faith'.⁶⁷ Here universality and orthodoxy are intimately bound together: the universality of the teaching is seen as proof of its truth.⁶⁸

To this Photian conception, Isaac opposes his understanding of orthodoxy as faithfulness to the apostolic teaching of Gregory the 'Illuminator'.⁶⁹ We find the same understanding of orthodoxy also in the 'Demonstration of the True Orthodox Confession of [the Inhabitants of] Armenia',⁷⁰ text of the end of the eighth or of the ninth century, probably also belonging to Isaac.⁷¹ The appeal to Gregory's teaching ought to have been a powerful argument allowing to maintain, in dialogue with

⁶⁵ *Handês*, 445–46.

⁶⁶ *Epistula* 291, in *Photius: Epistulae* 3. 141; J. Hergenröther, *Photius, Patriarch von Constantinopel* 3 (Ratisbon, 1869), 335.

⁶⁷ Johan. Damasc., *Adversus iconoclastas* 11 (PG 96. 1357).

⁶⁸ Cf. Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* (PL 50. 640).

⁶⁹ *Handês*, 467–68.

⁷⁰ Sahak Mŕut, *Demonstration of the True Orthodox Confession*, 3–6, 11.

⁷¹ This text is attributed to Isaac Mŕut by its last editor, Norayr Bogharian (Polarean), cf. *Demonstration of the True Orthodox Confession*, b-g, which may be corroborated by J.-P. Mahé's analysis, in 'G. Nedungatt, M. Featherstone, eds, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*', *REArm* 25 (1994–95), 473–74; numerous literal parallels between Isaac's letter to Photius and the *Demonstration* point in the same direction.

Byzantines, the orthodoxy of the church he had established: the rediscovery of the relics of the Illuminator of Armenia in Constantinople several years before the correspondence between Photius and Isaac took place⁷² should therefore be interpreted in the sense of the recognition of the roots of the Armenian church.

The Armenian title *lusaworič'* (Illuminator) is to be traced back to the Greek *φωτισμός*, which implies both Baptism as illumination (*φωτισμός*), and evangelization as – in Isaac's words – Gregory's 'spreading of the light of the knowledge of God'⁷³ in Armenia.⁷⁴ Isaac maintains that St Gregory literally 'built' his definition of faith 'on the apostolic rock' (*šineac' i veray ařak'elakan vimin*). This affirmation has a double reference: one is to the same verse in Matth., and the other is to Ephes. 2.19–21: to Isaac's mind, because of their steadfast attachment to Gregory's teaching, the Armenians are rooted in Christ who is the 'chief cornerstone' of the Church. Therefore – Isaac states – 'heresy could never and nowhere penetrate into this land of the Armenians'.⁷⁵ Because of this attachment, says Isaac, 'we have needed neither teachings [using] new words, nor the councils of all colours convoked here and there, whose innovations in the orders and definitions of the faith established by the power of the Holy Ghost are [well] known to us'.

St Gregory's *Catechism* for Isaac therefore contains the fullness of truth; similarly for Samuel of Kamerdjajor (c. 940–1010) who, a century later (in 986, in his response to Theodore, the Byzantine metropolitan of Melitene, written at the order of Catholicos Xač'ik Aršaruni) was to argue that Gregory's *Catechism* is 'equal to' and 'identical with' the faith of three œcumenical councils.⁷⁶ Gregory's preaching at the beginning of the fourth

⁷² Vardan, *Collection*, 85; Ms. 222, in Mayr *c'uc'ak hayerên jeřagrac'* [*Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mechitarist Library of Venice*] 2 (Venice, 1924), 106; Mss. 184, 47, 96, 51, in *Manuscrits arméniens de la Bibliothèque nationale de France* (Paris: BN, 1998), 416, 593, 621, 658; Mss. 26, 29, in Catholicos Garegin, *Yišatakarak' jeřagrac'* [*The Colophons of Manuscripts*] 1 (Antilias, 1951), 71–72, 79–82; Geworg II Gařnac'i, 'Giwł' nřxarac s. Lusaworč'in', in L. Aliřan, *Hayapatum [Armenian History]* (Venice, 1901), 263–64.

⁷³ The same in *Demonstration*, 3.

⁷⁴ Illumination is used in both senses in the Catechetical instructions (c. 351) of Cyril of Jerusalem. The *Catechism* of Gregory in its final form was influenced by them; cf. R. Thomson, *The Teaching of Saint Gregory* (New Rochelle, 2001), 14–15, 45; F. Gahbauer, 'Der "Leuchter" als Symbol für theologische und geistliche Aussagen der Kirchenväter', *Orthodoxes Forum* 17/1 (2003), 25.

⁷⁵ Similarly in *Demonstration*, 6, 99.

⁷⁶ 'T'ulł' Samuēli Kamrdjajorec'uoy hayoc' p'ilisop'ayi, patasxani t'ł'oyn T'ëodorosi metropoliti Melitinosy, greal hramanaw Xač'ikay hayoc' kat'olikosi', in *Book of Letters*, 552–53.

century had thus contained all that the œcumenical councils were to define throughout the century or more that followed!⁷⁷

Furthermore, according to Isaac, the deviation from truth that occurred at Chalcedon provoked a further series of erroneous ecclesial acts within the Empire. These acts were not empowered by the Holy Ghost, and hence distanced the imperial Church even further from orthodoxy. Isaac takes the prohibition of the council of Ephesus 'to propose, to write down or to compose'⁷⁸ another definition of faith apart from the Symbol of Nicaea *sensu stricto*: in his view, the third council closed the corpus of dogmas.

Thus, on the one hand, Photius maintains a diachronic, collective and spatial understanding of orthodoxy: it is entrusted to the patriarchs whose sees are spread throughout Christendom. These patriarchates perpetuate the orthodox faith across the generations, developing it by means of œcumenical councils.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Isaac affirms the primordial importance of the roots of the Armenian church founded on the 'Apostolic foundation stone'. Both the vicissitudes of the Armenian church, which had had to transfer its patriarchal throne to a safer place on several occasions, and the destiny of Isaac himself, who had been forced to leave his diocese, did not allow him to conceive of orthodoxy in a spatial manner. Both obliged him to depend upon a principle other than that of the unanimity of bishops in different parts of the world, in order to defend the orthodoxy of his church.

Isaac's elder contemporary, Catholicos Zachary, also vindicates the orthodoxy of his church as that of St Gregory's disciples. It should be noticed that Zachary, like Isaac, conceives of St Gregory's importance in an explicitly 'geographical', not an 'ethnic', sense: Gregory is the 'Illuminator of all the Northern countries'.⁸⁰ Hereby Zachary acknowledges the ancient ties uniting all the Caucasian churches.⁸¹ In this, both authors

⁷⁷ R. Thomson remarks that St Gregory represents the 'embodiment of Armenian orthodoxy' in the letters exchanged between Armenian and foreign ecclesiastics beginning from Catholicos John II Gabelean (557/8–574); Thomson, *The Teaching*, 53–61; Id., 'The Defence of Armenian Orthodoxy in Sebeos', in I. Ševčenko, ed. and I. Hutter, *AETOS, Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998), 332.

⁷⁸ Denzinger § 265, 128.

⁷⁹ This conception of orthodoxy is developed by Nicetas Stethatos in his *Discourse Against Armenians* written around 1114; in *Monumenta graeca ad Photium pertinentia*, J.A.G. Hergenröther, ed. (Regensburg, 1869), 153.

⁸⁰ *Handês*, 67–68; Zak'aria, *Sermons*, 286, 341.

⁸¹ I.e., those of Armenia, Albania, Siwnik' and Iberia. This claim had been recognised by the Byzantines: in a letter sent by Nicholas Mystikos to Catholicos John of Draxanakert (897–925/6) around 914, he declared that Armenians, Iberians and Albanians are a part of the spiritual flock of the Armenian catholicos; Yovhannês Draxanakert'i, *Patmut' iwn*, 266;

continue the tradition attested by Vrt'anês the Scholar (*locum tenens* of the catholicosate, 604–7) who, in a letter to the clergy of Albania (Aġuank'), exhorted them to remain faithful to the common confession of faith and upholding the orthodoxy of his church whose 'foundation was laid by Gregory'.⁸² For the Armenian authors, the principles of apostolicity and catholicity thus converge in the figure of St Gregory.

Samuel of Kamærdjajor was to follow the same train of thought in his response to the metropolitan of Melitene. He defined the *Catechism* of St Gregory as the 'pillar and ground of truth' mentioned in 1 Tim. 3.15.⁸³ Isaac and Samuel ought to have been familiar with Photius's interpretation of St Peter from his 'Against the Heresy of the Theopaschites' addressed to Ašot: 'Christ established the Church unshakeably upon the rock of Peter's doctrines and especially of [his] piety' (ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν τῶν δογμάτων Πέτρου, μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς εὐσεβείας, ἀσάλευτον ἐστερέωσε [τὴν ἐκκλησίαν]).⁸⁴ In this definition of Petrine authority, Photius followed Nicephorus of Constantinople (750–829),⁸⁵ but in the context of Photius's controversy with Pope Nicholas I, the statement acquired a new urgency. This understanding of Peter was not accidental to Photius's thought; he reaffirms it in another letter: 'The Lord founded the Church on Peter's confession' (ἐπὶ τῆ αὐτοῦ ὁμολογία).⁸⁶

The Constantinopolitan patriarch thus upheld a doctrinal understanding of Petrine authority, which militated against the identification of St Peter with the bishop of Rome. In a parallel way, Isaac defends the authority of St Gregory, whose teaching is founded on the 'Apostolic foundation stone', against the Byzantine identification of Petrine authority with the pentarchy and, implicitly, against the Byzantine devotion to emperor as *ἰσαπόστολος*, promoter of missions.

Gregory's *Catechism* is incorporated into the Armenian version of Agat'angelos's *Armenian History*, which narrates Gregory's life. The Armenian version of the *History* describes Gregory as 'Christ's confessor' (*xostovanoł*) and as 'Holy martyr'. Catholicos Komitas (611–28)⁸⁷ and, later, Catholicos Zachary⁸⁸ and the *Demonstration's* author⁸⁹ also style Gregory as

'confessor' and 'martyr'. A century after Isaac, Catholicos Xaç'ik Aršaruni (972–91), in his correspondence with the Byzantine metropolitan of Sebastia, was to vindicate Gregory's doctrinal authority as that of 'Christ's confessor'.⁹⁰ Samuel of Kamærdjajor was similarly to affirm, in argument with the metropolitan of Melitene, Gregory's authority as that of 'true martyr and confessor; the apostle and the evangelist of the only-begotten Son, who illumined the inhabitants of Armenia'.⁹¹

Gregory's confession (*xostovanuł' iwn*) is therefore construed in both senses, that of the ὁμολογία, for which he was imprisoned by Tiridates according to Agat'angelos's *History* as had been the apostle Peter by Herod according to Acts 12.3ff, and that of the *Catechism* by which he instructed Armenia in the Christian faith. Armenian authors interpret Gregory's *Catechism* in the context of his life narrated in the *History*. Gregory's imprisonment and preaching, along with his episcopal ordination,⁹² which initiated the apostolic succession in Armenia,⁹³ together all explain the Illuminator as the Armenian 'Peter', or 'Rock'.

In Armenia, then, cut off from imperial Christendom first by dogmatic controversy and later by the Arab invasion, there can thus be seen, in the conception of the true doctrine, the growing importance of martyrdom on the one hand and of autochthonous origins on the other. The attachment to origins can be recognised as one of the characteristic features of later Armenian culture as well. Prince Gregory Magistros (†1058), for example, exalts the virtues of a recent martyr while evoking a whole series of national heroes. He mentions St Gregory's name in a single list along with the mythical ancestors of the Armenians: Aram, Ara and Anušawan from Moses of Xoren's *History*, and also beside the founder of the Armenian kingdom (c. 188–61 BC), Artaxias. He styles him as 'our ancestor Gregory, Illuminator and Parent'.⁹⁴

VII. An example from the later history may illustrate the continuity of the tradition that sees the Illuminator of Armenia as Peter. The main sanctuary celebrating St Gregory in Armenia is the monastery of the Deep Pit (*Xor Virap*) near the ancient capital Artaxata, founded by Artaxias,

Maksoudian, *Yovhannês Draxanakertc'i, History of Armenia* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 19–20; Id., *REArm* (1988–89), 341.

⁸² 'Patasxani hayoc' t'it'oyn aluanic', in *Book of Letters*, 395.

⁸³ *Book of Letters*, 555.

⁸⁴ *Photius: Epistulae* 3. 8.

⁸⁵ Niceph. Const., *Antirrheticus* 1.47 (PG 100. 320).

⁸⁶ *Epistula* 35, Ioannis Chrysocherae, in *Photius: Epistulae* 1 (1983), 87.

⁸⁷ 'T'ult' Komitasay Hayoc' kat'olikosi i Parss' [Letter of the Armenian Catholicos Komitas to Persia], in *Book of Letters*, 412.

⁸⁸ *Handês*, 67–68.

⁸⁹ *Demonstration* 3.

⁹⁰ 'Patasxani t'it'oyn metropolitin Sebastioy greal hramanaw teafn Xaç'kay hayoc' kat'olikosi', in *Book of Letters*, 584.

⁹¹ *Book of Letters*, 552.

⁹² Agat'angelos, *Armenian History*, 420.

⁹³ Cf. also *Demonstration*, 11–12.

⁹⁴ 'Patasxani t'it'oyn teafn Yovhannisi Siwneac' ark'episkoposi yalags Vahramay hawrelbawr iwroy katarman martirosut'eamb' [Response to the Letter of John, Archbishop of Siwnik', Concerning the Martyrdom of His Uncle Vahram], in *Grigor Magistrosi t'it'era* (Alexandropol, 1910), 38.

cultic centre of the hellenistic Armenia.⁹⁵ Although the actual constructions date from the abbot Davit' Virapec'i's time (+1695), the monastery's remoter origins go back to a seventh-century *martyrium*. The complex is built over the deep cave identified by tradition as the pit into which, according to Agat'angelos, St Gregory was thrown by King Tiridates for his refusal to worship the goddess Anahit and his profession of the Christian faith.⁹⁶

The monastery's main church was constructed in the 1660s. Its foundation incorporates the rock containing the 'Deep Pit' together with an ancient chapel built inside.⁹⁷ The rock interrupts the rectangular structure of the building, of which it is an integral part, forming literally its 'corner stone'.⁹⁸ Despite the abrupt and rocky surface of the country, this appears to be a distinctive feature of the Church of the Deep Pit. It seems that the rock, where Gregory had suffered at the hands of Tiridates, was integrated into the church's structure as a constitutive element and intended as the architectural expression of the meaning of St Gregory's person and feat in Armenian tradition.

Our analysis of the epistolary exchange between Photius and Isaac Mřut of 882 shows that the Patriarch of Constantinople defined the status of the Armenian church in accordance with John Damascene's systematization of heresies, whereas he articulated his Christological views in connection with his search for sources of doctrinal authority, a problematic characteristic of the iconoclast and post-iconoclast period. Both authors discussed the contents of orthodoxy in the context of the formal criteria of orthodoxy. While the origins of the Christological controversy between the Byzantines and Armenians go back to the differences between the exegetical schools of Alexandria and Antioch of the fourth–fifth centuries, the divergence between these two groups in their definitions of orthodoxy became particularly conspicuous during the following centuries. The criteria of doctrinal authority were defined in Byzantium and in Armenia in two different ways because of the different place occupied by the church in each of these two countries. In Armenia, which had lost its

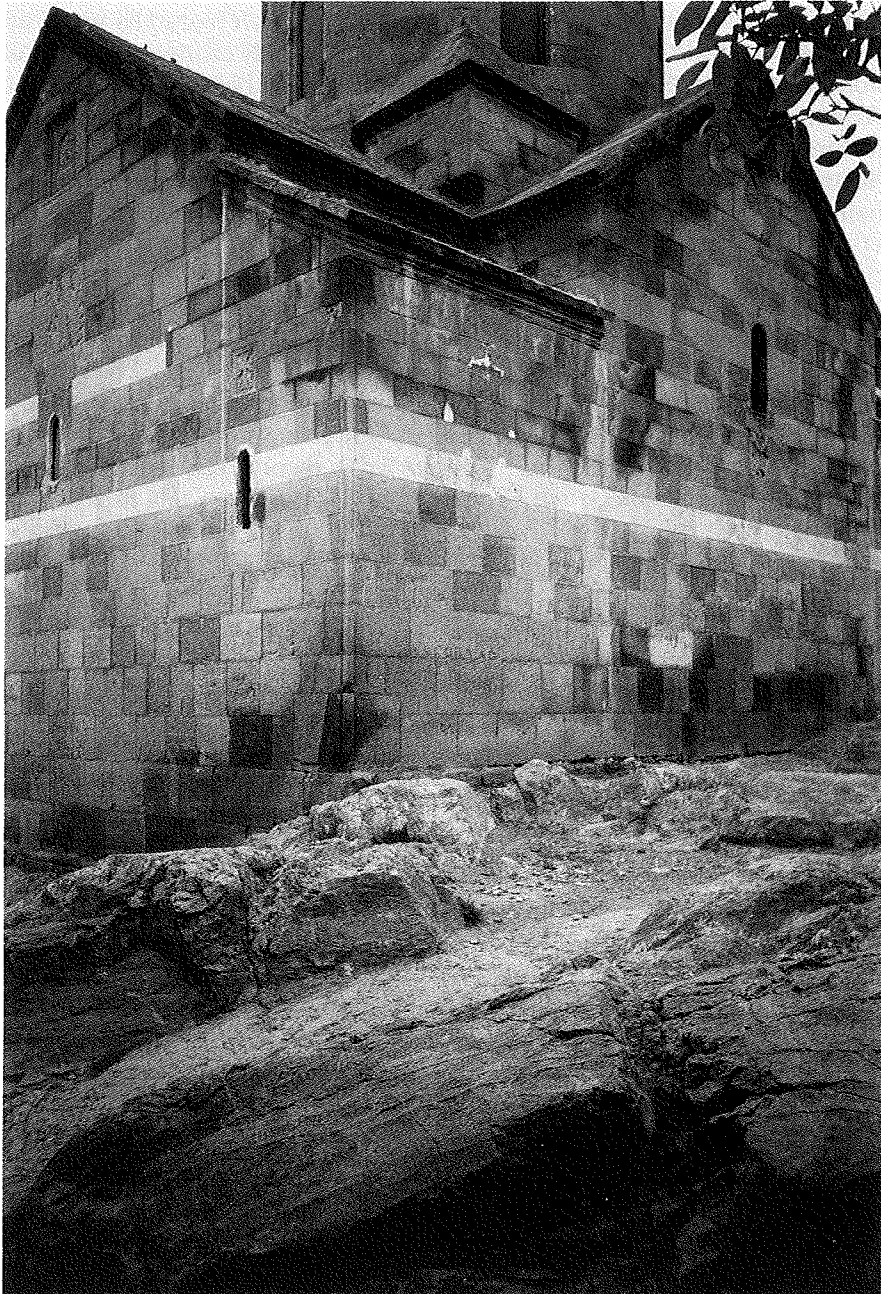
⁹⁵ On Artaxata, see Z. Khachatryan, 'Artaxata, capitale dell'Armenia antica, II s. a.C. – IV s. d.C.' translated and edited by I. Dorfmann, in *Ai piedi dell'Ararat: Artaxata e l'Armenia ellenistico-romana*, A. Invernizzi, ed. (Florence: Le lettere, 1998), 95–158.

⁹⁶ Agat'angelos, *Armenian History*, 30–31, 70–71.

⁹⁷ Zak'aria Agulec'i, *Awragrut'iwon* [Journal] (Yerevan, 1939), 80–82; Aliřan, *Ayrarat* (Venice, 1890), 434–440; S. Ėp'rikean, *Patkerazard bnařxarhik bařaran* [Illustrated Topographic Dictionary] 2 (Venice, 1905), 205–9.

⁹⁸ See the photograph on p. 203, below.

kingdom in the beginning of the fifth century, church hierarchs were, up until the Bagratid restoration in the end of the ninth century, subjects of non-Christian rulers. We have shown that in these conditions the Armenian authors stressed the value of martyrdom and of the attachment to the roots of their church. The examples from later Armenian church history show that the conception of orthodoxy shaped during this almost half-millenary period proved decisive.



Monastery of *Xor Virap* near the ancient Artaxata. View of the main church from the north-east.

The Orthodoxy of the Latins in the twelfth century

Tia M. Kolbaba

In previous research, I have dealt at length with those Greeks who *knew* – to the very depths of their being – that the followers of the pope, the Latins, were heretics. Interesting as it may be, however, the polemical output of these writers is not the whole story. To understand the continuous, plentiful flow of anti-Latin polemic, we must understand that works ‘against the Latins’ were hardly ever intended to convince or to convert Latins. The challenge confronting those who believed that the Latins were heretics and their rituals pollutions was a challenge within their own world – the Greek-speaking, Greek-rite world. As Paul Magdalino has put it, those who worked so hard in the twelfth century to define and guard the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between heresy and orthodoxy, between ‘orthodox’ Greeks and ‘heterodox’ Latins, were setting up barriers ‘across the main thoroughfares, and at the heart of the built-up area, of Byzantine culture. In other words, [the barriers] were going up at precisely those points where insiders and outsiders mingled and were therefore liable to become indistinguishable – points where forbidden zones look very accessible, familiar and safe In general, it can be said the guardians of Orthodoxy repressed tendencies to which they themselves were susceptible.’¹ Among these outsiders who mingled with insiders were the Latins – Christian brothers, fellow adherents of the seven ecumenical councils, fellow readers of the church fathers, fellow heirs to the philosophy of classical and Hellenistic Greece. There was much about them that seemed ‘accessible, familiar and safe’. So the Byzantines who wrote anti-Latin treatises and diatribes were addressing compatriots who believed in the orthodoxy of the Latins. To understand this is to get a fresh perspective on their arguments and the forms and

¹ P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 386–87.

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