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Aspects related to the disputes between the Church of Constantinople and the Non-Chalcedonian Church in the 6th – 7th centuries

Abstract

The Emperor Justinian was aware that the unity of the Empire was not possible to be put in practice if the inhabitants do not confess the same faith. Therefore, he intervened many times in religious and theological matters, trying to solve the appearing problems. This intervention of the imperial authority in the religious matters were not intended to interfere in the work of the Church, which maintained its ultimate decision in the disputed problems. The main theological issue during Justinian reign was the harmonisation of the Christology of the Third

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Ecumenical Council, where Saint Cyril had the most important role, and the Christology of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, with its teaching on the two natures intertwined in the person of Jesus Christ.

Justinian's attempts did not have the awaited effect. From the 4th century, the Monophysite Churches separated from the Orthodox Church and formed independent Monophysite national Churches. Under this form, they developed liberated from the influence and the tradition of the Orthodoxy, continuing their existence outside the borders of the Empire.

Keywords

Justinian, Christology, Chalcedonian, non-Chalcedonian, Church

1   Introduction

The Emperor Justinian I (527-565) was the one that marked the final point in the evolution and completion of the Byzantine theocratic conception. The "Byzantine Symphony"[1] tried by him

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[1]   Justinian's Novel VI to Epiphany, archbishop and Ecumenical Patriarch is recognised as theoretic document of this symphony (17 April 535): "There are two big gifts given by God from above, with His love for the man: priesthood (ἱερωσύνη) and imperial dignity (βασιλεία). The first one serves the divine, while the second administers the human affairs; still, both have the same origin and embelish the human life. Therefore, the priests' dignity should be above all imperial preoccupations, because the priests continually pray for the imperial wellbeing. If the priesthood is free of any guilt and has access to God and if the emperors correctly rule the state, a general harmony will result and anything good will be given to the humans" See the text of this *novellae*, commentaries

thought less of the ontological borders between the laic world and the Church; it was the expression of the fact that the Empire – impersonated in Justinian – did not understood the "ontological independence of the Church" in relation with the laic power and did not made a distinction "between the Roman state tradition and Christianity"[2]. A powerful and original tension is produced. There is not anymore about a relation between two separate institutions or entities disputing supremacy. The Church was already considered a state institution[3]. The conflict appears in the interior of the state and is related to the problem of the two authorities: secular (laic) and spiritual[4]. This is the tradition transmitted by Justinian and which contains the seed of its falling. It will mark the structure and the destiny of the Byzantine Empire: The Roman and Christian emperor (coming from God)[5] leading a state with a protected and supported religion. The religion ontologically belongs to the

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and further reading John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division: the Church, 450-680 AD*, (Crestwood, New York; St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), (208-211) and Alexander Schmemann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, translated by Lydia W. Kesich, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), (151-153).

[2]   John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division: the Church, 450-680 AD*, (145 and 148). More than any other Byzantine emperor, Justinian interpreted his imperial mandate as including theological issues and administrative issues of the Church, cf. Joan Mervyn Hussey, *The Orthodox Church. in the Byzantine Empire*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), (11).

[3]   Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: the Imperial Office of Byzantium*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), (303-304).

[4]   John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division: the Church, 450-680 AD*, p. 151.

[5]   This was Justinian's ideal when he was enthroned (A. A. Vasiliev, *Istoria Imperiului Bizantin*, translation and notes by Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, Vasile-Adrian Carabă, Sebastian-Laurențiu Nazâru, introduction by Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2010), (167).

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state. The faith is acknowledged as truth and used for imperial political purpose[6].

The Christological matters were seen by Justinian as essential for the real spiritual wellbeing of the society. All his measures on this issue were considered direct expressions of the Christian Emperor's responsibility[7]. Little by little, the Neo-Chalcedonism will become the official theology in Byzantium. The Neo-Chalcedonism is generally understood as the political doctrine explicitly intending the closeness between the Oriental Churches rejecting the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon and the Constantinople Church. From a theological point of view, this current involves "a Christology trying to integrate the Christology of the Anathematisms of St. Cyril in the formulas of Chalcedon"[8]. The Neo-Chalcedonism was a mediating theology. The Neo-Chalcedonians were separated in two big currents: the "political", preoccupied to bring together the adepts of Cyril and the Chalcedon, without using a dialectic system, and the "scholastics", believing to possess an elaborate system[9]. There is also the opinion that a Neo-Chalcedonian or Cyrillic-Chalcedonian tradition should be discusses and not a Neo-Chalcedonism as Christological current during Justinian[10].

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[6] Justinian inaugurated the „absolute monarchy", stating that he received from God the prestige and the control on the State, cf. Hélène Ahrweiler, *Ideologia politică a Imperiului Bizantin,* translated by Cristina Jinga, (Bucharest: Corint Publishing House, 2002), (19).

[7] John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division: the Church, 450-680 AD*, (245).

[8] Charles Moeller, Le chalcedonisme et le neo-chalcedonisme en Orient de 451 a la fin du VIᵉ siècle, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, hrsg. von A. Grillmeier und H. Bacht, t. I: *Der Glaube von Chalkedon*, (Würzburg, 1951), (666).

[9] *Ibidem*, (676).

[10] Patrick T. R. Gray brings some significant corrections of the definition elaborated by Charles MOELLER for this theological current. He considers that it is best to discuss a Neo-chalcedonian

Therefore, we should understand the Neo-Chalcedonism as the tradition of the thinkers who, as the followers of St. Cyril and Chalcedonians, interpret the Chalcedon in a fundamental Cyril appropriated manner, thus approaching the issue of the contra-dictory terminology[11]. In the context following the Ephesus and Chalcedon councils, Constantinople will occupy a middle posi-tion and will serve as arbiter between East and West, being determined to "elaborate a theology of conciliation and synthesis"[12].

In 532, Justinian tries to reconcile the two main fractions in the Empire: the Chalcedonians and the Monophisites. An heir of the Roman Caesars, Justinian considered that he had to restore the Roman Empire; in the same time, he wanted to establish a unique law and faith: "A state, a law, a Church" – this was the formula of his policy[13]. To fulfil this plan, he tried to attract various Monophysite fractions in accepting the Chalcedon, because they, ruled by Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicar-

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tradition and not the Neo-chalcedonism as Chrostological current of that age. See The *Defence of Chalcedon in the East (451-553)*, (Leiden: Brill Academics, 1979), (104).

[11] *Ibidem*, (169). A consistent analysis of the concept of Neo-Chalcedonism in relation with the monophysite heresy is made by Karl-Heinz Uthemann, Der Neuchalkedonismus als Vorbereitung des Monotheletismus. Ein Beitrag zum eigentlichen Anliegen des Neuchalkedonismus, *Studia Patristica*, XXIX, 1997, (373-413).

[12] John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creştină răsăriteană*, translated from English by Nicolai Buga, (Bucharest: Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, 1997), (9).

[13] A. A. Vasiliev, *Istoria Imperiului Bizantin*, (178).

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nassus, were an important acting force in the Empire[14], with a considerable part of the population loyal to them not only in Syria, but also in the Asian provinces, and also with some adepts in Constantinople[15], even enjoying the support of the Emperor Theodora[16], one of their fierce supporter.

Part of this plan was the meeting in Constantinople, around the spring of the year, with the participation of the leaders of both fractions, a meeting known under the name of "Colatio cum Severianis". The declared aim was "the reunification of the Churches" after the fights caused by the "Definition of Chalcedon"[17].

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[14] Around the year 530, in the Eastern province of the Empire, dominated by Monophysicists (especially in Syria), a parallel and independent anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy was created. See John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints,* edited and translated by E. W. Brooks, *Patrologia Orientalis*, no. 18, Paris, 1923-1926, (515-516). This fact led to some grave ecclesiological implications in the life of the Church, deepening the schism in it. See W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), (260-261) and John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: the Church, 450-680 AD*, (228-229).

[15] There was even in the imperial palace, a monastic community, protected by the empress Theodora, compounded in majority of anti-Chalcedonian monks. See John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church, 450-680 AD*, (229).

[16] John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church, 450-680 AD*, (222).

[17] Sebastian P. Brock, The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532) *Studies în Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1992), (87). The references to the Nika rebellion show that the written elaboration happened in the spring of the year 532 and the conference took place between March 532-March 533, cf. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, (264), note 2.

To present its point of view, the Monophysite fraction sent to the Emperor a letter containing its Christological position[18]. After praising the emperor and several written prayers for him, the letter continues with a confession of faith: "We confess that the Trinity should be adored, and we recognise the Trinity as holy power. For those honouring the Father and His Unique Son, God the Word, Who was born from Him before all ages and is always With Him without change, and the Holy Ghost coming from the Father and is together with the Father and the Son, we confess that One of the hypostasis in the Holy Trinity, who is God the Word, by the will of the Father was incarnated for the human salvation, from the Holy Ghost and Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, in body, with reason and thinking in the soul, and became man, without changing who was before. Therefore, of one essence with the Father, we confess that his humanity is of one essence with us. The fool Apollinaris, the undevout Mani, and the deceiver Eutychus were accused and the objection against Nestor who diminished the deification and the humanity if Christ, by separating Him in two natures and hypostasis , was repeated in Tomos and Synod. Still, in Chalcedon, the opinion of Nestor, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodoret of Cyrrhus were affirmed and a new confession

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[18]   The text of the letter was preserved in a double presentation: the letter of Inoccentius of Maronia to the priest Toma of Thessaloniki, cf. Zechariah Rhetor, *Historia ecclesiastica*, IX, 15, edited and translated by E. W. Brooks, coll. „Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium" III, (Louvain, 1919), (81-84) and Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, J. B. Chabot (Ed.), vol. II, IX, 22, (Paris, 1899-1905), (204); for the English translation see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, (362-366); for the Syriac part there is a short presentation of the debates published by R. Graffin, F. Nau, in *Patrologia Orientalis* no. 13, (Paris, 1919), (192-196), after a manuscript from the 7th century (British Library Add. 12155). A new presentation of the events can be find in another syriac manuscript *Harvard syr. 22* in the translation of Sebastian P. Brock, The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532), (92-113).

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of faith, different from the one of Nicaea, was approved. Therefore, Chalcedon was not accepted". It is argued the fact that their Christological position is between Apollinaris and Nestor: it does not endanger the humanity of Christ and does not ignore the reality of the unification of the two natures. In the same time, the "Definition of Chalcedon" is rejected and presented as a Diophysite Christology[19].

In this context, Justinian intended to impose this unity in the entire Empire, making it the "cornerstone of his religious policy"[20]. Some of the most frequent reproaches formulated for the Council in 451 were related to the welcoming in the communion the two former friends of Nestor: Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa. For the Monophysites, this was the most important proof that the Council repudiated the faith of Cyril, since both had fought Cyril and his definition was interpreted as Nestorian[21]. An imperial bishop, Theodore Askidas, suggested to the emperor to complete the Chalcedon with a new synodal act. This is how the controversy of the "Three Chapters"[22], mainly aiming to achieve the union with the Eastern Monophysite masses[23].

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[19] The Monophysites used again the formula two hypostases "through two natures" and they thought theu can find in the works of St. Cyril a condemnation of the two natures confessed to Chalcedon, cf. Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, vol. II: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*, Part 4: *The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451* (with Theresia Hainthaler), translated by O. C. Dean Jr, Atlanta: John Knox, 1995, (242).

[20] John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană*, (86).

[21] Ioan G. Coman, Împăratul Justinian, Sinodul V ecumenic şi papalitatea, *Studii Teologice*, II-nd Series, VII *(*1953), no. 5-6 (May-June), (357).

[22] In the language of that time, the "Three Chapters" were represented by Theodorus of Mopsuestia and his works; the writings of Theodore of Cyrrhus attacked the "Anathematisms" of St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus (431), refusing

In this context, Justinian published in 544 an edict accursing each chapter. Theodore and Ibas were not personally attacked, because they were rehabilitated to Chalcedon, but Nestor is accursed[24]. The confession of faith of Justinian already contains 14 anathematisms taken over by the Ecumenical Council V (553), without modifying their sense. By the approval of the Council, Chalcedon was meant to be acquitted by the accusation of Nestorianism (the anathematisms 5, 6, 14), the condemnation of the Nestorianism by the reiterated affirmation of the unity of the subject in the incarnated Word (the anathematisms 2, 3 4 and 5), the formal proclamation of the Teopaschism (the anathematism 10), and the interdiction to oppose to the writings of Cyril against (the anathematism 13). There was also an obstacle: the expression "μία φύσις" cannot and must not be understood in any other way than as synonymous with "μία ὑπόστασις" (the anathematism 8). Cyril is, thus, an Orthodox, so he must be understood in the light of Chalcedon and Chalcedon should not be understood as a disarmament of Cyril[25].

The Ecumenical Council V highlights the entire importance of the hypostatic union of the incarnated Word, supporting, against Apollinarius, that the enhypostasis human nature in the Word is "a body animated by a reasoning soul" and that, as consequence, the humanity of Christ remains fully human. According to Chalcedon, he is fully of the same essence with us in His humanity, but His hypostasis is the divine pre-existent Word. Therefore, the decisions of the council represent "the

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all forms of Teopaschism; the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris of Ardasir about the reconciliation between East and St. Cyril. See also H. M. Diepen, *Les Troi-Chapitres au Concile de Chalcedoine*, Oesternhout, 1953.

[23] John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creştină răsăriteană*, (87).

[24] This reserve proved providential, because, without it, the Antiochian School would have been entirely condemned.

[25] John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creştină răsăriteană*, (91).

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most Cyril related interpretation of the definition of Chalcedon"[26].

Despite the attempts and approaches of Justinian to bring the Christians of the Non-Chalcedonian Church in union with the Church of Constantinople, the desired results did not appear, proving once again that the separation was deeper than the theological and dogmatic issues[27].

2   The Monoenergeticism and the Monothelism of the 7th century

The Monoenergeticism and the Monothelism of the 7th century have a "Diophysite" character: Christ has two natures, divine and human, but a unique will and work, which are divine. This is a "hybrid formula of theological-political compromise between Orthodoxy and Monophysicism, combining the verbal recognition of the Chalcedonian Diophysicism and the doctrine of the Monoenergeticism and Monothelism of the Severian moderate Monophysicism, which was used by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, with the support of the superior Church hierarchy, as a solution for the spiritual reunification of Empire in the fight against the Persians"[28].

The beginnings of the heresy are connected to the name of Theodore of Pharan, who, while visiting Constantinople, had suggested the monoenergetic formula to the patriarch Sergius.

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[26] Ioan Caraza, *Hristologia Sinodului IV Ecumenic de la Calcedon în preocupările teologilor romano-catolici şi protestanţi din vremea noastră şi punctul de vedere ortodox*, Slobozia: Episcopia Sloboziei şi Călăraşilor Publishing House, 2000, (85).

[27] A synthesis and an evaluation of the results of the unionist Church policy of Emperor Justinian is presented by John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division*, (245-250).

[28] Ioan I. Ică, Definiţia hristologică a Sinodului VI Ecumenic şi semnificaţia ei dogmatico-simbolică, *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XXXII (1987), nr. 1 (January-February), (36).

Later, the patriarch, studying the problem, sent to Theodore, through Sergius of Arsinoe, documents – among which there was the famous libel of Mina – to support Theodore's ideas and make him the preacher of the monoenergetic doctrine[29]. The fragments preserved the writings of Theodore of Pharan (preserved in the acts of the Council of Lateran and of the Ecumenical Council VI, where they were presented as proofs for the manifestation of the heresy) present the author as a "Mono-physicist psychologist"[30], even if not presented in this way by the councils. For him, there was only one acting force in Christ, a unique form of action, a unique "ἐνέργεια". All the human expressions of Christ, mentioned by the Gospels, are interpreted so the Logos appears as omnipotent principle, meaning that the body and the spirit of the man, including the reason, are obedient to it. Any initiative and spontaneity are refused to Christ the man[31]. The energy and the will are discernible only as effect but not in the nature of the action, in the importance of the principle and of the determining organ. The metaphysical idea determining these aspects was repre-sented by the fact that the energy is connected to the person. This is the source of the uniqueness of the hypostasis (of the person), the unity and unicity of the action and will[32].

The patriarch Sergius of Constantinople "enjoys" patristic support to occupy the position of founder of the express Monoenergeticism of the 7th century. This also relates to the confession of Saint Maximus the Confessor from the "Dispute with Pyrrhus", the most important and interesting document in

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[29] E. Amann, Theodore de Pharan, A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, É. Amman, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, XV/1 (*Tabaraud-Trincarella*), (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1946), (281).

[30] Joseph Ternus S.J., Das Seelen und Bewusstseinsleben Jesu. Problemgeschichtlich-systematische Untersuchung, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, t. III: *Chalkedon heute*, hrsg. von A. Grillmeier und H. Bacht, Würzburg, 1954, (103).

[31] *Ibidem.*

[32] *Ibidem,* (104).

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the long Monothelite controversy[33]. We observe that, in the presentation made by saint Maximus, the first step giving priority to Theodore of Pharan is missing: it is the moment when he comes to Constantinople and suggests to the patriarch Sergius the possibility and idea to support the monoenergetic heresy. Anyway, as presented above, there is no possibility to exactly and rigorously chronologically delimitate the first stages of the Monoenergeticism. We consider that this inability is not a major impediment for understanding the whole and the main elements in the manifestation of the heresy. The under-standing is more connected to the exterior and fragmentary aspect of the problem. We can say that the enounce of Saint Maximus related to the beginning of the Monoenergeticism contains the necessary sufficiency to understand the later development of the heresy[34]. Together with the advantage of the historical-patristic confession, the variant proposing the patriarch Sergius of Constantinople as "first engine" of the manifestation of the heresy is confirmed by the later stages, when Sergius is omnipresent until his death in 638. He is present also to the elaboration if the symbolic document expressing the Monothelite heresy – the "Ekthesis".

The exact establishment of the beginning of the Monoenerge-ticism had another importance, too, different from the disinterested clarification of the chronology and significance of the historic events. This is the establishment of the party in

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[33] J. Bois, Constantinople (III-ème concile de), A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, É. Amman, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, III (*Clarke-Czepanski*), (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1923), (1264).

[34] This hypothesis was considered as truth by many researchers of the theme and of Saint Maximus' personality. As example, we mention one of the classic history of the Councils, written by C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, III, 1-ère partie, Paris, 1909, (320) and one of the most recent biography of Saint Maximus the Confessor - Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur*, (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1996), (14-15).

which the Monoenergeticism was born and each own's theology: Non-Chalcedonians or Chalcedonians, respectively Neo-Chalcedonians. Related to this issue, as a necessary instrument, there are several attempts, many times with a visible interest, to place Theodore in a party or another[35]. We can say that the origins of the Monoenergeticism are in the Neo-Chalcedonism and in Non-Chalcedonism. The conciliating spirit was at the base of the appearance and development of this false teaching. The Monoenergeticism was an attempt to interpret the Chalcedon in a way acceptable for the Monophysites[36], an explanation and an adaptation of the Chalcedon. More complex and comprising is the definition given by Martin Jugie: „the error of the Chalcedonian and Diophysite Monothelists was the desire to combine the Catholic (Orthodox) terminology transformed in canon by the Council of Chalcedon and the terminology of the Severian Monophysicism related not to the natures,

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[35] E. Amann consider that Theodore of Pharan as a Severian Monophysite; see "Theodore de Pharan, (280-281). The same opinion appears to C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (320). An attempt of placing Theodore of Pharan on the Neo-Chalcedonian side is manifested in its identification with the hieromonk Theodore of Raithu (see Viorel Ioniţă, Sinodul VI Ecumenic şi însemnătatea lui pentru ecumenismul actual (teză de doctorat), *Studii Teologice*, II-nd Series, XXX (1978), no. 5-8 (May-June), (402-403), who was known as a representative of the "scholastic" Neo-Nhalcedonism . See Charles Moeller, Le chalcedonisme et le neo-chalcedonisme en Orient de 451 a la fin du VIᵉ siècle, (685-686).

[36] Alexander Schmemann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, (173). Charles Moeller adhere to this idea in Le chalcedonisme et le neo-chalcedonisme en Orient de 451 a la fin du VIᵉ siècle, (695), affirming as opinion the exclusive Neo-Chalcedonian origin of the Monoenergeticism. Jean-Claude Larchet affirms that the Monoenergeticism and the Monothelism have the origins only in Monophysitism , *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur*, (302). Both heresies originate in the Severian party and not in the Neo-Chalcedonian current as believed by recent researchers.

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but to activities and will"[37]. The Monoenergeticism is the expression of the position occupied by Constantinople after the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. A specific form of this theology was the Neo-Chalcedonism, a middle mediating theology. "On this ground, if there were, among the so-called Monophysites, person empathising with the doctrine of Chalcedon, there were also constant attempts among the Chalcedonians to bring together the two apparently contradictory theologies. This is where we must search for the birth of the Monothelite, respectively Monoenergetic doctrine"[38]. This is the technical formal aspect of the Monoenergeticism. From the point of view of the monoenergetic formula, we can establish its appearance in the dawn of the Christological disputes. The Monoenergeticism of the 7th century received its content from the previous erroneous Christological manifestations, especially from the Severian Monophysicism. Another passive inheritance from the previous heretics was their erroneous terminology, which they tried to adapt to the mystery of the hypostatic union officialised to Chalcedon. Moreover, this terminology used without any type of criticism presented major lacks for the problems and ideas that were to be solved and clarify (the energy and the will). The correspondence between the elements of this terminology and the relations inside the person of Christ they pretend to express was lacking any natural-reasoning philosophical and theological foundation. This aspect will be proved by Saint Maximus the Confessor though his theology that valued these foundations in a coherent and definitive theological synthesis at the maximum human capacity of understanding the mystery of Jesus Christ.

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[37] Martin Jugie, Monothelisme, A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, É. Amman, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, X/2 (*Messe-Mystique*), (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1929), (2313).

[38] Viorel Ioniță, Sinodul VI Ecumenic şi însemnătatea lui pentru ecumenismul actual, (402).

From a theological point of view, the Monoenergeticism was an acknowledgement of the two natures (divine and human) in Jesus Christ, but refused their "expression", their manifestation in an existential manner, therefore trying to "save" the unity of Jesus Christ, a theme separating the Monophisites in the past[39]. Which was the major essential disadvantage of the Mono-energetic system per se, beyond its political-religious implications? We consider that the correct answer to this question is the deficiency in the terminology of the instruments used by the supporters of the Monoenergeticism and Monothe-lism in the approach of the theme of the action and will in Jesus Christ. This answer is confirmed by the theological-philosophi-cal methodology used by Sergius to support his monoenergetic system, a methodology used and defended also by Pyrrhus.

The primordial principle applied by Sergius in the elaboration of the monoenergetic doctrine is the association, which was necessary but false, between contrariety and alterity, the con-vertibility of the two notions in the action of Jesus Christ[40]. The hypothesis of two actions in Christ involves two distinct wills, which will be contradictory in the object. Sergius refers to the intentional aspect of adhesion to an object when he discussed the resisting will and "the two beings willing contradictory things". For Sergius, the alterity of the wills necessarily engages the contrariety in the objects: he supresses the alterity to supress the contradiction.[41]. He applies the Aristotelian

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[39] Alexander Schmemann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, (173).

[40] Marcel Doucet, Est-ce que le monothelisme a fait autant d'illustres victimes? Reflexions sur un ouvrage de F.-M. Lethel, *Science et Esprit*, XXXV/1, 1983, (58).

[41] Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Disputa cu Pyrrhus*, translated from Greek, introduction and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri*-partea a doua: *Scrieri şi epistole hristologice şi duhovniceşti*, coll. *Părinţi şi Scriitori Bisericeşti*, vol. 81, (Bucharest: Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, 1990), (322). We observe that Pyrrhus uses for the support of the Monothelism the same principles used by Sergius to promote the

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principle of contradiction. One object cannot will the positive
and the negative in the same time and in the same relation, it
cannot desire and refuse in the same time and in the same rela-
tion: it will be otherwise torn apart. If the subject is connected
to the object by one desire or by two desires, it does not change
the contradiction. The contrariety exists between the objects of
the two wills and not between the acts of willing as physical
entity.

In the vision of the patriarch Sergius, accepting the hypothesis
of two actions in Jesus Christ will equal the existence of two
will, necessary in contradiction (e.g. when the Word desired the
passion refused by the humanity), and, in the end, the existence
of two contradictory things. The solution proposed by Sergius is
based on the reasoning of the unity of the subject and later
reaches the affirmation of the contradictory wills, ending with
the denial of the expression "two actions". He especially rejects
the two contradictory actions/wills. He avoids, in general, the
number (like the Severian Monophysites) and support the
formula: the action of the Word one. Sergius refuses to acknow-
ledge a will or an impulse (ὁρμή)[42] contradictory to the divine
will. He adds to this negation that the body animated with
reason performed its natural movement only when God the
Word wanted it. The negation and the added affirmation are
Orthodox, but the unformulated implication is not Orthodox:
the total absence of any human will or impulse[43]. Sergius
adopted for the will the conceptual "model" belonging to
Severus of Antiochia[44]. It is obvious that the Monoenergeticism

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Monoenergeticism.

[42] Ὁρμή means elation; it is translated in a moral sense as impulse or
      desire for an aim, ardour, the first step in an action. See A. Bailly,
      Dictionnaire grec-français, (Paris, Ed. Hachette, 2000), (1403).

[43] The Monothelisme will become explicit only through the
      "Ekthesis" from 638. Until then, it will only be implicitly contained
      in the monoenergetic formulas used for the reunification of various
      Monophysites groups from the Empire.

[44] Marcel Doucet, La volonté humaine du Christ, spécialement en son

(Monothelism) was, firstly, a terminological issue from a theological point of view. Its supporters did not possess the adequate language and the necessary terminology to approach the subject: action – natural will, subject – person with gnomic will. The terms they used did not always have a correspondence and the ontological covering in the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ. They insisted on the unity in Jesus Christ but did not authentically perceive the unicity and the specificity of the Person of Jesus Christ. They do not take in consideration the ontological "revolution" brought by the incarnation of the Son of God. Their main dogmatic formulation was based on this type of ignorance. They reserved the name of ἐνέργεια to the initial movement of the agent, to the initiative of action, to the determination of acting in a divine manner and in a human manner. This ἐνέργεια was not called physical, but hypostatic or hegemonic[45]. Therefore, it is unique because there is only one responsible agent in Jesus Christ, having the initiative of any action produced either as God or as man. The Monothelites did not invent anything, outside, perhaps, the hypostatic epithet added to the words ἐνέργεια and θέλημα. They used the Severian Monophysite terminology for the actions and wills of God - man[46]. Surprisingly and paradoxically, the Monoenergeticism was a bridge and a union not only for the Monophysites; this doctrine was possible to use to approach the Nestorians met by the emperor Heraclius I in Persia[47]. Starting as a doctrine with a declared unionist aim, the Monoenergeticism/Monothelitism gained the right to be called the "chameleon heresy by excellence"[48]. The Monoenergeticism/Monothelitism

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agonie. Maxime le Confesseur, interprete de l'Ecriture, *Science et Esprit*, XXXVII/2, 1985, (133).

[45]   Martin Jugie, Monothelisme, (2309).

[46]   *Ibidem,* (2314).

[47]   John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division.* The Nestorians taught that the union between the two natures and hypostases in Jesus Christ is made through the unique activity (ἐνέργεια) of their unique "person of union".

[48]   Martin Jugie, Monothelisme, (2307).

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was the heresy that satisfied the highlights of the unity in Jesus Christ coming and, in the same time, saved the extreme radicalism that affirmed a separation between the two hypostases and the two natures in Jesus Christ. The originality of the doctrine resided in the fact that it was partially of Diophysite origins and partially of Monophysite Severian origins. The Monothelism is, thus, semi-Diophysite and semi-Monophysite[49]. "The object" discussed by the adepts of Monoenergeticism and by the Orthodox was the definition from Chalcedon. They acknowledged the signification of the doctrine and pretended to clarify it[50]. Significantly, the Monoenergeticism has the authority of the hierarchic magistery on its side[51], systematically supporting this heresy. Saint Maximus, the main adversary of the heresy, was a simple monk.

Therefore, we can conclude that the "Monothelite dispute was nothing more than a fight for the cause of the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon. Both parties used the decisions of the Council, but it was to be established whose side was the truth"[52]. Related to the "political aspect" of the Monoenergeticism, we can say that

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[49] *Ibidem*, (2314).

[50] Alexander Schmemann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, (173).

[51] The superior ecclesial hierarchy is the special guarantee for the authentic preservation of the tradition and its healthy valuing. Still, in the Constantinople, during the first half of the 7th century, the Church hierarchy passed through a difficult crisis, which deprived it by its teaching function.

[52] Viorel Ioniță, Sinodul VI Ecumenic și însemnătatea lui pentru ecumenismul actual, (405). Although the definition of Chalcedon was known by all, it remained for the majority "a fruct they cannot extract from its shell". See C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (321). This definition contained the entire Christological reality, including the problem of the wills and actions on Jesus Christ. Its deduction could lead to a fully Orthodox approach (the theology of Saint Sophronius and Saint Maximus the Confessor) or to a heretical interpretation.

this aspect is visible in all stages of the controversy. The political unity was an aim to be reached through religious unity. The general situation of the Empire clearly proved that "the political unity is impossible without moral unity"[53]. The politics speculated the stage of the Christological dogma and tried to give it a specific form and a use to serve the imperial interests: the result was a formula "admitting two natures in the Word made man, to please the Orthodox side, and a singular energy and a unique will, to please the Monophysite side"[54].

3   The first attempts of unification based on the Monoenergetic/ Monothelite formulas

In this context, the first attempt to make peace between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians based on the formula of "a singular energy" is represented by the discussion of the emperor Heraclius I with Pavel Ophtalmos[55], an adept of the Severians from Theodosiopolis (Armenia), in 622, during the campaign against the Persians. We do not know for sure if the patriarch Sergius participated to the discussions[56], but he contributed to this historical moment of the Monothelism

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[53] *Ibidem*, (317-318).

[54] *Ibidem*, (318).

[55] Sergius sent a letter to Pavel – dated by V. Grumel in 622 *(Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constanţinople*, I. *Les actes des patriarches*, fasc. I, *Les regestes de 381 a 715*, Instanbul, Socii Assumptionistae Chalcedonenses, 1932, (114) – desiring to bring him back in the official Church using the Monoenergiticism. He also sent the *libel* of the patriarch Mina to Pope Vergilius and the agreement with Theodore of Pharan, cf. *Disputa Sfântului Maxim cu Pyrhus*, (343-344).

[56] C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (335) presents as a fact the participation of Sergius to the discussion. The "discrete" presence of Sergius to this meeting is also mentioned by John Meyendorff, in *Imperial Unity and Christian Division*, (339).

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through the letter sent to Pavel, intending to attract him to the
Monoenergetic formula – and to the union of the Church. This
event is followed by a decree of the emperor sent to the
Arcadius of Cyprus against Pavel, the leader of the people
without bishops, called Acephali[57].

The next important event in the history of the Monothelism is
the travel of the emperor Heraclius I in the land of Lazica and
his meeting in 62 with the bishop Cyrus of Phasis, who was also
the metropolitan of the province. The emperor gives the decree
against Pavel Ophtalmos to Cyrus to read it and later sends it to
the archbishop Arcadius of Cyprus. The Orthodox doctrine was
exposed in an unreproachable manner, with one exception: it
was forbidden to discuss two actions of Jesus Christ after the
union of the two natures. The bishop Cyrus did not approve this
fragment and appealed to the letter of the Pope Leon explicitly
teaching the unification of the actions. After discussing this
issue, Cyrus also had to read the presentation of Sergius,
supporting the imperial decree and its dogmatic content. In the
end, the emperor ordered Cyrus not to approach for the future
this doctrine aspect, to not contradict it and to ask Sergius for
instructions on the obligation to admit the union of the two
nature in one leading action *(μίαν ἡγουμενικήν ἐνέργειαν).*
Cyrus writes to Sergius related to the matter in order to fulfil
the imperial order, but probably in order to clarify other
theological aspects. Sergius promptly responds during the same

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[57] An ampler presentation of the event is to be found to C. J. Hefele, H.
Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*,
(319-320, 324). The decree of the emperor Heraclius I is doubled
by a report of the patriarch Sergius to Pavel in 623, cf. V. Grumel,
Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constanţinople, I. *Les actes
des patriarches*, fasc. I, *Les regestes de 381 a 715*, (114). The text is
nowadays lost. Sergius inaugurated a practice that became usual in
the relation between the imperial power and the Church hierarchy
in Byzantium during the Monothelite dispute: the strengthening of
the imperial religious decisions (with a political aim) through a
guaranteeing act coming from the Patriarch of Constantinople.

year through a letter written during a Council in Constantinople[58]. Thus, step by step is formed a nucleus of the Monothelites and the religious policy of the emperor Heraclius I began to have a concrete "support"[59].

During the autumn of 631, Cyrus of Phasis was appointed as Patriarch of Alexandria, with the mission to re-establish the religious unity of Egypt through the propagation of Monoener-geticism[60]. On the 3rd of June 633, Cyrus achieved the union of the Theodosians with the imperial Church based on the mono-energetic formula: "All clerics in the party of the Theodosians in the city and all the remarkable citizens, civilians and militaries, and several thousand people united with us on the 3rd of June in the Holy Apostolic Church and participated to the Holy Sacraments celebrated in their entire purity. They decided guided by the grace of God and by the doctrine communicate by the emperors and by Your Sanctity, in the light of [...] This event brought joy not only in Alexandria but also around the city and even in the celestial spirits of the sky"[61]. The union was successful even if only apparently and temporary. It became the "official doctrine of the Empire"[62], the sense of the definitive and total orientation of the imperial religious policy.

The Orthodox reaction to the Monoenergetic unionist attempts manifested before the union in Alexandria. They manifested during the preparation of the union, while the nine anathema-

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[58] C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (336-337) și V. Grumel, *Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constanţinople*, I. *Les actes des patriarches*, fasc. I, *Les regestes de 381 a 715*, (114-115).

[59] Viorel Ioniţă, Sinodul VI Ecumenic şi însemnătatea lui pentru ecumenismul actual, (378).

[60] John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Division*, (345).

[61] First of all, this union had a „*dogmatic support*", specially formulated for this occasion, consisting of 9 anathematisms with a pronounced antinestorian character, cf. C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (340-341).

[62] Alexander Schmemann, *Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, (174).

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tisms were written. Saint Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem was also involved[63]. Being in Alexandria in 633 and finding out about the union, he asked for the union not to take place. This event marks "the beginning of a fight against the new heresy (the Monoenergeticism), the first break through the ingenious political-religious construction of Constantinople"[64]. In this situation, Sophronius goes to Constantinople to ask the Patriarch Sergius to clarify the problem. Sophronius obtained from Sergius the promise to not preach a heresy in Christ in order "not to disturb the peace in the church", but Sophronius breaks the agreement. By approaching the issue of the energy in the *Synodicon* emitted after he becomes the Patriarch of Jerusalem[65].

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[63]   For a presentation of the biography see Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jerusalem – Vie monastique et confession dogmatique*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), (54-72).

[64]   Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jerusalem – Vie monastique et confession dogmatique*, (79).

[65]   The "Synodicon" is "the first Orthodox reaction to the new heresy preached by Sergius" (Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jerusalem – Vie monastique et confession dogmatique*, 100). It has the form of an extended symbol of faith, firstly, it presents the Trinity theology and next the incarnation as consequence of the two natures of Jesus Christ, their work and their cooperation in the unique hypostasis of the Word. The third part of the letter of Saint Sophronius refers to the creation of the world and ends with a long list of heretics. The major argument opposed to the Monoenergetism is that the last one is in contradiction with the tradition of the Church (for the translation of the "Synodicon" see Sfântul Sofronie al Ierusalimului, Dreapta învăţătură despre cele două naturi şi despre cele două voinţe în Persoana Mântuitorului, translated by Nicolae Petrescu, *Mitropolia Olteniei*, XXXVI (1984), no. 1-2 (January-February), (57-65). The problem of the energy or actions of Jesus Christ is also approached in this Christological context. The ontological argument is the one also met to the Cappadocian Fathers in triadology – the fact that the energy belongs as being to the nature.

4   "Ekthesis" and "Typos": The reaction of St. Maximus the Confessor

The imperial response to St. Sophronius' "Synodicon" was the "Ekthesis" (statement of faith) published by the emperor Heraclius I in September-October 638[66]. The author of this imperial edict was the Patriarch Sergius, helped by the Abbot Pyrrhus. The edict has the form of a statement of faith, clarifying the Trinity Orthodox faith, the incarnation (discussed according to the Council of Chalcedon), and the main aim for the publication of this edict. Two main ideas are highlighted in the last part: a) the interdiction of using the expressions μία and δύο ἐνέργειαι; b) the affirmation that is only one will (θέλημα) inside Jesus Christ. The "Ekthesis" became, through its official doctrine acknowledgement, the "carta of the mono-theism"[67], opening the Monothelite phase of the dispute.

Later, Emperor Constans II (641-668) published, in 648, the "Typos", an imperial organic decree, renouncing to the vest-ments of a confession and establishing the free manifestation, favouring the Monothelism or the Diothelism[68]. The cause of the decree were the problems inside the Christianity about the economy or incarnation of the Saviour: some were confessing a unique will and work in Christ, while others were teaching about two wills and two energies. In order to bring peace to this conflict, it was no longer permitted to discuss or debate between the two parties in terms of a unique or two energies and wills. Any debate on the theme was desired to stop. The rule was in the content of the Holy Scriptures and in the traditions of the five ecumenical Councils, as well in the expressions and statements of the Fathers, without eliminating

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[66]   C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (388).

[67]   Martin Jugie, Monothelisme, (2308).

[68]   We used the fragments quoted by C. J. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'apres les documents originaux*, (432-433).

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or adding anything to them and without explaining them in a
detoured manner. The doctrine received before the debate had
to be preserved. It was not allowed to blame someone for lear-
ning about one will and an energy or two will and two energies.
To achieve the unification and reconciliation of the Churches
and to eliminate the pretext for debates, the "Ekthesis"
displayed in the nhartex of the Church Saint Sophia was
abrogated. The "Typos", therefore, condemns the truth to
remain quiet[69]. The "Typos" was composed by the Patriarch
Pavel and represented to an official level the restoration of the
things to their original state before any dispute related to the
energies and wills inside Jesus Christ.

Saint Maximus was the fiercest adversary of all these
theological-political compromises. He dedicated his entire
intelligence, talent, patient, and life to the Diothelism. He can be
called the "theologian of the two wills and two natures of God-
the Man"[70]. Saint Maximus fights the idea of mono-energy and
the Monothelites consequently affirming a unique work or
hypostatic energy in Christ, due to the unity of the person. He
shows that "the work ontologically and primordially belongs to
the nature and only secondly to the person"[71], as its
actualisation. The existence of two natures in Christ has as
consequence the existence of two natural wills[72]. The two
nature in Christ are not opposed to God in any way. The
opposition is not ontological, but to a level of a personal choice.
The opposition is the result of the sin and not of an alterity

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[69] J. Bois, Constantinople (III‑ème concile de), (1264).

[70] Martin Jugie, Monothelisme, (2320).

[71] Ioan I. Ică, Probleme dogmatice în dialogul Sfântului Maxim
Mărturisitorul cu Pyrrhus, *Ortodoxia*, XII (1960), no. 3 (July-
September), (363).

[72] "The Saviour as man had a natural need, imprinted by His divine
will, not opposed to Him. Nothing natural opposes to the will of
God, when the gnomic will (determined as consequence) reflecting
the personal separation, if by nature, is not opposed to Him" (*The
dispute with Pyrrhus*, 203).

between divine and human[73]. In general there is an opposition between the divine will and the human will, but not in the person of Christ. The human will oppose the divine will because, by choosing the sin, the human will deviate from its natural aim, while the human will of Christ preserves its natural character. The human will of Christ is deified.

An important place in the theology of St. Maximus is terminologically occupied by "λόγος τις φύσεως-τρόπος ὑπάρ-ξεως", applied in triadology, anthropology, and Christology[74]. With its help, he managed to offer real solutions to the complex issues in these fields. "Λόγος" is fix, invariable, immutable, unalterable, corresponding to the law of the nature. "Τρόπος" is

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[73] This principle was developed by Saint Maximus in „The dispute with Pyrrhus". He approached in relation with the fall of Adam and in "Answers for Talasie", question 42, in *Filocalia sfintelor nevoinţe ale desăvârşirii*, vol. 3, II-nd Edition, translation, introduction and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae, (Bucharest: Harisma Publishing House, 1994), (158-161).

[74] The analysis of this idea is to be found in many works: Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his refutation of origenism*, (Herder-Romae, 1955), (155-180); Alain Riou, *Le monde et l'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur*, (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1974), (73-103); Jean- Claude Larchet, *Introduction a Saint Maxime le Confesseur, Ambigua*, (Paris: Editions de l'Ancre, 1994), (15-16), Idem, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), (141-151); Lars Thunberg, *Microcosmos and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund, 1965, (96-98); John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creştină răsăriteană*, (142-152). The Cappadocians developed for the first time this issue in triadology, affirming that the nature does not ever exist separated from its hypostasis. The mode of the existence is not a simple bliss of the nature, but the free will to bet, cf. André de Halleux, Personnalisme ou essentialisme trinitaire chez les Peres cappadociens?. *Patrologie et oecuménisme. Recueil d'etudes*, (Leuven, University Press, 1990), (220). Saint Maximus applies the terminological distinction in Christology, on the line already suggested by Saint Dyonisius the Areopagite who affirmed the achievement of the incarnation in a supernatural way.

affected by diversification, variation, modification, and innovation, corresponding to the way the nature manifests, where a principle is applied, the nature works, or the person uses his natural powers or practice their energy[75]. In "Ambigua", Saint Maximus develops these principles and explains the renewal of the human nature through the incarnation of Jesus Christ[76].

Related to the practice of the principle in the Monothelite dispute, Saint Maximus accuses the supporters of "Ekthesis" that they misunderstand the terms and do not respect the ontological distinction between "λόγος" and "τρόπος". He affirms that "they cast shadows and darkened the reason of the work, attributing it to the person as person although it characterizes the nature; they do not attributed to the person the how and where the activity takes place, which shows the difference of those working and those put into work, according or opposed to the nature. Firstly, we know what it is and not who is working for. Firstly, we know the human nature, and later which human, Pavel or Peter, gives form to the work using the free will. Therefore, the difference in being of the persons is made this way. No one is working or reasoning. We all have the same reason and work in nature"[77].

There is a close relation between "τρόπος" and "ὑπόστασις", but the two notions must not be considered identical[78]. The

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[75] Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, (144).

[76] *Ambigua. Tâlcuiri ale unor locuri cu multe şi adânci înţelesuri din Sfinţii Dionisie Areopagitul şi Grigorie Teologul*, XLII, translated from Greek, introduction and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri*-partea întâi, coll. *Părinţi şi Scriitori Bisericeşti*, vol. 80, (Bucharest: Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, 1983), (270-297).

[77] Idem, *Disputa cu Pyrrhus*, Opusculul teologic şi polemic 10, (253).

[78] This identification can be found to J.-M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur. La Charite, avenir divin de l'homme*, (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1976), (166 and 173-174).

hypostasis defines the "τρόπος" and determines the way of existence. "Τρόπος ὑπάρξεως" is the way of existence of a hypostatic nature. F. Brune affirms that "τρόπος-ul does not designates a personal attitude, an "hypostatic mode" characterising the person per se without being present in its nature [...] τρόπος shows a way to be and a way to act. Saint Maximus well observed that it impossible to discuss the person as independent in its nature"[79].

The "τρόπος" always depends on the disposition of a person's willing (γνώμη) and choice (προαιερεσις), expressed in a way of being or a behaviour[80]. The function of the notion of "τρόπος" is, among others, to allow to Maximus to underline a person's possibility to freely determine himself in relation with the "λόγος" of his nature, meaning in relation with the definition and the dynamism of his nature oriented to God, the final aim, and tending to find perfection in Him[81].

By incarnation, the Son of God received the entire human nature, in its natural "λόγος", with its sinful character and affected by death. Still, "His way of being God becomes a way of being in His human nature"[82]. The natures do not change, they maintain all their properties. The energy of each nature

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[79]   Idem, La redemption obez Saint Maxime le Confesseur, *Contacts*, CII, 1978, (147-148). "The ontology of the person" conceived by Saint Maximus is the "most fascinating and original part in his theological synthesis". See also Andrew Louth, Sfântul Maxim, monah şi mărturisitor: actualitatea lui, translated in Romanian by Dan Vesea, *Revista Teologică*, New Series, VII (79), (1997), no. 4 (October-December), (138).

[80]   Sfântul Maxim is analizing the elements and moments of the actualizing the natural will process in *Disputa cu Pyrrhus*, Opusculul teologic şi polemic 1, (176-196).

[81]   Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur*, (148).

[82]   Christoph von Schönborn, *Icoana lui Hristos*, translation anf foreword by Vasile Răducă, (Bucharest, Anastasia Publishing House, 1996), (93). The paradoxical and amazing way of in-humanization is the central point of the theological meditation of Saint Maximus. See *Ibidem*, (95).

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continues to exist after their union. Christ preserves as intact
and integral the reasons of each nature, He act after each of
them, because the human action is not eliminated by the divine
action[83]. Christ humanly acts as man, but in a different way
from all the other men, in accordance with the way of acting of
the eternal Person of the Son[84].

Fighting the Monoenergeticism and the Monothelism, Saint
Maximus underlines the fact that the deification of human
nature in Christ does not mean that the human nature is
deprived of will and action, because the deification does not
involve a mutilation of the nature and allows it to be in its
essence[85]. The theology of Maximus was the main source of
inspiration for the dogmatic decisions of the Ecumenical
Council VI of Constantinople in 680-681. The Council did
nothing else than to dogmatise a teaching already consecrated
by the shedding of the blood.

5   Conclusions

The Christological formula elaborated and officialised by the
Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) represents the
doctrine standard of the Christology of the Christian Churches
from all times. From that moment, the Fathers of the Eastern
and Western Church will relate to it as to a *cornerstone*. The
fundamental teaching of Chalcedon is centred on the following
affirmation: Jesus Christ is a Person with two natures: divine
and human, united, not mixed and unchanged, not divided and
not separated". The hypostasis of the incarnated Logos is the

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[83] Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Disputa cu Pyrrhus*, Opusculul
teologic şi polemic 1, (192-196).
[84] Christoph von Schönborn, *Icoana lui Hristos*, (97).
[85] Jean-Claude Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon Saint Maxime
le Confesseur*, (324-325).

unity factor of the two natures, divine and human; God-The Word is the hypostasis of both natures and the divine nature is attributed human characteristics and work, while the human nature is attributed with divine characteristics and work, since this unique real hypostasis exists and empowers both natures.

Next to this essential aspect, "the dogmatic definition" of the Council of Chalcedon produced a schism in the Church. Due to the betrayal of the Cyril's Christology and to the rehabilitation of the Antiochian Christology, part of the hierarchy from the eastern provinces of the Empire – Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and others – refused to acknowledge these decisions, giving birth over time to the Non-Chalcedonian Churches or the Old oriental Churches. This division was not entirely theological; it was the result of a larger process, including terminological, political, and even national factors. The causes of this reaction can be approached from several points of view; still, beyond these possible interpretations, an awakening and a fight of the old orient against the Hellenism – as Byzantine orthodoxy at that time – can be observed. Under a cultural aspect the rejection of Chalcedon was a "difference in the philosophic culture" of these countries in contact with the Hellenistic culture.

By refusing to accept the doctrine authority of Chalcedon, some Oriental Churches rejected what they considered to be an intervention and an influence of the Emperor of Constantinople on the Council. The promulgation of the decision of a council through an imperial edict was also applied to Chalcedon, meaning that the faith proclaimed by the council had to be the unique faith in the Empire. For a large part of the believers in the important provinces above mentioned, the adoption of a faith rejected by the basileus from the imperial capital was a first step in obtaining the state independence. The Nestorianism and later the Monophysitism were real successive protests and alternatives to the Hellenisation imposed by the authorities from Constantinople. We can say that the two big Christological heresies can be identified with the fight of the Christian from these provinces for preserving their national and religious identity.

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