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The Definition and Practice of Ecclesiastical Oikonomia in Byzantium during the 7th and 8th Centuries

Abstract

The object of our study is the issue of ecclesiastical *oikonomia* in Byzantium during the 7th century and the first two decades of the 8th century. With regard to the enforcement of canons, the Orthodox Church is guided by two fundamental principles: *akribeia* (*accuracy, rigor, strictness*) and *oikonomia* (*exception, absolution, waiver, accommodation*). Byzantine theologians from the 7th and 8th centuries define the concept of *oikonomia* and methodize the teachings thereabout. In their opinion, the practice of ecclesiastical *economy* entails a loosening of the rigor of canonic provisions or even the suspension of the enforcement thereof by the church authority, taking into account the interests of the Church and those of the believers.



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In the opinion of Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (580-607), *oikonomia* is an *accommodation* to the circumstances, for a limited amount of time. According to Saint Anastasios (630-700), ecclesiastical *economy* is defined as an *exception* to the rigor of the law, or a deliberate loosening of the rigor of canons, granted by condescendence. Patriarch John VI of Constantinople (712-715) associates *oikonomia* with the idea of *mental restriction* and *dissimulation* of language. Church authorities have the competence to exercise the right to *economy*. An *economy* is solely valid if established by a bishop and if it does not harm the dogma. However, we cannot have *economy* when it comes to dogmas. The purpose of the enforcement thereof is both the spiritual wellness of the penitent, as well as the salvation of all believers. During the 7th century, the Church enforced *oikonomia* in the context of its conflicts with the Byzantine State. The canons established at the Trullan Council (691-692) regulate the enforcement of *economy* in cult.

Keywords

akribeia, oikonomia, Church, canon, canonic law, Byzantium

1 Introduction

With regard to the enforcement of canons, the Orthodox Church is guided by two fundamental canonic principles: *akribeia*¹ and *oikonomia*². The principle of canonic *akribeia* requires and im-

¹ According to the Greek word *akribeia* – *accuracy, precision, rigor, strictness, severity*, see Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, with a revised supplement, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 55, (s.v. ἀκρίβεια).

² According to the Greek word *oikonomia* – *administration, management, government*, see H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1204 (s.v. οἰκονομέω). In canonic law, the term *oikonomia* has a series of specific meanings – *exception, waiver, exemption, accommodati-*

plies the strict observance and rigorous enforcement of the provisions stipulated by canons. Contrarily, the practice of ecclesiastical *economy* entails a loosening of the rigor of canonic provisions or even the suspension of the enforcement thereof by the church authority, taking into account the interests of the Church and those of the believers.³ The principle of *economy* is based on the fact that according to church law, the provisions and stipulations thereof can be enforced by church authority either with leniency or with harshness, according to circumstances.⁴ Therefore, by employing *economy*, the Church can “sweeten” the severity (*akribeia*) of canonic prescriptions, or even suspend the enforcement of canons for certain believers, only in exceptional circumstances and for substantiated reasons. In other words, *economy* consists in a pastoral attitude of benevolence whose purpose is the adaptation of canonic provisions to the personal circumstances of the penitent or of certain categories of believers. The enforcement of *economy* does not imply or attract the repeal of canons and, implicitly, the in-

on, adjustment – which are certified in the writings of the Church Fathers, starting with the 4th century, see Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 940-943, (s.v. *oikonomia*).

- ³ Arhim. Chesarie, Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă despre iconomia divină și iconomia bisericască* (PhD thesis in theology, 2nd edition), (Mănăstirea Dintr-un lemn – Vâlcea county: 2001), p. XXII, 148, 157-158; see also Gilbert Dagron, Pierre Riché, André Vauchez (ed.), *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, tome IV: *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610-1054)*, (Paris: Desclée, 1993), p. 199, (hereinafter referred to as *Évêques, moines et empereurs*); Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iconomia în Biserica Ortodoxă. Noțiunea și întrebuițarea termenilor exactitate (acrivie, strictete) și iconomie*, *Ortodoxia*, XV, no 1, (1963), pp. 152-186.
- ⁴ Gheorghe Cronț, “Iconomia în dreptul bisericesc ortodox,” *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LV, no. 7-10, (1937), p. 417.

fringement of *akribeia*⁵. Therefore, ecclesiastical *economy* represents a *temporary waiver* from *akribeia*. The ultimate goal of the Church in its enforcement of *akribeia* and *oikonomia* is the same: *the salvation of believers*. In short, ecclesiastical *economy* “expresses the benevolent attitude of church authority with regard to church members who violate its provisions, as well as to Christians who are not part of it, but wish to become members of the *Ecclesia*.”⁶

The issue of ecclesiastical *economy* is a current topic. *Oikonomia* is an efficient instrument that the Church currently uses on a large scale in terms of worship (dealing the Holy Sacraments), in its pastoral and missionary activity, as well as in the ecumenical dialog.

The principle of economy had been applied by church authority even before the notion itself was clearly defined. As early as the 3rd century, the Church was forced by unfavorable circumstances to make a series of concessions with regard to the enforcement of canons, in order to avoid schisms and heresies or even to facilitate the dissemination of the true faith. In order to ease the return of heretics into the Church, its authority had to loosen its disciplinary norms in certain cases and circumstances. Also, the Church performed acts of economy in favor of its own subjects.

The object of our study is the issue of ecclesiastical economy in Byzantium during the 7th century and the first two decades of

⁵ G. Cronț, “Iconomia,” p. 446; Pierre L’Hullier, “Duhul dreptului canonic ortodox,” *Anuarul academic*, New series, VII (XXXII), (2006-2007), p. 14; Ion Bria, *Dicționar de teologie ortodoxă (A-Z)*, 2nd edition, amended and supplemented, (Bucharest: Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1994), pp. 7-8 (s.v. *acrivie*); 199 (s.v. *iconomie*); see also Jérôme Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l’économie ecclésiastique*, (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot S.A. 1971), pp. 13, 182.

⁶ C. Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă*, pp. 146, 148, 163-164.

the 8th century. We wish to discuss matters regarding the definition of the canonic concept of economy, the types of economy, the purpose thereof and the conditions and limitations of its enforcement. We will also present the actual method of enforcement of the principle of economy by the church authority in the context of the conflict between Church and the Byzantine State. Our pursuit is based on the premise that, in Byzantine canonic law, *akribeia* and *oikonomia* are a dynamic couple of canonic principles which are not mutually exclusive. The analysis of the concept of economy implies its relationship with, and therefore a reference to, *akribeia*. Our research is based on the investigation of written evidence (the books comprising the *New Testament*, writings of the Church Fathers, letters and correspondence, collections of canons).

Although numerous studies discuss the issue of ecclesiastical economy, the matter is far from exhausted.⁷ Our study brings a

⁷ Numerous books and articles have been written about the principle of ecclesiastical economy; we listed below only those with a direct connection to the topic of our article: Patriciu Vlaicu, *Canon și libertate. Împărtășirea continuă din experiența Bisericii*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2013); Heinz Ohme, "Oikonomia im monenergetisch-monotheletischen Streit," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* no. 12 (2008), pp. 308-343; Hamilcar S. Alivizatos, *Die Oikonomia: Die Oikonomia nach dem kanonischem Recht der Orthodoxen Kirche*, translated by A. Belliger, (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 1998); Gilbert Dagron, "La règle et l'exception. Analyse de la notion d'économie", in *Religiose Devianz. Untersuchungen zu sozialen, rechtlichen und theologischen Reaktionen auf religiöse Abweichung im westlichen und östlichen Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Simon, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), pp. 1-18; Carolina Cupane, "Appunti per uno studio dell'oikonomia ecclesiastica a Bisanzio," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, no. 38, (1988), pp. 53-73; John H. Erickson, "Oikonomia in Byzantine Canon Law", in: Kenneth Pennington, Robert Somerville (eds.), *Law, Church and Society: Essays in Honor of Stephan Kuttner*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 225-236; Mgr. Pierre Raï, "L'Économie dans le droit canonique byzantin des ori-

few new elements with regard to the perception and enforcement of the principle of ecclesiastical economy by high clerics involved in the conflict between Church and State which starts during the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610-641).

2 Ecclesiastical Economy in the New Testament and according to Church Fathers in the 4th and 5th centuries

In its original sense, the word *oikonomia* means *housekeeping*.⁸ By extension, this term, borrowed from household life, was attributed by profane authors the general meaning of *administration, leadership, government, organization, order, distribution*.⁹ Transposed into spiritual terms, *oikonomia* represents *God's plan* with regard to creation, which comes to fruition by means of the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ¹⁰; thus, *oikonomia* is used in the sense of *divine plan, providence* and especially *Incarnation* by Church Fathers and religious

gines jusqu'au XI^e siècle. Recherches historiques et canoniques", *Istina*, t. 18, vol. 3 (1973), pp. 260-326; Jérôme Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie ecclésiastique*, (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot S.A. 1971); Kamiel Duchatelez, "La notion d'économie et ses richesses théologiques", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, vol. 92, no. 3, (1970), pp. 267-292; Gheorghe Cronț, "Iconomia în dreptul bisericesc ortodox," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LV, no. 7-10, (1937), pp. 417-448.

⁸ H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1204, (s.v. *oikonomeo*); cf. Alexandre Bailly, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, rédigé avec le concours de E. Egger, édition revue par L. Séchan et P. Chantraine, (Paris: Hachette, 1963), 1357 (s.v. *oikonomia*). The word *oikonomia* derives from the verb *oikonomēiv*, in its turn comprised of the noun *oikos* (*home, house, belonging to the household*) and the verb *veμeiv* (*to distribute, share, manage, lead*).

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 1204, (s.v. *oikonomia*).

¹⁰ See Eph. 1, 3-10; 3, 2; 3, 9.

writers.¹¹ The act of Incarnation consists in the *condescendence* (*sugkatabasis*) of Christ, who, in order to redeem mankind, came to Earth as a mere mortal. The *economy of the Incarnation* proved to be necessary, as mankind was slipping further and further into evil, too weak to follow the rigorous Divine Law. This *economy* – in the sense of act of divine providence – is an adaptation to the weakness of men, thus characterized by *good will* and *accommodation*;¹² with these specific meanings, *oikonomia* is used in church law, where it is associated with notions such as *moderation*, *exemption*, *equity* (*epieikeia*) or even *amnesty*.

The New Testament provides an example which has now become a classic and which sheds light on *economy*. After stating before the Galatians that “if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all”¹³, Apostle Paul performs the circumcision of his disciple Timothy in Lystra “because of the Jews that were in those places.”¹⁴ Saint Paul circumcises Timothy, although he had stated that circumcision is useless. In other words, Paul *accommodates* the expectations and requirements of the Jewish population in order to attract them to the true faith¹⁵.

¹¹ G. Cronț, “Iconomia,” p. 420 and n. 8; for instance, Saint Cyril of Alexandria refers to the *incarnation of the Savior* using the phrase *the mystery of the Incarnation*, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *Explicatio duodecim capitum Ephesis pronuntiata*, 3 in “Patrologia Graeca; Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca”, 76, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, (Paris: 1863), col. 300, (hereinafter abbreviated as PG).

¹² G. Dagrón, “La règle et l’exception,” p. 3; P. Raï, “L’économie,” 262; K. Duchatelez, o.praem., “La «condescendance» divine et l’histoire de salut,” *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 95/6, (1973), pp. 597-598, 599.

¹³ Gal. 5, 2.

¹⁴ Acts 16, 1-3.

¹⁵ K. Duchatelez, “La notion d’économie,” p. 287.

The Church Fathers recommend practicing both *akribeia* and *economy*; they will enforce both of these canonic principles. Starting with the first half of the 3rd century, the concept of *economy* becomes more and more clearly defined. Origen and Clement of Alexandria already use *oikonomia* with the meaning of *indulgence*, *mental restriction* or *dissimulation*.¹⁶ The same term is used by Saint Basil the Great with the sense of *exception* from the rigor of the law.¹⁷ Likewise, Saint Gregory of Nazianz uses *oikonomia* with the meaning of *exception* from the rigor of the law when talking about the example of Saint Apostle Paul who circumcised Timothy.¹⁸ Saint Cyril of Alexandria (412-444) admits that *oikonomia* is opposed to *akribeia*. In his opinion, *oikonomia* is a momentary *deviation* from the regular norm of the law, taking into account a public goal, but on the condition of never infringing or violating the canons, whose integrity must be saved at any price. Since, according to Saint Cyril, *oikonomia* means an *exception*, it must only be enforced in exceptional circumstances, distinguished by their severity.¹⁹

3 *Oikonomia* according to Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (580-607)

Melkite Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (580/581-607) is the first Christian author who discusses the matter of ecclesiastical economy thoroughly. Eulogius wrote a treatise entitled *On Economy (Peri tes oikonomias)* which, unfortunately, has been

¹⁶ P. Raï, "L'économie," pp. 263-264.

¹⁷ Arhid. Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe. Note și comentarii*, (Sibiu: 1992), pp. 339-340 (canon 1); pp. 374-375 (canon 47).

¹⁸ P. Raï, "L'économie," pp. 263-264; pp. 286-288.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 265-266, 268; K. Duchatelez, "La notion d'économie," p. 289.

lost;²⁰ a summary thereof, however, remains in the work entitled *Bibliotheke*, signed by Patriarch Photios of Constantinople (858-867; 877-886).²¹ Eulogius's treatise is an invective against religious union between two Monophysite sects - Theodosians and Gaianites;²² the two rival heretic groups had united in virtue of the principle of economy, without abandoning their own teachings of faith. Eulogius condemns the religious union between Theodosians and Gaianites, saying that "their union did not accomplish an economy, as they thought, but a betrayal of their entire faith."²³

Eulogius starts from the premise that *economy* is fundamentally incompatible with dogmas. According to him, *economy* is an activity established in relation to something independent of dogma. Often, an economy, even if temporary, is proposed for a small deed, supported by those who should not be supporting it, and maintained for a long time; the Church accepts it as an

²⁰ Saint Theodore the Studite mentions Patriarch Eulogius's treatise *On Economy*, see Sf. Teodor Studitul, *Scrisoarea 49: Fiului Naucratie*, in: *Dreapta credință în scrierile Sfinților Părinți. Sfântul Theodor Studitul, Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur, Sfântul Amfilohie de Iconium*, vol. I, translated from Ancient Greek by Priest Marcel Hanches, (Bucharest: Sophia, 2006), p. 56.

²¹ Photius Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca* (Codex 227), in PG 103, (1860), col. 953-956.

²² The two Monophysite sects - the Theodosians and the Gaianites - were named after their leaders: Theodosius, the Monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria (535-566), and Gaianos, the first Bishop of the Gaianites; see Jean Meyendorff, *Unité de l'Empire et divisions des Chrétiens. L'Église de 450 à 680*, traduction de l'anglais par Françoise Lhoest revue par l'auteur, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1993), p. 245, 276, 294.

²³ Photius Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca*, PG 103, col. 953 B.

implacable mercy in order to restrain the zeal of those who plotted against the truth.²⁴

Patriarch Eulogius distinguishes three types of *economy*. The first type of *economy* consists of

an accommodation of circumstance, which exists for a limited time (*proskairos oikonomia*); it tolerates something that should not be. The goal of this temporary economy is to strengthen piety and temper those who plot against the truth - meaning the true faith - and thus harm the Church. This *economy* can be enforced by bishops in the field of church and worship discipline in general, on the condition that the dogma itself is not harmed²⁵. In order to exemplify this kind of *economy*, Eulogius discusses the example of Apostle Paul who, although having stated that circumcision was useless,²⁶ goes on to circumcise his disciple Timothy in Lystra “because of the Jews in these parts.”²⁷

The second type of economy refers to the manner of phrasing Church dogma. In Eulogius's opinion, this kind of economy consists of the leniency of the Church to replace or even omit contested words or phrases from the statement of the dogma, without affecting its content. In other words, church authority may phrase dogma using different words, on one condition: the

²⁴ *Ibidem*, col. 953 C (244); see also J. Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie*, p. 43.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, col. 953 C; see also G. Dagron, “La règle et l'exception,” p. 4; P. Raï, “L'économie,” 271; J. Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie*, 47; G. Cronț, “Iconomia,” p. 422.

²⁶ Gal. 5, 2.

²⁷ Acts 16, 1-3. Timothy was the son of a Greek man and a believing Jewish woman. Apostle Paul circumcises him because the Jews in Lystra knew Timothy's father was Greek, G. Dagron, “La règle et l'exception,” p. 5, note 14.

content of the dogma's teaching of faith remains intact.²⁸ In order to exemplify this kind of economy, Patriarch Eulogius evokes the example of Saint Athanasius of Alexandria: according to Gregory the Theologian's account, Saint Athanasius would accept words by tying them to things.²⁹ Meaning, he was satisfied with the real, admissible sense. Athanasius would tell his interlocutors: "Grant divinity its true power and we will give you the freedom to use your own terms."³⁰ This is the approach he took in the theological debates with the Latins regarding Trinitarian terminology; he allowed Latins to use the term "*prosoyon*" instead of "*hypostasis*" for the persons of the Holy Trinity because the Latin vocabulary was too poor to distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis*.³¹

The third form of *economy*, according to Eulogius, consists in the permission to keep communion with those who had been condemned by the Church for heresy, on the condition that the dogma is not harmed.³² By this type of economy, Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria (385-412) had remained in communion with bishop Gelasius of Caesarea († 395), although the latter had kept in the diptychs of the Church the name of his Arian predecessor, Eusebius of Caesarea.³³ Also, in virtue of economy, Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria did not break communion with bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428), who had been attributed a series of heterodox teachings with Nestorian inclina-

²⁸ Photius Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca*, PG 103, col. 956 A.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, col. 956 A-B.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, col. 956 B; see also G. Dagron, "La règle et l'exception," p. 5; P. Raï, "L'économie," p. 271; J. Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie*, p. 47; G. Cronț, "Iconomia," p. 422.

³¹ G. Dagron, "La règle et l'exception," p. 5.

³² Photius Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca*, PG 103, col. 956 B.

³³ *Ibidem*, col. 956 B.

tions.³⁴ Also in virtue of economy, the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431) did not cast an anathema on the bishop of Mopsuestia for being a Nestorian heretic in order to prevent the separation of his supporters from the Church.³⁵

4 *Oikonomia* according to Saint Anastasius Sinaita (630-700)

Saint Anastasius Sinaita is one of the more remarkable theological personalities of the 7th century. He was born in Trimuthun, Cyprus, around year 630. Saint Anastasius became a monk, and briefly after, the abbot of Saint Ekaterina monastery on Mount Sinai. His ecclesiastical works include a series of apologetic and polemic writings; one of the latter is the treatise entitled *Hodegos* (“*Guide Along the Right Path*”), directed against acephalous Monophysites.³⁶ According to the latest research, *Hodegos*

³⁴ In Letter LXXII to Bishop Proclus of Constantinople (434-446), Saint Cyril of Alexandria asks the latter not to cast an anathema over bishop Theodor of Mopsuestia, see G. Dagron, “La règle et l’exception,” p. 5 and note 18; see also Photius Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca*, PG 103, col. 956 B-C.

³⁵ P. Raï, “L’économie,” p. 268.

³⁶ Radical Monophysites in Egypt rejected the religious union with the Chalcedonians, provided in the *Henotikon* decree, issued by Emperor Zenon (October 482). They had separated from Monophysite Patriarch Peter Mong of Alexandria, who had accepted the *Henotikon*; for this reason, they were named “*akephaloi*,” meaning “headless” or “acephalous”, see A.A. Vasiliev, *Istoria Imperiului Bizantin*, translation and notes by Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, Vasile-Adrian Carabă, Sebastian-Laurențiu Nazăru, introductory study by Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie, (Iași: Polirom, 2010), p. 143.

was written shortly after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs (641) and before 680-681.³⁷

In *Hodegos*, Saint Anastasius alludes to the principle of economy which he probably evoked often in his theological controversies with the Severine Monophysites in Alexandria.³⁸ Anastasius gives a very succinct and vague definition of economy; in his opinion, “an economy is a voluntary condescendence of a thing of value, for the salvation of some;”³⁹ to Anastasius, “economy happens when something is not treated entirely as it should”⁴⁰. Saint Anastasius presents two examples of economy in relation to Jesus. He evokes Paul’s economy, as shown by his circumcision of Timothy, to attract the Jewish to the true faith; he also mentions the circumcision of Jesus Christ.⁴¹

According to Saint Anastasius, ecclesiastical economy is defined as an *exception* from the rigor of the law, or a deliberate loosening of the rigor of canons, granted by condescendence (*διὰ συγκατάβασιν*). The purpose of the enforcement thereof is both the spiritual wellness of the penitent, as well as the salvation of all believers.⁴²

³⁷ Marcel Richard, “Anastase le Sinaïte, l’Hodegos et le monothélisme,” *Revue des études byzantines*, no. 16, 1958, p. 33, 37; G. Dagron, P. Riché, A. Vauchez (ed.), *Évêques, moines et empereurs*, p. 54.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

³⁹ Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae Dux adversus Acephalos*, PG 89, (Paris: 1865), col. 77 C.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, col. 85 D; see also Raï, “L’économie,” p. 269.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, col. 85 D-88 A; see also K. Duchatelez, “La notion d’économie,” p. 291.

⁴² P. Raï, “L’économie,” p. 270.

5 *Oikonomia* according to Patriarch John VI of Constantinople (712-715)

Patriarch John VI occupied the patriarchal see of Constantinople during the reign of Emperors Philippikos Bardanes (711-713) and Anastasios II (713-715). Even since the beginning of his rule (711), Emperor Philippikos Bardanes encouraged the Monothelite heresy. Patriarch John VI was forced to obey the will of the Emperor; he, therefore, signed the imperial decree which imposed Monothelitism as only doctrine. However, the victory of this heresy only lasted two years. In 713, Philippikos Bardanes was removed from the throne by Anastasios II, who reinstated the true faith.

In these circumstances, Patriarch John VI wrote a letter to Pope Constantine I (708-715) trying to exculpate himself for having accepted the enforcement of Monothelitism. In the same letter, John VI pens a series of ideas about economy. In his opinion, *oikonomia* is the opposite of *akribeia*. The Patriarch starts from the premise that *oikonomia* - at least the one he practiced - "is derived from the virtue of carefulness, which allows a distinction to be made between bad things when good things cannot be prioritized."⁴³ John VI applies this theory in his own reasoning. More precisely, the Patriarch associates *oikonomia* with the idea of *mental restriction* and *dissimulation* of language. In other words, he understands *oikonomia* as a means to mask and hide his own thoughts.⁴⁴

John VI stipulates the conditions in which economy can be practiced. In his opinion, practice of economy is only justified in

⁴³ Joannes, Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Epistola ad Constantinum sanctissimum Papam Romae*, PG 96, (Paris: 1860) col. 1421 A., see also P. Raï, "L'économie," p. 272.

⁴⁴ P. Raï, "L'économie," pp. 272-273.

difficult, grave circumstances and times of constraint;⁴⁵ at the same time, the purpose of enforcing economy must exceed strictly personal interests and be based on superior reasonings.⁴⁶

6 The practice of *economy* in the context of disputes between Church and State

During the 7th century, the Church enforced *oikonomia* in the context of its conflicts with the Byzantine State. The religious agenda of Emperor Heraclius (610-641) contributed to the conflict between Church and state, which reached its peak during the reign of his successor, Constans II (641-668). Heraclius aimed to repair the unity of the Eastern Church by reconciling Chalcedonians and Monophysites, who lived mostly in the Eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire (Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Armenia).

6.1 *Economy* according to Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria

The religious union policy of Emperor Heraclius was fully and unconditionally supported by Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (610-638), who phrased the formulas of dogmatic compromise that helped the king bring Monophysites back into the Imperial Church. Patriarch Sergius came up with the idea of drafting Monoenergism as a formula of bringing together Monophysism and the Chalcedonian Dyophysitism. Monoenergism, although recognizing the existence of two natures in the

⁴⁵ Joannes, Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Epistola ad Constantinum sanctissimum Papam Romae*, PG 96 (Paris: 1860), col. 1421 A, 1428 A.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, col. 1421 A and 1425; see also P. Raï, "L'économie," p. 273.

person of Savior Jesus Christ, admitted that their energy (*energeia*) remained one.⁴⁷

The Patriarch of Constantinople used the Monoenergist doctrine in the religious unification negotiations carried with the Monophysites in Syria and Egypt. The clergy who had transitioned to Monoenergism under Sergius included the Chalcedonian bishop Cyrus of Phasis.⁴⁸ In 630/631, Cyrus was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria by Emperor Heraclius.⁴⁹ Immediately after being appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyrus tried to enforce Constantinople's unionist religious agenda. On June 3, 633, he succeeded to unite Theodosians (the moderate faction of the Egyptian Monophysites) with the Chalcedonian Imperial Church, based on the formula of *one single energy of Christ*. "If someone, (...) does not confess (...) that one and the same Christ and Son performed things befitting God and things human by *one theandric activity*, according to Dionysius [now] among the saints (...) let him be anathema."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Pompiliu Nacu, *Ereziile primelor opt veacuri creștine și dăinuirea lor la începutul mileniului trei*, (Galați: Partener, 2010), p. 270; Vladimir Lossky, *Introducere în teologia ortodoxă*, translated by Lidia and Remus Rus, preface by Priest Professor - Gh. Popescu PhD, (Bucharest: Sophia, 2006), p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul (Saint Maximus the Confessor), *Disputa Sfântului Maxim cu Pyrrhus*, "Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești", [PSB], vol. 81, translated from Greek, introduction and notes by Priest Dumitru Stăniloae, (Bucharest: Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1990), pp. 343-344.

⁴⁹ *Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul (580-662) și tovarășii săi întru martiriu: papa Martin, Anastasie Monahul, Anastasie Apocrisiarul. „Vieți” – actele procesului – documentele exilului*, translated and prefaced by Deacon Ioan I. Ică jr., (Sibiu: Deisis, 2004), 9, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁰ Cyrus, *Pact of union. Nine Articles of Faith* (Document 3: Article of Faith VII), in: Pauline Allen (ed.), *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy. The Synodical Letter and other documents*, Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary by Pauline Allen, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.

In a letter to Pope Honorius - dated at the end of 633 or at the beginning of 634 - Patriarch Sergius notifies the Roman Pontiff of the unification between Theodosians and the Imperial Church, carried out by Patriarch Cyrus. Sergius writes that Cyrus got close to the Monophysites under the pretext of *economy*:

“In particular the most holy pope, already mentioned, adduced for him testimonies from our holy Fathers where they spoke here and there in some of their writings of one activity. Yet Cyrus still superfluously alleged that often, when articles of faith like these made their appearance, our holy Fathers, for the sake of gaining the salvation of more souls, appear to have used God-pleasing accommodations and agreements without undermining the accuracy of the correct teachings of the church. Cyrus asserted that, since in fact at the present time also the salvation of so many myriads of people was at stake, it was imperative not to contend argumentatively at all on the subject of that article of faith because, as was already said, an expression of this kind had also been uttered by certain inspired Fathers, and the principle of orthodoxy had not been harmed by it at all.”⁵¹

170-172; see also Christian Lange, *Mia Energeia. Untersuchungen zur Einigungspolitik des Kaisers Heraclius und des patriarchen Sergius von Constantinopel*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), pp. 575-581; F. X. Murphy, P. Sherwood, *Constantinople II et Constantinople III*, (Paris: Les Éditions d'Orante, 1974), pp. 149-150; Louis Bréhier, René Aigrain, *Histoire de l'Église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. V: *Grégoire le Grand, les États barbares et la conquête arabe (590-757)*, (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1938), p. 118 (hereinafter cited as *Grégoire le Grand*); Charles Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, trad. par Dom. H. Leclercq, Tome III, première partie, (Paris: Éditeurs Letouzey et Ané, 1909), p. 339.

⁵¹ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 186.

The Patriarch of Alexandria talks about the Church Fathers' authority in order to justify the compromise union with heretics. Cyrius claims that the Holy Fathers used *economy* in their discourse; he says that, in those circumstances, a certain "loosening" of the rigor (*akribeia*) was required in the debates regarding the theological formulas concerning the salvation of several thousands of souls.⁵² In the union agreement drawn up in 633, Cyrus uses *economy* to phrase certain ideas. In virtue of *economy*, he attempts to adapt his language to the Monophysite doctrine by using a series of Cyrillian and Severine phrases beloved by the Monophysites. In reality, the *economy* evoked by Patriarch Cyrus to justify the unification between Chalcedonians and the Theodosian Monophysites seems to be a doctrinary compromise. In this case, we are witnessing a false economy. Patriarch Sergius abuses the concept in order to justify the behavior of Patriarch Cyrus, whom he had recruited for his plotting.⁵³

6.2 *Economy according to Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem*

The religious union between the Imperial Church and the Theodosians carried out by Patriarch Cyrus based on Monoenergism, triggered a prompt reaction from Palestinian King Sophronius, who at the time was in Alexandria. He identified the erroneous doctrine hiding behind the Monoenergist formula from the 7th anathema stipulated in the unification agreement.⁵⁴ Sophronius did not hesitate to express his disagreement with *the doctrine about a single energy of Christ*, urging

⁵² Ch. J. Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, vol. III / 1, p. 342.

⁵³ P. Raï, „L'économie,” p. 292.

⁵⁴ Cyrus, *Pact of union. Nine Articles of Faith* (Document 3), Article of Faith VII, trad. Pauline Allen, pp. 170-172.

Cyrus not to publish the unification degree proclaiming Monoenergism;⁵⁵ he rejected categorically the economy invoked by Patriarch Cyrus: "Sophronius, dear to God, whom we have mentioned, would in no way accept such an accommodation."⁵⁶ Sophronius traveled to Constantinople to warn Patriarch Sergius about the erroneous doctrine hiding behind the Monoenergist formula. He asked the Patriarch of Constantinople to eliminate the sentence referring to a single energy into Christ from the unification agreement drawn up by Cyrus⁵⁷. Sophronius insisted on the acknowledgment of *two energies* into Christ and not one, the energy being situated within his natures, and not his person⁵⁸. After a series of heated discussions, Patriarch Sergius reached an understanding with Sophronius; the two agreed that the stress should not be placed on *the action, work, and energy*, but on the *operating subject*, meaning a *single operating subject for both human and divine works into Christ*⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ The letter addressed by Saint Maximus the Confessor to Peter the Illustrious (Maxime le Confesseur, *Lettres*, XIII, introduction par Jean-Claude Larchet, traduction et notes par Emmanuel Ponsoye, coll. Sagesse chrétiennes, [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998], pp. 150-164) and the letter addressed by patriarch Sergius to pope Honorius (Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* [Document 6], translated by Pauline Allen, pp. 186-189) allude to the meeting between Sophronius and Cyrus.

⁵⁶ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 186.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 186-188.

⁵⁸ Johannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XI, Akademische Druck-Verlagsanstalt, Graz, 1960-1961³, col. 481 C; Sophronius, *Epistola Synodica*, 2.3.7., translated by Pauline Allen, p. 96; Bernard Sesboüé, Joseph Wolinski, *Histoire des dogmes. Le Dieu du salut*, vol. I, (Paris: Desclée, 1994), p. 434.

⁵⁹ The discussion between Patriarch Sergius and Saint Sophronius is narrated in Sergius's letter to Honorius, see Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 188; Ch. J. Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, vol. III / 1, p. 343, 345.

These objections of the honorable Palestinian monk were partially retained within the works of the permanent council that Patriarch Sergius summoned in Constantinople in order to conclude the discussion on this topic; in August 633, the Council issued a Dogmatic Decree (*ψῆφος*) whose contents are replicated fully in the letter that the Patriarch of Constantinople would send Pope Honorius. The *Psephos* states that Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria was recommended not to allow anybody to talk about one or two energies of Christ, but about *a single operating subject, Jesus Christ, in the energies of each nature*:

“a person should profess that one and the same only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God, performs both the divine and the human activities, and that every activity, both fitting for God and fitting for a human being, proceeds without division from one and the same incarnate God the Word, and is to be referred to one and the same (person).”⁶⁰

At the same time, Patriarch Sergius convinced Sophronius not to bring into discussion the matter of energies into Christ, but accept the teachings of the Church Fathers: “Finally it was decided and established that the most holy Sophronius, of whom we have spoken, should not in the future start any discussion about one or two activities, but should be content with the safe and tried-and-true correct teaching of the holy Fathers, mentioned above.”⁶¹ Saint Sophronius accepted to no longer discuss the matter of the energies into Christ, acting with *economy*:

⁶⁰ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 18; see also Chr. Lange, *Mia Energeia*, p. 592; Ch. J. Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, vol. III / 1, p. 345.

⁶¹ Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 192; see also Venance Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, Tome I: *Les Actes des Patriarches*, Fasc. I: *Les Regestes de 381 à 715*, (Constantinople-Istanbul: Socii Assumptionistae

“The oft-mentioned most holy man, then, was content with these conditions, and, when he had confirmed that he would abide by them, asked us to provide him with an answer on these matters in writing as well, so that, so to speak, he could show such a letter to those who perhaps would wish to question him about the enquiry of which we have spoken.”⁶²

Therefore, Sophronius gave the impression that he is satisfied by the compromise with Sergius, although his thinking remained very alien from the spirit of this Monoenergist formula.⁶³ We can say that “Sophronius’s economy is limited to a *prudent silence* which does not last very long and whose end goal is reaching a superior objective. The Church Fathers used this method of *economy-driven silence* on many occasions.”⁶⁴ In this case, staying silent meant in fact accepting the compromise. Moreover, Saint Sophronius was aware of it. That is why, as soon as he was appointed Patriarch of Jerusalem, at the beginning of 634, he launched an offensive. He sent a letter (Sinodikon) to the Pope and the other eastern patriarchs in which he states very clearly the true teachings against Monoenergism. Despite the prohibition stipulated by Psephos and the agreement with Patriarch Sergius to no longer discuss the issue of one or two energies into Christ, Patriarch Sophronius confesses

Chalcedonenses, 1932), pp. 115-116, no. 287; Sfântul Maxim Mărturitorul, *Epistula ad Pyrrhum*, PG 91, col. 592 B-C (*psephos*) and col. 596 A-B.

⁶² Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius* (Document 6), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 192; see also Honorius, *First Letter to Sergius* (Document 7), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 194.

⁶³ B. Sesboüé, J. Wolinski, *Histoire des dogmes*, vol. I, p. 434.

⁶⁴ P. Raï, “L’économie,” p. 292.

the duality of the works into Christ, considered by him a consequence of the duality of nature into the person of Christ.⁶⁵

Constantinople's response to Saint Sophronius's letter was Emperor Heraclius's issuance of the imperial decree *Ekthesis* (September-October 638). *Ekthesis* prohibits the use of phrases *one energy* (*mia energeia*) or *two energies* (*dyo energeiai*) into Christ but imposes the use of *one will* into Christ (*hen thelema*).⁶⁶ By favoring the phrase *one will*, *Ekthesis* "helped the transformation of Monoenergism into Monothelitism."⁶⁷ At the same time, the issuance of *Ekthesis* contributed to the conflict between Church and state.

6.3 *Oikonomia* according to Saint Maximus the Confessor

After the death of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (11 March 638 or 639)⁶⁸, Saint Maximus the Confessor got actively involved in the conflict between the Church and the State, which started during the reign of Heraclius and would reach its peak during the reign of his successor, Constans II. Saint Maximus started an open battle against the Monothelite heresy supported by the imperial power in Constantinople. He fought vigorously against the provisions of the decree *Typos*, published in 648 by Constans II, whose declared goal was to suppress the controversies between Chalcedonians and Monothelites and establish peace and unity within the Church. The *Typos* prohibits any discussion about one will or one energy, or two wills or

⁶⁵ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XI, col. 481 C.

⁶⁶ *Ekthesis of the emperor Heraclius*, (Document 9), translated by Pauline Allen, p. 214.

⁶⁷ Venance Grumel, "Recherche sur l'histoire du Monothelitisme," *Echos d'Orient*, 29 / 157, 1930, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Pauline Allen, "Sophronius and his *Synodical Letter*", in: Pauline Allen (ed.), *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy*, p. 21.

energies respectively, in the sole person of Jesus Christ.⁶⁹ In reality, Constans II's decree is an attack against the Church, threatening its integrity and even its existence. Maximus the Confessor started a conflict against the imperial power in Constantinople, and he was arrested in June 653; the political trial against him started in May 655, in Constantinople. After his refusal to "collaborate" with the investigators, Saint Maximus was exiled. He died on August 13, 662.

Saint Maximus the Confessor starts from the premise that *oikonomia* cannot be enforced in matters of dogma and faith. The Holy Father narrates the discussion he had in Rome with Patriarch Gregory - Emperor Constans II's delegate - whose mission was to facilitate the peace between Pope Theodor and Paul II, Patriarch of Constantinople (641-653)⁷⁰; at the end of 648 or at the beginning of 649, the Roman Pontiff had excommunicated Paul II due to his adhesion to Monothelitism. Gregory proposed the unification of the two Churches be carried out based on the *Typos* decree:

"And I said: 'Glory to God who made you worthy to perform such a service. Only [tell me] if you know, on what terms His divinely crowned Serenity has ordered the union to come about.' And you said: 'On the terms of the *Typos*.' And I said: 'This, in my opinion, is an impossible situation, for the Romans won't allow the illuminating statements of the holy Fathers to be annulled simultaneously with the expressions of impure heretics, or the truth to be snuffed out simultaneously with falsehood,

⁶⁹ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. X, col. 1029 E.

⁷⁰ Jan Louis van Dieten, *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I. bis Johannes VI (610-715)*, (coll. *Geschichte der griechischen Patriarchen von Konstantinopel*, Teil 4), (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), p. 95.

or the light to perish simultaneously with darkness⁷¹. I mean that there will be nothing for us to worship the sayings taught by God are annulled.' And you said: 'The *Typos* won't cause the annulment of the sacred expressions, but silence, so that we may arrange peace'."⁷²

According to Patriarch Gregory, *Typos* does not suppress the Church dogmas; it merely ignores them in order to reach an understanding between Church and the imperial power. In this case, *economy* implies the suppression of the phrases creating a fraction between *sacerdotium* and *imperium*.⁷³ Contrarily, according to Maximus the Confessor, keeping quiet under the pretext of *economy* as advised by Patriarch Gregory actually means suppressing the dogmas of the Ecclesia and implicitly accepting the *Typos* of Constans II.⁷⁴

Saint Maximus the Confessor rejects categorically the *economy* invoked by Patriarch Gregory. He is of the opinion that the Church's acceptance of the *Typos* would be a compromise with political power and, inevitably, a concession in favor of the heretics. In reality, what the *Typos* did was sacrifice faith and truth on behalf of the unity of the Church and the Empire, as well as

⁷¹ In this fragment, Saint Maximus the Confessor alludes to the condemnation of Monothelitism and Monoenergism, and the dogmatization of Dyothelitism and Dyoenergism by the Lateran Synod of 649, under the presidency of Pope Martin I (649-655).

⁷² *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions. Documents from Exile*, edited and translated by Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4, pp. 54-55.

⁷³ *Ibidem* (*Relatio motionis*) 7, pp. 63-65: "But do not sadden the Emperor (...) who, for peace, ordered the *oikonomia* of silence with regards to the phrases which divide."

⁷⁴ *Ibidem* 4, p. 55, 57: "And I said: "For Godly Scripture, silence is suppression... So, according to the Scripture, unless they are spoken and heard, the words about God do not exist."

peace, which had to be achieved at any price and by any means, including police repressions and compromises with heretics:

“But if the saving faith should be annulled simultaneously with erroneous belief for the sake of an arrangement, this kind of so-called arrangement is a complete separation from God and not a union. I mean that tomorrow the hateful Jews will also begin to say: ‘Let’s arrange a peace with one another, and unite, and let us remove circumcision and you baptism, and we won’t fight with each other anymore.’ (...). No emperor was able to persuade the Fathers who speak of God to be reconciled with the heretics of their times by means of equivocal expressions [*phrases of compromise*, author’s note]. Instead, they employed clear and authoritative expressions, and ones that corresponded to the teaching that was being inquired into, saying plainly that it is the mark of priests [*bishops*, author’s note] to make an inquiry and to define on the subject of the saving teachings of the Catholic church.”⁷⁵

As the provisions of the *Typos* stipulated the Church’s acceptance of a compromise (*oikonomia*) in matters of teachings of faith, in the sense of a dissolution of its dogmas, Saint Maximus opposes the enforcement of the *canonic principle of economy* in matters of dogma and faith. In the name of this principle, Maximus stood against the Monothelites’ pressure in 655. The argument invoked by the Holy Father in this sense is that, regarding dogmas, there can only be rigor and accuracy (*akribeia*), and never concession and compromise (*oikonomia*). Therefore, Maximus rejects firmly the contextual accommodation which the political power wanted to impose on the Church through the *Typos* decree in the name of the supposed *harmony* brought by religious unification and the existence of the Empire

⁷⁵ *Ibidem* 4, pp. 56-57.

itself.⁷⁶ The illustrious monk defends the idea that dogmas are the object of priests' work, and so emperors cannot intervene and use *oikonomia* when it comes to teachings of faith; however, those who did it fell into heresy or led the church on wrong paths without the courage and the sacrifice of bishops.⁷⁷

The Sixth Ecumenical Council enforced the ideas of Saint Maximus the Confessor; the dogmatic definition issued on this occasion prohibits the development of new confessions of faith for the purposes of religious unification with the Jewish, the pagans or the heretics by compromise (*oikonomia*):

“So now that these points have been formulated by us with all precision (*ἀκριβεία*) in every respect and with all care, we definitely state that it is not allowable for anyone to produce another faith, that is, to write or to compose or to consider or to teach others; those who dare to compose another faith, or to support or to teach or *to hand on another creed to those who wish to turn to knowledge of the truth, whether from Hellenism or Judaism or indeed from any heresy whatsoever, [...]* they are excommunicated.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Ibidem* 7, pp. 63-65: “But do not sadden the Emperor who drew up the Typos only for peace, and not for suppressing anything of Christ’s teachings and for which he ordered *the oikonomia of silence* over the phrases which divide.”

⁷⁷ Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et Prêtre. Étude sur le « cesaropapisme » byzantin*, ouvrage publié avec le concours du Centre national du livre, (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 182.

⁷⁸ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XI, col. 640; Jaroslav Pelikan, Valerie Hotchkiss, *Creeeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, vol. I, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 228-229; see also Gilbert Dagron, Vincent, Déroche, *Juifs et chrétiens en Orient byzantin*, ouvrage publié avec le concours de la Fondation Ebersolt du Collège de France, (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010), pp. 38-39.

The Council also condemned Monothelitism and re-established Orthodoxy; for the first time since the reign of Emperor Heraclius, a harmony between Church and State, as well as religious peace among Christianity was established.

7 The practice of *economy* at the end of the 7th century and during the first half of the 8th

In most cases, *oikonomia* expresses the concessions made by the Church to the imperial powers, or the compromises that the members of the clergy accepted after the constraints and pressures exerted by the emperor. Such is the example of Pope Sergius I (687-701) who refused to approve the canons issued by the Quinisext Council (691-692), thus attracting the fury of Emperor Justinian II; as a response, in virtue of *economy*, the emperor coerced the Pope's delegates in Constantinople to sign the documents of the council.⁷⁹

In 705, Justinian II tried to convince Pope John VII (705-707) to approve the Trullo canons, but he refused categorically.⁸⁰ However, in a different circumstance, it appears that the Roman Pope granted the Emperor's wish; John VII saw personally that

⁷⁹ *Liber Pontificalis*, LXXXVI, 6-7, vol. I, texte, introduction et commentaire par L'Abbé L. Duchesne, (Paris: Ernest Thorin Éditeur, 1886), pp. 372-373; see also Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West. The Church AD 681-1071*, (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), p. 38; Heinz Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum und seine Bischofsliste. Studien zum Konstantinopeler Konzil von 692*, (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 55-61.

⁸⁰ *Liber Pontificalis*, LXXXVIII, 5-6, p. 386: "Sed hic [Johannes VII, subl. ns.] humana fragilitate timidus, hos nequaquam emendans per suprafatos metropolitans direxit ad principem".

in the Santa Maria Antiqua Church in Rome⁸¹, Jesus was represented in icons as having a human face, probably modeled after Jesus's effigy on the coins minted by Justinian II.⁸² Thus, the Pope observed the provisions of canon 82 of the Second Trullo Council.

In 711, on the occasion of the negotiations in Nicomedia with Emperor Justinian II, Pope Constantine I (708-715) made a series of concessions in favor of the emperor; it appears that the Roman Pope approved the Trullo canons which were not incompatible with the liturgical practice and traditions of the Roman church. The Pope made this gesture in virtue of *economy*,⁸³

After the killing of Justinian II (November 711), Emperor Philippikos Bardanes (711-713) took the throne of Byzantium. As early as his inauguration, Philippikos Bardanes proved to be an ardent supporter of the Monothelite heresy. In 712, the Emperor condemned the Sixth Ecumenical Council which had ruled against Monothelitism; at the same time, he issues an imperial decree proclaiming Monothelism as the only religion accepted in the Byzantine Empire. Patriarch John 6th (712-715) was forced to fully observe the emperor's will; therefore, he signed the Imperial decree in favor of Monothelitism issued by

⁸¹ *Liber Pontificalis* mentions the fact that Pope John 7th was very involved in the painting of the Santa Maria Antiqua Church in Rome, see *Liber Pontificalis*, LXXXVIII, 2, p. 385: "Basilicam itaque sanctae Dei genetricis qui Antiqua vocatur pictura decoravit".

⁸² A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, p. 38; H. Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum*, p. 64; J. D. Breckenridge, "Evidence for The Nature of Relations between Pope John VII and The Byzantine Emperor Justinian II", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LXV (1972), 2, pp. 368-369.

⁸³ A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, p. 38 H. Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum*, pp. 66-75; Jean-Marie Sansterre, "Le pape Constantin Ier (708-715) et la politique religieuse des empereurs Justinien II et Philippikos", *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 22, 1984, pp. 13-14.

Philippikos Bardanes. A council summoned by John VI in 712 cast an anathema on the Sixth Ecumenical Council.⁸⁴ However, the efforts for the restoration of Monothelism only lasted two years. In 713, Emperor Anastasius II dethroned usurper Philippikos Bardanes and reestablished “Orthodoxy.”

In the letter to Pope Constantine I, Patriarch John VI of Constantinople tries to excuse himself for having favored the Monothelism imposed by the emperor.⁸⁵ Although perfectly aware of his guilt, John VI tries to justify his behavior by invoking a series of arguments to his defense. To this end, the Patriarch invokes the brutality of the Emperor who had constrained him to send the Pope the dogmatic decree in favor of Monothelism. Moreover, Philippikos Bardanes intended to replace John VI with someone who was not part of the clergy and who shared his opinions. The emperor wished to go even further and condemn the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon.⁸⁶

Patriarch John VI admits his mistake; he declares himself “Orthodox” and defender of the teaching about two energies and two works of Jesus Christ. John VI writes that he acted in virtue of *economy* (*κατ’οἰκονομίαν*) when, due to the constraints and pressures exercised against him by Emperor Philippikos Bardanes, he accepted to favor Monothelism.⁸⁷ More specifi-

⁸⁴ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XII, col. 190-196; Theophanes. *The Chronicle*. an English translation of anni mundi 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813), with introduction and notes by Harry Turtledove. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), (Annus Mundi 6203), 6.6.6.6., p. 77; see also L. Bréhier, R. Aigrain, *Grégoire le Grand*, pp. 206-208.

⁸⁵ V. Grumel, *Les Regestes*, pp. 128-129, no. 322.

⁸⁶ Joannes, Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, *Epistola ad Constantinum sanctissimum Papam Romae*, PG 96, col. 1420 D.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, col. 1421 A.

cally, his conduct consisted in “prudent concessions” in favor of the emperor; in such circumstances, says the Patriarch, it is recommended to act with a great deal of caution and without too much resistance: “You know this from your own experience, Your Holiness, that when confronted with the pressure exercised by the state power it is not easy to fight back too harshly, tactlessly.”⁸⁸ John VI’s attitude had been dictated by a desire to tolerate the smallest evil in order to avoid a larger one since Emperor Philippikos Bardanes intended to annul the decisions and canons issued by the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon.⁸⁹ The Patriarch adds that forced by the emperor, he sent the Pope a Monothelite *council* letter in which he mitigated and softened the terms as much as possible; nevertheless, he remained Orthodox in his conscience, using mental restriction solely under the pretext of economy.⁹⁰ To excuse himself even further, John VI confesses that when tyrant Philippikos burned the documents of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, he saved a copy thereof at the Patriarchal residence⁹¹.

In reality, the *economy* of Patriarch John VI is not justified, which he admits himself. Church Fathers excluded any compromise regarding dogma from the scope of *economy*. John VI’s

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, col. 1421 B-1424 A.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, col. 1420 C-D; see also A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, p. 38; J.-M. Sansterre, “Le pape Constantin Ier (708-715)”, p. 19.

⁹⁰ P. Raï, “L’*économie*”, pp. 272-273.

⁹¹ V. Grumel, *Les Regestes*, pp. 128-129, no. 322; Ioan Marin Mălinaș, *Dipticon sau Cronologie patriarhală și Imperială*, vol. II/1: *Biserica catholică Ortodoxă și patriarhii acesteia până în secolul al VIII-lea, Între moștenirea Chalcedonului și încercarea de codificare a dreptului canonic prin Sinodul quinisext 691-692*, (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 2009), pp. 180-181, no. 322; Friedhelm Winkelmann, “Die Quellen zur Erforschung des monoenergetisch-monotheletischen Streites”, *Klio*, 69/2, pp. 553-554, no. 180; see also J. L. van Dieten, *Geschichte der Patriarchen*, pp. 171-172; Jules Pargoire, *L’Église byzantine de 527 à 847*, (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1905), p. 167.

letter shows, on the one hand, the emperor's influence over the Church, and on the other, the submission of the church hierarchy to the imperial will under the pretext of tolerating the smallest evil. This tolerance is characteristic of John VI's *economy*.⁹²

8 The pastoral practice of economy

In the 7th century, *oikonomia* was used by the Church in worship, and especially in the management of the Holy Sacraments. During the 11th meeting of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, of 20 March 681, reference is made to the two canonic principles - *akribeia* and *oikonomia* - which guide the Church with regard to the enforcement of the canonic provisions: "Holy Fathers, in order to attract the salvation of as many souls as possible, when such issues arise, seem to use *economies* well-liked by God without stranding from *akribeia* or the rightful dogmas of the Church."⁹³

Canonic law provides as general principle a balance between harshness and leniency about the enforcement of canonic provisions. In this sense, canon 3 issued at the Second Council in Trullo stipulates: "Let us not allow too much leniency in clemency, nor too much rigidity in severity."⁹⁴ Also, canon 102 recommends two methods of exercising canonic authority: the

⁹² P. Raï, "L'économie," p. 293f.

⁹³ Rudolf Riedinger, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Series secunda, volumen secundum: Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium, Pars 1-2*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1990-1992).

⁹⁴ Ioan Marin Mălinaș, *Diptycon sau Cronologie patriarhală și Imperială*, canon 3, p. 364.

traditional method, of strict observance of canons (*akribeia*) and the method of leniency or exception (*oikonomia*).⁹⁵

Especially when the practice of *akribeia* would endanger the salvation of believers, in personal cases, the Church would enforce *oikonomia*. In church law, the word *oikonomia* has a specific meaning, exclusively pastoral and extremely dynamic; it refers to a spiritual discretion according to which, either due to circumstances or for purely personal reasons, the Church bypasses canonic provisions and imposes punishments⁹⁶. In other words, the Church chooses discretion and condescendence for the fallen person, in full awareness; it adapts the canon to the personal circumstances of the penitent, without repealing the canon or infringing the *akribeia*. The enforcement of punishments means a loosening of the canonic provisions. However, when circumstances require it, *oikonomia* may mean tightening the *akribeia*, even exceeding it; in this case, it can bring punishments that are even harsher than those provided by church canons.⁹⁷

The canonic provisions of the Second Council in Trullo include many provisions on the practice of economy. Canon 102 recommends spiritual advisors to enforce canons either rigorous-

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, canon 102, p. 388.

⁹⁶ *The penitence (ἐπιτίμιον)* is a repentance canon which the priest gives to the believer like some kind of punishment, so that the believer atones for their sins by conducting good deeds and acts of mercy (for instance caring for a sick person, clothing a poor child etc.); only this way can the believer receive God's forgiveness and the right to take Holy Communion, see Ene Braniște, Ecaterina Braniște, *Dicționar de cunoștințe religioase*, (Sibiu: Andreiana, 2010), pp. 143-144.

⁹⁷ The double and reversible nature of economy, which can mean either exception, condescendence, diminishing, or harshening and going beyond is revealed by canon 57 of Saint Basil the Great: "...So it remains at your discretion to lengthen or shorten the penitence according to circumstances," see Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe*, canon 57, p. 377.

ly, which entails a strict observance of canonic provisions, either with leniency and kindness, which implies a loosening of the rigor and the adaptation of canons to the believer's personal circumstances. According to the same canon, the bishop or the spiritual advisor must look into the nature of the error and the sinner's willingness to repent and thus find penitence as he would find a cure for an illness, and avoid endangering the redemption of the believer through his use of *akribeia* and *oikonomia*.⁹⁸

Canon 72 prohibits categorically marriage between Christians and heretics, as well as marriage between Christians and non-Christians, with a single exception, based on the statement of Apostle Paul, namely that a non-believing spouse is blessed by marrying a believing spouse.⁹⁹ Their marriage will not be disbanded although, by the conversion of one of the spouses, it becomes a mixed marriage, between a Christian and a non-Christian, which is prohibited by the canon. Besides this exception, the legality of any other marriage between Christians and non-Christians is not recognized."¹⁰⁰

In virtue of *economy*, canon 95 stipulates the enforcement of three different procedures for receiving heretics into the Church, in relation to the degree of their deviation from the true faith. For those who return to true faith from less severe heresies, *total economy* is enforced; these heterodox believers must only confess their orthodoxy in writing and cast an anathema over their heresy¹⁰¹. This category includes Nestorians, Eu-

⁹⁸ Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe*, pp. 160-161; J. Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie*, pp. 59-60; C. Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă*, p. 166.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 146 (canon 72).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 146-147; J. Kotsonis, *Problèmes de l'économie*, p. 51; C. Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă*, p. 206.

¹⁰¹ Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe*, p. 157 (canon 95).

tychians and Severines (the followers of Severus of Antioch).¹⁰² The heterodox who profess more severe heresies than those from the first category are received into the Church by anointment, thus a *restrained economy*; they must also confess true faith and cast an anathema over the heresy. This category includes Arians, Pneumatomachians, Novatians, Quartodecimans and Apollinaireans.¹⁰³ The heterodox who profess the most severe heresies (Paulicians, Eunomians, Sabellians and Montanists)¹⁰⁴ are received into the Church by (re)baptism. In their case, *akribeia* is applied.¹⁰⁵

9 Conclusions

In the 7th century, the concept of ecclesiastical economy got a clearer, more rigorous definition. Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria brings a systemic order to the teachings about *economy*. Also, the canons established at the Trullo Council (691-692) regulate the enforcement of *economy* in worship. The principle of *economy* is applicable both in worship and in church discipline. Also, *oikonomia* can be used to formulate Church dogmas, without harming the content of the teachings of faith. At the same time, church authority uses *oikonomia* in its relations with heretics and schismatics, in order to bring them back to the Church. However, we cannot have *oikonomia* when it comes to dogmas. Solely the church authority has the competence to

¹⁰² Nestorians and Eutychians did not deny the Holy Trinity; also, these heretics did not deny the embodiment of the Son of God, but understood it differently; C. Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă*, p. 180.

¹⁰³ Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe*, pp. 156-157 (canon 95).

¹⁰⁴ These heretics denied the Holy Trinity and rejected apostolic succession.

¹⁰⁵ C. Gheorghescu, *Învățătura ortodoxă*, p. 179.

exercise the right to *oikonomia*. An *economy* is solely valid if established by a bishop and does not harm the dogma. The purpose of the enforcement thereof is both the spiritual wellness of the penitent, as well as the salvation of all believers. *Oikonomia* and its indispensable opposite, *akribeia*, appear in Byzantine history every time there is a conflict between Church and State. By enforcing *oikonomia*, the Church is able to diminish the rigor of the canons or even suspend their enforcement, should higher interests impose it.