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METHODIOS I PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Churchman, Politician and Confessor for the Faith

Submitted by

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Department of Theology

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Orthodox Theology and Byzantine History

2001

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Professor Andrew Louth
Chair and Supervisor



22 MAR 2002

Abstract

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The chapter concerning the life and times of Methodios, Patriarch of Constantinople, begins with a summary of the history of the iconoclastic controversy. This provides the background for a review of Methodios' vita. A native of Syracuse in Sicily, he became a central figure in the victory of the iconodules over the forces of iconoclasm. Methodios was the Patriarch of Constantinople (843 - 847).

The Triumph of Orthodoxy, over which Methodios presided, commemorated the victory of icon supporters. The Sunday of Orthodoxy services are examined and the Synodicon's content is analysed.

The third chapter discusses the consequences of the restoration of images. This period of stabilisation and strengthening of the Church was, nonetheless, fraught with turmoil and controversy. The re-integration of the former iconoclasts and a schism from the Studite monks were two serious challenges the Patriarch faced during this time.

The formation of Methodios' ecclesiology, his concept of the Church, including his sense of place in and responsibility for the Tradition of the Church were significant in his thinking. The synergy of Paradosis and Parakatatheki is explored and it will be shown that Methodios considered himself accountable to God for his ecclesial trust.

His literary works are catalogued and analysed. Some previously unpublished compositions are discussed. The categories of hagiographic, poetic and liturgical compositions are emphasised. This is undertaken to reveal Methodios, both the dedicated iconodule but more importantly, the man. Finally, conclusions and thoughts concerning the legacy of Patriarch Methodios within Orthodoxy and history are offered.



Figure 1: – Icon of the SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY (used by permission of British Library)

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Declaration

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University.

Signed: George P. B. Hines

Date: 28 Sept 2001

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Lastly and most importantly, to my family, Presbyteria Penny, Olga, Betty, Peter, Nicole and Katina, this effort would not have been possible without their love, support and caring. Thank you.

DEDICATION

In the service of betrothal in the Orthodox Church the Church prays:

*That He send down upon them love perfect and
peaceful, and give them His protection;
Let us pray to the Lord.*

To my wife,

Ria

You have been my strength, my cheer and my heart. This effort is as much
yours as it is mine.

May God grant us His blessings always.

I dedicate this and all my works to you.

IN MEMORIAM

This work is written in loving memory of my father

+ Fr. Peter George Bithos (1919 – 1978)

my first and most enduring teacher in the faith.

*As thou did appoint him to be a minister of thy Church on earth,
so also do thou make him the same at thy heavenly altar, O Lord.*

Introduction

Methodios I, a scholar, a monastic, a confessor for the faith and Patriarch of Constantinople (843-847) is a figure wrapped in the clouds of time. Iconoclasm, the eighth and ninth century crisis that dominated Byzantium, affected not only the history of the Eastern Empire, but also that of the entire Christian Church.

It is the intent of this study not only to analyse Methodios as a person in history, but also as a Church leader with true depth of conviction. It will be demonstrated that he had a sense of his place within the Tradition of the Church and a fierce determination to end the threat of the heresy of iconoclasm.

Methodios will be examined in the light of the words of his contemporaries, his own works, which include hagiographic compositions, historical correspondences, liturgical and polemic writings and the historic record. The complex relationships and resultant power struggles between the various participants in the resolution of the iconoclastic controversy will feature significantly in the discussion.

Narrowing the research on the significance of the resolution of the struggle can yield historic insight to the present practices and theology of the Orthodox Church. In addition, the divergence of understanding between Western and Eastern branches of Christianity, which was a by-product of



iconoclasm, will be assessed. Three conclusions will be presented in this work. First, who had a legitimate claim to the mantle of victory over iconoclasm? Secondly, what were the principles and motives that directed the actions of Methodios? Lastly, what was the legacy and conclusions drawn from the life of Patriarch Methodios I of Constantinople?

Above, the phrase “wrapped in the clouds of time” is used to describe Patriarch Methodios I of Constantinople. Is this an accurate characterisation? The answer is both yes and no, simultaneously. The Orthodox Church remembers him on the Feast day of his falling asleep in the Lord, the 14th of June. The Church celebrates him as a saint and lauds him with these words from the Vespers of his Feast:

Today, the Church of God is clothed for a feast and joyously cries aloud, ‘My beauty shines more brightly than any city: behold the treasure of hierarchs, the glorious Methodios arrives in heaven!’ Come feast-lovers! All you orthodox Christians gather together! Let us draw near healing in abundance from the holy relics, and let us entreat Christ our God to deliver the world from all heresy! ¹

¹ *MHNAIA - Liturgical Books of the Months*, (1995) (Sophia Press), Newton Centre, MA, p. 47, Troparion of the Stichon at Vespers authored by Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople, see ΓΕΓΛΕ, Γ. (ed.) (n.d.) *Liturgical Books of the Months (MHNAIA TOY XPONOY)* (MIX. ΣΑΛΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ Α. Ε.), Athens, p. 68.

Is this a bit of a panegyric hyperbole or a sentiment worth considering in more detail? What is discernable from the above hymn is that the Church rejoices that its universal orthodoxy has been delivered from heresy through the life of Methodios. In addition to this and other festal hymns of the day, Methodios is remembered by the many liturgical texts, which he either authored or that were compiled under his supervision. Ironically, the Church venerates him in a relatively few icons, albeit he played such a pivotal role in the resolution of the iconoclastic crisis. It can be said, without risk of contradiction, that the mist of history still shrouds Methodios. What is the starting point for a voyage of discovery to better understand the life and ordeals of an ecclesiastical figure of so long ago? Fr. Georges Florovsky indicates the nature of the task ahead with these words.

The past can only be 'reconstructed.' Is it a possible task? And how is it possible? Actually, no historian starts with the past. His starting point is always in the present, to which he belongs himself. He looks back. His starting point is his 'sources,' the primary sources. Out of them, and on their authority, he proceeds to the 'recovery' of the past. His procedure depends on the nature and character of his information, of his sources.²

It must be conceded that little direct primary material remains extant from the iconoclastic perspective of the icon debate. This was a dispute involving a serious Christian heresy in the eyes of the victors. For this

² Florovsky, G. (1974) *Christianity and Culture, The Collected Works of Fr. Georges Florovsky* (Norland Publishing Co.), Belmont, MA, p. 36.

reason, much iconoclastic literature is not available. This is not difficult to comprehend when the ninth canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, Nicaea II is read.

It states:

That none of the books containing the heresy of the traducers of the Christians are to be hid. – All the childish devices and mad ravings which have been falsely written against the venerable images, must be delivered to the Episcopium of Constantinople that they may be locked away with other heretical books...

The penalties for the violation of this canon were deposition for a clergyman or being anathematised for a monk or layperson.³ Therefore, the viewpoints of the opponents to the use of images must be “reconstructed”, to echo the words of Fr. Florovsky. Their state of mind must be “recovered” from the arguments of the iconodules. An additional obstacle to a detailed historical analysis of this cleric is the short term, during which Methodios occupied the patriarchal throne, AD 843 through 847. Despite the brief duration, these four years were extremely contentious and dramatic; therefore, many of the sources reflect the biases and preconceived judgements of the antagonists.⁴ Even though the surviving writings of this period are fragmentary, Methodios was a central contributor to the resolution of the icon crisis and to the ensuing quest for stability within the

³ Percival, H. R. (ed.) (1956) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* (Eerdmans Publishing), Oxford/New York/Grand Rapids, vol. 14, p. 561.

⁴ These premises will be explored in detail in the body of the dissertation.

Church. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to separate, as much as possible, truth from rhetoric and to reveal more about this ninth-century churchman's character and motives.

The observance of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, which is commemorated on the first Sunday of Great Lent for the Orthodox Churches world-wide, is an excellent example of the ambiguous status of Patriarch Methodios. During this festive proclamation of the faith, in which he played such a decisive role, he remains only a figure on an icon. For the most part, he is unrecognised by the community of believers that he sustained and which is one of his legacies. Many may well be familiar with his name, but beyond this, there is little in-depth comprehension of the significant contribution he made to end iconoclasm. How different would Orthodoxy be today if the heralds of the iconodulic theology, Sts. John of Damascus, Theodore the Studite, the Patriarch Saints Germanos, Tarasios, Nikephoros and Methodios had bowed to imperial pressure and had not fought for their faith? How would the artistic legacy of Byzantium to the rest of the world have been altered? What theological doctrines would all Christian teachings contain if these pillars of Orthodoxy had not prevailed? These are extremely intriguing questions. Of course, some of these questions may never be answered. What can be examined are the actual events and the complex personalities involved so that a brighter light might shine on the era. The interplay of the actions, the reaction of the players in the drama, their motivations and the judgement of history are all issues, which can be investigated, analysed and evaluated in the light of modern scholarship.

The topics of iconoclasm, its history and the impact of Patriarch Methodios will be approached much like eating an artichoke. Starting with the outer leaves, history will be stripped away in layers, using sources and insights from the Patriarch's contemporaries and subsequent historians alike. The resultant "heart of the matter" should be a much deeper appreciation of the role and contribution of Patriarch Methodios and his fellow iconodules. If we approach Methodios in this manner, he will emerge from the clouds. By searching his heart through his own writings, decisions and correspondences, the man will be revealed. A man with principles, convictions, courage and a sense of his own place in the Tradition of the Church will become known. What will become clearer is the recognition of the positive outcome of his life, as well as his legacy in the Orthodox faith of today.

Chapter One

METHODIOS: LIFE AND TIMES

Sources

What do we know about Patriarch Methodios and where do we begin our exploration of his life? There are several primary bases for the study of the life of Patriarch Methodios. First, there is his *Vita*,¹ then other contemporary *vitae*,² the panegyric witness and the historical chronicles of the times. There is, of course, a limitation in exploring the hagiographical literature of this period that must be kept in mind throughout this study; that is the caveat we spoke of in the introduction. With the defeat of iconoclasm, there was a conscious effort by the victorious iconodules to remodel the historical record to reflect the orthodox perspective and to enhance the standing of the heroes of their cause. It is known from Methodios' *vita* that the Saint was born in Syracusa of Sicily. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but we know he was well educated and travelled to Constantinople as a young man. There, he embraced monasticism and became part of the patriarchal retinue of Patriarch Nikephoros. With the onset of the second phase of iconoclasm, he was sent to Rome perhaps as a patriarchal emissary. He returned to the Queen City in the early part of the 820's, only to be imprisoned and suffer as a

¹ "Sanctus Methodius - Constantinopolitanus patriarcha" (1857-1866) in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, tomos. c, ed. J.- P. Migne, Paris, cols. 1231-1326, cols. 1244 - 1272.

² These will be cited as they contribute to the thesis.

Confessor for the Faith. In 843, he helped the restoration of icons and became Patriarch. After four years in office, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Before continuing with the *vita* account of Methodios' life, perhaps it would be helpful to briefly review the events in the history of the iconoclastic controversy. This conflict not only shaped the age but also helped to fashion Methodios' character and his way of thinking. To understand Methodios, as a man of his time and a participant in a great drama, an understanding of the conflict is essential.³

Background: The Genesis of Iconoclasm

Thou shall not make to thyself an idol, nor likeness of anything, whatever things are in the heaven above and whatever are in the earth beneath, and whatever are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God.⁴

Professor Baynes, following the tradition of German scholars from the end of the nineteenth century asserts that the nascent Christian Church inherited its antipathy for artistic depiction from two sources, the Old Testament prohibition of idols and from its identification of religious art with

³ Bryer, A. and Herrin, J. (eds.) (1975) *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (University of Birmingham Press), Birmingham, UK. (henceforth *Iconoclasm*) see Cyril Mango "An Historical Introduction" pp. 1 – 6 same vol.

⁴ Exodus 20, 4 - 5 (LXX): Οὐ ποιήσεις σεαυτῷ εἰδωλον, οὐδὲ παντὸς ὁμοίωμα ὅσα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω, καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῇ γῇ κάτω, καὶ ὅσα ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς. Οὐ προσκυνήσεις αὐτοῖς, οὐδὲ μὴ λατρεύσεις αὐτοῖς· ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου, Θεὸς ζηλωτῆς.

the pagan world. Baynes explains his opinions in this manner. He states that the second commandment prohibition is quite understandable in view of the fact that the early Christians lived in a Jewish milieu. However, the impact of the pagan culture on the thinking of the early Church is many times overlooked.

The fear of idolatry was, I believe, a far more potent factor in the life of the early Christian community than we sometimes realize. But if it was against this idolatrous Mediterranean civilization that the Christian protested, he was still so much a part of that civilization that he fought his battle with the weapons which had been forged by the men of that Mediterranean civilization. The Christian apologetic against idolatry was simply borrowed from pagan thinkers. ⁵

This point of view, supported by later researchers of this century such as Ernst Kitzinger ⁶ and L. W. Barnard, ⁷ is strongly challenged by Sister Mary Charles Murray in her study, "Art and the Early Church" in *The Journal of Theological Studies*. Sr. Murray's arguments regarding the above subject and other pertinent ones will be commented upon in subsequent discussions.

⁵ Baynes, N. H. (1959) "Idolatry and the Early Church" in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (University of London The Athlone Press), London, pp. 116 - 143, p. 125.

⁶ Kitzinger, E. (1954) "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm", *DOP*, vol. 8, pp. 83 - 150.

⁷ Barnard, L. W. (1974) *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, Byzantina Neerlandica (E.J. Brill), Leiden, p. 85 ff.

The Onset of Christian Iconoclasm

Most accounts of the early and pre-eighth century patristic citations concerning the use of icons are scattered. They are well documented and for the most part agreed upon by scholars. Some of the historic and traditional supports for the use of icons are the "images made without hands",⁸ which include the "Veil of Veronica" and the Image of Christ's face sent to King Abgar of Edessa on a cloth. One of the other early legends supporting the use of images is that St. Luke, the Evangelist, is said to have painted an image of the Theotokos, while she was still living.

The iconographic type of the Mother of God, which is known under the name of "Hodigitria" (ἡ Ὁδηγήτρια) has had a series of prototypes, which connect it with a venerable antiquity. Byzantine tradition traces it back to an original painting by St. Luke.⁹

On the other hand, there are a few primary early iconoclastic opinions involving early church figures. Eusebius' letter to Constantia, sister of Constantine the Great is an excellent example of iconoclastic sentiment that occurred in the early fourth century.¹⁰ Responding quite strongly to a request from Constantia for a "portrait of Christ," Eusebius asserted that no

⁸ "ἁχειροποίητος" see St. John of Damascus, (1980) *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, trans. D. Anderson (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, p. 35.

⁹ Ouspensky, L. and Lossky, V. (1989) *The Meaning of Icons, Revised Edition*, trans. G.E.H. Palmer and E. Kadloubovsky (St. Vladimir's Seminary), Crestwood, NY, p. 80.

¹⁰ Hussey, J. M. (1990) *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, (Clarendon Press), Oxford, UK., pp. 32 – 33 and Gero, S. (1981) "The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered", *Journal of Theological Studies n.s.*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 460 - 470.

physical image could contain the divine essence. This rather strong rebuke, especially when sent to the Emperor's sister, could have been quite influential. The difficulty was that Eusebius was later considered to have Arian views so the value of his criticism was considerably minimised by his theological opinions.¹¹ Today some scholars doubt the authenticity of this work.

The thoughts and writings of Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, during the late fourth century, were used as proofs by both iconoclasts and upholders of orthodoxy. Epiphanius had spotless credentials as a father of the Church, unlike Eusebius. The iconoclastic side cited his Epistle to John of Jerusalem protesting the use of images,¹² while the iconodules accused the iconoclasts of using "forgeries" to appropriate this father as a patristic source.¹³ The incident that the letter describes is Epiphanius coming upon a church with an embroidered curtain. Epiphanius tore down the curtain, thus "proving" his icon phobia in the interpretation of the iconoclasts.¹⁴ This scenario, described in detail by Murray, has been the source of dispute concerning Epiphanius' attitudes since the ninth century. Even though, at first thought not to be authentic, it is now thought by some to be a genuine

¹¹ Gero, "The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered", p. 263.

¹² Barnard, L. (1975) "The Theology of Images," In *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Centre for Byzantine Studies - University of Birmingham), Birmingham, UK, pp. 7 - 13, pp. 9 - 10.

¹³ Sahas, D. J. (1988) *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, trans. D. J. Sahas (University of Toronto Press), Toronto /Buffalo/ London (Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations no. 4), pp. 116 - 121.

¹⁴ Sister Charles Mary Murray (1977) "Art and the Early Church", *JTS - n.s.*, vol. 28, pp. 303 - 345, pp. 336 ff.

work of the bishop.¹⁵ Sister Murray concisely compares the Greek text with the more familiar Latin translation of St. Jerome to argue that earlier assessments of this document misinterpreted the objection of Epiphanius. Sr. Murray cites a second letter from Epiphanius to the people of the church concerning the torn curtain. Epiphanius replied that he would replace the curtain, but had not yet found a suitable replacement.¹⁶ Additionally, Murray builds a powerful argument by listing a number of researchers by name and tracing how one scholar's work depended on the preceding one. She states there has been a tendency for a researcher to accept the premises of earlier scholars, without comparing the two document traditions.¹⁷ Therefore, Murray concludes the result has been a misinterpretation of the data. Her conclusions are worth reflecting upon at this juncture.

In conclusion, therefore, if the foregoing analysis of the literary evidence is correct, it seems a reasonable assessment of the case to say that there is very little indication indeed that the Fathers of the early Church were in any way opposed to art. Since then, according to the traditional view taken of the literature so many difficulties and inconsistencies have to be explained away, to say nothing of explaining away the art itself, it seems far simpler and for more in accord with what the Fathers actually wrote, to conclude that there

¹⁵ Ostrogorsky and Holl take opposite sides of this question, see *Ibid.* footnote no. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 338 ff. These pages summarise the scholarly tradition concerning this letter. The painstaking research and text comparisons point to the conclusions that Sr. Murray has reached.

never was a dichotomy between the art and the literature of the early Church; and an apparently insoluble problem proves never to have been a problem at all. It does seem impossible to believe, nor does there now seem to be any evidence for doing so, that all the wealth of art which survives was produced in the face of the Church authorities.¹⁸

Patristic sources formed the backbone of the iconodules justification for images. Pelikan explains the method of supporters of icons in this way:

Yet the friends of the icons could not let the iconoclasts lay claim to the tradition; not if "orthodoxy" was to mean support of the icons. For "orthodoxy" meant above all loyalty to the tradition of the fathers. The images in the church could not be "a recent invention," but had to have the authority of Christian antiquity, patristic and even apostolic, behind them... It was characteristic of every heresy, and especially of the iconoclastic heresy, that it sought to dissociate itself from the heresies that had preceded it and that it laid claim to the apostolic and patristic doctrines and to the authority of the councils.¹⁹

The fathers cited include St. Athanasios the Great (295 – 373 AD), St. Basil of Caesarea (330 - 379 AD), St. Gregory of Nyssa (330 - 395 AD). An

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 342.

¹⁹ Pelikan, J. (1977) *The Christian Tradition* - in 3 volumes / vol.2 - *A History of the Development of Doctrine* (University of Chicago Press), Chicago/London. p.98.

excellent summary of these sources and notations can be found in A. Giakalis' book *Images of the Divine - Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council*.²⁰

The Dionysian theology of hierarchy, image and prototype also contributed to the iconodules' armamentaria.²¹ St. Dionysios the Areopagite speaks of God and His creation in his treatise *The Divine Names*,

The theologians say that the transcendent God is inherently similar to no other being, but that he also bestows a similarity to himself on all those who are returning to him in imitation as far as possible, of what is beyond all definition and understanding. It is the power of the divine similarity, which returns all created things toward their Cause, and these things must be reckoned to be similar to God by reason of the divine image and likeness.²²

This reasoning of image and likeness, similarity and imitation was added to by the Biblical concept that Christ is the Image of the Father.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.²³

²⁰ Giakalis, A. (1994) *Images of the Divine The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (E.J. Brill), Leiden/New York/Köln. (Studies in the History of Christian Thought) pp. 34-42. Special note should be made of Giakalis' excellent footnoting and outline of source material. This is too lengthy to reproduce here.

²¹ Meyendorff, J. (1987) *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought (Le Christ dans la théologie byzantine)*, 2nd Edition (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, pp. 176 –177.

²² Pseudo - Dionysius the Areopagite (1987) *Pseudo - Dionysius - The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibheid (The Paulist Press), New York/Mahwah (The Classics of Western Spirituality), p. 117 = PG vol. 3, col. 913d.

²³ Col. 1, 15.

Foundational concepts, such as these, complemented by Incarnational Christology were to become central in the iconodules' thinking. During the centuries immediately before iconoclasm, some of the influential patristic defenders of icons were Severianos, Bishop of Gabala, Leontios, Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus and Stephen, Bishop of Bostra. Each of these apologists contributed to the latter iconophilic points of view. Stephen's primary contributions were an elaboration of the theme concerning man being made in the image and likeness of God, more specifically image-not-idol. G. B. Ladner, quoting from an Ambrosiana Manuscript, cites Stephen's distinctions as follows,

An image (εἰκών) is one thing, and idol (ἄγαλμα or ζῶδιον) is another. Then he [Stephen] quotes Genesis 1: 26, and continues: 'Now is it idolatry and impiety that man is an image of God? Far from it. If Adam were an image of demons, he would be abject and unacceptable; but because is an image of God, he is honorable and acceptable... And what is the honor rendered to the image if not just honor, as also we sinners do reverence (προσκυνοῦμεν) one another with honor and love'.²⁴

This was among the building blocks of the iconophiles' arguments, as we shall see shortly. Leontios, Bishop of Neapolis, writing in the seventh century, defends the Christian use of images against the charge of idol

²⁴ Stephen of Bostra, see Ladner, G. B. (1953) "The Concept of Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy", *DOP*, vol. 7, pp.1 - 34, p. 15, notes 98,104 and 106. For clarification on Stephen, see p. 14.

worship found in the Old Testament prohibition. His sermons, *The Defence of Christians against the Jews, and on Icons of the Saints* become influential patristic source material for later writers. He is quoted in the writings of St. John of Damascus, St. Theodore Studite and the proceedings of Nicaea II. Leontios asserts that the tradition of image making is, in fact, a Jewish custom "and not our own" [a Christian custom].²⁵

Iconoclasm Phase One

Rarely has a religious conflict had such a great influence on the course of history. The controversy over images and their use in the Eastern Church raged from 726 to 843. It defined an age and affected the future of Church relations in both east and west for centuries to come. The problem for the serious student of this period can be summed up in one phrase – "to the victors belong the spoils." Very little primary source material is extant that is not iconodulic in nature. The positions and arguments of the opponents of images, the iconoclasts, have been lost, deliberately destroyed or altered by the eventual victors. The iconoclastic positions are available only via the writings of iconodules who sought to refute and invalidate the viewpoints of their opponents. Therefore, the complete picture and background

²⁵ Mansi, vol 13, cols. 44 a - 53 c.

surrounding these events must be pieced together by evidence from various sources.²⁶

The issues and the core arguments are best appreciated when examined in two phases. Phase one has been delineated roughly from the ascendancy of Leo III (known as Leo the Isaurian or Syrian) in 717 through the Seventh Ecumenical Council, Nicaea II, in 787. After a brief hiatus, iconoclasm reappeared. Phase two is accepted to have begun early in the reign of Leo V the Armenian, (813 –820) and continued until 11 March 843. Probably the real end-date should coincide with the death of the Emperor Theophilos the previous year.

The 11 March date is that of the celebration of the first Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy and is traditionally declared as the end of the iconoclastic era. While this overall timetable is correct, as was demonstrated, the controversy may have had embryonic beginnings in writings prior to Leo III,²⁷ and its aftermath extended for a time beyond 843. There is a difference of opinion on the length of the aftermath period. Professor Mango believes this period does not truly extend into the patriarchal era of Photios.²⁸ On the other hand, Fr. Dvornik argued that during his patriarchal years much of Photios' concern was to eliminate the

²⁶ For an excellent overview of the entire Iconoclastic Controversy see Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 30 – 68; also see Ostrogorsky, G. (1969) *History of the Byzantine State, Revised Edition*, trans. J. Hussey (Rutgers University Press), New Brunswick, NJ, pp.147 - 152 with a view to the sources.

²⁷ Barnard, "The Theology of Images," in *Iconoclasm*, pp. 8 - 9.

²⁸ Mango, C. (1975) "Liquidation of Iconoclasm and Patriarch Photios," in *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies on Iconoclasm*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Centre for Byzantine Studies - University of Birmingham), Birmingham, UK, pp. 133 - 141, p. 135.

resurgence of the iconoclastic heresy.²⁹ There is no doubt the aftermath of iconoclasm dominates the patriarchal careers of both Methodios and Ignatios but the fear of a full-scale re-emergence appears to have passed by the time of Patriarch Photios.

The Byzantine Mind-Set in the Eighth Century:

In Byzantium there was a general perception regarding the role of Divine Providence in the life of the empire. Today it is difficult to grasp completely the accepted view that God had elected the Byzantine Empire to be the direct inheritor of Israel, His chosen people. In both the people and the emperor's views, the fortunes or misfortunes of the Empire were tied directly to God's *approval* or *disapproval*. Fr. McGuckin very succinctly explains this viewpoint in his article on power and images.

If the Arabs were again making ground at the beginning of the eighth century, was not the reason that something was radically wrong with the Christian *oecumene* at large, and particular with life in Constantinople, under whose walls the invaders had camped³⁰

If one reads McGuckin's opinions and combines them with the political, military and economic climate of the early eighth century in Byzantium, it is

²⁹ Dvornik, F. (1953) "Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", *DOP*, vol. 7, pp. 69 ff.

³⁰ McGuckin, J. A. (1993) "The Theology of Images and Legitimation of Power in Eighth Century Byzantium", *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 37, pp. 39 - 58, p. 42.

more understandable how a crisis about the images developed in the minds of the Emperor, the army and some of the citizens.

The Protagonists Emerge

All the world's a stage. And all men and women
merely players. They all have their exits and
entrances. And one man in his time plays many
parts...³¹

With Germanos Patriarch of Constantinople in his second year of office, Leo III (the Isaurian) secured the throne in 716 - 717. He did this in an agreement with the patriarch. This pact promised not to harm Theodosios, the previous Emperor and to preserve the Church undisturbed.³² Leo was not a sophisticated or erudite man but he was a good soldier and a shrewd politician.³³ We do not know when his antipathy towards images began, but the record shows he did not start a full scale offensive against images immediately upon taking over the empire. He waited for almost ten years to initiate his denunciation of icons and their use. During this time, he prepared public opinion to support his action.³⁴ Some problematic texts might be helpful at this point. According to Fr. McGuckin's analysis, Leo's

³¹ Shakespeare, Wm., *As you Like It*, Act II, vii, 139.

³² Theophanes the Confessor (1997) *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. C. Mango, R. Scott and G. Greatrex (Clarendon Press), Oxford, p. 540.

³³ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, p. 143 ff.

³⁴ Mango, C. (1990) *Nikephoros of Constantinople, Short History*, edited trans. and commentary by C. Mango, Washington, D.C. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae), p. 42.

correspondence with Pope Gregory II contains an indication of the emperor's attitudes.

But Leo's theocratical views on the place of Kingship in the Christian *oecumene* mark a new shift, in that they are elaborated far more explicitly than his predecessors, and work on a directly applied Old Testament model. Such a theocratic tradition had within it the seeds of a messianic policy of the centralised absorption of all hieratic functions - the Basileus as the Royal Saviour of his people who was prophet, priest and king all in one.³⁵

Gouillard quite convincingly argues that these correspondences have been redacted many times. It is his assertion that substantial portions of the correspondences were worked and re-worked later in the eighth and ninth centuries. Therefore, he does not believe that they can be considered entirely authentic. He makes these conclusions in opposition to the earlier findings of Caspar, Ostrogorsky and in some aspects those of Grégoire; but his opinion is supported by Mango.³⁶

The date commonly accepted, as the start of the iconoclastic period is around 726 AD. The beginning was associated with a violent and serious

³⁵ McGuckin, "The Theology of Images and Legitimation of Power in Eighth Century Byzantium", p. 45.

³⁶ Gouillard, J. (1968) "Aux Origines de l'Iconoclasme: Le Temoignage de Gregoire II", *Travaux et Memoires - Centre de Reserche D'Histoire et Civilisation Byzantines*, vol. 3, pp. 243 - 307, p. 260 and conclusions pp. 306-307; also see Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 558 - 559, note no. 3.

volcanic eruption in the area near the Aegean Island of Thera (Santorini). To many of the citizens, this calamity was proof positive of God's wrath descending on Byzantium. In their mind, the cause must have been the cult associated with icons and their use. Professor Hussey relates the account of the destruction of a mosaic icon of Christ by imperial troops. This mosaic icon, which hung above the Χαλκῆ [The Bronze Gate] at the entry of the Imperial Palace in Constantinople,³⁷ became a symbol in the ensuing conflict. The account now is thought to be legendary by Auzépy and Hussey. They believe that this story exemplifies the type of historical embellishment the image controversy fostered.³⁸ These shifts in viewpoints among scholars are, in my opinion, indicative of the difficulty encountered when a clear picture of the era's events are the goal, considering the much-doctored historical record.

Phase one of the conflict pitted the emperor and the garrison of Constantinople against Orthodox Church leaders, led by the aged Patriarch Germanos. Kaegi points out that in the capital, a great number of troops of the imperial army were more than ready to follow their Emperor's lead

³⁷ Mango, C. (1959) *The Brazen House - A Study of the Vestibule of Constantinople*, Arkeologisk-kunsthistoriske Meddelelser (i kommission hos Ejnar Munksgaard), Copenhagen, see pp. 112 ff. Consult for complete description and pp. 170 –174 for comment.

³⁸ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 37. This account is seen in several contemporary *vitae* or chronicle accounts such as the *Vita of Stephanos the Younger*, Auzépy, M.-F. (1997) *La Vie d'Etienne le Jeune par Etienne le Diacre*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, trans. M.-F. Auzépy (Ashgate Lmt. in the Variorum Series), Aldershot, Hampshire, U.K., pp. 100-101. Auzépy disputes authenticity of account on p. 193 – 194; see notes 72 - 73. Again, see Synaxarion of St. Theodosia in Talbot, A. – M. (ed.) (1998) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation* (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), Washington., trans. N. Condas, pp. 6 - 7, note 30. Also see Auzépy, M.-F. (1990) "La Destruction de L'Icône du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: propagande ou réalité?" *Byzantion*, vol. 60, pp. 445 - 492. and Frolov, A. (1963) "Le Christ de la Chalcé", *Byzantion*, vol. 33., pp. 107- 120. This event is also recorded in Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 559 – 561.

against the use of icons, even though at this early stage, this was not the case in the provinces.³⁹ The chronicles of Theophilos and Nikephoros both document that in January of 730 Leo summoned a *silentium* against the holy images. Germanos told Emperor Leo that he could not act without an ecumenical council being summoned. Germanos resigned under pressure from Leo.⁴⁰ Then the emperor replaced him with a patriarch much more sympathetic to his iconoclastic views, Anastasios. Anastasios was patriarch from 730 - 754 AD. Subsequently, Patriarch Germanos died in exile at his family home.

Many scholars now consider St. John of Damascus (c.675 – c.740) the most prominent theological apologist for the iconodules in this phase of the struggle. Because he was writing from Palestine, which by this time was under Moslem control, he enjoyed freedom from Imperial interference. He possibly wrote from the famous Monastery of St. Sabas. Although the timing is in question, it is believed he wrote his three discourses defending orthodox practices relating to icons somewhere around the year 730 AD.⁴¹ Even though the actual edict of Leo is not extant,⁴² by using the writings of icon supporters as a guide we can reconstruct the arguments of the first phase of the controversy. The primary iconoclastic attack was based on

³⁹ Kaegi Jr., W. E. (1966) "The Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm", *Byzantinoslavica*, vol./part 27, pp. 48 - 70, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 565, Mango *Nikephoros of Constantinople, Short History*, p. 43. Both of these chroniclers document resistance to Leo's decree among clergy and monastics.

⁴¹ Cross, F. L. and Livingstone, E. A. (eds.) (1974) *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press), Oxford, UK, p. 748.

⁴² Anastos, M. V. (1968) "Leo III's Edict against the Images in the Year 726-27 and the Italo-Byzantine Relations between 726 and 730," in *Polycordia. Festschrift Franz Dolger III* (3rd edition), ed. P. Wirth, Amsterdam, pp. 5 - 41, pp. 6-9.

the Old Testament prohibition of graven images (see Exodus 20, quoted earlier in this chapter or Deuteronomy 6).⁴³ The second area of attack was the concept of the authority of the Emperor as "Gods chosen vessel" to determine the Church's direction.⁴⁴ In his treatise, *On the Divine Images*, St. John responded using sources from the Fathers, the Scriptures and Tradition. He took pains to distinguish the essential concepts that differentiated idol worship from the use of icons. He stated.

And I tell you that Moses, knowing the sons of Israel to be hard-hearted and seeing that they easily fell into idolatry, forbade them to make images. But we are not the same, for we stand firmly on the rock of faith, filled with the light of divine knowledge.⁴⁵

Resnick seeks to comment on this passage by summarising the resultant orthodox synthesis in this manner,

Since Christ has overcome the demons, idolatry is impossible for Christians in their sanctified use of images, just as the true Christian can, in himself,

⁴³ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 16 – 17.

⁴⁴ Gero, S. (1973) *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III - with particular attention to the Oriental Source* (Secretariat du Corpus SCO), Louvain, (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 346, Subsidia tomus 41), pp. 57 – 58 see, notes 33 and 34.

⁴⁵ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, p. 65.

only be an image of God and not the devil. Since the incarnation has restored the image of God in man, it becomes possible for the first time to venerate in the images of the saints, for example, the image of God. It is just this possibility, which the pagans and Jews did not enjoy. ⁴⁶

Key terms to the understanding of the orthodox position, in regard to icons, are Λατρεία and Προσκύνησις. Λατρεία is absolute worship or adoration, which is reserved for the Godhead alone. Προσκύνησις is relative veneration, as in bowing down in respect, John of Damascus illustrated this distinction by using Old Testament examples,

Fear not; have no anxiety; discern between the different kinds of worship. Abraham bowed to the sons of Hamor, men who had neither faith nor knowledge of God, when he bought the double cave intended to be his tomb. ⁴⁷ Jacob bowed to the ground before Esau, his brother, and also before the tip of his son Joseph's staff. ⁴⁸ **He bowed down, but he did not adore** [emphasis mine]. Joshua, the son of Nun, and Daniel bowed

⁴⁶ Resnick, I. M. (1985) "Idols and Images: Early definitions and controversies", *Sobornost*, eds. S. Hackel et al., London, vol. 7, pp. 35 - 49, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Gen. 23, 7 - 19 (LXX) and Acts 7, 16 (Stephen's witness).

⁴⁸ Gen. 33, 3 and Gen. 47, 31 (LXX).

in veneration before an angel of God, ⁴⁹ but they did not adore him. For adoration is one thing, and that which is offered in order to honour something of great excellence is another. ⁵⁰

These nuances are integrated with the other pivotal points of St. John's writings. The assertion was made that with the coming of Christ a crucial change occurred in the fundamental relationship between God and man. The iconodules argued that the Incarnation, Christ assuming human flesh, enabled Him to be represented in images. During His earthly life, Christ ate, slept, walked, talked and was touched. These actions also took place after his Resurrection. These deeds were participated in, testified to and handed down to the Church, within the apostolic witness. This line of reasoning was to be elaborated by St. Theodore the Studite, as it became more significant in the second phase of the conflict during the ninth century. Even so, it was a vital aspect of John's defence against iconoclasm. ⁵¹ The sanctification of the material cosmos through its grace and ability to be spirit bearing also is featured in St. John's opinions on the divine images.

In former times God who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh conversing with men. I make an

⁴⁹ Jos. 5,13 – 16 and Dan. 8, 15 - 20. (LXX).

⁵⁰ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 18 - 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

image of the God of whom I see. I do not worship matter; I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take His abode in matter; who worked out my salvation through matter. Never will I cease honouring the matter, which wrought out my salvation! ⁵²

Yet, another area that John commented upon was the claim that the emperor was entitled to a say in the affairs of the Church. These opinions are presented in the following passage.

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers and shepherds, for building up the body of Christ. ⁵³ He does not mention emperors. And again, Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account ⁵⁴...Political prosperity is the business of emperors; the condition of the Church is the concern of shepherds and teachers. Any other method is piracy. ⁵⁵

The Third Apology of St. John elaborates on the concept of image and the various meanings and applications within the iconoclastic debate. He begins his examination by first listing the "questions". 1). What is an image? 2). Why are images made? 3). How many kinds of images are

⁵² Ibid., p. 23.

⁵³ I Cor. 12, 28.

⁵⁴ Heb. 13, 17.

⁵⁵ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 59 - 60.

there? 4). What may be depicted by an image and what may not? 5). Who first made images?

An image is a likeness, or a model, or a figure of something, showing in itself what it depicts. An image is not always like its prototype in every way...All images reveal and make perceptible those things which are hidden. ⁵⁶

The key points to the argument are demonstrated. The types of images are enumerated and explained. First, there is the natural image. The Son of the Father is the first natural and precisely similar image of the invisible God, for He reveals the Father in His own person. The Word is the messenger who makes the divine nature perceptible to us, and the Spirit is the interpreter of the Word. Secondly, there is the image of things yet to come, such as God's foreknowledge of things yet to happen, His changeless purpose from before all ages. The next image is man, who is made in the image and likeness of God. Fourth, the images are of invisible and bodiless things that give us a glimpse into the realm of the God. Fifth, images are prefigurements or types, ⁵⁷ which allow foreshadowing of future events. Sixth, images are made to remember past events. These may be in the form of the written word or in the material form.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁷ Daniélou, J. (1956) *The Bible and the Liturgy*, University of Notre Dame - Liturgical Studies, English Edition (University of Notre Dame Press), Notre Dame, IN, see especially Introduction and Chapter 1 for a detailed understanding of biblical typology – type and antitype.

Either remove these images, altogether, and reject the authority of Him who commanded them to be made, or else accept them in the manner and with the esteem which they deserve. ⁵⁸

All physical things and things that are circumscribed may be depicted in images. Those things uncircumscribed cannot be depicted.

In the beginning, He who is God begot His only Son, His Word, the living image of Himself, the natural and precisely similar likeness of His eternity. He then made man in His image and likeness...God did not unite Himself with angelic nature, but with human nature... It is not their place to reign or be glorified together with those who shall sit at the Father's table; the saints, on the other hand, are sons of God, sons of the Kingdom, heirs of God, and fellow heirs of Christ, for they are servants by nature, friends by election, and sons and fellow-heirs by divine grace, as the Lord said to the Father.⁵⁹

The change that profoundly affected the course of events was the death of Leo III on 18 June 741 and the succession of his son Constantine V (741-775) to the throne. Constantine V (called Copronymus ⁶⁰ in derision)

⁵⁸ This is a vital element in the Damascene's exposition in this phase of his argument against the iconoclasts.

⁵⁹ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 73 – 82.

⁶⁰ Literally meaning – “dung-named”: Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 551 - 552.

became emperor after a two-year civil war against his brother-in-law, Artavasdos. During the time that Artavasdos and his supporters controlled the capital, the iconodulic coterie once again became the dominant power in the Queen City. Even, the incumbent Patriarch Anastasios supported Artavasdos.⁶¹ However, this period was short lived; Constantine vanquished this faction, re-took Constantinople, strengthened his grip on power and dealt harshly with the rebels.⁶² The emperor reserved the most humiliating treatment for the patriarch. He had him scourged (possibly blinded) and paraded naked and seated backwards on a donkey in the Hippodrome. This event fulfilled a prophetic admonition of Patriarch Germanos.⁶³ If reported accurately, this indignation demonstrated Constantine's intent to subjugate church leadership to his will.⁶⁴ This last view is supported by Ostrogorsky but denied by Gero.⁶⁵

Constantine was a man quite different in character from his father Leo. His rearing and sophisticated Constantinopolitan education gave him an astute mind with an understanding of the theological premises of iconoclasm. Because of this background, he shifted the basis of the objection to the use of images from idol worship to opposition centred on Christological

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 576; Theophanes documents Patriarch Anastasios "testifying" to Constantine's Nestorian views.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 581.

⁶³ Ibid., see p. 564, for Germanos' prophetic utterance to Anastasios.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 581 "and bending him to his will (for the man held similar beliefs as his own), seated him on the episcopal throne."

⁶⁵ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, p. 166 for the opposing view cf. Gero, S. (1977) *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V - with particular attention to Oriental Sources* (Secretariat du Corpus SCO), Louvain (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 384, Subsidia tomus 41), p. 24 note 45.

grounds. He combined this theological shift with a change in tactics. After the Council of Hieria in 754, Constantine expanded his opposition against the monastic element within the empire, but most especially in and around the capital. He confiscated monastic property, tortured, humiliated, publicly paraded monks and nuns in mockery and even compelled them to marry.⁶⁶ The martyrdom of several monks, such as Andrew (Kalybites),⁶⁷ Peter the Stylite and Stephen the Hermit⁶⁸ is documented in iconodulic literature, as examples of the rare occasions when monks were put to death.⁶⁹ There are some theories for this repression of monasticism. Gero has characterised his thoughts on this matter in this way:

It is not possible to prove that the attack on monasticism was primarily a measure of self-protection by the state against the economic and demographic drain caused by parasitic monasteries - rather, to my own mind, the moving force was Constantine's own, personal hatred for the ascetic way of life, which was diametrically opposed to his own. One can also speculate that he regarded the monks as a politically unreliable

⁶⁶ Morris, R. (1995) *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843-1118*, (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge UK., pp. 12 – 13. Morris cites Theophanes as documentation, p. 13, note 9.

⁶⁷ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 595.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 610 – 611.

⁶⁹ Auzépy, *La Vie d'Etienne le Jeune par Etienne le Diacre*, pp. 169 –172, also Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 598.

force, which – under the guise of religious instruction and edification – fomented disloyalty and discontent even among the emperor's close associates.⁷⁰

Another tactical change the new emperor initiated to battle his adversaries, the iconodules, was to raise the stakes of the game. He did this by calling the Council of Hieria. This council met from 10 February 754 to 8 August 754 at the palace of Hieria. The final session was held in the Church of the Virgin of Blachernai. Patriarch Constantine II, who was hand chosen by the emperor, replaced Patriarch Anastasios who had died earlier that year. This replacement did not occur until 8 August 754.⁷¹ Theophanes pointed out quite clearly that this conclave was not claimant to the title "Ecumenical" with these words, "These men by themselves decreed whatever came into their heads, though none of the universal sees was represented, namely those of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem."⁷² Nonetheless, the emperor had prepared well for this council.

Nowhere is it mentioned that coercion was used to extort the consent of those present; iconophile tradition, very significantly, could not point to a single iconophile confessor from among the

⁷⁰ Gero, S. Byzantine Iconoclasm and The Failure of Medieval Reformation," in *Image and the Word - Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, vol. 4, ed. J. Gutmann (Scholars Press), Missoula, MT, pp. 49 - 62, p. 55.

⁷¹ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 39.

⁷² Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 591.

several hundred bishops. It is of course *prima facie* most likely that the majority of the participants, appointed during the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V, were at least sympathizers with the iconoclastic policy, if not active iconoclasts.⁷³

The resulting legacy of this council is that it officially elevated the iconodules to the status of "heretics" allowing their persecution by what we would call today "state-sponsored-terrorism".⁷⁴ It would appear that Constantine's motivation had a three-fold purpose. First, he personally opposed icons on theological grounds. Monasticism, which he considered harmful to society and to the strength of the empire, was the second target of his displeasure. Third, his desire was to do away with the opposition to his iconoclastic policies by eliminating its core monastic leadership and placing secular clergy with iconoclastic sympathies in key ecclesiastical posts.⁷⁵ After more than thirty years on the throne, Constantine died and his son Leo IV, the Khazar, ascended to the imperial dignity.

With the change from Constantine V's rule, the stage was set for a transition away from his stringent policies of repression. Leo like his father was an iconoclast but was not as rigorously anti-monastic. Exiled monks were allowed to return to the capital and were even appointed to vacant sees. In his *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor*, which will be discussed in

⁷³ Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V - with particular attention to Oriental Sources*, pp. 61 – 62, esp. note 27.

⁷⁴ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, pp. 173 – 174.

⁷⁵ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 604 – 607.

more detail in a later section on hagiographic literature written by Patriarch Methodios, the churchman characterises Leo IV in this way.

...the only son of Constantine Leo, the lukewarm, both good and very bad. Without an outlet, he was not very sympathetic towards his mother during her illness. He did not even honour grief in that he garrisoned soldiers in his home. He thought he honoured his mother, but throughout his sorrow, he made ready the royal carriage for her coffin.⁷⁶

His description continues several pages later. Methodios uses these adjectives to describe Leo. He is "sly as a fox, impious, cruel by threatening to blinding a youth's eyes⁷⁷ and in league with the devil". Leo is also characterised as being a Nestorian.⁷⁸ Methodios even alluded to Constantine's Khazarian ancestry. Leo reigned only a short time, 775-780. He died leaving his wife, Irene, regent for the young emperor Constantine VI, age nine or ten at the time of his father's death.

In this year, on 8 September of the 4th indiction, the most pious Irene together with her son Constantine were miraculously entrusted by God with the

⁷⁶ Latyšev, B. (ed.) (1918) "Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Thophanis Confessoris e codice Mosqvensi no.159 edidit", in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie - Series viii*, tomos. Xiii: pt. iv, (Classe Hist. – Phil.), Petrograd, pp. i + 120, p. 7. "χλιαρώτατος = lukewarm", an obvious allusion to Rev 3, 14 – 17. Also note the inference of an unfeeling and uncaring person.

⁷⁷ We discover later the "youth" is Theophanes the Confessor, himself, in his younger years before he took on the monastic habit.

⁷⁸ Latyšev, B. (ed.) (1918) "Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Thophanis Confessoris e codice Mosqvensi no.159 edidit", in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie - Series viii*, tomos. Xiii: pt. iv (Classe Hist. – Phil.), Petrograd, pp. i + 120, p. 10.

Empire so that in this matter also God might be glorified though a widow and her orphaned son...⁷⁹

Irene, a devout lover of icons, was extremely ambitious and cautious in her moves to restore them. Her first opportunity occurred four years after the beginning of her regency. She secured the aid of the aged, infirmed Patriarch Paul, who resigned repentant of his co-operation with iconoclasm. Paul retired to monastic life. The *Vita of Tarasios* quotes Paul's expressions of repentance in this way,

The indecent situation of the Church, suffering from heresy and so pained by a long lasting evil doctrine that she has acquired an incurable wound, that led me to this measure, and third, my assent to heresy, written with my <own> hands and in ink. ...I have chosen to dwell in a tomb rather than become liable to the anathemas of the four holy apostolic sees.⁸⁰

With Paul's help, Irene secured the election of new patriarch, Tarasios. A layman, in imperial service, he possessed a brilliant mind and was an adept tactician. After some reluctance to ascent to the patriarchal throne, he spoke before the Senate and the Army. Then Tarasios was elevated to the patriarchal throne to the acclaim of all present.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 626.

⁸⁰ Ignatios the Deacon, (1998) *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios - (BHG 1698)*, Introduction Text Translation and Commentary - S. Efthymiadis (Ashgate Lmt. in the Variorum Series), Hampshire, U.K (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs), pp. 79 – 81, trans. p. 174 – 175.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 85 –91, trans. pp.177 – 178.

In August 786, Tarasios and Irene called a synod to meet in the Church of The Holy Apostles, in Constantinople. The event that subsequently occurred showed the lingering strength of the iconoclasts. Imperial troops, still espousing iconoclastic convictions, stormed the church during the conclave.

...behold a swarm of wasps, I mean men raging like lions, and a herd of the army and the band of Constantine...[they cried] 'We shall not allow his doctrines to be abolished and a speech to be proclaimed in favour of the existence of idols. Yet, should someone attempt to do this and should we see a synod convoked by him rejected before our eyes, we shall redden the earth with the blood of priests.'⁸²

Tarasios and the empress wisely and quickly disbanded the gathering and after almost a year of manoeuvrings, they recalled a council on 24 September, 787 [the Feast of St. Thekla] in Nicaea in Bithynia.⁸³ The Acts of Nicaea II, as this council is now known, contain some of the most authoritative documentation we have of the theological views of both rival camps during the entire conflict. Combining this conciliar record with some of the later works of Patriarch Nikephoros, who attended the Council, allows us a good overview of the arguments of both sides.⁸⁴ The theological

⁸² Ibid., pp. 100 –101, trans.- pp. 182.

⁸³ Alexander, P. J. (1958) *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople-Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford at Clarendon Press), Oxford, pp. 18 – 22.

⁸⁴ O'Connell, P. (1972) *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828) Patriarch of Constantinople - Pentarchy and Primacy* (Pontificii Institutum Studiorum Orientalium), Rome, (Orientalia Christiana Analecta no. 194), pp. 53 – 67.

suppositions of the opponents of icons, their arguments and thoughts appear juxtaposed with those of the iconodules seeking to refute them. Because of this, the sessions and Horos of the Second Council of Nicaea give us a glimpse, into not only the minds and attitudes of its participants; but also those of the iconoclastic Council of Hieria-Blachernai.⁸⁵

Under the able Patriarch Tarasios, the approximately three hundred and fifty bishops, including representatives of the sees of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem met in the same city as the first Ecumenical Council of 325.⁸⁶ The council condemned and anathematised the iconoclasts as heretics. These delegates included Church leaders from among the episcopate, the clergy and monastics. The young Emperor Constantine VI and his mother the Empress Irene attended the last session in the Magnaura Palace.⁸⁷ The Horos of the proceedings begins in this way.

WE DECLARE that next to the sign of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable holy icons-made of colours, pebbles, or any other type of material that is fit - may be set in the holy churches of God, on holy utensils and vestments, on walls, and boards,

⁸⁵ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*. It presents a good overview of Council and its proceedings, Horos and signatories; - see pp.176 – 191.

⁸⁶ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* - (BHG 1698), p. 103 This document also confirms the presence of the representatives of the other Apostolic sees and the future Patriarch Nicephoros as well as monastics; for trans. see p. 183.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 106: “..τε τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων καὶ πάσης τῆς θεοκλήτου συνόδου ἐν τῷ τῆς εἰρημένης.”

in houses and in streets. These may be icons of our Lord and God the Saviour Jesus Christ, or of our Lady the holy Theotokos, or of the honourable saints.⁸⁸

The council dealt with several sensitive issues in its deliberations. These issues included the re-entry of former iconoclasts into the Church, the topic of the simoniac clergy and the passage of twenty-two disciplinary canons.⁸⁹

With real insight into the practical implications of the situation, the Council wisely received the former iconoclasts back into the Church after they had abjured their heresy before the assembly. This tolerant attitude did not, however, meet with the approval of the representatives of monasticism and heated exchanges took place. For the first time, it became obvious that there was a cleavage within the Byzantine Church, which was to affect the entire future history of Byzantium... At the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea II, the moderate party was victorious.⁹⁰

The signatories of the *Horos* of Nicaea II were also significant for ecclesiastical history. This document bears the authority and the *imprimatur* of the Pentarchy. Peter, protopresbyter of the throne of the Holy Apostle Peter, representing Pope Hadrian, Bishop of Rome, Peter,

⁸⁸ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, p. 179.

⁸⁹ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, pp. 521 – 587, Canons see pp. 555 – 570.

⁹⁰ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, pp. 178 – 179.

presbyter, the abbot of the monastery of St. Sabbas also in place of Pope Hadrian, Tarasios, Bishop of Constantinople and New Rome signed the document. Joining them, representing the eastern Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem were the presbyters John and Thomas. This unanimity of all the Apostolic Churches gave this conclave the legitimacy and the status of an Ecumenical Council. However, this was not a unanimous opinion at the time, Theodore the Studite expressed a different view concerning this Council in his early letters. Theodore characterised the Council as a local council, even though he later recanted this position.⁹¹ A significant contribution of Nicaea II was that it furthered the Christological definitions, which had begun in 325 at Nicaea I, the first Ecumenical Council.⁹²

From the fourth century until the eighth, the Church responded to threats to her unity by calling together the bishops of the Church, worldwide so that they could define, explain and develop the points of dispute in council. These "Ecumenical Councils," as they were later named, resulted from specific questions of faith that arose and were in dispute within the body of the Church. The councils, in effect, set the boundaries of what the "orthodox" Church believed. Inside the boundary, you were orthodox, outside, a heretic. The primary essence of all the councils revolved around

⁹¹ Fatouros, G. (ed.) (1991) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols. (Walter De Gruyter), Berlin and New York, vol.1, epistle 38: .."ἀλλ'οὐδὲ αὐτὴν σύνοδον ὡς οἰκουμενικὴν, ἀλλ' ὡς τοπικὴν καὶ ἰδιὸν πτῶμα τῶν ἄλλων ἀνορθώσασαν." Also see Henry, P. (1974), "Initial Eastern Assessments of the Seventh Oecumenical Council", *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s., vol. 25, pp. 75 - 92.

⁹² Walter, C. (1988) "The Icon and Image of Christ: The Second Council of Nicaea and Byzantine Tradition", *Sobornost*, eds. S. Hackel et al., vol. 10, pp. 23 - 33, pp. 32 – 33.

these central questions. Who was Jesus Christ? What was the Holy Trinity? What was the relationship between and among the Persons of the Trinity? What did Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension mean for mankind? From Nicaea I in 325 AD until Nicaea II in 787 AD, these questions dominated the conciliar climate of the Church. The manner in which the council of Nicaea II dealt with the Christological question is revealed in this passage by Theodosios, a recalcitrant iconoclast seeking re-admittance into the Church.

Moreover, I am well pleased that there should be images in the churches of the faithful, especially the image of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the holy Mother of God, of every kind of material, both gold and silver and of every colour, so that his incarnation may be set forth to all men.⁹³

The Second Council of Nicaea was the last council recognised as ecumenical by both Eastern and Western Churches. The first phase of iconoclasm ends with the conclusion of this gathering.

Between the Storms

The reign of Irene and her son Emperor Constantine VI was a period marked with disturbing events. Although the issue of the icons appeared to

⁹³ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, II Nice, AD 787, Extract from the Acts, Session I, p. 535.

be settled, external reversals in both wars and politics made the capital an uneasy place. The tension increased between the Empress and her son, Constantine, as he grew older. It was his desire to assume more power, and freedom from his mother's intervention, both in his personal life and his imperial prerogatives.

Irene chose a young woman named Maria and obliged Constantine to marry her. Afterward, almost defiantly, he developed a relationship with a woman of his mother's court, named Theodote. Ultimately, the stress between the young emperor and Irene came to a boiling point. In 795 after providing himself some positive public opinion with several military successes, Constantine, thought he was strong enough to act. He secured a divorce from Maria by intimidating Patriarch Tarasios with threats of bodily harm.⁹⁴ He then married Theodote, which was an act that was contrary to canonical law. The Patriarch would not perform the ceremony, but Joseph, a high-ranking priest of Hagia Sophia' Cathedral did officiate at the wedding ceremony.⁹⁵ This event and the subsequent crisis have come to be known the *Moechian Controversy*. The monks, Plato of Sakkoudion and his nephew, Theodore, reacted immediately as they led the outcry. Even though they were Theodote's close relatives, Plato and Theodore vigorously condemned the Emperor's actions, as well as Constantine and his new wife, personally. Patriarch Tarasios and the priest Joseph were also strongly condemned. For the monks, the canons concerning adultery

⁹⁴ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* - (BHG 1698), p. 128; trans. 191 - 192.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 117 -131; trans. pp. 188 - 193.

had been violated and there was no room for compromise. Professor Henry observes, "Constantine's annoyance at Saccoudion's inflexibility developed into a conviction that imperial prerogatives were at stake, and in February A.D. 797 he dispatched some troops to the monastery." ⁹⁶

The acrimony caused a further deterioration and estrangement between the patriarchal office and the monks. The monks refused to commemorate the Patriarch in the liturgy, removing his name from the diptychs and finally refusing to concelebrate with anyone in communion with the Emperor or the priest Joseph. The fact that they saw no change further infuriated the monks who now completely broke communion with Tarasios. Dr. Henry continues his analysis and elaborates this point in this way.

The specific aim of various family and official visits to Saccudion was to persuade the monks to return to communion with the patriarch. At this stage in Theodore's career a breaking of communion was something of a technicality, since Saccudion was rather far from the capital and disaffection would not often become apparent by repeated absence from appointed ceremonies. The technicality became the source of rumours, however, and to the extent the monks could disturb the consciences of the people it was highly desirable that they be persuaded to restore full relations with the patriarch. ⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Henry, P. (1969) "The Moechian Controversy and the Constantinopolitan Synod of January ad. 809", *Journal of Theological Studies n. s.*, vol. XX, pp. 459 - 522, p. 502.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

This forced the issue and the emperor reacted by having them banished from the capital. The patriarch reprimanded Joseph, but Tarasios exercised *economia* towards Constantine. Taking advantage of her son's preoccupation with these events, Irene began to plot her comeback. Moreover, Constantine suffered a number of military reversals and a personal loss. His infant son, Leo, died devastating Constantine and leaving no male heir for the empire.⁹⁸ The next action by Irene left her sole empress, but a completely wounded image in the perception of her subjects. She ordered her son, the Emperor, to be blinded and shortly after this incident, he died owing to the severity of his wounds.⁹⁹ Irene then became the first woman to rule the Byzantine Empire on her own. She allowed the banished monks, Plato and Theodore, to return to the capital and endowed a monastery to be refurbished for their use. The monastic house of "St. John tou Stoudiou" was located in the southwestern section of the city. [See Figure 4: - Map of Constantinople].

The monks now called Studites, under the leadership of Theodore, led the conservative monastic party in ninth century Constantinople. The Studite monastery became an influential centre for monastic rule and thought, throughout the empire.¹⁰⁰ The impact it exerted is still felt today in

⁹⁸ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 648.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p 648, Bekker, I. (ed.) (1838/1839) *Chronicle of Georgios Cedrenus* (Weberi), Bonnae, vol. ii, p. 31. This account is detailed.

¹⁰⁰ Frazee, C. (1981) "Theodore of Studios and Ninth Century Monasticism in Constantinople", *Studia Monastica*, vol. 28, pp. 27 - 58, pp. 38 – 45 describe life and organisation of Studios. This was to become the model for Athonite Monasteries even until present day.

Orthodox monastic communities around the world. Theodore was to be the ninth century's "St. John of Damascus." In addition to his systemising the monastic rule for coenobitic monasteries, he was a tireless writer and fearless apologist for the cause of the icons.

The financial and fiscal chaos that ensued during Irene's time on the throne set the stage for several abortive coups to topple her. Ultimately, her spirit broken and with age as a factor, she was politically weakened enough to allow a successful take over by the patrician and court official, Nikephoros, in 802.

The Age of Nikephoros the Emperor

Nikephoros I was a man of considerable talent and experience. He was well into middle age when he ascended the throne and had mastery of the intricacies of politics within the court, the bureaucracy and the army. He was a supporter of icons and a man whose personal habits were pious and even frugal.

Nikephoros overthrew Irene, but he did not overthrow her regime. He was backed by her leading officials and even by one of her relatives. Patriarch Tarasios, as well as other high officials readily accepted him as Irene's successor.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Treadgold, W. (1988) *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)* (Stanford University Press), Stanford, CA, p. 126.

Theophanes the Confessor did not have a high opinion of the new emperor. He used these epithets to denigrate Nikephoros: wretch, usurper, Judas, avarice, wicked, evil and finally even the charge that the new emperor was a homosexual.”¹⁰²

Nikephoros is now considered by some modern historians to have been an able, even a distinguished emperor, “a man of great ability.”¹⁰³ Nonetheless, just as his predecessors, Nikephoros believed that the authority of the Church should be subservient to the imperial wish. In the early part of 806 this attitude and events resulted in another clash. The respected elderly Patriarch Tarasios died and the emperor, wishing to appear conciliatory, sought the advice of many seeking a suitable replacement. The monastics supported a candidate for patriarch from their own ranks. There is a belief that Plato of Sakkoudion even named Theodore, his nephew, as his choice.¹⁰⁴ In spite of the fact that Theodore did not name himself, he did strongly urge that a monastic with certain characteristics be elevated.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps not coincidentally, these traits described him perfectly.

¹⁰² Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 657 ff.

¹⁰³ Treadgold, W. (1997) *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford University Press), Stanford, CA, p. 424.

¹⁰⁴ Theodoros Studite, *Laudatio Platonis*, PG vol. xcix, col. 837 b, “τὰ ψηφίσματα ἐπὶ πολλοὺς οἱ πολλοί, ὥς ἕκαστος εἶχεν κατὰ φιλίαν ἢ ἀλήθειαν..”

¹⁰⁵ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol. I, *Epistle 16, ad Νικηφόρο βασιλεῖ* pp. 46 – 48, specifically lines 30 – 31. Theodore specifies that the Emperor's choice be made from among the “bishops, abbots or stylites but definitely not a layman.” He continues to state that the chosen candidate should be able to direct the path of other Christians. Even though Theodore does not name himself, it is obvious he is describing a person with his known characteristics. Also, see next note.

When no clear consensus candidate emerged, the emperor used his prerogative, nominated and secured the election of Nikephoros, a layman of the court to the patriarchal throne. The elevation of Tarasios from layman to patriarch served as a model for such a move. The monastics were infuriated and the powder keg of yet another confrontation only required a spark to ignite it. This spark came in the form of an old wound between the monks, the patriarch and the emperor. The issue of the marriage of Constantine VI re-emerged, specifically because of the imposition of imperial power. A local synod was summoned and it reinstated the priest, Joseph, at the request of the crown. Emperor Nikephoros did this to re-pay Joseph for his services to the empire. Professor Henry describes these events in this way:

The emperor instigated this, and he was willing to open this old wound not primarily because he wanted to antagonize the monks, but because Joseph had served him well in helping to bring an end to a dangerous revolt in the year 803. In return for his services to the State, Joseph was to be restored to favour with the Church.¹⁰⁶

Once again, the monks, the patriarch and the crown were at loggerheads. The moderate Patriarch Nikephoros tried to find a middle ground, but he was opposed and even scorned by the zealot monks. The emperor did not react in a conciliatory fashion.

¹⁰⁶ Henry, "The Moechian Controversy and the Constantinopolitan Synod of January ad. 809", p. 506.

The emperor exiled Theodore, Joseph [Theodore's brother and Archbishop of Thessalonica] and Plato to different islands near Constantinople, and when the other Studites refused to accept the council's decision he expelled them from their monastery and exiled some of them. It was hardly an ideal result for Nikephoros, but the emperor could not regard a monk who presumed to excommunicate him and his patriarch as anything but disloyal, and allowing disloyalty to go unpunished endangered his throne.¹⁰⁷ During this exile, imposed shortly after the Synod of January AD 809, Theodore kept in constant communication with his supporters and encouraged them to resist, speaking out even to the point of martyrdom. In Theodore's eyes the responsibility of a monk was clear and in his perception, the perfect role model for monks was St. John the Baptist.¹⁰⁸

This point of view was to have a great affect during the second phase of iconoclasm and in the events of Patriarch Methodios' life. Theodore used the issue of Joseph, the priest, to appeal to both Pope Leo, as the inheritor of the senior Apostolic See and to Patriarch Nikephoros.¹⁰⁹ Theodore asked Pope Leo to intervene and to resolve the issue of Joseph's reinstatement. Moreover, Theodore assured Patriarch Nikephoros that he did indeed accept the concept of the "economy of the saints", which was the

¹⁰⁷ Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, pp. 156 – 157.

¹⁰⁸ Hatlie, P. (1996) "The Politics of Salvation: Theodore of Stoudios on Martyrdom (Martyrion) and Speaking Out (Parrhesia)", *DOP*, vol. 50, pp. 263 - 287, p. 277.

¹⁰⁹ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol.1 Epistles 33 and 34 to Leo are vague and never mention either the Emperor or the Patriarch by name. The letter to Nikephoros – Epistle no. 30.

primary charge against Theodore and his brother Joseph, the Archbishop of Thessaloniki at the Synod of 809.

In 811, prior to launching a military campaign against the Bulgars, the emperor tried to reconcile with the exiled monks, but apparently to no avail. The emperor, his son, the co-emperor Staurakios and his son-in-law Michael Rangabe left Constantinople to begin the military campaign. The first of the engagements went well, but in July 811 a crushing defeat occurred. The emperor was killed, Staurakios was severely wounded and the army was devastated. Staurakios was crowned emperor in the capital but his days were numbered from the onset. Within a short time, he abdicated, owing to his wounds. He withdrew taking on a monk's habit to await death, and died shortly thereafter. Michael Rangabe was the obvious choice to be the new emperor. These events happened within months of each other. Theophanes the Confessor relates that Michael restored Theodore and the Studite monks.¹¹⁰ The restoration was reported by Theodore, himself, in his famous *Eulogy of Plato*. Theodore related that not only had the monks been allowed back to Constantinople, but that they were to be allowed to re-inhabit the Studios Monastery.¹¹¹ After two years of ineffective leadership, Michael I was toppled and Leo V, the Armenian became emperor in 813.

¹¹⁰ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 678. Theophanes is not very complimentary of the Emperor Nikephoros. This view is supported by Ostrogorsky - see p. 197. Cf both Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople-Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*. pp, 96 - 97; and Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, p. 169, see note 227, argue against this opinion.

¹¹¹ Migne, J. - P. (ed.) (1857-1866) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, Paris, vol. 99.

Leo V and the Re-Appearence of Iconoclasm

When we look at Leo's background and the rapid series of reversals that the empire suffered between 811 and 813, we might well understand the resurgence of iconoclasm. Leo was from Armenia, the eastern portion of the empire an area known to harbour iconoclastic sympathies. Additionally there arose a question concerning the coronation oath exacted from by Patriarch Nikephoros from Leo before his coronation. Turner explores this issue and Leo's background in his monograph. He explains:

The pervasive influence of pro-Isaurian and iconoclast elements in Leo's circle prompted Nicephorus to ask for confirmation of the oath after the coronation. Leo's word as general was quite different from Leo's word as emperor, and Nikephoros was especially sensitive to matters of canonical propriety.¹¹²

In addition, as a military man, Leo was a pragmatist. He had observed that during the reigns of the iconoclast emperors, there was relative success in war, good economic expansion, and even something more personally appealing, a long sovereignty for the ruling house.¹¹³ Leo greatly admired the accomplishments of emperors Leo III and Constantine V. These "facts"

¹¹² Turner, D. (1990) "The Origins and Accession of Leo V (813-820)", *JÖB*, vol. 40, pp. 172-203, p.200. This entire article is an excellent overview of Leo V's accession.

¹¹³ Ignatios the Deacon (1998) *The Life of Patriarch Nicephorus I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, trans. E. A. Fisher, (Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection), Washington, D.C., p. 75, " ...because <their fantasies> promised length of days and victories to him if he would vomit out his impiety upon what had been established in the past."

inevitably led Leo to only one conclusion. God was not pleased with the use of icons, therefore, His displeasure was the root cause of all the recent set backs for the empire. The iconodules were wrong, and it was his duty as emperor to correct the path leading to ruin. Turner illustrates the mindset of Leo in this way:

Leo, like his contemporaries, was caught up in the uncertainties of a time when the Roman state was beset by external threats and internal upheavals. The modern reader may not appreciate the seriousness of the empire's troubles in 813 since the iconodule chroniclers, keen to minimise Leo's glory, avoided stressing the urgency of the crisis from which Leo personally delivered the state. He was popular with the army, and sensitive to the mood of the *tagmata* and the *demoi*...The *sakra* Leo issued upon the death of Krum, copies of which were distributed throughout the empire, proclaimed that God had shown confidence in him and the military. Leo was after all the first emperor to have been chosen from the ranks of the Army since Leo III in 717. No mention is made in the extant fragments of the *sakra* of the Isaurians or iconoclasm, but the tenor is clearly that of a soldier-emperor intent on reviving the power and prestige of his office, and in that process the restoration of iconoclasm on the Isaurian model was in many ways the next logical step.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Turner, "The Origins and Accession of Leo V (813-820)", p. 201, also see notes 143 and 144 (same page).

As can be observed in the above quote, the post iconoclastic refashioning of history, whether from chroniclers or hagiographers, diminished the positive motivations and the effect of Leo's leadership. Given the contemporary accounts, neither he nor his reign can be assessed in a balanced and objective manner.

Antagonists Become Allies

It is said that politics creates strange bedfellows, but they can also result from conviction. As Leo began his new denunciation of the use of images within the empire, the Patriarch and Theodore the Studite, once personal rivals and severe critics of each other, joined to confront this common threat to the peace of the Church. Leo shared the concept, which other emperors before him had held, that the Church should, in all things, be subservient to the will of the emperor.¹¹⁵ Both the Patriarch and the Studite monks, led by Theodore, were scandalised by this opinion. Disregarding past differences with the Patriarch and in keeping with his character Theodore was not timid in expressing his opinions. He is quoted supporting Nikephoros at the conclusion of a lengthy dialogue between Leo and the Patriarch.

Do not undo the status of the Church, for the
Apostle spoke thus: 'And he gave some apostles,

¹¹⁵ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Nicephoros I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, pp.101 – 102: "Emperor, it is obvious to us and to everyone. As you say, that you have been appointed to act as a mediator over Christ's greatest flock "(Italics in trans.).

and some prophets, and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints' (Eph. IV, 11), but he did not speak of Emperors. To you, Emperor, has been entrusted the political system and the army. Take care of them, and leave the Church to its shepherds and teachers according to the Apostle.¹¹⁶

The Emperor surrounded himself with an inner circle of iconoclastic advisors, quite a few being of Armenian descent. The learned John the Grammarian was believed to be one of them.¹¹⁷ Leo strengthened his support among lower clergy, bishops and monastics. These were men easily bought or those seeking to curry favour with the emperor. Leo's views were convincing to some, others he bribed or offered high posts. In their letters or writings, both Nikephoros and Theodore made all of these accusations.¹¹⁸ It should be noted that *anyone* agreeing with Leo would have been extremely suspect in their eyes.

Tension steadily rose between the Emperor and the iconodules from Epiphany to Easter of 815. Leo ostensibly sought to compromise. He would recognise the value of images, as "teaching tools or visual aids" for the unsophisticated, but all images must be placed high within the

¹¹⁶ Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople-Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 130 – 132, trans. by Alexander from *Vita Nicetae* see p. 130 note 2, and p. 132 note 1. As was discussed earlier, this echoes John of Damascus' arguments.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p127, also see note f, p.235.

¹¹⁸ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol. ii, Epistle 112 to Euthymios of Sardis "ωλίσθησεν ὁ Συμωναῖος ἐν ἐπισκόποις καὶ ὁ Χερσῶνος, ἐν ἡγουμένοις Χρυσοπολίτις, ὁ τῆς Δίου, ὁ τῆς Χώρας μικροῦ δεῖν πάντες οἱ ἐν ᾠαστει."

churches. This would eliminate the veneration of the material of the icon.¹¹⁹ Both Nikephoros and Theodore rejected this proposition, recognising it as merely a first step in a plan to ban images totally. The emperor angered by their arrogant defiance, demanded Nikephoros' resignation. Nikephoros refused to resign detailing the facts that he was upholding orthodoxy, the decrees of an Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II) and that he could only be "judged" by his peers, the other Patriarchs of the Pentarchy. Nikephoros rather eloquently answered the emperor's demand.

Oh Emperor, I shall not descend in this casual way,
for I gave you no reason to depose me. If,
however, I am forced because of my orthodoxy, or
piety, either by yourself or by one of your imperial
officers—send him, and I shall descend.¹²⁰

An infuriated Leo deposed and exiled the Patriarch as well as Theodore and his followers. It was from these places of exile that both men of orthodoxy produced some of their most significant writings. They also became reconciled with each other. Literary and iconic evidence of this reconciliation can be seen in *Figure 2*. As further proof of this O'Connell says this, "Theodore even agreed to count Tarasios among the Fathers."¹²¹ The recanting of his condemnation of both Tarasios and Nikephoros, by

¹¹⁹ Bekker, I. (ed.) (1838) "Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armeno", Paris, col.1023c: "μικρὸν σύνελθε ἡμῖν ἵνα περιέλωμεν πάντα τὰ χαμηλά. Ἐπεὶ εἰ οὐ βούλει, γνῶθι ὅτι οὗτος οὐ παραχωροῦμεν αὐτόθι σε εἶναι."

¹²⁰ Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople-Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 133, Alexander cites *Vita Nicetae col. xxx b*, cited in. Grumel, *Regestes no. 399*.

¹²¹ O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828) Patriarch of Constantinople - Pentarchy and Primacy*, pp. 50 – 51.

Theodore, would influence future events in the relationship between Patriarch Methodios and the followers of Theodore, the Studites.

To many scholars this phase of the icon debate was theologically a pale reflection of phase one. Ostrogorsky characterises the tone of the entire movement as rather lack lustre and without originality.¹²² Professor Alexander strongly argues the opposite point of view.¹²³ The focus of this phase of iconoclasm was primarily on the issue of who would wield authority over Church-state affairs. This concept of authority was a tangled web and it became as will be seen, a three-sided issue. The patriarch and secular clergy, the monastics and the imperial interests would clash repeatedly concerning power in the Church. These confrontations were to be the root cause for continued antagonisms and disputes in the future, most especially during the patriarchate of Methodios.

Leo chose a new patriarch who would be more *reasonable*. On Easter Sunday, 815, an iconoclastic patriarch Theodotus was enthroned. He had excellent political credentials, in that he was related to the family of Constantine V and was well known to Leo, having been a member of his court retinue. Immediately, a synod was summoned to repudiate Nicaea II and to re-establish the "legitimacy" of the Council of 754 (Hiereia - Blachernai). Theodotus presided over this gathering, called the Council of St. Sophia (815), and John the Grammarian steered the discussions. It is

¹²² Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, pp. 202 – 203.

¹²³ Alexander, P. J. (1953) "The Iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia (815) and its Definition (Horos)", *DOP*, Vol. 7, pp. 37 - 65.

considered that this council was portrayed as lacking of innovative thinking as well as relying primarily on past iconoclastic councils for its evidence. Previously discredited and repetitive patristic references are replete within the proceedings of this council. Alexander, Travis, Featherstone and O'Connell each give us accounts of the council's proceedings taken from Nikephoros' *Refutation and Overthrowing* (Ὶλεγχος καὶ Ὶνατροπή) of the Horos of the Council of 815 written from exile circa 820.¹²⁴ This was the time of general exodus of iconodules from Constantinople, which included a young Methodios. This should have occurred during the pontificates of either Pope Leo III or Pope Stephen III.

Notwithstanding, the joint opposition of patriarch and monk, the Emperor Leo and his allies persisted on their course of action. Hussey emphasises that Leo's actions had created, once again, a fissure between Rome and Constantinople. She points out, rather correctly, that in effect, Leo had painted himself into a corner. Rome could not allow the deposing of Nikephoros and support imperial interests.¹²⁵ Consequently, the entire episode lacked legitimacy and was destined to play itself out. Leo would not live to see this happen because of his murder. Mango describes the effect of Leo's assassination at Christmas Liturgy in St. Sophia, the year 820, in these words:

¹²⁴ Featherstone, J. (1984) "The Refutation of the Council of 815 by Nicephorus," PhD dissertation, Harvard. Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople - Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, see appendix for summary; Travis, J. (1984) *In Defence of the Faith - the Theology of Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople*, (Hellenic College Press), Brookline, MA, see introduction and summary; O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828) Patriarch of Constantinople - Pentarchy and Primacy*.

¹²⁵ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 58 – 60.

Fortunately, the luck of the Iconoclasts appeared to be breaking: far from dying in his bed and establishing a dynasty, Leo V was brutally murdered after a fairly short rule (820). His assassin, Michael II (820-29), stopped the persecution and recalled the exiles, but did not give them any further satisfaction.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Mango, C. (1975) "Historical Introduction to Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin, (University of Birmingham Press), Birmingham, UK, pp. 1 - 6, p. 5.

ΥΜΝΟΙ

Κρίνομαι κ' ὅτι ἄν' ἀκακίαι
μοῖς διδοράθην ::
Καὶ ταῖς τοῖς ἰσὺς λαοῖς ζοῦσιν ἡλῶ
σθ' ἐμὴ σὺ ::
Δοκίμασον με καὶ πείρασόν με ::
Πύρρον ποῖόν με φέρω καὶ τὴν
καρδίαν μου ::
Ὅτι τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν
φ' ἀφ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐγώ ::
Καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ::
Ὅτι ἐλπίς σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου
ταύτητος ::
Καὶ ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου
εἰσέρχου ::
Εἰσέρχου ἐκ τῆς ἐλπίδος σου ::
Καὶ ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ::
Νόμισα δ' ὅτι ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ::
Καὶ ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ἐάν τι ποῖόν σου ::

Θηκηφ
ο πρίφρ

ο θ πρ



ο θ πρ
ελέγχε με
πρίφρ
το κείκο
νομάχ



οι εικονομάχοι



Figure 2: - Sts. Nikephoros and Theodore the Studite Reconciled. Also shows Emperor Theophilos meeting with Iconoclastic Bishops. Taken from Theodore Psalter, British Library ¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Lowden, J. (1997) *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (Phaidon Press), London, p. 281.

Civil War Again

For the next three years, Michael II fought a civil war for the throne with Thomas the Slav. While the war was being fought, the iconoclastic Patriarch Theodotus died in 821 AD. Michael named Antonios Cassimates to assume the patriarchal throne. Antonios had played a decisive role in the leadership of the Council of St. Sophia. After defeating Thomas, Michael, who was a moderate man in his personal habits, faced constant attacks from outside the empire, consequently he did little to agitate public sentiment. He invited the exiled patriarch and monks back to the city. For the most part, the iconophiles were not extensively persecuted or abused during his reign. The exception was specifically Michael's treatment of Methodios. The Emperor accused Methodios of political crimes, in particular of being the author of an anti-Michael leaflet. For this Michael severely tortured Methodios. In addition to great territorial losses suffered during Michael's reign, Byzantium lost two great pillars of orthodoxy while he reigned. Patriarch Nikephoros and Theodore the Studite, courageous defenders and champions of the Church both died shortly before Michael II. The emperor died peacefully in 829, leaving his throne to his teenage son and co-emperor Theophilos.

The Last Stand of Iconoclasm

Theophilos was raised and educated in Constantinople. Like Constantine V, before him, he had an enthusiasm for learning and a sharp mind. His teacher John the Grammarian, a devoted iconoclast, passed on to his pupil

not only his fervour for learning but also his strong iconoclastic zeal. Speaking of Theophilos' upbringing, Theophanes the Continuator informs us,

Though he had not chosen John the Grammarian patriarch, Michael had great respect for John's learning. He put John in a place where he could lend the imperial family some much-needed intellectual respectability, by making John tutor to his son and heir, Theophilos...He [Theophilos] grew up under John's influence to be admiring of his tutor and a good deal like him; cultured, clever, a little too self-confident, and a convinced iconoclast.¹²⁸

It is reported that the young emperor greatly admired Arab learning, art and culture. An interesting set of circumstances characterised the parallels between Theophilos and some of his predecessors. He and Constantine V, were both men of unusual education and were both dedicated iconoclasts. Theophilos and Leo IV both married beautiful, able and devout iconophilic wives. Theophilos and Constantine VI both sadly lost infant sons. The accidental death of Theophilos' young son, Constantine, who drowned in a palace cistern in 830 or 831, was considered a bad omen.¹²⁹ After various losses to Moslem forces in the Mediterranean and the Aegean, the most embarrassing loss was Arab forces capturing the city of Amorion, which

¹²⁸ Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, p. 232. Primary source Bekker, I. (ed.) (1838) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus* (Weberi), Bonnæ, cols. 107 – 109.

¹²⁹ Bekker (ed.) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, col. 101 d.

was this dynasty's home city and a centre of considerable strategic importance. Militarily, the area was recaptured shortly afterwards, but the psychological effect had a great impact on the populace of the capital.¹³⁰

Whittow relates his opinion that even the suspicion of a traitor who may have aided the Arab army was inadequate to reverse the popular interpretation that God's *favour* was no longer on the side of the iconoclasts. The empire was failing and the people took notice.¹³¹ When Antonios died in 838, Theophilos selected his teacher, John the Grammarian, to be elevated to the patriarchal throne. John is perhaps one of the most enigmatic figures ever to occupy the throne of St Andrew. He was admittedly one of the most brilliant men to ever fill that office, but also one of the most vilified. He has come down in the record of the Church as a sorcerer, a practitioner of the black arts and a tool of the Devil.

While he was thus plotting, The Devil, who had made these suggestions to him, was walking through Byzantium. He finds John called the Grammarian saying: 'Take this man, who will be useful to you for what you plan; for he is a vessel of election for me that he may carry my name against the Orthodox.' Therefore, just as Paul became the mouth of Christ, so this man became

¹³⁰ Contemporary hagiography, even of Methodios' authorship, praises the 42 Martyrs of Amorion linking their triumph to iconoclasm and its defeat Euodios Monachos (c. 843-this edition 1989). "Hoi Sarantaduo Martyres tou Amoriou," in *Hagiologiaki Bibliotheki*, vol. II, ed, S. Euthymiades (Nea Smyrne), pp. 18 - 30.

¹³¹ Whittow, M. (1996) *The Making of Byzantium, 600-1025* [a.k.a. *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium*] (University of California Press), Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA, pp. 153 – 154.

the mouth of the devil, and just as a torrent is formed by the drawing together of many showers, and carries ill-smelling and troubled waters, so he also from the muddy treasure of his heart brought forth rotten and muddy dogmas, giving those who came to him to drink of his disordered perversion.¹³²

This example combined with the prominent place John possessed in the anathemas of the *Synodicon*, and the iconographic ridicule we find in the Chludov Psalter (see *figure 3*) allows us to comprehend the enmity, which John aroused in his detractors. Nonetheless, beneath the surface there was a quiet admiration of John's intellectual abilities and his acumen in the world of scholarship. What is apparent from sources of the times is that after John assumed the patriarchal throne there was an increase in the persecution of iconoclasts. Chroniclers' evidence and *vitae* of the times record several incidences in which monks were tortured and maimed.¹³³ Details of this type of repression will be discussed in later portions of this thesis.

¹³² Theosterictos (n.d.) "Vita S. Nicetae the Confessor", In *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, pp. xxiv - xxvii, p. 262 c.

¹³³ Bekker (ed.) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, col.117 a – 123 a. Details of torture of the iconographer Lazarus and the Monk-Brothers Theodore and Theophanes; also see Cunningham, M. B. (1991) *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, M. B. Cunningham, 1st edition (Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, Queen's University of Belfast), Belfast (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations), pp. 79 – 99, account of tattooing see pp. 86 and 87.

καὶ τὴν αἰσχύνην μου καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ
 πνύμην: ἐμάρτισέν με ἡ τέσσαρις
 βοῦντες:

+ **Θ**υγατέρα μου τὴν ἀδελφὴν μου καὶ τὸν
 καὶ τὰ χατάρια: καὶ ἡ τέσσαρις
 λυποῦμαι μοι καὶ οὐ χιλιάρης: καὶ
 παρακαλοῦμαι τὰς καὶ οὐ χιλιάρης:

Καὶ ἐξέστη τὸ πνεῦμα μου καὶ ἡ
 καὶ ἐξέστη τὸ πνεῦμα μου καὶ ἡ

+ **Γ**ερνήτω ἡ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐμῆς
 οὐρανῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ ἐξέστη τὸ
 δόσμη καὶ ἐξέστη τὸ δόσμη:

+ **Σ**κοῦσθι τὸ σπῆναι τὸ φθαρτὸν αὐτῶν
 τοῦ καὶ ἐξέστη: καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν
 τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν:

+ **Ε**κχεομένη αὐτῶν τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν
 καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν:

+ **Γ**ερνήτω ἡ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐμῆς
 μεν: καὶ ἐξέστη τὸ πνεῦμα μου καὶ ἡ
 τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν καὶ τὸν:

+ **Ο**τι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀσπίς καὶ τὸ δόσμη
 καὶ τὸ δόσμη καὶ τὸ δόσμη καὶ τὸ δόσμη:



Figure 3: - John the Grammarian whitewashing Christ's Icon from Chludov Psalter – State
 Historical Museum Moscow. ¹³³

¹³³ Lowden *Early Christian and Byzantine Art.*, p. 181.

Iconoclasm's Last Breath

It is perhaps one of the great ironies of history that the events surrounding one of the principal conflicts in the thousand-year story of the Byzantine Empire should end with a whimper and not a bang. The turbulent hundred and twenty-five years of dissension, rankle, confrontation and even sacrifice unto death just ended. On 20 January, 842 Theophilos died and with his passing, iconoclasm ceased to be a vibrant movement. Theophilos died at the very young age of twenty-nine and exactly as in the case of Leo IV, left the empire in the hands of his orthodox iconodulic wife. Theodora became regent for their very young emperor son, Michael III and she was determined to restore icons to the Church.

The deaths of the iconoclastic emperors Constantine V and Theophilos occurred some sixty years apart and there are a number of distinctions that should be examined between the two seemingly similar scenarios. First, there was a meaningful difference in the ages of the two heirs and young emperors; Constantine VI was nine or ten when his father died, while Michael III was only one or two when Theophilos died prematurely. Secondly, Theodora and Irene were women of completely differing temperaments and personalities. Unlike Irene, Theodora had the benefit of able and trustworthy advisors. Initially, she received excellent service from the Logothete Theoktistos, the eunuch. Also, the empress' relatives provided her with substantial support, especially in the early years of her regency.

And the men of God, George and Methodios, took along Sergios Niketiates, Theoktistos, Bardas, and Petronas, very orthodox men who happened to be leaders of the Senate...She [Theodora] was filled with exceeding joy and ordered both parties [the iconophiles and the iconoclast] to assemble at Kanikleiou and to have a debate with each other based on the divine Scriptures. When this occurred and the whole phalanx of the iconoclasts in its first and only assault could not withstand the force of the thrice-blessed Methodios in his arguments from the Scriptures, they completely threw away their shields and immediately deserted <the battlefield>. ¹³⁵

Continuing, iconoclasm was not a vibrant, accepted and popular doctrine as it had been prior to Nicaea II; in truth, iconoclasm had run its course and was a tired ideology. Lastly, the significant benefit to the iconophiles' ultimate victory was the recognised acceptance and authority of Nicaea II by the Universal Church. It was now part of the Παράδοσις of the Church.

This *Tradition* was not a casual concept. It had, as will be shown, a staggering and enduring impact on the thinking of Methodios and all his decisions.

¹³⁵ *Vitae of Sts. David, Symeon and George of Lesbos*, A. M. Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, trans. D. Domingo-Foraste pp. 216 – 218. Bardas and Petronas were Theodora's brothers.

With the defeat of iconoclasm as a force, we can turn our attention to an equally complex story, the life of Methodios of Constantinople. Who was this churchman? What was the meaning of his life? What was his place in the history of the great conflict of iconoclasm? Within a short time of his death, Photios the Great was composing a lengthy canon of liturgical praises to his memory.¹³⁶ However, Karlin-Hayter and Grumel, of the last century, view Ignatios' election as Methodios' successor as a corrective repositioning of the Methodian policies towards the recalcitrant iconoclasts.¹³⁷ Where does this leave the attempt to "reconstruct" his life? The solution to this puzzle must, of necessity, begin with the printed *Vita of St. Methodios*.¹³⁸ But even there, Professor Ševčenko cautions: "In its printed form the *Life of Patriarch Methodios* (d. 847) is reputedly an abbreviation of one by Gregory Asbestas, Photios' ally, and appears to be late [speaking of the time of authorship]." ¹³⁹ Unfortunately, this *vita* is the point of entrée for all studies of Methodios. This anonymous panegyric is a "classic" account of the life of a late iconodulic saint. Also, we will demonstrate how the hagiographic genre is used to portray Methodios.

¹³⁶ Schiro, J. (ed.) (1972) *Analecta Hymnica Graeca - Iunni* (Istituto di Studi Bizanti e Neoellenici - Università di Roma), Roma, ref. Junii 14.

¹³⁷ Karlin-Hayter, P. (1975) "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios," in *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Centre for Byzantine Studies - University of Birmingham), Birmingham, UK, pp. 141 - 145, pp. 141 ff.

¹³⁸ "Sanctus Methodius- Constantinopolitanus patriarcha." cols.1244 – 1272.

¹³⁹ Ševčenko, I. (1975) "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period," in *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Centre for Byzantine Studies - University of Birmingham), Birmingham, UK, pp. 113 - 132; p. 116 see note 22. Also see Dvornik, F. (1948) *The Photian Schism, History and Legend* (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge, UK, pp. 17 ff. for an expansion of the relationship between Methodios, Gregory and Photios.

Therefore, as was previously cautioned it should not be depended upon completely. Substantiating details and cross-references concerning Methodios' life are provided in the *vitae* of several contemporary saints and in several chronicles of the age. These *vitae* include the lives of Sts. Ioannikios, David, Symeon and George of Lesbos, Theodora the Empress and Michael Synkellos. Some contemporary correspondences also allow a glimpse into the character of Methodios. These are written by Theodore the Studite and by Ignatios the Deacon. As was previously stated, the *Vita of Methodios, Patriarch of Constantinople*, allegedly a condensed version of a lost one by Gregory of Syracuse, is the point of beginning for a study of Methodios.¹⁴⁰ The existing printed *vita* begins with these words:

Hierarch and simultaneously an ascetic and a martyr of Christ, if this is possible, who was praised as worthy by the angels, archangels of God decorated him as the first and holiest among hierarchs...¹⁴¹

As can be seen, the praise for Methodios begins at the outset of the *vita* and it continues throughout the entire opus. Nonetheless, there are some facts concerning his life that can be deduced from his printed life. The *vita* states that Methodios was born into a wealthy and distinguished family in the Byzantine city of Syracuse in Sicily. The exact date of his birth is not

¹⁴⁰ Karlin-Hayter, "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios," p. 143.

¹⁴¹ PG, vol. c, col. 1244 d: "Ἱεράρχην, καὶ ἄσκητὴν ἄμα, καὶ Χριστοῦ μάρτυρα, μόνοις δ' ἂν γένοιτο δυνατόν ἁγγέλοις ἐγκωμιάσαι ἁξίως, ἣ ἁρχαγγέλοις Θεοῦ, οἶγε τὴν πρώτην καὶ θεῖαν ἱεραρχίαν κοσμοῦσιν ..."

known, but a reliable estimate would be sometime during the latter period of the reign of Constantine V (741-775). The young Methodios had the advantage of a classical education.¹⁴² This would conform to the later verifiable facts of his comprehensive learning, his intricate writing style and his gift of oratory. The *vita* continues to state that he was afforded all the luxuries of life and he is said to have excelled in grammar, history and writing. Methodios is described as a youth with a "regal bearing and mature beyond his years."¹⁴³ It is most probable that at this point in his life he had little idea that he would be a churchman or even a future confessor for the faith.

The turning point in his life appeared to have occurred when he was least expecting it, and is described as "God's Providence".¹⁴⁴ As many a young man in the empire, he sought to further his education while seeking fame and fortune in the capital. It was at this time, he came under the influence of a certain unnamed holy man of God.¹⁴⁵ This man lit a passion in the young Methodios for a life of holiness, as an alternative to seeking the path of personal glory.¹⁴⁶ Following the Scriptural admonition, Methodios then distributed his wealth to the poor and needy.¹⁴⁷ He entered the monastic

¹⁴² Moffatt A "Schooling in the Iconoclastic Centuries" , in *Iconoclasm*, pp. 85 – 92.

¹⁴³ PG, vol. c, col. 1245 b: " βασιλικῶν ἀξιωματῶν τυχεῖν ἐφιέμενο, καὶ τῷ βίῳ περιφανῆς καταστήναι..."

¹⁴⁴ PG, vol. c, col.1245 c: "ἐκ προνοίας θεοῦ."

¹⁴⁵ Hints in the *Vita of St. Euthymios of Sardis*, written by Methodios, indicate that St. Euthymios may be this "man of God".

¹⁴⁶ PG, vol. c, col. 1245 c: "Καὶ εἰ οὕτω δόξης ἐρᾶς ὁ νεανία, διὰ τί μὴ τὴν μένουσαν μάλλον καὶ τὴν θεῖαν ἀντι τῆς παρερχομένης καταπλουτήσῃας.."

¹⁴⁷ Mark 10, 21, Luke 18, 22. This is typical of the holiness by which saints are characterised in hagiographic accounts.

bios at the monastery, Χηνολάκκος in Bithynia.¹⁴⁸ It was there, that he rigorously devoted himself to the ascetic pursuits of fasting and prayer. The *vita* does point out that he realised neither laxity nor excessive ascetic practice was beneficial to his spiritual progress, therefore, he practised them judiciously.¹⁴⁹ His faithful practices and his abilities became apparent and he was soon named ἡγούμενος (abbot) of the monastery.¹⁵⁰ This period of Methodios' life is extremely sketchy, especially if the *vita* is the only source of reference used. That Methodios reached the rank of Abbot can be independently confirmed from the letters of Theodore Studite.¹⁵¹ Even though Methodios' rank is confirmed, there are no chronological references in these three epistles. Using the date of Theodore's death, 11 November 826, as a *terminus post quem* and the known dates of the patriarchal years of Nikephoros, as well as the imperial and papal histories, a general chronology can be determined. Alexander states, "However, when in 813 Leo V, the Armenian, ascended to the imperial throne and soon began to favour iconoclasm..."¹⁵² Nonetheless, it is an interesting note that the Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor ends at about the same time. It characterises Leo as "pious" and states, "he (Leo) wrote to Patriarch Nikephoros an assurance of his own orthodoxy and asked for

¹⁴⁸ Janin, R. (1975) *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres Byzantins* (Institut Français d'études Byzantines), Paris. pp. 189 – 190, cited in PG, vol. c, col. 1246 d.

¹⁴⁹ PG, vol. c, col. 1245 d. – γ. Perhaps, this is a suggestion of the moderate nature of Methodios' character. This depiction by his biographer is appropriate to contradict later suggestions, from his detractors, that he was rigid and doctrinaire.

¹⁵⁰ Ringrose, K. M. (1979) "Monks and Society in Iconoclastic Byzantium", *Byzantine Studies - special edition essays offered in Honour of Peter Charanis*, vol. 6, pp. 130 - 151. p. 141, points out that this was a prestigious monastic centre for aristocrats aspiring to church vocations – see note 24.

¹⁵¹ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol. II epistles nos. 274, 377, 549.

¹⁵² Alexander, "The Iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia (815) and its Definition (Horos)", p. 38.

Nikephoros' prayers and consent with a view to assuming power." ¹⁵³ As it shortly became evident, the climate in Constantinople changed quite dramatically for the iconodules. The biographer of Methodios speaks in general terms of a persecution of iconodules and the physical actions taken against images in the capital. The phrase used to describe the setting at that time in Constantinople is "the deepest darkest night of heresy of men that hated and denied the economy of salvation of the Word of God." ¹⁵⁴ The next event chronicled is the "resignation" of Patriarch Nikephoros, which we know to have transpired in 815 because of pressure from Leo V. ¹⁵⁵ Doens and her collaborators add an additional interesting point without citation. They identify Methodios as the archdeacon of Nikephoros. ¹⁵⁶ Therefore, his ordination and appointment to this office must have occurred before 815, the date Leo deposed Nikephoros. As the *vita* continues, we are then presented with Methodios being in a place of refuge in Rome, described as an academy. ¹⁵⁷ The evidence of persecutions coupled with the known circumstances that are described in the *vita* indicates that an exodus of iconodules occurred from Constantinople at this time. It is said that iconodules fled to safe havens whether in Rome, or along the Black Sea coast, or to "wander in the mountains or caves and holes in the earth."

¹⁵³ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p.685.

¹⁵⁴ PG, vol. c, col. 1245 d.: "μέχρις ὅτε λοιπὸν ἡ βαθεῖα καὶ σκοτεινὴ νύξ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν μισούντων καὶ ἀρνουμένων τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου οἰκονομίαν."

¹⁵⁵ *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armeno*, P.G. cvii. col.1033 sqq.

¹⁵⁶ Doens, I. and Hannick, C. (1973) "Das periorismos-dekret des Patriarchen Methodios I. Gegen die studiten Naukratios und Athanasios", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik (JÖB)*, Band 22,, pp.93-102. p. 93. Also see Pargoire, J. (1903) "Saint Methode de Constantinople avant 821", *Echos d' Orient*, vol. 6, pp. 126 - 131, p. 129.

¹⁵⁷ PG, vol. c, col 1248 a.: "Τότε γὰρ λοιπὸν τοῦ φροντιστηρίου ἐξάρας τὴν Ρώμην.."

¹⁵⁸ It was indeed plausible that Nikephoros dispatched the Sicilian born Methodios, his archdeacon, with some type of correspondence to the Pope concerning the conditions in Constantinople. Methodios' background would have allowed him to be an effective envoy to Rome. The other supposition that can be made, without too big a jump from known to unknown, is that Methodios was cloistered behind the walls of the Monastery of St Sabbas, the Greek Monastery on the outskirts of Rome. The epistle of Theodore the Studite to Basil, Abbot of St. Sabbas, confirms that a Methodios was resident at the monastery. ¹⁵⁹ We know that Theodore the Studite was also in correspondence with Pope Paschal I, as well as others concerning the crisis of faith within the empire. There are two letters from Theodore to Paschal appealing to him as the senior shepherd of the Church to intervene in the heresy, to stop the abuses, the violence against the iconodules and to restore orthodoxy. ¹⁶⁰ The timing of these events is in dispute. As outlined above, it is very clear in the *vita*, that Methodios left Constantinople after Leo V's re-institution of iconoclasm. Therefore, it could not have occurred before March, 815. ¹⁶¹

There are conflicting versions that chronicle this series of events. Pargoire analyses this chronology quite thoroughly. He presents the opinions of

¹⁵⁸ PG, vol. c, col. 1248 a.: "...καὶ πάντες οἱ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ δόγματος μετανάστει καὶ φυγάδες καὶ ἀλήται γέγεννηνται, ἐν ὅρεσι καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὁπαῖς τῆς γῆς συγκλείομενα.."

¹⁵⁹ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol. II epistle 274: "ἄλλ' οὖν διὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἐξηγορίαν καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἱεροῦ Μεθοδίου ὁμοῦ καὶ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Μονοβασίας.."

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., vol. II, epistle 271: "Ἀκουε, ἀποστολικὴ κάρτα, θεοπρόβλητε ποιμὴν τῶν Χριστοῦ προβάτων, ἔχεις τὸ ἰσχύειν παρὰ θεῷ ἐκ τοῦ πάντων πρωτεύειν ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐτέθης. Πτοήσον, δεόμεθα, τοὺς αἵρετικοὺς θήρας σύριγγι τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σου· ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, θὲς τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν Χριστοῦ προβάτων.."

¹⁶¹ PG, vol. c, col. 1248 a.: "...καὶ καθυβριζόντων εἰκόνα τὴν οἰκουμένην κατέλαβεν, διτι ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλίδα, ὅγε ἀγιώτατος πατριάρχης Νικηφόρος".

Mgr. di Brolo that Methodios left Constantinople earlier than 815, in fact as early as 811.¹⁶² Pargoire continues in his examination of the conflict of dates. He cites that in his opinion additional confirmation for the 815 date can be found in the letter of the Studite to Methodios and Bishop John of Monemvasia.¹⁶³ The chronicles of Genesius, Cedrenus, Zonaras and Glycas each support the role of Methodios as an envoy, which is demonstrated by referencing the contemporary letters of Theodore. This period of exile was marked by a noteworthy ordeal. This is the miraculous intervention of St. Peter to heal "the fires of passion" within Methodios. This occurred as Methodios slept by the tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican. After many supplications to be relieved of the urgings of the flesh, St. Peter visited him and rendered him incapable of carnal pleasures. Methodios awoke in anguish from the pain of a burn.¹⁶⁴ This intervention in Methodios' life would be a significant factor in a future conflict during his patriarchal years. An article by Canart describes Methodios' activity as a copyist during his sojourn in Rome.¹⁶⁵ The details of Canart's findings will be examined in the section dealing with the works of Methodios.

¹⁶² Pargoire, "Saint Methode de Constantinople avant 821", p. 127 - 128; Pargoire states that it is not probable (vraisemblable) that Methodios left his monastery in Bithynia before (avant) 815.

¹⁶³ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., vol. ii, epistle 274.

¹⁶⁴ PG, vol. c, col. 1261 a.: "ὁ τῆς Πέτρου θήκης θεραπευτὰ, καὶ τοῦ ἐκεῖθεν ἀγιασμοῦ τῆς ἀγν(ας) θησαυροφύλαξ!" Also see Pargoire, "Saint Methode de Constantinople avant 821", p. 130.

¹⁶⁵ Canart, P. (1979) "Le Patriarche Méthode de Constantinople Copiste a Rome", *Palaeographica Diplomatica et Archivistica - Studi in onore di Giulio Battelli*, pp. 343 - 354.

Methodios the Confessor

The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines a confessor for the faith as "one who suffered for confessing his or her faith, but only to the extent which did not involve martyrdom."¹⁶⁶ Methodios was a model of an iconodulic confessor. There are three traditions, which tell the story of the sufferings of the monk. The most accepted chronology will be explored first. This is the *vita* account of Methodios and his encounters of torture at the hands of two different emperors.¹⁶⁷ The following known dates help to develop a probable an idea of the timing of events; Paschal's pontificate ran from 817 to 824, Leo's assassination occurred on Christmas day 820, Michael II's reign (820-829) and the patriarchal appointment of Antonios in January, 821. Therefore, Treadgold places the encounter between Methodios and the Emperor Michael II, the Stammerer, around 821.¹⁶⁸ This chronology appears very reasonable. The *vita* states that Methodios conveyed to the new emperor a letter from Pope Paschal expressing the Papal admonition to restore icons, orthodoxy and the deposed Patriarch Nikephoros.¹⁶⁹ Treadgold uses these words to describe this encounter.

Instead, Methodios found that Michael considered his mission to be not merely foreign interference in Byzantine affairs, but positively disloyal, since as a Sicilian, Methodios was an imperial subject.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p.330.

¹⁶⁷ PG, vol. c, col. 1248 c.

¹⁶⁸ Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, pp. 233 – 234.

¹⁶⁹ PG, vol. c, col. 1248 e.

¹⁷⁰ Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, p. 234

The vita also contrasts the sweetness of the words of orthodoxy and the angelic eloquence of Methodios with the harsh and difficult speech of the emperor.¹⁷¹ As a result, Methodios suffered one of two episodes of severe treatment at the hands of imperial justice. Methodios was severely flogged with "seven hundred" lashes until the young envoy was quite near death. Then, the emperor banished Methodios to solitary confinement in a tomb-like cell that barely allowed room enough to breathe. This imprisonment took place on the small Isle of St. Andreas in the Gulf of Nicomedia near Constantinople. The vita describes his ordeal in this manner.

And all about him was forgotten, in every way. He suffered from the repeated blows and beatings, the lack of medical care, the judgement of boorish men and worse. Because of the narrowness of the tomb and the dim light he approached blindness...he refused to be of sad countenance or to betray Christ... the baking he received formed in his struggle, a man like clay...¹⁷²

According to the record Methodios was imprisoned about nine years. It does appear that his treatment was less severe at times, because we know that he composed some of his writings during that time of imprisonment and was occasionally allowed contact with other iconoclastic prisoners.

¹⁷¹ PG, vol. c, col. 1248 c. "Ὁ δὲ τοὺς μὲν τόμους δεξάμενος, ὡς ἰστὸν ἀράχνη ἐφαύλισεν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὰ τῆς ὀρδοδόξου πίστεως τρανῶς καὶ παρρησιασμένως διαγγέλλοντα.."

¹⁷² PG, vol. c, cols. 1248-1249 d, a.

Notwithstanding, towards the end of his confinement, he is described in his *vita* as "having the stigmata of Christ's Passion on his body, having lost all of his hair and being close to death." The biographer then praises the pious zeal of the confessor and his ascetic martyrdom for Christ.¹⁷³ The *vita* then records the ascension of Theophilos to the imperial dignity. As the narrative continues there is a description of the general persecution of iconodules, which does not abate under Theophilos. A curious factor is inserted in the *vita* at this point. Theophilos' behaviour is somehow "explained" or at least rationalised by his excessive drinking.¹⁷⁴ This attempt to diminish culpability on Theophilos may very well be an attempt to begin to rehabilitate his image. As shall be shown, the Empress Theodora seriously promoted this effort at the time of her husband's death. Methodios, the haggard confessor, was then moved to a detention area beneath the palace. Once again, an inquisitor questioned him first, and then the Emperor Theophilos took up the interrogation. Since Theophilos did not ascend to the throne until Michael's death on 2 October 829,¹⁷⁵ this encounter would have occurred after this date. There are two very interesting insights to gain from the record we have of this encounter. The phrases and adjectives used by the author of the *vita* to describe the emperor are less than complimentary. Theophilos is characterised as being "lover of foreigners, and a snake".¹⁷⁶ The writer gives a word-by-word

¹⁷³ PG, vol. c, col. 1249 c. This identification with the sufferings of Christ is also a characteristic of this genre of writing.

¹⁷⁴ PG, vol. c, col. 1249 d.: "ἐκπομα πεπωκότος εἰς μέθην"

¹⁷⁵ Grierson, P. (1962) "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors", *DOP*, vol. 16, pp. 1-63.

¹⁷⁶ PG, vol. c, col. 1249 d.: "ἐθνοφίλου, ... τῷ ὀφεί ὁ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀριστεύς."

dialogue between Methodios and Theophilos that is worthy of closer examination.

Theophilos speaks 'Oh Methodios, when are you going to stop! The starvation you submitted to in your inopportune obstinacy, yet you still hold the same agitated opinions against the good order. Why? What characteristic of your nature [causes this]? What really cheap grace, the so-called images? You filled the entire world with confusion. You even involved the Pope of Rome, and thus sending my father over the edge.'

Methodios responds 'Anyone of us that cheapens the holy images with their words without a dignified reason, is not worthy of the Imperium of Rome [meaning Byzantium the Eastern Roman Empire]. Is it not condescension to wipe away the image of God! Is it not the same Christ who we honour, praise and follow to this very day. Oh, surely show us the reason and will we not say so?' ¹⁷⁷

Once again, Methodios was stripped to his waist and flogged. The biographer describes, in detail, the great amount of blood loss and the weakened condition of Methodios, which resulted from his punishment. Before continuing with the narrative, perhaps some observations are in order. The emperor seemed to focus on two themes, first Methodios' arrogant intransigence and the involvement of the Pope in these affairs, for which Theophilos blames Methodios. It appears the aim of Theophilos'

¹⁷⁷ PG, vol. c, cols. 1249 d – 1251 a.

criticism was to have Methodios bend to the imperial will. On the other hand, Methodios gave a theological answer in defence of images while denying the emperor's right to determine theology. Yet, another conclusion can be drawn from the description of Theophilos. At the time of the *vita*, in the eyes of iconophiles, Theophilos was still very much the villain. In his book, *The Byzantine Revival* Treadgold does put quite a different spin on this episode. This point of view is worth examining.

Theophilos learned late in 831 that iconophiles were circulating a pamphlet predicting his imminent death. Treating the matter as a conspiracy, he administered a beating to the monk Methodios, who had probably written the pamphlet, and to the deposed bishop Euthymios of Sardis,¹⁷⁸ who died of his wounds. Henceforth Theophilos regarded iconophiles with open hostility.¹⁷⁹

The relationship of these two men is a very complex topic. It will be examined later in the discussion and in relation to the events leading to the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the text of the *Synodicon*. The *vita* states that Methodios was imprisoned under the palace. He received medicinal ointment on his wounds delivered by an unknown person. Then he was secretly guided out of the dungeon again by this same "unknown friend of Christ" and taken to hospital. The life documents that Theophilos, in

¹⁷⁸ Euthymios of Sardis is the subject of one of the *Vitae* written by Methodios, see Gouillard, J. (1987) "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", *Travaux et Mémoires*, vol.10, pp: 1 - 101. It will be examined more closely in the sections on works of Methodios.

¹⁷⁹ Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 437, see note 9, Treadgold cites himself and Gouillard.

retribution, confiscated all the property of the physician, who treated Methodios.¹⁸⁰ The second account of Methodios' sufferings is recounted in the *Annales* of Symeon Magister. In this account, there are significant differences from the *vita*. The primary variances are as follows:

The torture all took place under the Emperor Theophilos. The imprisonment lasted seven years was on the Island of Antigone. It entailed a very narrow tomb like cell shared with two criminals one of whom was dead.¹⁸¹ The treatment Methodios received included the extraction of his teeth and the crushing of his mandible.¹⁸²

The monastic and natural brothers Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi feature prominently in the scenario, as do poetic verses exchanged with Methodios.

There are incidents of miracles in prison concerning oil for Methodios' lamp, which replenished itself.¹⁸³

The third account of the sufferings of Methodios can be found in the chronicles of Cedrenus and Zonaras.¹⁸⁴ There appears to be a blend of two experiences. The torture does start under Michael but is more severe under Theophilos. There is an account of correspondence of Methodios

¹⁸⁰ PG, vol. c, col. 1252 b.: "Νυκτὸς δὲ καταλαβούσης, ὑπὸ τινων ἀναληφθεὶς φιλοχρίστων, καὶ θεραπείας ἀξιωθεὶς, αὐτὸς μὲν ἀναβρώσεως ἔτεηχεν, ὁ δὲ τοῦτον θεοφιλῆς τεθεραπευκῶς οἶκος, δημεύσει παντελεῖ ὑπὸ τοῦ μισοχρίστου καὶ λυσσστήρος τυράννου καταδικάζεται.".

¹⁸¹ *Annales* Symeon Magister, PG vol. cix, col. 705 a.: "τὸν ἕνα τῶν ληστῶν ἑκεῖσε ἀποθανεῖν"

¹⁸² *Annales* Symeon Magister, PG vol. cix, col. 705 a.: "τῶν ὀδόντων ἐκρίζωσιν..σιαγόνων θλάσιν"

¹⁸³ *Annales* Symeon Magister, PG vol. cix, cols. 704 – 705, also see Pargoire, J. (1903) "Saint Methode et la persecution", *Echos d' Orient*, vol. 6, pp. 183 - 191, p.184.

¹⁸⁴ Bekker (ed.) *Chronicle of Georgios Cedrenus*. and Zonaras, I. (1868) "*Annales* - J, Zonarae - Epitome historiarum 6 vols, in v.1-2, in PG, vol. cxxxiv, ed. J.-P.Migne, Paris.

and the Graptoi Brothers.¹⁸⁵ Describing the effects of this treatment on the rest of Methodios' life, this account has come down to us from Marin, the French researcher:

Even though his lips had been mutilated by the hot irons of the iconoclasts and though he was forced to wrap his jaws with strips of white cloth during public functions, Methodios retained enough spirit and voice to dictate his hymns and speeches which were always feared by the enemies of images. In fact, the white pieces of cloth used by Methodios became the marks and ornaments of his successors' pontificates.¹⁸⁶

The *vita* then relates the "turning about of Theophilos' thinking"; it is inferred that Theophilos began to admire Methodios as a man of courage and fortitude and that around this time that Methodios was returned from his island imprisonment to Constantinople. Methodios' quick and able mind could have been the other character trait, which appealed to the young emperor. Methodios' ability to debate may have challenged Theophilos, who was a scholar and was educated by his tutor the learned iconoclast John the Grammarian. When the emperor's keen interest in learning is considered, his interest in debate is understandable. Nonetheless, the

¹⁸⁵ Zonaras Annales - J, Zonarae - "Epitome historiarum 6 vols." in v.1-2, in PG col. 1409. Also see Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos, - Text, Translation and Commentary*, pp. 98 – 99, then pp.160 – 161, note 167.

¹⁸⁶ Marin, E. (1897) *Les moines de Constantinople depuis la foundation de la ville jusqu a la mort de Photius (330 - 898)* (Leoffre), Paris, p. 360; cited in Sendler, E. (1981) *The Icon: Image of the Invisible (L'Icone: Image de l'invisible)*, English, trans. - S. Bigham (1988) (Editions Desclee De Brouver - Oakwood Publications), Paris, p. 33, [see figure 8: - Methodios the Confessor].

biographer relates that Methodios was brought into the palace to discuss and debate points of Scripture with Theophilos. The *Vita* does not say how Methodios was transformed from a prisoner to a person welcomed in the palace, but what is revealed about these episodes is the demeanour of Methodios, especially in relationship to the servants of the imperial household. He is said to have spoken in a soft and gentle manner, always speaking of the teachings of the orthodox. This was quite a different man from the one, who had been described to them, and because of his demeanour and faith he converted many of them [the servants] to the orthodox side.

Emperor Theophilos died in 842, within a year of ascending the throne, Theodora deposed the iconoclastic Patriarch John the Grammarian. She secured the election of the iconodulic confessor Methodios, a moderate, to the patriarchal dignity and all of Constantinople prepared to process to the Great Church to proclaim the Triumph of Orthodoxy. This set the stage for the entry of Methodios of Syracuse, as the new Patriarch. Methodios was elected Patriarch of Constantinople. The issues that confronted the new Patriarch were significant. The re-integration of the iconoclasts and establishing peace within the Church would prove a daunting task. Four years after his elevation as Patriarch, on 14 June 847, his life shortened by his sufferings as a Confessor, Methodios of Constantinople died having secured orthodoxy and the place of images in the Church. The unfolding of his life and the Patriarchal years including the triumphs and conflicts that ensued will constitute the balance of this account.



Figure 5: - St. Sophia Cathedral as it probably was on the First Sunday of Orthodoxy

Chapter Two

THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

The word "triumph" is defined as gaining victory or success, to win mastery.¹ Methodios entered his years as Patriarch in this spirit. However, this joyful interlude was to be a deceiving pause in a struggle to win a permanent victory. He was a man of strength and his character influenced much of the structure of the iconodules' final achievement. His attitudes and passions are reflected in his compositions, which will be examined and analysed in this chapter and later ones. Ultimately, Methodios' legacy will prove to be a significant milestone in the history of Orthodoxy.

The year interval between Theophilos' death, and the deposing of John the Grammarian followed by the immediate ascension of the Methodios, as the new patriarch, needs further examination. What factors led to Methodios' election? As Theodora examined the candidates, what were her options? No doubt, she was committed to choose a dedicated and proven iconodule. She most probably wished to choose a monastic, in order to seek harmony in the empire.² This is evident in some of the reliable contemporary sources. The *Vitae of Sts. David, Symeon, George of Lesbos*, and *St. Michael the Synkellos* each specifically refer to the ultimate selection of Methodios from among other monastic candidates for patriarch. For

¹ Neufeldt, V. (ed.) (1989) *Webster's New World Dictionary of American English* (Webster's New World), Cleveland / New York, p. 1432.

² Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, Lives of Sts. David, Symeon, and George, trans D. Domingo-Forasté, p. 221, see note 388.

example, Symeon answered in this way, when asked for his guidance in the choice for a Patriarch:

To me, all holy and God-gathered congregation, it seems that no one exceeds in honour the confessor, father Methodios, both in wisdom and the excellence of his virtue and his good deeds on behalf of piety. That is how it seems to me, brothers, but express frankly your opinion.³

The *Vita of Ioannikios* expresses his prophetic utterances on this matter when asked by Eustratios, "a most devout man." Eustratios asked Ioannikios the outcome of iconoclasm and the identity of the next Patriarch to "steer the rudder of the Church." Ioannikios answered that iconoclasm was on its last leg and added,

O Eustratios, they labour in vain who think it is fit to mention the aforementioned Studites and their colleague, John.⁴ But if indeed they should vote for Methodios, who is poor in spirit and most meek, in the words of the divine David, they will cry out this <name> with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁵

In the *Vita of Michael the Synkellos*, we read that the selection of Methodios occurred within the structure of a council of iconodules, both monastics and

³ Ibid., *Lives of Sts. David, Symeon, and George*, trans D. Domingo-Forasté, p. 222.

⁴ This refers to Naukratios and Athanasios, Studite monastic leaders after Theodore's death. Also, the prediction of future problems Methodios would encounter from this camp during his patriarchate, as to John Katasambas see note 499 in the reference below, *Vita of Ioannikios*.

⁵ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, Life of St. Ioannikios, by Peter the Monk, trans. by D. Sullivan, p. 339.

confessors of the faith.⁶ It is stated that even though they wished "to hand the helm of the church" to the pious Michael, he refused owing to his "great humility". The account continues to relate that the blessed Ioannikios guided the selection by naming Methodios as the best choice for patriarch.⁷

These accounts, interesting as they are, do lead us to another of Theodora's primary motivations, the "rehabilitation" of Theophilos, her husband. Her rationale can only be surmised; perhaps she wished this for the sake of her son, the young emperor and the reputation of the dynasty, which would be damaged by an anathema of Theophilos.⁸ On the other hand, she may have genuinely wished to gain absolution for Theophilos' sins. It has been suggested, she desired to exercise the power of the state in the choice of Patriarch by imposing a precondition on the candidates or that it was her wish to politicise the appointment.⁹ What is established, in her *vita*, the *Vita of St. Symeon* and in the work *De Theophili Imperatoris Absolutione*,¹⁰ is that her great desire was to prevent Theophilos from being publicly anathematised.

⁶ This reference is to the synod of the Kanekleiou Palace (perhaps the Council of Blachernae), see below.

⁷ Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, pp. 102 – 104.

⁸ Gouillard, J. (1967) "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", *Travaux et Memoires*, vol. 2, pp. 1 - 316., p.125, Gouillard states that the Emperors were not condemned after the Sixth Council or after the Seventh so why should Theophilos have been anathematised. Cf Afinogenov, D. (1997) "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios", *Erytheia*, 17, pp. 43 - 71. P. 59 disagrees stating that anathemas were possible.

⁹ Karlin-Hayter, "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios", p. 141. Cf. Afinogenov "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios", p 58 – 59, for a different view.

¹⁰ Regel, W. (ed.) (1891) *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione - in Analecta Byzantino-Russica* (Eggers & S. I. Glasunof), Petrograd.

The story of Theophilos' absolution is recounted in two traditions. The *Vita of Theodora* presents the story in the following manner. Importantly, the events occur before Theophilos' death. Depicted on his deathbed, in torment, the emperor is dying a death of agony, caused by his sins against images.

Then, she dozed off for a while and saw the supremely holy Mother of God holding in her arms the infant <Christ> with His cross and a terrifying ring of beautiful angels violently reproaching the emperor Theophilos who babbled, tossing his head endlessly from one side to the other and saying over and over in his anguish, "Woe is me, wretch that I am! Because of the icons I am being beaten, because of the icons I am being flogged."¹¹

After hours of suffering, Theophilos venerates an ἐγκόλπιον worn by Theoktistos.¹²

[Theophilos] drew it to his lips. Well, when the necklace, that bore, as was said, the holy and venerable image of our Saviour and God, had been put to his lips and mouth, suddenly - what an

¹¹ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation, Vita of Theodora the Empress*, trans. M. P. Vinson, p. 372.

¹² Theoktistos was the eunuch κανίκλειος "keeper of imperial ink", the red ink by which the emperor signed official documents. His office and responsibilities would be equivalent to that of Foreign Minister. See *Ibid.*, note 68 on p. 372, footnote 187.

unexpected miracle! - Those lips of his that had gaped wide apart, the ones that had debased the teachings of the Church and babbled a lot of nonsense against the holy and venerable images, came together and were closed.¹³

This description continues stating that instantly the emperor found tranquillity, his distress ceased and "in a few days he died peacefully". The inference is that Theophilos' late veneration of icons allowed him to be reconciled with God and to gain forgiveness for his persecution of holy images and their supporters.

The second account of the absolution of Theophilos has several variances to the description above. The most apparent and striking is the timing of the absolution. This version is set at a time after the death of Theophilos. There is recounted before the election of Methodios, a "consultation" of several eminent monastic leaders. Theodora asks the Venerable Ioannikios, Arsakios and Isaiah, their opinion on who would best fill the patriarchal throne. Each, in turn, recommends Methodios.¹⁴ After the selection of Methodios as Patriarch, Theodora passionately and tearfully pleads with Methodios on behalf of Theophilos' soul.

In order that you ask and prevail upon the merciful

¹³ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, p. 372.

¹⁴ Regel (ed.) *De Theophili imperatoris absolutione*, - in *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, pp. 24-25.

and philanthropic God on behalf of Theophilos my spouse O, Lord God forgive [Theophilos] all his transgression and especially those that he held against the holy and august images. ¹⁵

Methodios respectfully responds that he does not possess the authority to forgive Theophilos. This power comes only "from prayer and fasting." ¹⁶ Theodora retires to her palace to spend the first week of Great Lent in supplication and fasting on behalf of the soul of her husband. The next scene in this drama involves another dream sequence. Theodora sees Theophilos seated naked, before the icon of Christ on the Bronze Gate. Theophilos' hands are bound behind him and he is being tortured. Then Christ speaks to Theodora

O, Woman, great is your faith. Be of good cheer!
Because of your tears and your faith, more even on
account of your supplication and entreaties, I give
my holy forgiveness to Theophilos, your husband ¹⁷

Theophilos is saved from damnation by the tears and faith of Theodora. ¹⁸
The forgiveness of Theophilos is confirmed to Methodios in two ways. In

¹⁵ Regel, W. (ed.) (1891) *Vita Theodoraē imperatricis* - in *Analecta Byzantino-Russica* (Eggers & S. I. Glasunof), Petrograd., p. 30: " .ῒνα δεηθῆτε καὶ ἐκδυσωπήσητε τὸν ἐλεῆμονα καὶ φιλάνθρωπον θεὸν περὶ Θεοφίλου τοῦ ἑμοῦ συνεύνου, ὥπως συγχωρήσῃ αὐτὸν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὰ πλημμελήματα αὐτοῦ πάντα καὶ μάλιστα ὅσα εἰς τὰς ἀγίας καὶ σεπτὰς εἰκόνας ἠνόμησεν. "

¹⁶ Reference to the healing of the epileptic boy; see Mt. Chapter 17 and Mk. Chapter 9.

¹⁷ Regel (ed.) *Vita Theodoraē imperatricis*, - in *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, pp. 33 – 35: << ὦ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· ὑπάγε διὰ τὰ δάκρυά σου καὶ τὴν πίστιν σου, ἔτι δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν παράκλησιν καὶ ἱκεσίαν τῶν ἱερέων μου συγγνώμην δίδωμι Θεοφίλῳ τῷ ἀνδρὶ σου >> the reference "woman great is your faith" see Mt. 15, 28.

¹⁸ Maguire, H. (ed.) (1997) *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 - 1204*, (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library), Washington, D.C., pp. 250 - 251, (note 14), cites Mango *Brazen House*.

the context of a dream, angels inform the patriarch that God has forgiven the dead emperor. Miraculously, Theophilos' name disappears from the list of the anathemas, which Methodios had composed preparing for the ceremony celebrating the Sunday of Orthodoxy, thereby verifying the absolution.¹⁹ Whether these endeavours were successful is problematic, since, as we have previously noted, the *Vita* of Methodios, written shortly after his death, still labels Theophilos, an arch-villain and an iconoclast.

Can we ascertain Methodios' thinking and actions during the interim between Theophilos' death and the patriarchal election? We do know that he spent this period within the palace inner circle, this is borne out when one sees the company of high officials of the court associated with Methodios

And the men of God, George [of Lesbos] and Methodios, took along Sergios Niketiates, Theoktistos, Bardas, and Petronas very orthodox men and leaders of the senate and did not incessantly begging and imploring Symeon to assent to the Augusta's request..."²⁰

Contemplating the issues at hand must have been quite a daunting task. The form and structure of the Sunday of Orthodoxy Service, including The

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 37. The irony to note is that no emperor is singled out by name in the text of the Synodicon.

²⁰ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, pp. 216 – 217 and Mango, "Liquidation of Iconoclasm and Patriarch Photios." in *Iconoclasm*, p. 134. As was shown earlier two of these men were related to Theodora.

Synodicon ²¹ and the Διατάξεις (Rulings and Rubrics) for the “reception of lapsed Christians” appear to have been completely or partially written or compiled during this time. ²² This formulation of a policy to receive the hierarchs, the lower clergy and laity back into the good graces of the Church had to be delineated and prepared to be implemented. What would guide the new patriarch on this crucial matter? It is my contention that there are two very concrete indications of the mind-set of Methodios. First, the issue of the reception of the lapsed clergy was a topic dealt with at length by the Council of Nicaea II and was a sensitive point during those deliberations. Another reasonable assumption concerning this period is that it was used to assess the sitting hierarchs and their orthodoxy. Owing to the sheer numbers involved, this would have been a very time consuming undertaking. The number of bishops and monastics who had slipped back into heresy during the second phase of iconoclasm, under Leo V, was substantial. ²³

The guidance and moderation exhibited by Tarasios, Nikephoros and the other fathers of the Second Council of Nicaea must have affected

²¹ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 65. Hussey cites Gouillard stating the majority of the Synodicon was written for the first anniversary of the celebration. My question would be what celebration was used in 843? In examining the Synodicon, we will note that it is a composite service using much of the text of the Seventh Ecumenical Council Horos. My belief is that this earlier service formed the framework for subsequent commemorations.

²² Note: it is evident that Methodios compiled earlier Patristic material as the basis for the Diataxi. This synthesis and adoption of earlier sources would also have required some thought and time. See Arranz, M. (1990) “La <<Diataxi>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol. 56 - no. II, pp. 283 - 322, to be discussed at some length later.

²³ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., *Ep. 112 ad Euthymios of Sardis*. Theodore names the Bishops of Smyrna, Cherson, the abbots of Chrysopolitis, Dios, Chora. Theodore continues to state that a majority of the abbots of Constantinople and Bithynia succumbed to the heresy.

Methodios' thinking. After all, the entire thrust of the victory was to vindicate their proceedings and re-apply their *Horos*. At Nicaea II, some injunctions were imposed on the returning clergy, but when viewed, retrospectively, in 843, these sanctions were quite tolerant. The clergy and bishops were required to recant publicly and repent their apostasy. In addition, Canons One and Two of the Second Nicaean Council, called for all signatories of the canons to accept of the rulings of all previous Councils, whether Ecumenical or local, as inspired by the Holy Spirit and binding upon them, personally. Future candidates for bishop were required to sign their acceptance of all the rulings of the Councils thus ensuring their Orthodoxy.²⁴ After fulfilling all the above prerequisites, the lapsed clergy were welcomed back into the Church. Regardless of his wish to be the inheritor of Tarasios and his mentor, Nikephoros, Methodios was obligated to take into consideration the fact that, in spite of these provisions, large numbers of hierarchs, monastics and clergy slipped back into heresy during the second phase of iconoclasm. Steps needed to be taken to ensure this deception was not repeated.

²⁴ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, pp. 555 – 556.

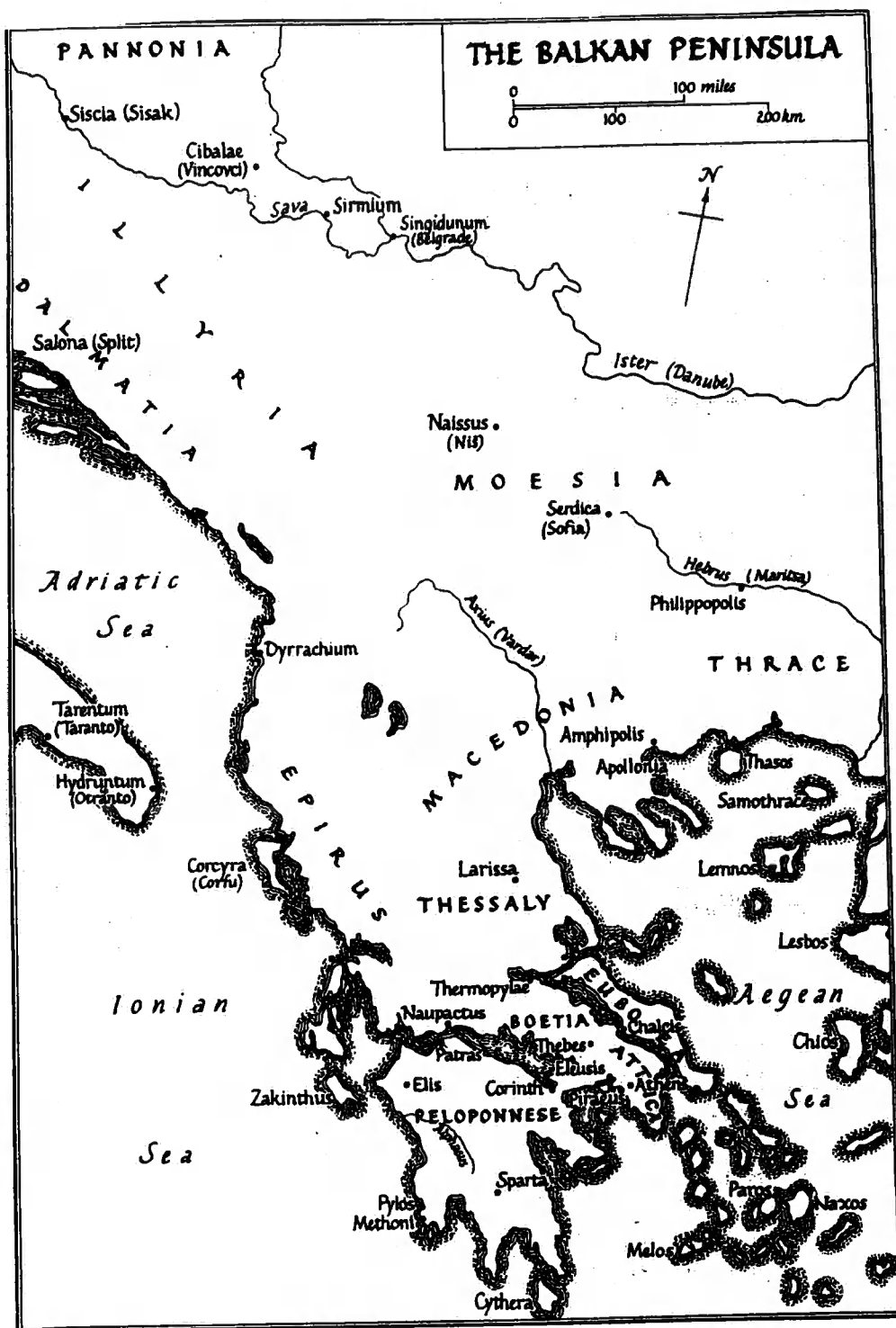


Figure 6: - Map of Balkan Peninsula

The Synod of Election and The First Sunday of Orthodoxy

The Election of Methodios

Many aspects concerning the "...σύνοδον θείαν καὶ ἱερὰν τοπικὴν σύνοδον, ἐν τοῖς Κανικλείου," ²⁵ are not firmly established. In the *Synodicon Vetus*, we find this is the entry.

When Theophilos, then, reached the end of his life in blasphemy, his son Michael, along with his mother Theodora, took over the Empire. These, fired with the zeal of God, recalled the holy fathers who were in exile, and having assembled a divine and sacred local synod in the Kanikleiou, they expelled the abominable John from the throne and appointed Saint Methodios patriarch of Constantinople. And accepting the seven sacred Ecumenical Councils, they admirably restored to the holy icons the reverence due to them from the beginning. ²⁶

First, the location of the synod is a point of dispute. The *Synodicon Vetus* and many other authorities name the Kanikleiou Palace, home of Theoktistos, ²⁷ but there is some indication that this was the location of a pre-synodal meeting, while the actual synod location was The Church of St.

²⁵ Duffy, J. and Parker, J. (1979) *The Synodicon Vetus - text, translation and notes*, Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae (Dumbarton Oaks Texts V), Washington, D.C., p. 132: see note 200. "...a divine and sacred local synod in the Canicleiou."

²⁶ Ibid., p. 132, note 201 states that even the timing of Methodios' election is in dispute. Some sources place it before the synod, the S.V. during the proceedings, and some afterwards. This will be discussed more fully shortly.

²⁷ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", pp. 125 ff.

Mary of Blachernae. The church was located in the northern part of the capital near the Golden Horn, very close to the Kanikleiou Palace [see figure 4].²⁸ The *Vita of St. Michael the Synkellos* comments differently concerning the meeting location,

Theodora commanded that the whole ecclesiastical body of spiritual combatants be assembled within a certain separate chambers of the palace...²⁹

The discussions and chronology of this synod are also a bit of a mystery. Again, our most lengthy description is found in the *Vitae of Sts. David, Symeon and George*. The *Vitae* clearly indicate that Methodios led the discussions, many iconoclasts were present and that "the force of his [Methodios'] arguments from Scriptures dashed their points of view."³⁰

The *vita* places the end of the synodal discussions and the election of Methodios on Saturday, 3 March 843.³¹ Methodios is described in the *Chronicle of Ioannis Scylites* as "being a Confessor and Martyr, bearing the signs of this [martyrdom] on his very flesh, always a pious priest and layman of the monasteries."³² After the election, a procession with Symeon at the lead, the monastics and Methodios, as the Patriarch-elect,

²⁸ This is described in Codex Sinaiticus gr. 482, which I have not as yet, been able to consult.

²⁹ Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, pp. 101-103.

³⁰ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, pp. 217 – 218.

³¹ Ibid., p. 222; also see Gouillard "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", p. 127.

³² Thurn, I. (ed.) (1973) *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum* (Walter de Gruyter et Socios), Berolini et Novi Eboraci, p. 84.

paraded through the streets of Constantinople early the following morning on Cheese Fare Sunday. The *Vita of St. Symeon* is specific with these additional comments.

At dawn, he [Symeon] took that great phalanx of people and they raised on high with their hands the all-holy icon of our Lord and of the Mother of God who bore Him and openly carried it through the street in public <procession>; they gathered at the church called by the all-glorious name of our Saviour, Christ [Chora], and from there they made known their arrival to the empress. She delayed not at all but went down into the so-called Magnaura and saw that angelic throng and learned from Symeon <the name of> the bishop [patriarch] who had been elected [Methodios]; and she ratified their decision and ordered that they celebrate the divine mystery in the church of God and invited them to dine with her in the palace.³³

The next event, which can be documented from several sources, is the removal of John the Grammarian from the Patriarchal Palace. The *Vita of Symeon* states that John “went mad,” faked an attack on his own person and was exiled by the Empress.³⁴

³³ Talbot (ed.) *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, pp. 222 – 224. This chronology dovetails with the “Absolution” in that Theodora could then have consulted Methodios as Patriarch-elect and spent the first week of Lent in prayer and fasting for Theophilos’ soul.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 224 – 225. See note 405 for references to variations of this story.

The Commemoration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy:

The associated occurrences leading to the celebration are not the subject of agreement. Fortescue writing in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* in 1911 places the date of the first Sunday of Orthodoxy as 19 February, 842.³⁵ This concept does not fit the scheme that modern researchers advocate. The exact sequence of events and dates is not known. In an early article, Treadgold states that 4 March, 843 was the date of the arrest of John the Grammarian, and 11 March, 843 the date of Methodios' enthronement.³⁶ In his book, Treadgold cites 11 March, as the date of the local synod that elected Methodios and deposed John.³⁷ Since the customary procedure was that a patriarch be enthroned on a Sunday or a major feast day, either arrangement fits this tradition.

The timetable presented by Gouillard, Hussey and Morris seems to be the most plausible. It is the account that fits with most contemporary sources of the period. Therefore, this chronology will be utilised for this discussion. These sources and others place Methodios' election on Saturday 3 March, 843. His elevation and enthronement was on Sunday, 11 March 843, this being the date for the first Sunday of Orthodoxy. Alternatively, the enthronement may have taken place on Cheese-Fare Sunday, 4 March 843

³⁵ Fortescue, A. (ed.) (1911) *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, pp. 242 - 243.

³⁶ Treadgold, W. (1979) "The Chronological Accuracy of the Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813-845", *DOP*, vol. 33, pp. 159 - 197, p. 191. This citation 153 credits Grumel, *La Chronologie* (note 24 *supra*).

³⁷ Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 447.

meaning Methodios was Patriarch during that first week of Great Lent.³⁸ This would then allow the Triumph of Orthodoxy commemoration to be led by an installed patriarch.

Regardless, whether Methodios was Patriarch or Patriarch-elect, a description of the rite of the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy can be determined from two sources, the Book of Ceremonies³⁹ and The Triodion.⁴⁰ These ceremonies described in *De Cerimoniis*, The Book of Ceremonies, outlined the practices used at the end of the tenth century in this manner:

On the Saturday evening, the Patriarch goes to the Church of the All-Holy Theotokos in Blachernae. And with him are the metropolitans, archbishops and bishops who happen to be in the City then, as well as the clergy of the Great Church and of the churches outside together with all those solitary monastic life within the God-guarded city, and all those who are to celebrate the midnight office in the holy church.⁴¹

³⁸ This would synchronise with the description of Methodios as Patriarch in *The Absolution of Theophilos*.

³⁹ Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, (1024 - 1029) *De Ceremoniis - Aulæ Byzantinae*, CB, Bonn, Budé and Paris, depicts the Sunday of Orthodoxy in the tenth century, but states "it is as it was celebrated of old".

⁴⁰ *The Lenten Triodion* (1977) trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (Faber and Faber Ltd.), London. This is the Church book of the Lenten offices, from Greek meaning three odes.

⁴¹ Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis - Aulæ Byzantinae*, Ch. 28, pp. 156 ff., = Vogt, vol. I, Book I, Chapter 37 pp. 145 ff.

On the next day, Sunday, the Book of Ceremonies summarises a Patriarchal procession of clergy and monastics starting at Blachernae, with candles and holy icons in hand, chanting Κύριε ἐλέησον. The ecclesiastical procession then met an Imperial procession at the doors of the Great Church [see figure: 4 for route of the procession and figure: 5 for St. Sophia - "The Great Church"].

The Text of the Absolution of Theophilos notes an interesting variant on this ceremonial order. It describes the first Sunday of Orthodoxy as follows,

...Uniting together with the Holy Patriarch, they came together in litanies from the Holy Altar following the Precious Cross and the Holy Gospel they came down saying prayers unto what is called the Royal Ktenarion. The chanted their earnest prayers and after dark tearfully moaned Lord have mercy. ⁴²

Grabar comments on this passage in this way,

They [the clergy] process to the gate of the Imperial Palace known as Κτεναρίων. It is most probable at the point that the Empress [and the young Emperor] came to meet the Patriarch and the clergy carrying- as we have come to know- an

⁴² Regel (ed.) *Vita Theodoraе imperatricis* - in *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, p. 38: "...καὶ ἐνωθέντες τῷ ἁγιωτάτῳ πατριάρχει καὶ λιτὴν ὁμοῦ ἀπάντες, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου θυσιαστηρίου μετὰ τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου κατῆλθον λιτανεύοντες μέχρι τῶν βασιλικῶν πυλῶν τῶν καλουμένων Κτεναρίων. Καὶ δὴ ἐκτενοῦς εὐχῆς γενομένης καὶ μετὰ κατανύξεως καὶ δακρύων πολλῶν στεναγμῶν τὸ 'κύριε ἐλέησον.' "

Imperial Candle. This Gate Κτεναρίων or ('of the comb') is not otherwise known to us; but the indication, if precise, is revealed to us in this era by a *Vita* of St Nicholas. We are aware of a street existing of the same name in Constantinople which was a street lined with boutiques of a particular type of artisans. ⁴³

The procession then proceeded in unison to the Great Church. The icons of the Great Church were re-installed in their places. ⁴⁴ It appears that the pattern for this procession could very well have been an earlier demonstration in favour of images by the Studite monks, led by St. Theodore. We read in Theodore's *Vita* of this procession of monks carrying icons on high and chanting triumphant hymns to Christ Our Saviour. "We venerate your Holy Icon, loving Lord, asking You to pardon our transgressions..." ⁴⁵

When the practice of two converging processions at the narthex doors of St. Sophia's began is not clear, but it is definitely normative by the end of the tenth century, since this is the description found in the Book of Ceremonies. The other difference noted in the Liturgical portion of this ceremony is that the sovereign does not enter the sanctuary to receive communion, as was customary; but receives on the metatorion. ⁴⁶ Two theories have been put

⁴³ Grabar, A. (1984) *L'Iconoclasme Byzantin* (Flammarion Press), Paris, p. 217, see notes 12 and 13.

⁴⁴ Regel (ed.) *Vita Theodoraë imperatricis* - in *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, p. 39.

⁴⁵ PG vol. 99, col. 185.

⁴⁶ Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis - Aulæ Byzantinae*, p. 147, lines 2 - 5.

forth as to why this took place on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. First, that this downgrading of the imperial participation was a penitential expression of the imperial role in the iconoclastic controversy. This visible lessening of the sovereign's position projected the "power" of the Church in Church – State relations.⁴⁷ The second theory states because Theodora was the sovereign at the time of first commemoration, she was not allowed to enter the altar area because of her sex.⁴⁸ The young emperor was much too young⁴⁹ to solely participate. Once the pattern was established it then became the model for all subsequent observances. The theory which centres on the battle of power between the Church and State as the most probable reason for the ceremonial order is a favourite of many historians. They view the details of the ceremony as reflecting a propagandistic measure by the Church. Afinogenov believes that the most reasonable rationale presented by the ceremonial form described by Vogt demonstrate the "political" aspects of the service. Scholars who advocate purely a political motivation to Methodios' actions find this a very seductive line of reasoning.⁵⁰

An alternative opinion might be offered at this time; since an empress without a husband was a rare circumstance in Byzantium and Theodora, as a woman, would not normally be allowed in the altar area. Additionally, we

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 162 – 164 also note pages in footnote 50 cited below.

⁴⁸ Grabar, *L'Iconoclisme Byzantin*, pp. 216 – 217; Gouillard supports this view, *Synodicon* p. 130, see note 103.

⁴⁹ Mango, C. (1967) "When was Michael III Born?" *DOP*, vol. 21, pp. 253 - 259, p.258. Professor Mango argues quite convincingly that Michael III was born in early in January, 840.

⁵⁰ Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios", pp. 60 - 62.

know the young Emperor Michael was little more than a toddler and he could not participate without his mother. Methodios was cognisant of this and the liturgical restrictions on Theodora. He was also aware that a great number of monks were attending that day from both inside and outside the city.

...And men [monks] came down from mount Olympos, from Athos, and Ida, even the congregation of Kyminas, and they proudly proclaimed the true faith.⁵¹

The conservative nature of both the era and the congregation would demand strict adherence to Church liturgical customs and practice. With the presence of such a large monastic contingent, it was reasonable that Methodios would hardly wish to antagonise the conservative monastics. Since he was the choice of what was considered the moderate party from within the palace circle of Constantinople, he would have hardly allowed himself and Theodora to be liturgically innovative on this occasion. Therefore, he strictly followed the prohibition on women entering the altar area to assure his detractors that he would indeed be following the strict Tradition of the Church in his future decisions .

⁵¹ Mango, "Liquidation of Iconoclasm and Patriarch Photios", p. 134.

The Synodicon

Even though the Synodicon commemorating the Triumph of Orthodoxy should rightly be categorised as a major work of Methodios, considering it at this point is appropriate. The opus, as shall be examined, includes three sections a homily, or patristic exhortation, historically thought to be the work of Methodios and although these texts are not formally part of the Synodicon, they will be studied here for the sake of completeness. The Canon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, a Methodian composition, and the text of the Synodicon proper, an amalgamated document of the iconodulic victory will also be examined as part of the "Synodicon".

These texts will be analysed in the order outlined above. The homily or exhortation form essentially one tradition and will be examined and compared in the pages to follow. Finally, it will be shown, in this comparison that these "Methodian Texts" depend on other root works. These will be highlighted and discussed. Although a complete line-by-line analysis is beyond the scope of this study, it will be undertaken in a future work.

The *Λόγος περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, which also will be examined is either a sermon given on The Sunday of Orthodoxy or a catechetical exposition by the Patriarch. The two sources to be used for comparative purposes are

Professor Afinogenov's transcription of *Codex Mosquensi Synodiali Graeco 5 (Vladimir 412)*⁵² and *Codex Vat. gr. 1753* [folio 225 ff.].⁵³

Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων: This composition credited to Patriarch Methodios can be found in two sources: Pitra, pp. 357 – 361.⁵⁴ and *Codex Vat. gr. 1753*. The account of this homily, in Pitra, is about sixty to seventy percent dependent of the mss tradition of the treatise taken from the *codex Vat. gr. 1753 (225r – 230v)*. Even though the manuscript is attributed to the pen of Patriarch Sophronios of Jerusalem (c. 560 – 638),⁵⁵ and it exhibits some possible clues, which might indicate a Sophronian origin, this treatise also has characteristics that could identify it as likely to be Methodian in its authorship. Because the *Vat. gr. 1753* manuscript is more complete than the Pitra text, it will be the primary source text used in this study. Pitra lists several sources for the *Ἐκθεσις*, the basis for the examination of the homily.⁵⁶ This Pitra citation is quite old and not as reliable as later scholarship, but some salient points will be included in this analysis.

⁵² Afinogenov, D. (1997) *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate- The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847) - in Russian* (Indrink), Moscow, pp. 182 – 188.

⁵³ Methodios of Constantinople (c. 843) *Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, in *Vat. Gr. 1753 (225r - 230v)*, Roma, pp. 1 - 12.

⁵⁴ Pitra, J. B. (1868) "S. Methodius CP," in *Iuris Ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta*, vol. 2, (S. Congregationis De Propaganda Fide), Roma, pp. 351 - 365.

⁵⁵ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1291. Then note the attribution on Methodios of Constantinople, *Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, in p. 1 [225r], line 4.

⁵⁶ Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", p. 353, he lists *Codex vatic. 1753 f. 225*, and *Mosquens. 140*, infra n. II Afinogenov in his book lists *Mosquensi Synodali Graeco 5 (Vladimir 412) anni 1445*. This shall be the text used since it is taken from most recent research (1997).



Additionally, the *Vita of Methodios* contains a passage, which appears by its placement and construction to be a homily by Methodios. This text will be considered first then the other texts noted previously will be assessed. The location of this text within the *Vita* does make it appear to be a homily on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. However, with further scrutiny of the structure and some of the language used, a question arises that perhaps this particular public rhetoric was not a homily, but could possibly be an oration giving the new patriarch's views.⁵⁷

It is known that *vitae* present their subjects in the best possible light and should be viewed with caution. Nonetheless, exploring the text, we can easily glimpse into the Methodios' thinking, as he instructs the faithful [or his clergy] on their conduct and attitudes in confronting the former iconoclasts. Methodios speaks frankly on the subject of those who had been the persecutors of Christ, the iconoclasts.

It is for us the blameless and the four pillars of Orthodoxy not to exact penalties of the miserable heretics. We cannot inflict the suffering on them that they inflicted on so many. We must be tolerant toward them and this Sunday let us memorialise them in hymn. "Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did..."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ PG, vol. c, 1253 c – 1257 d.

⁵⁸ PG, vol. c, 1256 b – 1257 a. This wording allows the readers of the *Vita of Methodios* to identify him and his sufferings with Christ and His Passion.

Methodios uses the phrase "this Sunday", which could show that the talk was not given during the celebration of the restoration of icons, but at some time before this ceremony, as a preparation for the populace. It can be noted that the prayers of the Synodicon do not reflect any similar language. Continuing within the same passage, Methodios is quoted saying that it is unbecoming to "dig up yesterdays and to use it against them [the heretics]." He admonishes the citizenry of the Queen City not "to imprison them, not to look upon these heretics with anger, or to act in any tyrannical fashion towards them."⁵⁹ It becomes obvious that these are not the sentiments of a zealot or conversely of a "weak sister". Methodios advocates an attitude of Christian understanding towards the iconoclasts, and even though he admits to some ill feelings due to personal hardships he suffered, he hastened to add "but let me say that my soul is not praiseworthy in that."⁶⁰ Characterising the heresy, Methodios declares that the heretics were vipers who had closed their ears to the Truth and said.

However, our memory of the Manicheans spewing out their venomous heresy is without all credible understanding. The entire world knows this to be true, the Word became flesh and lived among us. We saw His glory as the only begotten Son of the Father in that we also take part having heard His

⁵⁹ PG, vol. c, 1257 c.

⁶⁰ PG, vol. c, 1255 a.

promise. Blessed are those that have not seen,
but believe. ⁶¹

This text speaks directly about the heresiarchs, who preferred the glory of this world, to the blessings of God; and those bishops that did not teach and sustain the orthodox faith but promoted iconoclasm. ⁶² Methodios' concerns soon become apparent. He wished to underline his desire to cleanse the Church of this poison, for the last time. This thorny problem was a cause of great turmoil during the brief years of Methodios' patriarchal term and into Ignatius' time.

Λόγος περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων

This analysis is of the text transcribed from *Codex Mosquensi Synodali Graeco 5 (Vladimir 412) anni 1455* and it yields some very different conclusions from the segment of the *Vita* discussed above. ⁶³ *Λόγος* is identified as the homily of Methodios given on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The form and structure is indicative of a patristic based homily. The introduction, a statement of belief, begins with the basic credal recitation. The Nicene - Constantinopolitan Creed forms the basis for the introduction

⁶¹ PG. vol. c, col. 1256 d., Here Methodios identified the iconoclastic controversy as a type of Manichean Dualism (= Paulicians, in the Byzantine mind), which denied the reality of the Incarnation. See Hamilton, J. and Hamilton, B. (1998) *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World*, trans. Y. Stoyanov of Old Slavonic Texts (Manchester University Press), Manchester & New York (Manchester Medieval Sources Series) p. 66. Also see John 20, 29 for Scriptural reference.

⁶² PG, vol., c, col. 1257 b.

⁶³ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, pp. 182 - 188.

with a series of apophatic ⁶⁴ statements. There is one interesting aspect of this part of the text. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is described in this manner:

And in the all Holy Spirit the Holy and the Lord,
who together with the Father and the Son is
worshipped and glorified. ⁶⁵

What is startling in its omission, in the above text, is one phrase, "τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον". This critical definition of the source of the Holy Spirit "who proceeds from the Father" is not evident. The subordination of the Third person of the Trinity is contrary to Orthodox teaching and violates the credal statement of Constantinople I (381). There is no explanation for this exclusion.

The Theotokos is identified as the Birthgiver of God and her role in the Incarnation is acknowledged. The saints, the holy martyrs, holy relics and finally images are named as worthy of respect veneration and honour. Methodios states,

I venerate and kiss their honoured images which
are holy not as God but as evidence and
explanation and memory of their suffering. The

⁶⁴ To define by negation i.e., "What a thing is not". It is the opposite of cataphatic, or positive definition. Apophatic theology is favoured by the Eastern Church when describing the attributes of God. For example - God is unfathomable, indefinable or unknowable.

⁶⁵ Atinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847) - in Russian.*, p. 182, "Καὶ εἰς τὸ πανάγιον πνεῦμα, τὸ ἅγιον καὶ κύριον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον.."

icons are not for showing the bodily form only, but the struggles of their bodies. Because of their struggles for Christ our God, they are honoured and venerated. If they had not done these things for Christ, it would not be necessary to write their stories in the books of the Church.⁶⁶

Continuing, the Patriarch attacks the iconoclasts' claim that the icon supporters engaged in idol worship. He does this with a series of parallel questions "Whose idol, do I worship...?" With his answers, Methodios always returns to the Orthodox position of veneration and the Incarnational economy, and describes in a detailed record the life of Christ and his saving ministry.⁶⁷

In his homily, the patriarch then cites patristic proofs of the correctness of the iconodules' views. St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great are quoted specifically. Then, Methodios compares the "logographers", those who handed down the tradition of Christ, in words within the Gospels and iconographers, "writers of images", who handed this same tradition down in the form of colour in images.

Tell Me, why the book is venerated and the image is spat upon? What is the difference between the two? Because each evangelise one meaning, one group is venerated while one is spat upon. Who

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 183 – 184.

would not mock such logic? Who would not ridicule this teaching because both of them explain one story? One is venerated, while one is spat upon. Was knowledge in the one and ignorance in the other? ⁶⁸

Approaching the argument in this manner, Methodios attacks the iconoclasts' belief that the gospel book was worthy of veneration, while the act of venerating an icon was idolatry. Methodios returns to the patristic lesson Saint Basil expounded, quoted by St. John of Damascus,

...the honour shown toward the image is transferred to the prototype. ⁶⁹. Just as the insult... Thus, it should be for the image of the King of Heaven. He who insults the image of Christ, he directs the insult to the prototype [Christ]. ⁷⁰

The next line of reasoning that Methodios presents is that of Christ's incarnation and the circumscribable nature of the Θεάνθρωπος [the God-Man]. Again, this is a summary of the arguments of John of Damascus ⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 184: "Διατί τὴν μὲν βίβλον προσκυνεῖτε καὶ τὸν πίνακα ἐμπύετε, εἶπε μοι; Τίς ἡ διαφορά τῶν δύο, ὅτι ἀμφότεροι μίαν ἐξηγήσιν εὐαγγελίζονται, καὶ ὁ μὲν εἰς προσκυνεῖται; ὁ δὲ ἕτερος ἐμπύεται; Ὡς τῆς συμφορᾶς. Τίς οὐ μὴ καταγέλᾳσιν τὴν κρίσιν ταύτην; Τίς οὐ μὴ βδελύξεται τὴν διδασκαλίαν ταύτην, ὅτι ἀμφότεροι μίαν ἑρμηνεύουσι γραφήν, καὶ ὁ μὲν εἰς προσκυνεῖται, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος ἐμπύεται; Εἶδες γινώσκιν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀγνωσίαν;"

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 185. See St. John of Damascus *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, p. 29. See St. Basil the Great (1980) *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. D. Anderson (St Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood NY., chap 18, p. 72.

⁷⁰Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 185; See St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Image*, p. 29. See St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, chap 18, p. 72.

⁷¹ St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 50 ff.

and the refutations of Theodore of Studios ⁷² over the issues that were raised by the opponents of images. The exhortation continues, explaining the value of "unwritten" traditions.

Many and other traditions we have received from the apostles and the fathers that were not spoken by Christ. At what point did Christ say to venerate facing east, or to venerate the Cross, the Gospel, or to commune His Body, fasting, or for couples to be crowned? ⁷³

Methodios now evokes the patristic authority of the great Ecumenical Councils of the Church asking why an earlier council did not strike down the use of images. He begins with the First and continues through the Sixth asking the rhetorical question, "Why these Fathers in Council did not prohibit images?" When the Patriarch arrives at the Sixth Council, ⁷⁴ he tightens his reasoning by centring on the 82nd Canon of the Sixth Council. He explains the context of the canon and then quotes this canon verbatim:

In some pictures of the venerable icons, a lamb is painted to which the finger of the Precursor points his finger, which is received as a type of grace,

⁷² St. Theodore the Studite, (1981) *On Holy Icons*, trans. C. P. Roth (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, pp. 22 – 23 and pp. 69 – 73.

⁷³ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 185.

⁷⁴ This is called the Quinisext Council in the West = Council of the Trullo in the East (Penthecton). The Eastern Church considers this a completion of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. See Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, pp. 356 – 357.

indicating beforehand through the Law, our true Lamb, Christ our God. Embracing the ancient types and shadows as symbols of the truth, and patterns given to the Church, we prefer "grace and truth," receiving it as the fulfilment of the Law. In order therefore that "that which is perfect" may be delineated to the eyes of all, at least in coloured expression, we decree that the figure in human form of the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world, Christ our God be henceforth exhibited in images, instead of the ancient lamb, so that all may understand by means of it the depths of the humiliation of the Word of God, and that we may recall to our memory his conversation, in the flesh, his passion and salutary death, and his redemption which was wrought for the whole world. ⁷⁵

Forthwith, Methodios adds this strong statement,

If this is what the Fathers have ruled, what right do we have to go beyond those rulings of theirs, causing schism in God's Church. Do you not know that he who throws down the rulings of the Fathers receives anathema? ⁷⁶

The Patriarch states explicitly, "the Fathers of all six synods fought and cursed other heresies to throw them down; and tell me, is not idolatry

⁷⁵ Ibid., vol.14, p. 401. The Popes considered this Canon as a valid ruling of the "Sixth Council." See notes on p. 401, see Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 186.

⁷⁶ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 186: "Ἐὰν οἱ πατέρες οὕτως ὥρισαν, ἡμεῖς ποῖαν ἔχομεν ἀνάγκην ὑπερβαίνειν τοὺς ὅρους αὐτῶν καὶ βάλλειν σχίσματα εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ; Οὐκ οἶδας, ὅτι ὁ καταλύων ὅρια τῶν πατέρων τὸ ἀνάθεμα λαμβάνει;"

worse?" ⁷⁷ Over the next few paragraphs of his address, Methodios details the Old Testament use of imagery in the Temple and its relationship to idolatry, the appearances of non-corporeal and depicted angelic figures in both the Old and New Testament and the apostolic witness. He continues the patristic record and finally states that the role of the bishop is an instructive one.

This is why bishops exist to **instruct** [emphasis mine] the people, how they should behave and how they should pray. Because those fathers, the true fathers and teachers, guides to salvation, were concerned only to teach the people that which is necessary for their salvation, truly wishing to give an account to God for the good of the people. The bishops of this generation do not concern themselves with anything, but only when they will be called upon and rewarded. ⁷⁸

This characterisation and reference may very well reveal some foundational thinking of the new Patriarch. Methodios had very strong opinions on the role of the bishop, which will be explored in Chapter 4, which centres on Methodios' ecclesiology. After this description, the Patriarch compares and contrasts the leaders of the iconoclasts with the great fathers of the Church. In these extracts, he uses the same derogatory nicknames for the iconoclasts, which are used later in the Synodicon. Methodios turns his

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 186.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 187: "Διὰ τοῦτό εἰσιν οἱ ἐπίσκοποι εἰς τό διδάσκειν τόν λαόν, πῶς δεῖ πιστεῦειν ἢ πῶς εὐχεσθαι. Καί γάρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκεῖνοι, οἱ ἀληθινοὶ πατέρες καὶ διδάσκαλοι, οἱ ὁδηγοὶ τῆς σωτηρίας, οὐδέν ἄλλο ἐμερίμνων, εἰ μὴ τὸ διδάσκειν τὸν λαόν τὰ πρὸς σωτήριαν, ὡς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν βουλόμενοι λόγον ἀποδοῦναι τῷ θεῷ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ. Οἱ δὲ ἐπίσκοποι τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης ἄλλο οὐδέν μεριμνῶσιν, εἰ μὴ ποτέ ἀνακλιθῶσι, καὶ πῶς καὶ τί ἀριστήσωσιν."

attention to the Council of Hiereia-Blachernae (754). The contrast between the six legitimate councils and the council called by Constantine V was underlined.

To whom should we listen? The holy six ecumenical councils or the one without a head [Council of Hiereia] rejected by God and His saints. It was without a head. And tell me which Patriarch was there from Alexandria, none, Patriarch of Rome, no one; nor Antioch or his representative, Jerusalem, not even one, unworthy synod, without a Patriarch? But, he who was elected and deposed and killed himself. Oh! Who would not mock such a synod? ⁷⁹

The next section compares the work of the iconoclast with that of the Jewish leaders of the Temple and their treatment of Christ at the time of His Passion. Each of these assemblies, in Methodios' eyes had one source, Satan himself. All the acts of the iconoclasts were evils against the person of Christ. After this portion, Methodios begins his conclusion. The activities that will occur during his Patriarchal interval are clearly stated. He speaks of his legacy, his memory and how he wishes that history will remember his time as the archpastor of his flock.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 187: "Τίνα ὑπακούσομεν; Τὰς ἀγίας ἔξ οἰκουμενικὰς συνόδους, ἢ τὴν ἀκέφαλον ταύτην καὶ ἐβδεληγμένην καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ; Καὶ γὰρ ἀκέφαλός ἐστιν. Καὶ εἶπέ μοι· ποῖος πατριάρχης εὐρέθη ἐν αὐτῇ; Ὁ Ἀλεξανδρείας, οὐδόλως· ὁ Ρώμης οὐ κατεδέξατο ἐλθεῖν ἐν αὐτῇ· ὁ Ἀντιοχείας, οὐδὲ τὸ σύνολον· ὁ Ἱεροσολύμων, οὐδὲ ἅπαξ. Λοιπὸν ποταπὴ σύνοδος, πατριάρχην μὴ ἔχουσα; Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὃν ἐποίησεν ἐστράφη καὶ ῥίψας ἀπέκτεινεν ἐαυτόν. Ὡς τίς οὐ μὴ καταγελάσει τοιαύτην σύνοδον;.. " This last passage refers to Theodotus Cassiteras chosen by Constantine V in 754; he later committed suicide.

We will research the writings and the traditions of the Fathers and we will imitate them. As we found the Church, we will leave it. Thus, we will pass it on. We will not separate ourselves from the Fathers; perhaps, the next generation would anathematise and exhume us. Surely, we will not gain even if we go to the ends of the earth. I hope, beseech and if I exist, even unworthy of heaven and earth, that God grant that I am in communion with the Six Ecumenical Synods and have a place among them.⁸⁰

The last few lines of the homily are a benediction and a blessing.

An evaluation of the two tracts presented above yields some interesting observations. The first example, from the *Vita*, appears to be an address made in public sometime before The Sunday of Orthodoxy. It contains paternal advice and Christian teaching on the correct behaviour with reference to the wayward iconoclasts. Nevertheless, Methodios also admitted some personal feelings of resentment at the suffering that he and others received at the hands of the heretics. Methodios was concise and straightforward when he stated his desire to cleanse the Church of the poison that had infected it.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.188. folio [147r – v “ Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐρευνήσωμεν τὰς Γραφὰς καὶ παραδόσεις τῶν πατέρων, καὶ αὐτοὺς μιμησόμεθα· καὶ καθὼς εὗραμεν τὴν ἑκκλησίαν, οὕτως αὐτῇ καὶ παραμείνωμεν, καὶ οὕτως αὐτὴν καὶ παραδόσωμεν. Καὶ μὴ χωρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, μήπως ἐλθοῦσα ἑτέρα γενεὰ μέλλει ἡμᾶς ἀναθεματίζειν καὶ ἀνασκάπτειν· καὶ ὄντως οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς ὠφελήσουσι τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς. Ἐγὼ εὐχομαι καὶ παρακαλῶ, εἰ καὶ ἀνάξιος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς ὑπάρχω ἵνα καταξιώσῃ με ὁ θεὸς μετὰ τὴν ἐξ ἁγίων οἰκομενικῶν συνόδων κοινωνὸν γενέσθαι καὶ ἔχειν μέρος μετ’ αὐτῶν.”

The treatise from the Moscow codex, *Vladimir 412*, has a different aura from the *Vita* discourse. The text begins with the declaration of the credal roots of the iconodules. Methodios presents the central arguments of the iconoclasts, one by one, and he refutes them. The patriarch then proves the correctness of the orthodox position and its origin from within the true Tradition of the Church. The exposition is replete with patristic references, which many times follows the pattern of the early apologists for images. Using the patristic method, he declares that nothing innovative is added to the received treasure of faith; it is applied specifically to each age under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ The sermon continues with an identification of the “standards” of the Church defined by the Six Ecumenical Synods, [here it should be noted that Nicaea II is not yet declared the Seventh Council]. Nonetheless, the criteria for defining the nature of an ecumenical synod are stated quite clearly. Finally, Methodios evokes the authority of the historical Church and Tradition to seal the victory over the iconoclastic heresy that had rent the fabric of the Church and the Empire for more than a hundred and twenty years. The content, form, language and didactic quality of the composition are self-evident. If this treatment is examined with these points of comparison in mind, then it is highly probable that this discourse is partly or in total the homily of the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

⁸¹ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol.14, p. 555. See Canon One of the Council of Nicaea II to be discussed later in this work.

Closely related to *Codex Mosquensi Synodali Graeco 5 (Vladimir 412) anni 1445*, is *Codex Vat. gr. 1753 folio [225ff]*, which is titled above. Comparing these two texts side by side, there can be little doubt that one depends on the other. The Vladimir codex is slightly longer, while the *Vat. gr.* codex has slightly more detail; but the basic substantive points are the same. There is a version of these texts also found in Pitra. It is labelled *Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*.⁸² This document has large sections that duplicate either *Vladimir 412* or *Vat. gr. 1753*. As this analysis continues, some variances between the two documents will be demonstrated.

Returning to the comparison of *Vladimir 412* and *Vat. gr. 1753*, the openings are similar, as one would expect, since they are statements which position the writer within the Holy Tradition of the Church. There is a specific departure in *Vat. gr. 1753* in the opening paragraph. In this version the Holy Spirit is described in this manner:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father, who together with
the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified.⁸³

⁸² Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", pp. 357 - 361.

⁸³ The phrase "who proceeds from the Father" is included in this text, unlike the similar exposition in *Vladimir 412* (taken from Nicene – Constantinopolitan Creed).

The Pitra text does not record this portion of the work and it cannot be determined whether reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit is present or not. Folios [225r] and [225v] of *Vat. gr. 1753* manuscript frame and elucidate the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine as defined by the first Six Ecumenical Councils. The author uses these familiar phrases:

[The Trinity] one in nature, and essence and divinity, and one kingship and source and force and with three hypostasis (persons), that is to say one person, which I call characteristics and properties for hypostasis is another thing and essence yet another...⁸⁴

This passage continues to re-enforce the nature and the essence of the persons of the Holy Trinity as defined by the Holy Tradition of the Church. On page two, there is the use of a passage credited to St. Gregory the Theologian. Gregory uses the metaphor of the sun, its light and its rays to illustrate the properties of the Trinity. The use of these lessons of Trinitarian theology could well have been used either by Sophronios or by Methodios to prove their adherence to the Orthodoxy of the Councils. In speaking of the Son on page three [226r]; the text speaks directly to the central issue for the iconodules, the Incarnational Economy of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though this theology was accepted by iconoclasts, the iconodules sought to embrace it as their own.

⁸⁴ Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περί τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, page 3, folio [225r], lines 23 - 25: " ..εἰς μίαν φύσιν καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ θεότητα, καὶ μίαν βασιλείαν καὶ ἀρχὴν καὶ ἰσχύον, καὶ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, ἥγουν τό πρόσωπον ᾧ καὶ χαρακτήρας καλῶ καὶ ἰδιώτητος ἄλλο γὰρ ὑπόστασις καὶ ἄλλο οὐσία.."

If I am asked concerning the Holy Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ thus we answer: from the Scriptures this is how we believe that the Lord became man that He is the Word of God the uncircumscribable, without body, the unbegotten Son of the Father, Light from Light, the fount of life, and immortality, the reflection of Glory, and the image of the substance. And according to the will of the Father, who is before the beginning and with the synergy of the Holy Spirit and He took upon Himself, flesh from the virginal blood of the Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary ...⁸⁵

On page four [226r] and Pitra page 357, Methodios declares his acceptance of all the ecclesiastical traditions both written and unwritten. He also states that he venerates the august images of the human body of the Word.⁸⁶ This theological exposition speaks directly to the reality of the Incarnation and the assumption of human flesh by the Logos. St. Gregory the Theologian states in his Letter to the priest Kledonios [no. 101] the following:

That which is not assumed has not been healed;
but that which is united to God is saved.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid., page 3 folio [226r], lines 6 – 14: " Εὰν δὲ ἐρωτᾷ με τις θεΐας ἐν(ανθρωπ)ήσεως τοῦ Κ(υρίο)υ ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ), ἀποκρινοῦμαι αὐτῷ ἀπὸ γραφῆς πῶς δεῖ πιστεύειν καὶ τοῦ Κ(υρίο)υ ἐναν(θρ)ωπ)ήσεως, ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ Θ(εοῦ) λόγος, ὁ ἀπερίγραφτος, ὁ ἀσώματος, ὁ μονογενὴς τοῦ Π(ατ)ρ(ὸ)ς Ὑῖός, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς φῶς, ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας, τὸ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, ὁ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως, τῇ βουλῇ τοῦ προδάρχου Π(ατ)ρ(ὸ)ς καὶ τῇ συνεργείᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου Πν(εύματος), ἐκ τῶν παρθενικῶν αἱμάτων, τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ αὐτοῦ ὑποστάσει ἔπηξεν ἑαυτῷ σάρκα."

⁸⁶ Ibid., page 4, lines 10 – 12, also see Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", p. 357 for the very same wording: "παραδόσεις, ἐγγράφους τε καὶ ἀγράφους, προσπύσσομαι καὶ προσκυνῶ τὴν πάνσεπτον εἰκόνα τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου σώματος τοῦ Θ(εοῦ) Λόγου.."

⁸⁷ PG vol. xxxvii Epistle ad Cledonius, 101 4 – 7, 10.

The veneration of Holy Images is linked to both Holy Tradition and to the Incarnational theology of Christ's salvific economy, which is at the very heart of Methodian and iconodulic thinking. This tract continues in lines 15 – 22 to enumerate the other objects worthy of veneration – the Cross, the Holy Lands, the Holy Scriptures and the blessed temples of worship; which were objects that the iconoclasts also accepted as entities due veneration. Methodios then points out that many of these were made by the hands of man. Now, he returns to his central theme of the images by relating the icon of the Theotokos as a *typos* of the image of God.⁸⁸ The patriarch states that this image is due veneration. Methodios presently lists the members of the community of faith, which are also worthy of veneration in images. This list includes the Lord Jesus Christ, the Theotokos, St. John the Baptist and Forerunner of Christ, the Holy Apostles, the disciples and the Holy Martyrs of the Church. Methodios extends this line of thinking in folio [227r] to include other types of holy men and women that could be portrayed in icons. He defends the sanctity of these images as well as the value of the use of icons. He states, “they are venerated and kissed, not as gods, let it never happen; but similar to the honour given to the Holy Scriptures.” Methodios adds that this is done in remembrance of their sufferings and the examples they have set in their lives.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Gen. 1, 26 ff. This is true of all of mankind, but it especially true of the Theotokos as she is considered the “New Eve” in Orthodox theology. The Virgin Mary rectified the original sin of the old Eve with her voluntary participation in the Incarnation of Christ. See Luke 1, 26 ff. This position was accepted by the iconoclasts.

⁸⁹ Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, page 5, folio [227r], lines 12 – 20: “ τῶν προρηθενέντων λέγω δὴ τοῦ Κ(υρίου)υ'Ι(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστο)υ", τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, τοῦ ἁγίου Προδρόμου, τῶν προνόμου πατέρων, πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὁσίων ἱεραρχῶν, ἀσκητριῶν καὶ ἀθλοφόρων γυναικῶν, ὁμιόως τὰς οὐρανίους δυνάμεις ὁμολογῶ, σεύωμαι καὶ δοξάζω τὰς καὶ σεβασμίας αὐτῶν εἰκόνας καὶ φόβῳ πολλῷ

In folio [144r] section 2 of *Vladimir 412*, which corresponds with folio [227r] of 1753, the author lists the very same pagan gods and goddesses in answer to the rhetorical question, which idols do you say I worship? The Christian cynosures are answers to the pagan personalities named:

- Apollo is answered by comparing his statue with the image of Christ and the Divine Economy taught in icons
- Artemis is answered with the image of the Theotokos
- Dios – is answered with the icon St. John the Baptist
- Zeus [and Hercules] is answered with the icon of Holy Apostles

In both manuscripts, Methodios outlines events in salvation history, which the Church has handed down teaching the Incarnation of Christ in icons and in the Gospels. Once again, the lists are identical. The Annunciation, the Nativity, the cave, the manger, the mid-wife, the swaddling clothes, the Wise men, the Baptism and so forth are each enumerated one by one. This list continues through the Ascension and Pentecost.⁹⁰ The miracles, during Christ's earthly ministry, are detailed in the next catalogue. Again, these lists coincide in both codices. Towards the end of this folio and into the beginning of folio [227v], the Patriarch uses one of his favourite literary practices, quoting Old Testament figures. Utilising the prophetic authorities

αὐτὰς καὶ πίστει ἀσπάζομαι, οὐχ ὡς θεοὺς, μὴ γένοιτο, ἀλλ' ὡς γραφεὺς καὶ ἐξηγησὶν καὶ ὑπόμνησιν τῶν παθημάτων αὐτῶν.”

⁹⁰ *Vladimir 412*, folio [144r] = *Vat. gr. 1753*, folio [227r], lines 15 ff.

of Isaiah and David, Methodios counters the idea that the use of images is idolatrous. This accusation is the charge that the iconomachie, or as the new Patriarch refers to them, "the godless Theomachie", had levelled at the supporters of images.

Both compositions then compare and contrast the relative value in teaching the Incarnation by "logographers" and by "iconographers" citing St. Basil as the patristic source. St. Basil had illustrated his lesson using the phrase "written and unwritten sources". Methodios simply extends this to fit his meaning, he further states they are of equal value in teaching, illustrating and transmitting the Incarnation.⁹¹ He emphasises the lesson that Scripture is an aspect of Holy Tradition; but there are other valuable components, which present the Truth to the Body of Christ, the Church. One of these is the presentation of theology in images. The similarities continue as the patristic authority of St. John Chrysostomos is used to bolster the author's convictions. Once more, the same meaning is reflected in both treatises. In St. John's Holy Thursday homily, the likeness of the emperor and the icon of Christ are compared; St. John asserts that honour due to the portrait of the earthly king is appropriate, but that the higher honour is befitting the icon of the Heavenly King.⁹² Both folios quote St. Basil's classic assertion that the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype. The correspondence proceeds to the main critique of the iconoclasts' theology; the accusation made is the charge that by their

⁹¹ Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, in, folio [228r], lines 15 – 21.

⁹² Vladimir 412, folio [145r] = vat. gr. 1753, [228v], lines 12 ff.

"logic", they, the iconoclasts, separate the flesh of Christ (i.e. his humanity) from His Divinity. The iconodules state that this never occurs, not in the womb of the Virgin or elsewhere.⁹³

The compositions are parallel concerning the tradition of image use the Church received from the time of Christ until the patriarchate of Germanos. Each of the Ecumenical Synods is recounted through the Sixth. The question asked was why image use was not deemed idolatrous by any of these august assemblies of Holy Fathers.⁹⁴ The Vladimir text quotes the 82nd Canon of the Council of Trullo,⁹⁵ whereas the *Vat. gr. 1753* text excludes this reference. In folio [229r] of *Vat. gr.* and folio [146r] of *Vladimir 412*, the tracts again converge citing the same patristic fathers Chrysostomos, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.⁹⁶ From this point to the conclusion of each composition, they diverge, that is with one exception; in the last folio *Vladimir 412* [147r] and the last of *Vat. gr. 1753* [230r], both include the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea as one of the Holy Councils of the Church.

⁹³ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p.185 folio [145r]: "Λοιπὸν χωρίζεις τὴν σάρκα ἀπὸ τῆς θεότητος; Μὴ γένοιτο· οὐδέποτε γὰρ ἐχωρίσθησαν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, οὔτε ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τῆς μητρός..." = Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, page 9, folio [229r], lines 1 – 4 exact wording in both.

⁹⁴ Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, page 10, folio [229v], lines 1 - 9.

⁹⁵ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 185.

⁹⁶ In *vat. gr.*, folio [229v], line 7, Gregory of Nyssa is wrongly identified as Gregory the Theologian. The quotation is correctly attributed to Gregory of Nyssa.

As has been shown, the same language was used in the work *Λόγος περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, (codex, *Mosquensi Synodali Graeco 5* (Vladimir 412) anni 1445) and *Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ σεπτῶν εἰκόνων* (codex *Vat. gr. 1753*). There is striking parallelism between these two works.

By turning our attention to another source, we find that the Pitra text has remained identical with *Vat. gr 1753* until the mid-point in folio [228v], line 6. The two versions diverge only to resume the same wording again in line 18 folio [229r] “..γὰρ αὐτὸς Χ(ριστὸς) ἐπὶ τῆς.” The intervening portion concentrates on further iconodulic defence for image use. The iconoclasts are chided with this challenge by Methodios, for their veneration of the Gospel Book:

Tell me, what do you venerate in the book of the Gospel, the material or the interpretation of the Incarnational Economy? Surely, the interpretation; and thus it is with the Holy Icons we do not honour the planks of wood, not the wall, but the image of the Body and the interpretation of Christ's Economy and of the Saints...⁹⁷

After this direct attack, Methodios again relies on patristic texts to support his line of reasoning. He cites St. John Chrysostomos' sermon of Great

⁹⁷ Methodios of Constantinople, *Ἐκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, p. 8., folio [228v], lines 7 – 11: "Εἰπέ μοι, τίνα πρόσκυνεῖς ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τὴν ὕλην ἢ τὴν διήγησιν τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας· πάντως τὴν ἐξήγησιν οὕτως καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων, οὐ τὴν σανίδαν τιμῶμεν οὐδὲ τὸν τύχον·, ἀλλὰ τὸν χαρακτήρα τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὴν ἐξήγησιν τῆς τοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ) οἰκονομίας καὶ τῶν ἁγίων.." Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 184, folio [144v] = Pitra, "S. Methodius CP.", p. 359 slightly different wording.

and Holy Thursday in which the analogy of the honour paid to the portrait of the Emperor, an earthly king, and to the spotless image of Christ, the Heavenly King is made.⁹⁸ Toward the end of this folio, a critical precept is elucidated further explaining the theology of the iconodules. Speaking directly to the issue of whether Christ could be depicted since he is God, Methodios makes this reflection:

So thus it is good to conclude that he that does not honour the image of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would not flee from dishonouring with gross insults Christ, Himself? Because you ask me, is God uncircumscribable? I acknowledge that the Divine is uncircumscribable and without passion and unknowable; but the flesh, as it was seen on Earth after his passion is circumscribable. The iconomachos says, "Well then, You, separate the flesh from the Divinity. Oh, the sly reasoning of the Godless, may it never be so, they were never separate not in the Womb of His Mother or at His Baptism or..."⁹⁹

Starting on line 7 of this same folio Methodios uses a literary approach he has used in other tracts. He uses the same phrase *οὐχι ἡ σαρξ*, repeatedly

⁹⁸ Methodios of Constantinople, *Ἐκθεσις περί τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, p. 10, folio [228v], lines 12 – 19.

⁹⁹ Ibid., [228v – 229r], lines 26 – 30 and 1 – 5: " οὕτως χρῆ λογίζεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ Κ(υριοῦ) ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ) ὅτι ἀτιμάζον αὐτὴν τὸν Χ(ριστὸν) ἀτιμάζει τίς οὐ μὴ φύγῃ τὴν ὕβριν(;) τοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ)· καὶ ἐρῆς μοι ὅτι ὁ Θε(ο)ς ἀπερίγραπτός ἐστιν καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ὁμολογῶ ὅτι τὸ Θεῖον ἀπερίγραπτόν ἐστιν καὶ ἀπαθὲν καὶ ἀκατανόητον, ἡ δὲ σὰρξ περιγράφεται ὡς ὁραθῇ ἐπὶ γῆς μετὰ τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ. Ὁ εἰκονομάχος λέγει· καὶ λοιπὸν χωρίζῃς τὴν σάρκα ἀπὸ τῆς θεότητος· ὡς τῶν πονηρῶν λογισμῶν τῶν ἀθέων· οὐ γὰρ ἐχωρήθησαν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, μὴ γένοιτο οὔτε ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ μ(ητ)ρ(ό)ς, οὔτε ἐπὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος..."

to emphasise his intent and the proofs of his theology. This use of anaphora is characteristic of Methodian rhetorical style and is illustrated in the following passage:

...πῶς τὴν σάρκα περιγράφης μόνην· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐρῶ·
τίς' ἐθύλασεν γάλα ἐκ τῆς παρθένου, οὐχὶ ἡ σαρξ
τίς ἐστάθη γυμνὸς ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνι ποταμῷ, οὐχὶ ἡ
~~σαρξ~~· τίς ὀδυπόρησεν καὶ ἐκοπίασεν, ἢ τίς
ἔφαγεν καὶ ἔπιεν, οὐχὶ ἡ σαρξ· τίς ἤπλωσεν, τὰς
παλάμας ἐν τῷ στ(αυ)ρῷ, οὐχὶ ἡ σαρξ· περὶ δὲ
τῆς θεότητος,..¹⁰⁰

On [229r] line 18, the two texts, the manuscript tradition and that of Pitra¹⁰¹ cite the incident of Christ, Himself, forming the "image made without hands" by wiping His Holy Face on a Towel. Methodios states that since this image came down from Christ and was still in existence, he then asks how could venerating this object be considered idol worship?¹⁰² Furthermore, Methodios adds this historical dimension,

Methodios makes the point that the practice of venerating images had been handed down from the time of Christ until the time of the Patriarch Germanos. Suddenly this custom was idol worship; why had not the First Synod condemned it or the Second (and so fourth though the Sixth)...¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., [229r] lines 6 – 11.

¹⁰¹ Pitra, "S. Methodius CP.", p. 359.

¹⁰² Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, p. 9, folio [229r], lines 18 – 23.

¹⁰³ Ibid., [229r – 229v], lines 28 – 30 and lines 1 – 4: "...ἕως τῆς καταβάσεως τοῦ κυριοῦ Γερμανοῦ τοῦ ἀγι[ο]τάτου π(ατ)ριάρχου προσεκύνει ὁ λαὸς τοῖς εἰδώλοις, πότε ἔδη ἀναπληρωθῆναι τὸν ἄνω κόσμον ἀλλὰ οὐκ εἰσὶν εἴδωλα μὴ γένοιτο [229v] ἀναξίως ἐστὶν τῆς

Methodios then recounts the list of all the further four synods [one through six, total] and adds the Holy Fathers, Gregory the Theologian, Basil of Caesarea (ἡ Κεσάρειαν).¹⁰⁴ In this manner, Methodios illustrated that the whole of Church History, Tradition and collective practices of the people of God, supported the use and veneration of icons. This, he states, was the rule until the time of Germanos. The clear-cut emphasis is the fact that the heresy of the iconoclasts is the anomaly and at variance with the orthodox practices of the catholic Church. Methodios then quotes St. Paul and Moses to substantiate his argument. In folio [230v], with an eye to underline and accentuate his position, he again names each of the Ecumenical Synods individually. The changes he makes are: he now includes Nicaea II in the list of Holy Synods and for added significance, he reports the number of bishops that attended each Synod. This technique is used, no doubt, to underscore the historical support and foundation for image use throughout the life of the Church.¹⁰⁵ Methodios closes this work by declaring his acceptance of the rulings of the Synods, accepting their anathematising of heretics and upholding their rulings. He declares his faith in the life-giving Trinity and quotes the last article of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.¹⁰⁶

τῶν χριστιανῶν καὶ ἔξωθεν τῆς ἀγίας τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας καὶ εἴ τὸ ἀνάθεμα· ὅτι αὐτὰ κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων λογιζόμενος· ἢ γὰρ εἶσαν εἶδωλα, πῶς ἐδέξαντο αὐτὰ ἡ πρώτη σύνοδος. καὶ πάλιν ἡ δευτέρα..."

¹⁰⁴ This is most probably a reference to Caesarea. Also the two texts confuse the Gregories, Nanzianzus and Nyssa. This is confirmed by reference to parallel text in Mosquensi Synodical Graeco 5 (Vladimir 412). Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 186. Here Methodios speaks of the impact of the image of Christ's Crucifixion on St. Gregory.

¹⁰⁵ Methodios of Constantinople. *Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων*, p. 12, folio [230v], lines 6 – 12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., [230v], line 20.

Before leaving the commentary on this manuscript, some observations about the disputed authorship are necessary. What is the evidence that this work could be the work of St. Sophronios? Primarily, it is the attribution to Sophronios in the opening of the work.¹⁰⁷ This label is then quite strangely negated because the attribution continues to define the nature of the writing as a defence of the Six Holy Ecumenical Councils, which would include Constantinople III; which was held in 680 AD. Sophronios had died about forty years prior to this Council.¹⁰⁸ The introductory attribution continues to catalogue the theological precepts to be championed in the treatise.¹⁰⁹

The dispute of monothelitism and monenergism, associated with Sophronios, is not mentioned or defended within the context of the material. The only other possible hint that this work might not be Methodian in origin is the simplicity of the Greek used. Unlike some of the other texts to be examined, this particular piece seems to use *relatively* easier syntax.

There could be another possibility that this might be a hybrid document or that these three separate works could have a common origin in other texts.¹¹⁰ In the early twentieth century, the search for a common source

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., [225r], line 4: “Του τα π(α)ρ(ό)ς ἡμῶν Σοφρονίου π(α)τριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων...”

¹⁰⁸ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1291.

¹⁰⁹ Methodios of Constantinople, *Εκθεσις περί τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*, p. 9, folio [225r], line 6: “...περί τῆς θείας ἐνσάρχου οἰκονομία, καὶ τῶν ἀγίων σεπτῶν εἰκόνων”

¹¹⁰ These two documents may have a common source in *Oratio adversus Constantinum Caballinum*. See E. Kurtz, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, tomos xi (1902), pp. 543 ff. A third strongly

document began. This search also centred on a stemma leading to the Methodian texts, which have just been reviewed. Working in Russia, G. Melioranskij published a study analysing several codices in the Moscow archives. In a work featuring George of Cyprus and John of Jerusalem, Melioranskij presented two documents along the path to *Vladimir 412*. This study is extremely difficult to find. Fortunately, through the scholarship of Andreas Mitsides, the Melioranskij text has been made available.¹¹¹ Using Mitsides' studies as a guide, the earlier works of Melioranskij and Kurtz¹¹² provide a path to Methodios' work. It has been established in this paper that all the Methodian texts are related. What has yet to be ascertained is the existence of a root document.

The first step backwards from Methodios' writings is a work in the Damascene corpus.¹¹³ This work is titled *Oratio demonstrative, de sacris et venerandis imaginibus, ad Christianos omnes, adversusque imperatorem Constantinum Cabalinum ac haereticos universos*. It is also known by the shortened title *Adversus Constantinum Cabalinum*, = hence CC. This composition is recognised as a pseudo Damascene work. Its authenticity is discussed by Professor V. Anagnostopoulos in his article.¹¹⁴

related text is *Ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰκόνων διδασκαλία Γεωργίου τοῦ Κυπρίου* in Mitsides, A. (1989) *Η ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΩΝ – ΝΟΥΘΕΣΙΑ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΟΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΩΝ* (University of Athens), Leukosia, pp. 76 – 84.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 153 – 192, *Νουθεσία Γέροντος Περί Τῶν Ἀγίων Εἰκόνων* = *Νουθεσία*.

¹¹² Kurtz, E. (1902) "Review of B. Melioranskij's "Georgios von Kypros...", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. xi, pp. 538 - 543.

¹¹³ Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, vol. 95, cols. 309 – 344.

¹¹⁴ Anagnostopoulos, B. (1957) "ΒΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ," In *ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑ*, vol. 32, pp. 486 - 494, pp. 492 – 494. Also see Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 43, note 29.

Notwithstanding, these opinions do not apply to our present exploration. The work, regardless of authorship, will be used as a stepping-stone to attempt to trace a source; its authenticity in the corpus will not be judged. When *CC* is compared with any of the Methodian works analysed above, the similarities are very apparent. This “Damascene” work was written at least 85 years prior to the Methodian works. The resemblance between the two works requires further examination. Great sections of passages are not just similar, they are word for word copies with the Methodian texts depending on the earlier work. For the examples cited below, the Methodian extract that will be used is from *Vladimir 412*. Approximately ninety-five percent of Methodios’ homily is taken directly from *CC*. A few examples of the differences will be shown. One of the most obvious differences in the opening credal statement is that of the *CC* does include the phrase from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵ Because *CC* is a much longer document, *Vladimir 412* lifts portions of it but never violates its sense and continuity. There are occasions where certain passages are transposed and placed within the context of other thoughts or they might be eliminated. However, the wording rarely changes and is primarily identical. For example, the very beginning of the earlier text has a lengthy introduction prior to the credal statement.¹¹⁶ It does not appear in *Vladimir 412*. Additionally, an example of variances within the mss record is as follows:

¹¹⁵ Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, vol. 95, col. 312 a: “το ἔκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενος.”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 95, cols. 309 – 312a.

- CC, PG, vol. 95, col 316d ‘Η τί διαφέρει ἡ μεμβράνα τῆς σανίδος”
- Vladimir 412, [folio 144v], ch.4 Οὕτω κάγω οὐ τὴν σανίδα τιμῶ, οὐδὲ τὸν τοῖχον”
- Vat.gr. 1753 [228v] ...”τί δὲ διαφέρει ἡ βέμβρενα τὴν σανήδα...τιμῶμεν οὐδὲ τὸν τύχον.”
- Pitra, p. 359, “τί δέ διαφέρει ἡ μεμβράνα τῆς σανίδος;”

By comparatively analysing the texts, *Vladimir 412* from mid-point [folio 146r] to [147v] we find a condensing of the work of the pseudo-John of Damascus. Great portions are deleted, other segments are moved and placed as a composite text. Once again, the wording is the same in most respects. Even at the end, the Methodian text follows *CC* with the exception of the last 4 lines, which is the closing benediction.¹¹⁷

In addition to the work of Melioranskij, Kurtz and Mitsides, there is another more recent contributing voice. That voice is that of Dr. A. Alexakis in his study of *Codex Parisinum Graecus 1115*.¹¹⁸ Even though Dr. Alexakis' primary purpose is to date this codex, some of his analysis is very helpful to this study. He examines the text of *Νουθεσία* and compares it to *CC*. Citing both the work of Melioranskij and Mitsides, Alexakis has examined the following mss. *Mosquensis Historici Musei 265 (Vladimir 197) = (M)*,

¹¹⁷ Ibid., vol. 95, col. 344b, then see Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 188 [folio 147v].

¹¹⁸ Alexakis, A. (1996) *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), Washington, pp. 110 – 116.

Venetus Marcianus graecus 573 = (V) and his primary source *Parisinus Graecus 1115* = (P). He attempts to work through the question of the relationship of CC with *Νουθεσία*.¹¹⁹ The caveat he offers is the fact that conclusive proof cannot be ascertained due to a lack of a critical edition of CC.¹²⁰ Both Mitsides and Alexakis reflect on Melioranskij's work with this thought.

It is to his credit, also, that he gave a complete list of passages common to CC and the *Νουθεσία*. He actually discovered twelve passages with literal similarities and ten with looser ones, all occurring in the second and third parts of the *Νουθεσία*.¹²¹

Dr. Alexakis reviews and summarises Melioranskij's conclusion as follows:

The *Urtext* has to be traced in parts II and III of the *Νουθεσία*, which were probably written before 754, since no allusion to the Council of Hierēia exists therein. The text of the *Νουθεσία*, as it is transmitted by M, is a later version (ca. 770) of the pre-754 text with the addition of the introductory part I, which was possibly written in 765-775.

¹¹⁹ Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V - with particular attention to Oriental Sources*, pp. 25 – 36.

¹²⁰ Alexakis *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, p. 110.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 111; also see Μιτσιδης *Η ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΥΠΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΩΝ – ΝΟΥΘΕΣΙΑ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΟΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΩΝ*, p. 74.

As far as *CC* is concerned, Melioranskij suggested that the recension found in *M* – the very codex of the *Νουθεσία* – was a reworked version of the *Νουθεσία*. The text of *CC* as it is in *P* was a rehash of *M* made in 774, subsequently reordered and updated in the form of the extended version of *PG* in 780-786. Unfortunately, very few of the suggestions of Melioranskij are of any value today, and the whole work has to be repeated from the beginning.¹²²

One of the factors that must be kept in mind when evaluating the above opinion is the dates of the reign of Constantine V (*Constantinum Cabalinum*). Constantine reigned from 741-775.¹²³ Following this review, Alexakis proceeds to compare *P* to *M* and finally to *CC* from *PG* in a rather complete fashion. He states:

...we may conclude that there are only two basic versions of *CC*: the shorter one that is represented by *P* and *M* which dates from 766 to 770 and the longer one (*PG* 95, 309a – 344b) which is a little later (780-787).

¹²² Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, p. 111.

¹²³ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, p. xxi.

It has already been explained that the only certain aspect, as far as the relationship between the *Νουθεσία* and *CC* is concerned, lies in their interdependence. What, in addition, becomes apparent from the investigation of *M* and *P* is that not only *CC*, but also the *Νουθεσία* presuppose the existence of a florilegium from which they draw quotations and either incorporate parts of or elaborate on some phrases extracted from them. In the *Νουθεσία* this dependence is more evident simply because there are more quotations embedded in it than in *CC*.¹²⁴

Professor Alexakis cautions that both *CC* and *Νουθεσία* need current critical texts. He offers this opinion to the admixture:

But, still, we have no indication whatsoever that the *Νουθεσία* was known at Rome. So the question remains open for the editor of these two works, but, for the time being, the most plausible suggestion that can be offered is the following. Assuming that in 766 – 770 there was an Iconophile florilegium that included the *P* version of *CC* as its introductory piece, the *Νουθεσία* looks like a cut-and-paste work of somebody who used this florilegium and *CC*. The opposite is impossible

¹²⁴ Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, p. 114.

because, while M transmits the *Νουθεσία* and CC, P preserves only CC and there is no reason to assume that the Roman original of PV included the *Νουθεσία*.¹²⁵

It appears that these codices form one literary tradition. Methodios, as an educated man, and as the archdeacon to Patriarch Nikephoros may well have had access to these earlier writings. Considering all this, a conclusion that may be drawn is that the "Methodian documents" are part of a lengthy chain of iconophilic literature stretching back long before the Patriarch. The facility of Methodios may well have been applying these texts to his own epoch and to the circumstances of the iconophilic victory. Another possible explanation is that later patriarchal scribes were anxious to credit the victorious Patriarch Methodios with glorious words in a post iconoclastic period; they then put these words into the mouth of Methodios to augment the record.

The Canon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy¹²⁶

The second element of this review is the Canon¹²⁷ of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The Church rubrics specify for this group of hymns to be chanted after the Orthros, but before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The author is acknowledged to be Patriarch Methodios even though, the

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 115 – 116.

¹²⁶ *Τριώδιον Κατανύκτικον* (1900) (K. Antoniadis), Athens, pp. 141 –145.

¹²⁷ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 230. Hymnological chant of eight odes or canticles. See Cross for a more detailed definition.

Canon and Synodicon are grouped together and anachronistically attributed to Theodore Studite ¹²⁸ in the body of the text of the Triodion. ¹²⁹

Within this composition, Patriarch Methodios praises the return of the icons, lays blame firmly at the feet of the leaders of the iconoclastic heresy, most especially, the ecclesiastical leadership and reviews the theological foundation of the iconodules' victory in poetry. The text is replete with biblical imagery as well as references to New and Old Testament settings and characters. It is best to listen to his own words to appreciate his approach to the observance.

A true manifestation of Divine Grace has shown on the Oecumeni. To, now, be enlightened with glory and honour. The Church rejoices receiving the garments ¹³⁰ for her nakedness.¹³¹

Methodios' next few thoughts are directed towards the iconoclasts and he chastises them for their deviation from the true Traditions of the Church.

¹²⁸ Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843 - 1118*, p. 11, Theodore died 826 AD.

¹²⁹ In the introduction of *The Lenten Triodion*, there is an explanation of the structure of the Lenten offices used in the Eastern Church.

¹³⁰ [Images]

¹³¹ *Τριώδιον Κατανύκτικον*, p. 141: "Ἐπεφάνη ἀληθῶς, ἡ θεία χάρις τῇ Οἰκουμένῃ, δόξα καὶ τημῇ, πεφανέρωται νῦν, σκιρτᾷ Ἐκκλησία, Δεξαμένη τὴν στολὴν, τῆς ἑαυτῆς γυμνώσεως. (Οδὴ α)"

The tunic of Christ woven so clearly by the Holy Fathers and given to the Church was torn away by the deceiver and poisoner John the former¹³²

As can be seen here, the patriarch utilises the authority of the fathers of the Church and their legacy to cast down the iconoclasts. Even though, he has previously mentioned John the Grammarian, he now begins to personalise the thrust of his assault towards the other leaders of the heresy.

Let the haters, the dreadful Lizix, Antonios along with John and Theodore, those that denied their faith, be ashamed and turned back.¹³³

Three of the four names listed are iconoclastic hierarchs, who served at various times during the controversy. They are Antonios I Kassimatas (January 821 – January 837), John VII the Grammarian (21 January, 837 – 4 March, 843)¹³⁴ and Theodore.¹³⁵ The fourth name, that of Lizix, is more enigmatic. An excellent study of Professor Gouillard addresses this mysterious person who is very much the centre of Methodios' wrath.¹³⁶ Lizix [also known as Zilix] is mentioned in the Chronicles of Genesios and

¹³² Ibid., p. 141: "Τὸν χιτῶνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, διεβρῆγένου ὑπὸ τοῦ πλάνου, καὶ φαρμακουργοῦ. Ἰωάννου τοπρίν, οἱ θεῖοι Πατέρες, ἐξυφάνατες σαφῶς, τῇ Εκκλησίᾳ ἔδωκαν." John the Grammarian, the former patriarch.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 141: "Αἰχυνθήτωσαν λοιπὸν, καὶ ἐντραπήτωσαν μεμηνότες, Ληξιζὼς ὁ δεινὸς καὶ Ἀντώνιος δὴ σὺν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ καὶ Θεόδωρος ἀμφοῖν, οἱ ἀρηταὶ τῆς πίστεως." Methodios of Constantinople (843), Canon for The Synodikon of Orthodoxy, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, February 2001, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem>.

¹³⁴ Grumel, V. and Darrouzes, J. (eds.) (1989) *Les Regestes Des Actes Du Patriarcat De Constantinople (715 -1206)*, (Institut Francais D'Etudes Byzantines), Paris.

¹³⁵ Gouillard, J. (1961) "Deux Figures Mal Connues Du Second Iconoclasme", *Byzantion*, vol. XXXI, pp. 371 - 401, pp. 384 – 401. Theodore Krithinos was a clerical leader of the iconoclasts. He is singled out several times in the Canon by name.

¹³⁶ Ibid., see above.

Theophanes the Continuator as being a *protoasecretis* of the imperial court. He is identified as a leader of a heretical sect who subsequently returned to the Church.¹³⁷ His office seemed significant; perhaps Methodios wished to eliminate him from any possible chance to be elevated in the Church since on two prior occasions it had been a path to the Patriarchal throne. Tarasios and Nikephoros each occupied this office, as laymen before their election as Patriarchs. The examination of the Canon leads to several questions. Why is Lizix mentioned so many times? Why does Methodios single out this layman among the heresiarchs? It can be ascertained from Methodios' *Vita* and the Synodicon, which will be examined shortly, that in this era the iconodules related Iconoclasts, Paulicians, Manichaeans and Lizianoï as practitioners of variations of the same heresy.¹³⁸ Methodios is quoted in his *Vita* as saying that, "the Manicheans vomited (spewed) out their venomous poison."¹³⁹ The concern that the new patriarch had to eradicate the possible resurgence of heresy in his time shall be demonstrated in the chapter centring on Methodios' Ecclesiology. The trenchant attack on Lizix could have been a defence against the possibility of this occurring. The Manichaean and Paulician heresies are similar but not related. Each was a dualistic heresy that was prevalent in Byzantium during different periods of time, Manicheans in the sixth century and

¹³⁷ Lesmueller-Werner, A. et Thurn, I. (eds.) (1978) *Iosephi Genesisii -Regum Libri Quattuor* (Walter de Gruyter et Socios), Berolini et Novi Eboraci, p 60: "Κατ' ἐκεῖνο δὲ καιροῦ ἡ τῶν Ζηλίκων αἵρεσις ἀνεφάνη σὺν τῷ ἀρχηγῷ αὐτῶν Ζήλικι, ὄντι τῶν βασιλικῶν ἐν πρώτοις ὑπογραφέων.." See also Theophanes Continuator, pp.161 - 162.

¹³⁸ Gouillard, "Deux Figures Mal Connues Du Second Iconoclasme", p. 377. Also see Barnard, L. and Bryer, A. (1975) "The Paulicians and Iconoclasm + * Excursus on Mannanalis, Samosata of Armenia and Paulician Geography," in *Iconoclasm - Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, eds. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Centre for Byzantine Studies - University of Birmingham), Birmingham, UK, pp. 75 - 83, *excursus pp. 83 - 92.

¹³⁹ PG, vol. c col. 1256 d.

Paulicians in the ninth century.¹⁴⁰ Little is known about the beliefs of the followers of Lizix.

Returning to the content of the Canon, in the next portion Methodios makes a comparison that he often made in his writings. One of his favourite Old Testament notables is Moses. Methodios compares his struggles with that of the defenders of images. There is a direct relationship made between "the Lawgiver" and his opponents "the sorcerers from the court of Pharaoh" and John the Grammarian with Antonios against the iconodules.¹⁴¹ The theology of Incarnation and the charge by the iconoclasts of idolatry are dismissed in the stanza of the Theotokion of the first ode.

Wearing from you the royal robe, O Virgin, God
appeared to mortals in human form, double in
being; the form of his form we hold in veneration.¹⁴²

In the third ode, the Patriarch alludes to the association of iconoclasm and their condemnation of the cult of saints in both the form of images and in the veneration of relics.

¹⁴⁰ Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World*, presents an overview of the dualistic heresies of Byzantium.

¹⁴¹ *Τριώδιον Κατανύκτικον*, p. 141: "Ἰαννῆς καὶ Ἰαμβρῆς ἀθεστηκότες τῷ νομοθέτῃ πάλαι Μωϋσῇ.." See Exodus 7,11 and II Tim. 3,8.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 142: "Τὴν βασιλείον στολὴν ἐκ σοῦ Παρθένε Θεὸς φορέσας ὡφθη τοῖς βροτοῖς ἀνθρωπόμορφος διπλοῦς κατ' οὐσίαν οὐ τὸ εἶδος τῆς μορφῆς, ἐν προσκύνησει ἔχομεν." Methodios of Constantinople, Canon for The Synodikon of Orthodoxy, for trans.

Rejoice with gladness, O church, and every city,
town and village; let the monasteries be opened
and the nunneries adorned. Let them fittingly
worship the relics and icons of the Martyrs ¹⁴³

In a stanza of praise for the influence and staunch support of monks for the iconodule cause, Methodios, no doubt extends a peace branch to the monastics, like the Studites, who opposed his election.

Assemble rejoicing with boldness, you multitudes
of monks, for though they were evil, strong, the
cowards have again been defeated, and whatever
counsel such men counselled, the Lord will
scatter.¹⁴⁴

The new patriarch then addresses an issue that had been a central point of discussions at Nicaea II. The issue was that of simoniac clergy. This problem was so serious it became the subject of several canons emanating from this Council.

They defiled your Temple with unlawful ordinations
for money, and they have been canonically cast
out and are fallen from divine glory: Simon
Magus¹⁴⁵, and with him John and Antonios. ¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 142: "Ἀγάλλου ἡ Ἐκκλησία, καὶ πᾶσα πόλις καὶ χώρα ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ, ἀνοιγέσθω
νῦν τὰ ἀσκητήρια, καὶ οἱ παρθενῶνες καλλωπίζεσθε τὰ λείψανα, καὶ εἰκονίσματα τῶν
Μαρτύρων ἀξίως προσκυνεῖσθωσαν." Ibid., for trans.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 142, Ode 4, Ibid., for trans.

¹⁴⁵ Acts 8, 9 ff. Simon, a magician, offered silver to Peter and John to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit (through the laying on of hands). Peter castigated him. John the Grammarian and other iconoclasts are identified with biblical transgressors; also points out the violation of Canons of Nicaea II.

Later in the text of the Canon, Methodios singles out the iconoclastic clergy and hierarchs for condemnation. He compares their synod [Council of Hieria–Blachernae] to the Jewish Sanhedrin led by Annas and Caiaphas ¹⁴⁷ that condemned Christ. The ultimate condemnation that awaits these clergy is that of Judgement Day when Methodios states, the Fathers of the Church, whom they persecuted, will accuse them. God will then judge them. ¹⁴⁸ Later in ode seven, Methodios calls to mind the destruction of the icon on the Chalke Gate of the Palace.

Who would not grieve on seeing the outrageous act
of daring, the divine image over the Bronze gate of
the palace, stoned by lawless men on John's
instruction? ¹⁴⁹

The Canon ends with the troparion of the commemoration and a coda.

¹⁴⁶ *Τριώδιον Κατανύκτικον*, p. 142: "Ἐμίαναν τὸν Ναόν σου, ἀθέσμοις χειροτονίαις διὰ χρημάτων, καὶ κανονικῶς οὗτοι ἐβέβληνται, καὶ τῆς θείας δόξης ἐκπεπτώκασιν, ὁ Σίμων ὁ μάγος σὺν τούτῳ καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ ὁ δεινὸς Ἀντώνιος." Methodios of Constantinople Canon for The Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

¹⁴⁷ John 18, 12 ff.

¹⁴⁸ *Τριώδιον Κατανύκτικον*, p. 142 Ode 4, stanzas 5 - 6. Methodios of Constantinople Canon for The Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144: Τίς μὴ θρηνήσῃ τὸ μέγα τόλμημα, τὴν θεῖαν βλέπων μορφήν, τὴν ἐν τῇ Χαλκῇ πύλῃ τοῦ παλατίου, ὑπὸ ἀνδρῶν ἀνόμων λίθοις βαλλομένην, τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Methodios of Constantinople, Canon for The Synodikon of Orthodoxy. Note, no emperor is mentioned by name.

We venerate Your most pure icon, loving Lord, as we ask You to pardon our transgressions, Christ our God. For by Your own choice You were well pleased to ascend upon the Cross, in the flesh, so as to deliver those whom You have fashioned from the bondage of the enemy. Therefore, in thanksgiving, we cry to You; You filled all things with joy, our Saviour, when You came to save the world. ¹⁵⁰

The didactic character of the greater portion of the Canon, its singling out specific iconoclast "villains" for condemnation and its sensitivity about episcopal responsibility brands this work as Methodian in origin. Other characteristic Methodian literary traits shown were the use of Old Testament heroes, especially Moses, and his reliance on the patristic witness as foundational to his perspective.

The Synodicon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy

The condemnations, the acclamations and the proclamations of the restoration of the faith are preserved in a document called the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy*. ¹⁵¹ Most scholars accept it as probably being a composite document compiled under the direction of Methodios. ¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 145: "Τὴν ἄχραντον εἰκόνα σου προσκυνοῦμεν Ἀγαθέ, αἰτούμενοι συνχώρησιν τῶν πταισμάτων ἡμῶν Χριστέ ὁ Θεός, βουλήσει γὰρ ἡὐδόκησας σαρκὶ ἀναβελθεῖν τῷ Σταυρῷ, ἵνα ρύσῃ οὓς ἐπλασας ἐκ τῆς δουλείας τοῦ ἐχθροῦ· ὃδεν εὐχαρίστως βοῶμέν σοι· χαρὰς ἐπλήρωσας τὰ πάντα, ὁ Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν, παραγενόμενος εἰς τὸ σῶσαι τὸν κόσμον."

¹⁵¹ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire". This is the definitive study on the Synodicon. It will be the basis for our text.

¹⁵² Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843 - 1118*, pp. 9 - 10, notes 1 and 3.

The term *synodicon* is applied to an official definition promulgated by a synod or council, or to a statement, which has synodical origin or conciliar authority. The present synodicon was approved and issued by the Council of 843, which restored the worship of icons, i.e., it upheld and re-imposed the authority of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which had fallen into abeyance during the intervening second period of Iconoclasm (815-842). In the manuscripts, the titles are various: *The Synodicon of Orthodoxy*, *The Synodicon Confirming Orthodoxy Read on the First Sunday of Great Lent*, *The Synodicon Confirming Orthodoxy*, *The Synodicon Against All Heresy*, and different combinations of all the above. In the printed *Triodia*, the synodicon is titled *The Synodicon of the Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Council for Orthodoxy...the Council of 843 did not form any new definitions, but was concerned to proclaim again the authority of the Seventh Council and to re-establish the definition of the Faith propounded there.*¹⁵³

Even though the Synodicon of Orthodoxy is the most recognisable of synodica, there are other variations to the model discussed here. In addition, the Synodicon of Orthodoxy was, and potentially, can be a "living" document, meaning that through time, additions have been necessitated by the demands of history and locale. The Komnenian emperors in the eleventh and twelfth century amended the Synodicon to fit imperial policy.

¹⁵³ "Synodicon of Orthodoxy - in English translation" (2000) *The True Vine*, Spring Edition, pp. 1 - 108, p. 6, note 5.

The Palamite Controversy of the fourteenth century resulted in additions being placed in the Synodicon. This is an example of how variations come to the Synodicon because of history.¹⁵⁴ In addition, synodica have been customised in local areas to condemn heresies that arose and needed to be coped with by local Churches. As well as acclamations, the Synodicon contains anathemas. St. Theophan the Recluse has defined these statements of exclusion, from the Church in this manner,

After all, an anathema is precisely separation from the Church, or the exclusion from her mists of those who do not fulfil the conditions of unity with her and begin to think differently from the way she does, differently from the way that they themselves promised to think upon joining her.¹⁵⁵

The definition above was elaborated and further expounded on by a modern-day Saint of the Church when he said,

'The Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes,' 'let him be *anathema*' or 'let it be *anathema*,' means complete tearing away from the Church. While in the case of 'separation from the communion of the Church' or other epitimia or penances laid on a person, the person himself

¹⁵⁴ Meyendorff, J. (1974) *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, trans. A. Fiske (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY., pp. 86 – 106. Gouillard presents a text of the Synodicon with local variants and then the Palamite segment, Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", pp. 58 ff.

¹⁵⁵ "Synodicon of Orthodoxy - in English translation", Sermon of St. Theophan the Recluse: "What is an Anathema?" p. 26.

remained a member of the Church, even though his participation in her grace-filled life was limited. However, those given over to anathema were completely torn away from her until their repentance. Realizing that, in view of their stubbornness and hardness of heart, she is unable to do any thing for their salvation, the earthly Church she lift them up to the judgement of God. That judgement is merciful unto repentant sinners, but fearsome for the stubborn enemies of God...Anathema is not final damnation: until death repentance is possible. ¹⁵⁶

As was noted, the definitive text used for study of the Synodicon is by J. Gouillard. ¹⁵⁷ Recently, another mss tradition has become known and is included within these translations of the Synodicon, through the kind permission of Archimandrite Ephrem Lash. Fr. Lash describes this mss in his introduction to the Synodicon in this manner:

However, the British Library possesses a manuscript, (BL. Additional 28816) written in 1110 or 1111 by a monk Andrew of the monastery of Oleni in Moraea, which may give some idea of the scope and contents of the original; in the opinion of Jean Gouillard, the editor of the critical edition of the Synodikon, "the London manuscript is certainly one of the best witnesses to the primitive and purely Constantinopolitan form of the

¹⁵⁶ St. John Maximovitch (1977) "The Word *Anathema* and its Meaning", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 2, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire".

As a basis for his translation, Fr. Ephrem used Professor Andrew Louth's translation of text of the Synodicon plus the additional material from the British Library text. This will be the backbone of the English version of the Synodicon presented in this chapter. In this way, the most primitive text of the Synodicon now available will be analysed. It opens with this preamble:

A yearly thanksgiving is due to God on account of that day when we recovered the Church of God, with the demonstration of the dogmas of true religion and the overthrowing of the blasphemies of wickedness. Following prophetic sayings, yielding to apostolic exhortations, and standing of the foundation of the accounts in the Gospels, we make festival on this day of dedication.¹⁵⁹

Once again, Methodios approaches the topic of the restoration of icons in an accustomed pattern. He praises God and returns to his reliance on the Tradition of the Church as the basis for the victory over the iconoclast. As this prologue continues, Methodios borrows an analogy from St. Theodore the Studite and illustrates it with scriptural references. Describing the epoch of the iconoclasts as a "spiritual winter", this phrase was use by St.

¹⁵⁸ Methodios of Constantinople (843) Synodikon of Orthodoxy, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, February 2001, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem>.

¹⁵⁹ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 45: "Ἐποφειλομένη πρὸς Θεὸν ἐτήσιος εὐχαριστία καθ' ἣν ἡμεραν ἀπελάβομεν τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαν σὺν ἀπόδειξει τῶν τῆς εὐσεβείας δογμάτων καὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν τῆς κακίας δυσσεβημάτων. Προφητικαῖς ἐπόμενοι ῥήσεσιν ἀποστολικάς τε παραινέσεις εἰκόντες καὶ εὐαγγελικάς ἱστορίαις στοιχειούμενοι, τῶν ἐγκαίνιων τὴν ἡμέραν ἑορτάζομεν." Translation verified by reference to Methodios of Constantinople, Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

Gregory Nanzianzus in the fourth century in his 44th Oration to describe the end of heresies in his own time. Methodios praises the new season Spring.

For there was a winter with us - a long hard winter, and not just a fleeting season - one of great wickedness, spewing out savagery, but now there has blossomed forth for us the first of seasons the spring of the graces of God, in which we have gathered together to make a thank-offering God, a harvest of good works; or, to express it rather in the words of the Psalm: "Summer and spring, you have made them, remember this." ¹⁶⁰

Perhaps, this identification with the Studite leader is another attempt by the Patriarch to identify his policies with Theodore's sentiments. It could also be interpreted as a salute to Theodore for his defiance to iconoclasm. Nonetheless, Methodios, once again, borrows words recognisable to his audience. They can perceive a connection to the tradition of resistance to heresy and to the Triumph. The prologue closes with these words:

For in the icons, we see the sufferings of our Master for us: the Cross, the grave, Hades slain and pillaged; we see the contest of the martyrs, the crowns, that very salvation, which our first Prize-giver and Contest-master and Crown bearer wrought in the midst of the earth. This festival we celebrate today; together, we rejoice and are glad

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 45, Psalm 73, 17 (XII), Catecheses 68 of Theodore Studite. See Gregory Nanzianzus, PG, vol. xxxvi, col. 612, line 42.

therein with prayers and processions, and we cry
out with psalms and hymns. ¹⁶¹

The beginning declaration of the Synodicon is a quotation that is commonly used to introduce proclamations of the faith. Taken from Psalm 76 the text, which is also the text of the Great Prokimenon of the vespers of Feasts of Christ begins,

Who is as great God as our God? Thou art our
God who alone workest wonders! Τὶς Θεὸς μέγας
ὥς ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν; σύ εἶ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ ποιῶν
θαυμάσια μόνος. ¹⁶²

The opening stanza of the body of the Synodicon again evokes the figure of Moses ¹⁶³ and continues with a series of acclamations that are summarised below,

To those who confess the incarnate presence of
God the Word by word, by mouth, in the heart, and
the mind by writing and in images: ¹⁶⁴....

May Their Memory be Eternal!

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 47, Methodios of Constantinople (843), Synodikon of Orthodoxy, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, February 2001, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem>.

¹⁶² Psalm 76, 14 - 15 (LXX).

¹⁶³ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", p. 49: <<Μωσαϊκῇ τινὶ μιμήσει... in imitation of Moses>>.

¹⁶⁴ Methodios of Constantinople (843) Synodikon of Orthodoxy, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, February 2001, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem>.

To those that discern the distinction of [the two] essences in the one and the same hypostasis of Christ, and who attribute to it the properties of being created and uncreated, visible and invisible, capable of suffering beyond suffering, circumscribable and uncircumscribable; and who attribute to the divine essence of uncreatedness and the rest, while they acknowledge in the human nature the other qualities including being circumscribed, and affirm all this both in word and in images.¹⁶⁵

May Their Memory be Eternal!

Methodios goes on to acclaim those who transmitted the messages of the Tradition whether in sight or sound. He ties the use of icons with the living Tradition of the Catholic faith.

To those who know and accept and believe the prophetic visions, as the Divine Himself gave them shape and form which the choir of the Prophets behold and explain; and who, strengthen the written and unwritten Tradition of the Apostles, continuing to the Fathers, therefore express holy things in Holy Images and honour them.¹⁶⁶

May their memory be Eternal!

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 49. trans. Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 51, trans. Methodios of Constantinople, Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

In the next stanza, Methodios returned to his reference to the experience of Moses on Mt. Horeb. He reminds all that Moses was not allowed to see God's Glory, face to face.¹⁶⁷ He contrasted this to the reality of the disciples, as they encountered Jesus, Our Lord, during his earthly ministry. This differentiation stressed two incidences during Christ's ministry. The Apostles experienced the "Glorified" Christ at the Transfiguration¹⁶⁸ and after the Resurrection, they were able to perceive tangibly, and visibly the reality of the Incarnation and Christ's Glorified Body.¹⁶⁹ This is used as a proof that icons are justified in the Church.

The next passage of the Synodicon is perhaps the most recognisable. It is read in its entirety in the annual commemoration of this feast on the first Sunday of Great Lent, the Triumph of Orthodoxy. It has come to be known as the:

¹⁶⁷ Exodus 33 – 34 (LXX).

¹⁶⁸ Math. 17, 1 – 9; Mk. 9, 2 – 10; Lk. 9, 28 – 36.

¹⁶⁹ See the following eleven Eothina Gospel [Dawn Gospels] readings, they describe Christ's eleven post-Resurrectional appearances. Math. 28, 16 – 20; Mark 16, 1 – 8; Mark 16, 9 – 20; Lk. 24, 1 – 12; Lk. 24, 12 – 35; Lk. 24. 36 – 53; Jn. 20, 1 – 20; Jn. 20, 11 – 18; Jn. 20, 19 – 31; Jn. 21, 1 – 4; Jn. 21, 15 – 25.

Affirmation of the Orthodox Faith

As the Prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the Teachers have dogmatised, as the Universe has agreed, as Grace has shown forth, as Truth has revealed, as Falsehood has been dissolved, as Wisdom has presented, as Christ has awarded! Thus, we declare! - Thus, we assert – Thus, we preach honouring Christ our true God and honouring His Saints; in words, in writings in thoughts, in sacrifices, in churches, in holy icons; worshipping and revering the One as God and Lord; and honouring them because of their common Lord as those who are close to Him and His true servants of the same Lord of all, and accordingly offering them relative veneration. This is the Faith of the Apostles, this is the Faith of the Fathers, This is the Faith of the Orthodox, this is the Faith that has sustained the Universe.¹⁷⁰

In the next sections, the litanies resume centring on the venerable patriarchs. They are proclaimed.

These preachers of true religion, we praise as brothers and as those we long to have as our fathers, to the glory and honour of the true religions for which they struggled, and say:

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 51 trans. Methodios of Constantinople, *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*.

To Germanos, Tarasios, Nikephoros and Methodios true hierarchs of God and champions and teachers of Orthodoxy.

[Obviously added later] Ignatius and Photios. The other patriarchal names appearing in this edition are Stephanos, Antonios and Nicholas.

May their memory be Eternal! ¹⁷¹

Then a couplet of anathemas ensue condemning writings or spoken opposition to these fathers. This is an obvious reference to the written criticisms of the iconoclasts and incidentally one by Theodore the Studite. He wrote condemning Tarasios and Nikephoros. One very essential point is that Theodore, himself, is not condemned, only his pamphlet against Tarasios and Nikephoros. These writings are not singled out but are bunched with "All that was written or spoken against the holy Patriarchs..." the next stanza states:

On every innovation and action contrary to the tradition of the Church, and the teaching and pattern of the holy and celebrated Fathers, or anything that shall be done after this: Anathema!¹⁷²

This may very well be the heart of the Synodicon. This is a condemnation of anyone who has received and understood the doctrines of the Church's Tradition, but refused to pass on unsoiled what they received.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 51, trans. Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 53, trans. Ibid.

Consequently, they violate the Father's legacy and the Tradition of the Church. As will be confirmed, this same thought is repeated later in the Synodicon. No one individual is singled out by name now, but that will begin after the praise for the heroes of the Iconodules.

Methodios commemorates the confessor and martyr St. Stephen the Younger, who was one of the few iconodules who lost his life at the hands of an iconoclastic emperor.¹⁷³ The next groups of names are together in sets and reflect an orderly ranking according to Church protocol. Firstly, the hierarchs, who suffered at the hands of the iconoclasts, yet they remained true to Orthodoxy, are honoured.

To Euthymios, Theophilos, Emilianos the ever –
memorable Confessors and Archbishops.
May their Memory be eternal!¹⁷⁴

Then, prelates, who appear to have been living at the time of the restoration of the icons in descending ecclesiastical rank, Metropolitans, Archbishops and to "all bishops who were of like mind with them," were commemorated.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Auzépy, *La Vie d'Etienne le Jeune par Etienne le Diacre*, pp. 169 – 170. The emperor was Constantine V.

¹⁷⁴ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 53. The Confessor Euthymios, Archbishop of Sardis, was a friend of Methodios. The Patriarch had earlier written Euthymios' *Vita*: see chapter on Works of Methodios.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Methodios begins his next series of commemorations by singling out the individual leaders of the monastic communities for remembrances and prayers. He starts with Theodore the Studite, to whom he devotes an entire stanza.¹⁷⁶ He continues with Isaac the miracle - worker,¹⁷⁷ Ioannikios the Great prophetic, with Hilary the Abbot of Dalmatos, Symeon the Stylite, and finally, Theophanes the abbot of the Great Agros.¹⁷⁸ The interesting feature of this section is the fact that many of the leading monastic centres are represented, along with their venerable spiritual father who is specifically honoured. Apparently Methodios was trying to recognise the contribution of the monastics and to "build bridges" to this element of the ecclesiastical power bases of Constantinople, who might very well have been disappointed with his elevation to patriarch.¹⁷⁹

Resuming a sequence of anathemas, Methodios reviles the self-condemned action of the iconoclasts. In each phrase, the adjectives and descriptions used are very revealing of the patriarch's theological fundamentals. The central focus, at this point, is the effect that the deviant teachings of the iconoclasts had on the fabric of life within the Church, on the individuals of the Church and the distortion that the iconoclasts sought to create in Holy Tradition. As in earlier passages, the iconoclastic teachings are tied to the denial of the Incarnation of Christ and to the truths

¹⁷⁶ By listing Theodore first, Methodios is obviously publicly honouring and acknowledging Theodore's leadership. In addition, this can be interpreted as an "olive branch" to the Studites.

¹⁷⁷ Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843-1118.*, p. 10, see note 3.

¹⁷⁸ Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres Byzantins*, pp. 195 – 199. This is Theophanes the Confessor, who also is the topic of a Vita by Methodios (a.k.a. Theophanes the Chronographer), see chapter on works.

¹⁷⁹ Genesios, p. 58.

that are revealed in the images. The examples of the language that Methodios applied in this section illustrate his motivation,

These blessings have passed down from them to us, as from fathers to sons who are zealous for their piety, and curses overwhelm the parricides¹⁸⁰ and who despise the Master's commandments. Therefore we, the community of piety, publicly impose on them the curse, which they have brought upon themselves. Anathema!

On those who wickedly make play with the word 'uncircumscribed' and therefore refuse to depict in images Christ, our true God, who likewise shared our flesh and blood, and therefore show themselves to be fantasiasts: Anathema!¹⁸¹

Then finally, their heresy was labelled μάλλον Χριστομάχῳ ἀποστασία.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Here Methodios accuses the heretics of the "crime of murder against the Fathers."

¹⁸¹ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 55, lines 138 – 144 "Phantasiasts" refer to Docetists an early Christian heresy that Methodios related to the anti-material aspect of iconoclasm.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 55, line 158: "...or rather the apostasy that defies Christ."

On those who remain in the icon-fighting heresy, or rather the Christ-fighting apostasy, and neither wish to be led to their salvation through the Mosaic legislation, nor choose to live piously in accordance with apostolic teaching, nor are persuaded to turn from their error by the advice and exhortations of the Fathers, nor are abashed by the harmony of every part of the ecumenical Church of God, but once and for all have subjected themselves to the lot of the Jews and the pagans [lit: Greeks]; for immediately they have uttered blasphemies against the Archetype, and have not blushed to dare to make the image of the archetype identical with the archetype himself. On those therefore, who have heedlessly accepted this error, and have stuffed their ears against very divine word and spiritual teaching, as they are already putrified, and cut themselves off from the common body of the Church Anathema! ¹⁸³

This passage enables an understanding of the essential thrust of Methodios' argument. Once more, he enumerates in the most comprehensible manner, the prerequisites for "Orthodoxy". Adhering to the precepts of the Law, following the teachings of the Apostles, the instruction of the Fathers and agreement with the faith of the Catholic Church is the only path to pursue. Methodios reminds the iconoclasts that they had excised themselves from the body of the Church, and attached themselves to alien doctrines.

¹⁸³ Ibid., lines 160 – 170.

The anathemas now begin again. Then a series of iconoclasts are singled out for individual anathemas; they include Anastasios of Constantinople, Constantine and Niketas, iconoclasts during the Isaurian reign. The ensuing anathema is reserved for the three iconoclastic patriarchs, Theodotus, Antonios and John. They are called evil-doers and polluted teachers who succeeded each other impiously on the patriarchal throne. Paul [who Methodios vituperatively calls Saul], Theodore Gastes, Stephanos Molytes, Theodore Krithinos, and Lalontios Leontus.¹⁸⁴

...and to whoever resembles the aforementioned in uttering impiety to whatever rank of the clergy or any other honour or way of life they belong; and on all of these who continue in impiety.¹⁸⁵

There is a gap in the chronology of text, in which the Church inserted censures of different heresies throughout the centuries. Then, we return to Methodios' text.¹⁸⁶ The series of anathemas are short, jabbing denunciations of the iconoclasts.

To All the heretics ... Anathema
To The insolent council against the holy images.
Anathema...
To those who use the writings of holy writ against
idol worship against holy images of Christ our God
and His saints. Anathema.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 57, trans. Methodios of Constantinople Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 57. This is the closest condemnation of "public or court officials" in the text of the Synodicon, trans. Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 57, line 179 skips to p. 93, line 752, trans. Methodios of Constantinople, Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

To those who share the opinion of those who insult
and dishonour the august images. Anathema.

...To those that dare to say that the Universal
Church ever accepted idols, thus undermining the
whole Mystery [of the Incarnation] and insulting the
Christian faith. Anathema.¹⁸⁷

The prayers for remembrances resume. They centre on the imperial household of Michael III, the young emperor and Empress Theodora, his mother. The subsequent editions of the Synodicon commemorate emperors that follow Michael.¹⁸⁸ The closing passages of the Synodicon can be found later in Gouillard's edited text. After commemorating the Patriarchal champions of the iconodules and a long list of leaders of the Church by name, the closing prayer is offered:

The Holy Trinity has glorified them!
Beseeching God to affirm and acknowledge their
struggles and the dogmas they guarded even unto
death for the cause of the true religion. Make us
supplicants, complete imitators of their divine
behaviour until the end, so that we might be called
by the compassion and grace of the great and first
hierarchy, Christ our true God, through the
intercessions of our beyond glorious Lady,
Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, the God – formed
angels and all the saints.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", p. 93, lines 752 – 766, trans. Methodios of Constantinople, Synodikon of Orthodoxy.

¹⁸⁸ Gouillard's text is a composite of several, with the earliest approximately 11th Century.

¹⁸⁹ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: edition et commentaire", p. 107.

In examining the text of the entire Synodicon, some judgements can be drawn. No doubt, the issue of the deceased emperor must have been on the mind of Methodios. This is clear from the anathemas of the Sunday of Orthodoxy at which Theophilos, as well as the names of the other iconoclastic emperors, are omitted. He condemns clergy by name. Undoubtedly to Methodios, they are worthy of being anathematised for their deviation from the Tradition of the Church, which they had received, unsoiled but transmitted polluted with heresy. This special treatment by the new patriarch even though it might be looked upon as politically inspired, may also be viewed in light of the special responsibility of the sacerdotal grace and its vocation to protect the dogma of the catholic faith. In light of the fact that Methodios himself was a confessor for the faith, he may have considered this path the only path for all the true clergy. Many of the specifically named iconodules had taken the path of suffering rather than relenting to pressure, torture or intimidation and denying the faith. Methodios offers up the names of iconoclasts as examples of evil men who had been deceived and led the Church into apostasy. Because, of this, they deserved Anathema!

These liturgical expressions framed the conclusion of the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The singing and chanting would be remembered, even until our time. The new Patriarch now faced three difficult years, ahead. He had suffered for the faith and had shown resilience and courage; he would need all these traits to shepherd Christ's flock back from apostasy.

Chapter Three

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESTORATION OF ICONS

After the Triumph

Following the Sunday of Orthodoxy came the task of restoring order, stability and peace to the Church. "First the new patriarch, Methodios, recalled the bishops who had been exiled because of the iconophile beliefs and had suffered during the iconoclastic upheavals."¹ The *Vita of St. Michael Synkellos* testifies to the next measures in this manner,

After these events had taken place, [Methodios' election] he himself also condemned the heretics with countless anathema and after a purge among all the clergy, he liberated the Church of God from their tyranny.²

Some scholars believe the main objective of the new patriarch was to free the Church from the spectre of a return to iconoclasm. Others judge the motivation of Methodios as a desire to impose discipline on the iconoclastic clergy. Afinogenov believes that Methodios' plan was a systematic house

¹ White, D. S. (1981) *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople - His Life, Scholarly Contributions and Correspondence with a translation of Fifty two of his Letters*, Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources no. 5 (Holy Cross Orthodox Press), Brookline, MA, p. 18.

² Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 105.

cleaning of all clergy who had opposed Tarasios and Nikephoros and their policies.³

What history acknowledges is that the new Patriarch immediately encountered problems with this effort. Dvornik describes his effort with these words,

Anxious to preserve the peace of the Church and to forestall the possibility of a revival of heresy, Methodios studiously avoided appointing partisans of Extremist's views to any vacant see and chose the candidates exclusively from among the partisans of the Moderate party. And recent experience justified his policy.⁴

Karlin-Hayter cites the opinion of Grumel on this same subject. She expresses his view, with which she voices complete agreement:

Moderate and extremist are somewhat ambiguous terms in Dvornik's work, but they are used here expressly to indicate an attitude of greater or lesser severity towards the former Iconoclast hierarchy. Grumel, however at the same time, in a most carefully substantiated article, came to the

³ Afinogenov, D. E. (1996) "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ Part III - The Great Purge of 843: A Re-Examination," in *ΛΕΙΜΩΝ - Studies Presented to Leinert Rydén on his Sixty -Fifth Birthday*, vol. 6, ed. J. O. Rosenqvist (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis - Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia), Uppsala, pp. 79 - 91, p. 90. All these conclusions will be examined in the remainder of this study.

⁴ Dvornik, *The Photian Schism, History and Legend*, p. 13.

opposite conclusion: 'Methode fut du parti de la
severité.' – [Methodios, took the part of severity ⁵]
There can, I think, be no doubt that Grumel is
right.⁶

How can such respected researchers conclude such divergent perceptions and how can they be reconciled? The contemporary sources, an understanding of the practices of his day, the actions of Methodios and the reactions that they provoked, no doubt will lead to a better insight of the dynamics of these events and of this period. One thing that is known conclusively is the patriarch's actions became the source of conflict between Methodios and old foes of the patriarchal office, the Studites.⁷

The *Vitae* of both Methodios and Ioannikios offer some clues to the concepts that guided the process of dealing with lapsed hierarchs, clergy and laymen. If the discourse taken from his *Vita* is to be seriously believed, Methodios was, at first, inclined to be forgiving. Before the Sunday of Orthodoxy, Methodios revealed a lenient quality,⁸ but there may have been other opinions that influenced his thinking.

There are two sources that can identify the impact of St. Ioannikios on the decision-making process of Methodios. Even though Ioannikios was named

⁵ This relative term will be explored in the body of this work.

⁶ Karlin-Hayter, "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios", p. 141, cites Grumel in note 3 for his reasons. This includes that with Ioannikios' aid Methodios planned a complete purge.

⁷ v. Dobschütz, E. (1909) "Methodios und die Studiten", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. 18, pp. 41-105.

⁸ PG., vol. c, cols. 1254 c - 1256 c., quoted from in previous chapter.

as the origin of the prophetic advice to Methodios, it is relatively assured that Ioannikios was the spokesman for a segment within the monastic communities outside the capital.⁹ These monks were a counter balance to the influence of the Studites and their supporters. The two different *Vitae* of Ioannikios bear witness to this tug-of-war. It has been established that the *Vita* by Peter, the monk, was the earliest written and is indicative of an anti-Studite timbre. In this account, Ioannikios states clearly to an assembly of seventy bishops, clerics, monks who joined Methodios in visiting the aged monk:

Of old the great Anthony bade his disciples to have no communion with Arians, nor with Meletian schismatics, nor with their anti-Christian faction. And now behold, I, unworthy <as I am> and lowly and uneducated, am likewise moved by God and say to you: separate yourselves, all of you, from impious heretics, and the most abominable Studites and their colleague Kakosambas and the lapsed bishop of Nikomedeia, Monomachos or rather opponent of God, and the most irrational eunuch of the Church of Kyzikos. For they spoke great nonsense against God and against our father the pre-eminent patriarch...Those who did not shudder to do these things to the fathers and the holy patriarchs who have gone before, have themselves become therefore by their own action a

⁹ Darrouzès, J. (1987) "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", *Revue des études byzantines*, vol. 45, pp. 15 - 57, p. 54. Darrouzès identifies Symeon and Hilarion as abbots who were allies of Ioannikios.

scandal to the church of God, and *sons of the wicked one* and *tares*. If anyone, therefore, does not accept the great Methodios as patriarch, like the great Basil, and the theologian Gregory and the divine Chrysostom, let him be anathema. And if anyone cuts himself off from communion with him [Methodios], he will be cut off from the glory of God on the Day of Judgment, and he who rends the catholic and apostolic church *will be cut asunder*, as the gospel <says>, and *his portion appointed with the unfaithful*.¹⁰

The second *Vita of Ioannikios* penned by the monk Sabas borrows from Peter's text, but Sabas was more sympathetic to Studite interests.¹¹

Darrouzès quotes Methodios in a section from Sabas' *Vita of Ioannikios* as saying,

We also know the most truthful appeal that the saint of the desert made to me and to those accompanying me to the place two years ago: 'if you accept the heretics as ministers and priests, expect that through them you introduce into the Church not only Judaism, but also Paganism. This was said then by the Ioannikios the Great.'¹²

¹⁰ Peter the monk, (1998) "Life of St. Ioannikios," In *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saint's Lives in Translation*, ed. A. M. Talbot, trans. D. F. Sullivan (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), Washington, D.C., pp. 243 - 353, pp. 342 - 344.

¹¹ Mango, C. (1983) "The Two Lives Ioannikos And The Bulgarians", *Okeanos (Harvard Ukrainian Studies)*, vol./part 7, pp. 393 - 404, pp. 393 - 394. Mango concludes that the *Vita* by Sabas was written during the patriarchate of Ignatios. This was the reason for the tone, which is considered more conciliatory to the Studite point of view.

¹² Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 54: "Ἐγνώμεν δέ καὶ τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐμὲ καὶ τοὺς συμπρόντας μοι κατὰ χώραν λαληθὲν παρὰ τοῦ ἐρημικοῦ ἁγίου πρὸ χρόνων δυοῖν ἀληθέστατον προσφώνημα, ὥς· εἰ δέξῃ τοὺς αἵρετικούς λειτουργούς τε καὶ ἱερεῖς, οὐ μόνον ἰουδαϊσμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑλληνισμόν δι' αὐτῶν προσάξει τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπεκδέχου. Ταῦτα λόγῳ τότε εἰπόντος τοῦ μεγάλου Ἰωαννικίου."

An important consideration that must be taken into account when *Vitae* from this period are used to gain historical insight is the “perspectives and motivations” of the authors of the *Vitae*. The recognition that there were “agendas”, which included the projection of one group against another or the glorification of one individual or viewpoint, is essential; so that the examiner can evaluate the content and context of a source. This caveat will be discussed further in the chapter discussing Methodian works.

An essential element for Methodios was the development of parameters for dealing with the recalcitrant clergy. The Patriarch was formulating his official policy. There were several precedents that he could rely on from the Παράδοσις ¹³ of the Church, as it had dealt with heresy in the past.

The Διάταξις - rubrics written for the re-acceptance of iconoclastic heretics back into the good graces of the Church are an indication of the guiding principles set down by the Patriarch. These prayers and instructions were without a doubt, either written by Methodios or written under his direct guidance. Both the excellent monograph by Miguel Arranz ¹⁴ dissecting and commenting on the re-reception process and the Barbarini codex ¹⁵ are useful for this study.

¹³ Παράδοσις is defined as the Tradition of the Church handed down from generation to generation. The transmission and safeguarding of this treasure was and is the responsibility of the hierarchs. The impact of this on Methodios' thinking and actions will be fully developed in the chapter on his ecclesiology.

¹⁴ Arranz "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats".

¹⁵ Goar, J. (ed.) (1960) (1730) *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum*, (Unveränderter Abdruck), Venedig, Austria, pp. 689 – 704.

Even a cursory analysis of the prayers in context, reveal that Methodios discerned the degree of the apostasy, classified the restoration of the heretics and required varying penances for their return. These categories are listed below:

Children before the age of reason or those individuals not responsible for their actions.

Individuals who had succumbed to torture or physical violence as well as young adults and the elderly.

Adults who had voluntarily accepted the heretical teaching and apostatised were divided into two groups. The first was re-admitted after two years of penance followed by the prayers of expiation. The second category was only admitted back to communion at the hour of death.¹⁶

Within these rubrics, Methodios provided requirements as a sequence of preparation for each candidate and then outlined explicit prayers and pieties for the actual reintegration into the life of the Church. Before this process could begin, there was one prerequisite, a sincere μετάνοια.¹⁷ As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the only one who could determine this sincerity was the local bishop. In Constantinople, the local bishop was Methodios. Following Methodian guidelines, Arranz divided the process

¹⁶ Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats", p. 286. The final group follows the patristic Tradition established by the 73rd Canon of St Basil of Caesarea Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*. vol. 14, p. 609. "He that denied Christ is to be communicated at the hour of death, if he confess it, and be a mourner till that time."

¹⁷ Is defined as repentance or change of heart upon reflection.

into three steps. First, each individual was placed into a category for readmission to communion. Second, the prayers of expiation, their order and form were recited. Thirdly, the form and the prayers of anointing with Holy Chrism are given. This process would readmit each repentant member back into communion with the Church.

Considering the details of these practices, the first group were children who were forced by their parents, unable to resist falling into apostasy because of fear or due to their inability to discern the false way resulting in an unconscious acceptance of the heresy. These persons were dealt with in a most gentle way. Once a day for seven days if they were able, they were required to recite a prayer of expiation. On the eighth day,¹⁸ they were brought to the Church, bathed, prayed over, anointed with μύρον (Chrism),¹⁹ and then they were dressed in a new white garment in the manner of the Baptismal rite. They were then admitted into full communion once again.²⁰

The next group was also dealt with rather gently. This group included young people and senior citizens. Prior to the actual day of readmission, they were to prepare spiritually by fasting for two forty-day periods and recite penitential prayers on "bended knee and continual supplications." The additional pre-ritual preparation included eight days reciting prayers of

¹⁸ This is a parallel to the blessing of a newborn on the eighth day of their life.

¹⁹ Myron is a fragrant oil compound used to anoint a candidate during the Sacrament of Chrismation. It is symbolic of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the individual. This is regarded as a personal Pentecost.

²⁰ Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats", pp. 288 - 289.

expiation along with one hundred Κύριε ἐλέησον, and after this preparation, these individuals were brought to the Church. They were bathed, anointed with Chrism; subsequently they celebrated Liturgy and received Communion. This was repeated for a total of eight days consecutively in the manner of the Φωτιζόμενοι (newly enlightened).²¹

The patriarch must have considered the last group as the most difficult to rehabilitate. It was divided into two segments, each group with a differing procedure for their penance. By category, these were adults who had freely chosen the path of heretical teachings. The first group was judged in a more lenient manner than the latter. To return to the flock of Christ they were required to do penance for a period of two years. This penance consisted of a strict fast. Additionally, one hundred deep prostrations with penitential prayers and two hundred "Lord Have Mercy" were mandated daily. This last provision contained a caveat, " εἰ δὲ ἀδύνατοι κατὰ δύναμιν).²² Only at the conclusion of this rigorous preparation were the candidates then afforded the rites of readmission. The description of this procedure makes it clear that there is no differentiation made between male or female penitents of adult age.

The last group was the most incorrigible, in Methodios' judgement. They again, regardless of sex, were obligated to tearful repentance and confession during the remainder of their lives and finally after all this, only

²¹ Ibid., pp. 288 – 291.

²² Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats", pp. 292 – 293, "if they are weak according to their strength."

at the hour of death were they granted the mystery of Holy Communion, "through the philanthropy of God." The adherence to this formula was in strict accordance with the 73rd Canon of St Basil, dealing with apostasy, which states:

He that denied Christ, is to be communicated at the hour of death, if he confess it, and be a mourner till that time.²³

With each of the three categories, the actual prayers of forgiveness and even the formula for the administering the Holy Chrism vary. Arranz points out that the prayers designated for recital at the return of the adult apostates appear to be compilations of earlier texts that may have been combined for use at this time. He denotes that the prayers contain the biblical word ἰλασμοῦ.²⁴ This reference and use of this concept theologically, underscores the deep dependence the sinner has on the salvific sacrifice of Christ.

Various beliefs and attitudes held by Methodios become clear, whether we refer to Migne, Goar or to Arranz's analysis of the diverse aspects of the Διάταξις. The record reveals that the Patriarch is discerning and cognisant of extenuating circumstances which might have existed surrounding the apostasy and of the physical or psychological condition of

²³ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, p. 609.

²⁴ Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats", pp. 292 – 293, "expiation or propitiation" - see 1 John 2, 2 or 1 John 4, 10.

the individual involved. He differentiates between degrees of guilt and deals with them by applying discretion and οἰκονομία.²⁵ These traits are not the attributes of an irrational fundamentalist, nor are they capitulation at any price; they are designed solely to restore peace within the Church and more importantly, peace within the individual. Rather, there is an apparent selective and humane application of Church practices to deal with a contemporary problem within the framework of the Tradition. The one glaring exception is exemplified by the disposition of the most serious adult offenders, which is without doubt protection of the Church and her members from those “wolves” who might prey on the innocent and lead them back into heresy.

Again, Karlin-Hayter, citing both Grumel and Gouillard, voices her differing conclusion on this matter in this fashion:

Methodios was not a moderate, so much can be deduced from his Vita and not in terms of praise—it is clear that the author is embarrassed by his lack of moderation. He says, reluctantly and with some beating about the bush, that his hero overdid the ejecting of former Iconoclast hierarchs, and their replacement by candidates of whom nothing was

²⁵ The concept of economy is the right of a bishop to use his judgement to apply the canonical rules, to fit the situation, and thereby providing the opportunity of salvation for the individual's involved.

required but a demonstration of Orthodoxy. Methodios' ode on the triumph of the images is not moderated either. That he accepted Theodora's conditions—the business of the *Repentance of Theophilos*—does not make him so, nor does the rapid appearance of the Studites in the opposition.

She continues to comment on the treatment of the hierarchy by Methodios.

But the ecclesiastical hierarchy was considered expendable. Nor could the great majority of prelates deposed ever hope to be reinstated: after due penance, all they could aspire to was lay communion. Their discontent acquired respectability when the Studites assumed the leadership of opposition to the patriarch.²⁶

There is evidence that there was concern within the ecclesiastical community outside Constantinople about Methodios' approach to these lapsed iconoclasts. Grumel and Darrouzès cite correspondence with the Patriarch of Jerusalem regarding this issue. The first letter No. 419 in *Regestes* is listed as lost; its estimated date March or April 843.²⁷ The second letter, which is extant, reveals a considerable amount of Methodios' thinking. This letter, no. 434 (435), is dated around 11 March or April 846

²⁶ Karlin-Hayter, "Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios", pp. 141 – 142. See notes as she cites Gouillard and Grumel.

²⁷ Grumel and Darrouzès (eds.) *Les Regestes Des Actes Du Patriarcat De Constantinople (715 - 1206)*, p. 68.

by Grumel and Darrouzès.²⁸ The interval of time between the two letters must be considered significant. The first correspondence, very early in the patriarchal term of Methodios, demonstrates that this issue was a major consideration from the very beginning months of the shepherding of his flock. The second letter, separated by three years from the first, shows that this problem was not resolved, but continued to be a point of contention during the entire time Methodios was on the throne. Examining the content of the existing letter, quite a lot can be ascertained about Methodios' thinking. In addition, this letter can be used to surmise the unease of the Patriarch of Jerusalem about events in Constantinople. After the customary polite and ecclesiastically correct greeting, Methodios addresses the topic of the clergy who had been ordained by Tarasios and Nikephoros. Obviously, the subject had been previously discussed by the two patriarchs, perhaps in the first letter. The point in question was why this group had not been restored to their clerical offices. Methodios lists a series of prerequisites for true repentance and the requirements he believes these clerics should have exhibited so that they could have been forgiven and restored to their dignity. He stated:

They [the lapsed clergy] had discarded the Tradition of his predecessors.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 78 – 79. See Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", pp. 355 – 357, for text and commentary. Reprinted in Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, pp. 179 – 180.

If these clergy had, after their deviation from the Truth and the "straight path," wholeheartedly repented and regretted their error.

If they had anathematised the leaders of the heresy.

If they had pledged to uphold orthodoxy to their death and until Christ's second coming.

Then they would have been restored to their former rank, and harmony would have been re-established in God's household. ²⁹

There was a significant exception to this outline of repentance. This was the former patriarch, John the Grammarian. John was named and specified as a non-Christian who had not been properly graced with the sacerdotal blessing. Methodios then returns to the clergy previously discussed,

The counsel of the Patriarch [of Jerusalem] his esteemed eminence was well and good. But here, over three years later and into the fourth year of his [Methodios'] leadership. That, John, and his followers [these clergy] had not shown any fruit of repentance not even the speech of humility nor an austere and more retired life, but with rage each of them exhibits the same evil arrogance that had

²⁹ Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", pp. 355 – 356, lines 5 – 16.

been derived from the same Godless heresy...
[Methodios closes the letter with these words] This
is our judgement that no distinction was possible
among the heretics between those first ordained
[by Tarasios and Nikephoros] and the ones
ordained later [by the iconoclastic patriarchs].³⁰

This correspondence has elicited a comment from Afinogenov in his paper,
The Great Purge of 843. He states:

However, his grounds are completely different from
those he employed for "internal use". Instead of
recurring to the insistence of "the brethren" he
simply states that he could not do what his
correspondent suggested because the people in
question did not repent properly. Now, according
to Eastern canonical law, it is entirely the local
bishop's responsibility to determine the sincerity of
an individual's repentance. Since Jerusalem is too
far away, the patriarch has no choice but to believe
his Constantinopolitan counterpart. We, however,
need not do the same. The very fact that one and
the same action is justified by the same person in
two hardly compatible ways confirms that this

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 356 – 357: "Ταῦτα ὀρθῶς καὶ λίαν καλῶς δι' ὀλίγου ἐκθεμένης τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀδελφικῆς σεβασμιότητος, ἰδοὺ σήμερον τριετοῦς πληρωθέντος χρόνου, καὶ τοῦ τετάρτου ἀραξαμένου, οὐδένα καρπὸν μετανοίας τὸν διὰ τίνος ταπεινόφρονος λόγου καὶ σκληραγωγίας βίου ἡ ἡρεμίας ἐθελουσίῳ δεικνύμενον παρὰ τινι τῶν ὅλων αὐτῶν πώποτε ἔγνωμεν οὐ γὰρ ὁφρὺν τις, ἔν παρὰ τῶν ἀθέων ἐκείνων αἰρετικῶν ἐπαίρειν κακῶς ἔμαθε, κατασπᾶσα καὶ κατενεγκεῖν ἐβουλήθη το σῦνολον, οὐχ ὡς αἰσχύνῃς πεπλησμένος, ..ουκοῦν διὰ τοῦτου οὔτε πρῶτον τοῦ τελευταίου ἐν χειροτονίᾳ προεκρίναμεν οὔτε τὴν ἔσχατον τοῦ πρώτου."

person is aware of the real reason for undertaking the move but does not deem it expedient to reveal it.³¹

Even though Afinogenov expresses his politically based rationale for Methodios' behaviour, there is another perspective, which can be added to this reasoning. In light of such distinguished scholarly judgment, there might be proposed a supplementary construct on the issue of the apostate clergy and hierarchs.

Speaking expressly of Methodios' possible rationale concerning their re-entry into the Church, these patristic and theological references may help shed light on his thinking. The Six Books on the Priesthood by St John Chrysostomos, undoubtedly familiar to Methodios, cite this description of Judas, which could be compared to the example of a wayward bishop.

God chose Judas and set him in that holy company, and granted him the rank of apostle along with the rest, and gave him something more than the rest, in the management of their money. And what happened? When he abused both of these trusts, betraying him whom he was commissioned to preach and mispending what he

³¹ Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΝ ΕΧΕΙ: Part III - The Great Purge of 843: A Re-Examination", p. 84.

was appointed to take good care of, did he escape punishment? No, this was the very reason why he brought on himself a heavier penalty. And rightly so; for we must not misuse the honours bestowed on us by God to offend God, but to please him the more.³²

Furthermore, one of the central prayers during the ordination of a priest follows this exact method of action and instruction:

The Bishop [who is ordaining] bids for the [candidate] priest to come near, he takes the host and breaks the XC portion [the body of Christ] ...he gives to him saying, 'Receive you this pledge and preserve it **whole and unharmed** [emphasis mine] until thy last breath, because you shall be held to an accounting therefore in the second and terrible. Coming of our great Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' The newly ordained proceeds behind the Holy Table holding the Body of Christ in his hands reciting the 51st Psalm of Repentance.³³

Methodios' motivation may very well have been based on these theological guidelines. He might have had in mind the awesome responsibility of the clergy to preserve the teachings and the Tradition of the Church. We know from his *Vita* that he faced the cruellest of physical privations and tortures

³² St. John Chrysostomos, (1977) *Six Books On Holy Priesthood*, trans. G. Neville (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, p. 108.

³³ Goar (ed.) *Euchologion Sive Rituale Greacorum*, pp. 244 ff. and p. 247 for prayer. Psalm reading appears to be modern usage. See Hapgood, I. F. (ed.) (1965) *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church* (Syrian Antiochian Archdiocese), New York, p. 106.

and resisted the temptation to deny his faith. This attitude may also have had an impact on the treatment and return of one-time apostates back into the sanctity of the Church. If we examine the fact that he would allow them to return to *lay status* and the reception of the Sacraments, it seems strange to conclude that he was unusually harsh in his treatment of these clerics. After all, it was within his power to excommunicate them completely.

The outcry, which immediately arose from the extreme of the monastic circles, namely the Studites, is another piece of evidence that perhaps Methodios was not too harsh. The Studite position, well known in Constantinople and to scholars of our day, was extremely conservative, and much more doctrinaire than that of Methodios. The questions that must be asked are: Why the immediate end to the peace after the Triumph of Orthodoxy? How could Methodios be as extreme as Karlin-Hayter suggests? Lastly, is there perhaps a motivation that is so obvious that is being overlooked?

The Storm of Criticism

Even though Methodios' *Vita* is filled with commendations of his attributes as a pastor, a friend to the poor and less fortunate, it is known from contemporary sources that a smear campaign was mounted to discredit the Patriarch and his reputation. Theophanes Continuatus³⁴ and Genesios³⁵

³⁴ Bekker (ed.) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, pp. 157 ff.

cite this famous account; to show what extremes his detractors went to compromise Methodios. It seems a woman came forth and accused the patriarch of sexual assault. The chroniclers identify her as the mother of Metrophanes, future bishop of Smyrna.³⁶ The matter caused a great scandal in the capital. Summoned before a tribunal of political and ecclesiastical officials Methodios gave demonstrative proof of his innocence. Methodios exposed himself, showing his incapacity, and physical inability, to commit such an act. He then related the tale of his tortured battle with passions of the flesh and his release from sexual fantasies at the miraculous hands of St. Peter during his sojourn in Rome.

Moreover, as a seal of the burning away of his passions, his sexual urges were miraculously burned away and thus the extinguishing of his passions.³⁷

The miraculous burning of his genitalia, years before, had rendered him incapable of the act of which the woman accused the Patriarch; therefore the jury of gathered dignitaries exonerated Methodios. This account has the sound of a colourful legend but it reveals growing tension arising once again between two elements in the Byzantine social structure. Methodios' policy that excluded any member of an extreme party from episcopal candidacy directly affected the monastics. As Dvornik rightly pointed out,

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 83 ff.

³⁶ Dvornik, "Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 14. Metrophanes is identified by Dvornik as a member of the opposing party and an enemy of Methodios.

³⁷ Bekker (ed.) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 159: "...σφριγώντων ἔτι καὶ ἐνακαμαζόντων τῶν παθῶν, ἔρως τις αὐτὸν ἐξέκαιεν θερμότερον ἢ καὶ ὀρμήν"

these were the standard bearers of the fight against the iconoclasts, yet they were being denied the opportunity to lead the Church in this post-iconoclastic period. In their eyes, the individual denying them this earned right was Methodios. Additionally as they examined his appointments, his detractors accused him of choosing bishops of lesser ability and of lesser qualifications.³⁸

Methodios and the Studites

In an attempt to placate the supporters of both moderate and extreme positions, Methodios honoured the heroes of each camp. Early in his patriarchal term on 26 January, 844; he translated the remains of Theodore Studite and Archbishop Joseph of Thessaloniki, his brother, from the places of their deaths in exile, to the Studite Monastery in the capital. This was done with great respect and ceremony.³⁹ This was related in a contemporary source written shortly after Methodios' death,⁴⁰ speaking highly of Methodios' election and his early efforts to remove iconoclasts, this piece shows some dichotomies.

Casting out of those that who threatened the cities,
the churches and councils, then was substituted
the pious and orthodox Methodios, who was called
forth by ecumenical vote to assume the patriarchal

³⁸ Dvornik, "Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm", p. 14.

³⁹ van de Vorst, C. (1913) "La translation de S. Théodore Studite et de S. Joseph de Thessalonique," *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. XXXII, pp. 27 - 62, p. 27. This date is sometimes cited as January 24, 843.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58 line 11, also see note 4 p. 27.

throne to deliver and lead them. The most faithful offspring of the Church were glorified and proclaimed. He completely eliminated and brought down the iconomachy.⁴¹

This is an obvious reaction to the place of honour that Methodios gave the fallen Studite leader, Theodore, during the Sunday of Orthodoxy acclamations. On the other hand, it is obvious from the tone of the monograph that it was written by either Studites or a Studite sympathiser. The justification for this statement is in the text itself. The monograph clearly identifies Naukratios, Abbot of Studios, and Athanasios, Abbot of Sakkoudion, as initiators of the effort to exhume and return the bodies of the Studite leaders to Constantinople. These two monastic leaders were heirs of Theodore's leadership role and were rivals of Methodios for the patriarchal throne. Each are quoted making impassioned speeches to the Empress Theodora and Patriarch Methodios, extolling Theodore's virtues and beseeching for his re-burial in Constantinople.⁴² Continuing the examination of the text of *The Translation of St. Theodore Studite and St. Joseph of Thessaloniki* the role of Methodios in the actual ceremony was carefully highlighted. After a voyage on a sea "calmed of turbulence," a great throng of clergy, monastics and laity met the boat carrying the bodies of Theodore and Joseph.⁴³ They solemnly processed with the holy relics to the right side of the Narthex of the basilica of the Monastery of Studios to

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 54 (lines 28 – 34).

⁴² Ibid., p. 55 – 57, first Athanasios speaks p. 55 (line 25) – p. 56 (line 8), then Naukratios speaks asking that Theodore be returned home p. 56 (line 20) – p. 57 (line 19).

⁴³ van de Vorst, "La translation de S. Théodore Studite et de S. Joseph de Thessalonique," p. 57, (line 20) – p. 58 (line 2).

be met by the Patriarch and the Empress as well as a large official delegation.⁴⁴ Here the respect and dignity that Methodios afforded the remains of Theodore are described in detail. Methodios is depicted ministering to Theodore personally, reverently venerating the holy relics, embracing and kissing Theodore's body, vesting him with his own hands and placing the symbols of ecclesiastical rank on Theodore's remains.⁴⁵ With Methodios in constant attendance, Theodore's body lay in state for two days; then was processed again through the capital, passing by the Imperial Palace to be returned to Studios for burial amongst the martyrs.⁴⁶ The reviewer of a monograph, which was written in 1913, mentions that a sarcophagus with three bodies was discovered during the restoration of the basilica in the thirteenth century. They were re-cemented in their location. According to a document dated 1911, the bodies were clad in wool when previously excavated.⁴⁷ This fabric was common in monastic dress in the ninth century.

This portrayal of Methodios' role in Theodore's translation discloses what extraordinary lengths the patriarch went to honour Theodore and placate the Studites. Unfortunately, in time this effort proved in vain and did not appease Naukratios and Athanasios. The rupture that occurred between patriarch and monks fractured the peace that had been enjoyed in the heady days after the restoration of the icons.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 58 lines 6 – 9.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 58 lines 12 – 24.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 58 line 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 48 dated 1911. The three bodies are identified as Sts. Platon, Theodore and Joseph. This is at odds with reports describing Joseph's relics being translated to Thessaloniki for burial.

The Studite Schism

An analysis of the surviving correspondence from the Patriarch to the recalcitrant monks is enlightening. The correspondences from Methodios to the Studites were gathered in an article by Darrouzès.⁴⁸ It consists of a complete letter and a fragmentary letter or homily and several shorter fragments. In the case of the second larger remnant, Darrouzès does identify it as a letter. The sources used by Darrouzès are Migne, Grumel, *Les Regestes*, Mai, Pitra, most especially codex *Sinaiticus* 441 and others, which he notes when applicable. As all the correspondences are examined, there will be evidence that bears out some of our earlier suppositions. The Studites became increasingly offended at being eliminated from the hierarchical restructuring. They began to foment trouble in opposition to the Patriarch and his selections. Once again, the pervasive attitude from behind the cloistered walls of Studios was, 'We know what is best for the Church.' Their stance was that they and their fellow monks had suffered the most privation at the hands of the iconoclasts, so now it was only proper for them to reap the reward for their steadfastness. This line of thinking had two flaws in Methodios' eyes. One, it was presumptuous for them to interfere with his prerogatives to appoint bishops, and secondly they, as monks, owed obedience to their bishop, who was of course, Methodios.

There is difficulty in evaluating this all-important conflict during the Methodian Patriarchal years. This impediment results from a scarcity of

⁴⁸ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites".

independent historical observation. Early in this century, one of the pioneering scholars of Methodios, von Dobschütz, expressed this thought in this manner,

It is one of the most instructive facts of the historical traditions that the Byzantine chronicles available to us pass over this entire controversy in silence. There must have been works of another type, like the single fragment mentioned above shows, [this refers to a segment in the Vita of Nicholas the Studite, a successor to Naukratios in the patriarchal years of Ignatios] which unfortunately has been handed down to us in isolation. In the end, it is not surprising that we find nothing about it in the historical writings of the time: what we do have goes back almost entirely to a single, completely one-sided monastic source.⁴⁹

Wherever the text of Darrouzès is cited, the original Greek translated into English, aided by the French, will be used in order to deal with Methodios' difficult and complex writing style. The first letter is dated approximately 845 or 846 by Grumel/Darrouzès, giving us an indication as to the mood of the Patriarch.⁵⁰ It is known that the issue has been raging for sometime and Methodios had reached the point of more than irritation with the Studite

⁴⁹ v. Dobschütz, "Methodios und die Studiten", p. 48: "Es gehört zu den lehrreichsten Tatsachen der Überlieferungsgeschichte, daß die uns erhaltenen byzantinischen Chronisten diesen ganzen Streit mit Stillschweigen übergehen. Es muß doch noch Werke anderer Art gegeben haben, wie jenes oben erwähnte Fragment eines Historikers zeigt, das uns leider ganz isoliert überliefert ist. Wundern kann man sich schließlich nicht, daß wir bei der Historiographie dieser Zeit nichts darüber finden: was wir haben, geht doch fast alles auf eine, recht einseitig mönchische Quelle zurück."

⁵⁰ Grumel and Darrouzes (eds.) *Les Regestes Des Actes Du Patriarcat De Constantinople (715 - 1206)*, note 429. p. 75.

leadership. By custom, the salutation of these communiqués is usually polite and gracious. In this case, Methodios spoke plainly, when he began his salutation by using rather direct and derogatory phrases.

Likewise the very holy Methodios, Archbishop of Constantinople to the schismatic Naukratios and Athanasios under house detainment in their own monastery and condemned by their self-ordination as abbots, and denial of the most mutual love of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, those cohabitating [with the above monks] who wish to return themselves to the Holy Church by not submitting to their [Naukratios and Athanasios] obedience are permitted to do so. ⁵¹

Then Methodios calls for the fractious monks to submit to his authority. He declares that he has written to his fellow patriarchs about the issue of returning apostate clergy. Methodios didactically uses an Old Testament reference to instruct the wayward monks, as was his custom in his writings. He quotes the story of Noah and his drunken nakedness. Ham, Noah's son, witnessed Noah's exposure and Noah's exposed body was then covered by Ham's brothers. This serves as an example of the shameful conduct of Naukratios and Athanasios in relation to their spiritual father, Theodore. ⁵² Methodios, once again, demonstrates his knowledge of

⁵¹ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", pp. 30 & 31: "Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀγιωτάτου Μεθοδίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῖς ἀποσχίσταις Ναυκρατίῳ καὶ Ἀθανασίῳ περιορισμοῖς ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ μονῇ καὶ ἔλεγχος τῆς αὐτοχειροτονήτου αὐτῶν ἡγουμενίας, ὡς ἐστέρηται ἀγίου Πνεύματος, διὸ καὶ ἄδεια τοῖς θέλουσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν τῇ καθολικῇ προστρέχειν ἐκκλησίᾳ ὡς μὴ ὑποκειμένοις τῇ τῶν ἀτάκτων ὑποταγῇ."

⁵² Ibid., lines 10 – 13, see Gen. 9, 1 – 28.

Scripture and his willingness to utilise analogies from scriptural passages to illustrate his argument.

In the next section of this first letter to the Studites, Methodios speaks directly about Church governance. Methodios uses St. Paul's epistles and the example of the authority of a husband over wife, the husband's submission to Christ and Christ as head of the body, which is the Church.⁵³ The Church is not without a head, (ἀκέφαλος), but it can have only one head, who is Christ, Himself. Christ sent forth his Apostles with authority to lead the Churches and the patriarchs are their direct successors. Reminding Naukratios and Athanasios that discipline is a necessary component of Church life,⁵⁴ the Patriarch then imposes several conditions to their submission to his authority and outlines the terms of their punishment:

They are confined to the Studite Monastery

They could not accept visitors, other than Studites.

No other monks, clergy, laity or persons of rank were allowed in their monastery.

They were allowed to send disciples to the market-place to trade. They could sell, buy and trade their goods.

They were allowed to continue their work within the monastery walls.

They must acknowledge his authority and seek his permission for any other travel.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 31, lines 18 – 26, see I Cor. 11, 3, Eph. 4, 16 ff.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 33, lines 31 - 34.

They were required to acknowledge these restrictions and accept them as part of their rehabilitation.

Finally, he asked the monks to formally denounce Theodore's writings condemning Tarasios and Nikephoros. He reminded them that they would be following their spiritual father Theodore's example in this act of reconciliation and Methodios praised Theodore for recognising his own mistake and making amends before the end of his life.⁵⁵

As further evidence of Methodios' displeasure, the Patriarch repeated his charge that Naukratios and Athanasios were truly schismatic. He again gave his permission to all the young monks to leave the monastery without penalty so that Naukratios and Athanasios could not influence them. If they refused this opportunity, the other monks would be viewed as supporting the Studite leaders, thereby sharing their condemnation.⁵⁶ Methodios applied a biblical lesson as an analogy to this problem. He used the New Testament Parable of the Talents to present an analogy that Naukratios and Athanasios had wasted what Theodore had entrusted into their care, the spiritual legacy of the great Studite House.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae in two vols*, Epistle 478, Λέοντι σακελλαρίῳ pp. 695 – 699, lines 60 – 65, Theodore acknowledges the special position of the Patriarchs as successors to the Apostles. The rankings in ecclesiastical honour for the patriarchates are listed. Lines 78 ff. Nikephoros is the rightful Patriarch of Constantinople; he must be restored so that the pentarchy would return to its proper representation. In Epistle 475 pp. 683 – 685 lines 24 – 30 concerning Tarasios, Theodore acknowledges the authenticity of Nicaea II which was under Tarasios as president.

⁵⁶ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 33, lines 46 – 51.

⁵⁷ Matt. 25, 14 – 30.

Several times within his writings, he asks of Naukratios and Athanasios, which bishop had ordained them abbots. By appointing themselves, Methodios says that they have denied themselves the Holy Spirit, the grace from a bishop's ordination. "Who made you abbots? Firstly, I omit the when, and ask who established you? A bishop naturally makes a priest. Abbots, who ordained you? A bishop cannot, either while alive or dead, lay hands on [consecrate or designate] another bishop.⁵⁸ Who then established you? Who consecrated you? Who received you?" It was the general diaspora and yours [the other Studites] who played such a part.⁵⁹ The patriarch called upon the Studite leaders to prove themselves monks by living in a true monastic way, by living quietly. He stated they had been oppressed for Orthodoxy, [by the iconoclasts] and they had been scattered because of their steadfast stance. Then, were all united by God's grace? "You became solitary opinions unto yourself. Your small numbers would not corrupt the multitude".⁶⁰ Methodios then returns to the central theme of the missive to the Studites.

About the books [writings], of which we have previously spoken, the books against Nikephoros the all holy and Tarasios the trice blessed, if you do not anathematise them today, or on a day

⁵⁸ Under Orthodox canon law two bishops, minimum must consecrate a candidate to the episcopacy. This is to protect the Church from heresy.

⁵⁹ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 35, lines 68 – 76: "Ἡγουμένους ὑμᾶς τίς ἔθετο; Τὸ γὰρ <<Πότε;>> ἐκὼν παρίημι, τὸ δὲ <<Τίς ἔθετο;>> ἐρωτῶ. Πρεσβυτέρους ἐπίσκοπος πάντως ἐποίησεν ἔτι ζῶντος τοῦ ἡγουμένου ὑμῶν. Ἡγουμένους τίς ἡμᾶς ἔθετο; Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπίσκοπος ἐπίσκοπον εἰς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τόπον οὔτε ζῶν οὔτε μετὰ θάνατον χειροθετεῖ, οὔτε μὴν ἡγουμένος ἡγουμένον προτιθέναι εἰς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τόπον δύναται πώποτε. Τίς οὖν ἔθετο ὑμᾶς; τίς ἐπευλόγησεν; τίς ἐπεδέξατο; Ἡ μὲν γὰρ διασπορά τῶν ὅλων ἦν καὶ ἐν μέρει τινὶ ἦσαν οἱ τότε συνηγμένοι καθ' ὑμᾶς."

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 35 - 37, lines 95 – 101.

prescribed, in front of the brothers and concelebrants when they will come together in your monastery to hear you, and you will agree to burn and anathematise these writings. Know you brothers, for our own defence, as we have previously said to you, we have written the surrounding [patriarchates] concerning [this matter]. [If you refuse] then you will not be simply anathematised but even worse, katathematised! ⁶¹

In the next lines, Methodios reminds the recalcitrant monks that at the end of his life their esteemed teacher and father, Theodore, recanted and was "with us" i.e. the Patriarchs. Then Methodios declared there were more details that he could reveal against Naukratios and Athanasios, but he had chosen not to do so in order to avoid not provoking additional anger against them. ⁶²

Continuing with Darrouzès' treatise, even though he labels it as Letter 2, the text of this lengthy fragment is more analogous to a sermon than a letter. The second letter has a much different style and tone than the first letter and contains several pertinent points not explored in the first letter. The salutation does not now exist; and the text begins "...it was not

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 37, lines 109 – 116: "Ὁν τρόπον εἶρητο, τὰ γεγραμμένα κατὰ Νικηφόρου τοῦ πανοσίου καὶ Ταρασίου τοῦ τρισολβίου βιβλία εἰ μὴ ἀναθεματίσσετε ἢ σήμερον ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ συλλειτουργῶν ἢ εἰς ὥρισμένων ἡμέραν ἐλθόντων αὐτῶν πρὸς τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ μονῇ καὶ ἀκρωμένων, καὶ θείητε τὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄρον καίειν τε ἀναθεματίζειν αὐτά, καθὼς ἀπολογούμενοι ἐν ταῖς πέριξ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διοικήσεσι γεγραφήκαμεν, γνῶτε, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι ὑμᾶς τε αὐτοὺς τοὺς περιεχομένους αὐτῶν οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἀναθεματίσομεν, ἀλλ' αἰσχροτέρως καταθεματίσομεν."

⁶² Ibid., lines 117 – 128.

received.”⁶³ Whether this refers to the response to the first letter or the letter itself, we do not know. The Patriarch uses Old Testament metaphors, quotations from the fathers and citations of the canons to illustrate his message to the Studites. As is customary in his writings, the Patriarch employs the Old Testament figure of Moses to demonstrate the Studite behaviour. In the biblical example, Moses’ and Aaron’s leadership is challenged. Dathan, Korah and others confront them, but Moses responded that these men had separated themselves from God’s congregation, even though they were Levites. God then consumed these wayward priests with fire.⁶⁴ Methodios continues by demanding obedience of the Studite monks. He admonishes them to come out from behind the walls of Studios and to cease their hypocritical thoughts and actions. “Do you wish to obey the canons? They will silence you, even if you do not wish to be silenced.”⁶⁵ Methodios quotes the Council of Chalcedon, Canon IV to emphasise his authority:

Domestic oratories and monasteries are not to be erected contrary to the judgement of the bishop. Every monk must be subject to his bishop, and must not leave his house except at his suggestion.⁶⁶

⁶³ Darrouzès, “Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites”, p. 39 line 1 = taken from codex Sinaiticus 441 f. 265.

⁶⁴ Numbers 16, 1 – 50. Ibid., line 5 ff.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 41 lines 35 – 41.

⁶⁶ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol.14, p. 270. Darrouzès, “Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites”, p. 41 lines 41 ff.

He then re-emphasises that the bishop is the canonical head of the diocese and that all monks and monastic houses within the area are under his supervision, a point made very clear in the canons. Methodios questions whether the different monastic houses, Studite, Sakkoudium, and Sabatiani are "one house" or "separate houses"? The question may have been posed because the monks were acting in concord, and Methodios was attempting to differentiate their activities.⁶⁷ Continuing, the Patriarch comes to the issue of his position on the apostate clergy and their status in the Church. Methodios states his concepts were based on three sources, the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron, the words of the Apostle Paul in describing the priesthood of Melchizadeck,⁶⁸ and the patristic Fathers. He uses the Eighth Epistle of St. Dionysios the Areopagite *To the monk Demophilos Concerning One's Proper Work and Kindness* to delineate the ranks of the clergy, their relationship to each other, as well as their accountability.

Let the priests accept what the hierarchs have assigned to them. Let the hierarchs bow to the apostles and to the successors of the apostles. And should one of these last [the hierarchs] fail in his duty then let him be set right by his peers. In this way, no order will be disturbed and each person will remain in his own order and in his own ministry.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 43, lines 65 ff.

⁶⁸ Heb. Chapters 5 – 6.

⁶⁹ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 45: "Ὅτι δέ τοις <ιερεῦσιν> οἱ ἐπισκόποι, εἰτοῦν οἱ ἱεράρχαι, τοῖς δὲ ἱεράρχαις οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ τῶν ἀποστόλων διάδοχοι... Καὶ εἴ ποῦ τις ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῦ προσήκοντος ἀποσφαλεῖ, παρὰ τῶν ὁματαγῶν ἀγίων ἐπανορθωθήσεται, καὶ οὐ περιστραφήσεται τάξις ἐπὶ τάξιν, [κατὰ Μωσέα

This example was a clear reference to the rebelling Studites. They were judging their superiors [i.e. the bishops], which in the Tradition of the Church is contrary to the canons and an extremely arrogant abuse of their vow of obedience. It must be considered what would have been the consequences of this thinking if it had been applied to the monastics by iconoclastic bishops? Methodios most emphatically states that bishops, priests and deacons retain their priesthood until the end of time, and if they have gone astray; after being warned three times, they are katathematised and can never recover their priestly dignity.⁷⁰ Methodios asserts this opinion citing the authority of two canons, the fifth canon of the council of Antioch⁷¹ and the eighth canon of Chalcedon.⁷² Both canons speak to the issue of a priest or monastic who does not recognise the authority and discipline of their bishop. The consequence is defrocking and excommunication. As if to underline his authority as their bishop, he reminds the monks that the hierarchy is unified by principals, which draws on Grace to add to the shortcomings of the individual person. The bishop's office is a continuum with that of the Apostles themselves. He stated that

φησ[ιν] ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ τάξει αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν λειτουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἔσται." See Pseudo - Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo - Dionysius - The Complete Works.*, p. 276 = PG 3, 1093.

⁷⁰ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 47, lines 122 – 128.

⁷¹ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, p. 111: "Any presbyter or deacon who spurns his bishop, and withdraws from him, and sets up another altar, if being thrice called by the bishop, he shall persist in his arrogance let him be deposed and be deprived of all hope of restoration."

⁷² Ibid., vol.14, p. 273: "Let the clergy of the poor-houses, monasteries and martyrs remain under the authority of the bishops in every city according to the tradition of the holy Fathers; and let no one arrogantly cast off the rule of his own bishop; and if any shall contravene this canon in any way whatever, and will not be subject to their own bishop, if they be clergy, let them be subjected to canonical censure, and if they be monks or laymen, let them be excommunicated."

the principle that governs all bishops is that their power has one source, Christ and one continuum, the Apostles and their successors. This is the dignity of Apostolic succession, individuals who are diverse in talent with human frailties but are added to and strengthened by God's Holy Spirit through their ordination.⁷³

Methodios returned to his primary line of reasoning. The Patriarch pronounced he had been patient with them; he had not only asked their compliance three times but many times, he ordered them to condemn the writings of Theodore against Nikephoros and Tarasios. Again, a clear distinction was made between the writings and the man. The required contrition did not require renouncing their spiritual father, Theodore, or the whole corpus of his works, only his condemnation of the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros. This differentiation echoed the paradoxical portions within the text of the Synodicon.

All that was written or spoken against the holy Patriarchs (Germanos), Tarasios, Nikephoros, Methodios, (Ignatios, Photios, Stephen, Anthony and Nicholas) be Anathema [note names in parenthesis were added in later editions of the Synodicons]⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid., p. 49, lines 167 – 174.

⁷⁴ Gouillard, "Le Synodikon d'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", p. 53, lines 114 – 116, "Ἀπαντα τὰ κατὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατριαρχῶν Γερμανοῦ, Ταρασίου, Νικεφόρου καὶ Μεθοδίου (Ἰγνατίου, Φωτίου, Στεφάνου, καὶ Νικολάου) γραφέντα ἢ λαληθέντα, ἀνάθεμα." The parenthesis indicates patriarchs added later in history.

Only a few lines later within the Synodicon, Methodios followed this direct reference to Theodore's writings, among others, with direct praise for Theodore as an iconodulic leader. In the citation of the monastic iconodules, Theodore was given the first place of honour.

To Theodore the all-righteous abbot of the Studios,
May His Memory be Eternal... ⁷⁵

The Patriarch reminds the monks that they would be following the example of their mentor, Theodore, in denouncing these very specific writings (see figure 2). ⁷⁶ Methodios reminds Naukratios and Athanasios that the penalty for non-compliance is Κατάθεμα!

The Fragments ⁷⁷

Fragments 1 and 2

Niketas of Herakleion preserved fragment 1. It is an apologetic fragment of thirteen lines and concerns the restoration of previously deposed clergy and laity. Spring/Summer of 843 is the estimated dating of the writing. If this is an accurate chronology, the affected heretics must have been among the first group deposed by Methodios, shortly after the Triumph of Orthodoxy. It is clear that objections raised to the Patriarch's leniency must have been begun quite early. The objection demonstrates that Methodios' problems

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 53, line 127: "Θεοδώρου τοῦ πανοσίου ἡγουμένου τῶν Στουδίου, Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη."

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 51, lines 195 – 208.

⁷⁷ These fragments are catalogued and cross-referenced in *Appendix 1* as well.

with the dissidents began very shortly after the restoration of the icons.⁷⁸ Methodios names the venerable monastics Ioannikios, Symeon and Hilarion⁷⁹ as authorities that he consulted on the matter of leniency for these clerics. These elders were, as we have previously stated, the leaders of the anti-Studite monastics from outside the capital and highly respected spiritual leaders.⁸⁰

Fragment 2

This section is identified as a letter concerning "rebellious clerics." The dating of this portion is estimated to be 845. This segment of only 11 lines had to do with clergy who were heretical, but there was no mention of hierarchs within the text. The clergy consisted of the lower ranks, priests, deacons and lower orders who "were small in number compared to the great number of orthodox".⁸¹ Methodios refers to an oral communication from Ioannikios, which indicated that the struggle to clean the Church extended far deeper than only hierarchs.⁸²

Fragment 3

⁷⁸ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 17, Darrouzès concludes that these objections were raised by persons ordained by Methodios.

⁷⁹ Abbot of the Dalmatos Monastery, See Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres Byzantins*.

⁸⁰ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 54, lines 1 – 13.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 54, Fragment 2 lines 1 – 3: "Πάν γένος καὶ πᾶσα ἀξία μισοῦντες αὐτούς, οὐ συνεχώρουν εἰς κλῆρον ὁλως ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλ' ἠπεύλουν πάντες ἀπορραγῆναι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰ ὀλίγους αἰρετικούς πολλῶν ὀρθοδόξων προκρίνωμεν."

⁸² Ibid., p. 54, lines 5 – 10.

This fragment that is known by a small marginal notation by John Chelas deals with episcopal hierarchy. It is a reference to the submission of the hierarchy to God's natural order.⁸³ Patriarch Methodios' anthropology seems like a strange subject to include in this part of the study. When the segment is examined for content the appropriateness becomes evident. Methodios begins with the angels who were first created. Then he lists the first-parents [Adam and Eve] who were tempted by Satan and fell because of pride. Methodios turns this lesson toward the Studite leaders, "Anyone like this who does live within their boundaries or is prideful will be put in his place."⁸⁴

Fragment 4

This section is a portion of a homily directed to the supporters of Naukratios and Athanasios. Part of the censure of the Studites was that they were not allowed contact with any other monks. This fragment also instructs the monks on their behaviour. Methodios' order to condemn Theodore's writings also includes suspension from priestly service, even if they complied. It is not clear if this suspension is temporary or permanent, but the Patriarch is forceful in his directive to the monks:

⁸³ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁴ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 54: "Οὐδένοϋ γὰρ ἑτέρου τὸ μὴ μένειν ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις ὅροις ἢ τοῦ τῆς ὑπερηφανίας ἀλόγου κινήματος ἔργον καθέστηκεν."

Do not eat with them, do not greet them lest you be connected with their acts and their anathemas. This we will remember and declare if ever they return and anathematise the evil writings against the Patriarchs, even more so against the Church, for *they* were the Church and those who had gathered –anathematising [them], For the time that awaits them is one of penance not priesthood. ⁸⁵

Fragment 5 and 6

In these short sections, Methodios addresses the monastic communities of Sakkoudion and Bosketion. ⁸⁶ The Patriarch reminded these houses that Theodore himself had withdrawn his own condemnations of Nikephoros and Tarasios thus, he had returned to the good graces of the Church before his death. ⁸⁷ Methodios called on the monks to emulate Theodore's spirit and to condemn Theodore's writings. As a penalty, Methodios reminds this group of monks that he was still prepared to impose sanctions on them. ⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 55, Fragment 4, lines 1- 6: "Μὴ συνεσιᾶσθε αὐτοῖς, μὴ λέγετε χαίρειν, ἐπεὶ κοινωνεῖτε, ἔργοις αὐτῶν, ἐξ ἀναγκαίου δὲ λόγου καὶ τῷ ἀναθέματι. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ὑπομνήσομεν καὶ εἰπωμεν ὥς εἴ ποτε ἐπιστρέψαιεν κάκεῖνα τὰ κακῶς γραφέντα οὐ τοσοῦτον κατὰ τῶν πατριαρχῶν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ ἦσαν ἡ Ἐκκλησία οἱ καὶ ταύτην συνάξαντες-ἀναθεματίσουσιν, ἐφεῖται αὐτοῖς καὶρος μετανοίας καὶ οὐχὶ ἱερωσύνης."

⁸⁶ Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres Byzantins*, pp. 178 - 179.

⁸⁷ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 55, lines 4 – 6.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 55, lines 13 – 15.

Fragment 7

The Testament Fragment

This section could well be dealt with in the chapter on The Methodian Legacy, but since its contents consists of the two major conflicts that occurred in Methodios' patriarchal years, they will be discussed at this juncture. The fragment is believed to have been written very late in Methodios' life, when his *Vita* states he was suffering from a debilitating and painful illness.⁸⁹ The *Vita* goes on to assert that the Patriarch was certain that this trial was a chastisement from God because of his zealousness and inflexibility.⁹⁰ This fragment has two distinct sections. The first deals with the problem of the fallen iconoclastic clergy and their re-integration into the Church. Within this segment, the dying Patriarch openly discusses the clergy and deacons, while the reception of hierarchs is not discussed in the fragment. It cannot be ascertained if this is deliberate or the result of the segment, which dealt with the hierarchs being lost. Methodios confessed, "this issue was not a clear or plain situation" (εὐρεθέντος τοῦ πράγματος οὐκ ἀνιστάσεως ἀπλῆς).⁹¹ He continues by stating that the principle of οἰκονομία was his guide but his fellow brother and concelebrants insisted

⁸⁹ Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca.*, col. 1260 a, "Νόσον ἐπαφίησι τῷ ἱεράρχῃ ὕδερων αὐτὴν οἱ ἱατροὶ ὀνομάζουσιν."

⁹⁰ Ibid., col. 1260 a: "Ὁξὺς δὲ ὦν καὶ ἀγχινοῦσατος ὁ σοφὸς, ἐπέγνω τὸ αἷτιον τῆς παιδείας, ὅτι τε τὰ τοῦ ζήλου ὑπερήλατο μέτρα, καὶ ἀποτομία κατὰ τῶν ὑποχειρίων ἐχρήσατο."

⁹¹ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 56, line 4.

that these clergy be dealt with harshly.⁹² The concluding sentence of the first paragraph summarises the manner of their reception.

On this issue we are going to do the following, we will chrismate them with Myron in the fashion of the Arians.⁹³ We will catechise them to completely eliminate the evil.⁹⁴

The patriarch then leaves this subject with the following admonition.

And do not in any way attempt to forgive them by re-instating them to their [former] ecclesiastical or liturgical rank so that we do not surround ourselves and our brothers with a double evil, with a lack of wisdom and shame.⁹⁵

The theme of the next portion of this fragment, lines 19 – 35, centres on the Studites and their schism from the Patriarch. From the outset, Methodios labels the monks "those who are schismatic from the Church." As in the other correspondences, the patriarchal position is clear and concise. With a sincere repentance, the monks would be welcomed back into communion, but they must meet some requirements. What are the prerequisites? As in

⁹² Ibid., p. 56, lines 8 – 10.

⁹³ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, p. 185, Canon VII of Constantinople I 381 AD. Re-enforced at the Council of Trullo.

⁹⁴ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p. 56 lines 11 – 13: "Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ πράγματος ἐποιησάμεθα, μύρω χρίσαντες ὡς ἀρειανούς καὶ κατηχήσει περιβαλόντες, ἵνα τὴν κακίαν ἀποτρίψωνται εἰς τέλος."

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 56, lines 16 – 18: "...καὶ μὴ δοκιμάσητε συγχωρήσεως τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ ἱερατικῷ ἡ λειτουργικῷ βαθμῷ μεταδοῦναι αὐτοῖς, ἵνα μὴ διττοῖς κακοῖς περιάλομεν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς ἀσοφίᾳ φιλίᾳ καὶ αἰσχύνη."

past missives, Methodios again calls for the Studites to anathematise the writings of Theodore. After this stipulation, the Patriarch makes reference to the manner of re-instatement, he asserts that clergy be restored to "simple rank of clergy never returned to their former ranks, ...ἀπλοῦ ἱερατικοῦ βαθμοῦ τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐξουσίαν ἀπόδοτες." ⁹⁶ Fr. Dvornik summarises this rancour in this way:

The quarrel must have lasted till the death of Methodios, and it is just possible that the Patriarch made the first move towards reconciliation; at any rate, we find in the fragment of his will quoted by John Chelas at the end of the thirteenth century on reference to the Studites, when the patriarch wrote: 'Receive to communion with honour those willing to do penance, provided they disown with anathema their father's (St. Theodore Studite's) writings against the saintly Patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros; those who with sincere hearts return to the Church fully reinstate them in the dignity of the priestly order.' ⁹⁷

The Patriarch turns his attention towards the hierarchs. There is not an indication as to precisely which bishops he is targeting, but without a doubt, there is more than one in that the plural form is used. The hierarchs who supported the Studites in the conflict with the Patriarch are certainly the object of Methodios' wrath. The instructions that concern these wayward bishops are quite unambiguous. They can retain their office, in name only,

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 56, lines 23 and 24.

⁹⁷ Dvornik, *The Photian Schism, History and Legend*, p. 15.

their power should be stripped from them and their former homes [bishop's palaces] cannot be returned to them. Their physical needs should be provided. The necessities are listed, specifically wheat, wine and oil, but the amount is moderated so that only a "sufficient" amount would be made available.⁹⁸ After four difficult years in office, Methodios reaffirmed his reasons for continued vigilance and the motives for his actions in the concluding paragraph of the "Methodian Testament". His instructions and uneasiness are a loud echo of the homily he delivered in the opening days of his Patriarchate and reveal that even in the last hours, he continued to be apprehensive. Albeit, he states his willingness to receive the recalcitrant clergy and hierarchs, still he cautiously warns of the possible consequences of this act. He instructs that the returning clerics should be guardedly received. The Patriarch explained the purpose of this watchful approach in two facets. He states the fear that if these clerics harbour vestiges of their previous attitudes, they could do great harm to the Church. If this occurred Methodios prophetically declares that, those who received these clergy would be called to account at the hour of death for improperly receiving them and not protecting the Church from harm or scandal.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", p.56 lines 24 –27: "...μή μέντοι ταῖς οἰκείαις τῶν ἐπισκόπων ἀρχαῖς ἀναστρέψαι τούτους τὸ καθόλου τολμήσητε, ἀλλὰ, λειπομένοις ἐκ τῶν ποτε ἐπισκοπῶν αὐτῶν χορηγεῖτε τὰ εἰς ζωὴν αὐτοῖς, σίτου καὶ οἴνου καὶ ἐλαίου τὸ αὐτάρκες."

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 56, lines 29 – 35: "Βλέπετε· οὐκ ἔχετε ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένης παρεκτός τῆς προειρημένης ἀκριβοῦς ἐξετάσεως τὴν δοχὴν αὐτῶν ἐκποιήσασθαι. Ταῦτα ποιοῦντες καὶ οὕτω φυλάττοντες, ἑαυτοὺς εὖ διαπράττεσθε καὶ ἀπήμονα τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν διατηρήσετε, πεπεισμένοι ὅτι οὐ λαλοῦμεν ἀπλῶς καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ᾧ ῥα τοῦ θανάτου ἦτοι τῷ ἄκρῳ τῆς νοσηλεύσεως, ἀλλ' ἐν Πνεύματι θείῳ κινούμενοι καὶ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ φιλάττοντες τὸ ἀσκανδάλιστον."

One of the last official acts of Patriarch Methodios was an extremely illuminating one. We have a near contemporary account of the events that serve as a focal point of the actions taken by Methodios. There unfolds an intriguing tale of religious motivations mixed with political statesmanship. Methodios purposefully chose to honour Theodore Studite in January 846 . The translation of the relics of Theodore and Joseph, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Theodore's brother, was an occasion of solemnity and importance to the Studite house. ¹⁰⁰ Methodios, as was previously described, personally ministered most respectfully to the relics of Theodore, and paid great homage to the monastic leader. A year later, as was seen in the previous review of the fragments, the conflict with the Studite monks was still raging without a solution. The peace gesture that Methodios had made by his reverence of Theodore's relics did not bear fruit. Both Theodore the Studite and Patriarch Nikephoros, Methodios' mentor, had died in exile and had been entombed away from Constantinople. After January 846, Theodore Studite's remains were translated back to the capital; Methodios turned his attention to honouring Nikephoros. ¹⁰¹ The motivation of the Patriarch can only be surmised. Naturally, he wished to esteem his predecessor. As we know, Methodios had been Nikephoros' archdeacon; consequently, a close bond of friendship must have existed between these two churchmen. Yet, there is another dimension to this series of events. Using the work of Theophanes and the excellent analysis

¹⁰⁰ van de Vorst, "La translation de S. Théodore Studite et de S. Joseph de Thessalonique".

¹⁰¹ Theophanes Presbyteros (1978), (c. 844) "Mnemeia Hagiologica nyn Proton Ekdidomena - Narratio de translatione S Nicephori," in *Subsidia Byzantina*, vol. 8, eds. Θ. Β. Ιωάννη and J. Irmscher et al (Zenralantiquariat), Leipzig, pp. 115 - 128.

of Afinogenov in the second of his studies, the two ceremonies can be compared and contrasted.¹⁰² By looking at the two, some indication of Methodios' motives may be deduced. The description of the ceremonies surrounding Theodore's relics were outlined earlier in this chapter; consequently the core of the following examination will emphasise the differences and Methodios' conduct at Nikephoros' translation. Patriarch Methodios personally initiated the movement to restore Nikephoros to Constantinople. He approached the Empress Theodora and her councillors with the proposition of transferring the dead patriarch, but the reason that Methodios gave was that this matter concerned the state and the populace. Methodios argued that Nikephoros had suffered for "the all praiseworthy and blameless faith." Nikephoros now rested alone, the result of his condemnation to exile and he was left, without recompense to honour (οἶονεὶ τῇ αὐτῇ καταδίκη ἐξορίας ἀπολιμπάει ἀγέραστον).¹⁰³

After receiving Theodora's permission, Methodios personally travelled to the Monastery of St. Theodore, he was accompanied by many priests, monastics and laypeople. A tearful Methodios approached the grave of Nikephoros and spoke directly to the dead patriarch as if he were alive. He compared Nikephoros and his zeal with the great Father of the Church of

¹⁰² Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios".

¹⁰³ Theophanes Presbyteros, "Mnemeia Hagiologica nyn Proton Ekdidomena - Narratio de translatione S Nicephori", p. 124, chapter 9: "...ὁ πανίερος Μεθόδιος, δεόντως ἀνεκοινώσατο καὶ θεοσόφως παρηγγυήσατο τῇ θεοστεφεῖ βασιλίδι Θεοδώρα· ὡς οὐ προσήκον τῷ κράτει καὶ τῇ πολιτείᾳ...ἐν πατριάρχαις Νικηφόρον, ὑπὲρ τῆς πάνευκλεοῦς καὶ ἀμωμήτου πίστεως .. ὡς καὶ μετὰ θάνατον οἶονεὶ τῇ αὐτῇ καταδίκη ἐξορίας ἀπολιμπάνειν ἀγέραστον."

the fifth century, St. John Chrysostomos.¹⁰⁴ The choice of this saint was not a casual one, in fact as with all of Methodios' allusions, whether patristic or scriptura; in this instance the Patriarch carefully chose Chrysostomos. The history of St. John's struggle with the imperial house was well known, his repeated exile from Constantinople for standing against the Emperor Theophilos and the Empress Eudoxia paralleled Nikephoros' struggle against iconoclastic emperors. However, the similarities were startling in the toils of their lives, deaths and Translations of the two Patriarchs. Robert Payne has described Chrysostomos' death in exile in this manner:

Then he [St. John] communicated in the Lord, and said his last prayer, which closed with the words, 'Glory be to God for all things' and then having crossed himself at the last. Amen...¹⁰⁵

So on September 14, 407, died John of Antioch, known as St. John Chrysostom, who defied emperors and loved God. According to Palladius, the news of his death spread like wildfire, and the burial ceremonies in the shrine of Basilicus were attended by a host of virgins, ascetics and men renowned for their devout life, flocking from Armenia, Pontus and Cilicia, and as far away as Syria. For a little more than thirty years his body remained in the shrine. Then at the beginning of 438 the relics were solemnly removed to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 125: "...παρατηρήσις τῷ ἁγίῳ κεκοινωνηκῶς Χρυσοστόμῳ Ἰωάννῃ, ὡς ἐφ' ὁμοίῳ ζήλῳ σὺν ἐκείνῳ παρῴρησαςάμενος."

¹⁰⁵ St. John Chrysostomos, *Dialogos* 38.

Constantinople. Theodoret tells how the people of Constantinople gathered in close-packed boats lit with torches at the mouth of Bosphorus to see his coming. The relics were deposited in the Church of the Apostles, with those of emperors and patriarchs; and a new Emperor laid his head on the reliquary and implored forgiveness before God for the wrongs committed by his mother and father...¹⁰⁶

The scene now shifts a little over 400 years later to a different Patriarch, Nikephoros, who also died in exile, and whose relics are now being translated by his successor and friend back to Constantinople for burial in the very same church. Continuing, Methodios made these declarations.

In the past, the emperor [Leo V] alienated from God opposed you in life and foolishly expelled you from the Church. He received repayment that his outrage deserved, when he was in his turn expelled by his miserable death from power and life...Today the emperors attached by God by their pious nature give you back the Church even after death, and as if adopted by you through the Gospel together with me present it to you...Let your city have ...your blessed body...boasting of it more than the imperial majesty.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Payne, R. (1957) *The Holy Fire - The Story of the Fathers of the Eastern Church* (Harper & Brothers Publishers), New York, p. 234.

¹⁰⁷ Theophanes Presbyteros, "Mnemeia Hagiologica nyn Proton Ekdidomena - Narratio de translatione S Nicephori.", p. 125 – 126, chapter 11: "Πρώην ἡλλοτριωμένος τοῦ θεοῦ βασιλεὺς ἀντικατέστη σοι ζῶντι καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀπερισκέπτως ἐκβέβληκεν, ὃς καὶ δίκην ἀξίαν τῆς παροΐνias ἐκτέτικεν, ἀντεκβληθεὶς δυστήνῃ τέλει τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν.. Σήμερον βασιλεῖς ὠκειωμένοι θεῷ δι'εὐσεβείας τρόπων καὶ τεθνεώτι σοι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν διδόασιν, οἳ καὶ οἰκονεῖ διὰ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου υἱοποιηθέντες σοι ταύτην σὺν ἐμοὶ παριστώσι. Ἐχέτω ἡ πόλις σου.. τὸ πανόλβιον σκῆνός σου.. πλέον τῆς βασιλικῆς μεγαλειότητος ἐπὶ τούτῳ βρενθυομένη," trans.

After chanting hymns and reciting prayers, Nikephoros' relics were respectfully borne by clergy, in procession, to the dockside. There they placed the dead patriarch's remains on a specially commissioned ship of the imperial navy. This dromon was met at the harbour by the young Emperor Michael and officials of the court. Then the relics were again carried in solemn procession lead by Methodios, but those carrying the coffin were high officials of the court. They conveyed the patriarch's relics to the Great Church from which Nikephoros "had been chased away, and deprived of his archpriesthood."¹⁰⁸ After two nights of lying in state and prayers, the relics of Nikephoros were once again carried in procession most probably along the Mese.¹⁰⁹ With flowers and palms cast on the street by the people lining the route, the cortège made its way to the Church of the Holy Apostles for internment with the other revered Fathers of the Church including St. John Chrysostomos. The date of this event was 13 March 847 exactly 32 years, to the day of Nikephoros' banishment from the Queen City by Leo V. Methodios chose this date carefully for its impact and symbolism. Theophanes describes the ceremonies as so sumptuous that the previous ones, either for emperors or clergy, could not rival it. "...ὥς εἰκὸς, ἐν διαφόροις ὅτι μάλιστα ἐπὶ τε βασιλεῦσι καὶ ἱερεῦσι

Taken from Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios", pp. 69 – 70.

¹⁰⁸ Theophanes Presbyteros, "Mnemeia Hagiologica nyn Proton Ekdidomena - Narratio de translatione S Nicephori", p. 126: "ὁ τε θεοφρούρητος βασιλεὺς Μιχαὴλ ὁ νεὸς καὶ οἱ ἐν μεγίστοις ὑπερέχοντες ἀξιώμασι πατρίκιοι τε καὶ λοιποὶ, γεγηθότες ὑπὸ πνέοντι, λαμπάδας γερσὶ κατέχοντες καὶ δι' ἑαυτῶν ἐπωμαδίων φέροντες μετὰ πίστεως καὶ σεβάσματος τὸ τίμιον ἐκεῖνο γλωσσόκομον ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ τέως ἀπέθεντο Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ ἐξελήλαται τῆς ἀρχιερατείας στερισκομέος."

¹⁰⁹ Mango, *The Brazen House - A Study of the Vestibule of Constantinople*, p. 80 (fig. 4, see map of Constantinople).

γεγεννημένων.”¹¹⁰ In his excellent analysis of these events, Professor Afinogenov makes the following observations:

There is hardly any need to explain that the whole ceremony was designed to demonstrate the triumph of the Church as personified by the deceased patriarch, over the state. But the comparison of the two accounts reveals another aim of Methodios – all the pomp and splendour was probably supposed to dwarf the importance of Studiou and its glorious hegumenos. The patriarch obviously endeavoured to present the translation of his predecessor as a matter of state importance in contrast to the essentially private nature of Theodore's translation.¹¹¹

Almost exactly three months later, his complex life ended. On 14 June, 847, Patriarch Methodios I of Constantinople died and was gathered to the Lord, leaving the re-integration of iconoclastic clergy and the Studite Schism as unresolved issues. These conflicts would play a major part in the patriarchal years of both, his successors, Ignatius and Photios the Great. Nonetheless, one lasting tribute to Methodios and his determined policies was that after a bitter conflict of over a hundred years, he assured that iconoclasm would never again seriously threaten Byzantium or the Church.

¹¹⁰ Theophanes Presbyteros, "Mnemeia Hagiologica nyn Proton Ekdidomena - Narratio de translatione S Nicephori", p. 127.

¹¹¹ Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ: Part II - From the Second Outbreak of Iconoclasm to the Death of Methodios", p. 70.

Chapter Four

THE DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCES OF METHODIAN ECCLESIOLOGY

Ecclesiology Introduced

This, beloved is the preaching of the truth, and this the character of our salvation, and this is the way of life, which the prophets announced and Christ confirmed and the apostles handed over (παραδίδωμι) and the Church in the whole world, hands down (ἐγχειρίζω) to her children. This it is necessary to keep with all strictness...¹

This quotation from St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, who lived in the latter part of the second century, became part of the sacred deposit of faith. It articulated an integral part of the sacred responsibility of the Church and her leaders. This deposit, its reception, its protection and its transmission is central to the understanding of the nature of the Church. This idea is a thread that runs through Old and New Testament writings and reaches its zenith with Christ. After Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, throughout the Epistles of St. Paul, the Catholic Epistles and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, this most important aspect of theology was further explained and refined.

¹ St. Irenaeus of Lyons (1997) *On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. and intro. J. Behr (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, p. 100.

..and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ²

Fr. Congar, the noted Roman Catholic theologian, points out how this understanding is re-enforced, "probably a little later, the Epistle of Jude exhorts the faithful 'to contend for the faith which was once for all *delivered* to the saints, τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ πίστει.'" ³

What does this foundational thinking have to do with Patriarch Methodios? How were his actions and the motivation for his behaviour in the mid ninth century impacted by the historical development of this aspect of the faith? It is my conviction that the Patriarch was fundamentally influenced by his awareness of the nature of the Church, Her mission and most importantly by his perception of the awesome responsibility of the hierarchs to preserve and protect the Body of Christ. Methodios' familiarity with the Scriptures has been demonstrated many times in his writings. This would, no doubt, have allowed the admonition of St Paul to echo in his heart,

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing

² 2 Tim. 2, 2: "καὶ ἡκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἑτέρους διδάξαι." English taken from the (RSV). Here one can see the core of the duty of the episcopal charge.

³ Congar, Y. (1966) *Tradition and Traditions An historical and theological essay*, trans. M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (Burns and Oates), London, p. 20, see Jude 1, 3; 2 Peter 2, 21.

the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.⁴

This biblical exhortation, as well as many others, combined with the patristic teachings gave Methodios the impetus to take the steps he took. The urgent requisite to fulfil the proper role of the bishop and to safeguard the Church from a re-emergence of the iconoclastic heresy proved a powerful *raison d'être* for the Patriarch's actions. How his thinking emerged and the catalysts for his decisions will be the gist of the balance of this chapter.

Ecclesiology is defined in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* as a term used for the Theology of the Church.⁵ In the very early days of Her history, an insight into the nature of the Church began to materialise and expanded with time. Theological crises, Ecumenical Councils and the writings of the Fathers developed an understanding of this term. By the eighth and ninth century controversy over iconoclasm, the perception of the nature of the Church was central to the response of the players in the dispute. Starting with Patriarch Germanos and ending with Patriarch Methodios, the awareness of the ecclesiology of the Church evolved and exerted a great influence on the iconodules and their response to the heresy. Being the iconodulic patriarch whose fate it was to purify finally the Church after the second phase of iconoclasm, no one was more influenced by the thinking of his predecessors than Methodios. Their experiences

⁴ Acts 20, 28 – 31, overseers = bishops.

⁵ Cross and Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 441.

affected his understanding of ecclesiology, of his responsibility as Patriarch, as well as forming a powerful prototype for his discernment and his rationale.

Patriarch Germanos

Patriarch Germanos responded to the beginning indications of iconoclasm prior to its official pronouncement. He confronted three hierarchs who were suspected of initiating iconoclastic teachings in their dioceses. The Patriarch wrote letters to Metropolitan John of Synnada, Bishop Constantine of Nakoleia, and Bishop Thomas of Klaudiopolis in which he admonished their iconoclastic views.⁶ As has been demonstrated at this stage of the conflict, the primary justification by the iconoclasts was the evoking of Old Testament prohibitions of graven images. In these letters, written to his fellow bishops, Germanos repeatedly resorted to a didactic tone in which he dressed down these Bishops by tracing the traditions from the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, to the New Testament Incarnational Economy, the witness of the apostles and the teachings fathers. Germanos emphasised the solemn responsibility the bishops held not to scandalise their flocks, to protect the souls in their care and the reality of the bishop's accountability to God at His Final Judgement.⁷

⁶ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, cols. 156 – 198 = Mansi, J. D. (ed.), (1759 - 1798) *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, Florence and Vienna. vol. xiii pp.197 ff.

⁷ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, col. 164, Epistle to John of Synnada: "...Δεῖ γὰρ ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον αὐστηρότερον αὐτῇ προσαχθῆναι, τῇ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ κατακρίσει ἐσομένην ὑπεύθυνον. "

In his letter to Bishop Thomas of Klaudiopolis, Germanos utilises many Old and New Testament examples of faithful adherence to the Tradition of the Church. He states for Christians there are witnesses, even unto blood, who upheld the power of images. The resistance to sin against the Church followed the declaration of the Apostle [St. Paul], and the Word of Truth; it also served the prophetic word, provided a pious way of life and set upright the righteous works of the true servants of God.⁸ In these three letters, written around 726, Germanos left no doubt as to his sentiments.

Patriarch Germanos confronted Leo III, the first iconoclastic emperor. The Patriarch became a stalwart defending the Church against encroachment by the imperial apparatus and heresy as he saw it. This was accomplished by two theological treatises, neither, directly concerning images but each presented the case for images in a surreptitious way. The first dealt with the nature of the Divine Liturgy. The title of this work is *Ἱστορία Ἐκκλησιαστικῇ καὶ Μυστικῇ Θεωρίᾳ*, (*Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*). This work is believed to have been written by Germanos after he was compelled to leave the patriarchal throne by Leo III. In his introduction of the translation of this work, Dr. Paul Meyendorff makes this statement:

Moreover, the commentary appears at a time of

⁸ Ibid., col. 172: "Αἱ δὲ παρὰ Χριστιανοῖς ἁγίων ἀνδρῶν εἰκόνες τῶν τε μέχρις αἵματος ἀντιστάτων τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου φωνήν, καὶ τῶν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας διακονησμένων, προφητῶν τε λέγω καὶ ἀποστόλων, εἴτε καὶ ἐν εὐσεβεῖ βίῳ καὶ κατορθώσει ἔργων ἀγαθῶν ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ δούλων ἀναδειχθέντων. ..."

great flux in the life of the Byzantine church, at the outbreak of the great iconoclastic controversies, a period which marked a strong shift in theology and piety. Seen in this context, the document is revealed also as a theological statement. In fact, it is only in this context that Germanus' commentary can be properly read and understood.⁹

Examining portions of Germanos' composition, this assertion becomes comprehensible. In the first chapter of his composition, *On the Divine Liturgy*, there was an opening salvo by Germanos:

The church is an earthly heaven in which the supercelestial God dwells and walks about...It is prefigured in the patriarchs, foretold by the prophets, founded in the apostles, adorned by the hierarchs, and fulfilled in the martyrs.¹⁰

How can this seemingly theological description of the Church be interpreted as a statement of defiance toward Leo and the iconoclasts? As can be seen, the aged Germanos emphasises the Church's "roots and foundations". "It is prefigured in the patriarchs, foretold by the prophets, founded in the apostles, adorned by the hierarchs and fulfilled in the martyrs." This catalogue of the traditional fount of authority within the Church is obvious not in its inclusion, but most significantly in the exclusion

⁹ St. Germanos of Constantinople (1984) *On the Divine Liturgy*, trans. P. Meyendorff (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, p. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 57: "Εκκλησία ἐστὶν ἐπίγειος οὐρανός, ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἐπουράνιος Θεὸς ἐνοικεῖ καὶ τὴν ἐμπεριπατεῖ ... ἐν πατριάρχαις προτυπωθεῖσα, ἐν προφήταις προκηρυχθεῖσα, ἐν ἀποστόλοις θεμελιωθεῖσα, ἱεράρχαις κατακοσμηθεῖσας καὶ ἐν μάρτυσι τελειωθεῖσα."

of any mention of the role of the emperor. Germanos knew that Leo's concept of king-priest was a concept that needed countering, so it is conceivable that he intentionally answered Leo's notion by outlining the Church's true ecclesiology.

Later in his work, the Patriarch speaks of the role of Tradition. He describes the custom of praying facing east, which was and is followed by the entire Church. This practice is not part of the "written tradition", yet Germanos describes it in this way: "Praying toward the East is *handed down* [emphasis mine] by the holy apostles, as is everything else." ¹¹ Germanos pointedly continues his lesson in theology by relating the Incarnation as a direct teaching within the Sacred Tradition of the Church.

...The prophets are indicating His incarnation, of course, which we proclaim, having accepted and comprehended it through the ministers and eye-witnesses of the Word, who understood it. ¹²

Next, the patriarch portrays the role and source of the priest's vocation in this manner:

...The priest teaches the people about the threefold knowledge of God, which he learned through grace [i.e. the Holy Spirit]... ¹³

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 62 – 63: "Τὸ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς εὐχεσθαι παραδεδομένον ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων..."

¹² Ibid., pp. 72 – 73: "...ἡγοῦ τὴν σάρκωσιν αὐτοῦ δηλοῦντες, ἣν ἡμεῖς ἀποδεξάμενοι καὶ μαθόντες δία τῶν ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοπτῶν τοῦ Λόγου γενομένων διατόρων ταύτην ἀνακηρύττομεν."

¹³ Ibid., p. 91: "Ὁ ἱερεὺς διδάσκει τὸν λαὸν τὴν διὰ τῆς χάριτος θεογνωσίαν τὴν τριαδικήν..."

At the end of his treatise, Germanos delineates, once again, the chosen offices of God's people. Before his analysis of the Lord's Prayer, the Patriarch verbalises that the elect of God are resting awaiting the Second Coming of Christ. "The souls of Christians are called together to assemble with the prophets, apostles, and hierarchs in order to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [patriarchs of the Old Testament] at the mystical banquet of the Kingdom of Christ." ¹⁴ Once again, where is the office of the emperor? The Patriarch is clear in his description of the succession of inheritors of the tradition of the Church and he pointedly does not single out the emperor for special consideration.

The other work of Germanos which should be examined at this time is *De Haeresibus et Synodis*. ¹⁵ This discursive opus, also written after Germanos' deposition, reviews the history of heresies in the life of the Church. One can read between the lines in this theological history lesson and see the application to the "new" heresy threatening the Church. When Germanos comes to the events of his epoch, he describes Constantine of Nakoleia with these unflattering words:

There appeared a certain bishop of Nakoleia, a certain small town in the eparchia of Phrygia, a man totally lacking in understanding stupidly trying

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 100 – 101: "...καὶ συγκαλοῦνται μετὰ προφητῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων καὶ ἱεραρχῶν τῶν χριστιανῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ συνελθεῖν καὶ ἀνακλιθῆναι μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαάκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ μυστικῇ τραπέζῃ τῆς βασιλείας Χριστοῦ."

¹⁵ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, PG 98, cols. 39 – 88.

to conceal his own intention, glaring at the sight of the letters of the God-inspired Holy Scriptures, who wrongly taught innovations, against the sacred pronouncements, and who armed himself to resist against the Tradition of the Fathers. ¹⁶

This scathing condemnation of the bishop is noteworthy for several reasons. First, Professor Gero points out rightly that Constantine is not mentioned by name, only by diocese and in his note Gero concludes the role of Constantine may not have been as central as appears. ¹⁷ This idea may have validity, but the rest of the passage has a pointed theological implication. Germanos takes great pains to indicate his challenge and objection to Constantine's actions. The Patriarch articulates that the bishop was wrongly introducing *teaching innovations* against the accepted dogma and that this was against the *Tradition of the Fathers*. These phrases, which I have italicised, begin the articulation of the essential meaning, which defines the paramount obligations of the office of bishop. Here at the very outset of the iconoclastic conflict, a patriarch identifies the grievous violation of the bishop's duties by an iconoclastic hierarch, according to the Church's accepted practice. To quote the Apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy as he is prepared for leadership in the nascent Church,

¹⁶ Ibid., PG 98, col. 77a: " Ἀνέφθι γάρ τις ἐπίσκοπος Νακωλείας οὕτω καλουμένης πολίχνης τῆς Φρυγῶν ἐπαρχίας, ἀνὴρ οὐκ ἐλλόγιμος, ἀλογίᾳ δὲ μᾶλλον τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐκκαλύπτειν φρόνησιν φανταζόμενος, ὃς ψιλῇ τῇ τοῦ γράμματος θεωρίᾳ ἐν τῶν θεοπνευστῶν Γραφῶν ἀναγνώσει προσκεχηνώς, καινουργεῖν παρὰ τὰ ἱεροπρεπῶς ἐκπεφασμένα παρεδογματίζει, καὶ ταῖς πατρικαῖς κατεξανίστασθαι παραδόσεσιν ἀνθωπλίζετο..."

¹⁷ Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III - with particular attention to the Oriental Sources*, p. 88.

Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith, and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.¹⁸

“Guard the Truth” is the bishop’s charge. This portrayal is in direct conflict with the reported answer of Patriarch Germanos to the Emperor Leo III who sought his acquiescence to the new anti-icon policy.

But Christ’s courageous servant was in no way persuaded by Leo’s abominable error after expounding correctly the true doctrine, he resigned from the episcopacy and surrendered his pallium. Following many words of instruction he said, ‘If I am Jonah, cast me into the sea. For without an ecumenical council it is impossible for me, O emperor, to *innovate* [emphasis mine] in matters of faith.’¹⁹

The Patriarch did not yield even at the cost of his patriarchal office. He saw his duty and responsibility clearly. Germanos continues his castigation of the errant bishops in this manner.

Maddened by pride, they [the bishops] do not cease to raise dissension among the people of

¹⁸ 2 Tim. 1, 13 – 14.

¹⁹ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 565.

God, giving each other courage, they stray from the understanding of the truth and without restraint they dare to violate that which is sacred. Therefore, among some people at court and those who would manage the affairs from on high, a senseless anger is contrived against those people who would act piously.²⁰

Gero, in his work previously cited, seeks to examine the political motivation of Germanos. Therefore, he concentrates his analysis on the last sentence of the passage. However, if one looks, not at the last sentence, but at the very first sentence of the paragraph, the incrimination and onus for the deviation from the "truth" are placed squarely on the shoulders of the hierarchs. This censure was in keeping with the record of previous heresies that Patriarch Germanos had described in his polemic. These heresies grew out of deviations from the truth of the Church by hierarchs or clergy; Germanos shows that iconoclasm might very well be starting along the same course. The role and influence of the iconoclastic emperors cannot be disputed, but perhaps another dimension should also be considered. Germanos was the patriarch at the time of the beginning of iconoclasm, but his concerns and censures would be echoed by his successors. We can see they are directed toward the hierarchy's responsibility and trust. It will be demonstrated how this progressive tendency would influence Methodios.

²⁰ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca.*, PG 98, cols.80 b ff: "Οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἀλαζονείας ἀπονεινοημένοι, διχοστασίας τοῖς λαοῖς ἐπεγείρειν οὐ παύονται· ὑπὸ γὰρ τῆς σφῶν συμμορίας συνελισσόμενοι, ἐκόντες πρὸς τὴν σύνεσιν τῆς ἀληθείας διαμαρτάνουσι, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀναθημάτων ἀδεῶς κατατολμῶσιν ἐφάπτεσθαι. Διὸ καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆς βασιλείας καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ κρατούντων τὰ πράγματα, ἐκμανῆς ἀγανάκτησις τοῖς εὐλαβῶς διάγειν προαιρουμένοις ἐπινενόηται."

Tarasios and Nicaea II

With the unforeseen death of Constantine V's son Emperor Leo IV, fortune swerved in favour of the icon supporters. With the accession of the young Constantine VI and his mother Empress Irene, as regent, the return of the use of icons in the Church took centre stage. The initial task of the new rulers was choosing and securing the elevation of an iconophilic patriarch. The nomination of Tarasios by the iconoclastic Patriarch Paul, who resigned to end his days as a monk in repentance because of his cooperation with the iconoclasts; is related in the *Vita of Tarasios* by Ignatios the Deacon. In Paul's explanation to Irene and the young Emperor he is quoted as saying:

My words allude to Tarasios, the first among the secretaries of your God-given reign. I and every prudent man know that he will administer the Church propitiously and with the spiritual rod he will expel the monstrous nonsense of heresies, while, with the staff of a teacher and shepherd, he will drive the most holy flock in and out of the temples and sheepfolds of truth. ²¹

This fortuitous endorsement helped accomplish the selection of the able Tarasios, who was previously a protoascretis in imperial service. ²²

²¹ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* - (BHG 1698), p. 175. See footnote 22 for Greek text translation.

²² Ibid., trans. p. 81: "Ταράσιον ὁ ἐμός λόγος τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν μυστηρίων πρῶτον τῆς θεολήπτου βασιλείας ὑμῶν ὑπαινίσσεται ἐκεῖνον οἶδα καὶ πᾶς εὖ φρονῶν εὐκαίρως τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀνθίξεσθαι καὶ τῇ μὲν λογικῇ ῥάβδῳ τὸν τῶν αἱρέσεων ἀπελάσαι θηριώτατον φλήναφον τῇ

As a precondition of his acceptance of the Patriarchal dignity, Tarasios made one thing clear from the outset.

I behold and see that the Church which is founded upon the rock, namely Christ our God, is now divided and torn asunder; that we at times speak in one manner while our fellow-believers, the Christians of the East ²³ speak differently and the westerners ²⁴ agree with them, whereas we are estranged from them all and everyday anathematised by them. A terrible thing is an anathema; it drives one far from God, it pushes one away from the kingdom of heaven and leads to utter darkness. The Church in its rule and law does not recognize dissension or dispute, but just as it is wont to confess a single consensus on all ecclesiastical matters. Nothing is so acceptable and agreeable to God as our being united and becoming one Catholic Church, as indeed we confess in the symbol of our pure faith. Wherefore we ask...that an ecumenical council be convened by our most pious and orthodox emperors...²⁵

In speaking of the prime mover of the heresy, Tarasios names Leo but says this, concerning the violation:

διδασκαλικῇ δὲ καὶ ποιμαντικῇ βακτηρίᾳ εἰσελάσσαι καὶ ἐξελάσαι πρὸς σηκοὺς καὶ μάνδρας ἀληθείας τὸ θεϊότατον ποίμνιον”.

²³ i.e. Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

²⁴ i.e. Rome.

²⁵ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 633. This is confirmed in the Imperial Sacra to Nicaea II, see Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* vol. 14, p. 531.

...And since they [the icons] have been destroyed by the hand of an emperor, the matter is again under investigation, namely that they dared, according to their whims, to abolish an ancient custom that had been handed down in the Church. But God's truth is not bound, as the apostle saith.²⁶

Thus, Tarasios was fulfilling the requirement that his predecessor, Germanos, had enunciated years earlier, when he confronted Leo III. But what is noteworthy is that Tarasios stated in this passage the nature of the violation of the iconoclasts: "...they dared to abolished an ancient custom that had been handed down in the Church". This "ancient custom" is a part of the deposit of faith, Holy Tradition. In the mind of Tarasios, the iconoclasts were guilty of this primary heresy. After some time to prepare and an abortive attempt to call a synod in the capital, ²⁷ Nicaea II was assembled in the autumn of 787. This conclave had representatives from the Pentarchy, hierarchs, both iconoclast and iconodule, clergy, monastics and some laity. According to Theophanes the Confessor:

The synod introduced no new doctrine, but maintained unshaken the doctrines of the holy blessed Fathers; it rejected the new heresy and anathematised the three false patriarchs, namely

²⁶ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 633. Biblical reference - 2 Tim. 2, 9.

²⁷ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* - (BHG 1698), p. 182.

Anastasios, Constantine and Niketas and everyone who shared their view.²⁸

This council presided over and strictly guided by Tarasios' hand, provided a forum by which to communicate his sentiments about ecclesiology. This may not have been done overtly, but the Patriarch's imprint can be clearly seen in the record of the discussions during the various council sessions. The council itself defined the task it accomplished with these words, as can be seen strikingly similar to those used by Theophanes above:

As for ourselves, we gain nothing but the certainty that we, who have come to a reverence of God, introduce no innovation, but rather remain *obedient to the teachings of the Apostles and the fathers and the traditions of the Church.*²⁹

To emphasise the continuity with patristic teachings, Tarasios allowed to be placed in the florilegia of the council, scriptural and patristic proofs, supporting the use of images within the Church.

...during the beginning of the fourth session of Nicaea II. At that time Patriarch Tarasios ordered the presentation of the books which spoke in

²⁸ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 637.

²⁹ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, p. 52, - Sixth Session, First Volume. Italics are mine to illustrate the significant influence of the Tradition upon the participants in the Council.

favour of the images (Mansi XIII 4B):...γενήσεται
δὲ τοῦτο πῶς; προσαγέσθωσαν εἰς μέσον ἡμῖν
πρὸς ἀκρόασιν τῶν περιδόξων ἀγίων πατέρων αἱ
βίβλοι· καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρυόμενοι, ποτίσωμεν
ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς ποίμνιον...³⁰

The Fathers who were quoted included Sts. Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostomos and Athanasios the Great.³¹ This quotation from Epiphanius the Deacon and Chamberlain, a post most probably appointed and directed by Tarasios, gives us a recapitulation of the iconodules' attitude toward the iconoclastic Council of Hiereia – Blachernae (754),

For no more than seventy years have passed since the holy Sixth Ecumenical Council,³² when they [the iconoclasts] gathered to speak against the venerable icons. That it was not during those years that *tradition* of the reproduction of icons was handed down is clearly evident to all. Rather it was long before the Sixth Council; or to say the truth it was *since the time of the preaching of the Apostles*, as we have learned from looking at the holy churches in every place, *as the Holy Fathers have testified and as the historians, whose writing have survived until today...*³³

³⁰ Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, p. 227.

³¹ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, pp. 98, 123 and 145.

³² Constantinople II 680 – 681 AD, + Council of Trullo (Quinisext Council) considered together as a whole Council in the East: see canon 82 previously discussed Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church.*, vol. 14, p. 401.

³³ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, p. 59, Sixth Session First Volume. Again, my italics for emphasis - see note above.

Professor Alexakis makes a relevant observation concerning Tarasios' diligence to ensure an archive of the procedures free of future condemnation. The "rule" of the organising committee, undeniably under Tarasios' influence, was that *testimonia* on loose sheets of paper could not be introduced into the record. This abuse was practised at Hiereia – Blachernae and resulted in segments and quotations being taken out of context. Tarasios allowed entire books to be introduced "δίᾳ τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἀληθές (for the sake of truth)".³⁴ The Patriarch bent over backwards to safeguard the integrity of the council's documentary evidence and its continuity with the patristic teachings. Looking at some of the language within the Horos of the Second Nicaean Council the strict adherence to Tradition is prominent. This resulted in a buttressed explication by the iconophiles. The passage reads as follows:

In summary, we preserve all the traditions of the Church, which for our sakes have been decreed in written or unwritten form without introducing an innovation...Be this as it may, and continuing along the royal pathway, following both the teaching of our holy Fathers which is inspired by God and the traditions of the catholic Church – for we know that this tradition is of the holy Spirit dwelling in her – in absolute precision and harmony with the spirit we declare...³⁵

³⁴ Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*, pp. 228 – 229.

³⁵ Sahas, *Icons and Logos, Sources in Eighth Century Iconoclasm*, pp. 178 – 179.

In his article "Images of the Church in the Second Nicene Council and in the *Libri Carolini*", Dr. Patrick Henry offers some cogent and perceptive insights into his evaluation of the viewpoints of the participants of the council. In several passages, he asserts the following suppositions that are worthy of examination:

Indeed, the sharpest contrast of all between the ACN [*Acta Concilii Nicaeni*] and the LC [*Libri Carolini*] may well be their different views of prefiguration...The ACN, on the contrary, consider that until the Incarnation, true religion had to be "spiritual" in a quite restrictive sense, since the error of idolatry was always a threat. But the reconstruction of the world by redemption exceeds the original formation; *all things* have been made new, so the relation of created man to the creative world is fundamentally changed from what it was before.

Henry continues his observations in this manner:

The ACN continually call the church back to the company of the Fathers: it is they to whom we must listen, they with whom we must be in harmony...

The conclusions reached are intriguing:

It is the Fathers of Nicaea who effectively divide time into eras, while the LC see no fundamental difference between the age of Abel and the age of Charlemagne. Even more significant, however, is the fact that the ACN allow for real historical corruption of the church... The promise that the Holy Spirit will lead the church into truth is no guarantee that the church cannot fall into error.

The Fathers of Nicaea are suggesting that on occasion (such as their own time) the Holy Spirit must intervene in history, and specifically *in the history of the church*, not simply on behalf of the church. The image of the Fall, typologically the beginning of history of history, can be applied to the church, which is thereby caught in the web of history, and only God can extricate it.³⁶

The *idée reçue* of the synthesis of God's activity, through the action of His Holy Spirit, and man's co-operative effort is a basic tenet of Orthodox theology. A good example of the synergy between mankind and God's activity can be seen in the role of the Theotokos in salvation economy. Only with her concurrence could the Incarnation of Christ have taken place. Responding to the Archangel Gabriel's announcement, the young virgin agreed to participate with God in the salvation of the world.

³⁶ Henry, P. (1977) "Images of the Church in the Second Nicene Council and in the Libri Carolini," In *Law Church and Society, Essays in Honor of Stephen Kuttner*, eds. K. Penninglos, and R. Somerville (University of Pennsylvania Press), Philadelphia, PA, pp. 237 - 252, pp. 244 & 246.

And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'..³⁷

Suffice it to say; what is of prime value with this example is the consciousness of the principles under which the Fathers worked. The awareness of their obligation to the Tradition of the Church was not a casual one, but one steeped in a *theological* understanding of the history of doctrine and dogma.

An additional thorny issue, which Patriarch Tarasios faced during the Nicene Council, was the question of the lapsed iconoclastic clergy. Ignatios the biographer of the Patriarch expresses the opinion that Tarasios was indeed mild in his treatment of the obstreperous hierarchs and clergy.

...during nor after the council did they [the iconodules] bring forth an ill judged accusation concerning the former heresy against members of the clergy or those presiding over a bishopric nor did they excommunicate from the ecclesiastical pasture those ordained by heretics, but, following the dispensations of the synods and the Fathers,

³⁷ Luke 1, 37; May, H. and Metzger, B. (eds.) (1973) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (Oxford University Press), New York, p. 1241. For an elaboration of this doctrine in Orthodox theology, refer to the hymns of the Nativity According to the Flesh (Christmas) in: ... (1969) *The Festal Menaion*, 1st edition, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (Faber and Faber), London.

they embraced with open arms as brothers and fellow prelates those who had returned to <the fold of> the pious belief and deemed each worthy of his on see and office...³⁸

Here, in this one act of *economia*, is a scenario, which was to have a great impact on the reactions of the subsequent iconophilic patriarchs, Nikephoros and Methodios.

Nikephoros and Theodore the Studite Face Iconoclasm II

In the works of these two contemporary figures the concept of Ecclesiology and Tradition may be the best documented. These church leaders left an aggregation of material so that their views may be discerned and analysed. Both Nikephoros and Theodore were witnesses to the proceedings of Nicaea II. Nikephoros served as the palace spokesperson (mandator); previously, he had been a subordinate of Tarasios in the Imperial Secretariat.³⁹ Theodore, by all indications, did not personally participate in Nicaea II, but since he was the nephew of Plato of Sakkoudion, whom we know participated; he was intimately cognisant of the proceedings.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* - (BHG 1698), p. 184, also see Greek text, pp. 107 – 108.

³⁹ Featherstone, "The Refutation of the Council of 815 by Nicephorus," , p. xxiv, note 21, also see Alexander, "The Iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia (815) and its Definition (Horos)", p. 38.

⁴⁰ Auzépy, M.-F. (1988) "Le Place des Moines à Nicée II (787)", *Byzantion*, tome lviii, pp. 5 - 21., p. 9.

Le premier liste, celle des chefs de file des présents, comprend six higoumènes de Constantinople, deux de Bithynie, un de Nicée, et un inconnu.⁴¹

Even though both Theodore and Nikephoros wished to see the end of the heresy of iconoclasm, not all was tranquil after the council. I believe that Professor Henry has described the essence of the initial argument between Theodore the monk and the patriarchal coterie.

What Theodore found hard to accept was the fact that it was Tarasios who had done what he, Theodore thought he himself was supremely qualified to do. It was an 'economizer' who had reconciled the Church in Byzantium to that in Rome. The conclusion was inescapable, but Theodore tried to avoid it: the restoration of icons and of unity was primarily the work of men whose devotion to the Church he doubted. Theodore was firmly committed to what they had accomplished but it annoyed him intensely that it was they who had done it.⁴²

Theodore was not easily reconciled to Tarasios and his successor Nikephoros. In his letters written prior to 815, as mentioned earlier,

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 8 – 9, see note no. 16: – Ces higoumènes, les dix premiers à acclamer la synodique papale, sont: 1). Sabas ton Stoudion, 2)Grégoire tou Syracusa c'est à dire tov Orimiasdou 3) Jean ton Pagouriaou 4) Eustathe tov Maximianou 5) Syméon tov Chenolakon 6) Georges ths Pygis 7) Syméon ton Abramitwn 8) Joseph tou Herakleilon 9) Platon Sakkudion, 10)Grégoire tou Sykianthou...

⁴² Henry, "Initial Eastern Assessments of the Seventh Oecumenical Council", pp. 91 – 92.

Theodore questioned some of the rulings of and even the valid nature of Nicaea II, as an Ecumenical Council calling it a local synod.

...ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτὴν τὴν σύνοδον ὡς οἰκουμενικὴν,
ἀλλ' ὡς τοπικὴν... ⁴³

Even though Theodore was only in his twenties at the time of the council in 787, ⁴⁴ perhaps, he recollects the events in his correspondence at this time, through a vision influenced by the Moechian Controversy. With the outbreak of the second phase of iconoclasm in 815, Theodore and Nikephoros came together to commonly fight the new peril. Nikephoros and Theodore began their partnership as they confronted Leo V at the palace on Christmas day 814. The *Vita Nicetae* ⁴⁵ gives a detailed account of the encounter. The excellent translation of Professor Alexander will be employed to trace the interaction between Patriarch, Theodore and the Emperor.

...Theodore, the zealous (θερμός) teacher of the Church, abbot of Studios answered: 'Do not undo the status of the Church, for the Apostle spoke thus: And he gave some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. 4, 11), but he did not speak of Emperors. To you,

⁴³ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, p. 110 lines 63 64 of Epistula 38 ad Ἀρσείνω τέκνῳ. This letter is written circa 809 (see p. 181) some twenty years after Nicaea II, but Theodore refers to it as a local or regional council.

⁴⁴ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1358.

⁴⁵ Theosterictos, *Vita S. Nicetae the Mediciensis*, AA. SS. *Aprilis*, cols xviii-xxvii.

Emperor, has been entrusted the political system and the army. Take care of them and leave the Church to its shepherds and teachers according to the Apostle. If you do not agree to this - even if an angel from Heaven should give us a message about a deviation from our faith we shall not listen to him, and certainly not to you.⁴⁶

About three months after this *mêlée*, the Patriarch was forced to resign from office⁴⁷ and Theodore was exiled.

What can be noted in the above passage is Theodore's concept of the functional ministries within the Church. Theodore's other letters revealed his sentiments concerning Church authority. His concept of the Pentarchy and its unique place in the Church governance is very apparent in his correspondence. Reflecting the traditional Eastern Church view, Theodore consistently recognises Rome's position among the ancient and Apostolic Churches. In a letter to Emperor Michael II, Theodore describes the papacy.⁴⁸ Theodore was neither a rebel nor a papist by using this language. He was appealing to the ancient prerogatives of Rome and reflecting the indisputably recognised position of the Pope. Fr. John Meyendorff explains this position in this way:

⁴⁶ Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople-Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 131 – 132. Alexander states the original source *Vita Nicetae* is difficult to obtain. This is almost a direct quote from St. John of Damascus. See St. John of Damascus, *On Images, Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, pp. 59 – 60.

⁴⁷ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 57 – 59.

⁴⁸ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, Book II, *Epistle ad Michael II* no. 429, p. 601, see Mt. 16, 17 – 19: ἡ κορυφασιότατη τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἥς Πέτρος πρωτόθρονος, πρὸς ὃν ὁ Κυριός φησιν· σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. ”

The Eastern Churches had always recognised the particular authority of Rome in ecclesiastical affairs, and at Chalcedon [451 A.D.] had emphatically acclaimed Pope Leo [I the Great] as a successor to Peter,⁴⁹ a fact which did not prevent them from condemning the monothelite Pope Honorius at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 681. Even in the ninth century they did not realize that their previous acclamations were being interpreted in Rome as formal definitions of the Roman right to a primacy of power (*primatus potestatis*).⁵⁰

When writing to Pope Leo III and Pope Paschal, Theodore uses these words, "chief or Supreme-head, the chief of all the heads."⁵¹ To Pope Paschal I, Theodore wrote,

Listen, apostolic head, God-advanced shepherd of Christ's lambs (sheep), keeper of the keys of the Heavenly Kingdom, rock of faith, you who are the foundation of catholic church. You are the manager and keeper of order of the throne of Peter.⁵²

⁴⁹ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14 p. 259: "Peter has spoken thus through Leo." Also see bottom of the same page and p. 260; also refer to 28 Canon of Chalcedon.

⁵⁰ Meyendorff, J. (ed.) (1992) *The Primacy of Peter - Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood NY, in "St. Peter in Byzantine Theology" by Meyendorff, J., p. 68.

⁵¹ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, *Epistles ad Leo III*, Letters 33 and 34: "κορυφαιοτάτῳ, τῷ ὅλων κεφαλῶν κεφαλῇ, τὴν ἱερωτάτην σου κορυφήν."

⁵² Ibid., *Epistle ad Paschal I, Pope of Rome*, no. 271, p. 399 ff: "Ἀκούε, ἀποστολική κἀρα, θεοπρόβλητε ποιμὴν τῶν Χριστοῦ προβάτων, κλειδοῦχε τῆς οὐρανῶν βασιλείας, πέτρα τῆς πίστεως, ἐφ' ἣ ὠκοδομεῖται ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία· Πέτρος γάρ σύ, τὸν Πέτρου θρόνον κοσμῶν καὶ διέπων..."

Notwithstanding that the concept of the Church's ecclesiology in relation to Rome is clear and correct, Theodore also presents the Eastern Church's perspective towards the other apostolic sees. In letters sent to the Pope of Alexandria, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and his own Patriarch Nikephoros, the abbot of the Studites used many of the same words to describe their ministries and authority within the Church. This punctuates the reality that, unlike the West, the East was comprised of a number of Churches, which had Apostolic foundations.⁵³ Theodore set forth this understanding of the episcopal dignity inherent in each of the Eastern patriarchates. Theodore writes to Jerusalem thusly:

your most blessed apostolic head-ship...for with you, blessed one, resides head-ship, for you are the first of the Patriarchate [historically, Jerusalem was the first established Church under the Leadership of St. James, the Lord's Brother].⁵⁴

The Studite leader writes to the Patriarch of Alexandria, who is also traditionally given the title Pope. Not only does he allude to the Alexandrian Church's apostolic foundations,⁵⁵ but also recapitulates the primary charge against the iconoclastic council. This ecclesially based polemic shows

⁵³ Meyendorff (ed.) *The Primacy of Peter - Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church*, in "Peter's Primacy in the New Testament and the Early Tradition" by Kesich, V., pp. 59 ff. Note discussion on rank and status of Jerusalem and Antioch, a Church that also could legitimately claim Sts. Peter and Paul as their Apostolic founders.

⁵⁴ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, *Epistle ad Patriarch of Jerusalem*, no. 276, pp. 409 ff: "...της ἀποστολικῆς ὑμῶν μακαριωτάτης κορυφῆς.. ἡ τῆς σῆς μακαριότητος ὑπάρχει κορυφή. σὺ πρῶτος πατριαρχῶν,.." Refer to Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 722.

⁵⁵ Tradition assigns the foundation of the Alexandrian Church to St. Mark the Evangelist. See Eusebius, (c. 4th Century) *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, Dorset Classic Series, 1965, trans. G. A. Williamson (Dorset Press - 1984), New York, pp. 88 – 89.

Theodore's assertion against the iconoclasts is very reflective of the arguments that the other iconophiles have previously used. The following quote illustrate both points:

Your saintly chief [head-ship] suffers along with the all the other members of the Church. How crass they [the iconoclasts] anathematise our holy Fathers, they proclaim the disrespectors. The immature are nourished by impious teachings from the tomes of these teachers.⁵⁶

As can be seen, Theodore not only held a consistent view of the authority of the ancient apostolic sees, but also had a clear concept of what were the foundational violations of the iconoclasts. In a letter to the Emperor Michael II, Theodore stresses the point that the Church of Constantinople must be reunited with the head of the Church of God, in other words the Church of Rome and the other three Patriarchates.⁵⁷ This conviction is deeply rooted in the patristic tradition that the Church must be one; it must preach and proclaim one doctrine and one truth. We see in the treatise *Adversus Haereses*, by St. Irenaeus, this attribute of the Church described in its fullness.

⁵⁶ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, Epistle ad Pope of Alexandria no.275, p. 407 lines 55 –58: "...τῇ θειοτάτῃ σου κορυφῇ ὡς συμπασχούσῃ τοῖς τοῦ ὅλου σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας μέλεσιν... Τί τὰλλα; ἀναθεατίζονται οἱ ἅγιοι ἡμῶν πατέρες, ἀνακηρύττονται οἱ ἡσεβηκότες· τὰ νήπια ἐν τοῖς τῆς ἀσεβείας, δόγμασιν ἀνατρέφονται τῷ δοθέντι τόμῳ τοῖς διδασκάλοις..."

⁵⁷ Ibid., *Epistle ad Michael, Emperor and King*, no. 418, p. 586: "...ἐνωθῆναι ἡμᾶς τῇ κορυφῇ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ Ῥώμῃ καὶ δι' αὐτῆς τοῖς τρισὶ πατριαρχαῖς..."

The Church, although scattered over the whole world even to its extremities, received from the Apostles and their disciples...This preaching and this faith the Church although scattered over the whole world, diligently observes, as if it occupied one house, and believes as if it had but one mind, and preaches and teaches as if it had one mouth. And although there are many dialects in the world, the meaning of the tradition is one and the same. For the same faith is held and handed down by Churches established in the Germanies, the Spains, among the Celtic tribes, in the East, in Libya, and in the central portions of the world. ⁵⁸

Later in the same work, Irenaeus continues to delineate his awareness of the most common feature that results in harmony and order within the Church universal.

Anyone who wishes to discern the truth may see in every church in the whole world the Apostolic tradition clear and manifest. We can enumerate those who were appointed as bishops in the churches by the Apostles and their successors to our own day... For they (the Apostles) wished them to be without blame and reproach to them that they handed over their own position of authority. ⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Quasten, J. (1986) *Patrology* - in IV Volumes (Christian Classics Inc.), Westminster MD, pp. 300 – 301, in *Adversus Haereses* I, 10, 1 – 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 301, in *Adversus Haereses* 3, 3, 1.

From the earliest heresies, there was an acceptance of the concept that the unity of the faith was determined only through dogma promulgated by the entirety of the Churches acting in concord. This mutuality was fundamental to the definition of what constituted the “unblemished apostolic tradition.” Each of the Ecumenical Councils was a conclave, at which all Apostolic Sees had sent some representation. Writing his letters in the ninth century, Theodore was echoing exactly the teaching that Irenaeus had articulated in his century. Irenaeus had written in response to the danger of Gnosticism; Theodore struggled in response to iconoclasm. In his very straightforward message to Michael, Theodore clearly states that the Church of Constantinople had left the body of the Ecumenical Church by following iconoclastic teachings.⁶⁰ In Theodore's eyes, this situation was unacceptable and needed redress. Although Theodore had earlier voiced his reservations relative to the ecumenical status of the Council at Nicaea, he did ultimately recognise its authority and status. The Studite leader was also reconciled to Patriarch Nikephoros. This was evident in several personal correspondences from Theodore to the exiled Patriarch. In letter 286, Theodore's praise for Nikephoros is exuberant. He uses these words to greet Nikephoros,

Hail, O, true victor over impiety...Hail, O, great sun
of Orthodoxy...Hail O, Champion of truth...⁶¹

⁶⁰ Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, Epistle ad Michael, Emperor no. 275, lines 57 – 58: “...οὐκ ἔστι καταφευκτήριον σώματος ἐν οἰκουμένοις..”

⁶¹ Ibid., Epistle ad Nikephoros, the blessed Patriarch, no. 286: “...χαῖρε ἀληθῶς νικητήριον ἀσεβείας..χαῖρε ὁ μέγας ἥλιος τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας..χαῖρε ὑπέρμαξε τῆς ἀληθείας..”

Theodore continues in Κατήχησις, (406) to inculcate his monks as to the state of the Church of God. He declares that the Pope of Rome teaches, as if he was a voice from heaven itself. He describes the iconoclasts as Christ deniers who not only reject Christ, but also the Theotokos and all the saints. In his lesson, Theodore continues to accuse these heretics of not harkening to the words of the evangelists, the apostles, the prophets and the Fathers. As can be demonstrated by this enumeration, in Theodore's mind there is a complete repudiation of the Tradition of the Church by the iconoclasts. He continues his accusations by charging that these men had cast away the five-crowned [i.e. the pentarchy] body of the Church. The abbot is quite specific in citing Nikephoros as the rightful "fifth" head due to the fact he was still living; this implies that Theodore recognised Nikephoros as the only legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople. He closes this thought by attacking the heresiarchs, saying that they seized the Church by the throat, cursed Christ and trodden on the holy.⁶²

What has this examination of Theodore's ecclesial consciousness yielded? For the most part, it is evident that two key constructs are revealed in his understanding of the nature of the Church. Primary to Theodore's thinking was the fact that the correct faith depended on the unanimity and consensus between all the Apostolically founded churches. This unity was

⁶² Ibid., Catechism no. 406, p. 563; "...ἤκεν αὐτῇ φωνὴ ὑπομνηστικὴ ὡς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, ἐκ τοῦ κορυφαιοτάτου, ἐκ τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ θρόνου, τί πέπραχας; ῥωσά, Χριστὸν ἡρῆνησαι, Χριστοῦ τὴν εἰκόνα ἀθετοῦσα, τῆς Θεοτόκου, τῶν πάντων ἁγίων. ἄνοιξον εὐήκοον οὖς, ἐνώτισαι λόγους εὐαγγελικούς, ἀποστολικούς, προφητικούς, πατρικούς καὶ οὐ προσήκατο, οὐκ ἐδέξατο, ἀλλὰ διαρρήξασα ἑαυτὴν τοῦ πεντακορύφου σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας (ἐπειδὴ ἔτι ζῇ καὶ Νικηφόρος ὁ ἱερός) τραχηλὶ κατα θεοῦ παντοκράτορας, ἐνυβρίζουσα Χριστόν, πατοῦσα τὰ ἅγια."

a manifestation of the ancient Tradition handed down from the first days of the Church. We read in the book of Acts in the account of the Council of Jerusalem "It seemed good to the apostles, the elders, with the whole Church...For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." ⁶³ Commenting on this passage's impact, Rev. Dr. John Chrysavgis makes this observation in his book *The Way of the Fathers*:

It was in recognition of these people, [the Holy Fathers] and of what they stood for, that the opening phrase of the Great (or Ecumenical) Councils was established: 'Following the holy Fathers,...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us'. ⁶⁴

Besides the very serious doctrinal condemnation of iconoclasm, Theodore's grievance also reflected his distress with the unilateral and singular acceptance of the teaching by the Church of Constantinople. Constantinople's isolation from the rest of the catholic Church violated the ancient embodiment of unity. St. Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century had articulated the classically accepted standard:

In ipse item catholica ecclesia magnopere curadum est, ut id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. ⁶⁵

⁶³ Acts 15, 22 – 28.

⁶⁴ Chrysavgis, J. (1998) *The Way of the Fathers - Exploring the Patristic Mind*, Analecta Vlatadon (Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies), Thessaloniki, p. 131.

⁶⁵ Migne, J. - P. (ed.) (1844 - 1855) *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, Paris., *Commonitoria* 2,1: " In the Catholic Church herself every care must be taken that we may hold fast to that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all."

Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople provided a well-documented record of his theological objections to the teachings of the iconoclasts as well as his opinion of their corruption and abuse of the Tradition of the Church. Nikephoros' active display of resistance began when he objected to the re-institution of iconoclasm by Leo the Armenian. He begins his recriminations of the iconoclastic teachings and tactics by plainly citing the rift that they had caused within the Body of the Church. He states that none of the Apostolic sees could accept this false dogma:

But you [Leo] have decided to wage war on us [the Church]...Nonetheless, you have decided to raise up against <orthodox doctrine> some murky teaching from pernicious men. What Rome is it, first called the seat of the apostles, that accords with you in rejecting the revered image of Christ? Rather, Rome joins us in labouring and rejoicing to honour that <image>. What Alexandria is it, venerable precinct of the evangelist Mark, that ever joined <you> in refusing to set up the bodily and material likeness of the Mother of God? Rather, Alexandria assists and agrees with us in this <point>. What Antioch is it, far-famed seat of Peter, the chief <of the apostles>, that concurs <with you> in insulting the representation of the

saints? Rather, Antioch shares with us the long tradition of honouring these <images>. What Jerusalem is it, renowned home of <James>, the *brother of the Lord*, that conspires <with you> in destroying the traditions <handed down> from the <church> fathers? ⁶⁶

In the same excerpt, Nikephoros outlines the iconoclast's breach with the Tradition. He summarised the record that Leo wished to espouse a doctrine which had not been accepted by any Ecumenical Council. Nikephoros was well defined in his denunciation of Leo's intent to introduce "revolutionary teachings against the established tradition". ⁶⁷ Nikephoros' confrontation with Leo continues and the Patriarch makes the following appeal to Tradition:

What person possessed of reason and wisdom will follow you in <your path> of universal destruction?...the making of holy icons is revered; in reality <this practice> is clearly implied not by some <recent> notion from yesterday but by the coming of Christ among men. Thus, we have been taught that the prophets, apostles and teachers built on this foundation < of Christ>. ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Nicephoros I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, pp. 81 – 82; cited in Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca.*, vol. C, cols. 86 ff.

⁶⁷ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Nicephoros I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, p. 82.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103, alludes to Eph, 2, 20.

As the crisis deepened between Emperor and Patriarch, the iconoclastic cabal met in 815 at what has come to be known as the Council of St. Sophia.⁶⁹ Nikephoros was confronted at the patriarchal palace by a delegation from that council demanding that he "give account of the charges against him." Nikephoros answered them with this appeal to the authority of his peers, the fellow Patriarchs, and to Holy Tradition:

Who is it that hurls letters of accusation at us and entertains charges against us? Over which patriarchal see does he claim to preside? What pastoral authority does he hold that he subjects us to canonical restraints? If the helmsman who reverently steers the older Rome summons us, I shall come. If the holy preacher of Alexandria brings a charge against us, I shall attend upon him without complaint. If the holy shepherd of Antioch drags us to a court of judgement, I shall not be absent. If he who administers Jerusalem has summoned us to stand to account, I shall not fail to do it...You will not take hold of those who have fixed their mind upon the rock of the orthodox confession<faith>, nor will you cast down those who set themselves upon the heights of definitions made by the <ecumenical> councils. However the heavy seas of heresy will break upon you without washing over the universal Church.

⁶⁹ Alexander, "The Iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia (815) and its Definition (Horos)".

...what argument will deliver you from the punishment <specified by > the canons, since you wish to *build a heretical doctrine of wood , of hay and of stubble upon the foundation of gold and silver adorned with precious stones*, I mean <by "precious stones">, the teachings of the apostles and of the <Church> fathers? ⁷⁰

Shortly after this encounter, Nikephoros was forced to resign and was exiled. It is during the subsequent years, that the literary output of the Patriarch proliferated against the heretical dogma of the iconoclasts. The ecclesiology and theology that Nikephoros expounded before and during his exile must have influenced Methodios. This can be demonstrated by reviewing some additional excerpts from among the writings of Nikephoros. *The Twelve Chapters* ⁷¹ is a short work "whose purpose is to outline the reasons for which, the leaders of the iconoclastic heresy are outside the Church. There is no discussion; it is simply a statement of facts. The death of Leo V is mentioned, and therefore this work is after 25 December 820. ⁷² The *Refutatio et Eversio* [*"Ελεγχος καὶ Ἀνατροπή*] ⁷³ is a treatise composed of two parts. The first is a refutation of the Definition [Horos] of the iconoclastic council of 815 [St. Sophia]; the second part is a detailed criticism of the patristic dossier produced by this "council." ⁷⁴ The defence

⁷⁰ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Nicephorus I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, pp. 110 – 111, italics ref. Cor.3, 12.

⁷¹ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, A. (ed.) (1891) *Twelve Chapters of Nikephoros of Constantinople*.

⁷² O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828) Patriarch of Constantinople - Pentarchy and Primacy*, p. 62.

⁷³ Featherstone, "The Refutation of the Council of 815 by Nicephorus."

⁷⁴ O'Connell, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828) Patriarch of Constantinople - Pentarchy and Primacy*, p. 65.

presented in this latter work has been surveyed in earlier chapters of this paper therefore, we will concentrate for the most part on the former work at this time.

The *Twelve Chapters* presented in concise and direct language the chasm created between the Church and the iconoclastic teachings. From the opening sentence, Nikephoros makes the charge that the heretics had abandoned the Tradition, which had been kept and handed down in the apostolic and catholic Church. He confirmed that the heritage was transmitted and guarded "from the beginning" by all Christians, but the iconoclasts not only did not honour the Tradition; they in fact renounced these teachings. The Patriarch continued to rebuke his opponents saying that the teachings of the holy Fathers followed the apostolic admonition of St Paul:

So then, brethren, stand firm and hold the traditions, which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.⁷⁵

After this opening salvo of chapter one, Nikephoros quotes from St. John Chrysostomos, St. Basil the Great and as a bid to calumniate the iconoclastic arguments, he even quoted Epiphanius, as a source providing recourse to the Fathers, "as the Church prescribes this, the Tradition is received from the Fathers ὅτι ἀναγκαίως ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦτο ἐπιτελεῖ,

⁷⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus (ed.) *Twelve Chapters of Nikephoros of Constantinople*, p. 454, lines 10 – 13, 17 – 19. Also see 2 Th. 2, 15: "Ὅτι τὴν παράδοσιν, ἣν παρέλαβεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ ἄνωθεν ἡ ἀγία τοῦ Θεοῦ καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία καὶ πάντες.. ἱκράτειτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς παρελάβετε ἐγγράφως καὶ ἀγράφως."

παράδοσιν λαβοῦσα παρὰ πατέρων...”⁷⁶ The next few chapters are devoted to a recitation and review of the issues and the decretals of the Ecumenical Councils. In the sixth chapter, the Patriarch communicates the specific significance of Nicaea II in relation to the Tradition of the Church. Nikephoros pointed out these attributes of that council:

It met the criteria for ecumenicity, in that all the ancient sees were represented by delegates or by letters of authorization, these delegates remained until the conclusion of the council.⁷⁷ The council from its outset upheld the apostolic and patristic dogmas and proclaimed them. The fathers of the synod at all times also championed the teachings relative to the incarnational economy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by condemning those lawbreakers who set aside and cursed those dogmas.⁷⁸

These carefully chosen precepts denounced, by implication, both the iconoclastic councils of Hieria – Blachernae and the Council of St. Sophia. The Patriarch left no doubt as to the invalid nature of these conclaves. In next few chapters, he recounts the mistreatment inflicted on the temples, images and true believing Christians by the heretics.⁷⁹ Chapter twelve is

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 455, lines 21 – 22.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 457 lines 17 – 20; “...συνεδρευόντων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀποστολικῶν ἀρχιερατικῶν θρόνων διὰ τε τῶν συνοδικῶν γραμματέων καὶ οἰκείων τοποτηρητῶν, οἷς ἐχρήσαντο αὐτοὶ ἀρχιερεῖς πρὸς τὸ ἐπιτελεσθῆναι τὴν σύνοδον.”

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 457, lines 24 – 28: “Αὕτη δὲ ἡ ἀγία σύνοδος τὴν μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς κρατήσασαν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ συνήθειαν ἀποστολικῶς καὶ πατρικῶς δογματίσασα ἐκύρωσε, τοὺς δὲ ἀθετήσαντας καὶ ἐνυβρίσοντας τὴν θεῖαν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ οἰκονομίαν ἀνεθεμάτισεν ...”

⁷⁹ Ibid., see chapters 7 & 8, p. 458.

perhaps the most significant of the monograph. Within this portion of the writing, Nikephoros expresses two dramatic pronouncements involving the iconoclasts. The Patriarch breaks with the more lenient approach taken by Tarasios at Nicaea II, in respect to the iconoclasts' re-integration into the Church. He propounded that these heretics were essentially proponents of Manichaeism, a godless darkened belief, "...Μανιχαίων αθεον καὶ ἐσκοτισμένην θρησκείαν..." ⁸⁰ Earlier, the Patriarch had urged the Emperor Michael I to inflict the death penalty on Manichaeans and Paulicians and the Athingani.

Moved by an excess of divine zeal, the most pious emperor, [Michael I] at the instigation of the most holy patriarch Nikephoros and other pious persons, decreed the death penalty against the Manichees (that is the Paulicians of today) and the Athinganoi who live in Phrygia and Lykaonia, but was turned back from this course by certain perverse counsellors who used the pretext of repentance, although those who have fallen into that error are incapable of repenting. The counsellors argued in their ignorance that priests ought not to condemn the impious to death.... ⁸¹

The "perverse counsellors" referred to in the above excerpt included Theodore the Studite who openly opposed this policy. Theophanes the Confessor had no great affection for the Studite leader. In a letter to

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 459, 24 – 26.

⁸¹ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 678, cited in Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World*, p. 61.

Theophilos of Ephesus, Theodore voiced his opinion concerning this issue in this manner.

I have in my hands the letter which your sacred highness sent to our brother Athanasios, and, most worshipful of men, when I read it I was very grieved. Firstly, because disputes and disagreements have arisen among those of us who uphold the word of truth against the heresy of the Iconomachi which now assails it, and secondly because I am obliged in all humility to adopt the opposing position. Your greatness will forgive me, for the argument is about truth, than which nothing is more important or more to be revered. What then is the content of the letter which disturbs me? It says, 'We have not decided whether to kill the Manichaeans or not to kill them. But if we were to allow it, we would make a very right decision.' What are you saying, most reverend? In the gospels the Lord forbade this, saying, 'No, lest when you collect the tares you root up the wheat with them. Let them both grow together till harvest.'⁸²

⁸² Fatouros (ed.) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols., *Epistulae ad Theophilos of Ephesus* no. 455, pp. 644 – 647: "Ἐλαβον ἐπὶ χειρας τὸ γραμματεῖον, ὃπερ ἀπέστειλεν ἡ Ἱερα σου κορυφή Ἀθανασίῳ τῷ ἡμετέρῳ ἀδελφῷ καὶ ἀναγνοὺς ἐλυπήθην, ἱερῶτατέ μου πάτερ, λύπην ἱκανήν, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, τοῖς ὀρθοτομοῦσι τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας κατὰ τὴν νῦν λυττῶσαν αἵρεσιν τῶν εἰκονομάχων, ἐρεσχέλαι γίνονται καὶ σχίσματα ἐπιφύονται, ἔπειτα ὅτι ἀναγκάζομαι ὁ ἐλάχιστος ἀντιθετικῶς τὴν διάλεξιν ποιήσασθαι. Ἀλλὰ συγγινωσκέτω ἡ μεγαλειότης σου· περὶ γὰρ ἀληθείας ὁ λόγος, ἧς οὐδὲν προτιμότερον οὐδὲν αἰδεστικώτερόν.

Τί δέ τὸ ἐμφερόμενον ἐν τοῖς γράμμασι, περὶ οὗ ἡ λύπη; ἡμεῖς, φησὶν, οὐτε κτένεσθαι τοὺς Μανιχαίους οὐτε μὴ κτένεσθαι συνεβουλεύσαμεν· εἰ δέ καὶ ἐπετρέψαμεν, τῶν καλλίστων το μέγιστον εἶχομεν / ἄν ποιῇσαι. Τί φῆς, ὦ θεότιμητε; ὁ Κύριος ἀπηγόρευσεν ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις τοῦτο εἰπὼν οὐ, μήποτε συλλέγοντες τὰ ζιζάνια ἐκριζώσητε ἅμα αὐτοῖς τὸν σῖτον· ἄφετε συναυξάνεσθε μέχρι τοῦ θερισμοῦ."

To draw any comparison between the lapsed iconoclasts and the Manichaeans indicates that after the re-introduction of the second phase of the heresy Nikephoros was prepared to take drastic measures against them. Nikephoros' decisive and most powerful remodelling of his attitudes about the lapsed iconoclasts must have influenced and altered the thinking of his iconodulic successor, Patriarch Methodios. Nikephoros unequivocally stated that these dissident non-believers had never truly repented their ignorant blasphemies. As a result, they returned to their evil and impious teachings, thereby they created a schism in Christ's Church. As we know, this violated the canons of Nicaea II. Nikephoros' solution involved a very stringent application of the penalty of excommunication. He pronounced that these heretics remained outside of communion unless they appeal to the judgement of Rome, the first of the Apostolic sees. No doubt, this caveat was placed to emphasise the pre-eminence of Rome and to avoid a ruling from an iconoclastic patriarch in Constantinople absolving these lapsed heretics and allowing them to retain or regain their ecclesiastical dignity by stealth. Nikephoros unquestionably proclaimed that he would not accept these persons to return to communion in the Church, and finally he spoke of the ultimate penalty that they would pay, the condemnation to eternal fire and damnation.⁸³ With the recurrence of iconoclasm under Leo

⁸³ Papadopoulos-Kerameus (ed.) *Twelve Chapters of Nikephoros of Constantinople*, p. 460, lines 1 – 14: "Διὸ ὁ τοῦτος δεχόμενος κοινωνὸς ἔστι τῆς ἀπωλείας αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν μυρίων ἀναθεμάτων ἔνοχος. Ὅτι δὲ τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀπερρηγγέοι εἰσὶ, σαφῶς μαρτυροῦσι καὶ ἐπισφραγίζουσι καὶ τὰ πρὸ χρόνου τινὸς ἐκπεμφθέντα γράμματα παρὰ τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου καὶ μακαριωτάτου ἀρχιερέως Ῥώμης, τοῦτέστι τοῦ πρώτου καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου· ἔτι δὲ καὶ οἱ τοῦτο τοποτηρηταὶ καὶ ἀποκρισιάριοι, ὡς οὐ μόνον οὐ κοινωνήσαντες αὐτοῖς, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ εἰς ὄψιν μηδὲ εἰς λόγους αὐτῶν ὅπως οὖν ἔλθειν ἀνασχόμενοι, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ συνεστιαθῆναι αὐτοῖς τέλεον πατραιτησάμενοι. Διὰ ταῦτα οὖν πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν κοινωνίαν αὐτῶν ἀποστρεφόμεθα καὶ τό συναναστρέφειν αὐτοῖς παραιτούμεθα ἵνα μὴ ὡσαύτως τοῖς αὐτοῖς κρίμασιν

V and the return of large numbers of hierarchs who supported the doctrine, most especially in and around Constantinople, ⁸⁴ the climate had changed from the more conciliatory days of 787.

ὑποπέσωμεν καὶ ξένοι καὶ ἀλλότριοι τῶν ἀποστολικῶν δειχθῶμεν καὶ -- τὸ πάντων βαρύτερον -- τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν βασιλείας ἐκπέσωμεν καὶ τῷ αἰωνίῳ πυρὶ κατακριθῶμεν.”

⁸⁴ Fatouros (ed) *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* in two vols, *Epistola to Efthemiou of Sardis* No. 112.

Synergy of Παράδοσις and Παρακαταθήκη

Patriarch Methodios came to the throne of St. Andrew amidst this multi-changing setting. His approach to the treatment of the lapsed iconoclasts was affected by the swing of the pendulum concerning these heretical clergy. The Holy Tradition of the Church, παράδοσις, was foremost in his mind as he fought to cleanse the Church. The evolution of the Patriarch's reasoning and attitudes were influenced by the historical, political and theological milieu of his age. In addition, he was conditioned by his understanding of the responsibility of his office. In my opinion, the concept of παρακαταθήκη was a fundamental determinate that shaped Methodios' thinking as he set forth shepherding the Church. What is this aspect of Church Tradition that could evoke such a great authority over Methodios? How did this understanding develop? What patristic grounding did this teaching engender?

Παρακαταθήκη is a principle established and associated with the office of bishop from apostolic times. St. Paul wrote Timothy, his disciple and travelling companion, instructions on ministry. By tradition, Timothy became the first bishop of Ephesus.⁸⁵ Παρακαταθήκη can be defined, as the treasure of the Church's Tradition, the deposit of faith, which must be preserved inviolate and transmitted to future generations without any stain or spot. This duty is and has always been an obligation of the bishop. Reading I Timothy 6, 20, St. Paul's exhortation to his young friend is this,

⁸⁵ Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, p. 109.

"O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you." ⁸⁶ In II Timothy 1, 14 we read: Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. "Τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν." ⁸⁷ The sacred treasure is also the responsibility of the ordained clergy. At his ordination, each ordained presbyter was and is to this day entrusted with the Body of Christ, the Church. This charge is dramatically and tangibly emphasised within the ordination service. The candidate is directed by the ordaining bishop to approach the altar; the host is placed in his crossed hands. The words recited at this moment by the Bishop were and are:

Receive this treasure, guard it until the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, at which time he will ask an account of you for it. ⁸⁸

This is now more than an earthly responsibility; it is one that transcends time and the created order. The ordinate is then guided to stand behind the altar table, holding the Body of Christ. Symbolically these ordination rituals underlined the gravity of the priesthood and bound the ordained clergy to the Tradition of the Church and its protection. The office of bishop had an even graver onus. One of the primary callings of the bishop is the

⁸⁶ May and Metzger (eds.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, p. 1445.

⁸⁷ Marshall, A. (ed.) (1970) *The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek - English New Testament*, (Zondervan), Grand Rapids MI, p. 836 May and Metzger (eds.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, p. 1447.

⁸⁸ Goar (ed.) *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum*, p. 243: "Λάβε τὴν παρακαταθήκην ταύτῃ, καὶ φύλαξον αὐτὴν, ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτε πρὸς αὐτοῦ μέλλεις ἀπετεῖσθαι αὐτῇ."

preservation of the "truth of Christ." Scripture defines this function in this manner:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling [teaching] the word of truth. ⁸⁹

This biblical injunction was accented by the early canons of the Church and by prayers in the liturgical texts of both St. John Chrysostomos' Liturgy and St. Basil's Liturgy. The first of Eighty-Five Apostolic canons dealt with the ordination to the office of bishop. "Let a bishop be ordained *by two or three* bishops." ⁹⁰ This ordinance was upheld by Canon IV at Nicaea I, which stated that even the ordination of a bishop must involve a number of senior bishops. ⁹¹ Canon XIII of the African Code (419) reaffirms the Apostolic - Nicene orthodoxy. ⁹² The purpose of these stipulations was to insure the proper dogmatic qualifications of the candidate for ordination. The acquiescence, to the elevation of the entrant, by multiple bishops would help provide a method of testing his suitability and adherence to Holy Tradition. The apostolic succession inherent in the office of bishop was also safeguarded by these stringent procedures.

⁸⁹ II Tim. 2, 15 Marshall (ed.) *The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek - English New Testament*, p. 838: "σπούδασον σέ αὐτόν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον, ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας."

⁹⁰ Percival (ed.) *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14 p. 594, [emphasis mine].

⁹¹ Ibid., vol. 14 p. 11.

⁹² Ibid., vol. 14, p. 448.

Liturgically, the prayers of the fourth century liturgies lent support to the biblical instructions of St. Paul. Chrysostomos imparts in the prayers of remembrance, immediately following the Anaphora, these words:

We beseech, you, O Lord, Remember, all Orthodox
Bishops who rightly define the word of your truth.⁹³

Although St Basil expressed the same duty and grace for the episcopate in the exact same words in Goar's version of the *Euchologion* this is not borne out in Brightman's text and may very well be a later insertion from the Chrysostomos liturgy.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, the phrase is clearly present in the Chrysostomos liturgy, and St. Basil prays for remembrance and pacification of the apostolic and catholic Church in all corners of the world.⁹⁵

Between the time of the instructions of St. Paul to Timothy and Methodios' era, the function and accountability of the bishop became more defined and developed. Previously, three questions were asked. A short examination of the development of the role of the bishop historically, through the patristic witness, will enable a better understanding of the power of this postulate on Methodios' thinking. As was demonstrated, the bishop's pivotal function was not the administration of Church affairs, but he was theologically entrusted and imbued with the awesome trust to teach and

⁹³ Goar (ed.) *Euchologion Sive Rituale Greacorum*, Liturgy of St. John Chrysostomos, eighth century usage, p. 63: "Ἐτι παρακαλουμένσε, μνήσθητι Κύριε πάσης ἐπισκοπῆς, ὀρθοδόξου, τῶν ὀρθοτομούντων τὸν λόγον τῆς σῆς ἀληθείας.. "so see Brightman, F. E. and Hammond, C. E. (eds.) (1896) *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Clarendon Press), Oxford, p. 332.

⁹⁴ Goar (ed.) *Euchologion Sive Rituale Greacorum*, p. 147.

⁹⁵ Brightman and Hammond (eds.) *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, p. 332.

faithfully guard the Church dogma against heresy. His obligation was then to pass on this dogma unsoiled to the next generation. As St. John Chrysostomos reminds the Church, the trust and deposit of faith is from God, and it comes to the bishop through the Grace of the Holy Spirit received at ordination, but there is the idea of defending, preserving and handing this treasure to subsequent Christians.⁹⁶ Clement of Rome provided this sense of the continuum of the sacred deposit of faith that he received and in turn was obliged to pass onto his heirs.⁹⁷

In a sermon on the First Epistle of Timothy St. John Chrysostomos defines "παρακαταθήκη". What is the parakatatheki? It is the faith. It is the message of the Apostles."⁹⁸ Simply put, this is the message of the inheritance of the apostolic testament to their successors. This guardianship and transmittal of the uncorrupted pure faith was the bishop's commitment. Nikephoros expressed the sense of this burden as he prayed before leaving his Cathedral for the last time. He prostrated himself in St. Sophia and prayed:

...I commend into Thy hand, all powerful even now,
this <Church> that is *without spot or blemish*, just
as I **received it** from <Thy hand>, **watched over it**
in reverence as best I could, and kept it fixed upon

⁹⁶ Dumont, D. and Smith, R. (1995) *T.L.G. - C.D. Rom*, Pacific Palisades CA, St John Chrysostomos, *Scr. Eccle. Degregessue* Sec. 19, lines 4 – 5: "εὐχὰ ἀναφέρων καὶ ἔλεγον· Κύριε, τὴν ἐμπιστευθεῖσάν μοι ἐκκλησίαν ἔχε ἐν παρακαταθήκῃ οὐ πάρειμι ἐγώ, ἀλλὰ πάρει σύ,.."

⁹⁷ Ibid., Clement of Rome, *Contestatio*, Chapter 3, Sec. 2 lines 10 – 12: "...ὁμοίως ποιήσω τῷ γὰρ ἐπισκόπῳ μου παρακαταθήσομαι, ἵνα, εἰ μὲν τυχοί, ἐφ' ἡλικίας γενόμενος, ἄξιός εἴναι πίστεως, ὥς πατῶν παρακαταθήκην τῷ τέκνῳ ἀποδώσῃ κατὰ τὸν τῆς διαμαρτυρίας λόγον."

⁹⁸ Ibid., St John Chrysostomos, In Epistolarum II ad Timotheum (1 – 10), vol. 62, p. 608 lines 5 – 6: "Τί ἐστι παρακαταθήκη; Ἡ πίστις, τὸ κήρυγμα "

the rock of true belief, as a *place* and *tabernacle* of Thy glory, <Thy Church> has preserved its all-beautiful majesty, conducted to Thee many *sons* and *heirs* by means of holy baptism, and rendered countless multitudes fit for Thy compassion and favour through enduring repentance. To Thee, O Saviour, I **deliver this sacred trust**, albeit with unworthy hands, and I give over to the *great deep* of Thy judgements the disposition of the <Church's> affairs as seems best <to Thee>...For in the best offering we could make, we have also **preserved these <teachings> unblemished** for Thee, the *first born of every creature*...Under the seal of the pure confession <of faith>, I have secured the teachings of the <church> fathers, and I have been wholly eager to entrust to you <those teachings>, that can not be despoiled by heretical distortions. Farewell, <O patriarchal> throne, that I mounted not without constraint and that I now vacate under even greater constraint. Farewell, O godly shrines of the martyrs adorned with images of <the martyrs'> struggles and of the Gospel...Farewell, too, O great city of God [i.e., Constantinople], and those of your <inhabitants> whose mainstay is sound patristic doctrine; I have commended them to your <sheltering> wings and to God's, so that no winged creature of evil might remove them from your loving care.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Nicephoros I of Constantinople in Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints' Lives in English translation*, pp. 116 – 118. Bold indicates the Bishop's responsibility.

Fr. Congar has summed up this entire concept in a few sentences. He commented on the Pauline passages, which are so critical to the Church's understanding of this aspect of Holy Tradition. He expounds in this way:

In the final analysis, what the apostles had transmitted, and what was to be faithfully transmitted in the future, never belonged to them. They had only been servants, and trustees already, having to transmit something which had been entrusted to them on behalf of others, that is to say certain truths and a certain understanding of God's plan of salvation, of which Christ was the centre: in short, the word of God, the truth, the didascalia in line with orthodox religious belief. The moment we find that he who transmits the truth is not its first source, that there is an intermediary, that an unchanging truth must be transmitted by men who will eventually disappear, "tradition" in the objective sense of the word necessarily assumes the form of a "deposit"; and this is already true in the case of the apostles.¹⁰⁰

The hierarchs at Nicaea II who had returned to orthodoxy, by repenting their iconoclastic views were received by the Council and Patriarch Tarasios. They were required to sign and accept the Horos and Canons of this Council. Canon II became the standard for all former and new bishops. It stated, "That he who is to be ordained a Bishop must steadfastly be

¹⁰⁰ Congar, *Tradition and Traditions An historical and theological essay*, p. 20.

resolved to observe the canons, otherwise he shall not be ordained.”¹⁰¹

With this certification by the former iconoclasts, their situation had now changed. They had been welcomed back into the good graces of the Church on the strength of their own confession and repentance. They were cleansed of their error; with the advent of the second phase of iconoclasm and the re-defection of many of the same offenders, their sin was not heresy, a choice of a teaching of theological error, but apostasy.¹⁰² Apostasy involved more than theological error, it was the total abandonment of the Church and her teachings. The holy Church had been entrusted to Methodios. He would not and could not allow apostates to pollute and poison the Church, her children and future generations. Therefore, there was no choice. As, he said in the closing paragraphs of his homily on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

We will research the writings and the traditions of the Fathers and we will imitate them. As we found the Church, we will leave it. Thus, we will pass it on. We will not separate ourselves from the Fathers; perhaps, the next generation would anathematise and exhume us. Surely, we will not gain even if we go to the ends of the earth. I hope, beseech and if I exist, even unworthy of heaven and earth, that God grant that I am in communion with the Six Ecumenical Synods and have a place among them.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Percival (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, p. 556.

¹⁰² Cross and Livingstone (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 74.

¹⁰³ Afinogenov, *Constantinopolitan Patriarchate - The Iconoclastic Crisis in Byzantium (784 - 847)* - in Russian, p. 188.

Chapter Five

LITERARY HARVEST

*By the work one knows the workman.*¹

Introduction

This sage epigram written centuries after the death of Patriarch Methodios has varied and multitudinous applications; notwithstanding, it can be applied to Methodios, the man and to his writings. In this limited survey of some of the compositions from the pen of the Patriarch, the goal will not be to analyse each work completely, sentence-by-sentence, page-by-page, but to uncover more of the man within his works. The aim will be to discover the flesh and blood person, who irrespective of his monastic profession, struggled with passions, the hagiographer dedicated to praising the lives of holy men and women, the ecclesiastical leader who guarded his office's prerogatives, the poet, the man of his times and most importantly the defender of the faith in a period of deep division and dispute.

Previously, comments have been offered on some of Methodios' major works, his correspondence and liturgical selections. These will not be repeated but general comments may be offered referring to these excerpts.

Methodios presents several difficulties for the analyst of his works. In this introduction, his stylistic proclivities will be noted and examples will be cited

¹ *Fables*, bk 1 (1668), fable 21, Jean de La Fontaine.

as the compositions are enumerated. First, there is a problem of accurately dating his compositions, although, some can be approximated by a *terminus post quem* method.² Methodios used obscure language and he had a habit of "coining" words to fit his meaning. Many times, these situations were the deliberate use of language to convey theological, political or derisive meanings. Another technique Methodios used is the repetition of several words or phrases in a sentence or a paragraph. Many times, he used these anaphorae and alliterations of similar words to project meaning and in certain situations; he applied these word patterns and anaphorae for emphasis and as a literary device. In addition to these points, Methodios' linguistic syntax was extremely complex and convoluted. This trait has been called by Professor Ševčenko, "Methodian in its obscurity and its preciousity"³

One attribute that becomes evident, even when one makes a cursory examination of the works of the Patriarch, is his intimate and thorough grasp of Scripture. He consistently used Biblical imagery, scriptural archetypes and figures from the Bible as metaphors and lessons to both his listeners and readers. Among his favourite scriptural characters are Moses, Job, David and St. Paul. The use of these personalities becomes symbolic of the deeper messages that Methodios intended and they convey theological insight into man's condition. Other thematic constructs that are

² This is most applicable to the *Vitae*, where the date of the death of the subject is known from Church tradition or some other independent source, which provides a *terminus post quem* for the *Vita*. Also, in some works biographical information is revealed to allow the reader to relate to events and to approximate time frames.

³ Ševčenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period," in *Iconoclasm*, p. 125.

also apparent are the repeated references to Incarnational theology, salvational economy and mankind's pre-lapsarian state. No doubt, these themes were influenced and shaped by the theological struggle to defend images. They provided a basis for a strong historical and Traditional underpinning of the iconodulic response to the iconoclastic arguments. Even though these points of view were not original to Methodios, he used them with effectiveness and precision.

The major catalogues of the Methodian Corpus can be found in the following references:

- 1) Allatius in PG t. c, col: 1231 - 1239. ⁴
- 2) Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinische Literatur*, 2nd ed. p. 167.
- 3) Pitra, *Juris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia et monumenta*, t. ii, pp. 353 - 365. ⁵
- 4) Grumel and Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. I, *Les Actes des Patriarches*, Fasc. II et III , *Les Regestes de 715 à 1206*, pp. 63 - 86. ⁶
- 5) Beck, *Theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich*, pp. 496 – 519. ⁷

⁴ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*.

⁵ Pitra, "S. Methodius CP."

⁶ Grumel and Darrouzès (eds.), *Les Regestes Des Actes Du Patriarcat De Constantinople (715 - 1206)*.

⁷ Beck, H. G. (1959) *Theologische Literatur Im Byzantine Reich*, Handbuch Im Rahmen des Handbuchs der Altertumswissenschaft (C.H. Beck), Munich.

The literary activity of the holy Patriarch was considerable; but much of it survives, as shall be shown, only in fragments. The works of this churchman can be grouped and classified in the following classifications.

Polemic writings: this group consists of the Methodian writings and the role they played in the context of the struggle against and the victory over the heresy of the iconoclasts. The composition *Contra Iconomachos* (Against the Iconoclasts) represents this class of writings and the source for these works is PG, tomos c, cols. 1233 – 1234. Another example of this type of composition is *Επὶ καθαιρέσει τῶν ἀποστάντων ἱερέων*. It is a dogmatic letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem concerning apostate clergy. This can be found in Pitra pp. 355 – 357, a long extract is also given in Mai *Nova...*t. v, p. 144, 267 and reproduced in Migne. "*Εκθεσις περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων*" is a homily accredited to Methodios. *Λόγος περὶ τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων* is a related work. These works and all the texts associated with it were discussed and analysed in the section The Synodicon in Chapter 2.

The next classification of compositions by Patriarch Methodios is Works against the Studite Leadership. These works of Methodios fall into three groups. There are letters, of which large parts survive. There is extant a portion of a Synodal decree concerning the disciplining of the wayward Studites. Lastly, there are fragmentary remains of letters to the Studite leadership and the monks of the Studite monasteries.

The third classification of Methodian works is Canonical Writings, which include *Constitutio de haereticorum ad paenitentiam receptione*" (The

Constitution on heretics who repent). This work has a similar background as Works against Studite Leadership. Before 1990, it appeared with various titles in mss in Goar's *Euchologion*, pp. 876 ff; which has recently been re-edited and released by Perenti and Velkovska, *L'Eucologio Barberini Gr. 336 (ff. 1 - 263)*. In addition, parts of it can be found in MPG, tomos c cols 1300 – 1325, or in Pitra, pp. 362 363. This last entry cites only the canonical portion of the work. There is another mss tradition from *Codex Ambros. gr. 803, folio 138 – 151*, which presents a very differing text from the above. Fortunately, as discussed, the work of Arranz has helped to systematise this composition.

The fourth and perhaps the most revealing class of Methodian works is Hagiography. This group includes shorter accounts from saint's lives, or writings dealing with only their martyrdom. In this collection there is an encomion honouring St. Agatha, a set of scholia on the *Vita of St. Marina*, an abbreviated *Vita* of St. Nicholas and an encomion on St. Nicholas written by Methodios. The longest hagiographic texts attributed to Methodios are found in this category; they are two complete *Vitae*. The *Vita of St. Theophanes the Confessor* and the *Vita of St. Euthymios of Sardis*, both heroes of the iconodules, will be analysed.

The last category of compositions by St. Methodios is that of Poems and Liturgical Writings. These writings include various texts. The longest of liturgical texts are the hymns associated with the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which have been previously discussed. In addition, there are paracletic

canons and idiomela written by the Patriarch. A listing of them can be found in Pitra.⁸ He also gives a first list from the mss catalogues [Liturgical Fragments, see, Pitra n. 21, 22 and 23]. There are a minimal number, which were not available for examination, but for completeness, they will be noted and listed.

Polemic Writings

Contra Iconomachos

"Against the Iconoclasts", these writings are found in PG, tomos c, col. 1233 – 1234. They are fragmentary pieces of longer works, which will be reviewed, or a reading from the Synaxarion, which outlines the contribution of Methodios in the iconoclastic struggle.

Επὶ καθαιρέσει τῶν ἀποστάντων ἱερέων

This is a dogmatic letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem concerning apostate clergy. Even though this composition has been previously discussed, the following additional comments are cogent at this time. Methodios reserved his most damning criticism for John the Grammarian and his cadre of followers. He described John's behaviour and attitudes. These details were outlined for the Patriarch of Jerusalem, so that he could understand the post-restoration climate in Constantinople. Methodios did this in order to illustrate, not only John's lack of repentance, but also his arrogance and

⁸ Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", p. 354.

his lack of even the slightest sense of remorse for his heretical activity. As the Patriarch gives an account of what John the Grammarian's activities were while Methodios occupied the Patriarchal throne, it becomes obvious to the reader that John did not retire to a quiet life away from the capital, as might have been expected of a penitent. Rather, he attempted to seek public justification and vindication for his actions. Methodios states that John pretends to be the Publican (see Luke 18, 10 – 14) but is neither truly humble nor repentant. In his letter, Methodios points out that John and his cronies had continued to act in a haughty manner, glaring at people and dishonouring Christ and his Church. Therefore, Methodios states, without reservation, that John and his retinue were unworthy of re-instatement into the Church.⁹ This, in fact, was the case during Methodios' entire lifetime.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 356 – 357: "...ἄτερ μόνον τοῦ τελευταίου τουτέστιν ἐσχάτου καὶ πρώτον ἐχθίστου τῆς ἀληθείας Ἰωάννου, μηδὲ ὅλως πώποτε φανέντος χριστιανοῦ, καὶ κλήρου λόγον οὐκ ἐσχηκότος, οὐδ' ἐπεκτείναντος ἀπαντων τινί. Ταῦτα ὀρθῶς καὶ λίαν καλῶς δι' ὀλίγου ἐκθεμένης τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀδελφικῆς σεβασμιότητος, ἰδοὺ σήμερον τριετοὺς πληρωθέντος χρόνου, καὶ τοῦ τετάρτου ἀρξαμένου, οὐδένα καρπὸν μετανοίας τὸν διὰ τινος ταπεινόφρονος λόγου καὶ σκληραγωγίας βίου ἡρεμίας ἐθελουσίῳ δεικνύμενον παρὰ τινι τῶν ὁλῶν αὐτῶν πώποτε ἔγνωμεν οὐ γὰρ ὀφρύν τις, ἣν παρὰ τῶν ἀθέων ἐκείνων αἰρετικῶν ἐπαίρειν κακῶς ἔμαθε, κατασπᾶσαι καὶ κατενεγκεῖν ἐβουλήθη τὸ σύνολον, οὐχ ὡς αἰσχύνῃς πεπλησμένος συνήχθη ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ, οὐκ ἔστη μακρόθεν οὐ καθύβρισεν ἁγίου τόπου ἐμπαρὰ κλινόμενος, πρὸς ἕν μέρος εὐλαβούμενος προσεμβλέψας τοῖς θεοῖς οὐκ ἔδοξεν ἀνοίγειν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς, καὶ τάχος πάλιν ἐσφάλισε τὸν τελῶνιν πῶς εἰκονίζων καὶ [ἐκ] τούτου μαθητευόμενος, ἵν' ἔχη καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ εὐρεῖν ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῦ φιλανθρώπου Θεοῦ δικαίωσιν. Ἀλλ' ἀσκαρδάμυκτος μὲν ἅπας πρὸς τὸ ἀτενίζειν τοῖς ἀντ' αὐτῶν καταισχυθεῖσιν αὐτοῦ [Θεοῦ] ναοῖς, ἀπηρυθριασμένος δὲ πρὸς τὸν παρατυγχάνοντα ἐξ ἡμῶν ἕκαστον καὶ βλοσυρὸν μὲν προσβλέπων ὡς ὑπερκείμενος· ταυρηδὸν δὲ καὶ λοξῷ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ καὶ πυριναῖς ταῖς κόραις ἀπὸ κορυφῆς μέχρι ποδῶν καὶ ἀπὸ ποδῶν ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς ἔμπαλιν τὸν ὀρώμενον αὐτῷ ἀναμετρούμενος, ῥῆμά τε τοιοῦτον σκληρὸν καὶ δακέθυμον ἢ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κινῶν ἢ τῷ συλλαλεῖν ἐπαποκρινάμενος· οἷον οὐ λίθου πληγῇ οὐδὲ βολῇ τόξου ἐφ' ἕν τι μέρος ἢ μέλος τῷ προσραγῆναι κατοδυνῶν, ἀλλ' οἷον ῥομφαία ποιήσοι, μέσον ἰσχυρὴ διατελοῦσα καὶ πρὶν ἢ ἐκσυρῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ βληθέντος προεξαίρησας· οὐκοῦν διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε πρῶτον ἐν χειροτονίᾳ προεκρίναμεν οὔτε ἔσχατον τοῦ πρώτου."

Works against the Studite Leadership

The overall conflict between the Patriarch and the monks has been discussed in Chapter 3 under the section labelled, "Methodios and the Studites". One vital point that must be underlined is whatever "evidence" which remains available to us has been filtered through the perspectives of the Patriarchal scribes and historians. The lack of credible supporting documents or even documents with opposite points of view make impartial historical analysis difficult.

As can be shown, until the late 1980's, piecing together a complete picture of the works against the Studites also involved quite a lot of research. The amassing of the documentary sources required much referencing and cross-referencing, until Professor Darrouzès' definitive study.¹⁰ This article gathered all the scattered fragments, catalogued and systematised them into one source. The substance of the Methodian works will not be re-analysed, but the archive is to be explained and simplified in *Appendix I*.

¹⁰ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites".

Constitutio de haereticorum ad paenitentiam receptione

“The Constitution on the reception of heretics to penance”

The understanding of this document has become more succinct with the publication of a defining article in 1990.¹¹ Arranz gathered all the sources, with the exception of the Ambrosiana manuscript, into one paper. He provided an analysis of the steps that Patriarch Methodios took to insure the Church was free of heretics.¹² The primary question, whether Methodios was too harsh or too lenient in his treatment of the lapsed iconoclasts could be reviewed at this time. When one looks at the fact that Methodios established categories of transgressors and a sliding scale of severity of penances, two conclusions can be deduced. First, Methodios' cardinal motivation was to prevent the re-appearance of iconoclasm by denying it leadership. To accomplish this goal, he was most severe with two groups: adult apostates, who freely abandoned the Holy Church embracing the heresy and the second group, with whom Methodios was particularly strict, was the clergy.¹³ The Patriarch prevented this group from re-entering the ranks of the ordained clergy. The best voice that could be heard concerning this subject is the voice of Methodios, himself.

¹¹ Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats".

¹² For my evaluation and overview of these "Rulings" by Methodios, see Chapter Three – The Consequences of the Restoration of Icons.

¹³ Arranz, "La <<Diataxis>> du patriarche Methode pour la reconciliation des Apostats", p. 293 ff.

We also know the most truthful appeal that the saint of the desert made to me and to those accompanying me to the place two years ago: 'if you accept the heretics as ministers and priests, expect that through them you introduce into the Church not only Judaism, but Paganism. ¹⁴

Afinogenov correctly analyses Methodios' underlying *raison d'être* for defrocking the lapsed clergy. Following Patriarch Nikephoros' evolution in thinking, Methodios was convinced that this group of men had led the heresy by violating the oath required of them at their ordination. ¹⁵ Simply put, in his eyes, they were perjurers.¹⁶ This reason explains Methodios' actions, although Afinogenov's conclusion that the primary justification for Methodios' behaviour was the "vindication of his predecessors" ¹⁷ could well be supplemented by a consideration of the development of Patriarch Methodios' ecclesiology.¹⁸ An additional reason for Methodios' campaign against the iconoclastic clergy emerges from this last perspective. He was motivated by this deep conviction that it was his sacred duty and responsibility to cleanse the Church, as its archshepherd. He was

¹⁴ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", Fragment 2, p.54: "Ἐγνώμεν δὲ καὶ τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐμὲ καὶ τοὺς συμπρόντας μοι κατὰ χώραν λαληθὲν παρὰ τοῦ ἐρημικοῦ ἀγίου πρὸ χρόνων δυοῖν ἀληθέστατον προσφώνημα, ὡς· εἰ δέξῃ τοὺς αἵρετικούς λειτουργοὺς τε καὶ ἱερεῖς, οὐ μόνον ἰουδαϊσμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐλληνισμόν δι' αὐτῶν προσάξει τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπεκδέχου." For translation see Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ: Part III - The Great Purge of 843: A Re-Examination", p. 85.

¹⁵ Percival (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, vol. 14, p. 555 and 556, Canons 1 and 2.

¹⁶ Afinogenov, "ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΟΝ|ΕΧΕΙ: Part III - The Great Purge of 843: A Re-Examination," pp. 88 – 89.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁸ See previous chapter.

determined to pass-on "a spotless bride" to his successors and to the flock that would come after him.

Hagiographical Works

Martyrium Sancti Dionysii

"Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Διονυσίου τοῦ Ἀρεοπαγίτου, Ρωστικοῦ καὶ Ἐλευθερίου"

This work can be found in PG, tomos iv, cols. 669 – 684. In addition, it can be found in an analysis of mss vulcanianus 52 by Westerbrink.¹⁹ This hagiographic work is of Methodian origin and the chronology is fairly certain. Between 815 and 820, Methodios was in residence in Rome. Patriarch Nikephoros had sent him there, while he served as his archdeacon. There is evidence that Methodios produced several pieces of hagiography and liturgical hymnography at this time. Westerbrink in his analysis of the language and syntax finds numerous direct quotations from the works of Nikephoros.²⁰ Canart provides additional proof that this work was produced in this time frame in his article dealing with this period in Methodios' life. Quoting from ms, *Londiniensis Brit. Libr. Addit. 36.821*, folio (196r), Canart cites one of three entries in the manuscript, which

¹⁹ Westerbrink, J. C. (1937) *Passio S. Dionysii Areopagitae - Rustici et Eleutherii* (C. Haasbeek), Alphen.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 64 – 122, Westerbrink cites many direct linguist connections with this work and with various works of Nikephoros. The Life of St. Stephen the Younger by the Deacon Stephen is also a rich source of quotes by Methodios. Cross-referenced with Auzépy, *La Vie d'Etienne le Jeune par Etienne le Diacre..*

verifies that Methodios authored the work while in Rome.²¹ There is another line of reasoning to support this conclusion. This is found within both the text itself and through some revealing information from the work of modern scholars. There was known, during this period, two traditions of the *Passio of St. Dionysios the Aeropagita*, one familiar to the Western Church and one to the Eastern Church.²² The contrasting versions are exchanged at different times within a few years of each other. In the Western account, Dionysios dies in Paris under the Emperor Domitian.²³ The Byzantine *passio* was written by Michael Synkellos in a period between (821 – 833).²⁴ This version of the passion of Dionysios, accepted in Constantinople, stated that the saint's passing took place during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.²⁵ What does Methodios reflect in his *Martyrium* or *Passio*? In the last paragraph, Methodios writes that the three saints, Dionysios, Rusticos and Eleutherios all suffered martyrdom in Gaul near Paris on the 7th day of October *under the Emperor Domitian*.²⁶ Therefore, we can reasonably assume that Methodios was working from a Western Church tradition and prior to the exchange of manuscript traditions by the Eastern and Western courts in 825. The lack of mention of the Eastern tradition also places the

²¹ Canart, "Le Patriarche Méthode de Constantinople Copiste a Rome", pp. 345 – 346: " Τόδε πρώτιστον τῆς ξείνης Μεθοδίου τεύκτο ἔργον λιτογραφίης ἐν περικλῷ τῷ Ῥώμῃ· πρὸς κορυφαίου Πέτρου μεγάρῳ τῷ λυσιμόχθῳ."

²² Louth, A. (1994) *Denys L'Aréopagite et sa Postérité en Orient et en Occident*, vol. 151 ed. Y. de Andia (Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, Paris), pp. 329 - 339, pp. 336 – 339.

²³ Ibid., p. 338.

²⁴ Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 36, note 120.

²⁵ Louth, p. 338, " the encomion delivered [by Michael Syncellus] honouring St. Denys was 3 October, sometime before 833".

²⁶ Westerbrink, *Passio S. Dionysii Areopagitae - Rustici et Eleutherii*, p. 62: "Παθόντες μὲν ἐφ' ἅπαξ ἑβδόμῃ <καλανδῶν> τοῦ ὀκτωμβρίου οἱ τρεῖς μέρεσι τῆς Γαλλίας πρὸς τῇ Παρισίᾳ πόλει ἐπὶ Δομετιανοῦ βασιλέως..."

time of writing before Methodios returns to Constantinople. Accordingly, the placing of this writing while Methodios was residing in Rome is very probable. Canart adds this comment concerning the future patriarch's interest and work while in Rome.

Nous savions déjà par les scholies à la Passion de sainte Marine; que Méthode s'intéressait au texte du pseudo-Denys en voilà une confirmation précieuse, qui s'ajoute au panégyrique du saint composé et prononcé par le futur patriarche, soit à Rome, soit plus tard à Constantinople. ²⁷

Even though Westerbrink is working from another mss tradition there is a great chance that this represents the very same document. Turning to style and content, we can examine the text and identify Methodios in the language and the thought. Beginning in section two, we find two of the most familiar literary devices used by Methodios. There is repetition of the play on words "Διονυσίου and Θεονυσίου", which is a technique that Methodios uses to draw attention to the sanctity of Dionysios. ²⁸

Although this work was presumably written many years before Methodios' struggles as Patriarch, we discover some evidence of his foundational theological thought at this time. The concept of apostolic authority and the bishop's leadership in the Church can be detected even at this early stage in Methodios' ecclesiastical career. The young refugee cleric describes

²⁷ Canart, "Le Patriarche Méthode de Constantinople Copiste a Rome", p. 348, note 21.

²⁸ Westerbrink, *Passio S. Dionysii Areopagitae - Rustici et Eleutheri*, p. 44.

Clement, bishop of Rome as the apostolic chair, God-governor. Methodios then states that Clement is surefooted as the head of the Tribunal.²⁹

Beginning in section 11, Methodios builds a chain of authority for Dionysios from the Lord, to St. Paul and then to the Areopagitae.³⁰ At the same time, Methodios repeats over and over the words “ Ὁ κεφαλῆς.. ” as he refers to Dionysios and to the image of Christ as the Head of the Church. This phrase is reiterated, in one form of the word or another, nine times in two pages of text.³¹ The authority and more importantly, the role of the bishop, as a guardian of the Faith is based on an unbroken and immutable chain handed down from the Apostles while keeping Holy Tradition inviolate. As was shown in the previous chapter, the responsibility and charge of the bishop becomes central in Methodios' ecclesiology. He does not use Dionysian theology to defend the iconodulic theology but does use the *Passio* to underline his ecclesiology of Apostolic teachings and authority.³²

Oratio in S. Agatham

“ Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν μεγαλομάρτυρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἀγάθην ”

This work of Patriarch Methodios has been available and edited in Latin in *Acta Sanctorum*, fev. t. 1(1658), pp.624 – 631. It can also be found

²⁹ Ibid., p. 48, lines 23 – 25: “Κλήμεντι, τὴν ἀποστολικὴν καθέδραν θεοκυβερνήτως οἰακίζοντι. Καὶ τοῦτο τῶν ποδῶν, ὡς ἀνολίσδων ἰχνῶν τῆς κορυφαίας τρίβου...”

³⁰ Ibid., p. 56, lines 10 – 18.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 56 – 58 (Greek text only appears on even numbered pages).

³² Ibid., p. 52, lines 23 – 24: “..ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων διδαχὴν καὶ μαθήτευσεν.”

Combefis, *Bibl. concion.*, tomos vi, p. 728, and PG, tomos c, cols. 1271 – 1292. The Greek text had been available unedited in codex *Valicell.* B, K 17 and Allatius xxxiv. Professor E. Mioni working from a codex *Veneto Marciano* 362 found that it = Codex *Vallicelliano B* 34. Therefore, this Greek text is the basis for our work.³³

There has also been a recent analysis of this Methodian composition in a monograph by Dirk Krausmüller.³⁴ In this work, the Mioni source was used as the basis of his study. By examining the mss evidence as well as several independent studies, such as L. Bernardini,³⁵ Canart and Krausmüller, there does not seem to be an opinion as to when or where this encomion was written. If we look at the attribution, it is attributed to "Methodios Archbishop³⁶ of Constantinople". The fact is we do not know if this was the addition of a scribe, or the actual period of his life in which Methodios wrote the work.

What can be determined is the appeal of this particular martyr to Methodios. Agatha and Methodios shared a common homeland, Sicily. St. Agatha was from Catania³⁷ and as we know, Methodios was a native of

³³ Mioni, E. (1950), "L'Encomio di S. Agata di Methodio Patriarca di Constantinopli", *Analecta Bollandiana*, tomos lviii, pp. 58 - 93.

³⁴ Krausmüller, D. (1999) "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios' concept on virginity," in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium - Papers from the Thirty-first Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997*, vol.6 ed. L. James (Variorum/Ashgate), Aldershot, pp. 57 - 67.

³⁵ Bernardini, L. (1977), "Un Illustre Siracusano: Metodio I Patriarca di Constantinopli (843 - 847) Vincitore del II Iconoclasmo", *Oriente Christiano*, vol. 17 (1), pp. 42 - 66, articles in multi-parts.

³⁶ Mioni cites that his title is changed to "Patriarch".

³⁷ Mioni, "L'Encomio di S. Agata di Methodio Patriarca di Constantinopli", p. 61: "Agata è nata in urbe Catanensium...come la soma Gloria di Catania."

Syracusa.³⁸ In this work, Methodios praises the life and courage of the virgin-martyr, St. Agatha. Agatha lived in the middle of the third century in Sicily.³⁹ Turning to what can be extracted from the text itself, we can find a number of anecdotal clues within the writing of this piece. Methodios begins by praising Agatha's martyrdom. These "clues" concern timing; this may be indicated by Methodios' theological considerations at the time of composition. Even more important than chronology, we have the contextual implications of the writing itself and the stylistic evidence of Methodian authorship. Beginning in Chapter 3 of the Oration⁴⁰ and continuing through the next page, some 32 lines of text, Methodios counterpoises the words "γυνή and παρθένος". He uses the word "γυνή" thirteen times in this passage and "παρθένος" eleven. This is done not only for meaning, but also for the rhetorical effect that these words imply. In the introductory part of his text, Methodios presents his heroine to the audience in her roles as "woman" and "virgin". This reference to the gender of Agatha is contrasted with her purity and goodness. When he speaks about her as woman, he adds that she was a "woman" by nature, not by choice.⁴¹ Conversely, she chose the path of virginity and purity for Christ.

The encomion continues by praising her name Agatha (Ἀγάθη), which is translated "good". Methodios uses the word Agatha and good seven times

³⁸ Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, tomos c, col. 1245 b, *Vita Methodios of Constantinople*.

³⁹ Acta SS I, tomos i, pp. 595 sqq.

⁴⁰ Mioni, "L'Encomio di S. Agata di Methodio Patriarca di Constantinopoli", p. 77, line 1.

⁴¹ Krausmüller, "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios' concept on virginity", p. 59.

in an anaphora over the course of eleven lines. He celebrates the martyr in this manner, Agatha, the name of our saint, means "good". She was truly good, for she lived as a child of God. Agatha, goodness coincides with her name and her way of life. She won a good name by her noble deeds, and by her name, she points to the nobility of those deeds. Agatha, her mere name, wins all men over to her company. She teaches them by her example to hasten with her to the true Good, God alone.⁴²

Methodios relates the event of the issuing of an edict by the Emperor Decius against Christians and the result was that the official Quintianus, moved by passion for Agatha, attempts to use her Christian beliefs as a lever for gaining Agatha's sexual favours.⁴³ Agatha rebukes him by declaring that she is Christ's servant.⁴⁴ She is then imprisoned and tortured in a most cruel manner. She is subjected to the removal of her breasts and does not receive any subsequent medical care for her wounds.⁴⁵ Methodios recounts the miraculous healing of Agatha in her prison cell by St. Peter.⁴⁶ Agatha is subjugated to repeated tortures and ultimately her tormentors lay out her naked body on a bed of burning coals. Amid her ordeal, God causes an earthquake and answers Agatha's prayer to end her pain. She dies thanking God.⁴⁷

⁴² Mioni, "L'Encomio di S. Agata di Methodio Patriarca di Constantinopli", p. 78 chapter 4.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 79 – 80, chapters 6 – 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 82, chapter 11, lines 1 –2: "Ἀποκρίνεται ἡ μαρτυς ταχύτατα << Οἰκέτης μὲν εἰμι τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἄκων τάχα διέβλεψας τὴν δουλεῖν μου>>..."

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 85, chapters 18 – 19.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 88, chapter 23.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 89, chapters 26 – 28.

Krausmüller characterises Methodios' literary style and narrative approach in his monograph. This viewpoint is alluring when the entire thrust of his paper is examined.

Methodios was anything but a naïve story-teller to whom the meaning of his stories were self-evident. Quite the contrary: he clearly held the belief that meaning can only be established by transcending the contingencies of the narrative. Methodios' main preoccupation is to bring the phenomena of the world into a meaningful order.⁴⁸

Even though this is one valid perspective, another consideration that is worth examining is the relevancy of the theological intent of several segments of the text. Examining such a phrase, we see Methodios stating this: " ...Because in the incorruptible Word of God, even though I am a corrupt human; by the taste of the flesh of the One and undivided Son, he lifts [me] up." ⁴⁹ This statement of faith is a declaration of the ultimate message of Incarnational salvation because, through Christ coming to earth and instituting the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; all of mankind was saved. Agatha expressed her faith by those words and Methodios conveys the iconodules' answer to the iconoclasts. Christ did become truly human, with flesh, thereby allowing the potential transfiguring of the human

⁴⁸ Krausmüller, "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios' concept on virginity", p. 58.

⁴⁹ Mioni, "L'Encomio di S. Agata di Methodio Patriarca di Constantinopoli", chapter 3, lines 10 and 11: "...διότι ἐκ τοῦ ἀφθάρτου Θεοῦ λόγου, κᾶν δι' ἐμὲ ἀνθρώπου φθορᾶς γευσσαμένου τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ του ἐνὸς καὶ ἀμερίστου υἱοῦ ἐξελήλυθεν."

condition, in Christ. By the Incarnation, the fullness of the saving economy of God was realised. This allowed the promise of the metamorphosis of even the material cosmos, to return to its pre-lapsarian created goodness. Methodios makes this teaching very clear in this passage describing Agatha; "You became everything for Him, who had become [Incarnate] for your sake." ⁵⁰

We see once again, the Patriarch emphasising the Incarnation as the saving event in human history. This event is a reality to Methodios and to the saints, whom he uses as lessons for his readers. Krausmüller states,

Methodios' saints, on the other hand, never communicate with an imageless God. They are dependent on God's condescension, since God has manifested himself as man and made all of these relations possible in the first place. If they want to relate to him, they must incarnate him again in their imaginations. Even if Methodios believes in a God beyond the images, it is clear that, for him, such a God is neither accessible to humans nor able to have an effect on them. ⁵¹

He also says the following concerning the text of Agatha, but does not draw the obvious parallel with Methodios' life.

⁵⁰ Ibid., chapter 19, p. 86: "...καὶ γένηταί σοι πάντα ὥσπερ ἐγένου προγενομένη αὐτῷ διὰ σε,..." For trans see Krausmüller, "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios' concept on virginity", page 61, footnote 21.

⁵¹ Krausmüller, "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios' concept on virginity", p. 61.

Methodios addresses the problem that those who opt for virginity are bound to be haunted by the wish to have sexual intercourse with a partner. In their memories they have stored the respective images which will present themselves and unchain the passion leading to the fulfillment of this wish.⁵²

While discussing the life of Methodios, we learned that he endured his own personal struggles with the fleshly passions. The miraculous cure effected through the intervention of St. Peter, while Methodios slept by the altar of St. Peter's Basilica, was described.⁵³ Later during his Patriarchate, the disclosure of his physical limitations acquitted him of the false charges of sexual assault brought by his enemies.⁵⁴ As we see in this work and will see repeatedly in others, these experiences of Methodios must have impacted his psyche, thereby influencing his writings and his attitudes. This will be demonstrated as we examine the next writing of the Patriarch.

Acta S. Marinae

⁵² Ibid., p. 60.

⁵³ Bekker (ed.), *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 159, b – 4 through c – 2: "...τὸν κορρυφαῖον Πέτρο τῷ χεῖρι πρὸς τὸν ναὸν ἐκπετάσας ἐξελιπάρει τυχεῖν τινὸς ἐπικουρίας καὶ ἀρωγῆς. Καὶ δὴ τῷ κόπῳ τῆς εὐχῆς πρὸς ὕπνον κλειθεὶς φανῆναί οἱ τὸν ἀπόστολον ἐκείνου τοῦ μέρους ἀπτόμενον καὶ τὰς ὁρμὰς σβεννύοντα τῶν παθῶν, τοῦτο μόνον προσεπιλέγοντα τὸ ' ἀπολέλυσαι δὴ τῆς τῶν παθῶν ἐπικρατείας, Μεθόδιε.' "

⁵⁴ Bekker, I. (ed.), (1838) *Chronicle of Symeon Magister* (Weberi), Bonnae, p. 652, line 11 – 16: "μῶμον δέ τινα ἐπειράτο μετὰ τῶν ὁμοίων αὐτοῦ τῷ ἐν ἀγίοις Μεθοδίῳ προσάπτειν καὶ γυναῖκά τινα φρεναπατήσαντες κρυψιγαμίας ἐγκλημα τούτῳ ἐπιδέξασθαι. ὁ δὲ μακαριώτατος πατριάρχης μὴ θέλων πέτρα σκανδάλου λογίζεσθαι τὰ κρύφια αἵσχη ἀπογυμνοῖ, καὶ εὖρητο παρὰ τὸ μεμαρασμένα..."

This work can be found in a work by Usener.⁵⁵ Also, it can be found in *Jahrbuch für protestantische theologia*, tomos xiii, (1887), pp. 247 ff. Although labelled *Acta*, this writing is in reality scholia on the *Acta*. Scholia are defined by Cross as:

Notes, especially of a critical, grammatical, or explanatory kind, inserted in the margins of an ancient MS. Their use was a regular practice in the Greek schools of later classical antiquity, and, probably through the contact between pagan and Christian culture at Alexandria, they were introduced by Christian scholars into the MSS, of Biblical and ecclesiastical texts.⁵⁶

The text that will be utilised for this survey is the text of Usener. The composition on St. Marina has several interesting facets. In the opening attribution, we read that this work is by Patriarch Methodios of Constantinople. The introduction continues saying it is a work on the martyrdom of St. Marina written while in residence in Rome at St. Peter's [Basilica].⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Methodios of Constantinople (c. 815 - 821) "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ," in *Festschrift zur fünften Säcularfeier der Carl-Ruprechts Universität zu Heidelberg*, ed. Usener (Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von Carl Georgi), Bonn - 1886, pp. 48 - 53.

⁵⁶ Cross and Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1247.

⁵⁷ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 48, references folio [135r]: "Τοῦ ἁγίου Μεθοδίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως σχόλια, ἅπερ ἐποίησεν εἰς τὸ μαρτύριον τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίνης ἐν τῷ μαρτυρολογεῖῳ ὅπερ ἔγραψεν ἰδιοχείρως καθεζόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον Πέτρον."

With this as an affirmation, we realise that the scholia were written between approximately 815 and 820 AD.⁵⁸ There is additional evidence that helps the observant reader identify not only Methodios as the author, but to place this work chronologically by using the autobiographical information that the Patriarch shares with the reader.

The *Vita of St Marina* that is the basis for these scholia is composed by St. Theotimos who relates the life from his first hand knowledge and acquaintance of Marina and her suffering.⁵⁹ St. Marina, known in the West as St. Margaret, lived in the time of the Emperor Diocletian in Pisidia of Antioch.⁶⁰ The *Vita of Marina* relates the tale of the young daughter of a pagan high priest, who is raised by a pious Christian nursemaid after the death of her mother.⁶¹ The life praises the virtues and goodness of Marina and the influence of her Christian environment until the turning point in the story occurs. A new ruler Olybrios is assigned to her district with orders to persecute Christians.⁶² Olybrios is dazzled by Marina's beauty and wishes to marry her, but she rebukes him and confesses her faith in Christ as her Saviour.⁶³ The ruler, who is moved by the Devil, threatens Marina

⁵⁸ Canart, "Le Patriarche Méthode de Constantinople Copiste à Rome", p. 344: "On sait que, de 815 à 821 environ Méthode, partisan résolu des images se réfugia à Rome..." Canart continues on the same page to quote the same proof of authorship and chronology that has been cited in the above text.

⁵⁹ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 15, lines 6 – 9.

⁶⁰ Cross and Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 871 – 872.

⁶¹ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 16, lines 27 – 29.

⁶² Ibid., p. 17, line 4 – 7: "Ἐ δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις περιῆγεν Ὀλύβριος ὁ ἑπαρχος, καὶ ἦν ἐρχόμενος ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀντιοχείων πόλιν θλίβειν τοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἀνατεθειμένους, ὁσους εὗρισκε Χριστιανούς."

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 17 – 19.

with intent to make her deny Christ and worship pagan idols. Wishing to placate Marina and to win her over to his position, the ruler offers the young girl riches and status over her peers.⁶⁴ He then threatens Marina with bodily harm and torture.⁶⁵ She defiantly states that Olybrios may have authority over her body, but her soul cannot be harmed and she declares she will offer her body as a sacrifice to Christ.⁶⁶ Marina is then bound, scourged and beaten with clubs. Her flesh is torn and she loses a great deal of blood. Marina fervently prays to Our Lord to ease her pain.⁶⁷

It is at this point in the text that Methodios begins his scholia by quoting from one of his most favoured Old Testament books, the book of Job. Quoting from Job 41, 9 – 10, Methodios sets the struggle between evil and man in the context of a battle.⁶⁸ With this as the opening, Methodios frames the story of Marina. The central theme of the scholia is the victory of goodness over evil, through Marina's struggle against the passion and intimidation of Olybrios and her steadfastness in the faith. Marina is praised as an example of a Christian who struggled and was victorious in her efforts to humble and weaken the devil, personified as a dragon,⁶⁹ and

⁶⁴ Ibid., "Γινωσκέτωσαν οἱ θεοί, ὅτι ἔλεω" το νέον ἡλικίας σου· ὃδεν πείσθητί μοι καὶ θύσον τοῖς θεοῖς, καὶ πολλὰ χρήματα παρέξομαί σοι καὶ καλῶς σοι ἔσται ὑπὲρ πάσας τὰς ἡλικιώτιδάς σου."

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 20 lines 27 ff.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 20 – 21.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 22 – 23.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 48. From the LXX, Methodios condensed the quotation to fit his intent.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 49, lines 15 – 16.

his demons.⁷⁰ Methodios who was plagued with his own personal demons, which tempted him to yield to his passions, describes his efforts to be relieved from his torments.⁷¹

Methodios, in the very next sentence, makes the profound statement of how demons attack the saints, "through other men"; that is, in Marina's story the person of Olybrios. This sentiment can be viewed in several contexts. First, the statement could be a generalisation of a theological truth of life. On the other hand, it might be a reflection of Marina or Methodios' personal struggles with temptation and the passions of the flesh. Lastly, this might well refer to the historical backdrop of the second phase of iconoclasm, led by Leo V, who had unleashed a barrage against Nikephoros and the iconodules in Constantinople.⁷²

Returning directly to his praise of Marina, Methodios cites, in clear terms, the source of her strength. He identifies prayer as the power to control evil, to relieve distress, and ease sickness.⁷³ Again, this parallels with the personal struggles, with which Methodios was battling. The solution to his own fight with his demons was prayer.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 48, lines 12 – 16: "...λέγων τε καὶ διηγούμενος οὖν τοῖς φιλοῖς φρίττειν δοκεῖ τὰς πανουργίας τοῦ δαίμονος οἷονεῖ καταπλη[τ]τόμενος, συνθήσεται λοιπὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ μακαρίᾳ μάρτυρι ταῦτα τὰ γεγραμμ[έ]να οὕτως ἔχειν."

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 49, lines 1 – 5: "...ὥς ὁ γνούς τὰς λεπτότητας τῶν ὑποκριτικῶν κατάρξεων αὐτοῦ καὶ οἷονεῖ γενειάδας καὶ τρίχας τῷ ἀσυγκατάθ[έ]τῳ τοῦ νοῦ προεκτίλας θάττον ἐτυφλώσας διὰ τῆς πρῶτης νίκης τοῦτον τὸν δόλον αὐτοῦ ἀνειρεῖ καὶ ἐξαφα[νί]ζει..."

⁷² Ibid., p. 49 lines 6 – 9: "Σημειωτέον. Ἐπίστανται οἱ ἅγιοι σώφρονι καὶ προσεκτικῷ λογισμῷ ὅτι οἱ πολεμοῦντες αὐτοὺς δι' ἀνθρώπων, δαίμονές εἰσιν διὸ καὶ οὐ τούτων, φημί δὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐνεργούντων δι' αὐτῶν κατεύχονται."

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 49 – 50, lines 31, 1 – 4: "...ὁ ἐστὶ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτῆς αἰσχύνῃ τὸν ἐχθρὸν εἴληφεν· αὕτη γὰρ ἤδη πάλιν προσεύχεται, καὶ οὕτω τοῦ ἐχθροῦ δράκοντος λαβομένη ἄσχημόν τινα καὶ ἀσθενῇ, ἐκτίλασα καὶ το γένειον ὃ ἐστὶν τὴν οἷονεῖ περιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ, τίθησιν..."

The life continues as Marina is imprisoned and completes her prayer. An earthquake occurs and from a crack in the earth in the corner of her cell emerges a ferocious dragon.⁷⁴ Again, the maiden beseeches God to protect her from the dragon of Hades. The dragon attacks Marina and swallows her. The young Marina protects herself by holding her arms in the sign of the Cross. The dragon is overcome by the power of the Cross, his intestines rupture, and Marina comes forth unharmed.⁷⁵ Next, the Devil, in the form of a man, appears in the cell to try to convince Marina to succumb to the ruler's enticements. Marina, grabbing the Devil by the hand, then beats him about the head, resulting in the removal of his right eye.⁷⁶

At this point, Methodios adds his notation citing the Scriptural reference of Math. 5, 29, in which, Jesus teaches the lesson of "plucking out an offending eye". Methodios remarks that the enemy, the Devil, uses the mind's fantasy and thinking to attack him. Marina is held up as an example on how grace can be victorious over the enemy.⁷⁷

Marina finds a bronze hammer (σφύραν χαλκῆν) in the cell and she beats the Devil. Methodios inserts a comment in the margin on the phrase "finds a bronze hammer". The future Patriarch clarifies the symbolism of the hammer. It represents the help provided by the grace of God. The

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 25, lines 21 – 25.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 26 – 27: "...αἱ δὲ χεῖρες αὐτῆς ποιήσασαι τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ ἁγίου Χριστοῦ, προπορευσάμενος ἔμβροσθεν τῆς κόρης οὕτως διέρρηξεν τὰ ἐνδόσθια αὐτοῦ. καὶ οὕτως καταπεσὼν ἀπο τοῦ τετραγώνου ἐποίησε ψόφον μέγαν καὶ διεσχίσθη κατὰ μέσον καὶ ἀπέθανεν. ἡ δὲ ἁγία κόρη ἐξηλθεν ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ μηδὲν ἀδικηθεῖσα."

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 29, line 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 50: "...ἡ ἁγία διὰ τῆς χάριτος νικῶσα τὸν ἐχθρ[ον] νοητῶς..."

experience of Marina and her help from God is compared with the true experiences of St. Julianna.⁷⁸

There is a curious occurrence in the next four notations by Methodios as catalogued by Usener. They appear out of sequence with the story. Scholia vi – x actually refer to passages before the ones cited above. In notes number vi, Methodios expands on the words " ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ." He states that the governance of evil comes from the head and a defeat of fantasies provides restoration, by bringing one's imaginings back down to earth.⁷⁹ The next notation by Methodios refers to p. 27, line 2 of the *Vita*. The word Methodios singles out for comment is " ἔδραμον" [running]. By running, the demons hurry to the nest of their chief, the Devil, to agitate him so that he swallows human souls. The comment of Methodios in scholia ix refers back to page 27, line 13. The phrase Methodios centers upon is " ἡ δὲ ἁγία κόρη, (This holy maiden)". He concentrates his attention on the protection afforded Marina by the sign of the Cross. Grace became evident in the failing of the dragon. The fierce battle is waged between the Devil, with his demons, and Marina. The prize for the Devil is the saint's soul. Demons in the guise of dogs bark and growl at Marina, attempting to distract her so that she is vulnerable to the Devil's attacks. Methodios sees Marina's victory as an example of God's grace.⁸⁰ Scholia x presents an

⁷⁸ The notation given to identify this saint, she is also incarcerated and the Devil appears to her. Cited in Symeon Mag., PG, vol. cxiv, col. 1444 d.

⁷⁹ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 51 ref. p. 26, line 1.

⁸⁰ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 51, scholia ix.

interesting scenario. Once again, Marina answers the onslaught of the Devil by prayer. In this commentary Methodios returns to the theme of scholia viii posing alternatives concerning the phrase "ΤΕΤΡΑΓΩΝΟΝ Τὸ ἐκ τεσσάρων". On the face of this expression, one can look only at the four corners of the cell, but by referring to Revelations 20, 7 and 8 one finds that there is a deeper theological meaning relating to the dragon of The Apocalypse. If this is considered in relationship to Marina's struggle, the universal battle against the forces of evil and the forces of good, the dragon "will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth".⁸¹ In his scholia, Methodios does not answer these questions; he only presents a variety of alternatives for contemplation.

Scholia xiii "ἐκ τοῦ σκοτεινοῦ" refers to page 32, line 23 of the *Vita*. Marina is engaged in a conversation with the man in her cell. He speaks to her from the darkness and declares his name to be Satan. Methodios speaks of the fall of Lucifer from a place of brightness to that of darkness⁸² and discloses that Satan is never truthful; he is in fact "the father of lies". The commentary proceeds in scholia 15, by referencing page 34, line 29. Methodios continues the remarks he began in scholia 14. This dialogue between Satan and Marina intrigued Methodios. He has four separate marginal notations within a few lines. In scholia 14, Methodios calls attention to the word "soul". Now, in number 15, "καὶ πῶς" is the point of departure for Methodios. He answers Satan's question to Marina

⁸¹ Rev. 20, 7 – 8.

⁸² Isaiah 14, 12 ff.

concerning the origin of the soul in the human being. The churchman quotes Genesis 2, 7 to establish that the soul of man has its source in God.⁸³ He inserted next scholia adjacent to the phrase "καὶ νοῦν" on line 37 of the same page. The text elicits this note from Methodios, as he refers to the Life of St. Antonios. He underlines the lesson given by St. Antonios that Christians should not believe the Devil even when he speaks truths.⁸⁴

At the end of the scholia, Methodios provides a direct lesson about the images and their use in the Church to supplement the written word. In the body of the *Acta*, the dying Marina says that "writings" will tell the stories of the ascetic struggles of the saints.⁸⁵ Methodios adds in scholia xvii "That it is an ancient custom of iconographically adorning the churches with the most wonderful Divine Economy and with the ascetic struggles of the renowned saints".⁸⁶ This comment harkens us back to the lesson presented by St. Basil and quoted by Methodios in several other works. The maxim stresses the iconodulic concept that iconography, theology in colour, is a part of the ancient tradition of the Church on par with "logography", theology by the written word. Methodios then skips to comment on the last moments of Marina's life. She has endured much

⁸³ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 52, scholia xv lines 19 – 21: "Καὶ ἐνψύσθησεν εἰς αὐτὸν " ὁ θεός (δῆλον δ' ὅτι εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον) "πνεῦμα ζωῆς", εἶτα "καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν."

⁸⁴ Athanasius (1980) *The Life of Anthony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. R. Gregg (Paulist Press), New York, Ramsey, Toronto (The Classics of Western Spirituality), p. 51.

⁸⁵ Methodios of Constantinople, "ΣΧΟΛΙΑ ΑΠΕΡ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΜΑΡΙΝΗΣ", p. 42 [folio 140].

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 52 – 53, lines 27 – 28 and lines 1 – 2: "... ὅτι παλαιὸν εἰκονογραφεῖσθαι τὰς ἐκκλησίας σὺν τοῖς τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας ὑπερφυέσιν ἔργοις· οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῦ ἐπωνύμου ἁγίου ἄθλησιν."

suffering and pain. Miraculously saved from boiling water, Marina did not experience the heat of the water, another earthquake frees her bonds and she baptises herself in the Name of the Trinity. The ruler then orders Marina decapitated.⁸⁷ The last three notations by Methodios relate to Marina's translation and her virginal martyrdom. Scholia xviii quotes St. Basil saying that the commemoration of the saints provides miraculous cures and that their relics demonstrate the presence of Grace in that saint.⁸⁸

After Marina is beheaded, twelve angels surround her and bear her head to the throne of God, chanting hymns.⁸⁹ It is at this point that Methodios enters another notation, number xix. Methodios cites the work of St. Dionysios the Areopagite, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, about the activity of the ranks of angels.⁹⁰ The *Vita* informs us that because of her purity Marina was borne to this level of direct communion with God.

Methodii ad Theodorum in vitam et reliquias sancti Nicolai Myrensis

This work of Methodios is found in a definitive study written by Anrich.⁹¹ The original composition was written at the behest of a certain Theodore.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 40, line 34.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 53, scholia xviii, as cited in St Basil's Epistle no. 238.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 45 – 46.

⁹⁰ Pseudo - Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo - Dionysius - The Complete Works., de cael. Hier.* Chapter 7, part 2, pp. 162 – 164.

⁹¹ Methodios of Constantinople (unknown), "Methodii ad Theodorum in vitam et reliquias Nicolai Myrensis," in *Hagios Nikolaos der Heilige Nikolaos in der Griechischen Kirche*, vol. I ed. G. Anrich (B. G. Teubner), Leipzig - Berlin (1913), pp. 140 - 150.

We read as Methodios refers to Theodore as "...ὁ ἀνδρῶν ἄριστε καὶ περιφανέστατε Θεόδωρε..."⁹² Therefore we can assume that he is a highly placed person within Constantinopolitan society. This opinion parallels that of Professor Ševčenko, who says the following:

He addressed Theodore, a rich man and a gourmet, as *periphanestatose*, "His Eminence." I imagine Theodore to have been some court personality, and Methodios to have been out of prison and residing at Theophilos' court and satisfying Theodore's curiosity about Nicholas...⁹³

The question, "When was this piece written?", has already been commented upon in the above quote. We know from the attribution that Methodios was a priest and an Abbot, "πρεσβυτέρου καὶ ἡγουμένου,"⁹⁴ but not yet patriarch. In the quotation above, Ševčenko proposes that this work may have been written while Methodios was residing in Theophilos' court, that is, after his imprisonment. There might be yet other possible periods in Methodios' life, which he could have written this work, that is, during the time of his imprisonment or even just before his incarcerations. What we do know is that the chronology is not only ambiguous; but that it will probably remain so considering the present evidence. This work featuring highlights from the life of St. Nicholas includes some of the better known events in the Saint's life. The remarkable discovery concerning these two compositions

⁹² Ibid., p. 140, line 6: "O most excellent man and most notable Theodore."

⁹³ Ševčenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period", p. 126.

⁹⁴ Methodios of Constantinople, *Methodii ad Theodorum in vitam at reliquitas Nicolai Myrensis*", p. 140 attribution.

is not in their content, but quite the contrary, in what they do not contain. This short life of St. Nicholas and the encomion, which is associated with it, do not carry within their texts any reference to images or to the great conflict between iconoclasts and iconodules; in fact, there is a striking lack of theology or polemic in either work. Methodios calls to mind the Saint's life, his holiness and the miracles associated with Nicholas.

The writing style is Methodian even though, he promises Theodore at the beginning of the treatise that he will be simple and straightforward.⁹⁵ There is the habitual use of biblical allusions and lessons. Quotations from the Synoptic Gospels, the Epistles of St. Paul, the Psalter, the books of Genesis, Job, Kings and Leviticus pepper the ten pages of the work. Methodios begins his account of Nicholas' early life by describing the "miraculous" characteristics of his birth and the blessed nature of his childhood. Nicholas was born without pain and afterwards his mother remained barren as signs that Nicholas was indeed a special child.⁹⁶ Even from birth and infancy, it was apparent to all that Nicholas was a child of God.⁹⁷

The work discusses two miracles that demonstrate the generosity, compassion and holiness of the man of God, Nicholas. The first account relates the dire situation of three sisters from a formerly wealthy family about to be forced into a life of prostitution, because their father had

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 140, Chapter 1, lines 6 – 8.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 143, lines 16 – 20: " ..τὰ αξιοπρεπή ὑπὲρ ἡλικίαν χαρίσματα..."

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 143, lines 21.

squandered their dowries. Through the mercy, generosity and Christian love of the saintly Nicholas, their dowries were provided secretly in the form of sacks of gold left for each of the girls separately. Methodios quotes two scriptural passages to characterise this act of charity by Nicholas. The first passage is "Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself" and the second passage he cites is, "When you give alms let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing."⁹⁸ Methodios stresses the fact that Nicholas was intent on being merciful, but his philanthropy, which shone from God, was hidden from human eyes.⁹⁹ Through St. Nicholas, these young girls were saved from lives of sin.¹⁰⁰

Perhaps one of the most "Methodian" segments of the essay is the description of the elevation of Nicholas to the episcopal throne of Myra. The sitting bishop had died and the other hierarchs gathered to elect a new chief pastor. While the bishops were in council, the eldest bishop heard a voice that commanded him to proceed to the doors of the church that night. There he was instructed that he would find a man named Nicholas. This man was God's choice to be the new shepherd of God's flock.¹⁰¹ Methodios compares the grace bestowed on Nicholas by this supernatural choosing of him to fill the vacant throne with the story of David's anointing. He uses the biblical account of the anointing of David by Samuel to bear

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 144, lines 31 – 33, Lev. 19, 18 also Math. 22, 39; and Math. 6, 3.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 145, lines 2 – 3: "...τούτω ἐδείκνυ τὴν δωρεὰν κρυφιώτατα· καὶ ὡς φωτὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλλαμψεῖς τὸ φιλόανθρωπον..."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 144 – 146, Chapters 9 – 14.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 146, chapter 15, lines 28 – 31: <<"Ἀπελθε εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν νυκτὸς καὶ στήθι πρὸς <τὰ προ>πύλαια· καὶ ὃς πρὸ πάντων ὑπείσελθεῖν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐλεύσεται, τοῦτο κρατήσαντες εἰς τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν προχειρίσασθε· Νικόλαος αὐτῷ ἐστὶν τὸ ὄνομα.>>

the Spirit of the Lord and to be the future king of Israel.¹⁰² Methodios states that this miraculous seal of grace confirmed Nicholas as the bishop.¹⁰³

The second miracle, which Methodios highlights, is the saving of a group of sailors from a storm. They called on the name of Bishop Nicholas, of whom they had only heard. By the help of the saint, they returned safely to dry land.¹⁰⁴ At that point, the sailors rushed to thank the bishop. When they encountered him, Nicholas discerned that the three seamen were captive of the sin of fornication. Like a loving father, he spoke gently to them and sought to correct them spiritually.¹⁰⁵

The other section that is characteristically Methodian in style is a portion towards the end of the work. Methodios is praising and acclaiming the virtues of Nicholas, and he accomplishes this through a series of anaphorae, indicative of his command of rhetoric.

¹⁰² | Kings 16, 13 (LXX): "...and Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

¹⁰³ Methodios of Constantinople, "Methodii ad Theodorum in vitam at reliquitas Nicolai Myrensis", page 148, chapter 18 lines 3 – 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 148 – 149, Chapters 19, lines 15 – 24.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 148, chapter 20, lines 34 – 36; p. 149, lines 1 - 5 lines: << Γνωῦτε ἑαυτοὺς, ἀδελφοί, παρακαλῶ, καὶ τὸν βίον εὐθύνετε· ἡ γὰρ σύντροφος ὑμῖν καὶ ἀδίκια καὶ τό πλεονεκτικώτατον, μετὰ τῆς μυσαρᾶς πορνείας ἐπιπυλάζουσαι, τοῦ φιланθρώπου θεοῦ τὴν πειδείαν, ὡς ἱατροὺς αἱ νόσοι, ἐκκαλοῦνται καὶ ἐπαφίαισιν ἀναγκαιότατα. μεταμάθετε οὖν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸν ἀγιασμὸν ἐγκομβώσασθε, οὐ χωρὶς τάχα τὸν κύριον οὐδεὶς ὄψεται, καὶ ἔξοιτε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐκ τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς σπερμάτων ἀμώμενα πλουσίως τῆς σωτηρίας τὰ δράγματα. >>

...μέγαν Νικόλαον ἔχε...---πρὸς φιλίαν θεοῦ
 εἰκόνα ἀπαράχαρανκτον, πρὸς ἔχθραν δαιμόνων
 ἐνστήλωμα ἀνεπικλίτον, πρὸς χρείαν πενήτων
 χαρακτηῖρα, πρὸς ζῆλον δογμάτων κανόνα
 εὐθύτατον... ¹⁰⁶

Methodios returns to use this device 23 times in only 16 lines of text. He then ends his work beseeching for the saint's intercessory prayers.

Encomion in Sanctum Nikolaum

The encomion is found in the previously noted monograph by Anrich. ¹⁰⁷ This composition is attributed to Patriarch Methodios in several mss traditions. This writing is, as the name identifies, a work in praise of St. Nicholas. This work, in contrast to the previous one, bears the attribution of Methodios as Archbishop of Constantinople. As was mentioned earlier, very little within this piece refers directly to the struggle with the iconoclast or if the attribution is to be believed, there is no declaration of victory and triumph over the heretics that one would expect in a work written during Methodios' patriarchal years.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 149 – 150, Chapter 22 – 23, lines 22 - line 3: "...great Nicholas you gush forth ...the genuine image of God's love, to the demon enemy, the devil, the unforgettable fortress, to the poor in need the image of the archetype, to the dogmatic zeal, the most straight canon."

¹⁰⁷ Methodios of Constantinople (n.d.) "ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΝ ΜΥΡΟΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ", in *Hagios Nikolaos der Heilige Nikolaos in der Griechischen Kirche*, vol. I ed. G. Anrich (B. G. Teubner), Leipzig - Berlin (1913), pp. 153 - 182.

The text does contain a concentration and various distributions of biblical references, as have been found in other Methodian compositions. An examination of the 28 pages revealed 32 direct scriptural quotes in the work. Once again, Methodios uses a large number and variety of scriptural passages to draw his allusions and to demonstrate the lessons he wishes to insert.

Within this particular opus dedicated to St. Nicholas, Methodios writes about two of the same miracles that were discussed in the *vitam et reliquias*, one of these being the account of the three young sisters saved from prostitution through the saint's intervention. The other incident is the account of the protection of the sailors, being brought safely to land from an angry sea by the calling on the Bishop for aid. Nicholas appears on their boat and prays, and they are then saved. There has been added in this encomion additional evidence of the sanctity of Bishop Nicholas. There is an episode relating of the salvation of some military men from execution because of the saint's concern. Three commanders, Nepotian, Ursus and Herpylion were dispatched from Constantinople to the Diocese of Lysia to quell a civil disturbance; because of weather they remained in the harbour town.¹⁰⁸ Soldiers under their command treated the local people harshly; St. Nicholas intervened by admonishing the commanders. The officers punished the offending soldiers and harmony was restored.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, there are chronicled several miracles brought about by seeking the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 162, Chapters 19, lines 6 – 11.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 162, Chapter 20, lines 12 – 17.

intercession of Nicholas, after he had fallen asleep in the Lord. Methodios reports three separate experiences through which the grace and holiness of Nicholas are demonstrated. These events involve the intervention of the saint in the lives of religious men; the first is of a priest named John.¹¹⁰ Second, a certain presbyter of Mytiline is aided by the saint's care.¹¹¹ The third and last cited is the account of the help given to a certain monk - scholar named Peter.¹¹² Each of the episodes shows the love, caring and miraculous intervention of the prayers of Nicholas upon those who seek his help in faith and with hope.

Even though the encomion is without reference to the iconoclastic struggle, it is not devoid of any theological and dogmatic affirmations. The heresy which is singularly condemned, is Arianism. Methodios discusses this early threat to orthodox Christianity by praising Nicholas for keeping his diocese pure in light of the pervasive heresy.¹¹³ Methodios then expounds the Orthodox teaching of the Trinity. He distinguishes the oneness of the essence, the discernibility of the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the co-equality of the Trinitarian God. The Nicene formulation is upheld, while Arianism and Sabellianism,¹¹⁴ which confuse the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity, are condemned. The unity and the oneness of the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 169 – 171, Chapters 36 – 40.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 171 - 174, Chapters 42 – 45.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 174 – 180, Chapters 47 – 57.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 160, Chapter 15, lines 6 – 7: “...μόνη τῶν Μύρων μητρόπολις ταῖς τοῦ ἁγίου τούτου διδασκαλίαις τὴν ταύτην οὐδε προσήκατο...”

¹¹⁴ Cross and Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1218.

Divine Trinitarian Godhead are declared and heralded.¹¹⁵ Notwithstanding that within this section strict orthodoxy is defended, the direct relevance to the conflicts of the eight and ninth centuries are not observable.

The last feature of this work to be inspected is the routine use by Methodios of a series of compound statements to intensify his meaning. In this instance, the concluding portion of the encomion accentuates the qualities and gifts of Nicholas. Methodios utilises a string of anaphorae each beginning with either τοῖς ἐν or τοὺς ἐν. This device is used about ten times in nine lines of text.¹¹⁶ Examples of this usage are as follows:

...τοῖς ἐν φυλακαῖς ἐπισκεπτόμενος· ...τοὺς ἐν
νόσοις ἰώμενος, τοὺς ἐν συμφοραῖς
παραμυθούμενος, τοῖς ἐν χαρμοναῖς
συνευωχούμενος,...¹¹⁷

It is apparent St. Nicholas held great appeal to our ninth-century churchman. As will be subsequently shown, Nicholas is yet the subject of a Canon by Methodios.

¹¹⁵ Methodios of Constantinople (n.d.) "ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΝ ΜΥΡΟΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ", p. 160, Chapter 15, lines 11 – 21: "...μῖα γὰρ φύσεως τὰ τρία καὶ μῖα οὐσίας ἐπιγινώσκουσα, ἰσοδύναμα ταῦτα καὶ ἰσόθεα πανταγοῦ διεκηρυκεύετο, οὔτε τὰ τρία εἰς ἓν συναλείφουσα καὶ συγχέουσα, οὔτε τὸ ἓν εἰς τρία διαιροῦσα ἀλλόφυλα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρία καλῶς διαιροῦσα – προσώποις γάρ – καὶ τὸ ἓν εὐσεβῶς φυλάττουσα θεότητι γάρ --, καὶ οὔτε τῷ ἐνὶ σαβελλίζουσα, οὔτε τοῖς τρισὶν ἀρειανίζουσα· ἓν γὰρ ἐν τρισὶν ἡ θεότης, καὶ τὰ τρία ἐν οἷς ἡ θεότης, ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν ἅ ἡ θεότης. ..."

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 182, Chapter 60 lines 1 – 10.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 182, Chapter 60 lines 2 – 5: "...visiting those in prisons, healing the infirmed, consoling those in distress [calamity], celebrating together with the joyful..."

The *Vitae*

The next two works by Methodios are a different category of hagiography than the ones previously discussed. These works are *Vitae*, which are highly stylised biographies of holy men and women. In the Methodian corpus, there was only one established *vita* until relatively recently. The work is the *Vita of St. Theophanes the Confessor*. After this review, our attention will turn to the second *vita*, which was identified in the 1960's as a probable work of Methodios by Professor Jean Gouillard. The *Vita of St. Euthymios of Sardis* confirmed Gouillard's supposition with the publication of his critical text of this work in 1987.¹¹⁸

Vita of St. Theophanes the Confessor

This opus has been preserved in the codex *Mosquensis Synod. No. 390 (Vladimir)*. Bibliographic references to it can be found in Krumbacher (1897) and Spiridonov (1913). The critical text and the one that will be utilised in this analysis is the Russian study.¹¹⁹

In determining the chronology of this work, we know that it could not have been written before March 822, the burial of the saint's body at his Monastery of Agros,¹²⁰ because this event is described in the last few

¹¹⁸ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode".

¹¹⁹ Latyšev, B. (1918), *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris e codice Mosquensi no. 159 edita*, Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie series viii, TOMOS xiii, pp. i + 120.

¹²⁰ Theophanes the Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, Introduction pp. I – li.

pages of the *Vita*.¹²¹ Professor Ševčenko dates these two works in this manner:

Even though many iconodule *Lives* dealing with second Iconoclasm were written within the ninth century, the number of those dating from before 843 is so small, that they can be listed there. The original *Vita of Euthymios of Sardis* by the future Patriarch Methodios dates from early 832. This *Life* was preceded in time by that of Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818), by the same author; thus the *Life* of Theophanes may conceivably fall in the time of Michael II.¹²²

We can then place this composition at a time when Methodios had returned to Constantinople shortly after his stay in Rome. The end of the story is hardly an appropriate point to begin an essay of any work, the *Vita of Theophanes* included. Methodios undertakes to laud and to present to his readers a portrait of a holy and courageous champion of the struggle to defend images. We identify Methodios' rhetorical style from the outset; Theophanes is described in these words "Θεοφάνει τῷ θεοφανεστάτῳ."¹²³ He is presented as being the son from a noble Christian home, who is born "almost" miraculously due to the advanced age of his parents. The biblical

¹²¹ Latyšev, *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris*, p. 38, Chapter 58, lines 23 – 27: "...μετὰ πολλῆς βίας, ὡς δὲ καὶ δόξης κηρῶν τε καὶ θυμιαμάτων καὶ ψαλμωδίας κυκλοτερώς τοῦ πλήθους ἐξάρχοντος, μετήραν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ κτισθεῖσαν μονὴν τὸν Ἄγρον ἐπιλεγομένην καὶ κατέθεντο ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ ᾧ ὠκοδόμησαν πρὸς τῷ δεξιῷ μέρει τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ψάλλον νυκτεριναῖς ταῖς ὥραις ἐκάθητο." Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres Byzantins*, p. 195.

¹²² Ševčenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period", p. 118. Michael II reigned 820 – 829.

¹²³ Latyšev, *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris*, p. 2, Chapter 3, line 28.

model of Abraham and Sarah is cited as the image of God's blessings.¹²⁴ His mother and father were named Isaakios and Theodote.¹²⁵ His father was a high official in the administration of the iconoclast Emperor Constantine V. During his youth, Theophanes is described as being spirited and athletic. He enjoyed the outdoor activities of hunting and horseback riding, which according to Methodios helped to quell the passions of youth. Once again, Methodios presents a saint grappling, much like himself, with the fire of physical passions.¹²⁶ Soon these passions of the flesh were superseded in Theophanes, by the love of God and a desire to embrace the monastic way. The path to this life was blocked an arranged marriage of his mother's making. After the passing away of his mother, there emerged a battle of wills between his desire to enter the monastery; and his wife's family that wanted him to fulfill his marital obligations. The Emperor Leo IV, because of the urging of Theophanes' in-laws, threatened to blind the young Theophanes if he pursued his desire to become a monk.¹²⁷ To deter Theophanes, Leo sent him on an imperial mission to construct a "κάστρον" at Kyzikos. Methodios speaks plainly in describing Leo as a Nestorian heretic and impious despot.¹²⁸ In the next chapter, Theophanes stopped on his way to Kyzikos

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 3, See Gen. 17, 18 ff (LXX).

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 3, Chapter 3, line 7.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 5, Chapter 6.

¹²⁷ Perhaps this incident could be interpreted as imperial hostility to the institution of monasticism.

¹²⁸ Latyšev, *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris*, pp. 10 – 11, Chapter 15, lines 27 – 30 & lines 1 – 3: "Τοῦτο οὖν μαθὼν ὁ ἀλωπεκόφρων Λέων, τοῦ νεστοριανοῦ φημι Κωνσταντίνου ὁ παῖς ὁ Χαζάρειος, διόμνυται το θεῖον κράτος ὁ δυσσεβέστατος ἐκκόψαι τοῦ νεανία τὰ ὄμματα, εἰ τοῦτο βουλευθείη διαπράξασθαι· προσέτι γε μὴν καὶ ἐκυρὸς ὁ τούτο συνείργει τῇ τοῦ τυράννου βουλῇ καὶ διεκώλυεν τοὺς νέους τοῦ ἐνθέου σκοποῦ αὐτῶν· ἐξ οὗ καὶ φυγὴν ἐβουλήθησαν χρήσασθαι ἡσχόλησε γοῦν ἡ βασιλεύς

and consulted a monk by the name of Gregory on the Mount of Sigriane. Gregory counseled the young Theophanes to be patient because God will clear the obstacles in his path to monasticism. This materialised by the deaths of Leo and Theophanes' father-in law.¹²⁹ When these foretold events took place, Theophanes and his wife prepared to retire to monastic life.¹³⁰ While this is a pleasant anecdote of an event in Theophanes' life, we call attention to it to reveal yet another aspect concerning Methodios. Throughout his life, Methodios put great store in prophesy, as a gift from God and a vehicle to evince truth. This proclivity will be pointed out as we encounter it in other Methodian works, or even in the events of the future patriarch's own life.¹³¹

The next few chapters of the *Vita* illustrate Methodios' rhetorical style as well as any passage in the work. The historical circumstance, which evokes the flowering of Methodian phraseology, is the ascension of the iconodulic Empress Irene and her minor son Emperor Constantine VI to the throne, after the death of Leo IV, her husband. The identical word, in Greek, of the Empress' name, Εἰρήνη and the word for peace, εἰρήνη, allows Methodios to celebrate and praise the instrument of the iconodules' victory, the new empress. In chapters 19 and 20, Methodios uses the play on these two words or words derived from "peace" about eighty times. It

χείρ τὸν θαυμαστὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ τῆς Κυζίκου κάστρῳ συγχειρίσοντα πορευθῆναι (ἤδη γὰρ τότε ἐτίζετο)."

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 11 12, Chapter 16, lines 18 – 21, the events continue throughout this Chapter.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 13 – 14, Chapter 19.

¹³¹ See events such as, the election of Methodios, encounter with Ioannikios the Great, and interaction with Euthymios in his cell.

would be too lengthy to reproduce the entire two chapters at this point, but the following few lines should act as an example of the technique, which Methodios utilises so effectively to make his case:

καὶ ἦν εἰρήνη εὐφήμως ἐπὶ Εἰρήνῃ αὐτοκράτορι
εἰρηνευούσα καὶ ἤρξαντο τὰ ἔθνη φρονεῖν
εἰρήνην, εἰρηνικῶς εἰρηνεύοντα, καὶ πρὸ ἐθνῶν
ἤραντο ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους εἰρήνην οἱ
χριστιανίζοντες...¹³²

While celebrating the accomplishments of the iconodulic Empress, the future patriarch adds this to the account of her achievements:

"κατεστόλισεν τοὺς ναοὺς καὶ καταποίκιλεν ἐκκλησίας ἡ εἰρήνη..."¹³³

By complimenting the Empress, that her largess was being used to the great work of adorning God's churches, Methodios subtly contrasted Irene with her iconoclastic predecessors, who had destroyed the images in the Holy Churches. The next chapter coincidentally relates the account of the taking up of the habit by Megalo, Theophanes' wife, who assumes the monastic name Irene.¹³⁴ The narrative continues describing the life of the saint. In chapter 27, Methodios relates the events of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, Nicaea II and Theophanes' active role in the proceedings. As an admiring biographer, Methodios commends Theophanes for his wisdom, his spiritual insight as well as his virtues, which

¹³² Latyšev, *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris*, pp. 13 – 14, Chapter 19, line 32 – Chapter 20, lines 1 – 3.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 14, Chapter 19, lines 25 – 26: "...and she re-adorned temples and embellished churches of peace..."

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 15, line 25.

are universally recognised and appreciated by all those in attendance at the council

... he offered at Nicaea straightforward dogma and the highest gift of humble Grace.¹³⁵

Methodios illustrates the character and Christian strengths of Theophanes during his peaceful years in the monastery. As the years pass, Methodios, the commentator, makes a point to editorialise regarding the imperial personalities. With Irene's passing from the scene, Nikephoros I (802 – 811) became the new emperor. Methodios is effusive with his praise of Nikephoros.

...from the time of Irene, the lover of Christ, there followed Nikephoros, the most prudent and ultraorthodox, free thinking, servant of God, the most faithful and piously worthy, with unbiased judgement and a truthful logic in his decision-making...¹³⁶

A few passages later, Methodios praises two subsequent iconodulic emperors. Staurakios, who only ruled a few months in 811, and Michael I Rangabe (811 – 813) were both heralded for their many virtues, their wisdom and their admirable Christian traits. Staurakios is described as

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 19, Chapter 27, lines 2 and 3: "...προεισενέγκας τῇ κατὰ Νίκαιαν τῶν δογμάτων ἰθύτητι καὶ τὸ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης χαριστήριον δώρημα. "

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 26, Chapter 41, lines 7 – 11: "... εὐσεβούντων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν ἀπὸ Εἰρήνης τῆς φιλοχρίστου καὶ ἐπὶ Νικηφόρον τὸν φρονιμώτατόν τε καὶ πανορθόδοξον, τὸν ἐλευθερογνώμονα καὶ θεόδουλον, τὸν εὐσεβοπρεπεῖ καὶ πιστότατο, τὸν ἀνεπίγνωστον προσώποις ἐν κρίσει ἀδιάψευστον νοήμασιν ἐν ψήφῳ."

being wise beyond his young years and of an agreeable youthful nature. ¹³⁷

Michael, named after the Archangel, is characterised as bearing a light of goodness. ¹³⁸

Chapter 45 demonstrates three characteristics of Methodian writing style. First, his comprehensive knowledge of scripture, which has been noted in other works, is apparent in this composition. In this chapter alone, Methodios quotes from the books of Romans, John, Daniel and the Psalms. ¹³⁹ The second aspect, which this chapter demonstrates, is Methodios' tendency to vilify the iconoclastic emperors wherever he is able. This is accomplished within this chapter by the use of the third literary mechanism, which Methodios is fond of using, alliteration and a play-on-words. In this example, Leo V (813 – 820) is the object of Methodios' derision.

Leo, the twice lion-like and his dreadful monstrous
claws... ¹⁴⁰

The scene quickly shifts to centre on the ordeals that Theophanes undergoes at the hands of Leo and his agent. Methodios makes a statement concerning the relationship of the suffering of confessors or

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 26, Chapter 42, lines 28 – 30: [Σταυράκιος]" ἐν νεωτερικῇ ἡλικίᾳ τὸ φρόνημα καὶ μέγα τὸ τῆς σοφίας καὶ φιλοθετίας καὶ συγχωρήσεως ἐν νεανιευόσῃ φύσει."

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 27, Chapter 42, line 1: "...[Μιχαὴλ] ὁ ἀρχαγγελογόναμος καὶ φερώνυμος ἀγαθότητι ὑπερέλαμψεν ..."

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 28, Chapter 45, lines 8 – 32.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 29, Chapter 45, 4 – 5: "Λέων ὁ δυσλέων καὶ λειαίνων πολύθρυπτα τοὺς ὄνυχας..."

witnesses for the faith, which is not only true for Theophanes; but also for Methodios and his sense of consciousness, relative to the Church:

and so then on this the compelling and unbending tradition of faith is secured, by suffering...¹⁴¹

It can be noted in Chapter 47 [mislabelled 46 in Latyšev] that the antagonist of Theophanes is the arch-iconoclast, the hated “sorcerer” and future iconoclastic patriarch, John the Grammarian.¹⁴² The first tools used to bend the will of Theophanes are debate and persuasion; when he is not won over; Leo and John resort to coercion. Theophanes suffers deplorable conditions of deprivation and cruelty, transmitting an image of Methodios' own suffering for the faith.

...surely, because of extreme hunger, thirst, darkness, the lack of care, and total exhaustion in order to have the thrice-suffering [Theophanes] voluntarily succumb.¹⁴³

Theophanes persevered, but his health was severely compromised. Shortly after being exiled to Samothrace,¹⁴⁴ Theophanes fell asleep in the Lord, earning glory and the wreath of martyrdom and victory. This triumph, in

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 29, Chapter 46, lines 22 – 23: “...εἶτα τὴν ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἀναγκαίαν καὶ ἀπαρέγκλιτον τῆς πίστεως παράδοσιν τηρῆσαι διεμαρτύρετο...”

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 30, Chapter 47, lines 15 – 16: “Ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ ἀδικώτατος παρέδωκεν Ἰωάννη τῷ μαγομάντει τὸν ὄσιον...”

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 30, Chapter 47, lines 27 – 29: “...τὴν γὰρ πολλοὺς ὡς ὄντως ὑποπιέζων λιμῷ καὶ δίψει καὶ σκότῳ καὶ τῇ λοιπῇ ὀλιγωρίᾳ καὶ καταστένων καὶ κατατρύχων εἰς ἐθελοπέθειαν ὁ τρισάθλιος.”

¹⁴⁴ See figure 6: Map of the Balkan Peninsula.

Christ, is extolled over several pages of the *Vita* using biblical imagery and metaphors. Methodios then provides a powerfully opposing spectre using the death of Leo as a model. He quotes the passages in Isaiah 14, which deals with the fall of Lucifer, from a position of honour to the depths of Hades and employs this representation to deride Leo and by comparison to lift up Theophanes.¹⁴⁵ This imagery reflects the scholia of Marina where Methodios also cited the descent of Lucifer from a place of brightness to one of darkness. After describing the translation of the remains of the saint, the many miracles and cures associated with Theophanes' relics, Methodios closes his narrative and this tale has come full circle.

The Vita of St. Euthymios of Sardis

As was noted in an earlier area of this chapter, the attribution of this work to Methodios was not made until the 1960's. Beginning with an article of Gouillard concerning the authorship of St. Euthymios' *Vita*, it was thought that this composition might be ascribed to Methodios.¹⁴⁶ Finally, with the definitive text and analysis, the work has been credited to Methodios and added to his corpus.¹⁴⁷ Before the work of Professor Gouillard, the only known *Vita of Euthymios of Sardis* was a work of Metrophanes.¹⁴⁸ In

¹⁴⁵ Latyšev, *Methodii, patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Vita S. Theophanis confessoris*, p. 36, Chapters 55 and 56.

¹⁴⁶ Gouillard, J. (1981), "Une Oeuvre Inédite Du Patriarche Méthode: La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes," In *La Vie Religieuse A Byzance. Also to be found in BZ*, vol. 53, 1960 (Variorum Reprints), London, pp. 36 - 46.

¹⁴⁷ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode".

¹⁴⁸ Papadakis, A. (1970), "An Unpublished Life of Euthymius of Sardis: Bodleianus Laudianus Graecus 69", *Traditio*, XXVI, pp. 63 - 89.

Gouillard's investigation, a different ms tradition was used as the source document. The text is drawn from the collection of the Theological School of Chalke (*Schol. Theol. in Chace insula Agia Triatha 88* [folios 227v 252v] = BH G 2145).¹⁴⁹ A comparison of the work analysed by Gouillard and the Metrophanes text by Papadakis does contain the following comment about the content of the *vitae*: " ...the only other extant Life of Euthymius, which he [Gouillard] has examined, is admittedly less verbose and contains a great deal more detail [than Metrophanes' text]." ¹⁵⁰ The dating and contemporary nature of Methodios' text makes it appear to be the earlier of the two sources.

The Life of St Euthymios is significantly different from other Methodian hagiography. The differences are german enough to warrant some words of introduction. Unlike other subjects about whom he wrote, Methodios personally knew and interacted with Euthymios. Their relationship, if the *Vita* is to be taken as reliable, was both long-term and close. Notwithstanding, the episodes and many of the events were witnessed by the younger Methodios, as Euthymios' near contemporary. In addition, Methodios was acquainted with many of the players in Euthymios' story. These points and others, which will be highlighted as the text is examined, make this work a meaningful example of Methodian writing. Another difference in this work is that Methodios wrote it as an accomplished and recognised author of ecclesiastical writing. This can be said because in

¹⁴⁹ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 16.

¹⁵⁰ Papadakis, "An Unpublished Life of Euthymius of Sardis: Bodleianus Laudianus Graecus 69", p. 65.

one section, which will be noted, Methodios comments on his own writing style. Furthermore, Euthymios was held in such high regard by Methodios that in the text of the Synodicon, Euthymios' name is placed in a position of honour, immediately after the names of the esteemed iconodulic Patriarchs.¹⁵¹ The addition of this composition to the Methodian body of work adds greatly to the insight and the understanding of the man behind the pen.¹⁵² Because of these reasons, a significant amount of detailed analysis will be undertaken of this work.

We ascertain from the onset by Methodios' own words that he undertakes the biography at the urging of a "Symeon, a man of God, an angel [messenger] of the ascetic faith". Methodios relates that he is obligated to listen to such a voice.¹⁵³ This "Symeon" can most likely be surmised to be Symeon the Stylite of Lesbos.¹⁵⁴ Unlike many traditional accounts of saints' lives, this *vita* virtually ignores the earlier life of Euthymios. The narrator [Methodios] explains in Chapter 2 that he recognised this fact, but only proceeds to include a sketchy outline of Euthymios' youth and background. The main body of the narrative begins after Euthymios has been made Metropolitan of Sardis¹⁵⁵ in time to be a delegate at the

¹⁵¹ See section, the Synodicon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

¹⁵² Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", pp. 21 – 23 *(odd pages, only, are the Greek text).

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 21: "... ἄνθρωπε τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἄγγελε τῶν πιστῶν ναζηραίων, εὐχὰς ἐπικαλεσάμενος, ὦ Συμεών, τῷ ὄντι ὑπακοῆς..."

¹⁵⁴ "Life of Sts. David, Symeon and George" (n.d.) in *Byzantine Defenders of Images - Eight Saints in English Translation*, ed. A. - M. Talbot, trans. D. Domingo - Forasté (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), Washington, pp. 142 - 241, pp. 182 – 183.

¹⁵⁵ See figure 7: map of Asia Minor; his elevation must have been through the hands of Tarrasios.

Seventh Ecumenical Council. Euthymios, it is noted, is a very young man at the time of the Council, but he is described as having the wisdom of an "elder".¹⁵⁶ The fact that he is representing the eastern part of the empire is emphasised during this same segment. Chapter 5 reveals the first exile of Euthymios. It takes place after the revolt of Bardanes Turkos;¹⁵⁷ Euthymios is exiled by the Emperor Nikephoros I, with two other hierarchs to the island of Pantallaria, south of Sicily. Shortly after this point, Euthymios was allowed to return to the capital, but never allowed to return to his see. This caused discord between the Emperor Nikephoros and the aged Patriarch Tarasios. This "interference" by the emperor in the life and order of the Church elicited a comment from Methodios, that the emperors' action disturbed the Church and caused rancour within her.¹⁵⁸ The responsibility for order and discipline within the Church is the purview of the Church, Her bishops and Her canons. Specifically, in this case, Patriarch Tarasios, who was Euthymios' superior, was responsible for any judgements concerning his see. Methodios does not allow this criticism to be lost, even on an iconodulic emperor, to whom he has been generally kindly disposed in past writings.

¹⁵⁶ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 23, Chapter 3, lines 41 – 42: "...τότε δὴ ὦν ἐπρεσβυτία φρενὶ ὁ πάντερος..."

¹⁵⁷ Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 425, Gouillard believes the Metropolitan compromised himself in the rebellion. Gouillard, "Une Oeuvre Inédite Du Patriarche Méthode: La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes", p. 38. See Papadakis, "An Unpublished Life of Euthymius of Sardis: Bodleianus Laudianus Graecus 69", p. 65, cites Euthymios' confrontation with Nikephoros' official concerning a young woman, circa 806.

¹⁵⁸ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 27, Chapter 5, lines 80 – 84: "Τοῦ γὰρ ἁγίου Ταρασίου μὴ εὐδοκήσαντος μὴδὲ κατανεύσαντος ἥνπερ ἐβούλετο ποιῆσειν καθαίρειν, ἀποκριθέντος δὲ ἐτοίμως ὡς οὐ τὸ προστεθῆναι τοῖς τυραννήσασιν φέρει τοῖς ὑπαχθεῖσι κανονικὴν πω καθαίρειν, καὶ ἂν μάλιστα ὅτε οὐχὶ ἐκόντες ἀλλ' ἀβουλήτως κεκράτηνται, πλὴν ὅσον εἶχε δυνάμει δια μῆνιδος ἀπεστέρι τῶν θρόνων καὶ ἐκφραλίζειν οἰκειπαθῶς οὐκ ἀπέληγεν."

Starting with Chapter 8, Methodios states that darkness has once again descended upon the empire in the form of iconoclasm, instigated by Leo V. Methodios comments that this darkness continues even as he is relating the story.¹⁵⁹ The next event, which Methodios communicated, is an attempt by the new emperor to cajole Euthymios with discussions and logic to embrace iconoclasm. When this effort failed, yet another exile of Euthymios was ordered by Leo. The entirety of the balance of Chapter 8 is devoted to the mockery and contempt of three iconoclastic church leaders. They are identified as Theodotos, Antonios and John the Grammarian, the future patriarch. They are each accused of differing personal weaknesses and sins, ranging from drunkenness, womanising, greed and using the Church for their own aggrandisement. Methodios remarks that Theodotos is too insignificant to merit a comment.¹⁶⁰

Then Methodios discusses the unworthiness of his narrative and the "martyrdom of composition", which he has suffered in writing this work. He states he is cognisant of the limitations and the insufficiency of his writing to accomplish the great task of praising Euthymios. With this passage, Methodios identifies the difficulties that readers have in deciphering his prose. He catalogues some of his literary shortcomings, or to be kind, difficulties with his style such as clumsiness of expression, obscurity, incomprehensibility, disjointedness, verbose phraseology, and his use of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 31, Chapter 8, lines 129 – 132.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 31 – 32, perhaps in the light of Theodotus' suicide.

solecisms. ¹⁶¹ Surely, this may be an attempt by Methodios to declare his humble unworthiness to the task assigned him. This is a common trait of hagiographic writers especially of this period, ¹⁶² but the description of the characteristics of his style does ring especially true in the case of Methodios.

The remainder of Chapter 9 is a lengthy dialogue between Euthymios and Leo with regard to the theology of images and their historical place within the Church. Many of these arguments have been previously discussed in this thesis, but in this work by Methodios, himself, they should be re-emphasised to accentuate the thinking by two of the leading iconodules in the mid-ninth century. Euthymios discusses this with the Emperor. He relates that he had personally travelled in both the East and the West in his role as a courier for both the Patriarchal throne and the imperial court and he had seen Christian lands far and wide. He emphasised that throughout his travels Christians were united, the Church was one. He confessed that the Faith and Traditions were universally held as hymned in the Creed. Therefore, having read the writings relating to the Holy Images, having personally seen and venerated with great throngs of the faithful, the Holy Image of Our Lord in Edessa, "the image made without hands" by the Incarnate Son of God Himself, knowing that this illumination and gift came

¹⁶¹ Gouillard, *Une Oeuvre Inédite Du Patriarche Méthode: La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes*, p. 33, Chapter 9, lines 166 – 170: "...ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὰ τοῦ ἁγίου λεκτέον μόνον τοῦ κελευσθέντος μοι, καὶ τῇ ἀφύτῃ καὶ ἀμουσίᾳ μου, ὡς τὰς ποινὰς κατακριθέντι τὴν οἰκείαν διήγησιν, ἵνα ᾗ καὶ ἐκ τοῦτο ἀθλοφορῶν ὁ μακάριος, τῷ συνεχεῖ τῶν δυσφραδιῶν μου ἄσθματι ἐγκρουπτομένου τοῦ ἐποφειλομένου συντόνου τῶν διηγήσεων, καὶ τῇ σολοίκῃ χάσμη τῶν βορβορωδῶν μου λέξεων τοῖς προστυγχάνουσι μένων αὐτὸς ἀσαφὴς καὶ ἀκατανόητος."

¹⁶² See the introduction of *Vita of Methodios* as an example: PG "Sanctus Methodius - Constantinopolitanus patriarcha", vol. c, cols. 1252 ff.

through the Holy Spirit, Euthymios could and does witness and avow these truths before the Emperor and the people, stating, these Traditions had been passed from the Apostles through the martyrs and the Fathers to their day, to be held, observed and protected. ¹⁶³

At this point, Euthymios launches into a series of condemnations of the iconoclasts, which he does without naming specific names. These censures are reminiscent of the condemnations of Nicaea II and anticipate the language that Methodios will employ for the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy*.

He that does not venerate the holy and august images – Anathema! He who does not hold them [in honour] for himself – Anathema! Those who evade the Traditions, announcing the intention of deviation and strange proposals – Anathema! ¹⁶⁴

It should be noted that the appeal to the Tradition and its inviolate nature is strongly accented. The text and resultant actions by Leo demonstrate the climate of this time in Constantinople. Patriarch Nikephoros is exiled, as is Euthymios, and there is reported a reign of terror by the emperor, Leo V. ¹⁶⁵ Leo is assassinated shortly thereafter. The new emperor is Michael II, who attempts to be more lenient with Euthymios and to inveigle the holy man to

¹⁶³ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 38, Chapter 9, lines 175 – 182.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 35, Chapter 9, lines 188 – 190: "...Ὁ μὴ προσκηνῶν τὰς ἁγίας καὶ σεπτὰς εἰκόνας ἔστω ἀνάθεμα καὶ ὁ μὴ ἔχων οὕτως ἀνάθεμα καὶ περαιτέρω τῶν παραδεδομένων περὶ αὐτῶν ἀλλοτρίως λαλοῦντες ἢ ἀφραίνοντες εἶεν ἀνάθεμα."

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 35, Chapter 9, lines 190 – 193; note in the next line the island of Thasos is identified as the place of exile for Euthymios (see figure 6: - map of the Balkan Peninsula).

his thinking. When Euthymios did not acquiesce, he is exiled once again to the island of Thrasos.¹⁶⁶

In the central portion of Chapter 12, Methodios reports the falling asleep in the Lord of the exiled holy Patriarch Nikephoros.¹⁶⁷ Following this occurrence Theophilos, the son of Michael II, assumes the throne. The beginning of Chapter 13 finds Methodios again commenting on Euthymios' gift of prophesy. As he describes it, the holy man had predicted the deaths of Leo V, then secondly, that of Michael II and finally he foresaw the third death, that of Theophilos, himself. This daunting augur frightens the new emperor.¹⁶⁸ Theophilos and Euthymios engage in a face-to-face confrontation, which results in the beating of Euthymios, as well as his incarceration on Agios Andreas island prison.¹⁶⁹ This is the locale of the site of several encounters and interactions between the two iconodulic champions. Euthymios, the elderly battle-worn campaigner, was destined to become the subject of the younger Methodios' indite. Methodios, who was fated to orchestrate finally the triumph in the cause they each held so dear, clearly became attached to Euthymios at this time. When they met as adults, both were being held in the hellhole prison of St. Andrews. The conditions of Euthymios' and Methodios' imprisonment are described in

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 37, Chapter 11.

¹⁶⁷ This is dated 2 June 828 AD.

¹⁶⁸ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 39, Chapter 13: "...Εν οἷς φοιτῶντων πολλῶν καὶ τὰ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν βεβαιουμένων, γίνεται τις μηνυτικὴ γραφὴ ἐπαπειλοῦσα τῷ κρατοῦντι ἀπώλειαν, ὅτι δὴ ἐπὶ Λέοντος πρὸ ὀκτομήνου τῆς καταστροφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς τούτου πρὸ πενταμήνου, οὕτω δὴ τούτου πρὸ χρόνου τόσοῦ ὅσου συμβήσεται. Ἡ δὲ ἔδοξε καὶ ἐκρίθη, τῷ πρώτῳ καὶ δευτέρῳ τῆς ἐπαληθεύσεως, ἔτι καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ ἀψευδὴς εἶναι καὶ πλέον ἐτάραξεν.."

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 43, Chapter 14.

detail in Chapter 15 - 16 and in Methodios' *Vita*.¹⁷⁰ Despite these deplorable conditions, there develops, within a short period in December of 831, a sympathetic bond of respect and friendship between the two churchmen.¹⁷¹ Although a description of the prison environment is enthralling, the most cogent portrayal is of the interactions between these two men. Nonetheless, the conditions of incarceration must have been much more devastating on the physical health of a seventy-eight year old Euthymios, than on a much younger and healthier Methodios.

Shortly after Euthymios' arrival on St. Andrews, the two iconodules are allowed to meet at their own request. On 17 December, 831 they come together. Methodios stated that he was honoured to be blessed by such a holy shepherd of Christ's flock. He prostrated himself before the saint and Euthymios blesses Methodios on his head. This blessing imparted to the author great courage and relief from the conditions of imprisonment. A little past three in the afternoon, they are served a meal; but the guard was apparently unaware it was the period of the Christmas Fast. After the food is delivered, the two men of God pray for the guard.¹⁷² It is not clear

¹⁷⁰ "Sanctus Methodius - Constantinopolitanus patriarcha", col. 1248 d.

¹⁷¹ This time-frame is determined by working backwards from Euthymios' date of death.

¹⁷² Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 45, Chapter 17, lines 326 – 338: "Καὶ πάλιν ἐπανελθὼν καὶ συνομιλῶν ἡμῖν, δι' αἰτήσεως τῆς παρ' ἡμῶν, ἤγαγεν τὸν πανάγιον τρόπον; τοῦ ὅτι 'δεῦρο καὶ ὄψη τὸν τόπον, ἐν ᾧ ἐπιτετάγμεθα κλεῖσθαι σε.' Ὅς ἐλθόντι συγκαθεσθεῖς καὶ ἐνδοὺς ἡμῖν λαλῆσαι καὶ ἀκοῦσαι λόγια παρ' αὐτοῦ τα μελίρρυτα εὐλογηθῆναι τε ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄρτον καὶ ποτήριον δέξασθαι διὰ τῆς ἀγίας χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, 'Εὐχαριστοῦμέν τῷ Θεῷ, πρὸς τὸν ὅσιον ἔφημεν, ὅτι σὲ τὸν ποιμένα τοῖς ταπεινοῖς ἡμῖν καὶ μικροῖς προβάτοις εἰς ὁδήγιαν κεχάρισται'. Προσκυνήσαντες δὲ τὴν χεῖρα ἐν τῷ ἀποχωρεῖν καὶ ἐπ' ὀφθαλμοῖς βαλόντες ἐκθύμως καὶ ποθεινότατα, εἶτα ἐπὶ κορυφὴν ἡμῖν θεμένῳ τὴν παλάμην καὶ ἐπευξαμένῳ ὥσπερ ἠτήσαμεν, ἀπελύσαμεν χαίροντες ἅμα καὶ κλαίοντες ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον παρηγορήσαντες· ἦν γὰρ ἡμερινὴ ὥσεί ἐνάτῃ ὥρᾳ καὶ τι, αὐτοὶ τε ἡμεῖς πρὸς τοῦ κατέχοντος παρακληθέντες φαγεῖν ἐκ πάντων ἀδιακρίτως ὧσων ἂν ἀποστείλῃ

whether the prayer is because he is unenlightened about the Church's fast rules; but it appears more likely to be one of gratitude for his kindness in being gracious enough to allow these prisoners private time together. After this time together, they are once again separated.

Chapter 18 depicts in graphic terms the suffering and brutal torture of Euthymios at the hands of a logotheti from Theophilos' court. This cruel interrogator maltreated the elderly bishop by racking him, redolent of the manner of suffering endured by St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles.¹⁷³ The object of the questioning is to ascertain the names of those people who had visited Euthymios in exile. Methodios overheard the sounds of the punishment from his nearby cell, and he was extremely upset. There are no shortages of metaphors and comparisons to fellow sufferers among the many confessors and martyrs of the Church; in fact at one point Methodios compares Euthymios' ordeal to Christ's own passion and suffering. This identification is a common one in the genre of this type of Church literature.

Chapter 19 outlines a series of lashings at the hands of the logotheti. There are lashings, interrupted by questioning, then more lashings; the final total of strikes is put at 120 by Methodios. Although covered in blood from the lashings, the holy man remained resolute; he refused to give up other

ἡμῖν - συνεθέμαθ' αὖτε καὶ ἐπηυξάμεθα τῷ ἀγαγόντι πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὸν ἅγιον καὶ ἤδη καὶ αὐτοὶ πρὸς ἐστιαθῆναι τετράμεθα. ”

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 47, Chapter 18, lines 346 – 347; "...κατὰ τὸν θεομακάριστον κορυφαῖον τὸν ἀποστόλων ὡς πρὸς σταυρὸν εἰς ποῖνας ἀπλώσαντες,..."

iconodules. Methodios expressed his own feelings and reactions to the saints suffering and anguish.

As for me in my fortress-like tomb, while he was thrashing the saint; I fell down prostrate asking for divine help for him and myself and uttering 'Lord have mercy' for divine consolation. ¹⁷⁴

In Chapter 20 three facts are revealed: the eminent death of Euthymios, the chronology and the last encounter between Euthymios and Methodios. The date was established easily because the Nativity of the Lord in the Flesh was celebrated on the day before the last events in Euthymios' life. ¹⁷⁵ The last communion of the elderly bishop was a mystical and prophetic experience for Methodios. Methodios prepared the Holy Mysteries for Euthymios and it was passed to the aged one via a guard. In the *Vita*, Methodios quotes Euthymios asking: "Κύριε, ποῦ λειτουργεῖς;". Initially, Methodios did not clearly grasp the meaning of this cryptic phrase, "Lord where do you celebrate the Liturgy?", nor did he understand the prophetic meaning of this utterance. His response to the great Euthymios was one of regret for not having a proper place to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Finally, Methodios realises the phrase is one that prophesises the saint's death. Why this conclusion? A grasp of the liturgical theology of the Church is essential for this insight. Each and every Holy Liturgy is fulfilled by the Lord on His Heavenly and Celestial altar.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 49, Chapter 19, lines 379 – 381: "Κἀγὼ μὲν τῷ ὀχυρώματι τοῦ οἰκείου τάφου ἐν τῷ τὸν ἅγιον τύπτεσθαι πρηνῆς πεσὼν ἐζήτουν τὴν θεῖαν βοήθειαν ἑαυτῷ τε κἀκείνῳ τὴν τοῦ 'Κυριε ἐλέησον' φωνὴν εἰς θεῖαν παράκλησιν προτιθέμενος".

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 49, Chapter 20, lines 396 – 399.

For You Christ our God are the One who offers and
is offered, the One who receives and is distributed,
and to You we give glory... ¹⁷⁶

Only when Methodios was able to elevate his reference from the dank prison cells, even from this temporal world, to the Kingdom of Heaven, did he fully comprehend that Euthymios was preparing to serve at the altar at which the eternal Liturgy is served with Christ as the High Priest. The saintly man received the Holy Gifts and fell asleep in the Lord. ¹⁷⁷

With Euthymios' last earthly acts, the witness of the narrative begins to relate accounts of the sanctity and power of the relics of the saint. Methodios uses these events to communicate the essential lesson of grace and the incorruptibility of deified matter. The saint's body, which has been transfigured and transformed in Christ, has partaken of the crucifixion, by its suffering; is now sharing in the Resurrection by conquering the natural decay of the body. We are all destined to share in Christ's incorruptible nature to abide in the image, which He created us and in the flesh, which He assumed and redeemed with His Incarnation. Prior to the Incarnation,

¹⁷⁶ Brightman and Hammond (eds.), *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, p. 318, Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn. [Eighth-century usage translation by myself].

¹⁷⁷ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", pp. 49 – 51, Chapter 20, lines 399 – 408: "...Κοινωνίαν μὲν τῶν ἁγίων μυστηρίων ἐμοὶ διακονησαμένῳ καὶ ἀποστέλλαντι διὰ χειρὸς ἑνὸς τῶν προσμενόντων καὶ φυλαττόντων ἡμᾶς, αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο ἀναλογιζομένῳ μοι ὅτι πέφυκεν ὁ ἐν τῷ πρὸς με ἔλθειν ἔφη μοι ὁ μακάριος λέγων 'Κύριε ποῦ λειτουργεῖς;' δηλῶν ὅτι ἄρα ἐπὶ χρείας γενήσεται ἀγιάσματος τοῦ τῆς μεταλήψεως ἐπιτέλευτα, καὶ οὐ συνῆκα τὸ ῥῆμα ὁ ἀδιάγνωστος ὅστις περ ἦν προφητευόμενον, οὐ βλέπόμενον – καὶ γὰρ μὲν οὖν τότε ἀποκέκριμαι.' 'Ὡς μέγα μοι, ὦ παμμέγιστε, εἰ καὶ μεταλήψω πῶς ἀξιοθήσομαι· ποῦ γὰρ ἢ τόπον ἀρτίως ἢ τρόπον ἄλλως τέ ποτε ἱεουργίας ἐγὼ κέτημαι;' καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ὑπεῖπον, ἅπερ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον προσθεῖναι τῷ νῦν διηγήματι -- λοιπὸν συνῆκα, ὡς ἀπεδήμει ὁ τρισμακάριος ὅτι τοῦτο ἦν το << ποῦ λειτουργεῖς; >> ἐρήσασθαί με προφητικώτατα. "

humans had allowed corruption to enter the world and its life. The Incarnation of the Word of God brought mankind back to the created potential intended by the Maker. Methodios stresses that nowhere is this fact as evident as with the saints who have conformed their lives to Christ. By conforming to Christ, being one with Him, saints partake of the Divine Nature of the life of the Holy Trinity, thereby conquering death and corruption in Christ.¹⁷⁸ The fact that many saints' relics remain incorruptible is a witness to the reality of the Incarnation and Resurrection. This message is one of the pivotal teachings of the iconodules. It speaks directly to the potential for the sanctification of the material cosmos. Methodios summarises iconodulic theology in one paragraph.

Oh what a miracle! How can it be logical for someone who has the resemblance and possesses the grace relative to the beyond good Lord Jesus at the occasion of his life-bearing death for us, since we are conformed to the image of the Son of God, of which the image is His divine, inseparable flesh which is from and of His nature. It is thus by this flesh, that as image we have seen the invisible God the Word and it is at this image of the Son of God to know his flesh that the saints become conformed [with Him] by the sufferings they endure for Him. ...for if we had been united with Him in a death like His, we shall be united in a resurrection like His.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ 2 Peter 1, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", pp. 51 – 53, Chapter 22, lines 436 – 442, lines 438 – 439 (Rom. 8, 29) and lines 446 – 447 (Rom. 6, 5): "...θαῦμα ὅπως ἄν θείης τοῦτο, ἀκολουθοῦν ἔχοντος καὶ χάριν τὴν πρὸς τὸν ὑπεράγαθον

Methodios begins a discursive account about eschatological theology in Chapters 25 and 26. Within Chapter 25, alone, he uses ten New Testament references to support his argument. Since he has repeatedly stated that he is writing this account while still incarcerated, we must marvel at his familiarity and recall of scripture. He begins by exalting the martyrs and the honour that awaits them at the day of the Second Coming. His description starts from Hebrews 11, 39 – 40; but primarily taken from I Corinthians 15, 24ff. This exegesis ends with Rev. 6, 11. To comprehend this passage from the *Vita* properly, one must read and consider the carefully selected scriptural pericopes in the light of the events preceeding their use. Methodios is accentuating the bestowal of the trophy for Euthymios' martyrdom. The granter of this prize will be the Lord, Himself.

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.¹⁸⁰

Returning to the implications of the lesson from the first book of Corinthians, chapter 15, Methodios draws attention to the theme of Christ

Κύριον Ἰησοῦν ἐπὶ τῆς ζωηφόρου ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τελευτῆς αὐτοῦ κτωμένου, ἐπεὶ καὶ 'σύμμορφοι τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, (ἐσμεν), ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ θεία καὶ ἀμέριστος καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ὑποστᾶσα σὰρξ αὐτοῦ· δι' αὐτῆς γὰρ ὡς δι' εἰκόνος τὸν ἀκατόπτευτον Θεὸν Λόγον ἔωρακαμεν, ἥτις ἐκόνι τοῦ Υἱοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡγουν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, δῖα τῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ παθημάτων συμμορφοῦνται οἱ ἅγιοι..· Εἰ γὰρ συμφυτοὶ γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα"

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 57, Chapter 25, Rev. 6, 11; The preceding two verses are relevant both to the meaning and to Methodios' message: "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth.'"

making all things subject to Himself. As the Image of God the Father, He has been given authority by the Father to bring all enemies, including death, under His feet. When this is accomplished, Christ will present the Kingdom of God to the Father.¹⁸¹ How does this relate to Euthymios and to the iconoclasts? Without broadening our thought too much, the moral is evident. The saint has earned his future reward, he has fought the good fight,¹⁸² he has overcome evil, in Christ. Christ, Himself will vanquish Euthymios' tormentors, the iconoclasts. In Chapter 26, Methodios reveals a great distaste for the uncommitted or individuals in the "grey-zone": he states their fate will be similar to simple horses or wood.¹⁸³ His antipathy for their fence sitting is very obvious.

Then we read that chanting and prayers were said over the uncorrupted body of Euthymios. After preparing the body, Methodios places simple vestments on the saint, not the elaborate ones due his office, and the storyteller likens them to the burial shroud of Christ, which was provided by Joseph of Arimathea. Methodios reads the service, some writings of St. Paul, Psalms and hymns. Even though this chanting is because of the death of Euthymios, Methodios remarks that it is, nonetheless, a joyous occasion when a saint falls asleep in the Lord.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ II Corinthians 15, 24 ff.

¹⁸² II Tim. 4, 6.

¹⁸³ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 59, Chapter 26, lines 532 – 537.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 61 – 63, Chapters 28 and 29.

After disclosing that the saint's body did not show signs of corruption even after forty days, Methodios expounds some of the most pivotal and central theological lessons in the *Vita*. This occurs in Chapters 32 – 39. Methodios uses the opportunity to present his theological anthropology. These chapters are a lengthy and detailed commentary on Trinitarian teaching, the Persons within the Holy Trinity and their relationships, Christological Logos economy, as well as both image and likeness as it relates to the creation of mankind. The application of this theological perspective, representative of the iconodule's position, vis à vis the iconoclasts, is discussed in Chapter 34. In Chapter 37, Methodios discusses the theology of the image in its role of revealing a redeemed humanity. Subsequently, he compares the iconoclasts and their heresy with the historical apostasy of the Emperor Julian. In Chapter 40, he brings his treatise full circle, speaking of the first martyrs of the Church and the contemporary example, the holy Euthymios, who has been martyred for the sake of images.

Now that these chapters have been summarised, a review of some of the other details would be of benefit for our understanding of Methodian theology. The future patriarch begins his explanation by stating that the incorruption of Euthymios' body presents two clear denunciations of the iconoclasts. There are these lessons to be gleaned from the Euthymian struggles and his triumph over them.

- His strength during his torture and his unbroken spirit reflected the reality of the Resurrection.
- By his death and incorruptibility, Euthymios demonstrated the futility of his adversaries' position and their perdition.¹⁸⁵

The instruction proceeds by describing the Word as the image of the "νόημα".¹⁸⁶ Methodios asserts that image, archetype, prototype and the intimacy of their relationship have an origin in biblical teaching. This conclusion provides an entrée into his thinking. He maintains, without exception, the image is the Word and the Word is image. He declares that those who deny images deprive themselves of the Word. Those in rebellion [the iconoclasts] will deprive themselves even of the words of the Bible because these precepts are there presented. They also will never truly care about the Word of the Gospels.¹⁸⁷

But what does he mean? Methodios proceeds to illustrate by beginning with the narrative of creation from Genesis 1, 26.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 67. Chapter 32, lines 651 – 658.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 67, Chapter 32, lines 658 – 660: "ὥς γὰρ ὁ λόγος εἰκὼν τοῦ νοήματος." (intellect).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 67, lines 660 – 667: "...οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν λόγος τοῦ προτοτύπου καθίσταται διὰ γραφῆς "βοῶσα του ἀρχετύπου τὰ ἰδιώματα. Οὐκ οὐκ ὁ λόγος" ἡ εἰκὼν, καὶ λογικοὶ οἱ εἰκάζοντες, ὡς ἄλογοι ἐξ ἀναγκαίου, κἂν εἰ μὴ βούλοιτο, καὶ εἰσὶν καλοῖντο οἱ ἀνείκονιστοι. Ὅτι μὲν γὰρ εἰκὼν ὁ λόγος καὶ τὸ ἔμπαλιν λόγος ἡ εἰκὼν, ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς πεισθεῖεν οἱ ἀπειθέστατοι οἱ τῇ γραφῇ προσβλέπουντες μὴ μελετήσαντες πώποτε καὶ ὅποι γράφει περὶ εἰκόνας ἐπαποροῦντες ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ οἶονται. Πρὸς οὓς μὴ παρόντας ὡς ἐν προσώπῳ ὄντας ἐτοίμως ἀποκρινόμεθα ὡς οὐ μόνον ἡ θεία γραφὴ ἐν τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς δημιουργίᾳ τὴν τῆς εἰκόνας ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ὑπέθετο ποίησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ δημιουργοῦ Λόγου παρίστησι τὴν ταύτης χαρίτωσιν."

Thus said the Father to His equal in power, of the same strength, and will, co-eternal Son and Word, "Let us make man in our Image, after our likeness."¹⁸⁸

Continuing the discussion, Methodios expands the concept "καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός".¹⁸⁹ He states that the mystery of the Trinity begins to be understood, as much as man can understand it, in this phase. These words indicate the essence of consubstantiality, the distinction of persons, and the equality of will. He then points out God is a bodiless being, not needing a voice or ears, as we know them. Methodios attempts to clarify in patristic language the undertone of man's tendency to anthropomorphise God. Therefore, the word "said" points to the interaction of God the Father, the living and unconfused hypostasis, with the co-creator, the Word of God,¹⁹⁰ Methodios extends these thoughts by discussing the affinity between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. He dissects the phrase "Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν" ¹⁹¹ even more thoroughly. He discusses the grammatical implication of "Ποιήσωμεν" or as would be said in English, "Let us make", to Methodios the use of "us"

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 67, Chapter 33, lines 668 – 670: "Φησὶν γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ πρὸς τὸν ἰσοσθενῆ καὶ ὁμοδύναμον καὶ ὁμοθελῆ καὶ συναΐδιον αὐτοῦ Υἱὸν καὶ Λόγον τὸν δημιουργόν τοῦ παντός καὶ πρῦταν· 'Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν,..' refer to Gen. 1, 26. (LXX).

¹⁸⁹ Gen. 1, 3 (LXX). "And God said..."

¹⁹⁰ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 69, Chapter 33, 674 – 680: "Εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐβούλετο τὸ ἀσύγχυτον τῶν προσώπων τηρῆσαι, οὐκ ἂν τὴν τοῦ 'καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός' φωνὴν ὑπεσήμενεν· ὅπου γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν, διὰ τὸ ταυτοούσιον καὶ ὁμοφυὲς καὶ ἰσοβούλητον, προσθήσω δὲ καὶ ἀσώματον, οὔτε φωνῆς τις χρεία οὔτε ἀκοῆς ἐτοιμασία, μὴ μεσιτεύοντος ἀέρος μηδὲ ὀργανικῆς τοῖς μερῶν ἢ μελῶν κατασκευῆς εἰς λόγον ἢ ἐπ' ἀκρόασιν, περιττὴ ἢ τοῦ 'εἶπεν' φωνῆ πρόσκειται, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐμφαίνῃ τοῦ συνδημιουργοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ Θεὸς τὴν ζῶσάν τε καὶ ἀσύγχυτον ὑπόστασιν."

¹⁹¹ Gen. 1, 26 (LXX): "Let us make man..."

definitively indicates plurality of Persons. He adds the conclusion is supported by "our" as a plural pronoun in the next phrase. In the next sentence, Methodios attests that not two but three persons are distinguished in the persons of the Trinity. He adds that this comes out of technical agreement of meaning [language].¹⁹²

Quoting St. Paul, Methodios further explains who Christ is, "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation."¹⁹³ Methodios delineates the essential distinction between the Persons of the Trinity in this way:

The Father is Intellect, the Son, as the Word, manifests as the Power of Intellect. The Holy Spirit, as the Breath of God,¹⁹⁴ with His inspiration and expiration transmits this to us.¹⁹⁵

Methodios expands these concepts by citing Christ's answer to Philip when Philip asked to be shown the Father. Christ responded,

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 69, Chapter 33, lines 683 – 685: "οὐκ ἐπὶ δύο, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πλείονων λέγεται, ὧν καὶ ὁ τρεῖς ἀριθμὸς εἰσαγωγεύς ὡς καὶ ἐκ τῆς τεχνικῆς ἀκολουθείας παρίσταται."

¹⁹³ Col. 1, 15.

¹⁹⁴ Reference to Gen. 1, 2, See also Psalm 32, 6 (LXX) Also quoted by St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. John of Damascus: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their hosts by the breath of his mouth."

¹⁹⁵ Gouillard, "La Vie D'Euthyme De Sardes (+831) une oeuvre du patriarche Méthode", p. 69, Chapter 33, lines 699 – 703: "Ὡς γὰρ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ Λόγῳ τὸν τε Πατέρα ὡς νοῦν καὶ τὸ ἀναπαυόμενον ἐπὶ τῷ Υἱῷ Πνεῦμα ἐωράκαμεν καὶ ἐλάβομεν, οὕτως ἐν τῷ παρ' ἡμῖν λογικῷ ἢ τε τοῦ νοῦς ἡμῶν κίνησις καὶ βουλή καὶ ἡ τοῦ δι' αἼρος ἐλκομένου ἡμῖν πνεύματος εἰσφορὰ καὶ ἐκφορὰ ἐπιφαίνονται· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἔχομεν τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα ἐν τῷ λογικῷ καὶ εἶναι καὶ διαδεικνύσθαι."

He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.¹⁹⁶

Chapter 34 is devoted to an exegesis of the concept of "to the likeness". Man conforms to the likeness of God with his acts and with his efforts. Additionally, he grows in concordance to God's likeness as he learns more of God and applies this to his life.¹⁹⁷ This explanation continues with a scornful denunciation of the iconoclasts. Methodios states that those who do not understand the Word that was given to us in creation and repudiate the Word, those without images, can never walk, in the Word. That is to say, they cannot reflect, in their lives the Divine Image, after which they were created, as it was written in Genesis. Since these people [the iconoclasts] deny the image, they can never truly comprehend what was written concerning the image of God in Man.¹⁹⁸

In Chapter 35, a familiar equation of the iconodules is reiterated by Methodios, "The image is the Word and the Word is the image...the drawn

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 71, Chapter 33, lines 716 – 717, also see John 14, 10 ff.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 71, Chapter 34, lines 727 – 730.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 71, Chapter 34, lines 736 – 740: "Οἱ γὰρ μηδὲ τὸν τῆς δημιουργίας ἡμῶν παραδεδομένον <λόγον> συνιέντες, ἀλογώτατοί φημι καὶ ἀνεικόνιστοι, πῶς κατὰ τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα σπουδάζουσιν ποτε διαζήσεσθαι, καθ' ἣν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν, αὐτὸ τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα γεγενῆσθαι, εἴτ' οὖν ἐν λόγῳ διαπορεύεσθαι, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν εἰκόνι, ὡς καὶ γέγραπται, ἔξαρνούμενοι καὶ μηδὲ γεγράφθαι πώποτε συνιέναι δυνάμενοι;"

image is equal to the spoken word.”¹⁹⁹ He expands this teaching by saying that the Son of God, the Logos, is by nature the image of the invisible God. Christ, the Logos, entirely reveals the Father as intellect and the co-eternal Holy Spirit is revealed through the Son. Likewise, our capacity as human beings to verbalise thought reflects this likeness such as the relationship of the colours in an image bears a resemblance to the prototype.²⁰⁰ Having gone quite theoretical in previous chapters, Chapter 36 finds Methodios returning to the significance of the image to the Faith. Recapping his former arguments, he then states God is manifested in true creation and in the writings of Scriptures. Methodios declares that God’s prophets, who were taught by the Spirit, brought the Word to life. Methodios now asks the rhetorical question, for which *other* “Apostolic Bible” should we ask in order to show the certain fact that we, mankind, were made in God’s image as written in the Bible? The teachings in Scripture have set the practice of imprinting images and preserving them.²⁰¹ At the conclusion of Chapter 37, Methodios condemns iconoclasts for their reliance on the words of the Scripture, while not recognising Christ who appeared in form and colour. He then chastises the heretics for not understanding the concept of the condensation of Christ’s Incarnation in His love for man and declares this act has redeemed the entire cosmos from sin. He goes on to anathematise the iconoclasts for being tools of the Devil.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 73, Chapter 35, lines 741 – 742: “Εἰκὼν γὰρ ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἡ εἰκὼν ἢ γραφομένη εἰκὼν τῷ διὰ στόματος λόγῳ Ἰση πέφυκεν.”

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 73, Chapter 35, lines 747 – 752.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 73, Chapter 36, lines 754 – 765.

²⁰² Ibid., p.75, Chapter 37, lines 788 – 798.

Concentrating on the treatment, the elderly Euthymios received at the hands of his torturer, Methodios asks the question, "Perhaps **we** should ask the question, who visited **them**?" He proclaims we [the iconodules] should interrogate them! They daily blaspheme and strike out against the righteous Patriarchs and fathers. He levels the accusation: "You once tormented the first martyrs, they died once and now the same thing is happening again to those who fight and die for the image of Christ, as did the saintly Euthymios."²⁰³

In the last significant Chapter, number 47, Methodios embarks on a lengthy prayer of intercession beseeching the newly martyred saint. He declares his unworthiness and that he is a sinner in his tomb, in pain, being submitted to severe punishment. He is writing the life of the martyred saint as he was ordered to write this work. Methodios prays imploring Euthymios: "Guide me, you who in our generation were Apostolic and the most accomplished of martyrs. You, who lived your life in an ocean of compassion, and died spreading your action in miracles and exorcising demons. You who otherwise knew me previously as a child, you took me in your arms. You encouraged me to overcome my vanities."²⁰⁴ "Respond to my call, as you did call to the ascetics who preceeded you. You asked and

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 79, Chapter 40.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p 87, Chapter 47, lines 963 – 964: "...ὁ πάλαι ἐγνωκώς με καὶ ὑπαγκαλισάμενος καὶ λόγῳ ἐπαίνου εἰς προθυμίαν πολλάκις τονώσας μου τὴν χαυνότητα..." This must have occurred around the time of Euthymios' exile in Pantallaria, which is close to Methodios' native island of Sicily. The phrase "overcome my vanities" is a possible reference cited in the *Vita* of Methodios to the influence of a certain "holy man" who encouraged the youthful Methodios to embrace the monastic way of life.

received, give me to acquire the understanding to fear and love God. Intercede for me. Moreover, grant to the faithful and to me the correctness of dogma. Stop the bleeding of the Orthodox by the shedding of your blood." ²⁰⁵ Methodios ends his work with a plea for Euthymios to accept his work like the myrrh and aloe, which was provided for the body of Christ by Nicodemus. ²⁰⁶

Now that this brief examination of the *Vita of Euthymios* has been completed, what general observations can be made? No doubt, Methodios sincerely wished to honour, document and chronicle the life of this martyred hero of the iconodules. As an admirer of Euthymios, he was determined to present the events of the life and the struggles of the bishop against the evil machinations of the iconoclasts. Methodios interwove within the narrative specific scenarios to present the convictions of the supporters of images and to contrast these historical, traditional, patristic and scriptural tenets to the empty heresy of iconoclasm.

However, by examining both *Vitae* in the context of the historical and hagiographical tradition of this period, it is evident that there is a deeper and more crucial element within the texts. The supporters of images used the vehicle of the *Vita* to convey both theology and iconodulic polemic. The *Vitae* of iconodulic saints, beginning with the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*,

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 87, Chapter 47, lines 955 – 957, lines 959 – 964, lines 972 - 975.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 89, lines 984 – 985.

written in 809 ²⁰⁷ and the later *Vitae* had another goal, other than transmitting the life of the subject. This goal was to present the historical facts in the perspective of the iconodules. Starting in the early ninth century and continuing beyond Photios' patriarchate, the authors presented views of the details of the conflict in a light that praised and lauded the defenders of images. The lives of the iconodule patriarchs, Germanos, Tarasios, Nikephoros, Methodios and many iconodulic saints presented these ecclesiastical figures in the most complimentary light. The histories stressed the holiness and piety of iconodules and diminished the accomplishments of any iconoclast. Methodios, himself, commissioned Ignatios the Deacon to write the *Vitae* of two of his predecessors, Tarasios and Nikephoros. The interesting fact concerning this appointment was that Ignatios was a repentant iconoclast hierarch. This patriarchal court patronage continued after Methodios so that the "propaganda machine" not only influenced the presentation of lives, but also accentuated the roles of certain individuals or groups of individuals to the detriment of others. The exploitation of the historical record served the iconodules not only to preserve their triumph but also to shape the consciousness of the population. One example that can be cited is found in the *Vita of St. Ioannikios*. It provides the following description of the events during Methodios' patriarchal years:

But the evil demon who hates the good could not
bear to behold the peaceful state restored to the

²⁰⁷ Ševčenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period", p. 115.

churches of God. So he entered into some glory-seekers, men of aged appearance who were deluded in their minds, the aforementioned jealous Stoudites and their colleague Kakosambas, whom you all know to be *vessels fitted to destruction*. When he found them he turned their unjust and profane tongues to babbling nonsenses and through them won over a very large faction and stirred up disorder in the church of God. You all know the shameless face of the men and their opposition to that great light and martyr Methodios. <What befell him> was no different from what happened to that great and wondrous Athanasios at the hands of schismatics and Arians.²⁰⁸

In this passage, the role of the Studite monks is identified with an extremely unseemly episode. They are not only accused with being connected with a smear campaign against Methodios. The episode is the incident previously discussed, that Patriarch Methodios was accused of sexual misconduct by a woman.²⁰⁹ The woman, who was the mother of Metrophanes, the future Archbishop of Smyrna, claimed she was molested by Methodios. The Patriarch proved his innocence but the Studite's cause was harmed, because Metrophanes was said to be in the group of Studite supporters. The assumption was that this charge could not have been brought without Studite aid. Concurrently, they are identified with the actions of the

²⁰⁸ Peter the Monk, "Life of St. Ioannikios", p. 340.

²⁰⁹ Bekker (ed.) *Chronicle of Georgios Cedrenus*, pp. 83 ff; also found in Bekker (ed.) *Chronographia Theophanes Continuatus*, pp. 157 ff; cited in Dvornik, *The Photian Schism, History and Legend*, pp. 14 – 15.

archheretical Arians and by their contribution to this slanderous occurrence, the role of the Studite House in the iconodule victory was devalued.

Poems and Liturgical Writings

The Oxford Byzantine musicologist, Egon Wellesz, characterises two great poetic forms of Eastern piety as the kontakion and the canon. Earlier in the development of the musical form, came the troparion. Troparia are shorter prayers that were written and inserted after the verse of the Psalms.²¹⁰ In the fifth century the troparia evolved into longer verses, sung only after the three to six last verses of the psalm.

The kontakion as a poetic form is associated with the hymnographers, St. Anastasios, Kyriakos and Romanos.²¹¹ Developing about the sixth century this form consists of "eighteen to thirty stanzas all structurally alike. The single stanza is called a Troparion; its length varies from three to thirteen lines."²¹² Later emerged the musical form which became known as the canon, "It is a complex poetical form made up of nine odes, each of which originally consisted of six to nine troparia...the nine odes of every canon are modelled on the pattern of the nine canticles from the Scriptures and

²¹⁰ Wellesz, E. (1949) *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Clarendon Press), Oxford, p. 144.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 152.

have the character of hymns of praise."²¹³ Names associated with this hymn form are St. Andrew of Crete, St. Romanos the Melodist, St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore of Studios. In the Resurrection Canon of the Damascene, there is a reduction from nine to eight odes by eliminating ode two.²¹⁴ Methodios wrote his work about eighty years after John of Damascus and near contemporary with Theodore of Studios and his brother Joseph, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, who was also a hymn writer. Later in this period, hymnographers include:

Another pair of brother, Theophanes (759-c. 842) and Theodorus, 'the branded ones' (οἱ γραπτοί), and Methodius (+846) fought and suffered for the cause of orthodoxy, and composed Canons, hymns, and Stichera for the feasts of the Saints. St. Methodius, who came from a family of Sicilian patricians, became Patriarch of Constantinople; having been mutilated by the Iconoclasts, he dictated his hymns, some of which were written in an iambic measure of twelve syllables, a metre favoured by John Damascene.²¹⁵

Towards the end of the ninth century, Joseph the Hymnographer (of Studios) and Metrophanes continued the tradition.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 168.

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 184 – 186.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

The first group of hymns to be considered during this survey are those, which have been published. The reference, which leads to the text of each hymn, is noted within the comments.

Idiomelon on St. Constantine and St. Helena

The text of this hymn is found in W. Chris and M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca carminum christianorum*, p. 99. The catalogue by E. Follieri lists this work.²¹⁶ It can also be found in *Ménées de toute l'année*, tomos 5, Rome, 1899, p. 145. The text used here is from the *Menaia*, month of May, p. 146.²¹⁷

This idiomelon is a hymn of praise for The Emperor Constantine I and his mother the Empress Helena. Their feast day is May 21. In present usage, this hymn is chanted at the conclusion of the Orthros. It is sung in plagal tone 4.

Ὁ τῶν Ἀνάκτων Ἀναξ καὶ Θεός, ὁ πλουσίαις
δωρεαῖς κατακοσμῶν τοὺς ἀξιους, αὐτὸς
οὐρανόθεν, ὥσπερ Παῦλον τὸν ἀοίδιμον, διὰ
σημείου τοῦ Σταυροῦ, σὲ Κωνσταντῖνε
ἐξώγρησεν. Ἐν τούτῳ, φήσας, νίκα τοὺς
ἐχθρούς σου· ὃν ἀναζήτησας σὺν μητρὶ
θεόφρονι, καὶ εὐρὼν ὡς ἐπόθεις, τούτους κατα
κράτος ἐτροπώσω. Σύν αὐτῇ ἱκέτευε, ὑπὲρ
ὀρθοδόξων Βασιλέων, καὶ τοῦ φιλοχρίστου

²¹⁶ Follieri, H. (1960) *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae*, Studi e Testi - 211 (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), Città del Vaticano, p. 293.

²¹⁷ ΓΕΓΛΕ (ed.) *Liturgical Books of the Months (ΜΗΝΑΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ)*.

Στρατοῦ, καὶ πάντων τῶν τὴν μνήμην σου
τελούντων πιστῶς, τὸν μόνον φιλόανθρωπον,
λυτρωθῆναι πάσης ὀργῆς. ²¹⁸

The following translation is for meaning and not designed for poetic value.

The Prince of Princes and God, who adorns from
heaven with rich gifts, those who are worthy,
strengthened you, Constantine, like the famous
Paul, through the sign of the Cross

“By this sign conquer, your enemies”, you said;
together with your devout mother you searched for
and found, that which was desired. ²¹⁹

Together with her pray to the only Lover of
Mankind, on behalf of Orthodox Kings, the Christ-
loving army and all celebrate your memory
faithfully that they may be redeemed from all
wrath. ²²⁰

Canon in Honour of St Nicholas

This work of Methodios is found in Pitra, pp. 363 – 364. According to the notation introducing the hymn, it is sung in the second tone and in a spirited manner. It is labelled a canon but it is only a fragment of the entire canon. This conclusion is offered, because in its preserved form, it does not meet

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 146.

²¹⁹ The precious Life-Giving Cross.

²²⁰ Translation mine.

the criteria for a canon. In fact, there appear to be only three stanzas from the main portion of the canon reproduced in this archive. Within the text, there are several clues, which support this conclusion. The first stanza is addressed to God, as Trinity. In the next few stanzas, Nicholas is directly addressed: this is accompanied by a switch in the tenses of the verbs to the second person. No doubt, the last stanza printed in Pitra is the Theotokion.²²¹ There are several places within the text that Methodios utilises as an opportunity to present theology that could be interpreted as iconodulic polemic. The Theotokion is the most conspicuous verse in which this occurs.

The opening two lines of stanza one are addressed to the Trinity.

High and only all powerful Godhead, with one
nature and three times glorified King.²²²

In this introductory phrase, Methodios harkens back, theologically, to the conflict of Nicholas' era. He directly frames the reference to the Trinity in anti-Arianistic language. The next few lines ask that the memory of Nicholas be enlightened by God. The next stanza directly addresses Nicholas to give the chanter of his praise the concise word to describe the man of God.²²³ The following few lines could very well depict Methodios pondering his own sin. It has been shown and will be demonstrated in

²²¹ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1365, "In the Eastern Church, a stanza of liturgical hymnography addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mother, the Theotokos. The concluding verse in a series of troparia usually takes the form of a Theotokion."

²²² Pitra, "S. Methodius CP", p. 363: "Υψίστη μὲν πανθεν ἐξ θαρχία· Μία τε φύσις· καὶ τρεῖς ἀνακτε δόξα."

²²³ Ibid., p. 363: "Πρόσδεξαι τοῦτο· τὸν βραχύτατον λόγον, Ἄριστε ἄνερ· τοῦ Θεοῦ..." Chanter is understood from previous verse.

some penitential hymns, that this guilt was part of Methodios' make-up because of unknown events before his stay in Rome. Listen to the plea of the hymnographer to Nicholas, the holy man.

We implore you O, fervent protector from danger,
shield those who dare to come to you and to hymn
passionately. ²²⁴

There is an alternative reading of the same phrase that can be interpreted in this manner; the person coming to Nicholas may be emboldened by his or her passion for the saint to approach him in prayer.

The Theotokion is so interesting in its theological language that it will be produced in its entirety [see footnote 223]. The concepts are not new to Methodios, but he does manage to insert them in this hymn.

We see in the first line praise for the Virgin Mother. Methodios continues, and tells his listeners, why she is praised. She has contained in her womb the Word of God. The Logos burst forth from the Theotokos bearing flesh, Incarnate. He came to save and refashion mankind, who had been corrupted by the ancient transgression. He did this as God and with the Theotokos' contribution, his humanity. ²²⁵ What is demonstrated in verse is the theology of the iconodules. Their conviction was that through the

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 363: "Ἡξαι δυσώπει· τοῖς τολμῶσιν ἐκ πόθου· μέλπειν σε θερμέ· ἐν κινδύνοις προστάτην."

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 364: "Ἐν σοὶ τὸ κλέος· μητροπάρθενε πέλι·- Θεῖος γὰρ Λόγος· ἐν γαστρὶ σου σκηνώσας -Ἐλαμψεν αὐθις· ἐν κόσμῳ σαρκοφόρος· - Ἵνα τὸν πάλαι· παραβάσει φθάρεντα· - Σώσας ὡς Θεὸς διὰ σου ἀναπλάσῃ."

Incarnation of Christ, by the Theotokos, God provided for the transforming potential, in Christ, not only for mankind, but also for all of creation. As has been shown in many writings of Patriarch Methodios, this is one principal premise of iconodulic theology. Even though, iconoclasts also believed in the Incarnation, the iconodules attempted with this type of logic to frame their response in a way that would minimise the iconoclastic identification of Incarnation.

In imaginem sic dictae τῆς Χαλκῆς portae

Until recently there were only two sources to locate this work. Fortunately, a third source has been added recently. The previous archives are found in Sternbach and in Mercati. The newer document is translated into English and is used here with the permission of the translator.²²⁶ The complete text is presented here and will be analysed at the conclusion.

On the Icon of Christ above the Bronze Gate

Seeing, O Christ, your most pure Icon
And your Cross inscribed in image,
In reverence I worship your true flesh.
For being by nature the Father's timeless Word,
From a mother you appeared in time, by nature
mortal.
Therefore, when I circumscribe you and depict in
types,
I do not circumscribe your immaterial nature,
For it is higher than depiction and than passions.
Depicting the, O Word, your flesh that's passible
I say that you are God uncircumscribable.
But the disciples of Manes' doctrines,

²²⁶ Methodios of Constantinople, (843) *ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΑ ΤΗΣ ΧΑΛΚΗΣ*, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, February 2001, <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem>.

Who mindlessly babbling their opinion
 Ingloriously declare the incarnate nature you
 asumed,
 Becoming one with humankind, to be mere
 phantasy,
 Not bearing to behold it shown in image,
 With frenzied rage and leonine rash folly
 Tore down your all-revered appearance,
 Depicted here of old in honoured form.
 Whose lawless error utterly refuting
 Queen Theodora, guardian of the faith,
 With her golden-purple offspring,
 Imitating the Orthodox Sovereigns,
 And declared Orthodox beyond them all,
 With mind devout erected it again
 Above the palace Gate this present day,
 Unto her glory, praise and high renown,
 And to the majesty of the whole Church,
 The whole fair guidance of the human race,
 The fall of foes ill - willed and barbarous. ²²⁷

This is a declaration of victory by the reigning Patriarch, who is in the process of beginning the restoration of icons to the capital. As was demonstrated in the text of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, Methodios uses this very symbolic event to feature the triumphant iconodulic theology and to disparage the heresy of the iconoclasts. The first statement Methodios makes is to equate the image of Christ with the Cross on the Gate. ²²⁸ The next eight lines summarise the Incarnational basis for the theology of the icon supporters. ²²⁹ Lines 11 through 20 accentuate the heretics' errors. Once again as in the Sunday of Orthodoxy, Methodios identifies the heresy as form of Manichaeism. ²³⁰ Lines 13 and 14 support this statement. Methodios accuses the iconoclasts of distorting and not recognising the

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Sternbach, L. and Cracoviae, D. (1898) "Methodii patriarchae et Ignatii patriarchae carmina inedita", *EOS*, tomos iv, pp. 150 ff., p. 150, lines 1 – 2.

²²⁹ Methodios of Constantinople, *ΕΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΚΟΝΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΧΑΛΚΗΣ*, lines 2 – 10.

²³⁰ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 864 – 865.

true nature of the Incarnation. They are denounced for believing the Incarnation to be a “phantasy”. Furthermore, Methodios, in a not so veiled personal insult, castigates the Emperor Leo III who began iconoclasm and according to legend encouraged the original destruction of the image associated with the gate.²³¹ The Patriarch contrasts the pious actions of the Empress Theodora in restoring not only Orthodoxy and the images, but also specifically the image over the gate, for which her heretical predecessor showed such little respect.²³² This poem closes with a celebration of the Church and Her role in the cosmos.

In Crucem

This is a curious entry in the Methodian corpus, it seems to refer to two works at one time. The first is a short poem on the Cross that is found in both Sternbach and in Mercati. The second reference in this entry is a work of a completely different genre a homily, or to be wholly accurate three, fragments of homilies. An interesting feature of the sermon is that Migne mistakenly places it in the works of Methodios, Bishop of Olympos.²³³ The reference for these three homily fragments is PG vol. xviii, cols. 397 – 404.

The poem, *On The Cross* is five lines long. It is not clear, whether this is the complete work or only a small fragment, which survives. The other

²³¹ Auzépy, "La Destruction de L'icone du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: propagande ou réalité?"

²³² Methodios of Constantinople, *ΕΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΚΟΝΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΧΑΛΚΗΣ*, lines 20 – 26.

²³³ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 910 – 911. This Methodios is a fourth century Church Father of the 3rd and very early 4th century who fought against Origen and Gnosticism.

possibility is that it is a second portion of the poem on the "Image on the Chalke Gate". The text is as follows:

Εἰς τὸν Σταυρὸν

Τὸ ζωοποιὸν καὶ σεβάσμιον ξύλον,
ἐν ᾧ πέπονθε σαρκικῶς ὁ Δεσπότης,
πᾶσι πρόκειται προσκυνητόν, ὡς θέμις,
χρυσοστολισθὲν Μιχαὴλ θείοις πόνοις
φρουρὸν κραταῖον ἐν βίῳ κεκτημένον.²³⁴

As we see above, Methodios heralds in lines one and two that the Lord [Master] suffered in the flesh on the life-giving and majestic wood. He continues that the Cross is set before all to venerate as is meet and right because it was adorned in gold by the God appointed labourer, the Emperor Michael. What was gained was the mighty fortress of life [i.e. the Cross].²³⁵

One of the irregular aspects of this verse is that the Emperor Michael would have been a very young child at the time of the described action. In fact, he would have been barely three or four, if that old. There is the possible consideration that Methodios did not mention the young Emperor by name in the previous work, although he was referred to in line 19, "σὺν τοῖς ἑαυτῆς χρυσοπορφύροις κλάδοις".²³⁶ This discrepancy might well explain Methodios' desire to honour the male heir to the throne and to "lift him up"

²³⁴ Sternbach and Cracoviae "Methodii patriarchae et Ignatii patriarchae carmina inedita", p. 151, section II.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 151, number II.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 151, line 19: "With her golden-purple offspring," Methodios of Constantinople, *EIS THΣ EIKONA THΣ ΧΑΛΚΗΣ*, line 21.

for his participation in the victory, albeit through his regent the Empress Theodora.

Of the Cross and Passion of Christ
– fragments of homilies.

These three portions of sermons all deal with the same topic. They are listed and attributed to Methodios of Constantinople in Pitra p. 354. He cross-references his cataloguing by citing Allatius and Combefis.

The first of the three homilies is the lengthiest preserved segment. There is no hint within any of the texts as to when the sermons were written or delivered. The opening of the first homily does name the work as being written by "Bishop Methodios", although this could very well be Migne's error in assigning this work to Methodios *Bishop* of Olympos. The second and third sermons are each labelled as the work of Methodios. The first homily begins with Methodios posing three rhetorical questions centring on the Cross.

What benefit did the Son of God give us by his
Incarnation? Why the sign of the Cross represents
His Passion [for us] and for others it represents
punishment? What is the value of the Cross?"²³⁷

²³⁷ Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, vol. xviii col. 397: "Τί ὠφέλησεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ σαρκωθεὶς ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος; Διὰ τί τῷ τοῦ σταυροῦ σχήματι ἠνέσχετο παθεῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλη τινὶ τιμωρίᾳ; Τί τὸ χρήσιμον τοῦ σταυροῦ; "

The immediacy of engagement with the central issue of the iconoclasts is striking. Methodios sets forth these concepts: While the Lord Christ appeared on earth in the flesh, he dimmed the afflictions of those who were fallen because the demons of the nether world constantly attempt to enslave our minds. For this did the Lord Christ take on flesh, and became man. He was nailed upon the Cross, as it was ordained.²³⁸ Methodios outlines the value of the Cross with several descriptions of its strength. For mankind, we are no longer ruled by our passions because the sign of the Cross is our fortification. The Cross conquers the lower powers [evil].²³⁹ Christ's Cross is the shield against injustice and drives it away. It frees the debt for all the gifts coming down from God. It is the means by which the Church is fortified and built up.²⁴⁰

The second of the Methodian homilies declares it is addressed to the "ashamed concerning the Cross of Christ". It is evident from the text that this is a short, incomplete segment of a longer work. Methodios begins by posing the situation that those who are of God try to balance and put their house in order. This involves balancing the evils that affect man; these include the demon inspired traits of vanity, culpable acts with the good that is sourced in God.²⁴¹ Further, into the work, Methodios declares that Christ went to the Cross in the flesh so that with His stretching out of His arms,

²³⁸ Methodios of Constantinople (edited 1857-1866), "Homily on The Cross and the Passion of Christ (excerpts)," in *PG*, vol. xviii ed. J. - P. Migne, Paris, cols. 397 - 401, col. 397 d.

²³⁹ This is reminiscent of the protection of Marina from the dragon by the sign of the cross, which she made with her arms.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 400 b and c.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, col. 401 a.

humanity could be stretched upward in the direction of God.²⁴² Reading on, Methodios utilises a customary tool of his rhetorical style by the repeated use of several words that alliterate and play on meaning. This relates to the subjugation of the physical passions and the replacement of them by a Passion for Christ. In this instance, the words that are employed are "πάθος, παθῶν, πάθη, παθεῖν, πάθους and παθητῶ". The root word in Greek means "passion".

Ὅτι τούτῳ τα πάθη τῷ σχήματι ἡμβλυνται· πάθος
παθῶν διὰ τοῦ παθεῖν γενόμενος, καὶ θάνατος
διὰ θανεῖν θανάτου· οὐδὲ ἀλυγυνδεῖς ὑπὸ πάθους.
Οὔτε γὰρ πάθος ὅλως αὐτὸν ἐξέστησεν,...²⁴³

At the start of the third homily, Methodios presents these questions. How did the Son of God in a short and determined time depart in the body? Next, he asks the question concerning the goal for Christian life, how is an apassionate soul born of one ruled by the passions?²⁴⁴ Methodios declares that Christ's humanity could never be separated from him, and it was, in all respects, no longer subject to death. The adversary of Christ, the Devil, is truly the wounded through the wounds of Christ. Christ overcame those who beat his flesh and he pierced those who stabbed his body by conquering Satan. There was a co-equal suffering; Christ on the Cross and in the flesh suffered; but those who were causing his suffering

²⁴² Ibid., col. 401 b: "Ἐπαθε γὰρ σαρκὶ τῷ προσπαγεῖς ὁ Λόγος, ἵνα ἀπλώσῃ ἀπονεναρκημένον πλάνη τὸν ἄνθρωπον πρὸς τὸ ἄνω τε καὶ θεῖον μέγεθος."

²⁴³ Ibid., col. 401 b, c.

²⁴⁴ This goal of Orthodox spiritual life is explained in *The Philokalia* (1978), vol. 3, pp. 331 ff.

also suffered.²⁴⁵ This section ends with yet another question. "How rather, did Sophia and apassion, remain unwounded, or did not acquire a bad meaning; and if the body was wounded and fixed by nails, how did nature, which comes from God's being become purer and improved?"²⁴⁶

None of these homilies ends in the accustomed benediction or theological conclusion. It is therefore very reasonable to assume that they are incomplete and that the record is fragmentary.

Canon in honour of St. Lucia of Syracuse

The virgin-martyr Lucia was an early fourth century Christian of Syracuse in Sicily.²⁴⁷ The popularity of this saint could not have escaped a young Methodios growing up in the saint's hometown. The canon can be found in the following references: L. Bernadini, *Methodio I patriarcha di Constantinopli (843 – 847), vincitore del II iconoclasmo*, Roma 1970, [typed thesis]. This text with Italian translation is very difficult to find. The Bernardini journal articles [see bibliography] do not contain this composition. The source used here for the Greek text is found in *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*.²⁴⁸ St. Lucia's feastday is celebrated on 13 December.

²⁴⁵ Methodios of Constantinople, "Homily on The Cross and the Passion of Christ (excerpts)", col. 404 a.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., col. 404 b: "πῶς οὐ μᾶλλον ἄτρωτός γε ἔμεινεν ἡ Σοφία καὶ ἀπαθής, οὐδὲν πρὸς οὐδενὸς καकुνομένη, καὶ τεμνόμενον συνῆν καὶ προσηλωμένον τῷ σώματι βελτίων καὶ καθαρωτέρα φύσεως πάσης μετὰ τὸν γεννησάμενον αὐτὴν θεὸν ὑπάρχουσα; "

²⁴⁷ Cross and Livingstone (eds.) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 842.

²⁴⁸ Methodios of Constantinople, (n.d.) "Canon in Sanctam Luciam," in *Analecta Hymnica Graecae - Codibus erute Italiae Inferioris*, vol. iv - Canones Decembris ed. A. Kominis (Istituto di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici Università di Roma), Roma, pp. 279 - 287 for 13 Dec.

The exact date and place of the writing of this canon is not known, nor is there any indication within the text. It would be reasonable to assume that this might very well have been formulated during Methodios' stay in Rome around 815. This canon is an acrostic poem.²⁴⁹ and is sung in the fourth tone.

The hymn begins with a plea for the intercession of the virgin-martyr, for her to bear the prayers of the faithful as shining branches lighting the darkness.²⁵⁰ A classic Methodian tool can be seen in the next verse as he uses a constant repetition and play on words, specifically in this case the word is Δόξα, meaning glory.

Δεδόξασται ἐν τῇ σῇ ὁ Κύριος
ὁμολογία, σεμνή,
καὶ συνεδοξασέ σε ἑαυτῷ
ἐν Θεῷ γὰρ ἡ δόξα σου
τῷ ἀληθῶς δοξάζοντι
τοὺς τοῦτον πάντοτε δοξάζοντας.²⁵¹

The concept of Lucia giving glory to God through her witness is complemented by the glory God has bestowed on her because of her steadfastness. The first Theotokion glorifies the Virgin Mother as the one who without seed brought about the Father's will, through the Holy Spirit. Together with the Son and with the flesh, which she contributed, the Eternal Son was without a mother being begotten before all ages of the Father;

²⁴⁹ A poem in which the first letter of each verse forms a word or a series of words. The Akathist hymn is an example; each verse begins with a letter of the Greek alphabet from alpha to omega.

²⁵⁰ Methodios of Constantinople, "Canon in Sanctam Luciam", p. 279, lines 1 – 6.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 279, lines 6 – 12.

likewise He was without a father as he was Incarnate on earth.²⁵² This concrete declaration of the role of the Virgin Mary in Salvation Economy provides an agent for praise as well as a theological ascertainment, which undermines iconoclastic theology.

Commenting on Lucia's chastity and her martyrdom, Krausmüller translates this passage on p. 282, lines 74 – 78.

We applaud your exchange of virginity, for you
remain pure in espousal and virginal in marriage,
but you are impregnated regarding martyrdom.

He then presents the following opinion, "In other words, because Lucia has remained chaste, she will receive in exchange impregnation by Christ. For Methodios, Lucia's renunciation establishes a contract with God, who will then be obliged to manifest himself as the husband she has not had before."²⁵³

Methodios continues to laud Lucia for her strength and fortitude in rejecting her fiancé and speaking her mind to her mother. This behaviour was not the customary response of a daughter to her mother during these times.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 280, lines 19 – 24.

²⁵³ Krausmüller "Divine Sex: Patriarch Methodios's concept on virginity", p. 63; see note 30 as explanation. This conclusion on the "obligation" of God may be reading more meaning into the poetic language and not considering the theology. God is under no obligation to man; He acts only out of His love.

She is determined not to marry, but chooses instead martyrdom as a virgin for Christ.²⁵⁴

The comparison of Lucia with the "Three Youths in the Furnace"²⁵⁵ is made, but it is revealed in the text that Lucia did not personally recite the Hymn of Praise of the Youths, "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise and exalt Him forever."²⁵⁶ The canon praises the young virgin for enduring the flames, but each stanza ends with the verse of the Three Youths.²⁵⁷ The insertion of the text from the hymn in praise of Daniel and the Three Youths is interesting because one of the works of Methodios, which I could not consult, has the same theme. The hymn repeatedly called up in the canon for St. Lucia is very well known, being prominent in the Holy Saturday morning service of Holy Week in the Orthodox Church. The canon ends by citing the miraculous wonderworking intercessions of St. Lucia after her martyrdom for Christ. The last two verses of the canon declare that St. Lucia is ever ready to intercede to God for the faithful who turn to her in piety.²⁵⁸

The Canon in Honour of St. Ioannikios

²⁵⁴ Methodios of Constantinople, "Canon in Sanctam Luciam", p. 284, lines 114 – 126.

²⁵⁵ Daniel 3, 1 – 57 (LXX).

²⁵⁶ Papadeas, G. (ed.) (1971) *Greek Orthodox Holy Week and Easter Services* in Greek/English, New York NY, p. 428.

²⁵⁷ Methodios of Constantinople, "Canon in Sanctam Luciam", pp. 285 – 286.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 287.

Of the liturgical works of St. Methodios, this one presents some very interesting features. It can be found in a study by Schiro.²⁵⁹ This canon can be dated with relative accuracy in the last year of Methodios' patriarchate. Ioannikios fell asleep in the Lord on 3 November 846.²⁶⁰ The canon is an acrostic work, which is sung in tone plagal four. Ioannikios was not a distant historical figure to Methodios, they were not only contemporaries, but also intimately acquainted. Several accounts document their relationship, including *Vita of Michael Synkellos*²⁶¹ and the *Vita of Ioannikios*.²⁶² The canon contains biographical information about the saint, which is interpreted in a theological light by Methodios. Another provocative feature of this composition relates to the time which it was written. It contains almost no iconodulic rhetoric or polemic. It would seem Methodios is confident that the threat from iconoclasts is relatively over. Examples of this fact can be confirmed by examining the nine Theotokia within this work. The word "σάρκα" appears once, while "σάρκωθέντα" also appears only one time. As was shown in earlier hymns, iconodulic language is much decreased here; the remaining Theotokia are pious pleas for intercession by the Mother of God.

The canon opens with praise for the blessed, God-bearing Ioannikios by a choir of heavenly voices, who faithfully honour him for being a luminary in

²⁵⁹ Schiro, J. and Kominis, A. (eds.) (1972) *Canones vol. III - Novembris Canon of St. Ioannikios by Methodios of Constantinople* (Istituto di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici - Universita di Roma), Roma, pp. 134 – 145.

²⁶⁰ Peter the Monk, "Life of St. Ioannikios", p. 245, in the introduction.

²⁶¹ Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, pp. 102 – 103.

²⁶² Peter the Monk, "Life of St. Ioannikios", p. 339, p. 340 and p. 344.

their time.²⁶³ The Methodian style quickly becomes apparent in the second ode. The patriarch uses in one stanza four forms of the Greek word "knowledge or making known".

"Ἰσμεν σε ἀνεπίγνωστα, πάτερ' Ἰωαννίκιε,
ἐπιγνόντες μὴ γνῶναι το εἶναι ὑπὲρ τὸ γνῶναί
σε. ²⁶⁴

Lauding the monastic life, Methodios refers to the models of the monastic ideal, St. John the Forerunner and Elijah the Thesbite²⁶⁵ as examples followed by Ioannikios. Methodios comments that Ioannikios shares the same name as the Forerunner²⁶⁶ and the same holy calling.

God's calling moved the thrice -blessed Ioannikios,
he accepted to walk the same path as Elijah, a
monastic in the desert. ²⁶⁷

In the fourth ode, Methodios explains an event in the life of the Saint Ioannikios, who appears to have "deserted" from the army.²⁶⁸ Mango in his article comments on this theory citing the different versions in the *Vitae*,

²⁶³ Schiro and Kominis (eds.) *Canon of St Ioannikios by Methodios of Constantinople*, p. 134, lines 1 – 5: " Ἱεροφῶνοις χορείαις θεοφόρον ὄσιον, τὸν φωστῆρα τοῖς χρόνοις ἡμῶν, καὶ ἡμεῖς τιμῆσωμεν πιστῶς Ἰωαννίκιον."

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 135, lines 31 – 35.

²⁶⁵ III Kings 17, 1 (LXX).

²⁶⁶ Peter the Monk, "Life of St. Ioannikios", p. 243; Sullivan notes that Ioannikios is a diminutive form of the name John. Note how Methodios connects Ioannikios with St. John the Baptist.

²⁶⁷ Schiro and Kominis (eds.) *Canon of St. Ioannikios by Methodios of Constantinople*, p. 136: "Πρὸς κλῆσιν τοῖς πράγμασιν εὐδούμενος, Τῷ Προδρόμῳ ὁμώνυμος Ἠλίῳ τε σύνδρομος ἀναδείχθης, τρισμάκαρ οὐς καὶ ἡ δίαιτα καὶ κλήσις θεοῦς ἔδειξεν. "

²⁶⁸ Peter the Monk, "Life of St. Ioannikios", p. 262, Chapter 7.

one by Peter and the other by Sabas. He points out that if Sabas is to be believed Ioannikios most probably “retired” honourably.²⁶⁹ Notwithstanding, Mango in his conclusion places his faith in the *Vita* by Peter the Monk.²⁷⁰

This assertion conforms to this stanza of the canon. Methodios not only gives this incident credence: he elevates the motivation and actions of Ioannikios to a theological plain. According to Methodios’ account, the saint did throw down his army shield, but in doing so he took up the sword against the Devil through his monastic vocation. With his ecstatic faith, the noble Ioannikios was able to “sever the heads of headless enemies [demons]”.²⁷¹

The fifth Theotokion is an excellent example of the shift in emphasis by the Patriarch after the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Listen to his words as he supplicates the Virgin Mary. She is heralded as more honourable than the Seraphim, and the most holy Virgin is asked to beseech her Son on behalf of the salvation of the souls of those who hymn to her.²⁷²

This verse presents the Virgin not as an agent to representing iconodulic theological perspective, but rather, she is portrayed in her role as intercessor and protectress of God’s people. The composition continues honouring Ioannikios as one lauded by the prayerful faithful because he is

²⁶⁹ Mango, “The Two Lives Ioannikos and The Bulgarians”, p. 401.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 404.

²⁷¹ Schiro and Kominis (eds.) *Canon of St. Ioannikios by Methodios of Constantinople*, p. 137 – 138: “ Ρίψασπις σὺ φανείς ἐν μάχῃ πολεμίων, ἐδείχθης ἀριστεύς κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου, ὡς ἐν ἐκστάσει τῆς πίστεώς σου μαχαίρᾳ διατεμών τοὺς ἀκεφάλους ἐχθρούς.”

²⁷² Ibid., p. 139, lines 131 – 135: “...Τῶν Χερουβίμ φανείσα τιμιωτέρα, παρθένε πανύμνητε πρέσβευε τῷ υἱῷ σου σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ὑμνούντων σε.”

the embodiment of Orthodoxy. He has taken the singular way, that of being a solitary, in a straight and unbending fashion so he is worthy of acclaim.²⁷³ Twice in the next few verses, Methodios reverts to the Song of the Three Youths in the Furnace to end stanzas. "Praise and exalt Him forever"²⁷⁴ and Praise ye, the Lord and exalt Him forever.²⁷⁵ This is the standard usage for the seventh and eighth odes of a canon at this time period in the writing of Orthodox hymns.

The last few stanzas describe the characteristics that Ioannikios exhibited while on earth. "As the noncorporeal angels give wisdom, as the forward looking prophets, together with the apostles you daily witnessed the way,²⁷⁶ ascetic Father Ioannikios".²⁷⁷ Methodios, in his tribute to the monastic father of his time, praises his spiritual attainments, not his influence on the contemporary events of the day. The Patriarch looks toward the Kingdom of Heaven and not the earthly kingdom. He has no doubt that his friend, Ioannikios, is a citizen of the Heavenly realm.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 140, lines 148 – 151: "Ὡς κύριος ὀρθοδόξων καὶ κανὼν τοῦ μοναδικοῦ βίου, σύ ἀπαρέγκλιτε ὑπερεύχου τῶν πιστῶς εὐφημούντων σε.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 142, lines 194 – 196: "ὕμνεϊτε καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας "

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 143 lines 218 – 220: "Κύριον ὕμνεϊτε καὶ ὑπερυψοῦτε εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας."

²⁷⁶ Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843 - 1118*, p. 32: "The ἀγγελικῶν βίῳ, the life of the angels, the ultimate goal of all monasticism, a life in which the demands of the body and of the human will were completely subordinated to those of the spirit".

²⁷⁷ Schiro and Kominis (eds.) *Canon of St. Ioannikios by Methodios of Constantinople*, p. 143, lines 239 – 244: "Μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων ὡς ἄσαρκος συνετάγης, μετὰ προφητῶν προορῶν, συντάττη ἀποστόλοις καὶ ἐν μάρτυσιν ὁσήμερα τῇ βίᾳ, πάτερ ἀσκητὰ Ἰωαννίκιε."

The Idiomelon in Honour of the 42 Martyrs of Amorion

This work is found in the following references, *The Ménées de toute l'année*; tomos 4, Rome, 1898, p. 145, also catalogued by Follieri.²⁷⁸ The text that will be used for this study is from the *Menaia* month of March.²⁷⁹ Unlike many of Methodios' works, the dating of authorship can be estimated quite closely. The historical record clearly indicates that Amorion was captured by the Persians in 838.²⁸⁰ These martyrs were held prisoners for seven years until their martyrdom on 6 March 845.²⁸¹ Therefore it is reasonable to assume that Methodios wrote this hymn, while he was Patriarch and after that date.

The rubrics for this hymn in modern usage are quite clear, it is to be sung during the vesper service of the feast celebrating the memory of these martyrs on 6 March. Further instructions indicate that this particular idiomelon by Methodios is only to be chanted if the vespers for the feast fall on a Saturday. The hymn is chanted in the second tone. The text for the idiomelon is as follows:

Ἡ ἐκκλησία σήμερον πανηγυρίζει μυστικῶς, νέαν
στολὴν ἐνδυσσάμενη, ὡς πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον, τὰ
αἵματα τῶν νέων Ἀθλοφόρον τούτος γὰρ ἐν

²⁷⁸ Follieri, *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae*, p. 296.

²⁷⁹ ΓΕΓΛΕ (ed.) *Liturgical Books of the Months (ΜΗΝΑΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ)*, p. 25, 6 March.

²⁸⁰ Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, p. 303. Treadgold cites the date the Persians left Amorion after its sacking, (15 August 838). The 42 prisoners were then taken to Baghdad.

²⁸¹ Kazhdan, A. P. (ed.) (1991) *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford University Press), New York and Oxford, pp. 800 - 801.

εὐσέβεια ἐκθρεψαμένη, θυσίαν ἁμωμον δεκτὴν
καὶ εὐάρεστον, Χριστῷ προσήγαγε· Διὸ νικητὰς
ὁ τούτος τῶν παράνομων ἀναδείξας, καὶ
στεφανώσας καὶ δοξάσας, καὶ ἡμῖν κατάπεμψον,
ταῖς αὐτῶν πρεσβείαις τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.²⁸²

The observation that was made concerning the text of *The Canon in Honour of St. Ioannikios* is applicable to this hymn, which was written after the Triumph of Orthodoxy and it heralds the sacrifice of Christian martyrdom and victory. Therefore, “the clothing of the Church in a new robe” can be interpreted as the icons being returned to the Church. The phrase “most iniquitous” could very well describe the iconoclasts. The hymn proclaims:

Today, the Church celebrates a mystic feast, She
is dressed in a new robe of porphyry and fine linen
by blood of the young athletes. Nurtured in piety,
She has offered their blameless sacrifice,
acceptable and well pleasing to You O Christ.
Wherefore, O you who did show them to be victors
over the most iniquitous and have crowned and
glorified them, through their supplications send
down upon us Your great mercy.²⁸³

²⁸² ΓΕΓΛΕ (ed.) *Liturgical Books of the Months (ΜΗΝΑΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ)*, Month of March, pp. 25 – 26.

²⁸³ *ΜΗΝΑΙΑ - Liturgical Books of the Months*, p. 45.

Poem from and to the Graptoi

This short composition is not listed in any of the catalogues of Methodian works. It was written during the time of his imprisonment.²⁸⁴ According to this account of Methodios' incarceration, the following communications of salutation and reply were exchanged between Theodore and Theophanes *Graptoi* and the already captive Methodios.

The *Graptoi* wrote:

Τῷ ζῶντι νεκρῷ καὶ νεκρῷ ζωηφόρῳ,
Οἰκοῦντι τὴν γῆν καὶ πολοῦντι τὸν πόλον,
γραπτοὶ γράφουσι δέσμιοι τῷ δεσμίῳ.

Methodios responded:

Τοῖς ταῖς βίβλοισιν οὐρανῶν κλησιγράφοις
καὶ πρὸς μέτωπα σωφρόνως ἐστιγμένοις
προσεῖπεν ὁ ζῳθαπτος ὡς συνδεσμίῳις.²⁸⁵

This short exchange is rich in theology and commentary on their situation. This translation is offered to attempt to convey the spirit of the dialogue between these iconodulic prisoners of conscience.

The *Graptoi* wrote:

To the dead-living man and the life-bearing dead
man,
To one who lives in the earth, and haunts the
heavens,
The branded captives write to the captured.

²⁸⁴ Bekker (ed.) *Chronicle of Symeon Magister.*, pp. 642 – 643, cited in Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 161.

²⁸⁵ Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos - Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 161.

Methodios responded:

For the heavenly images you are called Branded
Imprinted on soberly imprinted foreheads
Said the one buried alive to [his] co-fettered.

Unpublished Works

The following few works of Methodios have previously not been published. The manuscripts were referenced and cited in various catalogues. They were made available for this study in reproduction form. My thanks to the various institutions, which assisted in this endeavour.

A Canon of Supplication and Confession to the Theotokos

This work was catalogued by Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitike Bibliotheke*, tomos 2, Petrograd, in 1894, on p. 547. In 1892, C. Sakkellion identified the manuscript and catalogued it in the National Library of Greece.²⁸⁶ The transcription of this mss will be used for this enquiry. As with other compositions of Methodios, the date of writing is not clear. The attribution does state "a work of Patriarch Methodios", but it is not evident whether this is the later notation of a scribe or a partial dating. There does not appear to be polemic or anti-iconoclastic language within the canon. The canon is an extremely personal and revealing assertion of Methodios' feelings of weakness and failures. Constantly within the text, the state of

²⁸⁶ Methodios of Constantinople (n.d.) *Canon of Supplication and Repentance to the Theotokos*, in *Catalogue of the National Library of Greece* number 728, Athens, pp. 133 ff., p. 133 [folio 78].

wretchedness of Methodios as a penitent is emphasised, and there is a call for the aid of the pure Virgin Mother. Although this is a stylistic technique in penitential canons, one cannot help but think that Methodios felt these sentiments personally. The rubrics direct this hymn to be sung in the second plagal tone.

The canon begins with Methodios declaring his wretchedness and as a result, he states he is lost and afraid. He laments his life of countless sins and acknowledging his state, asking for the help of the pure Lady.²⁸⁷ He declares he is weary, and beseeches, where does he begin to recount his unspeakable and wicked failings? The suppliant asks for pity at the end wondering what he has become.²⁸⁸ Is Methodios nearing the end of his life or is this a verbalisation of his trepidation at the thought of the Last Judgement? Methodios laments that he has soiled the pure image and his high-minded judgement, both given to him by God. He bemoans that he has lived the life of a reprobate, through his thoughts and his actions.²⁸⁹ Methodios goes on to avow that he has defiled the temple of his body,²⁹⁰ and declares most mortal men tremble when entering God's temple, but he

²⁸⁷ Ibid., in folio [78], p. 1, lines 7 –12: “ Πῶς μου θρηνήσω τὸν βίον τὸν ρυπαρὸν, καὶ τὰ πλήθη δέσποινα τῶν ἀμέτρων μου κακῶν· τίδε ἐξαγγείλω σοὶ ἀγνή, ἀπορώ καὶ δειλιῶ, ἀλλὰ βοήθει μοι...”

²⁸⁸ Ibid., in folio [78], p. 1, lines 13 – 18: “Πόθεν νῦν ἄρξομαι λέγειν τὰ πονηρά, καὶ δεινά μου πταίσματα, ὁ ταλαίπωρος ἐγώ· οἶμοι τί γενήσομαι λοιπόν, ἀλλὰ δέσποινα ἀγνή, πρὸ τέλους οἴκτειρον.”

²⁸⁹ Ibid., in folio [78], pp. 2 – 3, lines 17 – 20, lines 1 and 2: “Τὸ κατ’ εἰκόνα μου ἀγνή, κατερρύψωσα οἶμοι, ὑψηλόφρονι γνώμῃ καθ’ ὁμοίότητά γάρ καὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λογισμῷ τοῦ ἀσώτου ἔπραξα τὰ ἄτοπα.”

²⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 6, 19.

on the other hand shamelessly enters, as a profligate.²⁹¹ He recounts that Adam transgressed, even though he had the commandment of the Creator and for this he suffered exile from Paradise. Methodios cries that he can only lament his abysmal failings as a transgressor, an apostate of Christ. He declares that the fires of his passion curse his flesh²⁹² and catalogues a myriad of his sins and sufferings, evermindful of his unworthiness. Behold, he comes to the Chaste One with much fear and beseeches the Theotokos to strengthen him with wisdom.²⁹³ This segment of the canon ends²⁹⁴ with the following request from Methodios:

Receive now the choir of archangels, the army of
the host of heaven of my creator the company of
apostles and prophets, martyrs and blessed
hieromartyrs and intercede to God, for me, you
who are called the Pure One.²⁹⁵

How does this canon fit into the entire Methodian corpus? There are some stimulating and valid questions, which could be asked from the introduction to this hymn. Was this the cry of a young Methodios stricken with such extreme guilt from an unknown sin or passion or the sorrow of an elderly

²⁹¹ Methodios of Constantinople *Canon of Supplication and Repentance to the Theotokos*, in folio [78], p. 4, lines 7 –12: “Ναὸν ἐμόλυνα, κακῶς τοῦ σώμ(α)τος καὶ ναὸν τοῦ Κ(υρ(ι)ο)υ ὅνπερ βροτοί, τρέμοντες εἰσέρχονται· ἐγὼ δὲ οἴμοι ἀναιδῶς, εἰσπορεύομαι ὁ ἄσωτος.”

²⁹² Ibid., in folio [78], p. 7 appears throughout the entire page encompassing several stanzas.

²⁹³ Ibid., in folio [78], p. 10, lines 11 – 16: “ Ἴδοῦ προσέρχομαι, σοι πανάχραντε φόβῳ πολλῷ, καὶ πόθῳ τὴν ἰσχὺν ἐπιστάμενος, τῆς πολλῆς σου πρεσβείας ὃ δοῦλος σου· μέγιστα γὰρ ἰσχύ[ει] δέησις δέσποινα...”

²⁹⁴ The manuscript reflects the mid-ninth century canon form; there are only eight odes.

²⁹⁵ Methodios of Constantinople *Canon of Supplication and Repentance to the Theotokos*, in folio [78], p. 10 lines 19 and 20, p. 11 lines 21 – 27: “...Χοροὺς παράλαβε ἀρχαγγέλων νῦν καὶ τὴν πληθὺν τῶν ἄνω στρατευμάτων κτίστου μου, ἀποστόλων δήμους τέ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, μάρτυρας καὶ δόσιους ἱερομάρτυρας καὶ πρεσβείαν ποίσον ἀγνή, ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς Θε(ο)ν...”

infirm Methodios facing death and fearful of God's judgement because of his passed life? These questions may never be answered, because there is no support for either supposition within the text.

Penitential Canon of Methodios of Constantinople

The next composition of Methodios is also a canon, which decries the state of sin of the author. It was catalogued by G. de Andrés in Madrid, in the year 1965.²⁹⁶ The monastery was good enough to furnish a copy of the manuscript, but unfortunately, the quality of the manuscript is extremely poor. There are numerous lacunae and the canon in its preserved form is incomplete. The work is an acrostic poem, which the acrostic notation spells out "Lament your life."²⁹⁷ The hymn is sung in the fourth plagal tone. The introduction declares it laments the miserable pitiable life of Methodios.

There are some subtle differences between this canon and the previous one analysed. The darker and more sombre tones are not as prevalent in this work even though he speaks openly of his battle with sin, his polluted life and corrupted will. He declares he has struggled with these failings since he was young²⁹⁸ and asks the Theotokos for her intercession.²⁹⁹ There is a hint in the language of a man who has begun to deal with his sin.

²⁹⁶ Methodios of Constantinople (n.d.) *Penitential Canon*, in *Catalogo de los griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, Madrid, pp. 333 ff.

²⁹⁷ "Θρήνη σὸν βίον".

²⁹⁸ Methodios of Constantinople, *Penitential Canon*, in Ode 1, lines 9 – 12: " ἡ ζωὴ μου τρισαλθία καὶ ὁ βίος ἐναγῆς καὶ ὁ τρόπος βέβηλος, καὶ ἡ προαίρεσις διεφθαρμένη...Νέαν ἄγων ἡλικίαν."

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, in Ode 1, line 19.

He acknowledges that he is repressing the lust of the soul and body. The weight of his contest is being lifted toward God the Saviour and true Lord Christ.³⁰⁰ Generally, this opus is penitential, but it possesses an element of hope and faith in salvation.

Stichera

The last two works are listed as being unpublished but catalogued in a study of the history of the Triodion.³⁰¹ After cross-referencing notations in this enquiry, it is evident that both hymns have been published. In fact, not only have they been published in Greek, but they have also been translated into English. They are hymns sung during the Great and Holy Thursday Mattin Service. The confusion has occurred, primarily because no attribution is noted ascribing the hymns to Patriarch Methodios, in Triodion³⁰². The translated text is as follows:

Today Judas lays aside his outward pretence of love for the poor, and openly displays his greed for money. No longer does he take thought for the needy. He offers now for sale, not the oil of myrrh brought by the sinful woman, but the Myrrh from

³⁰⁰ Ibid., in Ode 3, lines 12 – 13: “Βάρος παισμάτων ἀνεύειν πρὸς τὸν σ(ωτή)ρα, τὸν ὄντως Κ(ύριον) καὶ Θ(εο)ν ”

³⁰¹ Archimandrite Kallistos (1934) "Historical Structure of the *Triodion* - in Greek," in *Nea Sion*, Vol. tomos 29 Thessalonica, p. 563.

³⁰² *ΤΡΙΩΔΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑΝΥΚΤΙΚΟΝ*, p. 392.

heaven, and he takes the pieces of silver. He runs to the Jews and says to the transgressors: 'What will ye give me if I deliver Him up to you?'

O avarice of the traitor! He reckons the sale profitable, and, agreeing with the wishes of the purchasers, he concludes the transaction. He does not dispute about the price but sells the Lord like a runaway slave; for it is the custom of thieves to throw away what is precious. So the disciple casts that which is holy to the dogs, and the madness of avarice fills him with fury against his own Master. Let us flee from such folly, and cry: O longsuffering Lord, glory to Thee. ³⁰³

There is very little explanation necessary, primarily owing to the excellent translation of Mother Mary and Bishop Kallistos Ware. One observation might be of help to those unfamiliar to the use of "today" in Orthodox liturgical language. The concept of time, in Christ, is one not bound by conventional definitions. The transforming of linear historical time into the immediacy and present is a factor of liturgical time, *kairos*, which places the events of the Church, out of history and into now. ³⁰⁴

The next hymn by Methodios is from the same service. The text is as follows:

³⁰³ *The Lenten Triodion*, pp. 555 – 556.

³⁰⁴ Mantzaridis, G. (1995) *Time and Man*, trans. J. Vulliamy (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press), South Canaan, Pa, p. 77 ff; see especially chapters on Transfiguring Time and Liturgical Time.

O ye faithful, let none who is uninstructed in the Mystery draw near to the table of the Lord's Supper; let none approach deceitfully as Judas.

For he received his portion, yet he betrayed the Bread. In outward appearance he was a disciple, yet in reality he was present as a murderer. He rejoiced with the Jews, though he sat at supper with the apostles. He kissed in hatred, and with his kiss he sold the God and Saviour of our souls, who has redeemed us from the curse.³⁰⁵

The hymn presents the events of Holy Thursday in a very personal manner. The image of one of the disciples of our Lord, one so close; betraying the Master is offered not as a piece of history; but as an act of personal faithless perfidy.

There are a few works of Methodios, which were not discussed but will be listed here. The primary reason for not studying them is the obscurity of the reference or an error within the reference making them unavailable and preventing their investigation. They are as listed below:

In Constantinum et Helenam

This work is an unknown type of work, but it appears to be a homily on Sts. Constantine and Helen. The reference is W. Chris and M. Paranikas *Anthologiae Graeca carminum christianorum*, p. 99.

³⁰⁵ *The Lenten Triodion*, p. 556.

The Canon in honour of Daniel and the three youths in the furnace

This hymn could not be located because the thesis in which it was referenced is not available. The issuing school is unknown. Consulting the journal articles by the same author did not yield any concrete results. The reference is listed as L. Bernardini, *Metodio I Patriarca di Constantinopoli (843 - 847) Vincitore del II Iconoclasmo*, Roma, (1970), [typed thesis].

Two Theotokia

This work is catalogued in T. Toscani et I. Cozza, *De Immaculata Deiparae conceptione hymnologia graecorum* Roma, 1862, p. 112 n.23, p.178 n. 11.

Paracletic Canon [unpublished]

This composition is referenced in E. Tomadakes, *Eptēris Etaireias Byzantinon Spoudon*, Tomos 29 – 30, (1972 – 73), p. 127 n. 11. There appears to be an error in the reference and a search in Greece failed to uncover this citation.

As the works of Methodios are reviewed, some observations can be applied, keeping in mind the criteria that were posed in the introduction to this chapter. It might be asked, what has been revealed about Methodios, the man, by examining his compositions? There are characteristics that have become evident, which are appropriate to a description of Methodios.

He has been shown to be a poet, a theologian and an educated man of his time. He is all of these, yet not exclusively any one of these. He struggled with sin, and exhibited guilt and cumpunction for his failings. He was a man of deep faith and prayer. He intensely loved his friends, but also felt the need to document his times. Methodios was committed to a cause and to his fellow sufferers for Christ. As was discussed after the sections on the *Vitae*, Methodios was extremely aware of the historical responsibility of what he considered to be the Orthodox position. They had not only defeated their opponents, but the opponents of Christ. He was unshakeable in the opinion that it was the duty of the iconodules to assure that the heresy never returned to pollute the Church again. To this end, Methodios used all the tools at his disposal including the literary ones. Within his writings, Methodios utilised his skills to provide a forum for his philosophy and points of view. The largest canvass on which Methodios wrote was that of the faith. Whether in polemical writings, poetry, history, liturgical hymns, encomia or *vitae*, one thing is demonstrable, above all, Methodios was a man of the Church.



Figure 7: - Map of Asia Minor

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS AND THE METHODIAN LEGACY

O Methodios, hierarch of God, in you we recognise
a firm pillar of the Faith, a rampart of sacred doctrine,
a defender of piety, a dwelling of purity, a precious
flask filled with the myrrh of the Spirit, a repository of
teachings, upon whom rests the
Church of Christ! ¹

Remarkably, these words written by an unknown hymnographer about Patriarch Methodios capture much of the essence of the man, who was described in the introduction as a figure wrapped in the clouds of time. His life was extraordinary. He lived in a period in history, which called for considerable courage. He answered duress with resolute determination. His principles were not only guiding lights, they were convictions of faith. The easiest and most expedient course of action for all the leading iconodules would have been to acquiesce and abdicate their tenets. This was a course of action that none of them chose.

Methodios' life, his literary compositions and the chronicles of his contemporaries reveal a portrait of an extremely complex man, a man with many gifts, yet a man who felt greatly unworthy, as he viewed his own sins. In spite of these sensibilities, he revealed himself, in almost a cathartic way,

¹ Hymn from the vespers celebrating St. Methodios I, Patriarch of Constantinople. Sung in tone 4.

in his works. Methodios made enemies, some by his rigid opposition to heresy and some through his efforts to cleanse the Church of any vestiges of iconoclasm.

The resolution of the iconoclastic heresy was not the work of one person. The defenders of images became advocates of theological teachings which were the culmination of centuries of definition. They did not view themselves in isolation, but in continuity with the Tradition of the Apostles, the saints, the martyrs and the Fathers. Each of the iconodulic Patriarchs, Germanos, Tarasios, Nikephoros and Methodios vigorously safeguarded their sacred trust. They upheld the role set aside for the hierarchs, "guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us." ²

This element of hierarchical responsibility was a great influence on the spirit of Methodios. His actions were resolute and, in a large part, dependent on his concept of his duty to the Church. It was his obligation that the heresy of iconoclasm would never again threaten God's Church and he took this stewardship soberly. Methodios judged others by the high standards that he kept himself. In no small way, his shepherding of the Church provided a time for the re-establishing of a strengthened Orthodoxy. Images were brought back into the Church, She was re-adorned in icons but more significantly there would not be a return to the days of schism and doctrinal errors of iconoclasm.

² 2 Tim. 1, 14.

The Methodian Legacy

For Christians, since the first Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the definition that Christ is at one time, fully God and fully man is an essential teaching of the Faith. The reality of the Incarnation has been secured. The contemporary Orthodox theologian, John Chryssavgis has written:

God was made flesh (John 1, 14); to claim otherwise is to undermine the fullness [of] the Incarnation and to deny Christ's humanity. The painting of icons, therefore, is not an incidental act of devotion or a pious option, but a necessary expression of the reality of both God and the world.³

The icon's message is at once, beauty and theology, but the beauty is not of this world; it is a transcendent reflection of the Kingdom of God. For Orthodoxy, the teaching that the faithful who have put on Christ by their baptism have, in Him, the potential to "partake of the divine nature" ⁴ is a basis for their spiritual life in the Church. The images of Christ, the Theotokos and the saints are the actuality of life transfigured in Christ. "Behold I make all things new." ⁵ This is the promise of the icon; this is the splendour of theology in colour. Ultimately, this is the legacy that Patriarch Methodios has bequeathed and it can be summarised with these words:

³ Chryssavgis, J. (1999) *Beyond the Shattered Image* (Light and Life Publishing Co.), Minneapolis, MN p. 123.

⁴ 2 Peter 1, 4.

⁵ Rev. 21, 5.

This is faith of the Apostles, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith of the Orthodox, this is the faith which sustains the Christian *Oikoumene* ...⁶

⁶ Geanakoplos, D. J. (1984) *Byzantium - Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*, (University of Chicago Press), Chicago, p. 158.



Figure 8: - Methodios the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople (843 – 847) ¹

¹ Treadgold, W. *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)*, p. 377, A drawing made between 1847 and 1849 by Gaspare Fossati of a mosaic in St. Sophia, Constantinople, that is now lost but was probably of the ninth century. (Photo: Archivio Cantonale, Bellinzona).

Epilogue

To the Orthodox Christian the reality of the icon is a reality beyond reality. It is at once a reminder, a promise and a prayer. The image has its place only within the liturgical essence of the faith and the hearts of the faithful. Archimandrite Vasileios of the Holy Mountain summarises the true meaning of the icon in this way:

Time and nature are made new: worldly space is transfigured; perspective, which puts man in the position of an outside observer, no longer exists. The believer, the pilgrim, is a guest at the Wedding. He is inside, and sees the whole world from the inside. History is interpreted differently: the events of divine Economy are not past and closed, but present and active. They embrace us, they save us. What we have in the icon is not a neutral faithful historical representation, but a dynamic liturgical transformation. In iconography, the events of salvation are not interpreted historically but express mystically and embodied liturgically; they interpenetrate with one another. They become a witness to the "different way of life" which has broken through the bounds set by corruption. They invite us to a spiritual banquet, here, now.¹

¹ Archimandrite Vasileios, (1984) *Hymn of Entry - Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church*, Contemporary Greek Theologians, trans. E. Briere (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), Crestwood, NY, p. 82.

Appendix I

The Works against the Studites as classified by Darrouzès are compared with the other sources:

- Fragment A is found in Mai, *Spicilegium romanum*, tomos vi, p. xxii and (partially supplemented) in Mai, *Script. N. collectio*, tomos iv, p.168; PG tomos c, cols. 1294 - 1296; also in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, tomos xviii, (1909), pp. 49 - 50. This composition is a portion of the segment labelled, "Première Lettre aux Stoudites" by Darrouzès.¹
- Fragment B is a modicum of work, which begins " Ἐπισκεπτέον δὲ...", it can be found in Pitra, p. 353 (note 3). In Darrouzès' article, this is an element of the "Seconde lettre aux Stoudites".²

It should be noted that although the passage begins with slightly differing wording; very quickly it reverts to a word for word parallel text to the Pitra version.

¹ Darrouzès, "Le patriarche Méthode contre les iconoclastes et les studites", pp. 30 – 38, see specifically the excerpt on pp. 37 – 39.

² Ibid., pp. 42 – 43, begins: " Ἐπισκεπτέον οὖν τὰ..."

- Fragment C, which begins: “ Ὁ γὰρ μακάριος πατήρ...” can be found in Pitra, *Scr. n. col.* p. 255. In his study, Darrouzès labels this “fragment 5” and is recounted on p. 55 of his monograph.
- Fragment D begins: “ Σὺ μοναχὸς εἶ” is found in Mai, *Sp. rom.*, tomos vi, p. xxii; PG tomos c, cols. 1297 & 1298. Darrouzès names this “Fragment 8”. It can be found on page 57 of this work.
- Fragment E can be found in Mai, *Sp. Rom.*, tomos vi, p. xxii, PG, tomos c., cols. 1293 – 1294. This passage starts with the phrase “ Μὴ συνεστιάσθε...” Labelled “fragment 4”, it is on page 55.
- Fragment F which begins with the phrase: “Πρὸς οὖν τοὺς Στουδιώτας”. This is an extract from the synodical act disciplining the Studites. It is preserved in Allatius, *De Methodiis*, p. 377. PG, tomos c, cols. 1296b – 1297b; Pitra, p. 361 has the complete text. Darrouzès compiles this text as a portion of what he classifies as Methodios’ second letter to the Studites; but he takes pains to differentiate it from the remaining body of the letter.³

³ Ibid., p. 53; see note 29.

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Lists of Patriarchs, Popes and Emperors ¹
From 700 – 886 AD

Patriarchs of Constantinople

Cyrus	706 - 712
John VI	712 - 715
Germanos I	715 - 730
Anastasios	730 - 754
Constantine II	754 - 766
Nicetas I	766 - 780
Paul IV	780 - 784
Tarasios	784 - 806
Nikephoros I	806 - 815
Theodotos Melissenos	
Cassiteras	815 - 821
Antonios I Cassimatas	821 - 837
John VII Grammatikos	837 - 843
Methodios I	843 - 847
Ignatios	847 - 858
Photios	858 - 867
Ignatios (again)	867 - 877
Photios (again)	877 - 886

Popes of Rome

John VI	701 - 705
John VII	705 - 707
Sisinnius	708
Constantine I	708 - 715
Gregory II	715 - 731
Gregory III	731 - 741
Zacharias	741 - 752
(Stephen II	752)
Stephen III (II)	752 - 757
Paul I	757 - 767
Constantine	767 - 769
(Philip	768)
Stephen IV	768 - 772
Hadrian I	772 - 795
Leo III	795 - 816
Stephen V	816 - 817
Paschal I	817 - 824
Eugenius II	824 - 827
Valentine	827
Gregory IV	827 - 844

¹ Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire.*, pp. xxi - xxvi

(John	844)
Sergius II	844 - 847
Leo IV	847 - 855
Benedict III	855 - 858
(Anastasius	855, d. c. 880)
Nicholas I	858 - 867
Hadrian II	867 - 872

Emperors of Byzantium

Tiberius III	698 - 705
Justinian II (again)	705 - 711
Philippicos Bardanes	711 - 713
Anastasios II	713 - 715
Theodosios III	715 - 717
Leo III	717 - 741
Constantine V	741 - 775
Leo IV	775 - 780
Constantine VI	780 - 797
Irene	797 - 802
Nikephoros I	802 - 811
Stauracios	811
Michael Rangabe	811 - 813
Leo V	813 - 820
Michael II	820 - 829
Theophilos	829 - 842
Michael III [with Empress Theodora as regent until 858]	842 - 867
Basil I	867 - 886

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