

A microhistory of monastic networks in Late Antique Mediterranean

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Περίληψη: Το άρθρο εξετάζει τη δημιουργία και ανάπτυξη δικτύων επικοινωνίας στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο κατά το πρώτο μισό του εβδόμου αιώνα. Στο επίκεντρο της παρούσας «μικροϊστορικής» διερεύνησης βρίσκεται η απόπειρα της δυναστείας του Ηρακλείου να επιβάλει ως αυτοκρατορικό δόγμα τη θεολογική φόρμουλα της μίας ενέργειας και μίας θέλησης του Χριστού, με απώτερο σκοπό τη θεραπεία του σχίσματος Χαλκηδονίων και Αντιχαλκηδονίων μετά το 451. Μέσα από τις πηγές αναδεικνύεται η δυναμική δραστηριότητα Κυπρίων μοναχών και επισκόπων, όπως επίσης και οι επαφές τους με τον αυτοκρατορικό οίκο, πατριάρχες και πάπες και τον μοναστικό κύκλο του Μαξίμου Ομολογητή.

Summary: This paper explores the formation and development of social networks in the Eastern Mediterranean, during the first half of the seventh century. At the heart of this “microhistorical” investigation we find the attempted imposition of the “one activity” and “one will of Christ” formula by the Heraclian dynasty, which aimed at reconciling Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonian after 451. The sources stress the dynamic activities of Cypriot monks and bishops, as well as their contacts with the imperial household, patriarchs and popes, and the monastic circle of Maximus the Confessor.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: δίκτυα επικοινωνίας, μοναχισμός, Ηράκλειος, Κύπρος, Μάξιμος Ομολογητής

Key-words: social networks, monasticism, Heraclius, Cyprus, Maximus the Confessor

In her 1992 monograph on the Origenist Controversy, Elizabeth A. Clark employed social network theory to examine the personal connections and clashes of the debate’s protagonists and participants, while also exploring the impact of culture and theology on

ecclesiastical politics.¹ In this paper² I wish to focus on another important chapter of Late

¹ Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy. The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1992).

² This paper was first presented in the Institute of Classical Studies 2019 Byzantine Colloquium “Politics of Faith: Theology, Ecclesiology, and Spatiality in the Christian World”.

Antique (or Early Byzantine) cultural and religious history, namely the controversy over imperial definitions of orthodoxy in the seventh century. Adopting a methodology similar to that of Clark's, I shall limit my discussion to Cypriot clerical networks in relation to the person, circle and theology of Maximus the Confessor. My approach is fundamentally "microhistorical", in the sense that I am focusing on key historical actors from a specific geographical micro-level (Cyprus), examining their role and activities within a broader Mediterranean macro-level, which stretched from Constantinople to Alexandria and from Sinai to Rome. As is well known, Maximus was the main champion of Christ's two natures, activities and wills against imperial doctrines (under Heraclius and Constans II) that advocated Christ's single activity (Monenergism) and will (Monothelitism). The aim of imperial ecclesiastical policy was to unite Christians in East and West under one faith, as a result of the division caused by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (since the non-Chalcedonians rejected the decree that Christ had two natures, being fully God and fully human at the same time).³

"Why do Cypriot ecclesiastics matter?" one may ask. The best way to answer this question is by turning to John the Merciful or John the Almsgiver. A native of Amathous (an ancient *polis* on the southern coast of Cyprus near the modern city of Limassol), John was the son of Stephanus or Epiphanius, the island's *archon*. Having lost his wife and children at a young age, John witnessed the vision of a beautiful *kore*

bearing the olive wreath and introducing herself as *Eleymosine* ("Mercy"), the firstborn daughter of the heavenly King. John was invited to befriend the luminous lady, so as to be brought before God; this he did for the rest of his life.⁴ John's vocation found expression in his activities as patriarch of Alexandria between 610 and 619/620. "The powers and authority vested in the bishop of Alexandria", Hans Hauben reminds us, "were indeed exceptional in every respect, religious, as well as political, [with] Egypt ... playing in many respects a central role in the eastern Mediterranean".⁵ These observations could partly explain the scholarly *topos* that Alexandrian patriarchs maintained "pharaonic" powers, both religious and political.⁶

In many ways, the image of John the Merciful emerging from his various hagiographies is at the antipode of this "hegemonic" (and largely negative) stereotype, embodying remarkable ascetic and pastoral virtues coupled with the extraordinary authority of Alexandrian popes. The essence of the matter is that, being son of the *archon* of Cyprus as well as personally pious, John was able to penetrate into the highest social stratum and ecclesiastical offices, by gaining (intentionally or not) the favour of general

³ There is vast bibliography on Maximus. See, e.g., Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London–New York, 1996); Demetrios Bathrellos, *Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (New York, 2004); Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015).

⁴ Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων, ο πολιούχος της Μητροπόλεως Λεμεσού, intr.-ed. Arch. Photios Ioakeim (Limassol, 2018), pp. 25, 122 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 6), 336 (John Moschus and Sophronius, pars. 2-3). On the name of John's father, see also Philip Pattenden, "Who was the father of St. John the Almoner", *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982), pp.191-194; Alan Cameron, "The Epigrams of Sophronius", *The Classical Quarterly* (NS) 33:1 (1983), pp. 288-290; Claudia Rapp, "All in the family: John the Almsgiver, Nicetas and Heraclius", *Νέα Πώμη* 1 (2004), pp. 126.

⁵ Hans Hauber, "The Alexandrian Patriarch as Pharaoh: From Biblical metaphor to scholarly topos", in *Egyptian Religion, the Last Thousand Years (Part I)*, ed. Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Harco Willems, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 84 (Leuven, 1998), p. 1345.

⁶ Hans Hauber, "The Alexandrian Patriarch", pp. 1341-1352.

Nicetas, cousin of Heraclius, the self-proclaimed emperor who had risen against Phocas' tyrannical rule. Sometime around 608/609, Nicetas seized control of Cyrenaica and Egypt; the rebels took over Cyprus and copper coins bearing the inscription D(OMINO) N(OSTRO) ERACAIΩ CONSVLI were minted on the island. Phocas was overthrown in 610, Nicetas was appointed *praefectus augustalis* of Egypt, and Heraclius ruled until his death in 641.⁷ Nicetas came to know John during the rebellion and the early phase of Heraclius' reign. At the time, John held a public office in Cyprus and Amathous profited from his evergetism.⁸ As Claudia Rapp puts it, "John's civic virtues [and loyalty, we may add] must have attracted the attention of Heraclius and Nicetas who must have wished to profit from his abilities by appointing him to the patriarchate of Alexandria";⁹ John became ritual brother (*adelphopoiotos*) with Nicetas and godfather of his children (*synteknos*), which bound him to Heraclius himself (apart from being the emperor's cousin, Nicetas was both the godfather and father-in-law of Heraclius' son Constantine).¹⁰ Thus, by appointing Nicetas as *praefectus augustalis* of Egypt and John as patriarch of Alexandria, Heraclius ensured that "Egypt remained in reliable hands, because it was a rich province, possibly contributing 30 percent or more of the revenues of

the Prefecture of the East to the imperial treasury".¹¹

John's involvement in the Christological controversies of the seventh century has recently been examined by Phil Booth, in connection to the activities of the two *Eukratades*,¹² namely the monks John Moschus and his disciple Sophronius, Maximus the Confessor's spiritual mentor and later patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638).¹³ Let me summarise some of Booth's findings. First, John the Merciful was "an active Chalcedonian",¹⁴ which means that he accepted the decrees of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) that asserted Christ's perfect divine and human natures.¹⁵ John suppressed the so-called theopaschite formula added by the non-Chalcedonians to the *Trisagion*, increased the number of Chalcedonian chapels in Alexandria, demanded a Chalcedonian confession from candidates to priesthood, instructed his flock to break communion with heretics and personally confronted the

⁷ Evangelos Chrysos, "Ο Ηράκλειος στην Κύπρο (609/10)", in *Πρακτικά Συμποσίου Κυπριακής Ιστορίας*, ed. Costas N. Constantinides (Ioannina, 1984), pp. 53-62; Walter Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 44-48; Rapp, "All in the family", p. 124.

⁸ Cameron, "The Epigrams", p. 288; Rapp, "All in the family", p. 126.

⁹ Rapp, "All in the family", p. 127 (also suggesting that John had also been godfather of Heraclius' son, together with Nicetas).

¹⁰ *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, p. 336 (John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 4), Rapp, "All in the family", p. 127-134.

¹¹ Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 53.

¹² Henry Chadwick, "John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the Sophist", *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1974), p. 59 (n. 1): "There was a monastery of the Eukratades at Constantinople near the church of St. Maura in Justinianae (modern Galata), whose higumen attended the council of Constantinople of 536.... Eukras or eukraton was a must containing pepper, cumin, and aniseed, a drink unattractive enough to be prescribed in the Studite Rule for Holy Week".

¹³ *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy. The Synodal Letter and Other Documents*, ed.-trans. Pauline Allen (Oxford, 2009); Philipp Winterhager, "Rome in the Seventh-Century Byzantine Empire: A Migrant's Network Perspective from the Circle of Maximus the Confessor", in *From Constantinople to the Frontier. The City and the Cities*, ed. Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki and Lorenzo M. Bondioli (Leiden–Boston, 2016), pp. 199-200.

¹⁴ Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire. Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 2014), p. 51.

¹⁵ *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, intr.-ed.-trans. Richard Price and Michael Gaddis (Liverpool, 2005); Richard Price and Mary Whitby (eds.), *Chalcedon in Context. Church Councils, 400–700* (Liverpool, 2009).

non-Chalcedonian group of the Theodosians. Second, John prudently chose to avoid active persecution of the non-Chalcedonians. Third, the patriarch offered his patronage to the *Eukratades*, who acted as his counselors and collaborators.¹⁶ It should be mentioned here that one of our main sources for John the Merciful's life is the hagiographical account written by Moschus and Sophronius.¹⁷ Given John's ardent Chalcedonianism and close relationship with the *Eukratades* it is not surprising that Maximus the Confessor, Sophronius' disciple, pointed out in his disputation with Pyrrhus (645) that John the Merciful had wished to defrock the non-Chalcedonian George Arsas for his support to the reconciliatory imperial formula of Monenergism (according to which Christ, as one person, has a single activity). However, he was prevented from doing so by the Persian invasion of Egypt (619).¹⁸ According to Booth, John the Merciful, "Moschus and Sophronius' quondam patron", is presented by Maximus "as a protosource of Monenergism".¹⁹ It should be noted that Maximus himself was associated with correspondents in Alexandria, "where Sophronius had studied and where Maximus too may have acquired or sharpened his theological acumen, perhaps even in Sophronius' entourage",²⁰ a network built around the charismatic person of John the Merciful.

¹⁶ *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, ed. Ioakeim, pp. 116 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 6), 166 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 16), 230 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 33), 242-244 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 37), 284-288 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 49), 336-338 (John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 5); Booth, *Crisis*, pp. 51-54.

¹⁷ *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 335-349.

¹⁸ *Μαξιμόν τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ, Περὶ Θελήσεως. Πρὸς Μαρίνον Ἐπιστολή, Ζήτησις μετὰ Πύρρον*, intr.-ed.-trans. Dina Samothraki (Athens, 1995), pp. 158, 160.

¹⁹ Booth, *Crisis*, p. 197.

²⁰ Christian Boudignon, "Maxime le Confesseur: était-il Constantinopolitain?", in *Philomathestatos. Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts Presented to Jacques Noret for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Bart Janssens, Bram Roosen and

The Amathousian patriarch of Alexandria was, in the words of Elizabeth A. Clark, a "broker", namely a liaison person "who provide[d] access between the more and the less powerful persons in [his] network".²¹ While being connected with the imperial household of Heraclius, John the Merciful was also pastor of his Alexandrian flock and patron of the *Eukratades*, fighting for the Chalcedonian cause and even coming into conflict with Arsas, a supporter of the imperial doctrine of Monenergism. At the same time, John maintained (and even strengthened) his ties with Cyprus. The patriarch recruited bishop Theodore of Amathus, who had been ordained by John himself, to support the refugees of the Persian invasion of Syria (611) and to ransom captives after the Persian conquest of Jerusalem (614);²² John pursued an ascetic life and founded two monasteries in Amathous;²³ he returned to Cyprus on the eve of the Persian conquest of Alexandria (619);²⁴ he arbitrated a dispute between the shady figure of general Aspagourius and the citizens of Constantia; he went on a pilgrimage to the local shrines of St Barnabas and St Epiphanius;²⁵ he wrote the *Life of St Tychon of*

Peter Van Deun (Leuven–Paris–Dudley, Massachusetts, 2004), pp. 11-43; Booth, *Crisis*, p. 148.

²¹ Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, p. 18.

²² *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 118, 120 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 6), 342 (John Moschus and Leontius of Neapolis); Arch. Photios Ioakeim, "Οἱ γνωστοὶ ἐπίσκοποι Ἀμαθούντος τῆς Κύπρου κατὰ τὴ βυζαντινὴ περίοδο", *Κυπριακαὶ Σπουδαί* 74 (2010), pp. 66-78.

²³ *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 282, 284 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 48).

²⁴ *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 298, 300 (Leontius of Neapolis, ch. 52). John's life appears to have been threatened by general Isaakios, who had delivered Alexandria to the Persians; while in Cyprus, Isaakios planned to assassinate John but he was himself slain (p. 348, John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 15).

²⁵ *Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐλεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, p. 348 (John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 15). Aspagourius is considered a Persian by Clive Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity", *The English Historical*

*Amathous*²⁶ and he was finally buried in St Tychon's church, next to two previous bishops of his native city (619/620).²⁷ The Cyprus Department of Antiquities recent excavations at Akroteri have brought to light a large seventh-century complex with liturgical structures and probably funerary character; it has been proposed that the complex might be associated with John the Merciful and that it served the hosting of refugees, while also preserving precious relics, such as those of St Stephen and St James, Brother of the Lord, known to have been rescued by John from Persian hands.²⁸

Some twenty years after John's death, bishop Leontius of Neapolis in Cyprus was commissioned by Archbishop Arcadius (625–641/642) to write a *Life of St John the Merciful*.²⁹ I agree with Vincent Déroche that this was partly in order to express Arcadius' attachment to

Chalcedonian orthodoxy, particularly against the imperial doctrines of the "one activity" (Monenergism) and "one will" of Christ.³⁰ Arcadius, like John the Merciful, was a liaison person or broker. His extensive network of contacts included Heraclius, with whom Arcadius and his predecessor Plutarch funded in three different phases, between around 610 and 641 (the dates are debated by scholars), the construction or renovation of an aqueduct from Kythrea to Constantia.³¹ "Arcadius", Booth writes, "assumed a prominent position as a trusted confidant of the emperor and as the arbiter of his irenic policies", apparently supervising non-Chalcedonian prelates who rejected the imperial doctrine of Monenergism.³² Following Heraclius' death, the archbishop's loyalty to the emperor's widow, Martina, and Patriarch Pyrrhus, at a time of civil strife, nearly led to Arcadius' arrest; he died before his persecutors reached Cyprus (641/642).³³

Acknowledgement of Arcadius' personal holiness was widespread. The Cypriot archbishop is surprisingly praised by Chalcedonian, Monenergist/Monothelite and non-Chalcedonian authors, including the Coptic bishop John of Nikiu,³⁴ the Monenergist/Monothelite cleric Gregory/George of Resh'aina,³⁵ and the Chalcedonian monk Ana-

Review 90 (1975), p. 724, and Evangelos Chrysos, "Cyprus in Early Byzantine Times", in *The Sweet Land of Cyprus. Papers Given at the Twenty-Fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991*, ed. Anthony A. Bryer and George S. Georghallides, (Nicosia, 1993), pp. 12-13; other scholars argued the he might have been Roman, e.g., George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 281-282, and David M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus, 491–1191* (Nicosia, 2009), pp. 375-378, 383-385.

²⁶ *Der Heilige Tychon*, intr.-ed. Hermann Usener (Leipzig–Berlin, 1907).

²⁷ *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 306, 308 (Leontius of Neapolis, chs. 57-58), 348 (John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 15).

²⁸ *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, p. 346 (John Moschus and Sophronius, par. 14); Eleni Procopiou, "The Excavations at Akrotiri-Katalymata ton Plakoton, 2007–2014", in *Medieval Cyprus. A Place of Cultural Encounter*, ed. Sabine Rogge and Michael Grünbart (Münster–New York, 2015), pp. 185-218; Procopiou, "New Evidence for the Early Byzantine Ecclesiastical Architecture of Cyprus", in *Church Building in Cyprus (Fourth to Seventh Centuries). A Mirror of Intercultural Contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Marietta Horster, Doria Nicolaou and Sabine Rogge (Münster–New York, 2018), pp. 84-93.

²⁹ *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, intr.-ed. Ioakeim, pp. 50-51, 96 (Leontius of Neapolis, prologue), 322 (n. 10); Booth, *Crisis*, p. 52 (n. 42).

³⁰ Vincent Déroche, *Études sur Léontius of Neapolis* (Uppsala, 1995), pp. 16-36.

³¹ *Salamine de Chypre XIII: Testimonia Salamina* 2, ed. Jean Pouilloux, Paul Roesch and Jean Marcillet-Jaubert (Paris, 1987), pp. 83-85; Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus*, pp. 220-221, 385-387 (with additional bibliography); cf. Chrysos, "Ο Ηράκλειος στην Κύπρο", pp. 54-62.

³² Booth, *Crisis*, p. 220.

³³ *The Chronicle of John. Bishop of Nikiu, Translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic Text*, trans. Robert H. Charles (London–Oxford, 1916), p. 199 (ch. 120); Booth, *Crisis*, p. 261 (n. 138); Ioakeim in *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, p. 51.

³⁴ *The Chronicle of John. Bishop of Nikiu*, trans. Robert H. Charles (London–Oxford, 1916), p. 199 (ch. 120).

³⁵ Sebastian Brock, "An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor", *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), p. 316 (pars. 10-13).

stasius of Sinai, who was a native of Amathous and attests Arcadius' contacts with recluse and stylite monks.³⁶ This last piece of information is further supported by the writings of Gregory the Persian, a Nestorian ascetic who spent some time in Cyprus,³⁷ as well as by John of Damascus' reference that Arcadius had composed a *Life of St Symeon the Stylite*.³⁸ Arcadius might have known the *Eukratades* during their visit to Cyprus (perhaps in 619 or earlier), described in Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow*.³⁹ Sometime in the 630s, Sophronius sent a letter to Arcadius over the "theopaschite" addition to the *Trisagion*, a liturgical formula read by the Chalcedonians as a statement of non-Chalcedonian faith. Sophronius (at the time still a monk) recognised the orthodoxy of Arcadius and his flock, but instructed the archbishop (perhaps in a slightly offensive tone) to suppress the *Trisagion* addition that had penetrated into Cypriot liturgical life.⁴⁰

³⁶ François Nau, "Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte)", *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1903), p. 69; Stefan Heid, "Die C-Reihe erbaulicher Erzählungen des Anastasios vom Sinai im *Codex Vaticanus Graecus 2592*", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 74 (2008), pp. 105-108, 114; cf. Kyrris, "Cypriot Ascetics and the Christian Orient", *Βυζαντινός Λόγος* 1 (1987), pp. 105-107. Note that Arcadius is commemorated as saint by all Cypriot *synodica*: Ioakeim in *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, p. 51 (n. 59).

³⁷ Irénée Hausherr in *Gregorii Monachii Cyprii, De Theoria Sancta* (Rome, 1937), pp. 28-30.

³⁸ Costas N. Constantinides, "Η παιδεία και τα γράμματα στη Βυζαντινή Κύπρο", in *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, vol. 3, ed. Theodoros Papadopoulos (Nicosia, 2005), p. 435 (Arcadius also wrote an *encomium* on St George).

³⁹ *Joannes Moschus, Patrum Spirituale*, in *Patrologiae Graecae Cursus Completus*, vol. 87c, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1865), coll. 2877-2880 (ch. 30); Ioakeim in *Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Ελεήμων*, p. 59.

⁴⁰ *Lettre de Sophronie de Jérusalem à Arcadius de Chypre = Patrologia Orientalis* 39:2, intr.-ed.-trans. Micheline Albert and Christoph von Schönborn (Turnhout, 1978). See also discussion by Brock, "An Early Syriac Life", p. 322; Brock, "The thrice-holy hymn in the Liturgy", *Sobornost* 7:2 (1985), pp. 24-34; Andrew Louth, "Why did the Syrians reject the Council of Chalcedon?", in *Chalcedon in Context*, ed. Price and Whitby, pp. 107-116; Booth, *Crisis*, pp. 219-

The climax of Arcadius' involvement in seventh-century Christological controversies was his convening (at Sophronius' instigation) of a council in Cyprus in 636.⁴¹ Forty-six ecclesiastics came together on the island to discuss the *Trisagion* addition and Maximus' rejection of imperial orthodoxy, including Cyrus of Alexandria (John the Merciful's successor), two deacons representing Rome and Constantinople respectively, Anastasius (Maximus' disciple), and Sophronius (in his capacity as patriarch of Jerusalem).⁴² The broad spectrum of participants highlights the inclusivity of Arcadius' network, affirming his role as a broker.⁴³ According to the Syriac *Life of Maximus* by the Monenergist/Monothelite Gregory/George of Resh'aina (an eyewitness), Arcadius attacked Sophronius and Maximus' theology, although none of them was condemned at the council.⁴⁴ Given the earlier tension between Arcadius and Sophronius this clash should not surprise us.⁴⁵ Moreover, Arcadius appears to have been reluctant to publicly oppose Monenergism, at a time when the prevailing tendency in the East was to support the imperial doctrines; even in Palestine, the Monenergist/Monothelite faction "received much wider

221; Chrysovalantis Kyriacou and Charalambos Dendrinou, "The *Encomium on St Barnabas* by Alexander the Monk: ecclesiastical and imperial politics in sixth-century Byzantium", in *Πρακτικά Δεύτερου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Κυπριακής Αγιολογίας*, ed. Chrysostomos Nassis and Theodoros X. Yiangou (Hagia Napa-Paralimni, forthcoming).

⁴¹ Date proposed by Booth, *Crisis*, p. 239.

⁴² Brock, "An Early Syriac Life", pp. 315-317 (pars. 8-15). On Sophronius' involvement in the debate, see Pauline Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy. The Synodal Letter and Other Documents* (Oxford-New York, 2009).

⁴³ Cf. Evangelos Chrysos, "Από την ιστορία του μοναχισμού στην Κύπρο τον 7^ο αιώνα", *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου* 4 (1999), pp. 216-217.

⁴⁴ Brock, "An Early Syriac Life", pp. 316-317 (pars. 14-15).

⁴⁵ Cf. Brock, "An Early Syriac Life", p. 315 (par. 7).

support”.⁴⁶ Diplomacy and realism might have led Arcadius to pursue a prudent line of *oikonomia* (“accommodation”),⁴⁷ officially siding with Constantinople in order to preserve his links with Heraclius and avoid imperial intervention within his own see, while also communicating (through his representative, Marinus) with Maximus. Indeed, the regular correspondence on theological issues between Marinus and Maximus during the period between 636 and ca. 646, strongly suggests that the latter considered Arcadius orthodox, despite not being an outspoken apologist of the “two activities” and “two wills” theology.⁴⁸

Arcadius “amphibious” stance was probably determined by his concern to safeguard the special administrative status of the insular Church of Cyprus, recognized as autocephalous by the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. This privilege was reaffirmed by Emperor Zeno in the late fifth century, against Peter the Fuller’s claims that Cyprus was not an apostolic Church and should, thus, be subordinated to the Patriarchate of Antioch. Cypriot ecclesiastical independence,

⁴⁶ Milka Levy-Rubin, “The Role of the Judaeian Desert Monasteries in the Monothelite Controversy in Seventh-Century Palestine”, in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven, 2001), p. 299.

⁴⁷ Albert and Schönborn in *Lettre de Sophrone*, pp. 170 [6] - 174 [10]; Déroche, *Études*, pp. 29-31; Chrysovalantis Kyriacou, “To what extent was the Church of Cyprus involved in the ecclesiastical policy of the Emperor Heraclius?”, MA Dissertation (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2011).

⁴⁸ Vasilios Karayannis, “Ο Άγιος Μάξιμος ο Ομολογητής και η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου”, *Απόστολος Βαρνάβας* 53:11 (1992), pp. 379-398; Karayannis, “Saint Maximus the Confessor and the Church of Cyprus”, in *Σκεύος εις Τιμήν. Αφιερωματικός τόμος επί τη συμπληρώσει 25ετίας από της εις Επίσκοπον χειροτονίας και 20ετίας από της ενθρονίσεως του Μητροπολίτου Αυστρίας και Εξάρχου Ουγγαρίας και Μεσευρώπης κ. Μιχαήλ* (Athens, 2011), pp. 893-910; Booth, *Crisis*, p. 261 (n. 138); Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth, “A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus*, ed. Allen and Neil, pp. 26, 46-51, 63.

sanctioned by the discovery of St Barnabas’ relics, meant that the ordinations of the Cypriot clergy were to be performed without external interventions and pressures. Cypriot hagiography coloured this notion of freedom with a Chalcedonian message: the autocephaly guaranteed Chalcedonian orthodoxy against external, non-Chalcedonian interventions.⁴⁹

Arcadius was succeeded by Sergius in 641/642, under whom the communication between Marinus and Maximus continued.⁵⁰ It was in the great Church of Rome, bastion of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the West and supporter of Maximus, that the new archbishop sought an ally to declare the official position of the Cypriot hierarchy. On 29 May 643, Sergius wrote a letter to Pope Theodore; this document was included in the *Acts* of the (anti-Monothelite) Lateran Council in 649, in which Cyprus was represented by Leontius of Neapolis, John the Merciful’s hagiographer.⁵¹ “Until today”, stated Sergius, “while they [the Monothelites] were practicing some sort of accommodation [*oikonomian tina*], we remained silent, thinking that they would change their own teachings for the better. For thus also thought our divine Arcadius”.⁵² The archbishop also stressed the Cypriots’ readiness to

⁴⁹ Kyriacou, “To what extent”; Kyriacou and Dendrinou, “*The Encomium on St Barnabas* by Alexander the Monk” (forthcoming). On the autocephaly, see now Evangelos Chrysos, “Some Remarks on the Autocephaly Issue”, in *Salamis of Cyprus: History and Archaeology from the Earliest Times to Late Antiquity*, ed. Sabine Rogge, Christina Ioannou, and Theodoros Mavrojannis (Münster-New York, 2019), pp. 769-773 (with earlier bibliography).

⁵⁰ See note 48.

⁵¹ *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, vol. II/1, ed. Rudolf Riedinger (Berlin, 1984), pp. 2-7 (Leontius is #87 on the synodal list), 60-65 (letter of Sergius).

⁵² *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, vol II/1, ed. Riedinger, p. 62; English translation by Booth, *Crisis*, p. 261 (n. 138).

seal their confession with martyrdom.⁵³ Sergius is reported to have later changed sides, perhaps seeking imperial protection against the Arabs who raided Cyprus in 649 and 653/654. Ironically, it was the Muslim conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt that must have enabled the consolidation of Maximus' theology in Cyprus, alienating the island from Constantinopolitan control.⁵⁴ Epigraphic evidence from the Cave of Moses on Mount Sinai suggests that Sergius kept his bonds with anti-Monothelite monastics, probably around the time of John of the Ladder and his Cypriot disciple, Anastasius of Sinai.⁵⁵

Political loyalty to Heraclius and his dynasty determined the actions of the protagonists of his paper, John the Merciful, Arcadius and Sergius; at the same time, their actions were determined by their common ascetic *habitus*, a particular way of Christian life that stressed their commitment to defend Chalcedonian orthodoxy. But this personal responsibility was governed by prudence, escaping the temptation of blind fanaticism. It is this combination of faith and realism (not least common in other periods of Christian history) that

placed our Cypriot hierarchs next to other prominent figures of their doctrinal network, transcending the geographical boundaries of their native island.

⁵³ *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, vol II/1, ed. Riedinger, p. 62.

⁵⁴ Brock, "An Early Syriac Life", p. 318 (par. 23); Brownen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006), p. 167; Booth, *Crisis*, p. 261 (n. 138). On the Arab raids in Cyprus, see Vassilios Christides, *The Image of Cyprus in the Arabic Sources* (Nicosia, 2006), pp. 11-28.

⁵⁵ Ihor Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966), p. 264; Bernard Flusin, "Démons et Sarrasins: l'auteur et le propos des *Diègēmata stèriktika* d'Anastase le Sinaïte", *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), pp. 381-409; Chrysos, "Ἀπό την ιστορία του μοναχισμού", pp. 211, 217; André Bingelli, "Anastase le Sinaïte. *Récits sur le Sinai* et *Récits utiles à l'âme*. Édition, traduction, commentaire", 2 vols., unpublished PhD thesis (Université Paris IV/Sorbonne, 2001), pp. 332-334; Daniel F. Kaner (with contributions by Sebastian Brock, Richard M. Price and Kevin van Bladel), *History and Hagiography from the Late Antique Sinai* (Liverpool, 2010), pp. 34-35 (n. 141).