

# Leontius of Byzantium – Interpreter of Chalcedon

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## Abstract:

Leontius of Byzantium, whose identity remains a subject of debate, is the central theological figure of the sixth century. He introduces the concept of *enhypostasis*, thereby giving a deeper understanding to the Christological doctrine and clarifying the question of the two natures or physis in the person of the Savior Jesus Christ. Leontius points out as no one else, the act of assuming, taking over, of the human nature in the hypostasis of the divine Logos..

## Keywords:

Leontius, Chalcedon, enhypostasis, nature, person.

## I.1. Life of Leontius

The Byzantine tradition does not contain much biographical data with reference to Leontius of Byzantium<sup>2</sup>, called by some also Leontius of Jerusalem<sup>3</sup>. It can be inferred from his own works that he was a monk attracted by the culture of his times and that for some time in his life he was close to the Nestorians<sup>4</sup>. It should be pointed out that the gaps in his life also derive from the fact that he was often called "recluse" or "hermit" and that usually such people did not ordinarily leave behind writings

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<sup>2</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, Basilica Publishing of the Romanian Patriarchate, Bucharest, 2009, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană: Sever de Antiohia și Leonțiu de Bizanț (Post-Chalcedonian Christology: Severus of Antioch and Leontius of Byzantium)*, in volume *Și Cuvântul trup S-a făcut, Hristologie și mariologie patristică (And the Word Was Made Flesh, Patristic Christology and Mariology)*, Banat Metropolitan Publishing, Timișoara, 1993, p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 29.

related to their own lives, which is why often the information we have in our research is often incomplete or unobjective.<sup>5</sup>

The research of the works of Leontius marks their temporal appearance during the period 520-543, a period corresponding to the reign of the Emperors Justin and Justinian. Of the different authors with the name mentioned during the respective age, four characters could be identified corresponding to the research in question.

The first is a monk who, during the reign of Justinian, endeavored to introduce the formula "One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh", being part of a delegation sent to Rome in June 519. The second is mentioned at a meeting from 531 of the Orthodox and the Severians, under the name "*Leontius, vir venerabilis, monachus et apocrisiarius partum in sancta civitate constitutorum*", near Eusebius the priest. The third character participated in the council chaired by Patriarch Mamas in 536, under the name of "*monk and abbot Leontius*", near the monks Domitian and Teodor, future bishops of Ancira and Caesarea, hierarchs who will have an important contribution to the Origenist issues of the time. The fourth, also a monk, comes to Constantinople with Saint Sava in 531 to resist Chalcedon, but he is sent back to the New Lavra because of his origenist inclinations, becoming one of the most prominent leaders of the Origenist monks. The great patrologist Fr. Loofs identifies him with the author of the works attributed to Leontius of Byzantium.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that there is a great likelihood that Leontius from Scythia be the same person as Leontius of Byzantium, and if we take into account that St. Cyril of Alexandria and his Christological doctrine were of great honor among the Scythian monks, which is also evident in the writings of the theologian of Justinian I, who, if he were a monk, would certainly continue with the process of thinking he had been initially trained, which would eventually happen and would give rise to the possibility of supporting such a thesis<sup>7</sup>. But there are other views, (such as those of B. Altaner), which give the information that Leontius was not one and the same person as the Greek theologian Leontius, surnamed "of Byzantium"<sup>8</sup>, and another opinion (that

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<sup>5</sup> Teodor Bodogae, Review at *Leontiu de Bizanț. Viața și Scrierile (privire critică) (Leontius of Byzantium. Life and Writings (Critical Approach))*, teză de doctorat, Athens, 1984, page X+310, in Greek, in: *Mitropolia Ardealului* 7-8/1985, p. 518.

<sup>6</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> On the identity of Leontius of Byzantium see Fr. Loofs, *Leontius von Bizanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche, I Teil: das Leben und die polemischen Werke des Leontius von Byzanz*, Leipzig, 1887; also Grumel, art. *Léonce de Byzance*, in *Dictionnaire de Theologie catholique*, par Vacant, Mangenot et E. Amann apud Vasile Gh. Sibiescu, *Călugării Șciți (Scythian Monks)*, in: *Revista Teologică* 5-6/1936, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> B. Altaner, "Der griechische Theologe Leontius und Leontius der skytische Mönch", in: B. Altaner, *Kleine Schriften*, Berlin, 1967, p. 378, 382 apud Ioan G. Coman,

of John Meyendorff) argues with various arguments that Leontius of Jerusalem (author who wrote between 532-536) is not the same person as Leontius of Byzantium, his Christology being radically different from his, being found in his writings even a direct attack on the Origenist positions of the latter.<sup>9</sup>

With these benchmarks we can assume some information about Leontius' life. He was born in Byzantium in the second part of the 5th century<sup>10</sup> (according to some research around 485 in Scythia or Constantinople in an aristocratic family<sup>11</sup>). The voices supporting the thesis of his birth in Scythia, including the researcher Mihail Diaconescu, say that he came from a Dacian-Roman family originating in the East of Lower Moesia. In the first period of his life he lived in his native places, where he also formed himself as an intellectual.<sup>12</sup>

He was related to Vitalian, the great commander of the Thracian forces, about whom we have the information that he was close to the well-known Scythian monks of Dobrogea, intending through the three beleagerments of the Byzantine capital from the years 513-518 to compel Emperor Anastasius to stop supporting the Monophysites<sup>13</sup>. Vitalian was named by historians, like Ioan Malalas (the author of the Universal Chronicle, contemporary with Daco-Roman rebels; he lived approximately between the years 491-578) or Ioan Zonaras - "*Vitalianus Thrax*", while Ammianus Marcellinus calls him "*Vitalianus Scythia*" (keeping to the idea that he was originar from Scythia Minor). Vitalianus came from Zaldapa (near Callatis, north of Marcianopolis). Around 471, shortly before the birth of Vitalianus, Moesia Inferior

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*Scriitori bisericești din epoca străromână*, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1979, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Probably the writings of Leontius of Jerusalem are part of the anti-Orthodox campaign triggered in Constantinople following the Palestinian disturbances. In his treaty entitled *Adversus Nestorianos* in Migne edition, but which is, in fact, directed against "*those who affirm that there are two hypostases in Christ*" (see PG 86, 1399-1400), that is the Nestorians and the Origenists; he calls his opponent several times: "*an Egyptian*" (Αἰγύπτιος), V, 7, 19, col. 1732 c, 1741 b. We may wonder whether this is not a reference to Evagrius, a monk from Schete *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* (*Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*), translated from English by Fr. Prof. Nicolai Buga, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest 1997, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Remus Rus, *Dicționar Enciclopedic de literatură creștină din primul mileniu* (*Encyclopedic Dictionary of Christian Literature in the First Millennium*), Lidia Publishing, Bucharest, 2003, p. 498.

<sup>12</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane* (*History of Dacian-Roman Literature*), Alcor Edimpex Publishing, Bucharest 1999, p. 578.

<sup>13</sup> Teodor Bodogae, Review at *Leonțiu de Bizanț. Viața și Scrierile... (Leontius of Byzantium. Life...)*, p. 517.

included Scythia Minor also (Dacia Pontica and Dobrogea). In some writings, Leontius of Byzantium is also remembered as "*monachus de Scythia*". After the assassination of Vitalianus in 520 at Zaldapa, the group of Scythian monks in Constantinople is seen to be in danger. Leontius, his kinsman and supporter, goes to Jerusalem to shelter at St. Savas Monastery. He did not return to Constantinople until 531. He continues to pursue a profound preaching activity of the Chalcedonian Orthodox teaching cultivated and supported by the Dacian Romans in the cities and settlements from the Lower Danube.<sup>14</sup>

One can ask a question, namely, what led Leontius to become a monk exactly at the Holy Lavra of St. Savas near Bethlehem? Was it not precisely the fact that there was a Thracian language church<sup>15</sup>, besides those in Latin and Greek, since there was a clear and old link with the Palestinian monasticism, we might think that these *bessi* monks remembered in Palestine at Mount Sinai were just monks who left Scythia Minor<sup>16</sup>. The supposed idea that he was born in Constantinople can not become a decisive argument that he was not from Scythia Minor. Certainly, in Constantinople, there were also Traco-Roman families with a certain status in the administrative apparatus of the empire, among which Leontius' family could have been. Kinship with General Vitalian may be defining in this case. In Constantinople, although the Greek was used in writing, not only Greeks but also Traco-Romans lived, representing the population of the whole territory from the south of the Danube towards near Athens<sup>17</sup>. The information may also be interpreted as meaning that it was born in Scythia but

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<sup>14</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane...* (*History of Dacian-Roman...*), p. 578-579.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Holl, *Das Vortleben der Volkssprachen in Kleinasien in nachchristlicher Zeit*, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte II. Der Osten, 2 Halbband*, Verlag Mohr, Tübingen, 1928, p. 242-243 *apud* Dumitru Stăniloae, Introduction to *Scriverile Călugărilor știți daco-români din secolul al VI-lea* (*The Writings of the Daco-Romanian Scythian Monks in the Sixth Century*), with a translation by Nicolae Petrescu, in *Mitropolia Olteniei* 3-4/1985, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup> Vlad Protopopescu, "Călugări știți sau călugări *bessi* (Scythian or Bessi Monks)", in: *Peuce* 6/1977, p. 200.

<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly, besides what we said, we find Leontius "*of Byzantium*" identifying with Leontius "*the Scythian*", the fact that at the same time there appear two monks about the same age, with the same Christological ideas, bearing the same name. We also mention that names with the termination *-te* are still very common to Romanians today: Leonte, Axente (maybe from Maxentius), Terente, Arvinte, Melinte, Dominte *apud* Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri ale Călugărilor știți...* (*The Writings of the Daco-Romanian...*), p. 211.

traveled and lived for a long time in Byzantium, where he had many connections, hence the name "*of Byzantium*"<sup>18</sup>.

In the first part of his life he was attracted by the Nestorian heresy, but after converting to Orthodoxy, he entered the Holy Lavra, near Jerusalem with Nonus, the leader of the Origenists, and some other monks in 519-520<sup>19</sup>. Leontius was the main deputy (ὀψοῦργος) and friend of battle of Nonnus, who revolted against St. Savas, being mentioned in the documents of the time<sup>20</sup>. He always keeps in touch with the Scythian monks, with whom he comes to Constantinople in 519 and then to Rome to support their cause and formula "*One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh*"<sup>21</sup>. He will accompany Saint Savas during his trip to Byzantium in 531 to take part in the Origenist controversy, but he is removed by this because of his predilection to Origenism. He is to take part in the discussions between the Severians and the Orthodox with Hypatius of Ephesus, a meeting organized by the Emperor Justinian in Constantinople.

Leontius would remain in the capital of the empire after Saint Savas' departure to Palestine, most likely in 536 at the synod against the Monophysites. He supports the rise in the church hierarchy of the origins of Domitian and Teodor Askidas. He would return to the Holy Lavra in 538 and then travel to Constantinople, where he would find his end in 542<sup>22</sup> or 543<sup>23</sup>.

Analyzing the views of different scholars and their multiple appreciations regarding the person of Leontius, even the Byzantine historian Vasile Muntean concludes that his identity is difficult to establish and that in this respect, the scientific research should be intensified.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ioan I. Russu, *Elementele Traco-Getice în Imperiul Roman și în Byzantium (veacurile III-VII) (The Thracian-Getic Elements in the Roman Empire and the Byzantium (Third-Seventh Centuries))*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1976, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> See especially Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Cyriaci*, Schwartz Publishing, TU 49/2, p. 230 *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Nestor Vornicescu, Metropolitan of Oltenia, *Primele scrieri patristice în literatura noastră. Sec. IV-XVI (The First Patristic Writings in Our Literature. Fourth-Sixteenth Centuries)*, Publishing House of the Metropolitan of Oltenia, Craiova 1984, p. 74-79.

<sup>22</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 29-30.

<sup>23</sup> Teodor Bodogae, *Reviu at Leonțiu de Bizanț. Viața și Scrierile... (Leontius of Byzantium. Life and Writings...)*, p. 517.

<sup>24</sup> Vasile Muntean, "Cine a fost, de fapt, Leonțiu de Bizanț?! (Who was, in fact, Leontius of Byzantium?!)", in: *Altarul Banatului* 10-12/2004, p. 89.

Following the presentation of the above, we believe that Leontius from Scythia can be identified with Leontius of Byzantium, the author of the theological writings so well known to general public. Then, the fact that he was born in Constantinople can not contradict his Scythian origins, presented in this research at the right time.

## **I.2. The Work**

Much of the public actions and writings of Leontius of Byzantium are related, on the one hand, to the actions of the other personalities of the group of Scythian monks (Saint Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, John Maxentius, Achilles, Maurice, Peter and others) and on the other, to the great revolt of the Daco-Romans from the Lower Danube (Scythia Minor, Moesia Superior and Thrace) against the heretical Monophysite emperor Flavius Anastasius. Unlike the works of the other authors of the group of the Scythian monks, all noted in Latin, the writings of Leontius of Byzantium were in Greek.<sup>25</sup>

Leontius of Byzantium is the author of the following works: 1. *Αόγοι τρεῖς κατὰ Νεστοριανῶν καὶ εὐτυχιανιστῶν*<sup>26</sup> - *Against the Nestorians and the Eutychians in Three Books* (*Libri tres adversus nestorianos et euthychianos*) was written at the request of a friend. The first book is directed against the Nestorians and the Eutychians. In it the author speaks of the difference between being and hypostasis, tackling the mistakes of the two heresies. The second book is made up of a dialogue between an Orthodox and an Aphthartodoket, being addressed to the Eutychian Monophysites, whom they accuse of Aphthartodoketism. In the third book, are fought the Nestorians and their dogmatic errors, some of them from Theodore of Mopsuestia.<sup>27</sup>

2. *Ἐπίλησις τῶν ὑπὸ Σευήρου προβεβλημένων συλλογισμῶν* (*Solutio argumentorum a Severo obiectorum*)<sup>28</sup> is a continuation of the first work, in the form of dialogues in which a series of accusations against the Orthodox side are brought.<sup>29</sup>

3. *Τριάχοντα κεφάλαια κατὰ Σευήρου* (*Capitula 30 Contra Severum*)<sup>30</sup> - forming the second part of the previous work.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane...* (*History of Dacian-Roman...*), pp. 579-580.

<sup>26</sup> Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine (Epoca de la 461 la 636/750)* (*History of Old Christian Literature (Age from 461 to 636/750)*), Vol. III, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Moldova Publishing, Iași, 1996, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 30- 31.

<sup>28</sup> Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine...* (*History of Ancient Christian Literature...*), p. 42.

<sup>29</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine...* (*History of Ancient Christian Literature...*), p. 42.

4. Apart from the three mentioned works, Leontius of Byzantium is also assigned:

- *Πρὸς τοὺς ποσφέροντας ἡμῖν τινὰ τῶν Απολλιναρίου, ψευδῶς ἐπιγεγράμμενα εἰς ὄνομα τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων* (*Adversus fraudes Appoli naristarum*), in this book are shown the errors of the Apollinarians used by the classical Christian authors in the foundation of their teachings<sup>32</sup>. This seems to belong to an earlier author of Leontius;<sup>33</sup>

- *Σχολία Λεοντίου ἀπὸ φώνης Θεοδώρου*, these are notes of Leontius, delivered by Theodore<sup>34</sup>. They have been kept under different titles: *De sectis*; *Adversus Nestorianos*; *Contra Monophysitas*. From these, some fragments have been preserved;<sup>35</sup>

- Some text contained in *Doctrina Patrum de Verbi incarnatione*;

- *Scholia*, posterior to Leontius;

- *Joannis et Leontii collectanea de rebus sacris*, belonging to St. John of Damascus;

- *Leontii Byzantini sermones*.<sup>36</sup>

Considered to be global, the work of Leontius of Byzantium differs, in terms of ideas, through the intellectual depth, the theological subtlety and the capacity for inclusion, and in the perspective of expression, through the finesse of the abstract style, by perseverance and rigor in confirmation, and by satisfying the notions of maximum generality.

The notions of pamphlet attributed especially in "*Three Books against the Nestorians*" and "*Against Apollinarian Frauds*" is a symbiosis of acidity and complexity of ideas, a dominant aspect of the whole work.<sup>37</sup>

Leontius transmits a work of harmonizing Orthodox elements from the Christology until his time with the help of the Aristotelian philosophy that was in use at that time, at the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th century, using also patristic thought, often saying that: "*Nothing said is mine, but all is taken from the*

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<sup>31</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 31.

<sup>32</sup> Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine... (History of Ancient Christian Literature...)*, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Ubaldo Mannucci, *Istituzioni di Patrologia, Parte II, Epoca Post-Nicena*, Terza edizione riveduta, Roma 1932, p. 305, *apud* Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine... (History of Ancient Christian Literature...)*, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> Cicerone Iordăchescu, *Istoria vechii literaturi creștine... (History of Ancient Christian Literature...)*, p. 42.

<sup>36</sup> Arhid. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 581.

*Fathers*"<sup>38</sup>, taking from the Fathers especially the speculation of a philosophical nature<sup>39</sup>. Leontius succeeded in making a synthesis of the material identified at the Holy Fathers, removing the apparent opposition between Cyrillian and Chalcedonian theologies, thereby making it possible for reconciliation within the Church<sup>40</sup>.

Those used by him are especially Cyril of Alexandria and the Cappadocians. The influence he manifests on the descendants is attested by his commemoration of John of Damascus, by Photios, by Euthymius Zigabenus and others. Nowhere in the Leontinian writings do we find any Origenist statements.<sup>41</sup>

Leontius' work is also used and quoted by the great Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae in "*Second Volume of Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*", și namely in Part III, called "*The Person of Jesus Christ and His Salvation Work, committed in His assumed Humanity*". He uses this to clarify some deep theological themes.<sup>42</sup>

The work of the illustrious writer and theologian Leontius of Byzantium is one of the most important treasures of Dacian-Roman and universal literature for the beauty and the power of dialectical demonstrations, for the spiritual truths expressed, but especially for the consequences it produces within us and new exposures marking deeply the evolution of the European culture.<sup>43</sup>

### ***1.2.1. Leontius de Byzantium - Founder of Scholasticism***

Scholasticism is a philosophical system that, starting from Christian dogma, develops various abstract judgments and logical demonstrations. The unity between education and Christian dogma gave to Scholasticism the fame and the institutional

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<sup>38</sup> Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nestorienilor și Eutihienilor II (Against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists II)*, PG 86/1, 1344 D apud Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 214.

<sup>39</sup> Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 214.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Fr. Loofs: *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schiftsteller der griechischen Kirche. Erstes Buch: Das Leben und die polemische Werke des Leontius von Byzanz*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 304 apud Vasile Sibiescu, *Împăratul Iustinian I și ereziile (Emperor Justinian I and the Heresies)*, Bucharest, 1938, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> Teodor Bodogae, Review at *Leonțiu de Bizanț. Viața și Scrierile... (Leontius of Byzantium. Life and Writings...)*, p. 518.

<sup>42</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, Vol. II, The Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 2010, 3<sup>rd</sup> part, *Persoana lui Iisus Hristos și opera lui mântuitoare, săvârșită în umanitatea asumată în El (The Person of Jesus Christ and His Salvation Work, committed in His assumed Humanity)*, p. 7-194.

<sup>43</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 784-785.



authority. The entire culture of the European Middle Ages is generally understood through Scholasticism. It is a culture that evolved under the guidance of the Church and it was shown itself as *Ecclesia Docens* and *Mater et Magistra*<sup>44</sup>.

During the Antiquity, every person wanted to cultivate their culture after learning to express themselves in a correct language, through rhetoric and logic one learnt the oratory, namely, the style and the pleasant way of expressing themselves in public. Logic was born along with rhetoric, but soon it would become an independent science, especially during Aristotle's time (384-322 BC). So, logic along with rhetoric was an integral part of the study of those who wanted to advance in the science of the time. Constrained by the vicissitudes of the times, after they had rejected the "*useless philosophy*", Christians in the first centuries would be open to receiving the way of instruction of the pagans, a way that would provide them with new ways and processes that they would later fight against and take their place. Prepared in the ancient pagan cultural centers, Patristic writers would perfect their science of logic and then use it in argumenting theological issues. Then, with the formation and development of their own theological centers, the patristic writers would draw up their own textbooks necessary for the study, among which the ones for logic.<sup>45</sup>

Many historians of logic, such as Nae Ionescu Anton Dumitru, Louis Bréhier, John Meyendorff argue that Scholasticism appeared and was made known in intellectual and academic circles under the guidance of the Eastern Church.<sup>46</sup>

As a founder of Scholasticism Leontius Byzantium "*inspired*" in the centuries that followed a way of thinking based on Christian values and the logical-deductive principles of the intellect, that is, the power to understand the real in the descriptive, theoretical, practical, affective and spiritual planes.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Anton Dumitru, *Istoria Logicii*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised and enlarged, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest 1975, 4<sup>th</sup> part, *Logica scolastică (Scholastic Logic)*, pp. 294-441; See also Jacques le Goff, *Civilizația Occidentului medieval (Medieval Western Civilization)*, with a presentation by M. Beza, Translation and notes by Maria Holban, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest 1970, chap. IX, *Mentalități, sensibilități, atitudini (secolul XIII) (Mentalities, Sensitivities, Attitudes (13th century))*, p. 459-461 *apud* Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 582.

<sup>45</sup> Mitropolitan Nicolae Corneanu, *Patristica Mirabilia, Pagini din literatura primelor veacuri (Patristica Mirabilia, Pages from the Literature of the First Centuries)*, Banat Metropolitan Publishing, Timișoara, 1987, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 582-583.

<sup>47</sup> The writings of Leontius Byzantinus are published in the famous collection *Patrologia Graeca* (166 volumes printed between 1857-1866), initiated by the cleric, eminent philologist, church historian and literary historian Jacques-Paul Migne (1800-

Leontius of Byzantium gives his theological-dogmatic works an unprecedented rigor, being also characterized by a rich systematic character<sup>48</sup>. The methodical influence induced by the dogmatic theological works, especially "*Against the Nestorians and the Eutychians in Three Books*", "*Fighting Severus' Arguments*" and "*Thirty Chapters against Severus*" have been used in the fields of Mathematics, Geography, Anatomy, Astrology, Botany, Zoology, grammar, poetry, Rhetoric and History; their authors being interested in giving their writings a systematically ordered and at the same time Christian content.

The scholastic system founded by Leontius of Byzantium shows the concerns and ambience of the spiritual and scientific discussions in the educational institutions of the Roman-Byzantine Empire of the fifth-sixth centuries. Within these units, the monastic teaching in Pontic Dacia and other regions of the Empire, the universities of Constantinople and Beirut, the scriptoriums, the libraries and synods, both local and ecumenical, had a dynamic role in the process. The Scholastic movement imposed by

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1875), immediately after the series *Patrologia Latina* (218 volumes edited between 1844-1855). Thus, *Trei cărți contra nestorienilor și eutihienilor (Three Books against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists)* appeared in PG 86/1; *Contra monofiziților (Against the Monophysites)*, in PG 86/2 and *Combaterea argumentelor aduse de Sever (Fighting Severus' Arguments)*, in PG 86/2. The deepest and most nuanced commentary devoted to the Romanian culture of these writings was made by Fr. Prof. PhD. Ioan G. Coman in the volume *Și Cuvântul Trup S-a făcut. Hristologie și mariologie patristică (And the Word Was made Flesh. Patristic Christology and Mariology)*. Banat Metropolitan Publishing, Timișoara, 1993, chap. XIII, *Hristologia postcalcedoniană: Sever din Antiohia și Leontius de Bizanț (Post-Chalcedonian Christology: Severus of Antioch and Leontius of Byzantium)*, p. 209-218; but unfortunately in Romanian culture there was not yet another scientific edition of Leontius Byzantius's fundamental works *apud* Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 776.

<sup>48</sup> Louis Bréhier, *Civilizația bizantină (Byzantine Civilization)*, Collection of Cultures and Civilizations, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, The 5<sup>th</sup> Book *Viața intelectuală (Intellectual Life)*, chap. *Formarea Scolasticii ortodoxe (Formation of Orthodox Scholasticism)*, pp. 327-328; See also Nae Ionescu, *Istoria Logicii, al doilea curs (History of Logic, Second Course)*, Official Gazette and State Imprimeria, National Imprimeria, Bucharest; Bookstores of Romanians in Exile, Paris 1989, p. 135-136; See also: Mitropolit Nicolae Corneanu, *Studiul Logicii și Sfinții Părinți (Study of Logic and the Holy Fathers)*, in vol. *Patristica mirabilia, Pagini din literatura primelor veacuri creștine (Patristica Mirabilia, Pages from the Literature of the First Centuries)*, Banat Metropolitan Publishing, Timișoara 1987, p. 34-49 *apud* Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 777.

Leontius within the history of the European and universal culture is the consequence of a long and complex previous development<sup>49</sup>.

Within the Scholastics, the works left by Aristotle, the Holy Fathers and the Church Writers, as well as some of the various discoveries of the natural sciences are re-evaluated in order to achieve new scientific and philosophical syntheses. The results of Leontius of Byzantium's work on European theology, science and philosophy are not limited to the Scholastic era. In the twentieth century, his creation continued to be active in the works of other great personalities, such as the theologian and philosopher Karl Barth (1886-1968), Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), one of the great neotomists (Neotomism - Contemporary philosophical current that revives Toma d'Aquino's scholastic system with the aim of reconciling science with religion<sup>50</sup>), Etienne Gilson (1884-1978), him also a neotomist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) Catholic scholar, paleontologist, anthropologist, culturologist and theologian, Paul Tillich (1886-1965) and others.

All the work of the great writer is rich in dialectical composition. The fact that he used dialectics in his original style, that is, in the style of argumentation induced and maintained by an active dialogue with his ideological ancestors, increased the interest in his writings, so he continued the dialectic tradition up to him of the great personalities such as: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Porphyrios.

The dialectical heritage acquires a new meaning through Leontius due to his theological, epistemological, anthropological, cosmic, ecclesiological, moral and spiritual implications of the manifestations through which he distinguished himself.<sup>51</sup>

Using the dialectic of Socratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian origin, Leontius was aware of the fact that it was useful to reveal the truth of faith as explicitly as possible. Starting with him dialectics, research and the art of reasoning become a permanent concern in the scholastic work. Leontius confesses along with Caledon's fathers that the teaching of the Sacred Revelation is witnessed by the Holy Scripture, and that the Church preserves and continues the divine revelation in the Old and New Testaments, as in the Holy Tradition.

In the theological and intellectual environments of Pontic Dacia, where Leontius came from, there were precursors of the dialectical method and of the exposures of

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<sup>49</sup> Anton Dumitru, *op. cit.*, 4<sup>th</sup> part, *Logica scolastică (Scholasticism Logic)*, p. 294-441; See also Jacques Le Goff, *Civilizația Occidentului Medieval*, with a presentation by M. Beza, translation and notes by Maria Holban, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1970, chap. *Mentalități, sensibilități și atitudini (Secolul XIII) (Mentalities, Sensibilities and Attitudes (13<sup>th</sup> Century))*, p. 459-461 *apud* Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 777.

<sup>50</sup> <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/neotomism> - accessed on October 6, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 777-781.

various subjects based on reasoning of premises in Aristotelian style. They are authors like: Saint Theotim I the Philosopher, Bishop of Tomis, St. John Cassian, Bishop Theotim II of Tomis (in the answer to Emperor Leon I the Great), Saint Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (in the answer given to Bishop Peter or to the two "venerable gentlemen and brothers, dear John and Leontius"), John Maxentius, when he writes "to Pope's delegates in Constantinople", when he sends an "Answer against the Acephals" or in the many polemics against the Nestorians, Archbishop and Metropolitan Valentinian of Tomis, in the response entitled "Epistle to Pope Vigilius" (unfortunately this is lost).<sup>52</sup>

The addition brought by Leontius consists in the severe rigor of the demonstrations and the firmness with which he used dialectics in his theological-dogmatic works, that is why in his treatises "Against the Nestorians and the Eutychians in Three Books", "Fighting Severus' Arguments" and "Thirty Chapters against Severus", but also in the works assigned to him, such as "Scholia" and "Against Apollinarian Frauds", his demonstrations take the form of theorems<sup>53</sup>. The proper combination between ecumenical synodal theology, dialectic, revelation language, and Aristotelian deductive logic cultivated by Leontius of Byzantium was the right premise for his works to penetrate into the intellectual circles of the time, this representing also a new beginning in science. For these reasons Leontius of Byzantium is considered by many historians and philosophers to be the founder of Scholasticism.<sup>54</sup>

Leontius of Byzantium knew very well the writings of Saint Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, writings supporting the group of the monks of Scythia, both of them being from Pontic Dacia. Under the guidance of his friends, John Maxentius and Leontius of Byzantium, Dionysius translates from Greek into Latin "two epistles of the Blessed Cyril, the Bishop of Alexandria, addressed to Succesus, the Primate of the Dioceses of Isauria". To them he dedicates the preface to this translation "Prefatio ad Ioannem et Leontium" and he also plays a special role in the action of 519 when the Scythian monks come from Constantinople to Rome in the days of Pope Hormizda

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<sup>52</sup> Ioan G. Coman, *Scriitori bisericești din epoca străromână (Church Scholars of the Romanian Ancient Age)* and Nestor Vornicescu, Metropolitan of Oltenia, *Primele scrieri patristice în literatura noastră... (The First Patristic Writings in Our Literature...)*, Chap. I, *Scrieri patristice la Dunărea de Jos în vremea Sfinților Părinți (Patristic Writings at the Lower Danube in the Time of the Holy Fathers)*, p. 33-97.

<sup>53</sup> Louis Bréhier, *Civilizația bizantină (Byzantine Civilization)*, edition cited, Chap. *Formarea scolasticii ortodoxe (Formation of Orthodox Scholasticism)*, p. 327-328 apud Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 592.

<sup>54</sup> Mihail Diaconescu, *Istoria Literaturii Dacoromane... (History of Dacian-Roman...)*, p. 590-592.

(514-523) to support, as the neocalcedonians who resolutely defended the Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, the Dyophysite theological formula "*One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh*".

Most researchers agree that Leontius of Byzantium in his writings refers to the works of St. Dionysius. There is a clear influence of his work on Leontius' writings. As theologians, they are the result of the same intellectual environment in Pontic Dacia, and as far as the Tomis Literary School is concerned, they are the most illustrious representatives.<sup>55</sup>

### **1.3. The Theology of Leontius of Byzantium**

#### ***1.3.1. Leontinian Theology continuing the Chalcedonian Theology***

Living in a period dominated by the conflicts between the Chalcedonians and the Monophysites, Leontius issues a new clarification of the Christological problems. His view was that in this way it would be possible to demonstrate the utility of the Evagrian metaphysics, whose Heterodoxy was struggling to shelter it in order to avoid a possible blame or even condemnation. From his point of view, the Council of Chalcedon was the middle road between the two adverse teachings, Nestorianism and Eutheism.<sup>56</sup>

Leontius of Byzantium is the greatest theologian from the time of Emperor Justinian the Great<sup>57</sup>. This assimilates in *His Confession of Faith* from 551 the doctrine of Leontius<sup>58</sup>. The controversies that debuted a century ago have not found their solutions, so they have maintained a tense atmosphere in the empire. Leontius is the one who thinks and places in a new order with new visions the post-chalcedonian Orthodox Christology, and for a time managed to conclude the disputes between the Monophysites and the Nestorians, as well as between the Monophysites and the Orthodox<sup>59</sup>. His activity was closely related to the actions of the Scythian monks and

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 594.

<sup>56</sup> Archd. Prof. PhD. Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie (Patrology)*, Vol. III, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Fr. Looks, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche. Erstes Buch: Das Leben und die polemische Werke des Leontius von Byzanz*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 303 *apud* Ion Caraza, "Doctrina Hristologică a lui Leontiu de Bizanț", in: *Studii Teologice* 5-6/1967, p. 321.

<sup>58</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, "Posibilitatea Reconcilierii Dogmatice între Biserica Ortodoxă și Vechile Biserici Orientale (The Possibility of Dogmatic Reconciliation between the Orthodox Church and the Old Eastern Churches)", in: *Ortodoxia* 1/1965, p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Fr. Prof. I. G. Coman, *Curs de hristologie (Course of Christology)*, p. 103 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 321.

aimed at harmonizing the Cyrillian thinking with the Chalcedonian judgments<sup>60</sup>. About the formula "One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh" is concerned Leontius in his book "Against the Nestorians", through this directing his whole attention to God the Word as the subject of His two natures, for which he uses the notion of "hypostasis". In the context of using this formula, Leontius of Byzantium, as well as John Maxentius, places in his Christology the same middle-ground between Monophysitism and Nestorianism, both of whom direct their writings against both Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Emperor Justinian was also drawn by this position. Until the years 535-536, Leontius pleaded for the formula "One of the Trinity was crucified", which seemed opposed to Nestorianism. In 536 Justinian formally approves the formula, Leontius attending an endemic synod in Constantinople which condemns Patriarch Antim, the favorite of the Empress Theodora, who supported Monophysitism<sup>61</sup>.

Leontius is the first writer to give a philosophical clarification to the existing theological problems. Compared to the non-Calcedonians who deplored the human nature in Jesus Christ, he shows a deep perception of the human having his permanent reason in God<sup>62</sup>. This is why Christian humanism can benefit from this work of the great writer.

Until Leontius of Byzantium, the Holy Fathers have established the revealed truth of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, according to which Jesus Christ is only one person in two natures. This was not, however, well analyzed and explained, which led to the occurrence of heresies and various conflicts on the subject. Analyzing in depth the term hypostasis, Leontius of Byzantium shows that Jesus Christ, the unique hypostasis, could assume a concrete, individual human nature, but without this to be a person. The starting points are the notion of hypostasis as a stand-alone existence given by the Cappadocians and the Orthodox assertion that human nature did not exist outside union, so it is not a person. Thus, the term οὐσία means mere existence "and not what or how"<sup>63</sup>. It can be used for God, angels, animals, plants, and everything that exists. We can talk about the "essence" of a being, on what distinguishes it from other beings: but in this situation οὐσία becomes synonymous with φύσις, nature; actually the purpose of the word φύσις is to convey a difference (τὸ παρηλλαγμένον) not

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<sup>60</sup> Fr. Looks, *op. cit.*, p. 59 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 321.

<sup>61</sup> Ilie Frăcea, *Leontios Byzantinos*, Athens, 1984, p. 89 and the followings *apud* Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri ale Călugărilor știți... (Writings of the Scythian Monks...)*, p. 212.

<sup>62</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Posibilitatea Reconcilierii Dogmatice... (The Possibility of Dogmatic Reconciliation...)*, p. 25-26.

<sup>63</sup> Εἰ γὰρ οὐσίαν ἀπλῶς ὀρίζομενοι εἶπομεν τὴν τιнос ὑπαρξιν δηλοῦν..., οὐ τὸ τί ἢ τὸ πῶς, *Epilysis*, col. 1921 c *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 69.

partition or number (τὸ διηρημένον)<sup>64</sup>. The term ὑπόστασις show division (τὸ κεχωρισμένον), the individual (τὸ ἄτομον), the particular (τὸ ἴδιον)<sup>65</sup>, and also indicates "that someone" (τὸν τινά)<sup>66</sup>.

The Leontinian contribution to deciphering the idea of a person is that using the aristotelian categories of substance, genre, aspects, individual, accident, gave a special expressivity with rational theological fundamentals to the idea of person and nature, notions which before him did not have clarity. The exact blur and instability of the terms of person and nature up to him led to the appearance of so many heresies. Leontius says about hypostasis: *"The nature contains the idea of existence, while the hypostasis contains the existence itself. The nature shows the species, the hypostasis indicates the individual. The former designates the character of the universal; the second separates the particular from the common. In a word, the consubstantial ones are said to be of a single nature and the reason for their existence is common. Definition of hypostasis: either those identical by nature but distinct in number, or those made up of different natures, but which simultaneously have among them the communion of existence. And the communion of existence is said to be not in the sense of mutual complementation of existence as can be seen in essences and their essential predicates called qualities, as if the nature and essence of each would not be considered in itself, but with that with which it is composed and combined"*<sup>67</sup>. Using the Aristotelian categories in Christology, Leontius teaches that in Christ there is the human nature belonging to the animal genre and having the specific differences of "rational" and "mortal"; in Him there is also the divine nature having the attributes of "incorruptibility" and "immortality"<sup>68</sup>.

Leontius admits in his work *Epilysis* that the pre-existence of Christ's humanity is ontologically possible (οὐκ ἀδύνατον): an hypostasis can very well be made up of

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<sup>64</sup> *Epilysis*, col. 1945 c; see also 1920 d - 1921 a *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking), p. 70.

<sup>65</sup> See *Contra Nest. et. Eut.* (Against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists), col. 1305 c; *Epilysis*, col. 1921 a, 1928 b etc. *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking, p. 70.

<sup>66</sup> *Contra Nest. et. Eut.* (Against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists), col. 1277 d *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking, p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> Leonțiu de Bizanț, *Contra nestorienilor și eutihienilor* (Against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists), col. 1280 AB. Translated after Fr. Prof. I. G. Coman, *Curs de hristologie...* (Course on Christology...), p. 103 (Please note that the texts used in translation were confronted with the original) *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică...* (The Christological Doctrine...), p. 326.

<sup>68</sup> Nicolae Chițescu, "Formula O singură Fire întrupată a Logosului Lui Dumnezeu (The Formula One Incarnate nature of the Logos of God)", in: *Ortodoxia* 3/1965, p. 297.

preexisting entities, such as bringing together the body with the soul at the resurrection. In the exceptional situation of Christ, it would not have been proper for Him to have had ever existed as "*simple man*" (ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος)<sup>69</sup>.

Although it was liable to be declared a heretic, Leontius succeeds, however, by using ambiguities of expression to avoid this. So he does not confess directly that he would incline to preexistence. He remains faithful to Evagrius: he does not deny preexistence except as regards the "*humanity*" (ἰσθωπότης) of Christ; that is the state of fall in which the intellect has become "*soul*" (ψυχή). In Evagrie's vision, this state of decay is, indeed, the man. This is the humanity that Christ received at the Incarnation from Mary, for for its salvation, humanity's, He came into the world<sup>70</sup>. Certainly this humanity was not pre-existing in Him. But he does not deny the pre-existence of Christ as an intellect, united from the eternity with the Logos (καθ' ὑπόστασιν and καθ' οὐσίαν)<sup>71</sup>.

The distinction between hypostasis and nature is that of individual and general, the individual being in relation to plurality even through common attributes<sup>72</sup>. By the individual is first understood a self-existence, while the general represents a plurality of similar individuals; they can not be called whole but in the abstract sense. The individual is first a special whole, and then he can give the general as plurality or repetition<sup>73</sup>.

The relationship between nature and hypostasis is created precisely by distinguishing the attributes of the same individual by showing him concurrently, a particular hypostasis and a common nature<sup>74</sup>. The function of the hypostasis is to show

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<sup>69</sup> Epilysis, PG 86, 1944; see 1941 d-1944a; see the analysis of these passages made by M. Richard, "Léonce de Byzance", in: *REB* 5 (1947), p. 58-60 *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană*, p. 67.

<sup>70</sup> This is Leontius' essential argument against the Aphthartodokets who believed that the body of Christ was incorruptible from the Incarnation (see especially PG, 86, col. 1348 bd) *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* (*Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking*), p. 67.

<sup>71</sup> John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană* (*Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking*), p. 66-67.

<sup>72</sup> Leonțiu de Bizanț, *Combaterea argumentelor lui Sever*, PG 86/2, 1921 CD, 1928 C *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 326.

<sup>73</sup> *Idem*, *Contra nestorienilor... (Against Nestorians...)*, col. 1289 A *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 326.

<sup>74</sup> *Idem*, *Treizeci de capitole contra lui Sever (Thirty Chapters Against Severus)*, PG 86/2, 1909 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 326.



first of all the freestanding existence, to others, as well as the nature<sup>75</sup>. Alternatively, the role of nature is to show the difference from other natures, the hypostasis having that role only within the same nature. Unlike other natures, the hypostasis does not have a divisive role, but it is the one that brings them together, given the community of existence. So, the hypostasis has the capacity to unite in itself different natures in which they will exist as part of the whole<sup>76</sup>. With these explanations, Leontius of Byzantium managed to transform the notion of hypostasis of the capadocians into the Christology. In Jesus Christ, human nature is not self-contained, but by this it does not remain a simple nature without hypostasis, since nature without hypostasis does not exist. It is "enhypostasis" because it does not exist alone, but in another: "*The hypostasis and enhypostasis are not the same as the essence is something and what is in essence is something else. The hypostasis indicates someone, while the enhypostasis shows the essence; the hypostasis delimits the person through the characteristic properties; the enhypostasis shows that there is no accident, which has its existence in another and is not considered in itself. These are all qualities that are called essential and attributive, none of which is essence, that is, a thing that exists in itself, but all are considered in connection with essence, such as color in the body, science in the soul. Therefore, who says: «There is no non-hypostatic nature» that tells the truth; but he who claims that what is not non-hypostatic is hypostasis does not conclude rightly; it is as if someone says that there is no body without form, but then it would unfairly conclude that the form is body and can not be seen in the body*"<sup>77</sup>.

Leontius shows to the Nestorians that one can not speak about about the duality of persons and hypostases starting from the duality of the natures in Christ, as well as to the Monophysites, he proves that one can not speak about the unity of nature starting from the unity of the hypostasis and the person<sup>78</sup>. Enhypostatic existence means existence within the Logos<sup>79</sup>. Enhypostasis applies to attributes called essential and attributed to the essence, since they are neither accidents nor essential things. They have a community of existence with the being they are complete with. These attributes

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 1945, A apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 326.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 1944 AB apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 326.

<sup>77</sup> *Idem*, *Contra nestorienilor*, col. 1277 D.; 1280 A, according to Fr. Prof. I. G. Coman, *op. cit.*, p. 104 apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 327.

<sup>78</sup> J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes*, Paris, 1928, III, p. 156 apud Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 216.

<sup>79</sup> Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra argumentelor lui Sever (Against Severus' Arguments)*, PG 86/2, 1944 C apud Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 216.

are not independent, as the human nature of Christ is, what is outside Him lies in other thousands of subjects.<sup>80</sup>

Human nature has been enhypostatic in the pre-existing hypostasis of the Logos, so in Christ the Lord the human nature has received concrete existence, but not as in its own center, but in a pre-existing center, in the unity of the divine hypostasis of the Logos, for it is impossible to speak of an autonomous subsistence of the human being within the higher and larger unit in which it has come to existence. The Hypostasis of the Divine Word did not unite with another human hypostasis, The Hypostasis of the Divine Word has not united with another human hypostasis, but has formed through the incarnation a human nature, assumed and framed in His eternal Hypostasis, and by this He made Himself the Hypostasis of the human nature. The main point that emerges is that the Son of God Himself has united Himself with humanity, or has come to the fullest reach of us<sup>81</sup>. The enhypostasized human nature preserves all its determinants and its capital energies in the human existence of Christ. The Logos assumed the human nature in His essence, in His way of Trinitarian existence. The hypostasis does not compete with the individual human existence, but translates it into its own source, in the hypostatic way of the Son of God, Who renews and deifies it without altering its essence<sup>82</sup>. Preserved as a whole in its essence, the human nature assumed by Christ is deified, for the Logos or the Word of God is the One Who works both through the divine nature and through the human nature, all of which take place due to the love for man of the Lord who humbled Himself: "*He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*" (Philippians 2:7). Christ the Lord embraced all humanity in Himself with all human beings, so that all may enjoy the results of redemption and deification<sup>83</sup>.

Enhypostasis is a special existence, distinct from both hypostasis and accident. The humanity of the Savior was concrete, individual, real. It retains these attributes in the Logos too, with the only distinction that it does not exist distinctly. But by this it does not become without reality, ie an abstract nature composed only of attributes. The personal attributes that the human nature retains in its entirety do not exist in the

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<sup>80</sup> Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Calcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 216.

<sup>81</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, Vol. II., p. 36-37.

<sup>82</sup> Fr. Prof. PhD. Dumitru Radu, *Iisus Hristos, Mântuitorul lumii*, in *Îndrumări misionare*, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1986, p. 34 *apud* Kamal Farahat, "Hristologia lui Sever de Antiohia și Hristologia Sinodului de la Calcedon (Severus of Antioch's Christology and the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon)", in: *Glasul Bisericii* 5/1987, p. 49.

<sup>83</sup> Fr. Prof. PhD. Dumitru Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 34 *apud* Kamal Farahat, *Hristologia lui Sever de Antiohia... (Severus of Antioch's Christology...)*, p. 50.

Logos but enhypostasized. So the existence of human nature in Jesus Christ is the enhypostasis, to which Leontius of Byzantium has shown his character as a complete substance.<sup>84</sup>

The Leontinian dialectics (referring to hypostasis, ousia, and enhypostasis) does not fit into the Trinitarian vocabulary of the Capadocians, to which, sometimes he is bound to refer<sup>85</sup>. The hypostases represented for the Saints Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianz the direct and concrete object of the contemplation of the Holy Trinity; the unity of these hypostases was admitted by the Cappadocians under the influence of Athanasius the Great<sup>86</sup>. If at St. Basil the explanation of being and hypostasis is often limited to the concept "common" and "particular", the expressions used by St. Gregory of Nazianz show more concisely their personal way of existence, eliminating their interpretation as simple "relations"; the hypostases "possess" divinity (τὰ ὅν ἡ θεότης), and the divinity is "in themselves" (τὰ ἐν οἷς ἡ θεότης)<sup>87</sup>.

The theologian John Meyendorff concludes, saying: "*When it is admitted that the hypostasis of Christ is none other than the hypostasis of the Logos himself, preexisting and assuming the humanity (which in this sense is a enhypostaton), when it will be cleared, and according to Cyril, that this Chalcedonian concept of the duality of the beings does not suppress the unity of the subject in Christ, that subject being the Logos, then the true Leontinian contribution will take its place in the history of Christology*"<sup>88</sup>.

### ***1.3.2. The Hypostatic Union in Jesus Christ***

Wanting to save our whole flesh, the Savior took complete human nature, substantially uniting His rational body and soul, in order to clean the one alike through something similar<sup>89</sup>. The moment of union is the same as the beginning of the Savior's

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<sup>84</sup> Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 327-328.

<sup>85</sup> Does he not refer to St. Cyril himself, whose Christology is however as distant as that of the Nestorians? *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 72.

<sup>86</sup> See especially G. L. Prestige, *God in patristic Thought* (London, 1952), p. 242 sq *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 72.

<sup>87</sup> *Poem. dogm. XX, 3, PG 37, 414 a; Orat. 39,11, PG 36, 345 d apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 72.

<sup>88</sup> John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> Idem, *Contra nestorienilor... (Against Nestorians...)*, col. 1325 A *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 328.

humanity, so from the first moment of the *oikonomia* He embraced our nature as an ornament<sup>90</sup>.

Leontius defines the union of the divine nature with the humanity in Christ as "*existential union*" (ἔνωσις οὐσιῶδης) or "*after being*" (ἔνωσις κατ'οὐσίαν). This formulation is used in all his writings<sup>91</sup>. Leontius speaks nothing of existential gnosis but merely of "*union*". This could be a solution in trying to identify the proper terms of his time, and the purpose is to apply the Evagrian ontology to the sixth century Christological problems. Nowhere does Leontius call the Logos "*Subject*" of the union as this "*Subject*" is always Christ, or, more usual "*the Lord*". "*Appearing from the Virgin, the Lord was also called God and Son of God in the Logos and according to the Logos*"<sup>92</sup>.

We are talking about three ways to understand the union: first, being the moral union that allows to see the natures separated, with no other relation than according to humanity, will or thought<sup>93</sup>, another union is that which mixes the natures<sup>94</sup> and the last is that which does not share or interfere with the natures: "*it (the union) knows, on the one hand, that it has uninterrupted those united according to their attributes because of the unchangeability, on the other hand the same are made to belong to one and only by the substantial union itself; so that the attributes of each of them are inherently common to the whole, and those of the whole are common to each of them because of the unmixed attribute of the same in each*"<sup>95</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Although he uses terms such as: dwelling, clothing, Leontius of Byzantium is considering the substantial union between the two natures. But he deduces this unity exclusively in the way of union, regardless of time or place. Human nature could have existed before the union, according to Leontius, but it did not exist not because it could not, but because it was not necessary for it to remain a moment without the Logos (Leontius of Byzantium, *Combaterea... (Fighting...)*, col. 1944 C.D.) *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 328.

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, *Contra Nest. et Eut.*, col. 1297 d, 1300 ab, 1301 bd etc.; *Epilysis*, col. 1941 ab, etc. *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană*, p. 67.

<sup>92</sup> Ο ἐκ Παρθένου πεφηνὸς Θεὸς τε ἐκλήθη καὶ Υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ καὶ κατὰ τὸν, *Contra Nest. et Eut.*, col. 1301 a (in the text from Migne Λόγος is printed with little „λ”, which makes the meaning of the sentence unclear) *apud* John Meyendorff, *Hristos în gândirea creștină răsăriteană (Christ in Eastern Christian Thinking)*, p. 67.

<sup>93</sup> Idem, *Combaterea... (Fighting...)*, col. 1940 C. D. *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 329.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 1940 D-1941 A, see also V. Grumel, Léonce Byzance, in „*Diction. De Théologie Catholique*”, t. IX, Paris, 1926, col. 408-421 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 329.

<sup>95</sup> Leonțiu de Bizanț, *op. cit.*, col. 1941 AB; vezi și V. Grumel, *op. cit.*, col. 408-421, from whom we took the translation *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 329.

Leontius of Byzantium dedicates much of his work of arguing and supporting the two natures, making him an important Chalcedonian<sup>96</sup>. Against Severus of Antioch, he claims that after the union there are two natures, since Jesus Christ has two "omousios" - one with the Father and one with us<sup>97</sup>. He takes care of the definition of hypostasis in Christology. Like the whole composed by parts, Jesus Christ keeps the middle between extremes due to the parts. To us He is an entire hypostasis with the Divinity, because of His humanity, and an entire hypostasis of the Father with the human nature because of the Divinity. The hypostasis distinguishes and separates "omousios" by attributes, but joins "eterousios" through the community of being<sup>98</sup>.

Leontius reproduces the Orthodox meanings of Saint Cyril of Alexandria's expressions, susceptible to Monophysite interpretation. Thus the formula "*two natures through thinking*" (τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ) affirms the duality of natures as well as the formula "*two natures through acting*" (τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ) which Severus puts in antithesis. He argues that by the formula "*two natures through acting*", the Holy Fathers expose their existence in act, not division, but the formula "*two natures through thinking*" they express their division. Also the expression "*a single incarnate nature of the Logos*" has an Orthodox interpretation, as St. Cyril interprets it too. If the substance has, against the hypostasis, the distinction between common and inherent, then Christ as Logos has only one nature not with the body, but with the Father with Whom He has the unity of nature and identity<sup>99</sup>. Responding to the Nestorian assertion that what is not inherent to the divine nature of Christ is not inherent to the Person of the Word but to another person, he shows different meanings of the term "*inherent*" saying: "*The mind is inherent to the soul, as power; are inherent the thoughts, as works; the body is inherent to the soul, as an organ. a son is inherent to a man, as being from him; but also, an agricultural term is inherent to him, as property*". To Christ the Lord His own body is inherent in the most intimate sense, because He suffered in him the nails and

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<sup>96</sup> V. Grumel, *op. cit.*, col. 410 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 329.

<sup>97</sup> *Idem*, *Treizeci de capitole... (Thirty Chapters...)*, col. 1908 D *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 329.

<sup>98</sup> *Idem*, *Contra nestorienilor... (Against Nestorians...)*, col. 1289 A. Although it seems that natures have an equal part in the formation of the only hypostasis, Leontius does not forget that their common substance is actually the substance of the Logos, and human nature is enhypostasized by Him (ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ ὑποσδιῆναι); see also V. Grumel, *op. cit.*, col. 412 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 330.

<sup>99</sup> *Idem*, *Treizeci de capitole... (Thirty Chapters...)*, col. 1909 B. C.; See: Prof. N. Chițescu, "Formula o singură fire intrupată a Logosului lui Dumnezeu (The Formula One Incarnate Nature of the Logos of God)", in: *Ortodoxia XVII* (1965), no. 3, p. 295-307 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 330.

the spear, including the Church is His inherent body (Ephesians 5:29; I Corinthians 12:27). However, the Church and its faithful are not His body in the most inherent sense, because He was not crucified in the body of the Church or its members: "*The Church is not inherently His, because He was not nailed to it*". "*But keep in mind that His body is not inherent to the nature of the Word, but it was done in the latter days inherent to His hypostasis*"<sup>100</sup>.

Regarding the position of the Monophysites claiming that the body of the Lord was not like our body after the fall, Leontius states: "*I argue with boldness that the Lord took this body, which is not only of the first man but ours. For He came not only for this, but also for us. It would have been very absurd to be only like one's, and with all the others who needed healing not to be*"<sup>101</sup>.

Among the analogies of hypostatic union, the most used, as in the Holy Fathers, is that of the union between body and soul<sup>102</sup>. Like man, Jesus Christ is composed of two distinct, perfect parts, of whose union results one single hypostasis<sup>103</sup>. Proponents of Severianism are not justified when they call nature what comes out of the union of the natures, as man is a nature. We can call man a nature, considered not as an individual but as a species, but as there is no Christic kind (χριστότης) we can not say that Christ is a nature<sup>104</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

We can assert without fail that Leontius is the official theologian of Emperor Justinian the Great, as well as an aspiring participant in the theological debates of the time and a mediator for the maintenance of peace and unity of faith in the empire.<sup>105</sup>

The Leontinian contribution to the interpretation of the Christological doctrine is a categorical one. It is he who explained philosophically the definition issued at the

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<sup>100</sup> Adv. Nestor, lib. VII; PG 87/1, 1765 apud Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri ale Călugărilor şciţi... (Writings of the Scythian Monks...)*, p. 213.

<sup>101</sup> Contra nestorienilor şi eutihienilor, PG 86/1, 1348 apud Dumitru Stăniloae, *Scrieri ale Călugărilor şciţi... (Writings of the Scythian Monks...)*, p. 213.

<sup>102</sup> Leontiū de Bizanţ, *Contra nestorienilor...* (Against Nestorians...), col. 1289 apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 330.

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem, col. 1921 A.B. apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 330.

<sup>104</sup> Idem, *Combaterea argumentelor... (Fighting Severus' Arguments...)*, col. 1945, C.D. apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 330.

<sup>105</sup> R. Devreese, "Le florilège de Léonce de Byzance", in: *Revue des sciences religieuses* 10 (1930), no. 4, p. 547 apud Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 321.

Council of Chalcedon. For its interpretation, he used the Aristotelian notions<sup>106</sup>, so his preoccupation exceeded the affirmation of the differences between the nature and the hypostasis, continuing to demonstrate what the differences were between them. So, according to him, nature has the sense of existence, and the hypostasis, the sense of self-existence. Starting from this distinction, Leontius can claim against the monophysites that in Christ there was a human reality, characterized by the human genre and by the specific differences: rational and mortal. There is no doubt that the Savior also had divine nature, having the attributes of the divinity: incorruptibility and immortality. In fact, Severus of Antioch admitted in Christ after the union these two categories of specific differences, which made clear the absurdity of his claim that Christ was made up of two natures, a duality that was suppressed by union. In other words, if the general exists only in the individual, it means that the human nature did not exist before the Incarnation<sup>107</sup>. This fact shows that the human nature of Jesus Christ does not exist without hypostasis, so it is not self-hypostatic, but it is hypostasized in God the Word, that is, it is enhypostasized (*ενυποστατος*)<sup>108</sup>, or has its subsistence (*το υποσθηναι*) in the Word<sup>109</sup>.

Through Leontius' contribution in accordance with St. Cyril's thinking, the Chalcedonian duality of the natures did not suppress the unity of the subject in Christ<sup>110</sup>. Leontius even emanates a Cyrillic view of Chalcedon, including the formula

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<sup>106</sup> Leontius prepares his notions of nature, hypostasis and enhypostasis, with which he would work in Christology, by studying the definitions and the scale of the existence. He speaks about being or existence, gender, species, individual, properties of the being, inseparable or essential accidents, and separable or attributive accidents (See Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, p. 60-63; Tixeront, *op. cit.* III, pp. 153-154; Grumel, *Leonce de Bysance*, in: *DTC IX* (1920), col. 405-407) *apud* †IPS Prof. PhD. Irineu Ion Popa, *Contribuția hristologică a monahilor sciți după Sinodul de la Calcedon (The Christological Contribution of the Scythian Monks after the Council of Chalcedon)*, Foreword to the research of Fr. Ioniță Apostolache, *Teologi daco-romani de seamă în cetatea eternă... (Daco-Roman Theologians in the Eternal City...)*, p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> PG 86, 1367 D *apud* †IPS Prof. PhD. Irineu Ion Popa, *Contribuția hristologică... (The Christological Contribution...)*, Foreword to the research of Fr. Ioniță Apostolache, *Teologi daco-romani de seamă...*, p. 11.

<sup>108</sup> PG 86, 1227 D *apud* †IPS Prof. PhD. Irineu Ion Popa, *Contribuția hristologică... (The Christological Contribution...)*, Foreword to the research of Fr. Ioniță Apostolache, *Teologi daco-romani de seamă...*, p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> PG 86/2, 1944 C *apud* †IPS Prof. PhD. Irineu Ion Popa, *Contribuția hristologică... (The Christological Contribution...)*, Foreword to the research of Fr. Ioniță Apostolache, *Teologi daco-romani de seamă...*, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Ioan Mircea Ielciu, "Hristologia lui Sever al Antiohiei și importanța ei în contextul dialogului cu necalcedonienii (The Christology of Severus of Antioch and Its

preferred by Saint Cyril "*an incarnate nature of God-the Logos*" seems to Leontius susceptible to a Dyophysite interpretation<sup>111</sup>. The Synod of Chalcedon could only be completed by a Cyrillic interpretation, this being achieved with an admirable victory in the time of Justinian the Emperor, giving him considerable help in the action of returning the lost to the right faith. The literary stage of the Christological disputes that trespassed in one form or another Chalcedon begins and ends with Leontius of Byzantium, being a stage of analysis of the synod formula. His Christology is not always very lucid, being perhaps natural, as he uses the Aristotelian concepts to explain Chalcedon. What makes Leontius is in fact a creation of reconciliation and systematization.<sup>112</sup>

His great merit is to be able to achieve a unitary whole from the teaching of the Holy Fathers on the Incarnation and to achieve a beneficial concordance between the Cyrillic and Chalcedon theology<sup>113</sup>. His successors, St. Maximus the Confessor and St. John of Damascus and others take over his ideas and deepen them<sup>114</sup>.

St. Maximus the Confessor, starting from the teaching of the two works and wills in a hypostasis, does nothing but apply to works what Leontius had said about the natures. However, the terminology being too rigid in the cult of the Eastern Church, the Cyrillic formulas remained dominant, and in the Western belief, the formulas of the tradition there, remained contained in Leon's epistle and confirmed by the Fourth Ecumenical Council<sup>115</sup>.

His special contribution is that he analyzed in detail the Christological dogma proclaimed by the Fourth Ecumenical Council, but using new explanations, such as the theory of the enhypostasis, thus studying the path of the non-Calcedonians to return to Orthodoxy<sup>116</sup>.

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Importance in the Context of the Dialogue with the Non-Calcedonians)", in: *Ortodoxia* 4/1988, p. 87.

<sup>111</sup> Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nestorienilor și Eutihienilor (Against the Nestorians and the Eutychianists)*, PG 86/1, 1277 AB *apud* Ioan G. Coman, *Hristologia Post Chalcedoniană... (Post-Chalcedonian Christology...)*, p. 217.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 217-218.

<sup>113</sup> Fr. Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schiftsteller der griechischen Kirche, Erstes Buch: Das Leben und die polemische Werke des Leontius von Byzanz*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 304 *apud* Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 332.

<sup>114</sup> Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 332.

<sup>115</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, "Definiția Dogmatică de la Calcedon (The Dogmatic Definition of Chalcedon)", in: *Ortodoxia* 2-3/1951, p. 430.

<sup>116</sup> Idem, *Posibilitatea reconcilierii dogmatice... (The Possibility of Dogmatic Reconciliation...)*, p. 26



The actuality of the Christological doctrine of Leontius of Byzantium is evident through its dense use, especially in the dialogues between the Orthodox Church and the Old Eastern Churches. The Leontinian work and doctrine provide the Christian world with essential points of understanding of the Chalcedonian Christology as well as well-founded ideas in analyzing the righteous doctrine.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ion Caraza, *Doctrina Hristologică... (The Christological Doctrine...)*, p. 332-333.