

## A Hesychastic Confession of faith

This article contains an introduction to the Romanian translation from Greek of a confession of faith which was believed to belong – by the Athonite manuscript tradition – to the Byzantine writer Nicephorus the Italian or the Hesychast, especially known for his implication and his writings in the Hesychastic dispute of the fourteenth century. The only manuscript that contains this writing is the codex 1626 (L 135) from the fifteenth century, pp.149a-153b, kept in the Monastery of the Great Lavra in Athos, and it is a dogmatic subject writing, sent by the author as a corresponding letter and theological advice to the disciples of his “frontistirion” by the end of his life, the exact title of the letter being “*About the belief in the Holy Trinity and the economy of the Word of God*”. Assigning this manuscript to St. Nicephorus the Italian was mentioned in the study of Basileiou S. Pseutonka, *Nicephorus the Italian, peri tes aghias triados kai oikonomias tou Theou Logou (eisagogi-keimeno-sholia)*, published in *Epistemonike Epeteris Theologikes Scholes tes Thessalonikes* (EETST) 23 (1978), pp. 207-231.

But the modern theological criticism, acknowledged that this confession of faith, about the natures and the redemptive works of Christ has a more complicated and sinuous history. It does not belong, in fact, to Nicephorus the Italian but, highly probable – because the introduction and salutation from the beginning of this confession of faith – the name Nicephorus hides another Hesychastic character, just as important by his Hesychastic struggle, experience and confession, namely Nicephorus Blemmides. Furthermore, a close analysis of this confession of faith and of the manuscripts and doctrinal tradition of the epoch, made by great modern scholars, point out that, in fact, it’s origins, compilation, and appropriation by one or another authors from epoch has stirred up great research and debate in the last centuries, the researchers ascribing wrongly this text successively to John Damascene and Pseudo Cyril of Alexandria because of its partial presence in

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some writings of these patristic authors. In our intention to clarify our reader and to make a short introduction to the translation of the text, we will resume this complicated history of the text, as it was explored by the renowned scholars of patristic theology, and, also, will present the short biographies of the principal authors to which the text was attributed by the manuscripts' tradition.

To introduce the reader in the subject we will start in an inverse perspective, presenting in the beginning the short biographies of the first two authors, and after that the summary of the debate regarding the ascription of this confession of faith to different authors from that byzantine epoch. Who were in fact the two Nicephorus, who was believed that assigned, as stated by the manuscript tradition, wide parts from the treatise *On the Holy Trinity* of Pseudo Cyril of Alexandria, in order to formulate this confession of faith, and why did they do this despite the fact that they were only hesychasts and not dogmatists? The answer to the last part of the question should be searched in the age in which these two confessors of the Eastern Orthodox faith and of hesychastic ascetic and spiritual practices lived. It is about the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, when have begun the first attempts to bring together the two Churches, the Byzantine Orthodox and the Roman Catholic one, more precisely about the Council of Lyon in 1274, when the events and the creeds of these athletes of faith took place.

Information about Nicephorus the Italian or the Hesychast – to whom Basileiou S. Pseutonka, the editor of the Athonit manuscript assigned the present confession of faith translated in this study – are quite poor for that age and even in the specialized studies. The salutations of the preserved texts mention him as Hieromonk of the Holy Mountain, devout and confessor, hesychast and philosopher. We do not know his birth year and the precise period of his spending in his native country, Italy, but M. Jugie believes that, Nicephorus, before coming to Byzantium, was a monk in one of the Hellenic rite monasteries in Calabria, the southern region from which, the main opponent of hesychasts, Barlaam Calabritul, will also leave to Byzantium. This view is somewhat contradicted by the information provided by Saint Gregory Palamas in the Triads 2.2, 2.3, according to which Nicephorus entered the monastic life after his conversion to the Eastern Church, more precisely, once arrived in Byzantium and Mount Athos, as a result of the persecution he suffered after the unionist council in Lyon, to which he firmly opposed. He was arrested in the spring of 1276 for opposing the unionist policies of Michael VIII Palaeologus and put on trial in Constantinople; he was then taken to Akko and tried a second time under the papal legate Thomas Agni. As the researcher Basileiou S. Pseutonka sums up, “just then, as shown, he decides to become a monk in the Holy Mountain called “the House of virtue”; after his submission and obedience “to the wisest fathers” he becomes initiated in

*About the belief in the Holy Trinity*

hesychasm, and after acquiring, by living around them, the richness of the ascetic experience, he himself becomes a famous master of the “art of arts”, the hesychia or the peace of the mind. He also founded his own “spiritual meditation holy school ~ frontistirion (aschitirion ~ place for ascetism), where he was frequently visited by a great number of disciple monks and who learned from him the practical philosophy”<sup>1</sup>. Teolipt of Philadelphia (1250-1325)<sup>2</sup> also becomes initiated in hesychasm by Nicephorus, who is also exiled in the Holy Mountain by Michael Palaeologus as he opposed to his unionist policy. The persecution of these saints creates, in fact, the spiritual emulation setting in which the great defender of Hesychasm, St. Gregory Palamas, will be trained, who, under these circumstances probably, includes among his ancient and contemporary spiritual masters – together with Saint Simeon the New Theologian, Teolipt of Philadelphia, Athanasius of Constantinople, Nile the Italian, Seliotis, Elijah, Gabriel and Athanasius - St. Nicephorus too. The year of death of Nicephorus the Italian is set by M. Jugie at the end of the thirteenth century, namely, just before or just after the birth of St. Gregory Palamas, around the year 1300<sup>3</sup>.

Nicephorus the Hesychast is mainly known as a Philokalic writer of some ascetic works: “*On fasting and the prayer of the heart*”, “*The method of the holy prayer and watchfulness*” in which he describes his typical method concerning the prayer of the hesychasts, somewhat adapted to the hesychasm practiced by the laymen. St. Gregory Palamas tells us that “he used to teach his method within the circle of his disciples, but most especially the novice monks in order to help them in their progress of concentrating, by prayer, the mind into the heart”. Varlaam, as Palamas confirms again, maliciously fought against both the method and the antirhetical theology of Nicephorus, without honouring the soldier for his virtue and for “that blessed confession and the exile caused by this”, but nor those remarkable men who visited him in the exile and learned the ascetism just from him”<sup>4</sup>. Beside this writings-compilations of patristic texts describing the methods of prayer – “the Method...” is even assigned in certain manuscripts to St. Symeon

<sup>1</sup> Basileiou S. Pseutonka, Nicephorus, *peri tes aghias triados kai oikonomias tou Theou Logou (eisagogi-keimeno-sholia)*, published in Epistemonike Epeteris Theologikes Scholes tes Thessalonikes (EETST) 23 (1978), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> For a short presentation of Nicephorus’ influence on Teolipt of Philadelphia, see vol. Teolipt al Filadelfiei, Cuviosul si Marturisorul (1250–1322), *Despre viața ascunsă în Dumnezeu – cuvinte duhovnicești, imne și scrisori*, Translation and introductory study: diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, ed. Deisis, 2000 și ed a doua 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, ed. Scripta, București 1993, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Ὑπερ τῶν ἱεροῦ ἡσυχάζοντων*, 2,2,3 (Π Χρηστού, σ. 509) vol. 1, Tesalonic, 1962.

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the New Theologian – Nicephorus the Hesychast gives a confession - *Dialexis*<sup>5</sup> – about the sufferings and debates he had with his witness fellow, Clement, on the differentiating points between the Catholic and Orthodox faith, with the Romano-Catholic representative, Thomas Lentino, who later become bishop of Bethlehem and archbishop of Cozenza<sup>6</sup>. This work describes in fact the persecution and the trial to which St. Nicephorus has been subjected for his opposition to the unionist decisions of the Council of Lyon, by the “great number of executioners”, servants of the Emperor Michael Palaeologus, and by the Pope’s representative, after the “blaze of the impropriety burst violently everywhere, and the smoke stretched to the Holy Mountain”.

Perhaps, under the same circumstances of the persecution against the opponents of the union with the Latin, Nicephorus also wrote an anti-latin antirhetorical work called “*Hypothetic syllogism on the procession of the Holy Spirit*”, of which only one fragment was preserved in the codex Mosq. Synod. 208.14, and, perhaps, under the same circumstances, it has been assigned to him – if the salutation in the prologue really hides him and not Nicephorus Blemmides – by the contemporary athonites, the manuscript we present in this study.

Another author who was believed that extracted this hesychastic confession of faith from the Pseudo-Cyrian treatise, *On the Holy Trinity*, was Nicephorus Blemmides who describes his life – out of which we extract only few important biographic elements – in two complementary words (logoi), called *Δεήγησις μερικῆ* (partial presentation)<sup>7</sup> written by the end of his life, when he was 66 years old, in 1264. Born in Byzantium in 1197 in a family of doctors, he retires in Bithynia after the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204. He studies grammar for 4 years in Broussa, then Nicaea, logic and other subjects of the classical education, then medicine in Smyrna, living around the metropolitan bishop Nicolas, knowing at this time of his life the “depths of perdition” by an incestuous relationship, unnatural as it seems. He continues his philosophical and scientific education in Troada in Skamandros Troada, within the school of a certain scholar Prodromos.

In Nymphée (Nicaea) under the protection of King John Vatatzes, he diligently studies the holy books, continuing his education with one of his former teachers, Demetrios Karykes. He enters the patriarchal clergy and is rapidly advanced in the clerical ranks of psalms reader, deacon and logothete (December

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. art *Nicephor l'hesychaste*, in D.Sp. tome XI, col. 202, Paris 1982.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. V. Laurent et J. Darrouzes, *Dossier grec de l'union de Lyon (1273-1274)*, in *Archives de l'Orient Chrétien*, Institut français d'études byzantines, Paris, 1976, chapter 20, Trial of Nicephorus. n 1, p. 490.

<sup>7</sup> A. Heisenberg, *Nicephori, Blemmydae curriculum vitae et carmina*, Leipzig, 1896, p. 1-92.

1223 - January 1224) by the Patriarch Germain II, fact which will draw down the envies of the archons and of the clergy in the court, who will not hesitate to devise an attack Nicephor. This fact and the slanders against him will make him decide to retire in Lesbos seeking rest and peace, from which the patriarch will call him back, under the threat of punishment, to occupy his position. Not succumbing to “the temptation of the carrer“, considering any promotion as “fleeting shadows” and human achievements as dreams, “Blemmides decides to completely give up the clerical positions, retiring in Latros near Ephesus, where the metropolitan bishop Manasseh makes him monk and takes him into his service. He travels Rhodes island, which was in dissidence at that time with the empire of Nicaea, where he reads avidly the library books of the monastery from Artamytes mountain in the autumn of 1232 or 1233, until the imperial army invade the island, bringing Nicephorus back to Nicaea and Efes at the emperor John Vatatzes and the patriarch Germain II’s service, who appointed him as spokesman of the orthodox faith in the dispute with the Pope’s representatives regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit. He returns to Efes where he receives the Great Schema and is ordained priest at the age of 38 (1235). He attempts to retire in mountain Ida striving for the peace of the hesychastic prayer he wished that much, but the metropolitan bishop of Efes brings him back in the city, setting him the task to concern with the Paxamidion monastic school – frontistirion – whence the harmful incidents will make him retire in a close monastery of Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, where he will be appointed abbot. His fame will increase and he will be acknowledged by the youth of that age as the “prince of philosophers”, and after some trouble caused by his disciples whom he taught logic by the order of emperor Vatatzes, he is exiled by the new metropolitan bishop of Efes, Constantine of Claudiopolis, to the cave of Pytagora. But the emperor restores him to his abbot position, proposing him in 1239 to become the archbishop of Ohrid; in the summer of 1240, the dying patriarch Germain II proposes him to be his successor, positions which Nicephorus will turn down. He also rejects to act as counselor of the patriarch Manuel II, a position which he considered “unnecessary disturbance” and, again, the proposal to become patriarch after Manuel’s death in 1254; all this for the sake of his struggle to find peace and because of his care for his new refuge-hesychasterion in Emathia, he continuing to reside in the monastery of st. Gregory the Wonderworker. His powerful character and the special philosophical instruction will make him be called back in the court during the dispute with the Pope’s representatives and the “Cilician” (the theopaschite Armenian) to discuss about “dogma and sacrifice”, namely about the procession of the Holy Spirit and the unleavened bread, respectively about the doctrine contents of the Trisaghion, about the matter of-

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ferred for the sacrifice and Christ's presence in the Eucharist. He also intercedes for the liberation of the dissident prince Michael II of Thesalia and for an aulic high official who was unanimously condemned by the others. He will also be looked for, by the end of his life in 1271-1272, to be the counselor of the patriarch Joseph in his dispute with the patriarch Arsenius, Nicephorus talking to him from his cell in which he locked himself, going an almost perfect seclusion since 1258-1259 in his refuge-hesychasterion in Emathia. He dies, probably in 1272, his last wish about the tax immunity and the autonomy of his foundation being not fulfilled by the patriarch Joseph who will declare the refuge-hesychasterion in Emathia the metochion of his monastery Galesion.

As can be noticed from this brief biography, Nicephorus was a very strong personality, the number of the writings that have been preserved from him confirming his authenticity as a writer and spiritual dogmatist. He composed a treatise *On the Soul* (Peri psyches), another *On virtues and asceticism* (Peri aretes kai askeseos), another *On the procession of the Holy Spirit*, another *On faith* (Peri pisteos) as well as *Comments on Psalms*, *Liturgical compositions*, the *Typikon* of his hesychasterion in Emathia, the *Hagiographic writings* and numerous poems and letters included in his *Correspondence*.

The confession of faith we translated here can be found, also, in PG 142 columns 586-604, within his work dedicated to the monks of the monastery he taught, as his third book *On faith*. The salutation in the prologue is identical with the one of the manuscript from the Great Lavra which we have translated below.

In fact, as the debate's history point out, there is a manuscript collection containing this confession of faith, relating to the treatise *De SS Trinitate* (PG 77, 1120-1174) ascribed to Pseudo Cyril of Alexandria<sup>8</sup>.

The analyze of these manuscripts has left – for a long period of time and to a great number of scholars which have dealt with the subject – the false impression that, in fact, it was Nicephorus Blemmides who extracted from the pseudo-Cyrian treatise *On the Holy Trinity*, (PG 77, column 1120-1174), only the fragments containing the essence of the doctrine on the Holy Trinity and on the economy of the Incarnation, more precisely the chapters from the columns 1148D to 1172A.

Thus, as Ms. Vassa Conticello resumes in her essential study on subject<sup>9</sup>, it was in 1604 that the first editor of the *De SS. Trinitate*, the German scholar, J. Wegelin attributed it to Saint Cyril of Alexandria, but already after 1613 Robert

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<sup>8</sup> B. Fraigneau-Julien, *Un traité anonyme de la Sainte Trinité attribué à Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* RSR t, 49, 1961 p. 189, no 5, p. 202, 204.

<sup>9</sup> *Pseudo-Cyril's «De SS. Trinitate»: A Compilation of Joseph the Philosopher*, In *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol 61, 1995, p. 117-129.

Bellarmino rejected this attribution, and based on his observation regarding the monothelitic theses contained in the text, the posterity represented by D. Petau (1644), J-P Migne (1859) and J. Mahé (1907), deduces that this treaty was inspired by John of Damascus' *De fide orthodoxa*. After 1912 J. de Guibert inaugurates the opinion that the *De SS. Trinitate* was not a late compilation, but indeed the source of the Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*<sup>10</sup>, stirring up the scholars' interest regarding the real identity of Ps. Cyril of Alexandria and the date of composition of this treatise. Based on the same monothelitic content of the treatise, B. Fraigneau-Julien<sup>11</sup> established the year of composition of the *De SS. Trinitate* through an analysis of its contents, between the years 657-681, but only after B. Kotter's critical edition of John of Damascus' works, and the refocused of the attention on the subject determined by it, in 1974, in a brief remark in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, D. Stiernon identified the *De SS. Trinitate* with the *De pietate (Peri eusebeias)* of Joseph the Philosopher (d. ca. 1330)<sup>12</sup>, an observation already made independently, in fact, by G. de Andrés in 1967, in his description of the *Scorial. Gr. 426 (V.1.6.)* containing the *Synopsis variorum disciplinarum*. of Joseph the Philosopher<sup>13</sup>. Later, Stiernon also noticed that an important part of the *De SS. Trinitate* was probably taken from the *Sermo ad monachos suos* (PG 142, 583-606) of Nicephorus Blemmydes (1197-1272)<sup>14</sup>, and thus, he concluded that the *De SS. Trinitate* of the so called Ps Cyril of Alexandria, was not a source of John of Damascus, but a compilation due to Joseph the Philosopher.

Ms. Vassa Conticello has confirmed and strengthened this hypothesis through an intertextual analysis of the akin texts belonging to the three types of manuscripts and authors, that means the *De fide orthodoxa* of St John Damascene, the *Sermo ad monachos suos* (PG 142, 583-606) of Nicephorus Blemmydes, and the *De SS.*

<sup>10</sup> J. de Guibert, «Une source de S. Jean Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*», *Recherches de science religieuse* 3 (1912), p. 356-368.

<sup>11</sup> B. Fraigneau-Julien, «Un traité anonyme de la Sainte Trinité attribué à Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie», *Recherches de science religieuse* 49 (1961), p. 118-211 and 386-405.

<sup>12</sup> D. Stiernon, «Joseph le Philosophe», *D Sp 8* [1974] 1391. For a recent bibliography on Joseph the Philosopher, see E. Trapp, *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, IV (Vienna 1980), p. 207.

<sup>13</sup> G. de Andrés, *Catalogo de los codices griegos de la Real Biblioteca de el Escorial*, Madrid, 1967, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> D. Stiernon, «Nicéphore Blemmyde», *DSp 11* [1982] 192. The relation between the *De pietate* of Joseph and the *Sermo ad monachos suos* of Blemmydes was first noticed by G. Vitelli, *Indice de' codici greci Riccardiani, Magliabecchiani e Manicelliani* (Florence-Rome, 1894), p. 492, in his description of the codex *Riccard. Gr. 31*. See also Studer, *Theologische Arbeitsweise*, 23, note 84. For a recent bibliography on Nicephorus Blemmydes, see Nicephorus Blemmydes, *A Partial Account*. Introduction translation and notes by J. A. Munitiz (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense. Etudes et documents 48, Leuven 1988) X-XV.

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*Trinitate* of the so called Ps Cyril of Alexandria, concluding on the one part that „far from being the common source of John of Damascus and Nicephorus Blemmydes, the *De SS. Trinitate* is rather a late compilation based on these two authors, and its *terminus post quem* must be put at the end of the thirteenth century”<sup>15</sup>, and on the other part that “since there is no manuscript presenting the *De SS. Trinitate* isolated from the «Encyclopedia» of Joseph the Philosopher and attributing it to another author, Ps.-Cyril must certainly be identified with Joseph”<sup>16</sup>.

Who was in fact, and what do we know about Joseph the Philosopher? As D. Stiernon resumes his autobiography<sup>17</sup> and the Encomion composed at his death by Theodor Metochite<sup>18</sup>, in the article dedicated to him in DS<sup>19</sup>, Joseph the Philosopher was born in Ithaque at around 1280. He leaves for Thessalonique to educate himself in all the science of that epoch, especially in philosophy, but without to let aside the ascetic practice and ideal. He lives his ascetic life in the mountain region of Thessalia, and for a while in Athos where he initiates himself in the hesychast eremitism. He immigrates to Constantinople where he meets the spiritual and the wise personalities of the epoch, becoming famous for his erudition, humbleness and sharp mind. He refuses the dignities and the honors proposed to him – he refuses four times to become patriarch of Constantinople between September 1309 and November 1323 – preferring the ascetic tension to the absolute good, and in 1326 he retires in a monastery from Thessalonique where he dies towards 1330 at the age of around fifty years.

His work consists especially in his great effort to gather in a single synthesis all the branches of the knowledge from his time, as the steps of a pyramid whose pick is the theology, synthesis he names Encyclopedia, and which surprises as a cultural initiative from the part of a hesychast, but also precedes the great ideal of the Illuminists thinkers in the realm of the orthodox religious life and knowledge. The work is preceded by his autobiography – *De se ipso* – and a Plan of his Summa exposed in iambique verses, the Encyclopedia consisting in itself of three treatises: *About Virtues (Peri aretes)*, *About Piety (Peri evsebeia)* and *De religione* containing also short extracts from Saint Cyril dogmatic treaties, and also prayers.

It is not our interest here to explore the contents of these treaties, but only to mention the relationship of our translated text with the *Peri evsebeia* treatise of Joseph the Philosopher find out also as *De SS Trinitate* of Ps. Cyril of Alexandria.

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<sup>15</sup> Vassa Conticello, *Pseudo-Cyril's «De SS. Trinitate»: A Compilation of Joseph the Philosopher*, In *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol 61, 1995, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> *De se ipso*, ed. Treu, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift = BZ* t.8, 1899, p. 35

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Metochite, *Encomion*, Der Philosoph Joseph, ed. Treu, *ibidem* p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Joseph le Philosophe*, in DS tome 8, cols. 1388-1392.



Our text, as we point out, originate from a Great Lavra Manuscript codex 1626 (L 135), and its dating from the fifteenth century, make it very improbably possible to belong indeed to Nicephorus the Italian (died before 1300) who intersected his life with that of Nicephorus Blemmydes (1197-1272) and Joseph the Philosopher (1280-1330). The identity of its prolog with the text from the *Sermo ad monachos suos* (PG 142, 583-606) of Nicephorus Blemmydes make highly probable that it was ascribed also to Nicephorus the Italian for his prestige in the hesychastic struggle and tradition from the fourteen century<sup>20</sup>, but also probably by mistake by the Greek editor of this manuscript, Mr. Basileiou S. Pseutonka, 1978, when the conclusions of the articles of the famous western scholars mentioned above were not yet fully formulated or not so much widespread and known. This situation has lead Mr. Basileiou S. Pseutonka to compare this manuscript only with Saint John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* (PG 94, cols 789 – 1109) and with Ps. Cyril of Alexandria's *De SS Trinitate* (PG 77, 1120-1174), letting aside the real author or compiler of the treatise, Nicephorus Blemmydes, whose treatise *De sermo ad monachos suos* has been compiled by Joseph the Philosopher with Saint John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* resulting Ps. Cyril of Alexandria's *De SS Trinitate* at around 1300. Thus, Nicephorus Blemmydes's work represents only a part of the pseudo-Cyrian treatise *De Trinitate*, and the fact that the chapters of his confession of faith are preceded by another 13 chapters and followed by another 6 chapters in PG 77, give us the possibility to understand the amplitude of the compilation made by Joseph the Philosopher between the Blemmydes original work and that of Saint John the Damascene. This compilation and its intention, that means to avoid the small prounionist tendencies and expressions existing in Blemmydes work, is detailed in the above mentioned study of Ms. Vassa Conticello.

Our translated text follows closely and only with small omission or additions the text of Nicephorus Blemmydes from his *Sermo ad monachos suos*, accrediting him as the real author, and not, with great probability, St. Nicephorus the Italian or the Hesychast. However, the fact that the text of Nicephorus Blemmydes, also, preserves at the end of his edition another long paragraph about the procession of the Holy Spirit and the disputes he had with the Latins, at Emperor John Dukas Vatatzes's request, addition which lacks from the Great Lavra manuscript translated here, point out again the adjustment made on the Blemmydes text to adapt it as a confession of faith for another monastic community. Our option to don't trans-

<sup>20</sup> He was also made prisoner in 1276 by the Emperor for his opposition against the Union with the Latins, contrarily to Nicephorus Blemmydes who has participate at the prounionist discussions inventing some doctrinal formulas which determined Joseph the Philosopher to select from his work only the passages clear orthodox and to combine them with excerpts from Saint John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*.

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late all the *Sermo ad monachos suos* of Nicephorus Blemmydes, that means to do not add the last paragraph (PG 142, 604 ABCD) about the procession of the Holy Spirit and the disputes he had with the Latins, is due to its historic content as a short explicative annex about the Blemmydes' discussion with the Latins concerning the procession of Holy Spirit. Also, preserving this edition of this hesychastic confession of faith, has served for us, as a motivation to present here, more deeply, the sinuous dispute regarding the origins and the ascriptions of these dogmatic and spiritual treaties in the byzantine middle Ages epoch, that means implying also the personality of Nicephorus the Italian or the Hesychast.

The evolution of the political-religious circumstances as well as the winding evolution of this pseudo-Cyrian manuscript tradition help us understand why these hesychast Byzantine writers, or at least, as for Nicephorus the Italian, his successors, wrote down his name on a treatise-confession of faith taken from the Neciphorus Blemmydes' treatise as such or with small changes. First of all, the dispute and the disorder caused by the unionist Council of Lyon was definitely the main reason of searching in the sources of the tradition a short confession of faith formulation which a quick and philosophy practiced mind like Nicephorus Blemmides could establish in order to give it to his contemporaries as a protective weapon in the doctrine dispute. But, as we can infer from Nicephorus Blemmides's biography, this confession of faith was only the first part or a big chapter of the *Typikon* of his refuge-hesychasterion in Emathia, together with another two parts or treatises we already mentioned, *On the virtue* and *On the soul*. It is very likely that under the same circumstances, probably, Nicephorus the Hesychast might have assigned for his frontistirion in Athos this confession of faith to which he added his treatises, already mentioned above, *On fasting and the prayer of the heart* and "*The method of the holy prayer and watchfulness*."

Hence not only the concerns of the founders to provide their monasteries with a *Typikon* or a way of life, but another perspective of understanding the hesychastic ascetic and spiritual effort in these frontistirions or monastic education schools for spiritual formation. That is to say, the practice of the hesychastic prayer was considered to be a continuous gym of the mind by alternating prayer with theologia or the persistence of the mind in the formulations of the creeds that eliminate the dissipation and the scattering of the thoughts and lead the hesychastic practitioner to the inner, mysteriously state of the mind, of illumination through the faith working directly in the heart, as witnesses also another hesychastic practitioner in the same epoch of the confession of faith which we translate here: "The efficacy of the commandments depends on faith working directly in the heart. Through faith each commandment kindles and activates the soul's illumination."

The fruits of a true and effective faith are self-control and love, its consummation God-given humility, the source and support of love<sup>21</sup>.

Explaining deeper this gnostic chapter, Father Stăniloae highlights the unifying and enlightening power the faith has on the mind, leading the ascetic hesychast practitioner to the inner, mysterious state of illumination and unity in and through faith of all the powers of the human nature, specific to the hesychastic experiences particularly and to the mystical life generally: “Saint Gregory appropriates until identification the commandments and the faith. The commandment, better said the strength to understand and fulfill it, comes from faith working directly in the heart. The faith works as a law, having in it as a guiding power the law of commandments from the right knowledge of God and from some sort of initial union with Him. Therefore faith itself should be as a commandment, or as a sum of commandments. In this understanding of faith, the Protestant separation between faith and works is completely wrong. But faith that imposes itself as a law, or as a commandment, it is necessary as such because it looks like a light in the soul, as the light of God showing us how we should behave us to makes us like Him, fulfilling His will, and becoming united with Him in will<sup>22</sup>.”

Namely, as St. Gregory of Sinai develops further, it's not faith “dead, unfeeling and ineffectual that it is only a matter of words and the consequence of ignorance”, but rather “faith of grace working through commandments in the Spirit, [which] is abundant for redemption ... indwelling in one who confesses it the image and the life in Christ (the ultimate goal of hesychasts)”<sup>23</sup>, and this is expressed precisely in creeds with a triadological and soteriological content identical with the one translated below as clearly expressed Saint Gregory of Sinai: “Orthodoxy may be defined as the clear perception and grasp of the two dogmas of the faith, namely, the Trinity and the Duality. It is to know and contemplate the three Persons of the Trinity as distinctively and indivisibly constituting the one God, and the divine and human natures of Christ as united in His single Person - that is to say, to know and profess that the single Son, both prior and subsequent to the Incarnation, is to be glorified in two natures, divine and human, and in two wills, divine and human, the one distinct from the other. Three unaltering and changeless properties typify the Holy Trinity: unbegottenness, begottenness and procession. The Father is unbegotten and unoriginate; the Son is begotten and also unorigi-

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<sup>21</sup> St. Gregory of Sinai *On Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and Promises; On Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and Also on Stillness and Prayer: One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts*, in *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart and Early Fathers from the Philokalia* ed. G. E. H. Palmer, 1951-1954 chapter 24, p. 217.

<sup>22</sup> Sf. Grigorie Sinaitul: *Cuvinte felurite despre porunci, dogme, amenințări și făgăduințe, ba chiar și despre gânduri, patimi și virtuți; apoi despre liniștire și rugăciune*. note. 142, FR 7, p. 99

<sup>23</sup> St. Gregorie Sinaitul, *Ibidem*, chapter 28, page 217.

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nate; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, as St John of Damaskos says, and is equally coeternal<sup>24</sup>.

We understand, therefore, also from this description of the mystical conception about faith, why all the patristic writers presented above has had their special concern to provide their monasteries and monastic communities with a confession of faith, and the succession of their various treaties in their encyclopedic works point out that in their understanding both the theological and the moral effort must be coordinate and explained coherently for their disciples. This fact is observed and illustrated brilliantly by Ms. Vassa Conticello regarding the relationship between the two works of Joseph the Philosopher – Ps. Cyril of Alexandria: “Following the program, Joseph himself gives in the *Prologue* of his work, the theological part of the «Encyclopedia» (i.e., the *De SS. Trinitate = De pietate*) is directly *connected to* the moral part, which is represented by the *De virtute*. Thus, in all the manuscripts mentioned above, we see that the *De virtute* is always accompanied by the *De SS. Trinitate*. The fragment of Cyril also follows the *De SS. Trinitate* in almost all the manuscripts<sup>25</sup>. Now, the same combination of these three texts can be seen in the manuscript used by Wegelin, the *Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg 240*, which, consequently, appears to be not nothing else but an incomplete copy of Joseph’s «Encyclopedia»<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, under the circumstances of the dispute with the Latins, providing these frontistirions or hesychasterions with a confession of faith in which the difference between the essence (ousia) and the divine energies (energeia) and their relation with the economy of redemption – as does the confession translated below – was essential and it definitely contributed to the final victory, in the conscience of that age, of the hesychastic orthodox teaching.

### **Of our Father among the saints, the philosopher, hesychast and presbyter monk Nicephorus, on the orthodox belief in the Holy Trinity and the economy of the Word of God**

1. To those who are devout and disciples of Christ the Lord the One who is, Nicephorus, by His goodwill and kindness, founder of your holy place for meditation, old priest, weak among those who live as monks, who needs the prayers of

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, chapter 26 and 27, p. 217.

<sup>25</sup> In the *Scorial. Gr. 426 (Vl.6.)*, this fragment has been replaced by another fragment attributed to Cyril, which is also present in a trinitarian homily of Joseph Bryennios (ca. 1350-ca.1438), published by E. Voulgaris, *Ιωσήφ μοναχου του Βρυεννιου τα ευρεθεντα*, I (Leipzig 1768) 237, cf Vassa Conticello, *Pseudo-Cyril’s «De SS. Trinitate»*.

<sup>26</sup> Vassa Conticello, *Pseudo-Cyril’s «De SS. Trinitate»: A Compilation of Joseph the Philosopher*; In *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol 61, 1995, p. 126-127.

your reverend; I tell you these things to remember my love for you, before any other formulation. Behold, the most important and needful thing for the Christians is to know the glory of God and feel it, live with it and die with it; it is precious for us to believe and confess and preach that God is One: namely the divine Essence (nature) is one, infinite and incomprehensible, but existing in three perfect hypostasis (persons), the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit in uncreated. The Father is unborn, the Son is not unborn. The Father begets the Son before all ages<sup>27</sup>, as this is appropriate to God. The Holy Spirit is neither born, nor unborn, but ontologically proceeds from the Father. The Father existed before all ages, the Son existed before all ages, the Holy Spirit existed before all ages. As we can never imagine the sun without its own light, so nobody can imagine the Father without the Son. As the Father was Father from the eternity. So it is obvious that He eternally had a Son. According to the principles of time, as the Father is without beginning, so is the Son without beginning, because the Father was from eternity and He is eternally Father; the Son was from eternity and He is eternally Son. Because the divine essence knows no change. And according to the natural principle, namely in terms of the cause of His existence, not the creational cause, the Son is not without a beginning, as the Father is His principle. Therefore, according to the natural principle, only the Father is without a cause. This is why the Lord, worshipping Him as the Father, said “the Father is greater than I!”<sup>28</sup>. He is greater in the sense that He has no principle, as uncaused, and as the natural principle and the cause of the Son. But, again, as the sun, in a natural way and with no change or the slightest delay, sending the light, is not separated (*ἀποτέμνεται*) from light (as it is light and the light comes from it and the light is in the sun), so the Father, begetting the Son ontologically (*οὐσιωδῶς*) and without passion (*ἀπαθῶς*) and from eternity (*ἀχρόνως*), he is by no means separated (*διέσται*) from the Son. Because the Son is eternally from the Father and eternally in Father, and the Father is eternally in the Son; and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds (*ἐκπορεύεται*) from the Father and He is eternally in the Father and in the Son; and the Father and the Son are eternally in the Holy Spirit.

3. So, from this point of view too, the Holy Trinity is understood as Oneness (*μονὰς*). The Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one, from all points of view, except the hypostatic properties (*την ἰδιότητων*). A perfect God is the Father, a perfect God is the Son, a perfect God is the Holy Spirit, but they are one God, not three Gods. As, on the one hand, we cannot say that three people, even

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

<sup>28</sup> John. 14.28

two, are one person, even though all the people have the same human nature, as everyone is different from the others. Everyone has his own spatial circumscription, but also in terms of time, will, power and glory and all the other things, we are different one from another in many other aspects. Something similar is in case of angels. As for the angels, each of them is intelligibly circumscribed to his own place, as they are all circumscribed and each one has a certain rank, and each one receives an illumination, one of them first, the other then, one receives directly, another indirectly or by one of them or by many of them; and one bestows to the other, and one is sent somewhere and the other in other place, and in short, there are many differences that separate them. There is one single essence (nature) of the Three Persons of the Most High divinity, neither the place separates them, as they are uncircumscribed (*ἀπερίγραπτα*) and they interpenetrate (*περικεχωρήκασιν*) one other entirely and totally, without commingling (*ἄτερ συγχύσεως*); nor the time separates them, as The Three exist before all ages and above time, and not one of them first and then the other; the will (*θέλησις*) is one, and the wish (*βούλησις*) is one for all the Three, one almighty power, one all-working energy, one almighty reign, one glory, one radiance above any glory and above any splendor, one and the same for all the Three in the consubstantial sense (*ὁμοουσίως*), one and the same worship (*ὁμοτίμως*) for them, which is above the essence (substance). Thus, the Three are perfectly united, but confused (*ἀσύγχυτα*) because of the hypostatic properties.

4. But the property (*ἰδιότης*) and the personal characteristic (*ἰδίωμα*) and the characteristic (*ἴδιον*) are the distinctive signs, which is characteristic to each hypostasis, by what is inherent especially to the one to whom it is characteristic and which is not characteristic to the other. For what is inherent to the other, that thing is in common and not proper. For instance, the property of the Father is to be unborn (*τὸ ἀγέννητον*); this is especially inherent to the Father, because only the Father is unborn, as he is the only Father. The property of the Son is to be born (*τὸ γεννητόν*), and the property of the Holy Spirit is to proceed (*τὸ ἐκπορεύεσθαι*) from the Father<sup>29</sup>. But neither the Holy Spirit is begotten, nor the Son is proceeded. On the other side, being uncreated (*ἄκτιστον*) and uncircumscribed (*ἀπερίγραπτον*) and above the essence (substance) and all the other properties, are common to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. For this reason these are called properties (*ἰδιώματα*) of the divine essence (*της θείας φύσεως*): of the divine essence because they are inherent to the essence and not hypostatic, being common to the Three Hypostasis. But they are called properties (*ἰδιώματα*), just like for the all other essences (*φύσει*), except the fact

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<sup>29</sup> John. 15, 26

that the properties of the divine essence, that are not at all communicated to neither the human nature nor the angels essence, are entirely characteristic only to the divine essence. They are also named *essence* (οὐσία) and *nature* (φύσις) and *form* (μορφή) because they are common or they refer to something which is common, and particularly, they are not one and the same with the essence. The *essence*, as something that eternally exists. The *nature* (φύσις) as something that give birth (φύουσα) to the hypostasis *form*, as something that contains all the characteristics and forms which subsist in it. But those that interpenetrate, are also called individuals (ἄτομα) and *hypostasis* (ὑποστάσεις) or *persons* (πρόσωπα). On the one hand, they are called individuals by the very fact that they do not admit any separation or division, because the human nature (της ἀνθρωπίνης οὐσίας), that means the humanity being divided in real peoples (κατ' αἰσθησιν) no one can be yet sectioned in other peoples, being altogether rational creatures, subjected to death, and conform to this definition, individuals capable of understanding and knowledge; we call *hypostasis* (ὑποστάσεις) as the one that sit and remain (or subsists) under nature (ὑπὸ τὴν φύσιν ἔστωτα), and entirely remaining in being in an universal mode considered as such only intelligibly at the level of thinking, but being particular and truly existing; we call them *persons* (πρόσωπα) because each of them has its own characteristics (οἰκειὸν χαρακτηριστῆρα), that are incommunicable to the others.

Here is why we set down as a dogma the fact that in divinity there is only one *essence* (μία οὐσίαν), one *nature* (μίαν φύσιν), one *form* (μίαν μορφήν), but three individuals, three hypostasis, three persons/faces acknowledged through their personal characteristics or specific properties. The Son is called the image of the hypostasis of the Father<sup>30</sup>, not because this is characteristic to the Father (this would mean that the Son is inferior to the Father), but because he is begotten of the Father; the Father knows Himself and is characterized by the fact that He has the Son, and the Son has in Himself everything the Father has<sup>31</sup>, but he remains Son and knows Himself from the things that are not, as an image (καθ' ἕνα εἰκὼν) of the Father and entirely like Him<sup>32</sup>. This is why He says: "Anyone who has seen Me, has seen the Father"<sup>33</sup>

5. Mind (νοῦς) being God, unoriginated through nature (ὁ ἀναρχὸς φύσει) is begetting a connatural Word (ομοφυσῆς); but being Father, is begetter of a Son of one substance (ὁμοουσίου). Therefore, the Son is also the Word of God and the

<sup>30</sup> Hebrews. 1,3. translation. Romanian Bible 1982 "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being"

<sup>31</sup> John. 16,15

<sup>32</sup> Col. 1,15

<sup>33</sup> John. 14,9

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Son of God. Therefore He is the Word of God and the Son of Father, by Whom all the things have been created<sup>34</sup> and by Whose own wisdom and power the Father created them. For He is the wisdom and the power of the Holy Spirit. For He, by the will of the One who begets Him, became man, being in very nature God and being made in human likeness (μεθ' ἡμῶν γεννωσας), (as He is uncircumscribed) and assuming human flesh, soul, mind (reasoning mind), word, will, work and everything inherent to the human nature, but without assuming any of the passions that entered us after the fall, being untouched by concupiscence (defilement) (μωμος) He remained untempted (ἀπειράτος); He also humbled Himself in order to prepare the mankind for the highest glory. In brief, He became perfect in manhood, not illusively, but He truly was a man, just like us and for us. He was just like us, as He was conceived in a woman's womb, assumed flesh (ζωοπλασθεὺς) from her and grew in her womb according to the law of birth-giving, as a child likes it. He was conceived beyond the natural law because He was conceived from the Holy Spirit<sup>35</sup>, without bodily intercourse<sup>36</sup>, without lust (concupiscence), without any sinful thought, forming His body and limbs from the all-immaculate blood and being perfect in manhood since His conception. It was proper for the birth without seed, without pain, not to defile the purity of the One who gave birth to Him. She remained virgin after giving birth, as she was before giving birth and before the conception, and remained like that all throughout her life, immaculate and undefiled. This is how the birth of God supposed to be. Just as ours, because He assumed earthly and corruptible body by putting together the four elements, He was animated by a tripartite soul, being governed by the natural powers and subjected to hunger and thirst and all the other weaknesses of the human nature. He was born above the natural way, as he was not just man, but man like us and God also. Becoming man He did not lose His Godhead but He remained God as He was, and became man as He was not, and not transforming the human nature into divine essence, by extension, but keeping all the characteristics of the two natures, He deified His human nature by means of the sublime union with the divine nature. Just as fire, when it meets the iron, burns it thoroughly, but the essence of the iron is not changed (as it remains the same iron after being forged or iron that has been forged by fire), so is God the Son and the Word; as God according to his nature, he united with the mortal nature, deifying it, on one hand, but not transforming the human nature into immortal. As it remains mortal nature even after the deification and the union, and we call it mortal nature and it truly is so; because it puts together the body with the rational, volitional and working soul.

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<sup>34</sup> Ef. 3, 9; Col. 1, 16: cf. John. 1, 3

<sup>35</sup> Matthew. 1, 18 – 20; Luke.1, 35.

<sup>36</sup> John. 1, 13.



6. But, as sin is illegitimate and not proper to the human nature (for it enters from outside when we are not watchful), this, with good reason, God-the Word did not assumed. As the human nature that He appropriated was entirely deified, it remained undefiled by sin in all aspects, being offered as sacrifice to the Father. In Christ there was no free will and no choice between good and bad (οὐδὲ προαίρεσις ἢ ἀμφιρροπή). As, on one hand, Christ had the free will according to His human nature, by the power of self-determination (αὐτεξούσιος), because He was rational too. For everything that is rational has self-determination too, and everything that has self-determination has the power of the free will. But deliberation (βουλή) and thinking/reflection (σκέψεως) and the possibility of discernment (γνώμη) (of Christ) and of the free choosing (προαιρέσεως), just as we have, Christ did not need them by any means, as well as those related to watchfulness (νήψεως) were worthless. As He was God in both of them: through His nature and through the deification of the human nature (τὸ μὲν φύσει, τὸ δὲ θεώσει). For this reason and in accordance with this, the Word was without sin. Otherwise, the free will definitely leads us to the sin, and the wrong free will is born of unwatchfulness and negligence (ἀπροσεξίας). Moreover, the fact of being unwatchful is sin too, and definitely this is the beginning of sin. For this reason we will have to account for the involuntary mistakes, according to the law. But where there is no guilt, how can guiltiness be inserted by stealth?

The election (proairesis) is, therefore, an exit to what I choose; namely the self-determination, the impulse endowed with rationality towards something I want, whatever it may be, which is inherent to all the rational beings. The election (προαίρεσις) also means to choose for something else (πρὸ ἑτέρου αἵρεσις), whatever it may be, and it is preceded by the will (βουλή) and then by the discernment (κρίσεως), by which the mood (διάθεσις) towards what is being judged by the will repeats itself and it is called opinion or view. The discernment that shows the free will first and then the result of the praise worthy good, is inherited. Such a free will, I would not say Christ had it. For, what is the weak will or which of the things related to will did have the great counselor<sup>37</sup>, the wisdom of God and of the Father<sup>38</sup>? or how could the free will, which we all have, be assigned to the One who knows the good before? Isaiah also bears witness that He, before knowing enough to reject the wrong, will choose the right<sup>39</sup>. That does not mean that He would have known the wrong in general, nor He would have rejected it; but it means that He will choose the right from the very beginning. And further

<sup>37</sup> Is. 3, 3; 9, 6

<sup>38</sup> I Cor. 1, 24

<sup>39</sup> Is. 7, 15, 16.

on, “before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, will not listen to the wickedness to choose what is right”<sup>40</sup>, namely before any kind of knowledge, in His great innocence, the child will reject the wrong and firmly will choose the right. “Before knowing (the right and the wrong)” does not mean that it was a time when something was unknown to the child “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”<sup>41</sup>, but it says “at the right time”, because it had to be revealed. This is how we should understand the words Jesus “increased in wisdom and grace”<sup>42</sup>, according to His age, as we have shown. As, on one side, what is specific to the age was received freely (*ἐπιδοσως*), and naturally received by the body, but what is specific to the wisdom and grace of the Most High was not freely received, but these were gradually revealed, at the right time.

7. However, Christ, as God, appropriating the human nature in His hypostasis, was good as He was God, but, as human, He also had attraction for the good, in accordance with the nature. Just as the bad and sin come from the human nature, so the good and the virtue are in accordance with the human nature. For this reason the sin is called failure of the good in accordance with the nature. So, on one side, the angels are hard to be attracted to the bad and it is said, and it truly is so, that they remain near God by the fact that they continually receive from Him the illumination and the help; but Christ’s soul was completely not attracted to the bad, having the Word of God in Himself, not in terms of relations, but according to the hypostatic union. So, the leading energy of the body, on one hand, and God-the Word on the other hand, were the ruling parts in Him. Thus, the accomplishing of His divine will and especially the power to will something different, by which He increased in holiness, were deliberate to Him. This is why the Lord, Who prayed to the Father during His passions, as a man, said this: “not as I will”<sup>43</sup>, but as You-will, “Your will be done”<sup>44</sup>. For He, the Word of God’s soul, in His prophetic will, has united His human will with the will of God the Word and of the Father. So, the Lord has the things of the servants, but above the servants, as He was the Lord, but He took the very nature of a servant<sup>45</sup>. He was hungry, just as us, He was thirsty, he was grieved, He cried, He was afraid, He fought, but deliberately. When He wanted, He gave His human nature the possibility to do perfectly what is proper to it, above us. He ate, drank, slept, spoke like us, but without committing any sin, above us. Who among us, according to his nature and mislead, would remain with-

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<sup>40</sup> Is. 7, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Col. 2, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Luke. 2, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew, 26, 39.

<sup>44</sup> Luke. 22,49; Matthew, 6, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Eph. 2.6, 7.

out sin? He suffered for us, He felt the pain of his nailing to the cross. He finally died, but He deliberately chose to suffer and feel pain and die. His flesh suffered, He felt the pain in his Soul by the connection with the flesh (as the flesh felt the pain through its connection with the soul) – without the divine nature which was existing in both of them suffering any change. As what it was divine in Him was above these things, but the divine nature was indivisible in both of them.

8. Suffering, dying and being buried, the Lord eliminated the corruptibility of the human nature and all the things related to corruption, He assumed body and flesh to make them incorruptible, and resurrected the third day in power, as it is proper to God. “I lay down my life” He says — “only to take it up again”<sup>46</sup>. “I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again”<sup>47</sup>. But even if after the resurrection the Lord ate<sup>48</sup>, He did this according to His economy, to persuade His own disciples that He resurrected, and He is now with them. When we say “according to His economy”, it does not mean imaginative (φαντασίαν). He really ate food, but in a new different way, as can be noticed. For this reason, He secretly showed them the nail marks<sup>49</sup> which were gone now, but He made them visible, as He can do all things.

9. For this reason, His body truly having no necessities (πάσης ἐνδείας) and no limitation or opposition, did not admit any feeding or touching. Therefore now we say that the Lord is not after the flesh, as he stripped the body’s desire for food, sleep, fatigue and the like. For in putting down the corruption, his body was made free and unpassionable, untouchable and immortal, but not uncreated, nor uncircumcised, because these[belong] only the divine nature, and to put it short, as Christ’s humanity was able to receive divine glorifications and get them from the union with the Word Himself for whom his humanity was venerated and worshiped, but as it was notable to receive not get them, as flowing from hereto know the difference of the natures of Christ and the unity of His person.

10. Thus, we acknowledge Christ as a hypostasis consisting<sup>50</sup> of two natures united together, the divine one and the human one, united in the hypostasis of the Word. For this reason, we call this hypostatic union (ἕνωσιν καθ’ ὑπόστασιν),

<sup>46</sup> John 10, 17

<sup>47</sup> John 10, 18

<sup>48</sup> John, 21, 10, 13, 15 ; Acts. 1, 4; Matthew 26, 29.

<sup>49</sup> John 20, 27

<sup>50</sup> Cf. AnastasiusSinaita, *On Christian Dogma*, speech 3, 23 (ed. S. Sakkos, Anastasius of Antioch, *Collection of writings that bring salvation*, Ἀπαντᾷ τὰ σοζομένα γνήσια ἔργα, Tessaionica, p. 52-53; Maximus the Confessor, *On the two natures of Christ*, 3, PG 91, 148 A. John of Damascus, *Against the Jacobites*, 24, 79, PG 94, 1149C-1476C; *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*-Book 3, 7, PG 94, 1009AB etc; *Speech 8*, on the Dormition of our Holy Theotokos 3, PG 96, 704B

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because one hypostasis of These Three of the divine nature, namely of the Son, unites the two natures in Him and through Him, in an unmixed way (ἀσυγχύτως) and properly to Him. Because the humanity of Christ did not subsist independently even for a while, as the word “hypostasis” gives the impression. This was not even necessary. Because what would we have gained by having deified only a hypostasis? But, God-the Word appropriated the whole humanity in Himself in order to deify all the human nature. Therefore we acknowledge Christ as unifying supremely a hypostasis consisting of two natures (μίας ὑποστάσεως ἐκ δύο φύσεων), united together without fusion (ἀσυγχύτως), through a perfect union, the two natures remaining eternally inseparable (ἀδιαιρέτων) one of another, and remaining in the hypostasis in which they were united (καθ’ ἣν ἦν ἡνωταί); but the two natures must remain as they are without confusion (τὸ ἀσύγχυτον), and keep their properties without confusion (ἀσύγχυτα), two natures, two wills, two works. The divine will (θέλησις) remains divine will, the human will remains human will, but deified because of the unity. But this is known also about their works. Thus, there are two wills and two works, as there are two natures in Christ. But the two natures work according to both wills and works, in which He, God-Man, was not divided into God and man, but indivisibly (ἀμερίστως) existing as God and man, being both God and man.

11. We must also say that the divine-human work does not mean fusion (σύγχυσιν) between the works of the two natures, but has presented the plenitude of their co-operation, and the fact that the human work was deified (τεθεωσθαι). As in Christ, through the union, the human nature was united with the divine nature, so were the will and the work put together and deified. For this reason, when was working His miracles, He was unifying with the divine energies (τοῖς θεοῖς ἐνεργήμασι) the human energies, and from the human works (τῶν ἀνθρωπικῶν ἐνεργημάτων) of the Word we see His divine nature, that means from word and from touching and other alike, just as the iron that has been forged cuts and burns at the same time, and the cut is made by burning and the burning is not separated from the cut, so the reunion between the two works in The One, results in their reunion (συνδρομή), not according to the nature, but according to the union. Thus, he who has spoken about a theandric work has shown through this unique enunciation the fact that the two works are one through their common effort and does not distinguish really one in reference to the other. Theandric means divine and human, and through this is shown the difference through nature of the works also after the union. But each nature is revealed by means of the work in another way. The name of work (energeia) manifest two realities, because the work of the nature represents the advancement of the power which abodes in nature towards the accomplishment of a thing (ergon) and which exists because works (energein) as the

power (*dynamis*) exists through giving birth and being able to (*dynastai*). We also call “work” (*ἐνέργεια*) the fact of carrying out the work: namely what is being worked (*αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργητόν*), and the carrying out of what it had to be done, and the work itself. This second meaning of the work adapts to the theandry, because, thanks to the divine-human (*theantropos*) existence of Christ, all His work (*praxis*) is divine-human and theandric (*θεανθρωπική καὶ θεανδρική*). This does not mean that the works of the two natures are united (*synchysin*), but it clarifies that One and the Same is working both divinely and humanly; the divine works are not done only divinely, as He is human also; and the human works are not done only divinely, as He is God also. And saying “one nature of God-the Word incarnated” (*μίαν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ Λόγουσεσαρκωμένην*)<sup>51</sup>, by adding incarnated, it is destroyed this suspicion because one is the nature of God, that means the divine one, and again other the nature of the body or of the human nature, and by *sinecdoque* one is the will of the divine nature and other that of the human one.

12. We call “will” (*θέλημα*) the act of willing (*τὴν θέλησιν*), the ability of willing (*αὐτὴν τὴνδύναμιν τὴνθελητικὴν*), which is the will of the nature or natural (*θέλημα φυσικόν*). This will of the human nature was visibly appropriated by God and deifying it, He has preserved it conform to the human nature. And wishing to show clearly this thing, “entering a house in the boundaries of Tyre and Sidon he won’t anyone to know Him, yet He could not keep secret his presence”<sup>52</sup>. According to His economy He wanted to hide Himself but He couldn’t, teaching us by His acts that The Almighty did not rebuke the will of the human nature and the weakness, but ontologically (*οὐσιωδῶς*) He appropriated our human nature, with all its characteristics. So, on one hand we say “will” (as a ruling principle) (*θέλημα προηγούμενος*) or the act of willing (*ἡ θέλησις*), which is the natural will, as we have shown. On the other hand we call “will” (*θέλημα*) also “what is being willed” (*αὐτὸ τὸ θελητόν*), which is something personal in peoples (*ὑποστατικόν*) and unnecessary to the whole human nature. The will of a person, who exclusively deals with a certain thing, for instance working the land, sailing or any other different activity encountered to one or other person, is called hypostatic will, gnomic will (*θέλημα γνωμικόν*). Therefore, God, who had two natures, also had two natural wills, divine and human, namely two volitional powers, each one differentiating through the reason of the nature. But, as they were revealed through the unique hypostasis, it is more proper to declare that He did not

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, Ep.16,2, PG 77, 241 A, and Ep.17, 8 PG77, 116C, where he uses a similar Christological expression “one single hypostas of God-the Word incarnated”. To this work of Cyril the monophy sites refered, in order to support their the monophysite opinions, but also the orthodox Fathers who correctly understood and explained this expression of St. Cyril.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Mark 7,24

Nicephorus the Hesychast

have two different gnostic wills. Because the thing willed (θελητόν) was one, as The One who willed (ὁ θελών) was one person (not two), one single hypostasis of His human will towards the willed activity (θελητικὸν κινουμένης), every time the activity, by His divine will, was willed by Him.

13. And discernment (γνώμη) is named, also the simple inclination toward the wanted thing (τὸ θελητόν), as something realized rationally (εὐλόγως) and with knowledge in the rational things. We call discernment (gnome) also the inclination toward something (ἡ περί τιδιάθεσις) born from before-deliberation (προβουλευέσεως) and appreciation (κρίσεως). It is not proper to say that Christ has had “gnomic will” (θέλημα γνωμικόν) (the second meaning of the word) or opinion-view (γνώμην), for the simple fact that this would imply ignorance (τὴν ἀγνοίαν). God appropriated the ignorant (τὴν ἀγνοούσαν φύσιν) human nature, but He made it partaker of the divine essence. It was the soul of God having all the divine wisdom, but also of the human nature at the same time, knowing everything has ever been, or is, or will be, according to His nature, not according to the grace. If He, by His own wisdom, knew everything before it had happened, thanks to the hypostatic union, why would we therefore say He had a gnostic will (βουλής)? If He had an all-knowing will, than which of the things did He not know?

And when it is written<sup>53</sup> that hungering Lord came to a fig tree that had no fruit, to find something, and he had found few leaves, this way of speaking is by assumption, as it involves a man who saw His coming to the fig tree, but did not know the reason of economy. For who would not have known what was obvious from what happened? For the time of figs was not yet. But to show He who can all, that He has not only beneficial power, but also punishing, and if he wanted to, he would dry only with the word those who crucified him, this is why He who is wise and loving people previously put hunger and coming to the fig tree, this is why that early in the morning hungry contrary to the habit, as He wished. Therefore, coming to the fig tree, and also the question about Lazarus who had died, where they put<sup>54</sup> and something else alike, does not come from ignorance, but from aright stewardship and economy (οἰκονομίας και προσφύρουσγκαταβάσεως). Thus, according to the second sense of discernment (γνώμης) and choice (προαιρέσεως), we can't speak in Christ about discernment, nor about choice, but according to the former, we say that this is the right discernment of God, namely that the thing accomplished is wanted and received by God, as to say that David has reigned according to the wisdom of God (κατὰγνώμην θεου). We said that the Word of God has, on one hand, the ability of before-choosing; so does the Holy Spirit. We

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Matthew 21, 19; Mark.11, 13; Luke.13, 6. ex.

<sup>54</sup> In. 11, 34

must therefore go thoroughly into the words, as the many meanings of a word, which are easy to distinguish by reason, lead us to the truth. Many ambiguities come from homonymy. And the first way (tropos) of expressing stands in sophistry.

14. Truly the divine name and that of the man (τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα καὶ τὸ ἄνθρωπος) refer sometimes to the nature, other times to the hypostasis, but the names divinity and humanity signify always only nature and never the hypostasis. The hypostasis of Christ consists of the divine nature and the human nature. The divine nature is the anointer (χρισμα), the human nature is the anointed (τὸ χρισθῆν)<sup>55</sup>. But the anointment (τὴν χρισιν) means the very interpenetration (perichoresin) of it into everything that is anointed. Because only in this way that which receives the anointing, could completely be anointed really (χριστόν): for what has been anointed externally, is anointed only partially, but not entirely, therefore is not anointed in a proper sense. For this reason, the kings and emperors, the ones that are anointed with oil and receive the exterior anointment, are not really anointed. Even if the grace dwells deeply by means of anointment, it does not literally reveal the anointed ones. They are still subjected to death. Truly our Lord Christ only is literally anointed, as He is completely anointed in all things, and not just by grace (ὡς ὁλωσ δι' ὅλου καὶ οὐ χάριτι), but He is anointed by means of the hypostatic union and He is eternally The Christ (the Anointed one). And the name God (Theos) also means Creator and Demiurge: because to make something means to put (theinai) and the one who creates has create by putting, but especially reveals his seeing work (τῆς θεατικῆς ἐνεργείας)<sup>56</sup>. And God is seer (theates) even to those yet uncreated but which are contemplated, and also looker (ephoros) over all the existence. Among all the names, The One who is (ho on), this is the most appropriate to the One who has no principle (cause) and brings into existence all the things that did not exist before<sup>57</sup>, for only He is before all ages and the source of existence (πηγὴ τοῦ εἶναι), and because of this, it is only He who literally exists; may Him be the glory, power, worship and adoration (τὸ σόβας), now and forever and to the ages of ages.

<sup>55</sup> St Gregory the Theologian, *Oration 30, 1*, PG 36, 105B

<sup>56</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, 4, 38, 3, PG 7, 1108C; St. Basil the Great, *Epistle 189*, 8, PG 32, 696. Gregory the Theologian, *Oration 30*, 18, PG 36, 128A; Evagrius Ponticus.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Exodus 3, 14, probably drawing his inspiration from John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Book I, 9, PG 94, 856B