Byzantine Hymnography and the Quest for Orthodox Unity: Notes on the Liturgical Commemoration of the Council of Chalcedon, Towards the Reconciliation of “Eastern” and “Oriental” Churches

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Among the issues remaining to be addressed along the path to reconciliation between the “Eastern” and “Oriental” Orthodox is the characterisation of Oriental teachers as heretics in the liturgical texts of the Byzantine Rite. The mere suggestion of liturgical revision to reflect the agreement that multiple theological vocabularies are legitimate and therefore theologians associated with them should not be anathematized or deprecated has been met with fierce opposition from some Eastern Orthodox. This paper considers what might actually be involved in such a revision, taking as an example the texts for the commemoration of the Council of Chalcedon. It suggests that the extent of necessary revision would be far less than is perhaps feared.

Keywords: *Chalcedon, liturgy, liturgical revision, Byzantine Rite, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox*

Introduction

From an Orthodox perspective, one of the great fruits of modern ecumenism¹ has been the inauguration of a new phase in the relationship between the “Eastern” and “Oriental” Orthodox churches.² An unofficial bilateral dialogue began in 1964, which became an official dialogue in 1985. Initial conversations correctly prioritised discussion of contested points in Christology (disagreement over which contributed significantly to and, to a large

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¹ This paper will not address opposition on principle to ecumenical dialogue (including dialogue between separated Orthodox groups) which is a common—indeed, characteristic—feature of some traditions within contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy. For a recent response to Orthodox anti-ecumenism see Paul Ladouceur, “On Ecumenoclasm: Anti-Ecumenical Theology in Orthodoxy” in: *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 61.3 (2017).

² It is difficult to find satisfactory terminology for these two “families” of churches. In this paper, I use “Eastern Orthodox” as functionally equivalent to “Chalcedonian,” and “Oriental Orthodox” as functionally equivalent to “non-Chalcedonian.” For a systematic reflection, see Zachary Ugolnik, “Names Matter: How to Better Represent the Orthodox Churches in Textbooks and in the Academy,” in: *The Journal of Religion* 96.4 (10/ 2016).

extent, defined the historical estrangement of these churches) and reached the conclusion that:

both families [of Orthodox churches] have *always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith*, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis for our unity and communion.³

Despite this agreement and the optimism of members of the Joint Commission in the early 1990s, little concrete progress towards restored full communion has been made in the last quarter century. Local, often informal and unofficial, co-operation developed and continues in many places, but many objections have been raised to the dialogue in principle and in fact of its conclusions and recommendations. These have been eloquently summarised in a recent article by Paul Ladouceur and deserve full consideration.⁴

However, this paper will rehearse neither the arguments of the Eastern-Oriental dialogue and its critics nor propose responses. Rather, it presupposes that the conclusions of the Joint Commission on theological matters are correct and “both families [of Orthodox churches] have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith.” From this starting point, this paper responds to the fact that there remain open questions and issues to resolve at multiple levels in light of 1,500 years of separation, as has been acknowledged from the beginning of the dialogue process. The Second Unofficial Consultation of Eastern Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox Theologians noted in 1967 that reconciliation would not be possible without agreement on

canonical, liturgical, and jurisdictional problems involved—e.g. anathemas and liturgical deprecations by some Churches of theologians regarded by others as doctors and saints of the Church, and the jurisdictional assurance and agreements necessary before formal restoration of communion.⁵

This paper will offer some observations on one of the outstanding liturgical problems: namely the condemnation of Oriental Orthodox saints in the Byzantine Rite, specifically in the course of the annual commemoration of the Council of Chalcedon.

³ *Second Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches*, Chambésy, 1990, §9. Emphasis added.

⁴ Paul Ladouceur, “Orthodox Critiques of the Agreed Statements Between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches” in: *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 60.3 (2016).

⁵ *Agreed Statement of the Second Unofficial Consultation of Eastern Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox Theologians*, Bristol, UK, 25th–29th July 1967, §9.

These notes are offered partly in response to comments made in the 1995 “Memorandum of the Sacred Community of Mount Athos”⁶ that was directed against the report by Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland that the Liturgical Sub-Committee of the Joint Commission would investigate “the purification of the liturgical texts” and “adapt the liturgical feasts” according to the theological agreement reached between the Eastern and Oriental churches.⁷ The representatives of the Hagioritic monks expressed their concern that “the sacred services of many holy confessors of the Faith, of many righteous Fathers, and especially the Holy Fathers of the Fourth Council in Chalcedon [would] be mutilated” by such a course of action and the editing of the hymnography for the feast would “cause the eradication of what we understand as Orthodoxy.”⁸

It will be possible here to address only one of the items specifically listed by the Sacred Community (that is, the service for the Holy Fathers of the Fourth Council in Chalcedon), but it is hoped that these notes may go some way towards soothing wider fears about the nature and scale of what might be required. The comments following will focus on “anathemas and liturgical deprecations by some Churches of *theologians* regarded by others as doctors and saints of the Church”⁹ rather than Christological language and expressions found in the service, because it seems that the hermeneutic of legitimate terminological difference espoused in the agreed statements of the official dialogue already accommodates the latter phenomenon.

Hymns for Chalcedon

In the calendar of the Byzantine Rite, the Sunday on or after 13th July is observed as a commemoration of the 630 Holy and God-bearing Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (hereafter SunEC^{IV}). This feast belongs to a genre of conciliar commemorations which includes as its principal occasions: (1) the Sunday after Ascension, kept as a feast of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 AD (SunEC^I); (2) the Sunday of or after 11th October, kept as that of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 787 AD (SunEC^{VII}); and (3) the first Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. In Slavic use, the July feast is of the Fathers of the *first six* Ecumenical Councils and the office is composite. In what follows, however, we shall refer to the texts of this feast attributed

⁶ “Memorandum of the Sacred Community of Mount Athos” (1995), http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/mono_athos.aspx, viewed 11.09.2019.

⁷ “The Theological Dialogue of the Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches: Thoughts and Perspectives”, in: *Episkepsis* 516 (3/1995), p. 18.

⁸ “Memorandum of the Sacred Community,” § XI.

⁹ *Agreed Statement*, §9. Emphasis added.

to the fourteenth-century Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople, which are found in the Greek liturgical books on SunEC^{IV} and are presumably those referred to in the Athonite “Memorandum.”¹⁰ Other councils are memorialised on dates as minor commemorations without a full office (ἀκολουθία).

Ephrem Lash once dubbed these liturgical texts “hymns of hate” in a general survey flavoured with his characteristic insight and wit.¹¹ He vividly describes monks of the Holy Mountain (of whom he himself was one) enthusiastically denouncing all manner of heresies and heretics in the words of these hymns, sung to “a rollicking set of melodies in Tone 8.”¹² As Lash points out, the principle issue arising from this hymnography, with respect to the Eastern–Oriental Orthodox dialogue and prospective reconciliation, is the inclusion within the hymns of the names of various figures considered as heresiarchs by the Eastern Orthodox but as holy teachers by the Oriental Orthodox. The fear conveyed in the “Memorandum” of the Holy Community is that the editing of these hymns (presumably to eliminate the mention of these contested figures) would amount to nothing less than their total “mutilation.”

A casual glance at the hymnography for SunEC^{IV} reveals one’s need to command an intimate knowledge of ecclesiastical history and a sophisticated grasp on theology if the texts are to be understood. No less than fourteen heretics are named explicitly across the office for the feast, but usually with little elaboration or explanation of the doctrinal error for they were condemned.¹³ In stark contrast, apart from the nameless conciliar “God-bearing Fathers,” only two Orthodox teachers are named—Cyril and Leo (the latter only once, and only as the author of a canonical text). Furthermore, to confuse matters, the dogmatic issues highlighted by the hymns are those not so much of the *Fourth* Ecumenical Council but of the *Sixth*. Of course, these two great councils are bound by a common concern for Christological orthodoxy, and the Sixth Council should be regarded as an important stage in the reception history of the Fourth, but the hymnography in fact makes some quite anachronistic claims. The sense of historical confusion is intensified by the fact that the office very clearly bears the mark of its fourteenth-century author, Philotheos, and themes contemporary to him, with its language of divine activities (ἐνεργεῖαι) and light (φῶς).

¹⁰ The complete hymnography for the feast may be found in the July Menaion, available in Greek online at <http://glt.goarch.org/texts/Jul/Jul13-19.html>, viewed 11.09. 2019.

¹¹ Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash), “Byzantine Hymns of Hate”, in: Andrew Louth, Augustine Cassiday (eds.), *Byzantine Orthodoxies: Papers from the Thirty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, 23-25 March 2002*, Aldershot, Ashgate 2006.

¹² Lash, “Byzantine Hymns of Hate,” p. 157.

¹³ Those named are: Arius, Macedonius, Sabellius, Pyrrus, Sergius, Honorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Nestorius, Severus, Peter, Paul, Theodore, Jacob.

Of the figures named in the hymns for SunEC^{IV}, only certain need concern us here. We are able immediately to dispense with discussion of those whose status is uncontested in the Eastern-Oriental Orthodox dialogue: Arius appears in his role as the archetypal heretic (to paraphrase Rowan Williams) and nobody is contesting his condemnation at the First Ecumenical Council;¹⁴ likewise Sabellius¹⁵ and Macedonius,¹⁶ whose heresies pre-date Chalcedon. The condemnation of the teachings of Nestorius and Eutyches is also unproblematic for this discussion and is affirmed “without reservation” in the *First Agreed Statement*.¹⁷

Sergius,¹⁸ Pyrrus,¹⁹ Honorius,²⁰ Peter,²¹ Paul,²² and Theodore²³ are all major figures associated with the monoenergist and monothelite controver-

¹⁴ Arius is named in the doxastikon in mode III at the vespéral aposticha, which is common to SunEC^I and SunEC^{VII}. The doxastikon at “Κύριε, ἐκέκραξα” is identical to that given at both SunEC^I and SunEC^{VII} except that, where these two feasts praise the Holy Fathers as “overthrowers of Arius [καθαιρέτας Ἀρείου],” SunEC^{IV} speaks of them as “overthrowers of the error [καθαιρέτας τῆς πλάνης].” The hymn is clearly common, like the vespéral aposticha doxastikon, but has been amended. The mention of Arius at Ode VII of the second canon is in passing: one is invited to hate his heresy, along with that of Sabellius (paralleling the hate of the heresies condemned at the Fourth Council in Ode VIII).

¹⁵ Sabellius: the third-century modalist. He appears in the Second Canon as co-heretic with Arius, and his heresy is Trinitarian. His position in the list of heretics at the vespéral Aposticha doxastikon is somewhat perplexing. This text is prescribed also for the Lity on SunEC^I and SunEC^{VII}, when a more specific text is given for the vespéral aposticha. Of yet greater intrigue in relation to this reference is the sixth sticheron at “Κύριε, ἐκέκραξα” for SunEC^{VII}, which praises the Fathers who drove away from the flock the followers of the heresiarchs. We find here the same list of heretics as in the SunEC^{IV} vespéral aposticha doxastikon, with the exception that Apollinarius replaces Arius, who is reserved for special condemnation in the preceding sticheron and the doxastikon. The interesting point is that the final reference is not to Sabellius and Severus, but to “the Sabelioseverusses [τῶν Σαβελλιοσεβήρων].” One can only speculate as to the nature of this extraordinary and otherwise unknown group!

¹⁶ Macedonius: the mid-fourth-century Arian Archbishop of Constantinople, said to have expounded the view that the Holy Spirit is not divine (as the doxastikon claims), which was taken up by the sect which became known as the *Penumatomachi* or “Macedonians.”

¹⁷ *First Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches*, Amba Bishoy Monastery, 1989.

¹⁸ Sergius: Patriarch of Constantinople (610–638), proponent on monoenergism.

¹⁹ Pyrrus: Patriarch of Constantinople (639–641, 654), who reaffirmed Sergius’s *Ekthesis*, and was Maximus the Confessor’s public interlocutor in North Africa in 645.

²⁰ Honorius: Pope of Rome (625–638), who wrote two letters to Sergius in support of strict Chalcedonianism using language later condemned.

²¹ Peter: Patriarch of Constantinople (654–666), supporter of monothelitism.

²² Paul: Patriarch of Constantinople (641–653), in conflict with the orthodox Pope Theodore of Rome, but intervened in favour of Pope Martin of Rome who was tried at Constantinople in 653 but later vindicated by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

²³ Theodore: Bishop of Pharan, a strict Cyrillian Chalcedonian, with whom Sergius corresponded c. 620; regarded by some as the architect of monothelitism. Or: Theodore of Bostra, consecrated at the same time as Jacob Baradaeus, for the service of the miaphysite populous.

sies that raged during the first half of the seventh century. These were settled by the Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 681 AD, vindicating the teachings of the confessor Maximus and Pope Martin of Rome. The six aforementioned bishops were condemned by name at the eight session of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and they clearly could not have been involved in the Council of Chalcedon!²⁴ Moreover, the *Second Agreed Statement* confirms the concord between Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox theologians that, in the hypostatic union, both natures are preserved “without confusion, without change, without division and without separation,” which entails the continuity of the natures each “with their proper energies and wills,” and so the condemnation of these figures also presents no real issue in this dialogue.²⁵

In the hymnography for SunEC^{IV}, we are therefore left with Dioscorus, Severus, and Jacob bar Addai (Baradaeus)—a smaller, but by no means unimportant group of figures! We shall consider the treatment of each of them in detail below.

Jacob bar Addai (Baradaeus)

The name of Jacob appears only twice in the hymnography for SunEC^{IV} and Jacob and the so-called Jacobites are condemned additionally once each by the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*.²⁶ Jacob, the titular bishop of Ephesus in the mid-sixth century, is credited with the revival of the waning miaphysite Syriac Orthodox Church at the encouragement of the Empress Theodora. The two mentions of Jacob are (predictably) unspecific: at Ode III of the second canon at matins,²⁷ he is said to have held the same error (πλάνη) as Severus and Eutyches, which is contrasted (presumably) with the truth held

²⁴ Curiously, Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria (630-641), a monophysite who exchanged letters with Sergius and who is also remembered for his correspondence with the Prophet Mohammad, is nowhere mentioned in this hymnography, neither in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, though he stands condemned by name at the Sixth Ecumenical Council along with the other six bishops identified here.

²⁵ *Second Agreed Statement*, §§ 3-5.

²⁶ See: Jean Gouillard, “Le Synodikon de l’Orthodoxie: Édition et commentaire”, in: *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), p. 1-316.

²⁷ The first canon contains the name of the author of the office (Philotheos) as an acrostic in the theotokia; the second canon contains no such identification. It is possible, indeed likely, that the second canon is from another source. Since many of the most problematic texts (in terms of Eastern-Oriental Orthodox reconciliation) are contained in the second canon, one practical option would be to offer an alternative for use. The manuscript witnesses to the development of the menaia show great diversity in terms of what material is included for a particular day, so there would be nothing noteworthy *in principle* about substituting one canon for another.

by the Fathers of the Fourth Council; the second occurrence, at Ode VIII of the same canon, condemns those who have taken the name of Jacob the Patchworker in place of that of Christ in whose name they were baptised (an accusation echoing 1 Corinthians 1. 12–13).

The second reference may be quite easily overlooked on two counts. The first is that Jacob himself is only implicitly condemned in Ode VIII and the main objective of the troparion is clearly the humiliation of those who have taken his name upon themselves. The order of the troparion is perhaps surprising: it implies that the departure to Jacobitism is *subsequent* to baptism, since the accused must surely have known the Christ whom they have “deserted.”²⁸ We can say, then, that the main problem in the hymnographer’s mind may be *deliberate apostasy* from the Catholic Church. The second reason why we may overlook this troparion is that it is not at all clear, in this period in any case, that Syriac Orthodox Christians *did* identify themselves as “Jacobites.” This is a slur imposed by the Chalcedonians rather than a self-appellation, and it is rather absurd to condemn a group for taking a slanderous nickname imposed on them from without!

The denunciation of Jacob with Eutyches and Severus is more complex, especially since it is based on the idea that they committed the *same* error. These men are bound together in the hymnography by their indiscriminate classification as “monophysites,” which ignores the fact that their respective theologies differed, and they were condemned for different reasons at different times.²⁹

Eutyches, as I have mentioned above, is condemned for his heresy by both Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. An archimandrite of Constantinople who was amongst those who began the process in 428 AD which led to the condemnation of Nestorius, he was a “dyed-in-the-wool Cyrillian...pushing for a Christology that pressed Cyril’s implications alone, and brought the scheme back to a proximity with Apollinaris that Cyril himself would have resisted,” according to McGuckin.³⁰ Eutyches was

²⁸ “...διὸ αὐτοῦ πρὸς χάριν, τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀποστάντες...”

²⁹ It is worth comparing how these heresiarchs are treated here and in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*. According to Jean Gouillard, these anathemas are a late insertion, part of the “living” tradition of the text: “Le synodikon imprimé du Triodion place ici une litanie d’anathèmes à divers hérétiques antérieurs à l’iconoclasme. Sa place disparate dénonce son caractère parasite”, “Le Synodikon,” p. 84–85. His commentary suggests that these anathemas, which are local additions made during the Comnenan period, are “confused and badly placed, [but] intended to evoke the first six councils”, “Le Synodikon,” p. 227; author’s translation.

³⁰ John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, Crestwood, NY, SVS Press 2004, p. 229.

truly a monophysite and eventually taught that Christ's humanity was not *homooousios* with that of ordinary human beings—a gross distortion, by any standard, of the Cyrilline theology he claimed to represent. Neither Jacob nor Severus (discussed below) would have agreed with Eutyches's teaching as here stated, and so when their teaching is equated with his in the hymnography, we must proceed with caution. We can be certain that the hymnography in this case is *not* attempting to preserve an accurate historical-theological record but is rather acting rhetorically to define an identity in opposition to a threatening, monolithic other. Today, we can question whether this rhetorical strategy functions as intended, in light of the theological agreement reached in the dialogues.

This last point is only strengthened by recalling that Jacob is not remembered (except by the oblique and imprecise references to his theology in the Byzantine hymnography) as a theologian, but as an energetic pastor of his flock. In D. D. Bundy's assessment, "the authority possessed and utilised by Jacob Baradaeus was charismatic, representative and moral in nature (contingency authority) rather than a real, official canonical authority which could be strengthened and defended against all detractors during a life of vigorous and purposeful activity."³¹ Jacob was much more a symbol of unity for those who remained separated from the Chalcedonian church than an innovative thinker himself.³² This does not mean that he was not genuinely possessed of non-Chalcedonian conviction, but only that it is somewhat misleading to characterise him as the architect and master builder of a developed theological system. We can understand his deployment in the Byzantine hymnography as a synecdoche for non-Chalcedonians—but we must admit that references to him are of limited value in establishing the dogmatic teaching of the Church, and if the miaphysite confession is shown (by modern theological dialogue) to accord with the theology of Chalcedon, one might legitimately ask how this symbology can continue to function, and to what effect.

³¹ David D. Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus: the state of research, a review of sources and a new approach", in: *Le Muséon* 91 (1978), p. 45–86.

³² This is essentially the conclusion of Bundy's research: "There is no doubt that Jacob's role in the creation of a new structure for the dispirited and scattered monophysite believers was an important one. He became the symbol for the ideals of church and piety for the movement as well as of its durability in the face of persecution... However, the documents examined above indicate that he was never *the* dominating factor in the renaissance nor was he ever in control of the monophysite 'Jacobite' church which he had helped to create", D.D. Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus", p. 83.

Dioscorus

The relationship between Dioscorus and Eutyches is more difficult to unpack, and its presentation in contemporary scholarship largely reflects the disposition of the modern author towards the Council of Chalcedon and ensuing rifts.³³ The fact that Dioscorus defended Eutyches against his deposition by Flavian (whom he regarded as a Nestorian) and the Home Synod of Constantinople at the so-called “Latrocinium” Council of Ephesus in 449 AD no doubt led to the assumption that he shared the latter’s theological positions, and this explains why they appear together in the hymnography (though not in the *Synodikon*).³⁴

Dioscorus was certainly a strict Cyrillian miaphysite and appears to have side-lined the later work of Cyril which sought a lasting union with Antioch by allowing a diophysite confession. We should remember, however, that Dioscorus’s “Latrocinium” adopted no new creed or definition and simply insisted upon the validity of Nicaea and the First Council of Ephesus (the First and Third Ecumenical Councils). Whilst we may not doubt the genuineness of Dioscorus’s support for Eutyches at Ephesus II, we should concede that it was based on an understanding of the fidelity of Eutyches to Cyril’s teaching and his opposition to Flavian’s perceived Nestorianism.

At the first session of the Council of Chalcedon, with the tables turned against him, Dioscorus distanced himself from the teaching of Eutyches.³⁵ While the latter was condemned at Chalcedon as a heretic whose teachings contradicted those of the *Tome* of Pope Leo, Dioscorus suffered the canonical penalty (deposition and laicization) only for failing to appear at the Council and for the “other crimes” of which he was accused as president of the Council of Ephesus of 449 AD.³⁶ Dioscorus continued to deny Eutyches after his deposition, such that Richard Price and Michael Gaddis conclude: “the later characterization of Dioscorus as a Eutychian heretic is not securely

³³ One might fruitfully compare: J. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 228-223; William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge, CUP 1972, Chapter 1; Martiniano P. Roncaglia, “Dioscorus I”, in: *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia*, <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cce/id/748/rec/1>, viewed 11.09.2019

³⁴ Leo referred to the Second Council of Ephesus of 449 in his *Epistle 95* as “non concilium sed latrocinium,” i.e. “a den of thieves”!

³⁵ Richard Price, Michael Gaddis (eds., trans.), *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press 2005, p. 159: I.168 “Dioscorus the most devout bishop of Alexandria said...If Eutyches holds opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, he deserves not only punishment but hell fire.”

³⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 30.

based on the proceedings of Chalcedon” and his deposition did not represent a unanimous decision.³⁷ The modern denunciation of Eutychianism by both Eastern and Oriental theologians (the latter regarding Dioscorus as a saint and doctor of the Church) should confirm our judgment on the incommensurability of the thought of Eutyches and Dioscorus.

As with most of the heresiarchs treated in this communication, the presentation of Dioscorus in the Byzantine hymnography begins to appear historically and theologically unsatisfactory. For one thing, as we have noted above, it presumes that he was condemned *as a heretic* at Chalcedon, a judgment for which there is no compelling evidence in the surviving conciliar sources. Other than the appearance of Dioscorus’s name in the more generic hymns (from which it could be excised), several occurrences demand our further attention.

The second sticheron at “Κύριε, ἐκέκραξα,” “Πύρρον τε καὶ Σέργιον,” which lumps Dioscorus in with Nestorius amongst others (!), envisages Chalcedonian teaching as steering a safe path between two sheer cliffs, presumably those of Nestorianism and monophysitism. It is important to pay close attention to the exact wording of the hymn because it very clearly teaches a duality of φύσεις (*physeis*) located in the single ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*) of Christ. Furthermore, the formula “μόναις ἐνεργείαις δεικνύμενον [disclosed by activities alone]” suggests a reserve in this matter, which is compatible with the Cyrilline teaching that the two *physeis* in Christ are known *in contemplation alone*. Leaving aside the extent to which the heresiarchs here named may be equated according to their teaching, and the historical fact that they were not all condemned by the Council of Chalcedon which SunEC^{IV} ostensibly celebrates, it is difficult to see how the theology expressed in this hymn could be regarded as incompatible with Dioscorus’s miaphysitism (given that he retreated from Eutychian monophysitism) and, through Dioscorus, with that of contemporary miaphysites who claim him as a teacher.

The third troparion at Ode IV of the second canon defines the Chalcedonian proclamation, which is said to be consistent with Cyril’s words, as “Δύο Χριστοῦ...φύσεις...ἄσυγχύτως [two unconfused *physeis* of Christ].” Once again, we do not find a theology here which is incompatible with Dioscorus’s Christology. The troparion refrains from probing into the inner workings of the mystery of the one Christ. We may even say that Dioscorus would find the insistence on the unconfused *physeis* to be highly agreeable, since it was precisely over the matter of mixture in Christ that Dioscorus disagreed with Eutyches!

³⁷ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 34-35.

The third troparion at Ode V of the second canon wrongly asserts that the Fourth Council condemned Dioscorus with Severos for blasphemy by confirming the *Tome* of Leo. Whilst Dioscorus did express reserve about Leo's *Tome*, and did not permit it to be read at the Council of Ephesus in 449 AD over which he presided, he did not deny it or call for its condemnation. Likewise, the reference to Dioscorus in relation to Nestorius at the theotokion of Ode VI of the second canon is deeply perplexing, since it suggests that he took issue with the Church's proclamation of Mary as pure virgin and mother of God (curiously, the sticheron does not use the sure-footed anti-Nestorian term *Theotokos*). The final mention of Dioscorus with any hint of doctrinal content occurs in the second troparion of Ode VIII of the second canon, where he is said to hold the "thorny error" that "confuses the *ousiai* of the Saviour [τὴν συγχυτικὴν, τῶν οὐσιῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος]." This issue has been considered at length by the Joint Commission and is resolved by the hermeneutic of legitimate difference in theological vocabulary mentioned above.

So, with respect to the portrayal of Dioscorus in the hymnography for the SunEC^{IV}, we are bound to conclude that it is at best imprecise (failing to make the necessary subtle differentiations between his theology and that of Eutyches) and at worst erroneous (in denouncing him as a heretic). As much as anything, Dioscorus suffers from guilt by association. No doubt he was involved in theological conflict with those who were vindicated at Chalcedon, but he cannot be thereby automatically aligned fully with those who were condemned for their doctrine by the Council. In a similar way to Jacob bar Addai, we are moved to conclude that if, as in the modern Eastern Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox dialogue, we have reached theological agreement on Christology, we must question how Dioscorus can continue to function in the hymnography as a symbol of an errant other.

Severus of Antioch

Finally, we turn to Severus of Antioch, perhaps the most important miaphysite thinker after the Council of Chalcedon, and a great rallying figure for the non-Chalcedonian churches. Severus was a conservative disciple of Cyril and became Patriarch of Antioch during the period in which Zeno's intentionally ambiguous *Henotikon* was being promoted as a focus for unity between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians. He suffered deposition under Justin and little improvement in his situation under Justinian. Severus was a prolific writer, though only fragments of his corpus survive in Greek (much more in contemporary Syriac translations), his books being proscribed and committed to the flames after his condemnation at Constantinople in 536

AD. At the heart of his Christology was Cyril's μία φύσις (*mia physis*) formula³⁸ which Severus took to mean that "when the hypostatic union, which is the perfect union of the two natures, is confessed, there is only one Christ, without mixture, one person, one hypostasis, and one nature, that of the Incarnate Word."³⁹ For Severus, φύσις (*physis*) was indicative of a concrete, instantiated individual (equivalent, therefore, to *hypostasis* and πρόσωπον [*prosopon*] in other vocabularies), which, in the case of Christ, is the Word-Incarnate, and so to confess two *physeis* after the union, with the *Tome* of Leo, is to admit of two *hypostases* and so divide Christ according to the manner after which Nestorius was accused. Chalcedon, however, spoke of *physis* as equivalent to οὐσία (*ousia*). Severus admitted of two natures *in contemplation*, so that Christ could be said to be *from* (ἐκ) but not *in* (ἐν) two natures, and could distinguish divine and human acts in Christ, but, on account of the unity, could not divide these between God and human.⁴⁰

Severus rejected the Council of Chalcedon and especially the *Tome* of Leo as Nestorian, because he considered that together they dissolved the hypostatic union in Christ by introducing two separate subjects. The union in Christ was *kata physin* and *kat' hypostasin*, but σύνθετος (*synthetos*, "composite") i.e. out of two *ousiai*, which could be recognised in theory. Severus distanced himself from Dioscorus over the latter's fixation on terminology, and we can see the reconciliatory desire at work in the contours of Severus's career, both before and after his deposition from the See of Antioch, which would have made him cautious about too easily accepting the Dioscoran position that was so determined by a commitment to Cyril's *mia physis* formula at any cost.⁴¹ Severus was mentioned in the Definition of the Sixth

³⁸ The centrality of the *mia physis* formula to Cyril's thought is the claim upon which the theological agreement of the dialogues principally rests. However, as noted above, aspects of the common theology articulated in the dialogue have been called into question. One of the most serious challenges is posed by Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Leiden, Brill 2009, who offers a systematic appraisal of Cyril's Christological language and concludes, with significant implications for the vaunted centrality of the *mia physis* formula, that "[his] dyophysitism is not just notional, but real" (p. 540). Van Loon's arguments clearly affect both any assessment of the orthodoxy of Severus's interpretation of Cyril and our arguments about the depiction of Severus in the hymnography. However, as stated at the outset, this paper proceeds on the basis that the dialogues reached an acceptable conclusion, so the implications of the above are not here pursued further.

³⁹ Severus's Letter to Sergius, quoted in: W. H. C. Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, 209.

⁴⁰ For a recent assessment of Severus, see Johannes Zachhuber, "Personhood in Miaphysitism: Severus of Antioch and John Philoponus", in: Alexis Torrance, Symeon Paschalidis (eds.), *Personhood in the Byzantine Christian Tradition: Early, Medieval, and Modern Perspectives*, Abingdon, Routledge 2018.

⁴¹ W. H. C. Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, 206.

Ecumenical Council for the heresy he taught, and for which it is presumed he was condemned, which gave birth to monoenergism and monotheletism (of course, monoenergism is the natural companion of Severus's miaphysitism), and again at the Seventh Ecumenical Council for having held to the mingling of natures in Christ.

Of all the heresiarchs we have considered, Severus appears most frequently in the hymnography in question, and suffers the most sustained and precise attack. This is surprising because he was never the principal subject of investigation by an ecumenical synod, and certainly not of the Fourth, which he post-dates by a generation. One must presume that he, like Jacob bar Addai, was identifiable with a group of non-Chalcedonians who persisted and were known to the hymnographer, and so, in some sense, he functions symbolically of them within the office. This suspicion is probably confirmed by the first troparion at Ode III of the second canon, which resembles the Jacobite troparion at Ode VIII of the same canon.

Like several other figures we have investigated, Severus is often linked in the hymns to figures with whom he himself would not have identified: Eutyches (second canon, Ode I, troparion 2) on the basis that they deny two *ousiai* in Christ; Eutyches and Dioscorus (second canon, Ode III, troparion 3); Dioscorus (second canon, Ode V, troparion 3) for contradicting the *Tome* of Leo; Eutyches and Dioscorus again (second canon, Ode VIII, troparion 3) for having confounded the *ousiai*. This betrays the tendency, which I have identified at several points throughout this communication, to lump together the familiar names of heresiarchs with little attention to their actual teachings, according to broad brush-stroke themes which do not withstand the scrutiny of careful investigation. Whilst this is understandable as a *description* of the situation of the Oriental Orthodox Church as it long existed, in which all of these groups have been excluded from the imperial Chalcedonian Church, it cannot be *prescriptive* of present and future behaviour, if the accusations lack substance.

Perhaps the most insulting accusation to Severus himself would be that he taught otherwise than Cyril—indeed, hardly a graver accusation could be levelled against any of the iconic non-Chalcedonian theologians! Two troparia at Ode VI of the second canon clearly teach that the Cyrilline doctrine contained in the two letters to Succensus is opposed to Severus's miaphysitism:

The two letters of Cyril, once sent to Succensus, the leader of the East, refute all the error of Severus, as they devoutly proclaim Christ.

Cyril proclaims Christ with two natures and double energies, routing the heresy of the senseless Severus; therefore, we all abide by his teachings.⁴²

But, in fact, the reading of those letters given by the dialogues shows the limited and qualified extent to which Cyril was willing to permit a diophysite Christological formulation, and it is much easier to accommodate Severus's thought to this than Chalcedonian thought as it is presented in the second troparion here.⁴³ We might further note that, in light of the two letters to Succensus, the first troparion at Ode VII of the second canon is somewhat ambiguous: this troparion effectively convicts Severus of Eutychianism, and by extension denial of the Incarnation, because he denied Christ *in* two natures and two energies, whereas in fact his insistence on the *mia physis* formula was precisely calculated to ensure the reality of the Incarnation.

Failure to appreciate the internal consistency of Severus's thought may again be seen in the second troparion at Ode III of the second canon. Here, his error is identified as the denial of two "undivided *ousiai*" and consequently of "two-fold wills and activities." The hymnographer assumes that Severus takes *ousiai* and *physis* as equivalent terms; in truth, he held them apart, confessing two *ousiai* united in Christ's one *physis*. By extension, we may understand that he would hold to the possibility of two separate wills and activities in Christ insofar as we speak of these as deriving from *ousiai*, but one *theandric* will and activity insofar as they derive from the single *physis* of union. Whilst the troparion adequately presents Chalcedonian doctrine, its potency to convict Severus of Christological heresy rests only on the silencing of the testimony of the accused on its own terms.

Awareness of terminological subtlety is not entirely absent from the hymns for SunEC^{IV}, however, as testified by the first troparia of Odes IV and V of the second canon. The first example equates *physis* and *ousia*, because it takes Severus's "one synthetic *physis* [μίαν φύσιν σύνθετον]" to indicate one *ousia* (neither divine nor human, but composite). Of course, the Severine formula was intended to convey the opposite, i.e. one *physis* of union composed of a divine and human *ousia*. Again, at the level of Chalcedonian logic, the accusation stands, but not at the level of Severus's language. The troparion from Ode V misunderstands Severus by proclaiming that his confused *physeis* (taking his "*synthesis*" to mean "mingling") contradicts the Orthodox teaching of two *ousiai* and one *prosopon*, whereas he would have argued that his synthetic *physis* of union preserved just that!

⁴² Trans. Ephrem Lash, https://web.archive.org/web/20160305085000/http://anastasis.org.uk/holy_fathers.htm, viewed 11.09.2019.

⁴³ But see: H. van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*.

Conclusions

These notes on the liturgical commemoration of the Council of Chalcedon are intended to highlight two features of the Byzantine hymnography for this feast that are relevant to the ongoing quest for reconciliation between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox.

First, the *quantity* of hymnography that would be subject to debate and possible revision (if revision of the services were the route taken – and this is by no means a foregone conclusion) is, in truth, quite small. We have only considered here texts of the commemoration of Chalcedon, but they are representative of the work that would need to be done more widely. As we have noted, doctrinal formulae contained within liturgical texts would *not* need to be revised because differences between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian language are fully accommodated within the hermeneutic of the Eastern-Oriental Orthodox dialogue that led to the statements on shared faith and which acknowledges a legitimate diversity in theological language. What would therefore remain to be considered is the condemnation in the hymns of alternative ideas and exponents of ideas. We have seen that, of the fourteen heretics named in the hymns for this feast, only three are contested, and the mentions of them are relatively few in number. It is very difficult to see how even a wholesale reworking of the relevant troparia could be construed as a “mutilation” of the office.

Second, the *quality* of the hymns that would be affected may be held already in some doubt, if theological and historical accuracy is a concern. Of course, we must admit that the liturgical texts of the Byzantine Rite are *not* to be understood as “objective” historical chronicles and systematic works of discursive theology – rather, they are rhetorical performances, intended to contribute towards the construction of a world oriented to Christ (against an erroneous other). But we may question how effective the texts can be in achieving this end if they promote a vision which is demonstrably false in terms that are important to contemporary worshippers. We have seen that the hymns, in places, ride rough shod over theological nuance and associate persons with views they simply did not espouse. In ages past, in which these figures were but symbols of ecclesial-political realities, this was perhaps permissible; but one wonders whether this is so today? The liturgical services undoubtedly use symbolic figures to construct an orthodox community in relation to an (imagined) heretical community, and this may be a legitimate dimension of the reception of Chalcedon by the Eastern Orthodox community. But a problem arises when these communities are mapped simplistically into actual historical communities – especially when a constructed heretical community is identified

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with an actual Oriental Orthodox community in such a way that is demonstrably inaccurate and disingenuous. Would not the case for Chalcedonian Orthodoxy (to say nothing of the unity in faith of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches) be stronger if built upon a firm and fair presentation and assessment of alternatives? This is a possibility that suggests itself from our brief observations.