

CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS IN BYZANTIUM From 1043 to 1118

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INTRODUCTION

The Byzantine Empire was of course a continuation of the Roman Empire, the name of which it bore. Nevertheless its main traits were Greek culture and Christianity. Indeed the latter was so influential in Byzantium that without transforming the empire into a religious caliphate it contributed an intense religious form to it.

Within this Greco-Christian state two authorities held sway: the imperium and the sacerdotium or more specifically the emperor and the Patriarch, the former being head of the state and the latter head of the Church.

But the following question was raised regarding the relations between these two authorities: Did they co-exist in harmony and co-operate in a spirit of mutual respect for each other's jurisdiction or was one of them superior to the other? Were they independent or was one prevailing over the other and determining its actions? And if that was the case then which of the two, the state or the Church, the emperor or the Patriarch, was superior? Historians are not in agreement concerning their answers to this question. Thus, some claim that the emperor was the absolute ruler who assumed religious authority and subjugated the Church. Whereas others, without considering the Patriarch superior to the emperor, support the theory that he was not dominated by the emperor and that the Church did not allow the interventions of the latter in its affairs.

Each side presents its arguments which seem to buttress its position.

Thus various instances in the history of Byzantium seem to strengthen the first of the above theories. Already the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, had said about himself, «I also am a bishop,

ordained by God to overlook whatever is external to the Church».¹ And his historian Eusebius had said about the same emperor: «He, like some general bishop, was constituted by God».² Some emperors regarded their authority as given by God: «You received the crown from God by my hand», said Basil I to his heir, Leo VI.³ And it was not unusual that the bishops themselves acclaimed the emperor *Archiereus* (Arch-priest) and *Basileus*, as it happened with Theodosios II in the synod of Constantinople (448) which condemned Eutyches⁴ and with Marcian in the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451).⁵ Leo the Isaurian declared it more openly. When writing to the Pope Gregory II he proclaimed himself «emperor and priest» and claimed to be the deputy «whom God has ordained to feed his flock like Peter, prince of the apostles».⁶

Nevertheless and in support of the second of the above mentioned theories, there were emperors who solemnly admitted the authority of the Church as constituted by God and having therefore authority equal to that of the state. Moreover, they considered the Church necessary for the cohesion of the empire and the felicity of its subjects. Indeed, Justinian distinguished in a law between *sacerdotium* and *imperium* as «two gifts of God's mercy to humanity».⁷ And Leo VI stated in the *Epanagoge* that «the greatest and most necessary parts in the polity (*politeia*) are the emperor and the Patriarch. Wherefore the peace and felicity of subjects in body and soul is (depends on) the agreement and concord of the kingship and priesthood in all things».⁸ A similar manifestation is that of John Tzimiskes who, when creating Basil Patriarch, recognized that «God has ordained two authorities (ἀρχαί)—the priesthood and the imperial power. To one of these the Creator has entrusted the care of souls and to the other the government of men's bodies that neither of these parts should fail in its duty, but be preserved in vigour and completeness».⁹

1. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine the Great*, 4, 24. In Migne P.G. vol. 20, col. 1172.

2. Ibid. I, 44. In Migne P.G. vol. 20, col. 957.

3. Basil I, *Paraenesis ad Leonem*, Migne, P.G. vol. 107, XXXII.

4. Mansi, *Sacrum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 6, 733.

5. Ibid. vol. 7, 177.

6. Ibid. vol. 12, 976.

7. W. Ensslin, «The emperor and the imperial administration», in *Byzantium*, ed. By N. H. Baynes and H. Moss (Oxford, 1948), p. 275.

8. C. E. Zacharias von Lingenthal, *Jus Graecoromanum*, vol. II, (Athens, 1931, p. 242.

9. Leo Diaconus, Migne, P.G. vol. 117, col. 805.

And from the side of the Church it was not unusual for Patriarchs to raise themselves against the emperors, rebuke their interventions in Church affairs and demand their yielding some concessions to the Church. Furthermore, behind the Patriarch there was the conscience of the whole body of the Church, which was stronger than the absolutism of the emperor.¹⁰

Then where can the truth be found? The answer to that question will be difficult as long as some scholars attempt to prove either one theory or the other by citing only those instances which strengthen their own ideas. On the contrary, our opinion is that we will find the truth after we have examined in detail the relationships between the Patriarchs and the emperors and their policies towards one another. And in such a case of course we shall deal with men who, whatever their positions were (emperors or Patriarchs), had their own idiosyncrasy and their personal opinions. Moreover, the ecclesiastical or political situation of each time influenced their behaviour. However, it will enable us to attain a general view and a solid idea of the whole subject.

But to examine the whole period of the Byzantine Empire will be a task of great length. We therefore in the confined limits of one article shall examine the era which begins with the dynamic Patriarch Michael Cerularius, up to the end of the great emperor Alexius I Comnenus. And we prefer to begin with Michael Cerularius not only because the times before him have been extensively studied, but mainly because Michael Cerularius marked a turning point in the history of Church and state relations, since he was the first Patriarch who attempted to free the Church entirely from state control. This fact, we think, adds to the interest of the subject with which we shall deal in the following.

It is obvious that the examination of one relatively short period cannot lead us to a general conclusion. However, it is an attempt to elucidate the whole problem, to the solution of which many others contribute their efforts.

10. Cf. D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West* (New York, 1966) p. 80.

THE PATRIARCH MICHAEL CERULARIUS AND THE EMPEROR ISAACIOS COMNENUS

The eleventh century saw seated on the patriarchal throne of Constantinople a very remarkable man—Michael Cerularius. He was distinguished in his learning and intellect and in his ambitious plans. He had a passion for power and before his consecration he even attempted to become an emperor through a conspiracy against the emperor Michael IV (1040). But it was discovered and Cerularius, who was the leader of the conspiracy, was banished.¹¹

He returned from exile in 1042, the year when Constantine IX Monomachus ascended the imperial throne. When the latter saw Cerularius, whom until that time he knew only by hearsay, he exclaimed: «He is just the man for the archbishopric of Constantinople», and so he took him into «his household and allowed him to share at his table».¹² After the death of the Patriarch Alexius (Febr. 1043), Cerularius ascended the patriarchal throne with the support of Monomachus.¹³

For Cerularius the patriarchal throne was the position from which he would start to realize what he had not succeeded in doing by the conspiracy. He put himself as in a fortress, and he aimed higher so as to seize an all-powerful position in the state and to overrule the emperor himself. And to speak in the tongue of Psellos, while God had appointed him Patriarch, he, «the great among the Patriarchs, considered it awful and intolerable for anybody to reign without his approval and his assent»;¹⁴ «the love of royalty» made him «want to rule over all and to will to stir heaven and Olympus by the consent of his eyebrows»¹⁵ and also to claim that he had the power to make and unmake emperors.¹⁶

In fact it was not an arrogance of words only, since his role in

11. G. Cedrenus, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, II (ed. Bonn.) p. 530.

12. Psellus, *Epiaphios to the patriarch Michael Cerularius*. In Sathas, *Bibliotheca Graeca medii aevi*, vol. IV, (Paris, 1874), p. 324.

13. Cedrenus, op. cit. p. 550.

14. Psellus, *Accusation against Archiereus*. In E. Kurtz, M. Pselli, *Scripta Minora*, (Milano, 1936), p. 279.

15. Ibid. p. 281.

16. Cedrenus-Scylitzes, op. cit. p. 643.

elevating or dethroning emperors was not of small significance. Thus, although in 1056 he assented to the choice of Michael VI as an emperor, one year later he forced the same emperor to abdicate, and he took the initiative in the revolution which carried Isaacios Comnenus to the throne. In that revolution, according to Psellos, he was «the highest of the chorus»¹⁷ and according to Cedrenos, he «not only was a participant but moreover he was the instigator of the rebellion».¹⁸

Cerularius has been accused of wishing to «combine royalty and priesthood» and of coveting the supreme power. Psellos in a letter to the Patriarch writes: «Do not seek to rule over us, do not play the emperor's part, for thus you become intolerable to the majority of men. Let one be Lord, one Basileus. Formerly,¹⁹ (says Psellos), the same man was both priest and protector of his people, but now that which was single has been divided: there have been ordained both the imperial power and the priesthood.»²⁰ But Cerularius, who wore the purple sandals, a prerogative solely reserved for the emperor alone, stated that there was no difference between empire and priesthood, or at least that difference was small; the priesthood was more honourable and perhaps of greater consideration.²¹

But such arrogance was too much for Isaacios Comnenus to tolerate. He therefore arrested Cerularius and banished him to Proiconnesos.²² But the Patriarch, although deposed, refused to formally resign and the bishops, who had been sent to convince him to do so, returned merely to tell the emperor «we have been defeated, Basileus, we have been defeated». This confronted the emperor with a difficult problem as a result of which «he was pensive and concerned». Finally it was decided to resort to dubious measures and depose the Patriarch by accusing him in front of a council which should be summoned for that purpose: indeed, the fabrication of the accusation had already begun. But the emperor was rescued from this difficult situation by the sudden death of the Patriarch.²³ The fact however, remains that he was determined to impose his will, even by the superiority of his physical might, on the

17. Psellus, *Chronographia*, ed. by K. Sathas (London, 1899), p. 206.

18. Cedrenus, *op. cit.*, p. 637.

19. He probably refers to the Old Testament where Melchisedec is mentioned as being priest and king.

20. K. Sathas, *Mesaionike Bibliothek*, vol. V. (Paris, 1876), p. 112.

21. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 643.

22. *Ibid.* p. 644. Cf. Psellus, *Chronographia*, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

23. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, (ed. Bonn), p. 65.

powerful Patriarch. The insistence of Isaacios Comnenus to get rid of Cerularius can be explained as an act of self defence rather than an infringement of ecclesiastical authority. Being afraid of the Patriarch, who elevated himself above the emperor and threatened him with deposition, the emperor preferred to act rather than to suffer.²⁴ This means that only the fear of losing his throne forced the emperor to resort to extreme measures i.e. to depose the Patriarch.

As for the Patriarch he died unyielding, and despite his inglorious end, the whole empire venerated him as a saint and martyr, and the emperor himself lamented the loss of the man who «was known among the first of the sages.»²⁵ With his death his dreams and his plans also passed away. But he remained in History as the first patriarch who not only attempted to achieve complete independence from Rome, but also to free the Church entirely from state control. Having a high ideal of the archieratic office he thought that the Patriarch was bound to «speak freely to secular powers, to resist tyrannies, to exalt the humble and to pull down the self-willed and the bold.»²⁶ This proves not only the ability of that man but also the authority which the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople had obtained in the 11th century.

Another factor which also contributed to the rift between Michael Cerularius and Isaacios Comnenus is the economic measures which the latter had undertaken for the benefit of the state, but which dealt with Church property.

It seems that the Patriarch Michael Cerularius in his programme for the modification of the relations between Church and state included among the others that of church property which he liked to keep free from the interventions of the state authority. Previously he had tried to secure, unsuccessfully however, privileges for the church properties from the emperor Constantine Monomachus, as we may at least guess from the incidental remark of Psellos that he owed many grudges to Monomachus; «καίτοι πολλά μνησικακεῖν ἔχων τῷ ἀπελθόντι».²⁷ But that which he did not accomplish then he managed to do later with the help of Isaacios Comnenus, to whom he had offered his support towards mounting the imperial throne, in exchange for economic returns.

24. Scylitzes, op. cit., p. 643.

25. Psellus, *Chronographia*, op. cit., p. 220. Cf. Scylitzes, op. cit., p. 644 and Zonaras, (ed. Bonn), p. 670.

26. Psellus, *Epitaphios*, op. cit., p. 354.

27. Ibid., p. 357.

It is very probable that an agreement had been made beforehand for that purpose. It is only thus that the generosity of Isaacios Comnenus can be explained, for he offered to the Patriarch, «whom he respected equal to a father», the administration of the church of Holy Wisdom and all the prerogatives of it which till then belonged to the palace. The emperor withdrew his interference in the affairs of the Church and left its treasurer (skevophylax) and the grand chancellor to be appointed from now on by the Patriarch instead of the emperor as it used to be.²⁸

But things changed and the friendly relations between the Patriarch and the emperor turned into hostility when the latter decided to confiscate part of the properties of the monasteries, which had been generously endowed by the emperors succeeding Basil II. This was not the first time that an emperor confiscated monasterial property. Nicephorus Phocas had previously attempted this with his novel of 964.²⁹ This time Isaacios Comnenus had strong reasons which not only justified but even necessitated his action. First he wanted to reinforce state finances and secure funds for his military needs;³⁰ second for social reasons, that is to free «neighboring farmers from the meanness and greed of the monks»,³¹ who tried to appropriate the lands of the former and caused conflicts which ultimately reached the courts.³² Aside from military and social considerations a third reason had to do with the morals of the monks; that is, the emperor tried to curb the «sybaritic and voluptuous luxury»³³ of the monks, leaving them only that which was necessary for their ideal polity and thus verifying the meaning of monasteries as ascetic communes.³⁴

How did people evaluate this imperial act? Was it directed against the Church and was it consequently an expression of the absolute power of the emperor over it? According to Zonaras the emperor attacked «things divine» and because of this, as well as for his reduction of other state expenditures, specifically of the senate and the army, he was «despised by everyone».³⁵ However, according to other historians even if this «surprised the multitude, nevertheless it was grad-

28. Scylitzes, op. cit., p. 641; Attaleiates, p. 60 and Zonaras, p. 666.

29. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, op. cit., p. 249-52.

30. Scylitzes-Cedrenus, op. cit., p. 642.

31. Ibid.

32. Attaleiates, op. cit., p. 61.

33. Scylitzes-Cedrenus, op. cit.

34. Psellus, *Chronographia*, p. 218.

35. Zonaras, p. 668.

ually understood and accepted by most»,³⁶ and even if «for those whose judgement was hasty this seemed to lead to irreverence and illegality and extreme sacrilege», nevertheless «for those who studied the matter deeply and intelligently this seemed to lead to no evil». ³⁷ On the contrary, «it was realized as beneficial both because it relieved the monks from cares that were irrelevant to the life they should lead... and because it freed the neighboring farmers from their impositions». ³⁸ Because of this Scylitzes wishes «that it (the imperial reforms) should have been carried out to its conclusion not only for the sake of the monasteries but generally for the sake of the entire Church». ³⁹

Thus from what we have already said it may be inferred that the economic measures of Comnenus aimed, without depriving the monasteries of those funds which were necessary for them to survive, to benefit the common good. This can be seen from the fact that they were approved by the majority of the people. The reaction came only from the clergy and the Patriarch himself. But since the emperor had the people on his side it was not that reaction which compelled him to depose the Patriarch. It may only have contributed to the decision which Comnenus had already taken to get rid of the Patriarch for the only reason that he threatened his throne. The deposition of Cerularius therefore was directed against his person only and not against the Church as a whole, all the more since the emperor himself took care of the Church and declined to interfere with ecclesiastical affairs.

That the emperor cared for the interest of the Church and for the improved administration of its affairs can also be seen from the novel which he promulgated. In this novel he determined on the one hand the amounts of money which bishops could legally receive from those who were ordained to the rank of reader (*anagnostes*), deacon and priest, and on the other hand the regular incomes of the bishops expressed in currency, animals or land products from villages. These villages were classified into three categories depending on the number of houses (*kapnoi*) on the basis of which the incomes of the bishops were determined. ⁴⁰ This ordinance was made in the interest of the Church, since it coordinated the economic relations between clergy and laity. This can be seen from

36. Psellus, *Chronographia*, op. cit.

37. Scylitzes, op. cit.

38. Attaleiates, op. cit.

39. Scylitzes-Cedrenus, op. cit., p. 643.

40. In G. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, op. cit., p. 275.

the fact that this novel, proclaimed again by Alexius Comnenus,⁴¹ was also adopted by the Church through consiliar decision.⁴² Thus it was an imperial interference to guard the rights of the Church and not to violate them.

THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE X DUCAS

The novel of 1065 proclaimed by Constantine X Ducas is noteworthy because of the information it furnishes us about the attitude of that emperor towards the Church.⁴³ This novel concerns the positions of the Metropolitan-syncelloi in councils and in church services. It was occasioned by the demands of the Metropolitan-syncelloi to be seated on the metropolitan stools before the other Metropolitans. It must be mentioned here that the syncelloi were initially priests and that only after the second half of the tenth century were they replaced by Metropolitan syncelloi. They were proclaimed by the emperor to the Patriarch who also confirmed them before the Metropolitans and Archbishops residing (ἐνδημοῦντες) in Constantinople at that time.⁴⁴ Because the syncelloi resided close to the Patriarch they gradually entered his confidence «and became increasingly influential, so much so that in the ninth and tenth centuries they occupied the highest position after the Patriarch» and what is even more important «in court ceremonial the syncelloi took precedence over the Metropolitans and were entitled to membership of the senate»⁴⁵.

These distinguished syncelloi were seated near the Patriarch in council but in small stools and separated from the Metropolitans who were seated after them in larger stools. The syncelloi duly honored the Metropolitans by rising when the latter entered the secretum of the Patriarch.⁴⁶ Furthermore, during ceremonies the syncelloi stood or were seated near the Patriarch before the synthronon of the Metropolitans.

However the Metropolitan-syncelloi after the tenth century demanded to be seated before the other Metropolitans not on the small stools which had been occupied by the previous priest-syncelloi, but in

41. Ibid. p. 311.

42. B. Stephanides, *Ecclesiastical History*, (Athens, 1948), p. 416.

43. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, op. cit., p. 276.

44. Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae*, vol. I, (ed. Bonn), p. 530.

45. E. Herman, «The secular Church», in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part II, (Cambridge, 1967), p. 114.

46. Constantine Porphyrogenetus, op. cit., p. 531.

the first seats of the Metropolitan stools and the synthronon.⁴⁷ They argued that this demand was based not on the title of syncellus but on the «senatorial honors», that is, on their capacity as senators. This of course insulted the other Metropolitans who went as far as to create «trouble about the cathedra» even «during mass».⁴⁸ Despite these reactions the Metropolitan-syncelloi continued to get seating preference until the promulgation of Ducas's novel.

Not only does this novel condemn the Metropolitans because they wished to change «the venerated thrones» but it presents them as innovators!: «if anybody wishes to innovate». And what is even more enlightening about Church-state relations, is the information contained in the novel, that the Metropolitan-syncelloi defended their demands on the basis of their senatorial title. The reason for this was that the senators in the general order of titles were higher than the Metropolitans. This can be seen from the following except from the novel: «And what other authority does the emperor have other than to honor the thrones with the senatorial titles»? ⁴⁹

The emperor, however, terminated by this novel the preferential seating of the Metropolitan-syncelloi and rebuked their excessive ambitions. He obliged them to conform to the traditional order, and appeased thus the conflict. But he did so without ignoring or supplanting the authority of the Church. On the contrary, he praised it as a divine institution, the order and laws of which no one has a right to violate. In order to exalt the priesthood he placed himself below even the lowest of priests and considered the episcopal thrones as awarded by the «holy wisdom which is the Logos of God and the Lord». Therefore «who can revoke or deny the throne to a person to whom it was given by Him»? He compares the bishops to the «holy and glorious apostles» whose rank «Christ our God ordained in the holy and life-giving Supper». Then he counsels the bishops to conform to the canons of the Holy Fathers of which «who is so daring and so vain and so impertinent as to change one single word»? If anybody wishes to improvise on the divine and to commit blasphemy and to overthrow the canons of the holy Apostles and of the God-bearing Fathers we certainly have no such intention». «Let this be from now on my command and my consideration».

47. G. Cedrinus, vol. II, (ed. Bonn), p. 487.

48. Ibid.

49. Cf. B. Stephanides, «Church and State Relations in the Byzantine State and the novel of the emperor Constantine Ducas», (in Greek), *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1930, p. 420.

Although this liberality of Constantine Ducas towards the Church can be explained by the influence which the intellectuals and the clergy exercised on him, and from the fact that it would be dangerous for him to lose the good wishes of these two classes, nevertheless this novel cannot but be considered as evidence of considerable respect of the emperor for the Church. It is an official testament of Ducas's credo that not even the emperor himself can interfere in the affairs of the divinely guided Church.

THE PATRIARCH JOHN XIPHILINOS (1063-75) AND HIS RELATIONS WITH THE PALACE

«When Constantine Leichoudes, Patriarch and leader of the Church for four years and six months passed away, John Xiphilinos from Trebizond was proclaimed to the archbishopric of Constantinople». ⁵⁰ The decision of Constantine Ducas to name John Xiphilinos Patriarch of Constantinople was a highly successful one because Xiphilinos was renowned for his virtuous and deeply cultured character; ⁵¹ thus «nobody else except him was considered worthy of such an honor». ⁵²

Xiphilinos had acquired great erudition in jurisprudence as well as in Theology. Constantine Monomachos, who reorganized the University of Constantinople, had already appointed him head of the law school (nomophylax), and he succeeded in making it «the centre of legal scholarship». ⁵³ As nomophylax Xiphilinos became an ex officio member of the senate ⁵⁴ and thus «he participated in imperial affairs and carried the highest rank after the basileus as a consequence of his distinction in political affairs». ⁵⁵ Despite the high and honored positions that he attained, Xiphilinos unexpectedly preferred to change the senatorial toga for the monastic cloth. He retired to the monasteries of Olympus in Bythinia where he lived for quite a long time and «radiated virtue and the fear of God». ⁵⁶ It was from this solitary and

50. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 680.

51. Psellus, *Chronographia*, op. cit., p. 242.

52. Attaleiates, op. cit., p. 93.

53. H. J. Scheltema, «Byzantine Law», in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, part II, (Cambridge, 1967), p. 70.

54. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 680.

55. Attaleiates, op. cit., p. 93.

56. Ibid.

ascetic life that Xiphilinos was summoned to occupy the Patriarchal throne despite his initial reluctance to accept such an honor.⁵⁷

Even though Xiphilinos as a Patriarch never acquired authority similar to that of a Photius nor power comparable to that of a Michael Cerularius, he nevertheless participated energetically in political affairs proving thus in his part the fact that a Patriarch was not necessarily influenced by the emperor but, on the contrary, that he could sometimes exercise considerable power over the imperial prerogative. Thus Xiphilinos acted as a symbol of legality, guaranteeing certain obligation on the part of the imperial family; he also had the power to generally intervene in imperial administration. Xiphilinos could even influence the election of an emperor. This can be shown by the following event which occurred during his patriarchate.

A short time before his death Constantine Ducas gave up a large portion of his authority to his brother Caesar John⁵⁸ and bequeathed the crown to his three sons, under the regency of his wife and their mother Eudocia, who was considered capable to administer the commonweal.⁵⁹ The emperor required the court, the senate and all members of the imperial family to sign an oath to respect the rights of his children to the throne⁶⁰ and the Augusta was required to sign an oath that she would not marry again.⁶¹ Eudocia signed this oath before both a senatorial and a Church council, over the latter of which presided the Patriarch Xiphilinos,⁶² who undertook to guard the signed oath.⁶³ It must be pointed out that the procedure made the Patriarch official guardian of the imperial throne. Nobody could claim the throne except for the legal heirs, neither could the empress declare another basileus by marrying him. The Patriarch not only had the power but was compelled to prevent such an occurrence.

Although we cannot conclude that Xiphilinos raised himself above the imperial authority, it can nevertheless be easily deduced from what has already been said, that he acquired the right to control it. A few months after the death of Ducas the military situation in the eastern and southern borders seemed extremely serious. The Seljuq

57. Ibid.

58. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 659.

59. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, p. 681, cf. Scylitzes *op. cit.*, p. 659.

60. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 65, cf. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, p. 682.

61. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, p. 681, cf. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 659.

62. Attaleiates, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

63. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, 681, cf. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 659.

Turks after conquering the entire Near East reached the borders of Byzantium, and, under the leadership of Alp-Arslan gained possession of Caesarea, where they carried out extensive looting and massacres. Thence they marched to Cilicia and Syria, where they posed a serious threat to Antioch.⁶⁴ The Turkish onslaught threatened the utter reversal of the Roman fortunes.⁶⁵ This situation caused concern in the capital for the choice of a new emperor capable of facing the danger.⁶⁶ The empress troubled by growing demands for a new emperor, and fearing that these could result in the loss of the throne for her and her sons, decided to secure her position by nominating a new emperor herself through marriage. Thus she chose Romanus Diogenes as a man capable to face the barbarian invasion.⁶⁷

Diogenes had been distinguished by his campaigns against the Patzineqs, which caused Constantine Ducas to proclaim him Bestiarches. When he was informed of Ducas's death he planned to seize the throne for himself. This, however, became known to the capital and as a result he was recalled and condemned to banishment. Subsequently, however, his case was reconsidered by an imperial court, in which Eudocia was also present, and which declared Diogenes to be innocent.⁶⁸ Even though Psellos tries to relieve Eudocia of all suspicions concerning her submission to the desires of the flesh,⁶⁹ it nevertheless seems that she fell in love with Diogenes who is praised by writers for the beauty of his appearance and stature; this perhaps contributed more than anything else to her decision to marry him.⁷⁰ Her designs, however, were thwarted by the oath which she had signed and which remained in the possession of the Patriarch. This prompted her to conceive of a satanic plan to secure the Patriarch's consent and to recover her signed oath. She therefore notified the Patriarch that she wanted to marry his brother Bardas. This proposal completely changed the Patriarch's disposition so that he not only gave his consent, but became very active in convincing the senators of the legality of this act, which he succeeded in

64. Scylitzes, op. cit., pp. 660-62.

65. Attaleiates, op. cit., p. 100.

66. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 683.

67. Ibid.

68. Scylitzes, op. cit., p. 664, cf. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 684.

69. Psellus, *Chronographia*, op. cit., p. 244.

70. Scylitzes, op. cit., p. 664 and Zonaras, op. cit., p. 685. cf. Attaleiates. op. cit., p. 101: *«The augusta preferred him because he was present there and did not have a woman»*.

doing, largely through flattery and even by bribes. Finally he returned the oath to the empress and it seemed that his efforts would be crowned with success, when suddenly the empress invited Romanus Diogenes to the palace during the night, married him and proclaimed him emperor with the consent of her sons and Caesar John.⁷¹

John Xiphilinos undoubtedly lost the chance to proclaim his brother emperor, but the consent of the senate in the marriage of the empress was his own achievement. This proves the significance of the role that the Patriarch could potentially play in political matters when of course he was a man of Xiphilinos's will and abilities; it proves as well what important countervailing power the Patriarch had with respect to imperial authority, and contradicts those who maintain that the Patriarch was a puppet of the emperor.

THE PERIOD FROM ROMANUS DIOGENES TO NICEPHORUS BOTANEIATES

Romanus Diogenes was benefited from the intervention of Xiphilinos, but whatever that profit was he lost it quite soon, again because of the interference of the Church. After his defeat in Manzikert (1071) a reaction against him started in Constantinople. This movement was initiated by the political party headed by Psellus and supported by Xiphilinos and the Church. It was through the support of the Church that Michael VII, the son of Eudocia, was proclaimed emperor, while Diogenes was deposed from the throne.⁷²

And when Diogenes after his defeats in Docea and Adana surrendered, representatives of the Church, the bishops of Chalcedon, Heracleia and Coloneia were sent to guarantee upon oath the immunity of his person.⁷³ The fact that they could not prevent the Caesar John's men from blinding Diogenes does not lessen the significance of their presence there, since of course they were not able to repulse the nefarious plans of the Caesar.

Michael VII, because he was inconsiderate and incapable of conducting the affairs of the state, depended on his teacher and reliable advisor Psellus and Caesar John. However, besides those two, a man of the Church, the bishop of Side, John, who was head of the protosyncel-

71. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, pp. 665-66 and Zonaras *op. cit.*, pp. 685-7.

72. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 702. Cf. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, p. 704.

73. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, 705. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, 704 and Attaleiates, *op. cit.*, p. 178

loi, was taken to the palace to guide the fate of the empire, although for a short time only, since later he was replaced by Nicephoritzes.⁷⁴

The Patriarch John Xiphilinos was succeeded in 1075 by Kosmas I, the Jerusalemite, who «although not having tasted the profane wisdom and being uninitiated in that, nevertheless was variously embellished by virtues»⁷⁵ and «he therefore was highly esteemed by the basileus».⁷⁶ This Patriarch, «who was taciturn», was destined, although quietly, to intervene in political affairs and contributed to their change.

The administration of Michael was ineffective not only in external affairs, but also in domestic finances. The Logothete Nicephoritzes, who took control of the government, became very active in gathering money, which instead of being distributed to the needy people, was wasted for the rapacious nobility and for the entertainment of the turbulent populace of the capital. The cupidity of Nicephoritzes and his propensity to accumulate money led him even to confiscate holy objects from the churches.⁷⁷ But neither this irreverent measure nor the monopoly of the corn trade could stop fiscal deterioration, which caused strong indignation against the emperor. This reaction became more intensified during a bad harvest when people died from starvation. The situation was so desperate that the Church decided to take again the initiative to dethrone the emperor. Thus the bishops were assembled and together with the Patriarch Kosmas deliberated on the seriousness of the situation. The decision which they finally reached was «to vote for Botaneiates to rule as basileus». But because of the fear of the present emperor they should not act openly but after consideration and with caution.⁷⁸ But their fear of Michael VII evaporated, when Nicephorus Botaneiates appeared in Asia Minor courageously claiming the imperial throne. On Sunday the day after Epiphany in 1078 and while the emperor with the senate were in the palace of Blachernae, in the church of the Holy Wisdom the people with the clergy proclaimed Botaneiates emperor, while he still was in Asia Minor.⁷⁹ Under these circumstances Botaneiates, after gathering strong army, advanced to Nicaea. There on the day of the Annunciation the people, the nobility and the clergy «with the Patriarch of Antioch Aimilianos and the bishop of Ikonion

74. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, 705. Cf. Zonaras, 707 and Attaleiates, 180.

75. Scylitzes, *op. cit.*, p. 731.

76. Zonaras, *op. cit.*, 717.

77. Attaleiates, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

79. *Ibid.* p. 256.

officiating» proclaimed Botaneiates emperor.⁸⁰ A few days later, on the feast of St. Lazarus, Michael VII was dethroned in Constantinople and on the 3rd of April, which was the holy Tuesday, Botaneiates entered Constantinople and was crowned for a second time by the Patriarch.⁸¹

No one can deny that the ascension of Botaneiates to the imperial throne was his own personal achievement. But again none can dispute the contribution of the Church to his success. Although Botaneiates himself declares that the imperial authority «was confirmed to him by God», that «the royal diadem was awarded to him by the divine grace», and that he was «proclaimed» by God, nevertheless he admits, although indirectly, that it was a deed of the synod too. Thus when he was reproving Nicephorus Bryennius for his rebellion, as a result of which the latter was blinded, he was telling him that by his revolt he «fought against God» and became the enemy of the holy senate and the synod.⁸² And his historian Attaleiates says also that Botaneiates «was elected and proclaimed basileus emperor by the entire council of the senate and the synod and the populace...»⁸³ That Botaneiates was indebted to the Church is shown from the fact that he returned to the churches all the holy articles which Michael VII had plundered,⁸⁴ and he enriched the churches and the monasteries with benefactions.⁸⁵

His reliance upon the Church is shown from his close co-operation with it, since he also took the bishop of Side to the palace and charged him «with the care of the common affairs».⁸⁶ And when he was going to decide about the fate of the dethroned Michael he asked the advice of the Patriarch Kosmas and with his consent and vote and that of the other bishops he promoted the monk Michael to *archiereus* (arch-priest) and head of the bishopric of Ephesos.⁸⁷ However, despite their agreement, the Patriarch vigorously reacted against the illegal marriage of Botaneiates to Maria, the wife of the former emperor Michael, by unfrocking immediately the priest who performed the sacrament of the wedding.⁸⁸

80. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 719. Cf. Scylitzes, p. 733 and Attaleiates, p. 270.

81. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 720.. Cf. Scylitzes, p. 734.

82. Attaleiates, op. cit. pp. 292—93.

83. Ibid. p. 298.

84. Ibid. p. 277.

85. Ibid. p. 274.

86. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 725.

87. Attaleiates, op. cit., p. 303. Cf. Scylitzes, p. 738.

88. Zonaras, 722. Cf. Scylitzes 738.

The same Patriarch Kosmas hastened the end of the sovereignty of Botaneiates. When, after the army of Alexius Comnenus seized Constantinople, Botaneiates, despairing of his fate and knowing that a civil war might break out at any moment, was approached by the Patriarch, who «counselled the emperor to abdicate» with the following words, which Anna Comnena⁸⁹ has conserved: «Do not begin a civil war, nor resist God's decree. Do not allow the city to be defiled with the blood of Christians, but yield to the will of God, and depart from our midst». «The emperor followed the Patriarch's advice» and conceded his position to Alexius Comnenus, who was crowned by the same Patriarch⁹⁰ on Easter Day, 4 April 1081.

The same conclusion can be derived from the novels of Botaneiates i.e. that he considered the Church as an authority equal to that of the state in the administration of the common affairs. But he entrusted to her mainly matters of a human nature.

Because the emperor was so occupied with political affairs and at the same time concerned with the exiled, fearing that they might be punished more than their original sentence specified, he ordered by his novel of 1080⁹¹ that «the holy and Ecumenical Patriarch of each time has the permission three times a year, that is every four months, to remind the emperor about the people who are in exile and to report about them, so that if a man has been punished adequately, he should be recalled from exile and brought home. And if for any reason he has to suffer additional punishment, he will be sentenced according to the judgement of the emperor».

And what is more important, Botaneiates desired that subsequent emperors comply with his legislation. Thus he charged the Patriarch with the responsibility of reminding any succeeding emperor, who might neglect its principles, of the nature of his legislation. The Patriarch then should stand up and defend the legislation, «striving to that effect according to the support he has from his flock».

This is another instance similar to that of Xiphilinos (p. 362) in which the Patriarch is constituted in front of God and men a guardian of the law and is charged with the responsibility of its application by

89. Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, II, 12. In the English translation by E.A.S. Dawes, (New York, 1967), p. 70.

90. Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, III, 2.

91. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus Graecoromanum*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 283.

the emperor himself. In case the latter neglected the law, the Patriarch was authorized to try to impose respect for the law by using the power he obtained from his flock.

With another novel⁹² of the same year (1080), the same emperor Botaneiates ratified and made laws of the state also the synodical decisions which were taken during the patriarchate of Xiphilinos and which concerned the engagement and the restriction of marriage.⁹³ Because those decisions had been against the views of the state, they were not approved at that time.⁹⁴ However, they had been invested with canonical validity and were applied but with some hesitation and even fear, and eventually some violated them, as may be concluded from the confirmatory chrysobull of Botaneiates: «So that they will not be forced by anybody because of fear, or cunning or for any other reason which is not worthy of praise». But Botaneiates «heeded the petition of those who requested accordingly, and strengthened with the royal authority those decrees which were pleasing to God, and therefore were canonized by the divine and holy synod», and he ordered through the aforementioned chrysobull that «the patriarchal and synodical decision is firm and no one may dare even with a single simple word to criticize or overrule it».

The fact that Botaneiates after thirteen whole years decided to confirm the synodical decrees of Xiphilinos «shows not only that these decrees had already been applied in Church practice, as has already been mentioned, but also that the power which was given to the Church, mainly by Xiphilinos, continues after that period, so that the state was bound to take very seriously into consideration the power and influence of the Church in matters referring also to the secular sphere of interest».⁹⁵

We can further add the fact that the agreement of the state on a matter «in which there was so much conflict between the state and the Church», was elicited by the calm and placid Patriarch Kosmas, shows also the power and the sovereignty which the Church as an integral organization attained during the 11th century.⁹⁶

92. Ibid. p. 288.

93. More about this subject see in K. G. Mbonas, *Ioannes Xiphilinos*, (Athens, 1937), p. 120.

94. Ibid. p. 122ff.

95. Ibid. p. 123.

96. Ibid. p. 123.

THE CHURCH POLICY OF ALEXIUS I COMNENUS

Alexius I Comnenus ranks among the greatest emperors of the Byzantine Empire. He took the empire after a period of disorders which cost it too much in territories and peaceful life and restored it to its old grandeur. He spent the long period of his reign (38 years) almost in continuous wars against the various enemies, which he managed either by his military strength or his capable diplomacy to push away from the territories of the empire and to bring back to it peace and safety. Anna, therefore, his daughter and historian, is justified when she says that «God was guarding Comnenus, like a precious object, for a greater dignity, intending by means of him to restore the fortune of the Romans».¹ And in the words which she puts in the mouth of Isaac, Alexius' brother, it was the wish of God to restore through him (Alexius) «the dignity of our family (γένος)».² After the anarchy and the troubled period which followed the death of Basil II (1025), it was in the person of Alexius I Comnenus, who seized the throne in 1081, that the Empire gained again one of its most capable emperors. And to speak in the words of Anna «after imperial dignity had long been absent from the Roman Court, it returned in a certain degree under him and him alone, and was then first entertained as a guest by the Roman ruler.»³

In the question of Church and state relations Alexius occupies a significant position, which is worthy of a careful examination, not only because it was natural that his long reign should lead him to intervene in religious affairs, but also because he was one of the most powerful emperors. The latter is of a great importance since in the long history of Byzantium most of the times it was the power of the emperors (imperium) which formed their views and regulated their policy towards the Church authority. In other words, the more powerful they were the more they raised themselves above the office of the Patriarch.

1. Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, I, 6, English translation by E. A. S. Dawes (New York, 1967), p. 20.

2. Ibid. II,7, p. 60.

3. Ibid. XII,5, p. 310.

Two are the main characteristics of Alexius' era: first that the imperial throne is occupied by a powerful emperor, while secondly, the Patriarchs of that period are men without any exceptional abilities. This notion might lead to the misconception that Alexius might have felt his power accentuated by the lack of balance in the head of the Church. Moreover, one is tempted to adopt such a view when the sole criteria are extracted phrases of the emperor himself, or of other authors without examining his very acts in regard to the Church, which better than anything else reveal his conception of Church and state relations.

Indeed Alexius said: «This Empire was transferred to my hands by the entire will of God».⁴ Furthermore he admonished his son John to remember that the throne is «ιερόν καὶ Θεοῦ δῶρον μόνου».⁵ Even men from within the Church exalted the emperor to that extent as to say that «Θεοῦ εἰκὼν ἅπας Βασιλεύς (ἐστὶ)»,⁶ and that the basileus is «θεὸς ἐγκόσμιος».⁷ Theodore of Balsamon, although subsequent to Alexius I, might be well considered as expressing the spirit of that time when he says that «the emperors and the Patriarchs are esteemed as Church teachers because of their holy chrism; therefore the faithful rulers and emperors teach the Christian people, and like priests burn incense and impart blessings with the dikerion (μετὰ δικηρίου σφραγίζουσι)». And «they, like the sun, by the brilliance of their orthodoxy, enlighten the world».⁸ The same author goes even further to place the emperor above the Patriarch, because «the power and activities of the emperors concern body and soul, while the power (μεγαλεῖον) of the Patriarchs is limited only to the benefit of the soul».⁹ In another case he stated that «the emperor is subject neither to the laws nor to the canons».¹⁰

However, the above quotations do not suffice to establish the theory that Alexius I held a caesaropapistic view, for the very reason that his own words should be interpreted as an expression of gratitude towards God rather than as declaring himself His vicar on earth. Fur-

4. Ibid. IX,9. p. 231.

5. Μοῦσαι Ἀλεξιάδες Κομνηνιάδες ed. by P. Maas, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 22, (1913), p. 361.

6. Theophylact, Archbishop of Bulgaria, *Epistola* V, ed. Migne, P.G. vol. 126, col. 512.

7. Ibid. epist. VIII, P.G. v. 126, col. 516.

8. Theodori Balsamonis, *Meditata*, Migne, P.G. v. 138, col. 1017.

9. Ibid.

10. Theodori Balsamonis, in *Canonem XVI*, Concilii Carthaginiensis, Migne P.G. 138, 93.

thermore, the views of the above mentioned ecclesiastics (Theophylact and Theodore) should be taken not as representing the view of the whole Church but rather as individual opinions which most of the time, as especially, in the case of Theophylact, intended to flatter the rulers of the state in order to secure certain advantages for their local Church.¹¹

A more realistic evaluation of Alexius' views is found in the account of Anna Comnena where the emperor is portrayed as a pious and devout ruler: «The Emperor was essentially a most religious man (ἱερατικώτατος), and in his life and speech the high priest of all piety. He was very fond, too, of teaching our doctrines and was a real missionary by choice and in his manner of speech; he wanted to bring into the fold of our Church not only the Scythian nomads, but also the whole of Persia, as well as the barbarians who inhabit Libya and Egypt and follow the rites of Mohammed». ¹² This portrayal of Alexius is in accordance with his life and works. He really was a pious man and very active in converting to orthodoxy, if not all those «barbarians» which Anna mentions, at least the heretics which appeared within his dominion. From the very beginning of his reign, he showed his respect for the Church and its canons by confessing in front of the Patriarch Cosmas and the other «leaders of the sacred Synod and of the monastic body» his deep regret for the plundering of the capital which took place on the day he occupied it and «brought suffering upon all the inhabitants». He counted the crimes committed by the soldiers as his own and reckoned that it was «as if he himself had perpetrated the many deeds of shame». He therefore placed himself before the clergy as a condemned criminal and related everything in humiliation, earnestly beseeching them to cure him from his sufferings by submitting himself to their reprobations. He accepted the penances to which the priests subjected him, and only after the penances were over «he resumed the management of state affairs with pure hands.» ¹³

Alexius considered the Church as his collaborator even in his

11. See Theophylact, *Epist. VIII*, in Migne P.G. 126. 516, in which he beseeches John, the son of Sebastocrator, for the exemption of the priests from taxations; and *Epist. XVI*, *ibid.* col. 529, in which he asks the same person to mediate to the emperor to help him (Theophylact) to get back the priests and deacons who had abandoned their parishes and «neither priests nor deacons were left in the Church of Bulgaria».

12. *Alexiad*, VI, 13, p. 164.

13. *Ibid.* III, 5, pp. 80-82.

wars against the enemies of the empire. But to that end she could not otherwise contribute than by praying to God to whom the emperor trusted the outcome of his struggles. When the Comans were threatening the empire, Alexius consulted the heads of the army whether to take the field against them. Because they did not agree he «referred the whole matter to God and asked Him for a decision». Consequently, he with «all the members of the priestly and military roll» and the Patriarch Nicolas went «to the great church of God in the evening» and prayed to God all night. At the early dawn the decision came as from the voice of God when the Patriarch opened one of the papers which he had laid on the Table and on which the question was written as to whether or not the emperor should go against the Comans. Taking the key-note of the paper as a consent of God, the emperor «threw himself heart and soul into the expedition» and «took the road against the Comans». ¹⁴

On another occasion Alexius had to ask the real help of the Church. Immediately after his accession, the Norman war broke out and the emperor had to take up «a struggle in which the very existence of the empire was at stake». ¹⁵ He was in a great need of money to gain allies and to reorganize the army. Because all the contents of the Imperial Treasury had been squandered by his predecessor Nicephorus Botaneiates, ¹⁶ Alexius decided to confiscate several sacred vessels of the churches and convert them into money. But he would not proceed without deliberation. Isaac the sebastocrator who undertook to carry out the decision first consulted the «ancient laws and canons» and after he found that it was lawful and just, he went to the great church of God and announced the decision to the Holy Synod in the presence of the Patriarch. The proposal was carried out but not without reaction. «This decision», Anna points out, «became the subject of a very grave scandal to the Emperors». The main protest came from Leo, the Bishop of Chalcedon, who «spoke his mind freely» and aroused Isaac's wrath by his shameless behaviour. The controversy assumed the nature of a theological dispute; the old question of icon worship arose again along with the appropriateness of extracting silver or gold from icons. Leo «attacked the emperor most impudently... and laid down the principle that we should adore the sacred images and not only give them relative honor». ¹⁷ The dis-

14. Ibid. X, 2, p. 238-39.

15. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1957), p. 317.

16. Alexiad, V, I, p. 116.

17. Ibid., V, 2. p. 117-19.

puted matter now was whether the icons should be venerated «σχετικῶς» or «λατρευτικῶς». The controversy threatened to bring a schism within the Church, especially after Leo started to spread his opinions through letters concerning this matter. The activities of Leo became known to the emperor who, in order to prevent any division in the Church, convoked a synod which was to decide on this question. Alexius himself presided over the council in which were present the Senate, the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem along with the Archbishop of Cyprus and many other hierarchs and abbots. The synod repeated the doctrinal decrees of the seventh Ecumenical Council concerning the veneration of the icons and decided that we venerate the icons «σχετικῶς» and not «λατρευτικῶς». Furthermore that we do not call an icon the material of which it is made «τὰς εἰκονικὰς ὕλας» but «τὰ ὁμοιώματα τὰ ἐν ταῖς ὕλαις φαινόμενα». The decrees of the synod were received unanimously, including the Bishop of Chalcedon Leo, who accepted the outcome without any opposition.¹⁸ Anna says that Leo «was condemned to deposition from office» and that because he insisted in being difficult and obdurate he was finally exiled to Sozopolis.¹⁹ But in the proceedings of the council no punishment of Leo is mentioned.

Thus the will of the emperor prevailed but only through a council, which in fact vindicated his action of melting the icons, since the material itself had not a holy value and did not represent any special figure.

However Alexius regarded the measure to which he, in a time of dire need, resorted, «as a loan and most assuredly not as robbery nor was it the plot of a tyrannical master as his slanderers asserted». After the successful termination of the wars and upon his return to Constantinople he summoned the Church in the palace of Blachernae and before that he defended his act and promised restitution of the confiscated wealth.²⁰ Moreover, he promulgated in August 1082 a degree²¹ in which he repudiated his own action, begged the forgiveness of God and men, and promised to restore whatever was confiscated from the churches. By the same chrysobul, he forbade for the future himself and the succeeding emperors from alienating any church properties «even if it is forced by any necessity» and ordered that from now on nobody should

18. Alexii Comneni, *Novellae Constitutiones*, Migne, P.G. v. 127, cols. 972-84.

19. Alexiad, V, 2. p. 119.

20. Ibid. VI, 3, p. 141-42.

21. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus Graecoromanum*, vol. I, (Athens, 1930), p. 302-4.

«profane the holy vessels by changing them into public expenses»; if any one in the future dare to touch the holy vessels he will be considered sacriligious before of God and all pious men.

Alexius manifested his religious zeal more ardently in his fighting against the heretics. That was a continuous struggle which occupied him almost to the end of his reign. This of course cannot be totally attributed to a religious fervor. Political reasons were also involved. History had taught him that heresies usually divide people and cause troubles to the state. He therefore endeavored by any means to keep the unity of the Christian flock. That he should do in a tactful way and in close co-operation with the Church. «Emperor and Church», says Ostrogorsky, «fought together against the heretical movements which threatened to undermine the organization of both parties». Emperor and Patriarch were both protectors of orthodoxy, but in such proceedings «it was the emperor who took the lead».²² That was quite natural to happen with such a powerful emperor like Alexius. He was apt in arguing with the heretics, and, as Anna says, «he had studied the holy writings more than any body else in order to sharpen his tongue for wrestlings with heretics. He alone commingled arms and arguments, and conquered the barbarians with his arms, and subdued the impious by his arguments».²³

The heresies which appeared in that period were many and their threat to the Church dangerous, especially when the heresiarchs were highly learned men. The Church seemed weak to contend with them and it was left to the emperor, as the only capable one, to carry on the struggle. When in 1082 he returned to Constantinople from his wars against the Normans, «he found the Church in a very perturbed condition» because of the teachings of John Italos, which «had obtained a great vogue and were upsetting the Church». Alexius «as he was a true apostle of the Church... did not neglect his faith»,²⁴ but decided to defend orthodoxy against the heretic Italos. Italos came from Italy: in Constantinople he became a student of Psellus, whom he later succeeded as the leading professor of philosophy in the Higher School of Constantinople and «was styled as the highest, '*Hypatus*' of philosophers».²⁵ Although Anna describes Italos as of a «boorish and barbarous disposition», «unrefined» and «rustic» in speech; a man who had never «tasted the nectar

22. G. Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 331.

23. Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 386.

24. Ibid. V, 8, p. 132.

25. Ibid. p. 133.

of rhetoric», an uncouth Latin, «subject to violent temper» and swift to his opponents, nevertheless, she admits that he was «well versed in dialects»²⁶ and «was the acknowledged master of all philosophy», who had many pupils, since, «the youth flocked to him».²⁷ Italos was the main representative of the Hellenic renaissance in Byzantium at that epoch. He expounded to his students «the doctrines of Plato and Proclus and of the two philosophers, Porphyry and Iamblicus, but especially the rules of Aristotle».²⁸ This intellectual revival resulted in the formation of various anti-Christian ideas and heretical doctrines «with which the emperors, as protectors of the orthodox faith, had to come into collision».²⁹ Anna mentions only a few of the erroneous teachings of Italos, such as metempsychosis, insults of the icons of the saints and unorthodox interpretations concerning the conception of the «ideas».³⁰ But more about his errors is known from the Synodicon,³¹ a list of the errors, of Italos, drawn at the order of the emperor, and from Italos' Trial.³² According to the Synodicon, Italos propagated such Greek theories as the eternal existence of matter, the self-existence of the ideas, the pre-existence of the human soul, metempsychosis and the non-eternity of punishment. He denied the miracles of Christ and attempted to explain the incarnation of Christ through logic.³³

But «the impious dogmas of the Greeks»³⁴ and «the stupid and so-called wisdom of the pagans»³⁵ could not compromise with Christian teaching. The emperor encouraged scholars in their studies but «bade

26. Ibid. V, 8, p. 133-34.

27. Ibid. V, 9, p. 135.

28. Ibid.

29. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, (Madison, 1952), p. 472.

30. Alexiad, V, 9, p. 137.

31. Edited by Th. Uspensky, *Synodicon for the first Sunday in Lent*, Zapiski imperatorskogo novorossiyskogo universiteta, vol. 59 (Odessa, 1893). See also in *Triodion*, the ritual book of the Orthodox Church.

32. Edited by Th. Uspensky, *Trial of John Italos for Heresy*, *Transactions of the Russian Archeological Institute at Constantinople*, (Odessa 1896).

33. See in Oeconomus, *La vie Religieuse dans l'Empire Byzantin au temps des Comnènes et des Anges*, (Paris 1918), pp. 25-28. Also F. Chalandon, *Essai sur le Règne d'Alexis I Comnène*, (Paris, 1900), pp. 314-15. For a thorough analysis of Italos' philosophy and the controversy see in P. E. Stephanou, *Jean Italos, Philosophie et Humaniste*, *Orientalia Christiana analecta*, 134, Roma, 1949. An edition of the works of Italos is done by P. Joannou, *Joannes Italos Questiones quodlibetales* (Ἀπορίαι καὶ Λύσεις), *Studia Patristica et Byzantina*, 4 Heft, 1956.

34. Synodicon, 2nd heading, in Oeconomus, op. cit., p. 25.

35. Ibid. 3rd. heading, p. 26.

them prefer the study of the sacred writings to Greek literature». ³⁶ Therefore «Anathema to those who devote themselves to Greek studies and... adopt the foolish doctrines of the ancients... anathema to those who believe such doctrines... and commend them to others.» ³⁷ Italos had to pay for his partiality towards the heathen wisdom and «for leading many astray.» ³⁸ By the order of the emperor, he was passed to a council which censured him as well as some of his disciples, and found his teachings heretical and misleading. They, therefore, delivered the heretic to the Patriarch Eustratius Garidas for instruction. But strangely enough instead of bringing him back to the right faith, the Patriarch was won «entirely» by Italos who took him to his side. This caused a great scandal among the population of the capital. The emperor was the last hope for subduing the heretic. By his order the above mentioned Synodicon was composed in which the teachings of Italos were set out in eleven chapters and Italos himself was forced to renounce them from the pulpit of St. Sophia. But even so, he persisted in his errors and was finally excommunicated. ³⁹

This of course can be considered an interference of the emperor in religious affairs which belong to the sphere of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But one cannot blame him for his intervention, since he appeared to be more orthodox than the Patriarch himself and his active interest prevented the Church from being divided into heretical sects.

Shortly after the condemnation of Italos, «the notorious Nilus appeared», ⁴⁰ a certain monk whom Anna describes as «uninitiated into Hellenic culture» and unable to comprehend «the deep meaning of the Divine writings», although austere in morals and high in reputation. His error was that he misapprehended the Mystery «of the hypostatical union» of the two natures in Christ and was wrong about how the human nature was made divine; «in his delusion he opined that it had been made divine by nature». ⁴¹ His teachings were actually a continuation of the doctrines of Italos concerning the incarnation of the Word, which were condemned by the first article of the Synodicon. And in that point Nilus might have been influenced by him. ⁴² But Anna relates

36. Alexiad, V, 9, p. 136.

37. Synodicon, 7th heading, in Oeconomos, op. cit., p. 27.

38. Alexiad, V, 9, p. 136.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. X, 1, p. 235.

41. Ibid.

42. Cf. Chalandon, op. cit., p. 317.

Nilus to the sect of the Armenians, many of whom at that time were in the capital and among whom he «acted as an incentive to profanes». ⁴³ Alexius took a personal interest in converting Nilus. «He instructed him clearly in the doctrine of the hypostatical union of the divine and human natures, and set before him the manner of the change and taught him how the assumption of the human nature was made divine by grace from above». But because Nilus «clung tenaciously to his own false doctrine» and that «impious teaching was gaining ground in many minds» of the Armenians, who «were preaching everywhere» the heretical doctrines, the emperor summoned a synod of «the Heads of the Church» with the Patriarch Nicolas Grammaticus, who censured Nilus and his Armenian followers and «imposed on Nilus a perpetual anathema». ⁴⁴

The Armenians, who were transferred to the capital of the empire or to other areas, mainly in Bulgaria, had brought with them their Christological heresies which they propagated among the orthodox people. Alexius, therefore, was greatly concerned in converting them. He dedicated to them a speech in which he expounds the orthodox teaching on Christ, and refutes their false doctrines. ⁴⁵ We know also from a letter of Theophylact of Bulgaria ⁴⁶ that the emperor ordered that the converted Armenians in Bulgaria should be brought to him in order to encourage the abjurations. In another letter, ⁴⁷ the same archbishop congratulates another bishop for the conversion of Armenians in his bishopric and gives him instructions about their acceptance into the orthodox fold. Thus we see that both Church and State endeavored to eliminate the Armenian sects from the empire.

After Nilus or rather about the same time, another heretic appeared; a priest named Blachernites. He was «infected with the mischievous doctrines» of the Enthusiasts, ⁴⁸ and like Nilus he «undermined great houses in the capital and promulgated his impious doctrines». The emperor personally instructed him, but when he realized that he was

43. Alexiad, X, I, p. 236.

44. Ibid.

45. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Ανάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας (1891) new edition (Bruxelles, 1963), pp. 116-23.

46. Migne, P.G. 126, cols. 345-49).

47. Epist. X, in Migne, P.G. vol. 126. col. 520.

48. Anna does not say what the errors of the Blachernites were, but the Enthusiasts are identified by Zigabenus (*Panoplia Dogmatica*, Migne, P.G. vol. 130, col. 1273) with the Massalians who with the Manichaeans were the two parents of the Bogomile heresy. Cf. Alexiad, XV, 8, p. 412.

not going to abandon his «pernicious doctrine, the emperor handed him also over to the Church» which «condemned him and his doctrines to a perpetual anathema».⁴⁹

Anna with a filial pride, brings her narration to an end saying: «In this manner then like a good pilot the emperor had breasted the successive assaults of the waves and washed from himself much worldly brine, and arranged church matters satisfactorily, and after that he was carried on to fresh seas of wars and disturbances».⁵⁰ Indeed Alexius was a capable pilot who knew how to drive his empire victorious against the enemies and, without dominating the Church, to steer its helm in peaceful triumphs over the heretics.

But while it was easy to subdue a heretic by submitting him to the anathema of a council, it was not the same with those heresies which were widely spread among the people and had become a way of life for them. Those had a strong popular appeal; and therefore to be uprooted a personal contact with the people themselves was needed. It was to such a task that Alexius had applied himself in his expedition for the conversion of the Paulicians and the Bogomiles. They both were varying forms of the old Manichaeism. The Paulicians used to live in the Eastern frontiers of the Empire in Asia Minor, but because of their dubious loyalty to the state the emperor John Tzimiskes about the year 975 had to transplant as many of them as he could to Thrace around Philippopolis.⁵¹ This policy intended both to break up their strength and to expose them to orthodox proselytism and to post them «as trustworthy guards» against the Bulgarians.⁵² But in the eleventh century, they increased in numbers and tyrannized over the orthodox Christians of the district.⁵³ Alexius was justifiably annoyed with them and yearned for their conversion. He therefore took this task very seriously. In 1114, while on his campaign against the Comans, he waited to hear about them in Philippopolis and «as the Comans had not yet appeared, he made the secondary purpose of his journey more important than his actual task» and, supported by the Bishop of Nicaea Eustratius,⁵⁴ the Bishop of Phi-

49. Alexiad, X, I, p. 236.

50. Ibid. V, 2, p. 237.

51. G. Cedrenus, vol. II (ed. Bonn.), p. 382; Zonaras, (ed. Bonn), p. 521-22 and Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 385.

52. Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 385.

53. Ibid.

54. Anna describes Eustratius as «a man of wide knowledge of religious and secular literature and pluming himself on dialectics more than those who frequent the

lippopolis and his son-in-law Bryennius, he «began turning the Manichaeans from their brackish religion and instilling into them the sweet doctrines of the Church». ⁵⁵ He spent there for that «apostolic contest» ⁵⁶ the whole spring, summer and part of the fall and by discourse with the Paulicians he converted many of them to the Orthodox belief. ⁵⁷ According to Anna, he brought to God about a hundred a day and the total sum of souls saved was estimated at ten thousand. Those he settled in a new town built near Philippopolis across the river Eurys and granted them lands which he confirmed to their descendants, male and female, for ever. ⁵⁸ But it was difficult for the emperor to convince the three Paulician leaders whom Anna describes as «clever at maintaining their heterodoxy and adamant against all verbal persuasion». He held with them a long course of theological disputations, but «the three stood there sharpening each other's wits, as if they were boar's teeth, intent upon rending the emperor's arguments», and «as he could not convince them at all, he finally wearied of these men's silliness and dispatched them to the Queen City». There, he renewed his arguments with the three men of whom finally Culeon «the more intelligent» was converted while the two others, because they remained obstinate, were cast into prison where they died «in company with their sins alone». ⁵⁹

Stoa and Academy (Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 386). In 1111 he defended the orthodox view in the discussions with the representative of the Pope Peter Chrysolanos about the union of the Churches; (see in B. Stephanides, *Ecclesiastical History*, Athens, 1948, p. 350). However, the same bishop was accused as holding the erroneous theories of John Italos whose student he was, because he used logic and reasoning in matters of religious faith; (see his treatise: 'Ελεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῶν λεγόντων μίαν φύσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐκ λογικῶν καὶ φυσικῶν καὶ θεολογικῶν ἐπιχειρήσεων, ἐξ ὧν δεικνύται ἀναγκαίως ἐκ δύο φύσεων εἶναι τὸν σωτῆρα Χριστὸν μου.....», Α. Δημητράκοπούλου, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, 1866, p. 160) Nicetas Acominatus (Thes. Orth. Fidei, Migne, P.G. 140, col. 136) mentions that Eustratius, in the course of a discussion with an Armenian in Philippopolis and in front of the emperor Alexius Comnenus, emitted unorthodox proposition about the human nature of Christ for which he was deprived of his rank of bishop. But this cannot be proved true, since in the synod (1117) which censured him he retracted his ideas and anathematized them and in the document he submitted to the council he signs as bishop of Nicaea. (See in B. Stephanides, op. cit., p. 389-90).

55. Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 386.

56. Ibid.

57. Zonaras, p. 753-54. Cf. M. Glycas, *Annales*, (ed. Bonn), p. 623.

58. Alexiad, XIV, 9, p. 388.

59. Ibid. pp. 387-89.

Thus the emperor «set up a double trophy, one for a victory over the barbarians by means of arms,⁶⁰ and the other over the heretics by most pious discourses».⁶¹

Alexius' last theological contest was against the Bogomiles. «That was the last and crowning act of the emperor's long labours and successes».⁶² According to Anna, «a very great cloud of heretics arose»⁶³ at that time and the emperor was impatient to exterminate, by the support of the Church, all heresies which were a real threat for both organizations i.e. Church and State. The heresy of the Bogomiles⁶⁴ arose in Bulgaria as a coalescence of the teachings of Paulicians and Massalians.⁶⁵ From Bulgaria Bogomilism came to Byzantium where it gained considerable success: «By this time the fame of the Bogomiles had spread everywhere».⁶⁶ The heresy gained many adherents even into great houses and had affected a very large number».⁶⁷ In Constantinople it had as its leader a certain monk named Basil for whom Zonaras⁶⁸ and Zigabenus⁶⁹ assert that he was also a doctor (ἱεργός). That Basil the «Satanael's arch-priest», Anna narrates, «was brought to light, in monk's habit, with a withered countenance, clean shaven and tall of stature». He «was very wily in handling the impiety of the Bogomiles; he

60. His army had driven the Comans beyond the Danube, (Alexiad, XIV, 9, p. 387).

61. Alexiad, XIV, 9, p. 387.

62. Alexiad, XV, 10, p. 418. For the date of the Bogomiles' persecution we follow here Anna who places it at the end of Alexius' reign which should be the year 1118. This date has been accepted by some historians like F. Chalandon, (op. cit. p. 319), and B. Stephanides (op. cit., p. 387); the latter gives the year 1119 (?). However the fact that Patriarch at that time was Nicolas the Grammarian who held office from 1084-1111 (see C. D. Cobham, *The Patriarchs of Constantinople*, Cambridge, 1911, p. 103; that work is a summary of the work of M. I. Gedeon, *Πατριάρχαι Πίνακες*, Constantinople, 1891), and that the emperor because of his illness in his last year could not carry on a trial which, according to Anna's account, must have lasted several months, are convincing that it took place at an earlier date, probably between 1109 and 1111. See more about that in D. Obolensky *The Bogomiles*, (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 275-76.

63. Alexiad. XV, 8, p. 412.

64. The name is Bulgarian and means «Θεόφιλοι» (B. Stephanides, op. cit., p. 386).

65. Alexiad, XV, 8, p. 412.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid. XV, 9, p. 415.

68. Zonaras, op. cit., p. 743.

69. *Panoplia Dogmatica*, Migne, P.G. vol. 130. col. 1289.

had twelve disciples whom he called 'apostles' and also dragged about with him some female disciples, wretched women of loose habits» with whom he «dissipated his wickedness everywhere». ⁷⁰ The emperor, after he had rid himself from the wars, «turned his attention to more spiritual matters.» ⁷¹ And because «the evil attacked many souls like fire, and the emperor's soul could not brook it», he began to investigate the heresy. ⁷² Accordingly, he summoned Basil to the palace where he received him in honor and let him share his table. And then pretending that he was interested in his teaching and that he desired to become his disciple, he deceived Basil, who thus gave a full exposition of his faith. Immediately then, the curtain separating the next room was drawn and there appeared a secretary who had written down Basil's doctrines, the senate, soldiers and ecclesiastics with the Patriarch Nicolas who had heard the heresiarch's confession. Consequently, he was imprisoned. The emperor «frequently exhorted him to forswear his impiety, but all the emperor's exhortations left him unchanged». At last and because the heretic remained obdurate a decision was taken by the synod and the Patriarch that he should be burnt. And as the emperor was of the same opinion Basil was burnt at the stake in the Hippodrome. As for his followers, those who denied the heresy were set free, while the others were cast into prison where «after pining away for a long time died in their impiety». ⁷³

Finally and in order to prevent any revival of heresies, Alexius commissioned a well learned monk Euthymius Zigabenus «who was the authority on ecclesiastical dogma» to expound all the heresies with the orthodox refutations of them. ⁷⁴ The treatise of Zigabenus, which appeared under the title *Panoplia Dogmatica of the Orthodox Faith*, ⁷⁵ was to serve as the arsenal of the scientific proofs fitted to refute the arguments of the heretics and to make their emptiness seen.

Thus the illustrious emperor Alexius Comnenus defended Orthodoxy with zeal in all his life. And while in his struggles against the heretics the imperial dignity lent him a privileged position, he never ignored the Church. On the contrary, he considered her as his collabora-

70. Alexiad, XV, 8, p. 412.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid. XV, 8-10, pp. 412-19; Zonaras, p. 743-44.

74. Alexiad, XV, 9, p. 415.

75. Migne. P.G. vol. 130, cols. 9-1362.

tor and in co-operation they both fought against the enemies of the orthodox faith. He «could always fall back on the help of ecclesiastical authority, and on the whole, there was little division of opinion concerning the religious policy».⁷⁶

The question of the relations between the two, Eastern and Western, Churches, did not leave Alexius indifferent. Forced by the need of support from the Pope in his policy in the Western part of the empire, or in his words «πρὸς τὸ τῆς εἰρήνης καλὸν»⁷⁷ he held out to him the hand of reconciliation. In 1089, he summoned in Constantinople the church synod, in which the Patriarch of Antioch was also present, and interpreting to them the desire of the Pope Urban II he suggested that his name should be put again in the diptychs and be mentioned in the holy services. After this was done, the differences separating the two churches should have been examined. But the council refused to commit itself to the emperor's will, and instead they commended another proposal to which the emperor had to conform. The Pope should first send to the Church of Constantinople an exposition of his faith «ἐκθεσιν τῆς ἐαυτοῦ πίστεως» and after it was found that his faith to the teachings of the Church remained unchangeable they should insert his name in the diptychs «κατ' οἰκονομίαν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν» and then proceed to clarify in a general council the disputed matters according to the holy canons. Because of the crucial situation of the empire and the conflicts of the Pope with an elected antipope the above decision was not brought into effect. However, the fact remains that the emperor, even under the pressure of political necessities, did not overrule the synod but deigned to act, in accordance with that.⁷⁸

An examination of the measures which Alexius I promulgated regarding the monastic properties as well as the organization of the Church, will also help in elucidating his attitude towards the Church.

Alexius, either because he wanted to support the weak economy of the state or to reward his followers, resorted to the use of charisticium,

76. J. M. Hussey, *Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire 867-1185*, (Oxford, 1937), p. 97.

77. See in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 28 (1928), p. 60, Here the Greek text of Alexius' document and other three texts related to the synod of 1089 are published by W. Holtzmann.

78. Ibid. pp. 61-62.

79. For a thorough analysis of the facts pertaining to the synod of 1089 see the interesting article of W. Holtzmann: «Die Unionsverhandlungen zwischen Kaiser Alexios I, und Papst Urban II, im Jahre 1089», *ibid.* pp. 38-59.

which was the granting of monastic properties to the care of laymen. This practice was not an invention of his own; long ago emperors or ecclesiastical authorities had given as grants monastic houses to laymen, but for the purpose of their restotation and «ἐπὶ φιλοκαλία καὶ καλλιεργείᾳ καὶ ψυχικῇ ὠφελείᾳ».⁸⁰ But Alexius employed the method as a kind of benefice.⁸¹ He therefore met with a strong opposition. The main protest came from John, the Patriarch of Antioch who, deploring the secularization of the monasteries, said that now those (the monasteries) which were havens for those who are sailing in the sea of this life have become a general shipwreck.⁸² However, the system of charisticium had also its good aspect since «it afforded an outlet for monastic economic activity, which was otherwise closely restricted by the inalienability of church property».⁸³ Therefore, not only the caustic homily of the Patriarch of Antioch was later disapproved by such a canonist as Theodore of Balsamon,⁸⁴ but, moreover, the system found support and approval by several ecclesiastics of repute and standing, such as the Bishop of Thessalonica, Eustathius.⁸⁵

That Alexius did not hold an anti-monastic policy can be substantiated from the fact that he supported the strictly ascetic monasteries of Mt. Athos and exempted them from any taxation or other vexation: «The civil officials had nothing to do with the Holy Mountain».⁸⁶ The same emperor proved to be protector and benefactor of the monasteries. He had in esteem the monks because they prayed to God for the whole world and for his basileia⁸⁷ and was prompt to satisfy their petitions «ὅταν καὶ ὄντα σωτηριώδη φαίνονται ταῦτα (τὰ αἰτήματα) καὶ τὸν δρόμον αὐτῶν τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν βελτιοῦντα καὶ τονώτερον ἐργαζόμενα».⁸⁸ One of the monks who was granted the most was Christodulos. To him the emperor granted the whole island of Patmos for the purpose of establishing there an «αὐτοδέσποτον» monastery. The island and the

80. John, the Patriarch of Antioch *Oratio de disciplina monastica et de monasteriis laicis non tradendis* Migne, P.G. vol. 132. col. 1129.

81. See in Chalandon, op. cit., p. 283.

82. Migne, P.G. 132, 1133.

83. Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 330.

84. Migne, P.G. vol. 137, col. 957.

85. Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 331 f2.

86. P. Uspensky, *The Christian Orient, Athos*, III (I) 226,27.

87. F. Miklosich et I. Muller, *Acta et Diplomata*, vol. VI, p. 26.

88. Ibid. p. 24.

monastery were exempted from any taxation for ever.⁸⁹ The emperor even offered to the same monastery a ship for its transportational needs.⁹⁰

The supervision of all monasteries, *patriarchica*, *basilica* and *auto-despota*, was entrusted to the Patriarch. He had the right to intervene in them for the correction of faults of the soul. He was also ascribed with the responsibility of censuring the administration of monasteries by the charisticarioi and, in case he found that the latter had neglected or caused any damages to them, to compel them for their restoration.⁹¹

The monasteries were supposed to help those who were in need and particularly the bishops of the Eastern provinces who had lost their bishoprics.⁹² For them a special care was taken by Alexius. By his novel No. 33 of the year 1094, he determined that because the bishops elected for the Eastern provinces, which were under hostile occupation, could not go there, they, while remaining in Constantinople, should keep for their support the rights they had before their promotion when they were holding different offices in fraternities (*ἀδελφᾶτα*), monasteries or in the Patriarchate.⁹³

Interested in the well being of the bishops, the emperor repeated the novel of Isaacios Comnenus about the incomes the bishops should have from the villages and from those they ordained in lower ranks of clergy,⁹⁴ as well as a non-extant novel of Constantine Monomachus about the payment the bishops should take from those who were married.⁹⁵

In regulating Church affairs, the emperor was under the restrictions of the holy canons. It was his right to promote the bishoprics to the rank of Archbishoprics and Metropoleis; but since Alexius had to conform with the precepts of the holy canons and fearing that from ignorance he might transgress any of them, he left the matter to the Patriarch. The latter should make the proper suggestion to the emperor,

89. Ibid. pp. 44-48 and p. 53. Also in C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, Jus, pp. 315-19.

90. Miklosich et Muller, op. cit. p. 51-52.

91. Jus. p. 347-48.

92. Ibid. p. 348.

93. Ibid. p. 325-26. The same novel is mentioned by Theodore Balsamon, Migne, P.G. vol. 138, col. 1032.

94. See above p. 358.

95. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, Jus, op. cit., p. 311-12.

explain to him the canons and then the emperor should offer the honor of promotion.⁹⁶

The powerful State ought to protect the Church. The emperor therefore commands the state administrators in the provinces to help the bishops in their duties and to take care that all the subjects of the empire observe the Christian state.⁹⁷

Sometimes the Church appealed to the emperor for the settlement of controversies which arose within it. As earlier with the syncelloi, something similar happened in the time of Alexius with the chartophylax of the Patriarch. He was one of the new officials, the *exocatacoiloi*, of the patriarchate (*megas oikonomos*, *megas sacellarios*, *megas skeuophylax*, *sacellios* and *chartophylax*) who took over the duties of the old priest-syncelloi, which the metropolitans syncelloi, who from the tenth century had replaced them, could not carry on. The chartophylax, although a deacon, used in all synods or ceremonies either in the Church or out of it, to be seated in front of all the bishops. The justification of this was that he considered to be like «the mouth, the lips and the hands of the Patriarch.»⁹⁸ But that distinction displeased the bishops and consequently caused several scandals and a conflict between them and the chartophylax.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the Patriarch and the synod had to submit their decision «ὁροθεσία» about that honorary position of the chartophylax to the emperor for its ratification. The emperor approved the «ὁροθεσία» and declared that the chartophylax rightly occupied that position because he represented the Patriarch, and the honor given to him, like in the icons, passed to the prototype, namely to the Patriarch «εἰς τὸν πνευματικὸν νυμφίον, τὸν περιφανῶς νυμφοστόλουμενον πατριάρχην Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ οἰκουμενικόν».¹⁰¹

Finally we have to add that Alexius did not confine his interest only to dogma and regulations of the Church, but he also expressed a deep concern for the promotion of a higher standard of discipline and conduct among the clergy and the people. He considered himself equally responsible to the Patriarch in raising the morals of the clergy

96. Ibid. p. 313-14.

97. Ibid. p. 325.

98. See above p. 10.

99. Theodore Balsamon Migne, P.G. vol. 138 col. 1044.

100. Ibid.

101. Πρόσταγμα τοῦ αἰοιδίμου Βασιλέως κυροῦ Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ (Aut 1094), edited by J. Nicole, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 3 (1894), pp. 18-20. Cf. Theod. Balsamon, P. G. v. 138, cols. 1044-1048.

and through them of the people. Do not consider me foolish for my interest for the Church», he writes to the Patriarch and the synod. For «my heart suffers because of the danger seen in the Church.»¹⁰² We both, the basileus and the bishops, will give word to God if we deliver Christians to the devil. A great task therefore is before the Church. From now on only men qualified both in moral conduct and education should be ordained or promoted to the higher ranks of the priesthood. And they shall undertake the responsibility of teaching to the people the true faith and the pious life. This is an urgent task which cannot be postponed. That was the commitment of the churchmen and the emperor had to remind that to them. In their work they will have the advise and help of the Patriarch and if it is needed of the emperor himself or his deputies, who will be ready for any assistance.¹⁰³

We both, «the basileus and bishops, are responsible before God». That was the conviction of Alexius, which directed all his activities in Church matters. We attempted to trace here Alexius' policy towards the Church throughout his long reign. On the basis of the material we have examined, we are convinced that Alexius, although a strong ruler endowed with exceptional abilities and gifts, did not disregard the Church. On the contrary, he remained her faithful and devoted son, and was equally concerned for her and the state. The religious unity of his subjects and the well-being of the Church were as equally significant for him as were the freedom and the well-being of the empire. Church and State were two conceptions which in his mind could not be conceived apart from each other. He felt bound to protect both parties and to that end he dedicated his long reign. Therefore the somewhat exaggerated statement of Anna that her father, like Constantine the Great, might be called isapostolos and considered as the thirteenth Apostle or at least that he might be placed «second to Constantine as Apostle and Emperor»,¹⁰⁴ is not groundless. Considering the Church policy of such an emperor one not only finds it blameless, but can justifiably say that were the Church always to be under such strong protection, she undoubtedly would have achieved more in her spiritual work.

The example of Alexius I Comnenus is perhaps a significant proof that the theory about caesaropapism as the prevailing conception in Byzantium cannot stand. In the Byzantine Empire there was only a

102. C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus*, op. cit. p. 351.

103. Ibid. pp. 351-59.

104. Alexiad, XIV, 8, p. 386.

close and harmonious co-operation between Church and State. These two factors were bound together and one supplemented the power of the other. If at times, various emperors neglected the Church, their cases must be considered as exceptions to a general rule, which ceased to exist with their perpetrators. Generally, the conception which prevailed throughout Byzantine History was the one which was articulated by the emperor Leo VI: namely that the emperor and the Patriarch were the greatest and most necessary parts in the polity «*politeia*», and that «the peace and felicity of subjects in body and soul depended upon the agreement and concord of the kingship and priesthood in all things.»¹⁰⁵

105. Epanagoge, 3rd title, in C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus*, vol. II, p. 242.