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*Kyrillos of Alexandria's Apologia (431) to Emperor Theodosius II:  
Introduction, Translation and a Note on Political Theory*



The Nestorian controversy, which raged throughout the Christian *oecumene* for well on thirty years in the mid-fifth century, and which cleared up some as yet outstanding doctrinal 'misconceptions' surrounding the nature of Christ, generated a plethora of documents attesting to the *minutiae* of the events, actions, decisions, motivations and persons involved. The salient facts and the progression of the controversy have thus been well established and authoritatively described in several studies carried out over the twentieth century<sup>1</sup>.

By way of example, the documentation available for the Council of Ephesus (431) has led to the thorough description of those events and their significance<sup>2</sup>. Some of the documents emanating from the Council and its aftermath however remain peripheral and have not yet been exploited fully for the additional information they provide. One case in point is that of Kyrillos' *Apologia* to emperor Theodosius II, written immediately after the Council, which previously has never come up for detailed scrutiny and exploitation<sup>3</sup>.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to provide a translation of Kyrillos' *Apologia* and some notes and comments, intended to facilitate the utilisation of

1. See for example these studies: L.R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, Oxford, 1983 (= Wickham, *Select Letters*) (which, in addition to the very convenient publication of important texts with translations, provide an excellent yet succinct historical and theological background notes to the Council of Ephesus and Kyrillos' role in that meeting.); John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York & Köln, 1994 (= McGuckin, *Controversy*) (the recent authoritative historical account of the Ephesus crisis, the opposing christological forces at work in Christianity, and the translation of some sixteen of the most important letters and other documents bearing witness as to the gist of the Nestorian controversy.), and John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: On the Unity of Christ*, St Vladimir's Press, Crestwood, 1995 (McGuckin, *Unity*). Taken together, these works provide a detailed and balanced picture of events. McGuckin's works also provide authoritative and highly useful bibliographies.

2. McGuckin, *Controversy*, p. 2 assesses the situation thus: "The records of the great christological controversy, in which Cyril was a leading protagonist after 429, and the voluminous correspondence it stimulated, have left the historian with an abundance of detailed sources for the reconstruction of Cyril's activities after this date. His earlier life is less well documented, indeed the dates only tend to become clear after 403".

3. The Cyrilli Apologeticus ad Theodosium, document no. 118 in the *Collectio Vaticana* published in Eduard Schwartz's, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (De Gruyter, Berlin & Leipzig, 1927) (=ACO) T. I, vol. I, pars iii, pp. 75-90. Quasten (in his *Patrology*), McGuckin and Wickham both simply make mention of the document without discussing its content.

the original as a historical source.

### *Kyrrillos of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy*

In the face of McGuckin's relatively recent excellent work on Kyrillos, it is appropriate to summarize here only the salient features of the bishop's career and works, and of the circumstances surrounding the production of Kyrillos' apology<sup>4</sup>. Kyrillos' youth and early career was all spent in Alexandria, where he was born sometime between 375 and 380. His uncle Theophilus was his predecessor as bishop, a factor which ensured for him a thoroughly Christian education and which marked him for life with the clear literary influences of writers such as Athanasius and of the Bible and orthodox theology<sup>5</sup>. After succeeding to the Episcopal throne of Alexandria in 412, the early period of his tenure distinguishes itself by the political turbulence experienced in a city and country in which a sizeable Jewish population, pagan Greeks, Christian Greeks and Egyptian natives all were battling to gain control of local politics and local cultural dominance; his own role in this turmoil may be characterised as 'ruthless', even 'harsh'<sup>6</sup>.

When Nestorius, a bishop from Syria, was appointed to the see of Constantinople, and started disseminating alternative views on the nature of Christ and of the Theotokos, Kyrillos became inextricably embroiled with the ensuing second great Christological controversy. The Nestorian controversy culminated at the Council of Ephesus, which was convoked in 431 by Theodosius and which led to the condemnation of Nestorius. He is hailed, together with Athanasius, as one of the renowned defenders of the deity of Christ and of the Holy Virgin's instrumental role.

### *Emperor Theodosius II*

Theodosius II succeeded to the imperial throne of the eastern part of the

4. Other excellent works cover Kyrillos' career and context admirably. See F.W. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. II, xxxix, (New York 1983) pp. 116-142 (= Quasten, *Patrology*), and L.R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, E.T. (Oxford University Press 1983) (Wickham, *Select Letters*).

5. Wickham, *Select Letters*, pp. xii-xvi.

6. Quasten, *Patrology*, p. 117.

Roman Empire in 408, on the death of Arcadius, at the age of seven<sup>7</sup>. The regent Anthemius ruled the empire on Theodosius' behalf for some time, before his sister, Aelia Pulcheria, was proclaimed *Augusta* and assumed the regency. Pulcheria effectively dominated the thirteen-year-old emperor and, as a devout and committed Christian, disposed over many contacts in the Church, and she arranged for a suitable bride for Theodosius in 421. On her baptism the bride assumed the name of Aelia Eudocia, and was shortly thereafter also proclaimed *Augusta*. For some time Theodosius' reign was still dominated by the two women in his life. The establishment of the first Chairs for Latin and Greek philology, philosophy, rhetorics and law in Constantinople belongs to his reign, as well as the monumental Latin compilation of the Code of Laws, published in 438, are the outstanding achievements of his rule. He also gained a reputation as a competent amateur theologian and he amassed a considerable theological library in Constantinople – indeed appropriate for an emperor standing close to the centre of the controversies raging in his time.

Through her growing power over Theodosius, the *Augusta* Augusta Pulcheria gained considerable political influence; she also professed virginity until eternity, and claimed the patronage of the Virgin Mary, in carving her ambitious political career<sup>8</sup>. For some time Theodosius increasingly tried to break free from Pulcheria's dominating influence, and this struggle contributed in no small respect to sensibilities around the Nestorian controversy.

Theodosius, too, originally was caught up in the sway of Nestorius' influence on the clergy. When Kyrillos set out to address the Syrian bishop's errors, he sent the treatise *De Recta Fide* directly to Theodosius II, but also two separate treatises to the two *Augustae* (*Ad Reginas*)<sup>9</sup>. While the treatise contributed substantially to the developing Christological debate, the *entendre* implied in the submission of separate treatises wasn't lost on the emperor and he probably protested as much in his later reply to Kyrillos<sup>10</sup>.

7. See the detailed discussion of Theodosius II's rule in Michael Grant, *The Roman Emperors: A Biographical Guide to the Rulers of Imperial Rome 31BC–AD 476*, Phoenix (Orion Books), London 1997, pp. 288-292.

8. McGuckin, *Controversy*, pp. 24-25.

9. McGuckin, *Controversy*, ch. 6.

10. McGuckin, *Controversy*, p. 40, and p. 47. See Kyrillos' explanation (and rationalization!) in the *Apologia* here below, ll. 54-60.

Theodosius II was, in the event, the commissioning agent of the Council of Ephesus; he decreed<sup>11</sup> that the Council was to take place with the sole view to discuss (and solve) the Christological problem.

*Kyrillos, the Nestorian Controversy and Emperor Theodosius*

Nestorius, a product of the theological school at Antioch, asserted in his sermons in Constantinople that there are two personages in Christ, a divine one dwelling in a human one, Jesus, and that the Blessed Virgin could therefore not be called the Theotokos, the Mother of God. Kyrillos, who enjoyed good standing in the broader monastic movement, addressed these issues upon the solicitation of the monks by 429, first in a paschal letter and then in an encyclical to the monks of Egypt (both enjoyed much wider circulation than Egypt alone)<sup>12</sup>.

The confrontation between the antagonist parties grew and it soon implicated the theological schools of Alexandria and Constantinople, as well as Pope Celestine of Rome. The only way out of the impasse that was potentially threatening for the unity of the Church was the convocation of a general council (upon the request of Nestorius). Emperor Theodosius II called all metropolitans and bishops of the Empire to a synod to be held at Ephesus over the Pentecost of 431. Events at this synod reverberated throughout the orthodox world and it came to be known as the Third Ecumenical Council.

As was almost customary at meetings of such contentious, and therefore of virtually political, nature, a great amount of wrangling took place before the meeting properly got under way. As papal delegate (nominated by Celestine), Kyrillos presided over the first plenary session of the Council. Nestorius was deposed and excommunicated and Kyrillos' twelve doctrinal test-statements, or *anathema*, were upheld. In effect this meant the condemnation of Nestorian doctrine, the confirmation of the traditional understanding of Christology and official recognition of the title of the Theotokos<sup>13</sup>. Complications followed: a

11. The imperial *Sacra*, directed at all the Metropolitans, Archbishops and Patriarchs of the Church, was issued on November 19th, 430; the Council was scheduled to be opened on June 7th, 431 (McGuckin, *Controversy*, p. 54).

12. Quasten, *Patrology*, pp. 117-118.

13. See Kyrillos' exposition of the situation here below in the *Apologia*, sections number (11) - (13).

significantly sizeable delegation from Syria, all Nestorian supporters, arrived a few days late for the meeting and called for a counter-synod in anger, believing that they could alter the course of decisions and events. Its meeting, with a quorum of 43 bishops, called for the deposition of Cyril, but in vain<sup>14</sup>. On the appeal of both sides to the emperor, Theodosius decided to send an imperial delegate to conduct an on-the-spot investigation. His recommendations led Theodosius II to uphold the deposition of both Kyrillos and Nestorius, and to drive both into exile. The some 200 bishops who supported Kyrillos refused to acquiesce in this decision and they dispatched the imperial treasurer, the strong-man sent to enforce the judgement, back to Constantinople, to which the tumultuous resistance to the imperial decision had already spread.

Theodosius then summoned the leading members of both parties to debate the issues involved in his presence in Chalcedon, a suburb of the city. Slowly but surely the emperor was persuaded by the mounting counter-offensive of Kyrillos' faction. Theodosius eventually had to acknowledge that the majority council held in Ephesus possessed the full force of imperial law; nothing remained but to give full effect to the decision of the majority council<sup>15</sup>. Theodosius' summons to Kyrillos' party to attend the consecration of Maximianus, Nestorius' successor to the Episcopal see of Constantinople, clearly signals the final acceptance of realities<sup>16</sup>.

#### *Kyrillos to Theodosius II from Alexandria*

Having attained success, Kyrillos left Ephesus in the autumn of 431 and returned to his see of Alexandria. He was destined for some years to continue his battle to see through the acceptance and implementation of the decisions reached at the Council of Ephesus; more pressing, however, was the matter of placating emperor Theodosius II on a number of scores. He had to defend his beliefs before the emperor in a way, which, contrary as his beliefs were to Theodosius' at that

14. McGuckin, *Unity*.

15. McGuckin, *Unity*, pp. 26-27.

16. Wickham, *Select Letters*, pp. xxiv-xxv. Theodosius' underwriting of the Council's proceedings and of the deposition of Nestorius is supplied in his document of summons, contained in E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (ACO)* t. I, volumen I, pars 3, De Gruyter (Berlin-Leipzig 1927), no. 109, p. 67.

stage, simultaneously underlined his loyalty to the emperor, and justified his actions at Ephesus. The *Apology* also explains to the emperor K.'s departure from Ephesus and, importantly, clears the monk Victor of the current suspicions that he intended laying charges against Kyrillos<sup>17</sup>.

### *Provenance*

The text of the letter, which presently appears as the *Apologia* in Schwartz's ACO I, i, iii, is an edition of a document transmitted in a row of others (81-119) in the shorter *recensio* of the Vatican collection of manuscripts. The letter also occurs in the *Collectio Atheniensis*, the twelfth century codex, number 9, in the collection of manuscripts of the Athens Society for Christian Archaeology, and in the eleventh century *Codex Coislinianus* in Paris<sup>18</sup>.

The document originally emanated from the ecclesiastical chancery of the patriarchate of Alexandria. McGuckin<sup>19</sup> described the appointment of the Alexandrian priest Peter as chief legal notary of the conciliar proceedings at Ephesus in 431. It is thanks to the meticulous attention and labours of Peter and the other members of the chancery of Alexandria that we today possess the large body of texts attesting to these events. Indeed, the provenance of the collection of documents also bespeak their Alexandrian bias (probably largely in their selection for preservation), but need not cast their substantial accuracy into doubt. It was important for Kyrillos and the whole Church to have legally sound documents at their disposal at a time when the aftermath of many church meetings was wont to degenerate into endless bickering over precise meanings and nuances<sup>20</sup>. The accurate recording of the minutes of meetings therefore was imperative, even if, as McGuckin points out:<sup>21</sup>

17. Wickham, *Ibidem*. The actual date of Maximianus' consecration (25 October 431) is supplied by Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 7, 37 ad fin.

18. ACO, I, 1, iii, p. 2.

19. McGuckin, *Controversy*, p. 75, 76 and 77.

20. Wickham, *Select Letters*, pp. xlv-xlv, explains that the Council of Ephesus is the first general council whose minutes and accompanying papers survive, and that these records were not neutral documents. Kyrillos was personally responsible for circulating an edited version of the minutes widely, of which the *Collectio Vaticana* forms an important (i.e. the fullest) part.

21. *Ibidem*.



"... They need care in the reading for what they do not say, more than for any doubt over what they do say".

### *Language & Style*

Kyrrillus' Atticising language and style of writing may broadly be characterised as 'provincial' by nature, in the sense that it resembles the affected language and style of someone removed some distance from the epicentre of the perceived vital and elegant usage of his language of choice, and whose colloquial idiolect is experienced by the reader, or listener, to be markedly at variance with, and inferior to, the variant of the language used at the trend-setting epicentre. It is the language and style of someone from the provinces aiming to impress the reader. The Atticising style was, of course, regarded then with considerable more benevolence than now<sup>22</sup>.

Wickham discusses Kyrrillos' style in apposition to his upbringing and education<sup>23</sup>, characterizing it as "distinctive in its abundance of rare words, archaising forms and regularly repeated epithets", which "shows... that he aspired to an elegance at home in the ancient Alexandrine tradition of fine writing"<sup>24</sup>. For the modern eye, his style possesses a studied ugliness, as Wickham observes.

Even though he occasionally quotes from Homer and employs the ancients' stylistic forms, Kyrrillos was better versed in the works of his Christian forebears. He had a thorough knowledge of the Bible, of the works of his predecessor Athanasios, and of the broader orthodox theology, and these virtues clearly shine through his complex argumentations.

22. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, Vol. I, CH Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (München 1978) (=Hunger, *Profane Literatur*) pp. 214-215.

23. Wickham, *Select Letters*.

24. Wickham, *ibid.*, cites (in footnote 6) the special studies carried out by Vaccari and others, on these aspects. In fact, in translating Kyrrillos' writings, one is constrained to consult both the LSJ, and Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon* simultaneously, often to very limited effect. Kyrrillos certainly uses many archaising forms but mostly fills them with contemporary (and thus: anachronistic) meaning. McGuckin, *Controversy*, p. 4, confirms the experience in his observation that "Cyril's written style has an abundance of rare forms and stylisations which are typically Alexandrian. ... Cyril's Greek is certainly dense and difficult, but the difficulty is as often related to the subtlety and compactness of his thought, as it is to the heavy loads he frequently places on his syntax, and on his preference for Atticising forms".

### *Termini ante postquemque*

The origin of the *Apologia* to Theodosius may firmly be assigned to the immediate period following Kyrillos' return to Alexandria from Ephesus. From Socrates' *Historia Ecclesiastica* (7, 37 ad fin.), it is clear that Kyrillos left Ephesus before the consecration of Maximianus as Nestorius' successor to the see of Constantinople on 25 October of the very same year; on the Saturday of that week (i.e. on 31 October), Kyrillos is reported to have entered Alexandria to a personal ovation<sup>25</sup>. The date of 31 October 431 therefore has to be regarded as the firm terminus post quem for the writing of the letter.

However, it appears that no firm *terminus ante quem* may be established for the composition of the *Apologia*. From the contents of Kyrillos' *Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten*<sup>26</sup>, and on the basis of its very clear conceptualisation of the crucial doctrinal points, it may be deduced that the events of the Council lie in the recent past. Another letter by Kyrillos (directed at Acacius of Beroea), which McGuckin places at the beginning of the year 432<sup>27</sup>, confirms for us that the *Apologia* stems from the turn of the year 431/432.

### *Nature and Structure of Kyrillos' Apology*

The inscription to Kyrillos' letter, attested to by the full manuscript tradition and probably added by the chancery of Alexandria, describes it as a λόγος ἀπολογητικός, an apologetic argumentation, directed at the Emperor Theodosius II<sup>28</sup>.

25. ACO 1,1,3 (p. 67) contains the summons. See no. 109, ll. 1-9. Schwartz remarks, in the apparatus criticus to line 9, that, in the Collectio Vaticana, the following was added: "... ingressus autem est Cyrillus episcopus Alexandriae Athyr tertia et susceptum eum civitas cum multa excellentia et gloria...". In the margin, he dates the event, on the basis of the reference, to 31 October, 431.

26. Translation of the extant Greek fragments given in McGuckin, *Controversy*, chapter 5, pp. 294-336; his footnote 1 [on p. 294] discloses some interesting points (with reference to M. Richard, "Le Pape Leon le Grand et les Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti de S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie", *RSR* 40 (1952) pp. 116-128): the Latin version of the Scholia (used by Pope Leo) came from Cyril himself and was prepared by Alexandria for the benefit of the Roman chancery. The only complete extant version today is the Latin version.

27. McGuckin, *ibid.*, p. 336, which cites the Latin version in the PG, and the Greek version contained in ACO 1.1.7, pp. 147-156.

28. ACO I.1.3 no.118, l. 25.

The heading in fact bespeaks the close association felt at the time between epistolary art and various forms of rhetorical exercises: the highly stylised contents of the argument have been cast into letter form.

Kyrillos' letter constitutes an *official* letter, originating out of the specific practical situation of the events of the Council of Ephesus, and directed at an official, in this case, the emperor, to explain those events and certain decisions reached<sup>29</sup>. The letter was clearly intended to be read out loud at court, hence, too, the many rhetorical devices it employs in the form of extended citations from scripture<sup>30</sup>. The public reading of such documents provided what Hunger describes as a piece of θέατρον<sup>31</sup>, a public hearing and, as it were, dramatization of the important issues of the day – a manifestation of particular relevance and importance for doctrinal controversies.

The letter is structured to contain an *address*, an extended *introduction* of the topic of the letter (i.e. the *prooimion*) (which probably contains the core of the matters raised for the reader in the letter)<sup>32</sup>, and a final greeting and conclusion.

#### Summary of contents:

(Summary done on the basis of section-division and numbering of Schwartz's text [ACO])

- (1) Address<sup>33</sup>, immediate procession to Prooimion: God is the supreme power, one above all earthly powers, which deals with sins and transgressions.
- (2) God should not remember the person's transgressions, especially as he is the God of mercy.
- (3) In imitation of God and Christ, the earthly emperor enjoys power over all

29. See the discussion on Byzantine (and, by implication, on Early Christian) epistolography in Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, pp. 199-233, with a full bibliography on pp. 233-239. For his typology see pp. 203-207.

30. Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, pp. 209-210.

31. Hunger, *ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

32. Hunger, *ibid.*, pp. 216-218.

33. Following the model τῷ θεῷ χαίρειν which had become customary in early Christian times (Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, p. 216), reflecting the true Christian humility and respect of the author, especially to the emperor.

earthlings and should extend peace and tranquillity on earth.

- (4) The emperor is requested to heal traumatised Christianity according to his own perspectives.
- (5) The emperor and the Augustae should affirm and protect the true believers in Christ, the true Lord, as the nation of God.
- (6) The clergy believing in Christ as God have been appointed as scout and guardian for the true faith.
- (7) Every member of the true clergy shall forewarn his congregation of the injustices committed against the faith.
- (8) Satan took possession of one of the clergy to do battle against our Saviour, Christ, thus placing the true faith under strain.
- (9) The emperor's faith has remained unshaken throughout the recent trials and tribulations and will remain so. There is reason for confidence that his stable faith will bring peace to the congregations, will withstand the onslaught of Satan and will discern the mysteries of the true faith clearly.
- (10) God has provided us with the true doctrine in his Scriptures and the truth is a comrade-in-arms to those battling heresy.
- (11) As in the case of the clergy experiencing the Arian problem, this generation of clergy have decided to take up the struggle against the present heresy, and no longer to keep quiet. They are raising their protests with the present emperors, who are God-fearing and equipped to deal with the matter.
- (12) Despite Nestorius' claims that he enjoys the support of imperial government, Kyrillos decided to oppose him for his heretical views.
- (13) Nestorius behaved abominably at the Council of Ephesus, by attempting to sabotage the proceedings. However, he was countered by the expertise and knowledge of the many holy bishops present.
- (14) The majority of bishops present in Ephesus were imbued with a love for Christ and their credentials were impeccable.
- (15) It was very necessary that the emperor drive the heresy from the Church, by first cleansing the impurity.
- (16) Just as king Hezekiah before him, emperor Theodosius used the clergy to cleanse God's Church before stopping the heretic himself.
- (17) Indeed, the Holy Synod joined in battle against the heresy and its henchmen, but considerable confusion was sown in ecclesiastical ranks.
- (18) Thus the bishop of Ephesus and others were caught up in their confused loyalties to Nestorius. But the Synod unequivocally judged in favour of

Orthodox tradition and confirmed the faith. And the emperor then underwrote these decisions.

- (19) The bishop, John of Antioch, joined the Synod and brought out a discordant vote after mobilizing Nestorius' supporters. Kyrillos and the bishop of Ephesus were especially insulted by John's false accusations.
- (20) – (21) The good attitude of persons even in Nestorius' retinue is illustrated by the citation of a letter from a well-disposed priest travelling with Bishop John of Antioch warning against deception and lies against persons involved in the debate.
- (22) The sincerity and appropriateness of the conduct of the Bishop of Antioch is queried.
- (23) John of Antioch's counter-letter to the emperor provoked another letter of refutation from Kyrillos, in which he disavowed Apollinarius and Eunomius. John was thoroughly trounced at the Council-meeting. The emperor has seen the minutes of Council and could bring out an informed judgement on matters.
- (24) Nestorius' undoing has been of his own making: he was invited to refrain from making damaging statements.
- (25) The bona fides of the priests supporting Nestorius in the council have to be queried and Nestorius' motives in the manipulation of the clergy questioned.
- (26) After the meeting of the Synod in Ephesus, Kyrillos strongly wished to travel to Constantinople to oversee the implementation of the decisions taken in Ephesus.
- (27) Kyrillos wished to do so to counter the slanderous allegations of Nestorius' supporters and to minimise their effects on the emperor himself.
- (28) Satan himself set up the slanderers and false accusers against the Holy Church. But 'the heart of the king is in the hand of God', and He makes the king well disposed to what He wants him to be.
- (29) The slanderous accusations against Athanasius in the time of the Arian controversy were also disproved.
- (30) The monk Victor was slandered just as Kyrillos was. He refuted these slanders through his spirited oath on the Holy baptism and mysteries. However, Kyrillos was saved by the gentle gesture of the emperor. Christ is thanked for the victory and persistence of Theodosius' government.

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### Translation: "Defensive argumentation to emperor Theodosius"

(1) Greetings in the Lord to the most venerable, pious and Christ-loving Theodosius, victor and always Augustus.

God's own pure Being, which rules over the universe, indeed his unapproachable Light, inhabits and occupies the loftiest throne, the one most fitting to His nature and to Him alone. Lordly rulers and powers crowd around it, as do the holy seraphim and, as Holy Scripture says, He *"makes all matters to shake and to tremble"*. In fact, having been thus glorified and having come to the limit of every miracle, He possesses a gentleness equal to the greatness of His supremacy and His unspeakable power; for no created nature of goodness could bear such unadulterated bravery and supernatural power and might.

In addition, the late prophet David, once, when praying on his own behalf and on behalf of everything on earth, said: *"Remember, Lord, we are but dust" and "If you should test our lawlessness, Almighty Lord, who shall remain standing?"* Yes, when the all-virtuous Job was being tested by the Devil by bitter and unbearable blows, he called to God, filled with self-control: *"Why did you not forget my lawlessness nor purify my sin? Instead, you sealed my lawlessness in a box and you indicated them when I unwittingly erred"*.

(2) However, I think one may immediately reply to this: *"Why, most honourable sufferer, did you count His unforgiveness almost as a ground for accusation? Even if you yourself have trespassed, you accuse the lawgiver of remembering your transgressions? "Yes," he says, "He who by nature is forgiving and, in addition, is not disposed to amazement at his glory, why is He not seen to be similar with regard to me? If He is, on the one hand, understood as in no way being able to lead the human mind astray, let the judge speak exceedingly accurately, let him seal those sins in a box, let him refrain from forgetfulness of those who occasionally offend even unexpectedly. But if one and all of us stumble and if impurity in everything is proper only unto Him, let His non-remembrance of evil show kindness to those who are customarily diseased"*.

(3) Therefore, a calm and mild spirit befits those of exceedingly high station; indeed, this preferred attitude is present in the Divine and most high Being, and, in imitation

thereof, also in your rule, Christ-loving emperors, because as a model of the heavenly Kingdom and as an imitation for earthlings, you alone have inherited power over all things and preserve subjection to it through fear and mildness; you extend tranquillity over everything under the heavens as something shining and peaceful.

(4) Even I have of necessity been constrained by the latter consideration to request by means of fitting defence that you heal our injured religion. And what is to me both usefully and necessarily the preferred course of action, I concede, but not willingly, because of the honour due to your royal power above all. For someone to say '*I have not existed*' is so arrogant or stupid or even utterly heedless, that whenever it may have occurred even against you, it should not go unpunished. For I have been afraid, very properly, to bring out my vote against those you support, in order that I may not suffer such as they say Israel suffered. For I am not in every respect removed from the occasional transgression (for each and every one of us stumbles and human nature is slippery to the default), and he may be regarded as a sharp-witted prison-guard who in now way offends against God; but hear what he is saying: "*Behold, I judge against you when you say 'I have not sinned'*". Therefore it is better and wise to yield to your rulers and to ask for forgiveness in what they are aggrieved. For, as I have said, forgiveness is at hand thanks to the imitation of your rule of God.

(5) I have therefore written to your worships and indeed to your most famed Augustae. I have done so, and exceedingly correctly at that, not in order to introduce uproar or conflict to your most holy court (Why? So that I thus may not land outside good reason and fitting motive), but rather in the consideration that it is temperate that the meeting of clergy approach the most Holy God, that they consider well what is good in His sight and carry it out without delay, in fear of the destruction hanging over them, if indeed they would at all be able to fall back into apathy. Surely we have to establish more firmly those who have come to believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ, those who He has won over through His own blood and has revealed as His worshipping begotten; He has called them his chosen people, his royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people destined for preservation, so that they may proclaim the virtues of Him who calls everyone unto His marvellous Light. (6) Indeed, when He is laying down the law concerning what is to be procured for sacrifice, He says to the prophet Ezekiel something like this: "*Son of Man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them: 'This is the land over which I shall bring the sword, and the people of the land shall take one of their men and they shall appoint him as their scout and*

*he shall see a sword coming over the land and he shall sound his trumpet and signal to his people and someone shall hear the sound of the trumpet but he shall not be on his guard and the sword shall come and shall cut him down. His own blood shall be upon him, and he himself – because he was on guard – shall destroy his own life. But if the scout should see the sword coming and do not sound the trumpet and his people are left unguarded even when the sword comes and takes one life from among them, that sword shall be taken because of its lawlessness and the blood shall be exacted from the hand of the scout".*

(7) I think the power of these words should not be left unquestioned; for, indeed, it would even be of greater benefit if the intention to be discovered in it were clarified. Is it not because of an expected attack by barbarians against the city that its guardians and philosophers and some imminent spymasters seat themselves in very high spy-towers, those who espy the rural fields, always directing their own eye in all directions vigilantly, preventing the attack of any enemy? They timeously signal the enemy's approach to the city and are not regarded as the temperate elder; they point the finger at the hostile approach and they themselves wipe the reasons for the prospective capture and suffering on their own heads, they await the final judgement of every soul in the city. I think that if each one of these priests in the same fashion – seeing that he has been appointed as scout by God – should report to the congregation under his jurisdiction the injustice which has been committed, the need shall have been established there for an agent of the crown; and it shall again fall in with those evils which come along with God's wrath, when He has after all done injury in no negligible fashion by those silences to the one who directs through those voices at his side unto righteousness. (8) Surely the battle was not against one of our human community, but rather waged against the Saviour of us all, Christ.

For it has been written: "*No-one says 'Jesus is anathema' unless through Beelzebul, that is, no-one denies Christ unless he has been raised by Satan to do so*". And because this proverb is true, no one shall contradict it. Surely the dragon, the apostate, that is the Satan, having taken possession not of the mind of a secure priest but rather of one led astray, and because he had a tongue at his disposal which, fully prepared, inconsiderately could insult the teachings of the truth and could detract from the glory of our Saviour (for that tongue was bold and heatedly went with unbridled rails at each of the most discordant views), and he filled our churches with uproar, the correct faith thus coming under siege. Disagreements occurred all over and the argument



among all the believers was great whether they were not erring about God when they were in truth thinking of Christ. And what was the upshot? Disease as if a kind of pestilence consumed all under the sun, having the lie as its root and Satan as its father.

But seeing that we were appointed spies by God and as protectors of our peoples, how could we not take up very enthusiastically the holy trumpet of the Church for those wishing to be pious to signal the approach of the Devil's sword? For what justice has God prepared for those who remain silent? "*That blood,*" He says, "*I shall exact from your hand!*".

(9) But your heart, Christ-loving emperor, was secure and unshaken. Yes, I myself am in agreement that these affairs will rather be of assistance and indeed, in addition to this, a long interval of time shall bear witness as to the fact that, having become famous for your piety, you contended with the glory of your forebears. But seeing that the possibility that your calmness be defeated is glorious for those people, I would most likely say – fearing no-one – that you shall wrap up the better and to be preferred outcome of the vote. I know the stability of your faith, its establishment in Christ's love, I regularly have been describing it as ready to come to the assistance of others, especially of all the congregations in uproar; for it is simply your custom to provide salvation. The trumpet signalling barbarian approaches only reminds of the strength and extreme battle-readiness of the bravery befitting him, but his not exceedingly fierceness nor his experience in matters of war is secured, so that when he unexpectedly invades the ranks of the enemy, he may not become the prey of the crudeness residing in them. For sure, my argument concerning Christ has been moving the centre of your piety against the cheek of the Devil, and has been securing those persons possessing a lightweight and easy manipulable mind. The mystery of Christ is not perspicacious to many, but the argument concerning Him is most profound to them that indeed possess a sound mind and is known to those who have accurately analysed Holy Scripture utterly as if "*in a riddle and in a mirror*".

Just as the most holy Paul says "*bad talk destroys useful customs*", so truly according to Solomon also '*a dripping droplet wears out a rock*'. Surely, regularly sending down into the human mind – like a droplet – words which by nature do injustice, is often not modest, but in most cases rather begets punishment. Indeed, my reminding has become both necessary and useful against the person waging battle against Christ contrary to all hope and against others who, having distinguished – not very

accurately – through arguments of one who strays, their knowledge of the divine mystery and are vexed by storms in no moderate measure. (10) For indeed I have been writing of necessity, and this implication of affairs has been made believable. For God has directed human affairs in the times since the beginning and during times past. For sure, the whole world has been led astray and as the late David says: *"All have deviated and were rendered useless. There was no one doing anything useful, not even one. Instead, 'an injunction came to us from on high'",* the only begotten Word of God appeared to us and He lived with the inhabitants of the earth having become a man while remaining God by nature. He himself linked us through Himself to God and his Father after removing the intervention and having in forgiveness set us free from those sins separating us and making us righteous through faith. Indeed, He himself is our peace according to the Scriptures. Thus He who is our bond of peace with God wanted to break the faith which was being undone in two. He intended that the way of righteousness be concealed from our minds, not to say something more vulgar.

For we have been made righteous through the holy baptism while we proclaim the death of Christ, in addition proclaiming His resurrection. Except that we do not proclaim the death of the common man, Christ-loving emperor, but that of the incarnate God, the One who had suffered on our behalf in the flesh, as was written, as of the living God who had remained non-suffering by His own Nature. Therefore, while Christian hope is in danger, the advent in the words of the errant and the unskilled and unguarded, has in a certain sense been both necessary and inexorable, emperor, seeing that we have the truth as comrade-in-arms to boost those possessing the true faith. (11) And indeed, that which has been urging us to arrive at this conclusion, is that factor. Here our deceased fathers, given the courage by God, on occasion set up their holiness in opposition to intractable heresies, especially that of the unholy Arians, even though those who at the time were in control of human affairs did not respect the truth, rather considered their points favourably and ground their teeth on the teachers of the Church. But these teachers were better than any fear and proclaimed the correct and unperturbed word of the faith. For they respected our Lord Jesus Christ saying: *"Do not fear those who kill the body, but who cannot destroy your soul. Rather fear that person who can destroy your body and soul in Gehenna"*. Thus, as they who regarded the rulers of all at that time as exceedingly hostile decided not to keep silent unto the glory of the Saviour of us all, how can it not be necessary that we ourselves follow in the footsteps befitting them and of belonging to Christ, or, to feel ashamed about the solidity of your piety? I have been exactly disbelieving that

it was him who found favour, but I!

And why has our silence not been persuasive? Alarm almost detracted me from what is necessary and made me prepared to strike against God. But I said to myself: "*You, you honestly keep your silence; even though the accusations brought in against you by God and men are terrible, he who has been crowned with imperial glory by God is pious and Christ-loving. And indeed, the silence of the most famous twin emperors may be seen through the same boastings, and both the holy and admirable sprouts of the Virgin are of the same mind. Those persons who bore the most recent discord and who have been burnished with the superiority of their dignities, are conspicuous through their most correct and unswayable faith, after they also having been saddened through the casting aside of glory of our Saviour. Otherwise, how could they not have vigorously fulfilled what is favourable in God's eyes? Or is the seaman not powerless when his passage is begged down from the wind favourable to him while a wind was blowing against his lines? Would the person who has been drawn up in military ranks not be weak and a deserter from battle if it is possible, through the assistance of the most brave men, to win in battle but he is seen to throw away his shield and act most unmanly?*". And, having kindled myself upon such considerations and having taken courage from the piety of your rule, I unflinchingly proceeded to eagerly address Christ, who was being insulted.

(12) Besides, Nestorius avers (even I say that I am also eager to produce even this for those I mentioned) that he has been exercised in the promises of the apostles, that he is an artisan unto piety, that he possesses an orthodox and completely untainted faith, and that your pious government earnestly seeks exactly such a man, as does the most eminent authorities of the holy churches – well, even I myself claim that! Therefore, when the letters with news of his ordination was sent through by the most pious yet misguided bishops, I carelessly responded in writing, joyfully praising and praying that my brother and fellow priest may enjoy only the best of all virtues through his divine election, but certainly not the charges later laid by our brotherhood, but rather arising from his own awkwardness. For he was elected to be a shepherd, but was found to be a wolf; deemed to be a faithful and well-known member of the household, but he loved the opposite; elected as a vine rich in grapes, but he sprouted weeds, as has been written; elected as skilled worker of the land, but he conspired against the earth; elected as good shepherd, but he became fiercer than wild animals.

Eventually, having taken ill – I don't know how – with his evil doctrine, he was most regularly given warning, and at that from many sides; but if he had taken heed from these warnings, would he have been stung if his intention had been revealed? Having been counselled with respect to the best options, would he even have considered any of the good ones? Did he hate the lie, did he hate the truth? Did he refuse the veil of ignorance, was he seeking the light? Was he convicted of his speaking ill against Christ? Was the host of those contradicting him put to shame? Was he sparing when he saw many, indeed countless, persons offended? Did it sadden him to see the Church denuded of the faithful? Not at all – just as if that phenomenon would have proclaimed the limit of affairs...

(13) For when the holy Synod congregated from all over in the Metropolis of Ephesus at the ineffable instruction of your Rule, he also pitched up, at that very moment, and even though it was proper that he lament and wail over those persons who had already passed on, just as if no-one had at all been offended at what he had arrogantly dared to say, he still stayed over in that famous city and kept heaping up his worst. He kept on prattling even worse evils and was emboldened against the glory of our Saviour, in the main only thinking Him worthy of negligible mention, and in general thinking little of the accusation of blasphemy against Him. Indeed, it is better to be silent on those matters he presumed to speak of, because while sharing these sentiments with the holy bishops, they similarly were in possession of the resolve and glory over each and every one of the faithful, and they were experts in Holy Scripture and knowledgeable. They had been very much aggrieved at the blasphemies against Christ and, out of hate for his intemperate and unbarred tongue, having washed their hands of him, they reported this to the Synod amidst streaming tears, not pushed aside into a corner nor imperceptibly, but taking courage to speak against that faith of his recollections, and being prepared to refute what is not even appropriate to think of, namely that which had been said against Christ. (14) And they did this out of fear of the coming judgement at the bench of God; for they weren't without tender affection, but they rather loved God and true guardians of the love unto Christ.

For surely just as our proper anger reveals to us the subjects of your undefiled monarchy or noble generals or indeed certain other dignitaries or aristocrats as being illustrious or censorious, if perhaps some might be wagging their tongue wantonly or unchastely against your rule or perhaps prefer to do something unreasonable or improper, likewise the divine ministrations, completely praiseworthy, is finished off by

God and by the angels (so that one shall not keep himself from those chattering about divine glory, preferring rather that they be relegated to the ranks who were especially hostile. Indeed, the late David clothes himself with the following boast and says: "*My Lord, have I not hated those who hate thee and was I not wasted away on account of your enemies? I hated them with an ultimate hate; they became my enemies*". If those who blaspheme Christ love Him, then those who are in conflict with them fall short of proper motivation. But if they hate Him openly, and this matter is in no way ambivalent, how could those persons who raise the healthy and reverent argument in opposition to their brutalities not be admirable and God-fearing?

(15) But it was otherwise both useful and necessary for your government to drive from the divine altar him who is treading these things underfoot. How? I would suggest by bringing the indications from Holy Scripture to certainty. Once, when the children of Israel had taken no heed of the divine injunctions of the all-wise Moses and considered the law given to them as naught, they were incited to secession from God and then they proceeded to become worshippers of idols and of the host of heaven, as has been written. The wretches have already come to this bad turn of events so as that they might defile His holy temple itself. God became cross at these things and delivered them unto the hands of their enemies. At the time when Hezekia, a holy and good man, was king, he restored what had been cast down and really cleansed God's temple; he thus brought home what was owed to God who rules over all. For it has been written thus concerning him: "*And Hezekia became king when he was twenty-five years old*". And then he addressed the Levites: "*Listen, Levites, be now sanctified and sanctify the house of the God of your fathers and cast out impurity from the midst of the holy, for your fathers rebelled and did what was wrong in the sight of the Lord and they forsook Him*". He then added various other things of use to his audience and again continued: "*And now, do not desist, for the Lord has selected from among you one to stand before Him to minister for Him and He has ministers and those making sacrifice. And the Levites stood up*" he says, "*and they gathered their brothers and they were sanctified according to the instruction of the king as the Lord commanded to purify the house of the Lord. And the priests went in even unto the house of the Lord and they cast out every impurity which they encountered in the house of the Lord*". Then the holy writ says: "*And on the sixteenth day of the first month they completed their work and they went in unto king Hezekia and said: 'We purified everything in the house of the Lord'*". And it has also been written: "*Hezekia the king rose early and gathered the authorities of the city and he went up to the*

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*house of the Lord and he brought seven calves, and seven he-goats on behalf of the kingdom, on behalf of the holy and on behalf of Israel'.*

(16) On the basis of the foregoing, o Christ-loving-emperor, note that even though that virtuous and holy Hezekia had been willing to pay homage to God, he did not even enter the temple of God and fully carry out the prayer, before he had instructed God's priests to purify His house and to cast out all impurity from there. And when this had taken place, he shinningly burnt incense and was at the same time exceedingly happy that he had made a very acceptable offering to God especially through having removed beforehand the impurity dwelling therein. Something similar has been done by your kingship to the glory of God. For it is our custom to sacrifice in our Churches and always to gather through the most abundant hand things pertaining to the glory of God, except it was always necessary to cleanse beforehand the temple of defilement and to remove from it every stain so that it became possible then to sacrifice at the right moment. And the blasphemy against Christ was beyond defilement with regard to Satan, but you ordered the clergy and, as I said just now, they cleansed the temple for you and sanctified it by stopping the artless and unholy tongue, so that you might be lauded all the more from the side of God, the angels and men.

(17) Therefore the holy ecumenical synod, in giving joy to the Saviour of the world, and counselling all to join in the faith in Him, and narrowly refraining from saying "*I have striven for the Lord*", in terms of what has been written, effected the removal of the stumbling block, so that it might disappear from our midst. On the other hand, it was probable that they rather, and of necessity, vigorously take it up jointly and that they courageously jointly grapple with those who have been in distress and divide among us the honourable gifts of Christ's extreme courage, having taken up the same zeal on our behalf and filling their own mind with a God-loving courageousness. But these latter people, having become hardened and unpitying even of the awkwardness of the blasphemer even in the least respect, and having been saddened and grieving, not primarily at the glory of Christ, but on account of the many things which had been babbled without any sense of holiness against Him, drew up in battle against His legitimate warriors and came out in opposition to those who wanted to consider the affairs of Christ, on account of which they had dared to go into action and all but openly say: "*Why did you stop your shameless and unbridled tongue and, having clothed yourself in sheepskin, put yourself up as the ravaging wolf which is familiar to all and sundry?*". For sure, the fact that it is scarcely tolerable that he has been elected over them is, in my opinion, nothing but the hallmark of people who had been

clamouring all along. (18) For the bishop of the parish of Antioch flouted the holy Synod, even though he had been commanded by your majesty to be present on an appointed day, withdrew his pending arrival while rejoicing in the intractabilities of him who had been babbling against Christ, and while probably really and unambiguously cherishing the same preconceptions as him. For when the sixteenth day had passed, some of his associates pitched up, spokesmen for the others (for they were Metropolitans), and duly gave the message purportedly coming from him to the holy synod that it shouldn't await his arrival but rather hurry to complete its divine affairs. And the synod had then scarcely been constituted in the holy church of Mary and had made as councillor Christ, its head as it were; for on the holy seat lay the venerable Gospel, all but saying to the holy clergy: "*Deliver righteous judgement, judge between the holy evangelists and the pronouncements of Nestorius*". For sure, they judged unanimously in favour of the former and the undiluted purity of the tradition of the apostles and the evangelists was disclosed and the force of the truth was rendered powerful. Indeed, the correct and unchangeable faith was confessed by all delegates, it was considered acceptable by you, Christ-loving emperors; for your whole vision focuses on the pleasing of God and on pious conduct. For you have never honoured anything above truth.

(19) But the elected bishop of Antioch, John, the delayer, the callous and long-suffering of the injured Christ, was sharp and hateful when moving his tongue in his endless talking delivered judgement. Like a bird he seized the council at Ephesus and, as if whatsoever he wished to do was right within his power, and at the same time holding nothing at value, as if the ordinances of the Church had been lifted completely, as if God does not oversee human affairs and directs them with irrationality rather than with His mind, and, having given the greater part of affairs over to his wrath rather than being inclined to master his common sense through logic, he then leapt from his carriage and entered the chamber, kicked up some dust and brought out an unsound and discordant vote together with those who think like himself. These people were men without sees, devastated and were the shield-bearers of of Nestorius' folly; having often been struck by great thunder, they share with him in the charges concerning the blasphemy against Christ. He therefore proceeds to insult the holy Synod, having ascribed to everyone under the sun – men of wide renown, some very well-known to your government, who have built up a considerable name among your nobility – a reputation of unsociability. Myself, however, and the priest of Ephesus he proceeded to label with more vulgar arrogance, by falsely

accusing us and saying that we cherish the same tenets as the disrespectful Apollinarius and that we subscribe to the accursed and unholy doctrines of Areius and Eunomius. And he was doing these things, as I was saying, while calling us these names and shaking in uncontrollable rage, letting the reins on everything loose into god-hating movements out of his rage and disdain – which really amazed me.

(20) For that always beloved and loving one, he who never ever denounces our words, has written in a friendly tone and has brought to us letters, he who has all but grown up before the very gates of Ephesus through his pronouncements of love, has placed the following in his own letter:

*"To my lord, the God-loving and holy fellow priest, Kurillos, greetings in the Lord. The fact that your holiness arrived these few days late in Ephesus has not stung me moderately. For this business's craving for your holiness pressed all the more on me to complete my journey as quickly as possible, amidst other pressing matters. Therefore, my lord, pray that we can travel and speedily hasten over these five or six stopover places and that this venerated and holy head of ours be enfolded. Those accompanying my lord, the God-loving bishop, Ioannes Paulos Makarios, all greet your holiness. Those with me and I myself greet the whole brotherhood with you fervently. May you persevere as the one beloved and prayed-for by us, o holy master beloved by God! How could our fellow-priest, also called our brother, suddenly be an enemy, when he has harmed no one? (21) I also hear someone is saying that he regards him as a wise person, since he dispelled the accusations of error against us, namely that I have written while still concealing my hostility and controlling its appearance at the necessary opportunity? Or, if I were truly the heretic and participant in the wickedness of that wretched Apollinarios, indeed in that of Areios and Eunomios, how can he call me a fellow priest? And how could he have been calling this head of mine holy and, on top of that, pure? Or is it not crystal clear to one and all that, should someone choose to harbour barbaric thoughts, he shall in general be the enemy of your most pure kingdom? Indeed, he was, as they usually say, concealing his hostility and he was being sweet with regard to the appropriate word, but he was running over with bitterness and cunning in his heart. Who would therefore dare to praise someone accustomed to living in this way? Or is he advising the Greeks to meddle in our collective affairs? Surely even they have come to hate one speaking a foreign tongue and thinking foreign thoughts? Let us therefore scrutinise the*



*viewpoint of Holy Scripture, but we have heard God pronouncing very clearly about a way of life like this: Their tongue is a wounding spear, the word of their mouth are deceptions; he speaks peaceful things to his neighbour but within himself he harbours hostility. 'I shall not watch over these people', says the Lord, 'shall my soul not bring such a people to justice?' Surely God hates deception and fraud and concealed bitterness, as is speaking matters of peace while being ill disposed is regarded as an untenable matter by him. Therefore He also promises to condemn it'.*

(22) Therefore, perhaps while feigning his pretexts through sin, as has been written, the young man shall, unto outrage, and the artisan, unto slander, speak a word additional to this, perhaps not a rude one at that, as he might think or intend. For he said: "*Even I have striven on behalf of the Lord*", just as the Holy Synod has done, but I have been saddened that you are heretics through the votes brought out by my side. And because he is saying this, he shall be acceptable to those people, whom our prophet Isaiah brought into the picture by saying "*we posited a lie as our hope and we shall be covered by the lie*", and unless someone call it chance, these matters themselves will cry it out loud. For sure, he shall firstly be found to be supercilious and a braggart, one enclosing holy priests spread over the whole inhabited world (*oecumene*) with arrogance and striking them hard with his single staff; for he ordered them unto unsociability, not so much thereby to cause them grief, but through having placed himself outside his fellowship with them. For somehow it is customary for persons with little insight to think it good that, when they rebuke others for acting in a certain way, when they may occasionally attempt something which is unrightful, they are committing injustice to themselves rather than to others. But how can it follow both to pay honour to your superiors and mindlessly to do injury to those who chanced to obtain only some lower rank; to relinquish the laws of the Church, which brings about the good order of peace and not to imitate that order but to love the knowledge of those in the world? Your pious rule has surely set the limits for positions of honour, and each and every bearer of an honour is surely not ignorant of his own station and yields to his superior and is not in competition concerning matters on an equal plane. And having conceded this as something stale and having spurned what is seemly, he drew back as it were with unbridled and inconsiderate motions in all respects, and having cast himself from the fellowship with one and all, he thought it well to tackle something profitable. And if he indeed did not believe that the bishop of Ephesus and I myself truly were heretics, what prevented him prior to coming to

the city of Ephesus to enquire by means of correspondence, to clearly pose the reasons in terms of which he had an argument with us. And when he arrived in Ephesus, what prevented him from setting up a meeting, from freely enquiring, from leading his accusations in public and, when in sitting with the holy synod, thus to summons me to recant together with others, or upon them considering and stating the correct teaching, to desist from his cause, or at least to let those preferring to think to vote those elements in dissension with the teaching of the Church to be right and just. (23) But since he refused to believe, having in vain embraced and having in unholy fashion composed misrepresentations against orthodoxy and having been entrusted with our affairs through his respect and kisses for Nestorius, he came and committed injustice and, as if engaged in nocturnal battles, he shot off his arrows, without being able to see and having composed a written document full of false accusations, he dared to refer it for your pious attention, and did not take the following into consideration, namely what lies written in divine scripture: "*Let no lie be spoken from your tongue to the king!*". And when we got wind of this, we composed for the holy and œcumenical synod an exposition of those books bearing witness to the correct and undefiled faith of the Church, in which those underwriting the thoughts of Areios, Apolinarios and Eunomios are nathematised, and we called upon him in terms of the laws of the Church to come into our midst and to convince us, having set up his own particular arguments. Our arguments, however, as I believe, were completely in keeping with the law; however, what sank to the depths of ignorance, indeed of cowardice and hesitation, was when he suppressed his arrival and he was not in the least perceived to be encouraging the holy synod. Thus I somehow rather had to resist him vigorously and, not waiting to be called upon, ran up of my own bidding, clearly convicted him, pointed out his fellow-accused, and to contend with him for his own votes. But I did not pitch up there through using an unsound perspective, thus out of fear for his arrival at the Holy Synod, so that I so to speak dared to pre-empt him at the banquet. Thus how could it be probable that the delegated priests, all of them reminded of their priesthood and mindful of God saying "*Bring out a just verdict and never consider the person in your verdict, for your verdict is that of God!*", seeing that we have all been elected in each and every way, could condemn us as heretics through the vote of their verdict? For it surely was necessary to make work of the minutes (of the meeting) and to reveal it to you? Surely, one single judge has been signalled for whole countries and big cities through your royal nod, and legal decision-taking on matters concerning blood and soul has been strengthened, and he has inspired fear in you, our law-givers, and through his oracular sayings to you he has directed you unto

the pursuit of justice. Thus, how could those elected by God to the priesthood, being so numerous in number and – I say – being in possession of nothing less than a marvellous comprehension of how we should be living splendidly, rather be venerated above the command of God?

(24) But that is why his mind became unbridled unto contempt and arrogance, and without care to see through other matters. For almost three full years have passed since that inventor of new teachings, Nestorius, has been hurling abuse against the Church; and seeing that he has been revealing through his very own letters to the most holy bishop of the Church of Rome, Celestinus, the sickness of his mind, he was not awaiting this vote (over him) in isolation or without sympathy, but he was rather invited to refrain from entertaining his inherently evil teaching and instead to choose the correct and undefiled faith – and he wasn't invited once but indeed very many times. However, it is thought the very precise investigator of the divine teachings (not to say anything vulgar!), he who stands impressionable before a knowledge of divine law, he who never reminds those who have been wronged by him, never issues an argument, and, above all, doesn't depend on the support of his own indiscretions, gives affront to the unholy through the vote and has perhaps been impressionable before this, so that he can hear the late David saying, indeed the Holy Spirit though the voice of David: *"Why does the man capable of lawlessness take pride in his evil-doings the whole day long? Has your tongue calculated unrighteousness? You wrought cunning like a blunt razor. You loved evil above goodness, injustice above the pronouncement of justice; you loved all words of degradation, a tongue of deception. For this reason, God shall demolish you down to the last stone; He shall pluck you out and remove you from your tent, as well as your sprout from the midst of the living"*.

(25) I have learnt that some people have attempted to convert him from his arrogance against us, when they were genuinely moved to grief after the ill-famed Synod took place without him. Indeed, it were better that we rather not interrogate this fact, but that his very own future in this regard be described. Conversely, those who had arrived beforehand and had announced to the holy Synod that they did not have to await him nor should arrive there at their own behest, but should submit to those voices reporting to him, why weren't they rather voted into abomination because they had levelled false accusations, had committed deception, but instead were considered to rank among the most legitimate bishops of all? Let this be considered an accident

and one to be mourned. For this reason, therefore, should he have disregarded God's laws? Should he have forgotten God saying "*you shall not kill one undeserving of punishment nor the righteous*"? Should he have condemned persons not found guilty of anything untoward? Did he require brothers to sheath the sword of evil doing? To revile the ordinances of the Church everywhere? To slander, to bear false witness at that against your very good name? Did he require anyone to consider the orthodoxy of our faith as worthless and to be willing to consider any single person as entirely defiled? To indulge in the succour of someone reviling Christ and setting him up to seek out the lie? To destroy the truth? Would one consider these things as the fruit of a holy mind? As the discoveries of a priestly council? Indeed, I hear God saying "*the lips of a priest shall preserve judgement and law for those seeking it from his mouth*". Therefore it is very clear that through whatever reasons it be thought possible to dispose of this prevailing mindlessness, through these very reasons themselves it will rather be discerned that they have been carried out as unholy matters. (26) However, on my part, Christ-loving emperor, I have been taking pleasure in departing from my task and at being away from your city Alexandria, while a furious wind was filling our sails and our ship was all but thundering down with being taken by the height of the seas and seething around the heads of the tillers; I remained of good cheer and stood through the danger of the storm backed up by the prayed-for supervision of your government. Indeed, when those attending the holy synod left Ephesus upon travelling up to that brilliant city, having previously undertaken to give effect to the decisions of the synod, I desired to be counted among them, firstly in order to look after the interests of your imperium, and secondly, in addition to this, that I may defend myself against that bishop of yours of Antioch and may prove that he had falsely accused me, had been raving contrary to the tenets of the law, had been overcome by unfettered madness, because I anathematised the main tenets of Nestorius' evil statements. For the church of Rome and indeed the holy Synod gathered, as is customary to say, from the whole world under the heavens, has borne witness unto the correctness of my faith. For sure, not having fallen outside of it in the least respect, I have succumbed to the tradition of the apostles and the gospels and am forging ahead along the straight and unswerving path of the holy teachings – they (i.e. the *bishops*) have come to concur unanimously and in underwriting, at that, the beacons of our faith having read those letters which I wrote to Nestorius.

(27) I have been praying that I may come there not only on account of the latter reasons, but also so that I may show up the lying slanders of others against my person and my teachings. For those arms-bearers of Nestorius' teachings, after having aimed

an arrow against me out of jealousy and malice and, having prepared in multifarious ways manifestations of unadulterated insanity, having bribed people and fabricated accusations, of which *God is the womb and the honour in their shame*, as the late Paul states, they were preparing to become troublesome to your government and very regularly so, even though they indeed never ever suffered anything unfitting. For there absolutely never was a single word from them to me, instead, as they usually say, they shopped out to their co-conspirators against me the stream of their words, they properly kept on chattering in their preparedness to do anything. For such persons, nothing cannot be attempted; for they have evil as their natural companion and nothing has been thought out by them but to give out the writ of slander and regularly to make false accusations, both with regard to whatsoever one wishes and even if nothing concerning the accusations are known to them. And all of us spread through your city of Alexandria know that they are of this nature and are accustomed to live like this. Therefore those people keep on chattering while making a present of money to those urged to do so and by effecting retribution as it were, thereby making a demonstration of their acceptance of a bribe for their incessant gossip against me. And I have taken great exception against these people (how could I not have?) Except that I remembered our Saviour Christ saying "*You are blessed when they persecute you and revile you and utter every form of insult against you when they are lying, all on my account. Be happy and exalt yourselves, for your prize shall be big in heaven. In this way, too, they persecuted the prophets before you*". (28) For when the father of lawlessness, that is, Satan, attempts to set a trap for the churches and for those possessing the correct faith and boldly to falsify through his own henchmen the tradition of the apostolic and evangelic faith, or when the guardians of orthodoxy set up truth in opposition to him and act against persons who destroy orthodoxy, while having Christ Himself as fellow-soldier and as supporter, who is the Truth, then indeed the father of the lie generally raises many false accusers, then also he set up a bunch of ferocious slanderers in opposition against those preferring to pursue piety. For the late Amos on several occasions prophesied and strongly accused the children of Israel that they had forsaken the love for God and were overlooking those laws given to them by God; straightaway Paschor came into their midst and acted against him (he was a false prophet and an exorcist of demons). He then set up the truly holy prophet in opposition to the king of Israel, having written thus: "*Amos has raised insurrections against you; the earth shall surely not be able to suffer all his words!*". And the blessed Jeremiah likewise tried to order the arrogant house of Israel to mend their ways, but he had resolute opponents, who incited Zedekiah, the manager of the

affairs of the royal throne, against him. However, this matter was burdensome to the faithful and, in truth, unbearable. Save for giving precedence to what was pleasing for God and to a love of their own lives, they were thus in control of their pursuits and not ignorant of what had been written, namely that *"The heart of the king is in the hand of God; what He wants it to accede to, there He makes it incline to"*. For He rendered these persons mild and inclined to take pity, even though they had been provoked very often when they were in command of Jewish affairs. (29) On our part, we shall here disregard those matters pertaining to them – they are well known to all – but we shall call to mind that well-renowned and thrice-blessed father of ours, Athanasios, who, on occasion, was bishop of your city, Alexandria. He was battling against the evil teachings of Areios, and those persons feeding off that accursed teaching ended up slandering him. They sent forth their shameless and unbridled tongue against him, and as if their lying fabrications weren't enough for them, they cut off a man's hand and carried it around, and in showing this horrible sight off to spectators, they declared that this bishop had cut it off and they seriously contended that that a certain Arsenios had suffered this. And they had spent a long time seizing and arresting people, until Arsenios was perchance found to be alive, and only then the undertaking of their folly was completely detected. (30) On the one hand, their arrogance was hardly tolerable and very wounding to free souls and to persons of clear conscience, and, on the other hand, the mind of persons who had suffered being counselled both rashly and fruitlessly by those who had been wronged confessedly in no fully evil respect was completely at a loss. Except that Holy Scripture has previously indicated that these very things shall bring the truth home to our church-elders. For it said: *"Fight unto death for the truth, and the Lord shall do battle on your behalf"*. And our Lord, Jesus Christ himself, anointed His disciples unto good courage and persuaded them not to take heed of any false accusation nor of toils in the face of persecution. *"If they prosecuted me,"* He says, *"they shall prosecute you too! If they called Beelzeboul the master of their house, how much more their house-fellows..."*. And He is extremely saddened when He aptly adds: *"No disciple is above his teacher, nor is a slave above his master"*. Surely, if He said this with reference to Christ, what is then our argument? And if these slanders took place against everything holy, how could the least of us escape? For sure, the tongue of the unholy is intemperate when wielded against those cast down, but it is cursed and hateful for God. In his psalms the blessed prophet David sings: *"The Lord shall destroy all deceitful lips and the boastful tongue"*.

(30) Together with me, the beloved monk Victor has been put to the test by arrows from the unbridled tongue. Indeed, certain people who had been accustomed to level false accusations alleged that he, one of those absent from the meeting, had spoken blatant untruth about me, so that, when he came to me in Ephesus, some delegates to the Holy Synod made vigorous accusations against him, and indeed, all and sundry turned their backs on him, having come to hate him as if he were an unholy person. They accomplished this by calling him a father-murderer, a brother-murderer and other similar names. Having learnt this, the old man, after most of the holy bishops had gathered around him and lifting his hands unto heaven, swore uncharacteristically on the Holy baptism and the holy mysteries of God; and thus he and I were empowered to heal the souls of those saddened. Unless, of course, many intending liars persist in producing such and attacking us in vain, having virtually been urged on to do so by Nestorius' supporters. However, the mercy of our Saviour and the disapproval of your Reverence have sufficiently been of help. For, as if plucking us from a blazing furnace, you saved us with the gentlest of gestures, so that we, together with all the other holy bishops and monks of Egypt, may bring incessant thanksgiving to the all-holy Christ on account of the victory and persistence of your government. Through Whom and with Whom glory be with the Holy Spirit unto all ages. Amen.

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### Notes on the political-theoretical content of Kyrillos' *Apologia*

Having been addressed at Emperor Theodosius II, Kyrillos' *logos apologetikos* is replete with elements of **early Byzantine political theory** – that implicit set of principles in terms of which Orthodoxy chose to arrange their relationship with the secular power of the day. Christianity had but recently become religion of state, and many of the facets involved in such a complex relationship still were in need of more precise formulation<sup>34</sup>.

Kyrillos' defensive argument in fact signals the transition to a situation where the emperor, in this particular case the emperor of the Greek eastern half of the Roman Empire, assumes the very important role of doctrinal arbiter among

34. See the still adequate exposition by I.E. Καραγιαννόπουλος, 'Η πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινών, *Βυζαντινά* 2 (1970) pp. 39–61.

(politically) contending Christian points of view<sup>35</sup>. From the very address of the letter to Theodosius (ll. 2-3), the Christian piety and Christ-loving nature of the emperor is stressed, the implication being that he disposes over the correct, true insight into the real nature of Christ, now cast into dispute by recent event events.

The emperor is then directly aligned with God, as a model and imitator of the heavenly Kingdom, having inherited (from God) power over all things on earth and then extending peace and tranquillity over the whole earth (ll. 32-37). In this capacity, the emperor is requested to intervene in, and heal, the Christological dispute in the trust that he will also, in imitation of the example of the rule of God, be forgiving (ll. 39-52). The Orthodox faithful (i.e. those persons believing in the Lord, Jesus Christ) may be regarded as God's own chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, one destined to be preserved while extolling the virtues of God (ll. 60-65).

Kyrrillos describes emperor Theodosius as being uniquely equipped, in terms of the soundness of his Orthodox faith, to guard against impostors, to understand the mystery of the incarnate Word and Scriptural truth (ll. 116 - 166). In fact, he has restored and cleansed the true faith just as Hezekiah did in the days of yore (ll. 260-270, and 289-304).

Kyrrillos' letter bears witness to the relative importance, at the time, of the Patriarchal and Metropolitan See of Alexandria within Orthodox sphere. His contribution to the formation of early Byzantine political theory was a continuation of a tradition started by his predecessor, the illustrious Athanasius<sup>36</sup>.

35. This was of course still the period of the 'birth' of Byzantine imperial ideology, as pointed out by H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, PUF (Paris 1975), pp. 16-19.

36. "Some Alexandrian Perspectives on the Relationship of Church and State: Athanasius and Kyrrillos", *Εκκλησιαστικός Φάρος* 83 (2001) no. 2 pp. 128-135.