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Leo of Chalcedon
The Network, *Paideia*, and Miracles
of an Early Komnenian Metropolitan

Abstract of the doctoral dissertation



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1) THE SCOPE AND TOPIC OF INVESTIGATION; *STATUS ARTIS*

This thesis investigates the personage of a late eleventh-century Byzantine metropolitan bishop and the religious controversy which is related to him. In three thematic units the metropolitan's network, his erudition (*paideia*), finally, the miraculous events which were associated with him, are analysed.

The Komnenian Iconoclast Debate erupted in 1082 and ended in 1094. The controversy's protagonist was Leo, the metropolitan of Chalcedon. In 1081, Alexios I Komnenos ascended the throne of the Byzantine Empire. His reign (1081–1118) constitutes the first phase of the Komnenian period which draws its name from that of the ruling dynasty. During the first decades of his reign Alexios consolidated his power, suppressed his opponents and created a new loyal elite. The *basileus* made painstaking efforts to build an effective and highly centralised polity. Upon his entry to power, Alexios inherited a decreased empire: in addition to the European provinces, i.e. the Balkan Peninsula, only a small part of Western Asia Minor and its coastline were imperial territories. Byzantium was attacked from three directions: the Pechenegs entered from the Lower Danube, the Normans from Southern Italy, and the Seljuks approached from the East. The Pechenegs were defeated by 1091, however, the Seljukian issue was solved only with the help of the Latins in the course of the First Crusade, and the Normans made incursions until 1108.

Alexios I led a mercenary army. In order to pay his soldiers, the *basileus* did not feel ashamed to confiscate church property and objects: precious metals from ecclesial and monastic institutions, decorations on buildings, and richly illustrated icons fell prey to the alienations in the capital and in the countryside. Leo, the metropolitan of Chalcedon, realised the effect of the imperial measures when upon his visit to Constantinople he witnessed that the doors of the Chalkoprateia church, dedicated to the Virgin, were deprived off their silver ornaments. Leo addressed the emperor in an open letter to halt the use of church objects for secular purposes. Alexios promised to make an end of the alienations, subjected himself to a judicial investigation which acquitted him. Subsequently, Leo required the deposition of Eustratio Garidas who was the new, loyal patriarch the Komnenoi appointed after their entry to power. Leo charged Garidas of expropriating church objects and of heresy. Though the patriarch was acquitted, final Garidas resigned his see. However, Leo was not satisfied and he did not take communion with the newly elected patriarch Nicholas III either. As a consequence, Alexios I launched an official investigation against Leo. The episcopal synod of the capital (*synodos endemousa*) censured Leo in early 1086 which entailed that the metropolitan himself resigned his see. However, neither the episcopal synod, nor Alexios I accepted his decision. Leo of Chalcedon gained courage and soon afterwards he delivered his *Apology* in attendance upon the ruler. In the oration, the prelate asserted that the

alienation of church property is sacrilege. In 1087, the renewed Pecheneg invasion forced Alexios to confiscate church objects again to be able to pay for his mercenaries. The metropolitan strongly criticised Alexios' measure, thus, he was deposed from office. In spite of this, the dethroned prelate continued plotting and became the protagonist of a conspiring noble group. This brought about Leo's banishment to Sozopolis at the Black See. Scholarship dates this to the period between 1087 and 1091. The exiled prelate remained in correspondence with his Constantinopolitan supporters, such as Alexios' mother-in-law and Nicholas who was Leo's protegee and the bishop of Hadrianople. During Leo's banishment the debate about the theology of icons continued to sparkle. Isaac, Alexios' brother committed the bishop Basil, Leo's close ally, to give a theological refutation of Leo's statements about the icons. Leo got to know this and he summarised his thoughts about icons in a letter to Nicholas of Hadrianople. The content of the letter became public and was examined. Leo was charged with heresy and was cited to Constantinople. At the end of 1094 the greatest assembly of the period, consisting of ecclesial and secular leaders, discussed the exiled metropolitan's teaching in the Blachernai palace. Leo acknowledged his doctrinal error and was reinstated to his see. His figure reappears only in the sources which were composed after his death from the twelfth century onwards.

The events of the Komnenian Iconoclasm have been analysed by subsequent generation of scholars from the end of the nineteenth century.¹ In 1972, A. Glavinas dedicated a monograph to the history of the controversy. Philologists, historians, art historians, and theologians examined the debate's chronology, the social background of Leo's opposition, and Leo's icon theology.² In spite of this fact, some questions remained unexplored, or need to be revisited. First of all the relationship between Leo and the 'two patriarchs', namely Kosmas I and Eustratios Garidas, is not entirely clear. The former abdicated, the latter gained power with the accession of the Komnenoi. It is also debated when and among which circumstances Leo lost his office and was sent into exile. It is not entirely clear on which basis and for what reason Anna Komnene portrays negatively Leo in Book 5 and rather positively in Book 7 of the *Alexiad*. A. Glavinas missed to examine the social aspect of the Komnenian Iconoclasm, the theory of J. Thomas showing Leo as a port-parole of a movement against the *charistikon*³ was refuted, and finally, V. Gerhold's idea about the alliance between Leo, the Doukai, and the administrative elite was not tenable either. It is a *desideratum* to systematically survey with which people, social-, or institutional groups Leo was connected and

¹ Such as I. Sakkalion, A. Lavriotes, V. Grumel, P. Stephanou, or P. Gautier.

² H. G. Beck, V. Nunn, V. Tiftixoglou, P. Thomas, M. Angold, A. W. Carr, B. Lourié, V. Gerhold, C. Barber, J. Ryder, D. Krausmüller.

³ A system of giving monasteries to private person, or institutions for a restricted period, usually a lifetime or three generations, see ODB 1 412 s. v. 'charistikion'.

what were the prelate's role in these networks. The studies of V. Grumel, M. Angold, and J. Ryder prepared the ground to draw an image about Leo which includes Leo's different social roles, such as the holy man,⁴ the metropolitan, and the political figure.

2) STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS

I structured my reply to the preceding questions as follows. In the Introduction of the thesis after clarifying the scope of investigation, I discuss the definition of the Komnenian Iconoclasm. Afterwards, I survey the controversy's sources and I give the overview of scholarship regarding Leo's personage and the debate. Subsequently, I present events of the controversy in a chronological order. Chapter One analyses Leo of Chalcedon's network and relationships, emphasizing those roles which Leo played as metropolitan and holy man. Chapter Two examines Leo's erudition (*paideia*). The first section introduces the reader into the details of Leo's so far unpublished *Apology*, delivered in 1086, which is a canonical demonstration (*apodeixis*) with invective tone. This is followed by an evaluation of Leo's icon theology; the focus is directed to the logic in the metropolitan's argumentation. Chapter Three studies the miraculous events which are associated with Leo of Chalcedon. First, the *Dream of Thomas the Deacon* is canvassed which recorded Leo's alleged apparition in Constantinople while the bishop spent his exile in Sozopolis. Subsequently, I give the interpretation of the second apparition of Leo with its broader textual context in the *Alexiad*. Anna Komnene's work solely records that Leo, so the story goes, appeared in 1087 at Dristra during the battle against the Pechenegs and saved the life of George Palaiologos, Alexios I's relative. The thesis ends with a brief comparison, illustrating the significance of Leo as a holy man, wonderworker, metropolitan, canonist, and political actor in the light of the career and works of outstanding twelfth-century Byzantine prelates.

This dissertation applies accepted historical methods alongside with new ones. The first basis of my analysis is the close reading of texts, considering their contexts. Second, I apply comparative analyses of texts, careers, and historical circumstances. I approach Leo's social relations with the network theory in mind. The sources of the controversy do not allow the metropolitan's network to be reconstructed in great detail. Nonetheless, results of the well-established historical methods can be brought further with paying special attention to Leo's social and political support, more narrowly to different social and institutional groups, such as

⁴ For the concept of 'holy man', see: P. Brown, 'The rise and function of holy man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* 61 (1971), 80–101.

the metropolitans, the senatorial elite who was suppressed by the Komnenoi with whom Leo had contacts.

3) NOVELTIES AND RESULTS OF THE THESIS

Thus, the novelty of the dissertation is partly based on its methodology, first in the network approach, and, second, in the treatment of the sources of the controversy. Scholarship so far has not paid satisfying attention to the fact that the sources about Leo were composed between 1081 and 1154, despite the fact that the controversy itself took place only between 1081 and 1094. If one adds the period of the formative years for Leo of Chalcedon, his youth and education, this time span can be extended to the 1060s and comprises almost 100 years. Therefore, the picture which can be drawn about Leo of Chalcedon is a complex construct which was influenced by three historical contexts: that of the second half of the eleventh-century; the period of the accession of the Komnenian dynasty and the first part of this realm extending to the death of John II Komnenos (1143); finally the first roughly fifteen years of the reign of Manuel I (r. 1143–1180). During the latter period the encomiasts elaborated the young Manuel's imperial representation and proved his superiority of over his father John II and over his grandfather Alexios I. Anna Komnene composed the most coherent narrative about the Komnenian Iconoclasm in her *Alexiad* in this milieu of fierce dynastic competition. This dissertation is a new synthesis which handles the sources and the legacy of the Komnenian Iconoclasm as interacting elements.

In addition to the methodological novelties, the results of the thesis in due accordance with the chapters are the following. Chapter One canvasses Leo's network, i. e. with which institutional and social groups he had contact and in which way this influenced Leo and vice versa. The Komnenian Iconoclasm has not been the subject of such a systematic survey. The first section of Chapter One portrays Leo as a metropolitan focusing on his relationships with the Constantinopolitan patriarchs Kosmas I (1075–1081) and Eustratios Garidas (1081–1084). I present Kosmas as a holy ascetic and a prelate with significant impact on central political decision-making. Afterwards, I show how Eustratios Garidas was appointed as the confidant of Alexios' mother and, at the same time, in which way Leo of Chalcedon appeared as the spokesperson on behalf of the entire church crossing the boundaries of his function as the metropolitan of Chalcedon. I make the close reading of Leo's *Letter to Alexios I* and I examine how Leo exercised *parrhesia*,⁵ i. e. frank speech in attendance upon a potentate, in this case upon the emperor. I

⁵ C. Rapp, *Holy bishops in Late Antiquity. The nature of Christian leadership in an age of transition* (Berkeley, 2005), 260–273.

contend that Leo in the letter did not go beyond the limits of accepted or legitimate *parrhesia* which takes into consideration the Byzantine world order. Alexios I accepted the metropolitan's advice and promised to end the alienation of church property claiming in his diploma of 1082 that 'he had been admonished by spiritual and holy men'. The second section of Chapter One brings the thematic further and I demonstrate that Leo's recognition as a holy man lay in the fact that he was the spiritual adviser of some members of the Doukas-branch of the Komnenian family, namely of Irene, Alexios' mother-in-law, and George Palaiologos. Scholarship was aware of the relationship between Leo and the Doukai; however, its exact nature has not been clarified. I close the section with refuting V. Gerhold's idea that Leo, the Doukai, and the suppressed senatorial elite formed an alliance against the Komnenoi. The third unit of Chapter One examines the enigmatic group of 'bad people' who supported Leo according to the testimony of the sources. I make the assumption to identify them with members of the senatorial elite who handled the reins of power in the previous regime and became suppressed with the accession of the Komnenoi. The unit first gives an overview about the events related to the senatorial elite in the first fifteen years of Alexios' reign. This is followed by the examination of the sequence of office-holding in the civilian administration. Two out of the three changes in the administrative staff overlap with the sequence of conspiracies in which senators also took part. The chain of plots can also be aligned with Leo's opposition which supports my hypothesis. Furthermore, on the basis of the course of events exposed, I contend that Leo was sent into exile in 1090–1091, as opposed to the scholarly view of 1087–1090. The closing section of Chapter One focuses on Leo's ecclesiastical supporters. The scarcity of evidence precludes the possibility of a detailed reconstruction; nonetheless, on the basis of Leo's correspondence it seems that the metropolitan had Nicholas of Hadrianople and Basil of Euchaita as close allies. Furthermore, Leo's relationship with patriarch Nicholas III (1084–1111) was formal. Presence lists and other data justify the assumption that the prelates, fleeing from the Seljuks who occupied great part of Asia Minor, or having their sees in the Western provinces, supported Leo of Chalcedon. Finally, some refugee metropolitans received corrodies from monasteries. Some of these monasteries suffered losses during the confiscations, as it can be assumed from their presence in the Blachernai synod. In that case, monks and certain metropolitans had a shared interest to support Leo's resistance.

Chapter Two discusses Leo of Chalcedon's erudition (*paideia*). The first unit sheds light on a so far unknown aspect of Leo's personage. Following A. Glavinas' hint, I discovered Leo's until now unpublished *Apology* in the library of the Escorial Palace in Madrid. Appendix 3 contains the critical edition, while the unit under discussion is the study of the text. The seven folios (16v–23r) of *Escor. Y. 2.7.* (262) give the opportunity to thoroughly discuss Leo's canonical expertise. The oration can be dated to the first half of 1086. Leo was censured by the episcopal synod in January

1086, resigned his see, but it was not accepted. Thus, the bishop resumed courage and explained his viewpoint concurrently with attacking his adversaries. Leo tried to demonstrate that minting coins from the metal content of icons and holy objects is sacrilege. Moreover, as his argumentation goes, destroying icons does not take into consideration that the visible image on icons has a share in the divine *hypostasis* of the prototype. The latter is Leo's doctrinal novelty which I discuss in the second section of Chapter Two. The metropolitan, implicitly, compared Alexios I to the iconoclast emperor Constantine V; furthermore, he argued that the one who consciously destroyed icons was the Antichrist himself. Leo's demonstrative canonical treatise is in fact a veiled invective against Alexios I. The section describes the manuscript, afterwards the oration's rhetoric is examined which is restrained. This is followed by the comparative analysis of Leo's Biblical, canonical, and patristic sources. I show that Leo's application of sources demonstrates Leo's awareness of the highest demands of his age. Afterwards, I direct attention to the metropolitan's legal methodology. Leo organizes his material in a chronological order: the Jewish examples are followed by Roman, later Roman, and Byzantine ones. The metropolitan applies elements of the technical-legal discourse and uses legal jargon. While the rhetorical register of the oration is low-key, Leo aims at creating effect by rhetorically transforming some elements of the legal language. The bishop uses the canonical framework to propose penalties to the emperor, directing at Alexios I's avarice. Leo involves the notion of the holy as it was applied in classical antiquity to portray Alexios implicitly more pagan than the pagans were themselves. Ultimately, the metropolitan knows and uses legal and canonical loopholes. The *Apology* testifies development in Leo's self-representation. Chapter One showed Leo as a *parrhesiastes*, the champion of frank speech. In the *Apology*, Leo defined himself as a *homologetes*, i. e. the defender of faith and follows the tradition of synods and church fathers. For Leo, the Byzantine orthodox tradition is the bastion and starting point which was not only defended by him personally, but that tradition also defended the metropolitan. In addition to Leo's legal professionalism, this was the main force behind Leo's arguments. The section contends that Leo was a prepared jurist, compared to other eleventh-century metropolitans and to John Zonaras, the twelfth-century canonist, too.

The second unit of Chapter Two surveys Leo's icon theology which was discussed by Anna Komnene. Alongside with other passages in Book 5, Anna gave a negative portrayal about Leo as the adversary of Alexios I's unifying church policy. According to the princess' opinion, Leo's canonical expertise was imprecise; moreover, the logic of the prelate's theological argumentation was poor. The examination of the *Apologos* refutes Anna's statement. What can be said about Leo's theological expertise? The subchapter is based on earlier scholarship, as Leo's theology has been thoroughly discussed. First, I expose A. Carr's view that Leo's theology is incoherent, since

instigated by the political situation, Leo emphasised the presence of the divine in the icons themselves. Leo showed that the material of the icon is not divinised; however, the painting on the icon has a divine *hypostasis*, the same as the *hypostasis* of the divine prototype. Carr contends that Leo was influenced by the practice of everyday religiosity, namely that the faithful, pertaining to all social strata, considered the icons as divine, prayed the icons as divine and attributed divine (healing) power even to the smallest piece of the textiles covering the icons. I complement Carr's view with Dirk Krausmüller's results. Krausmüller claims that Leo knew doctrinal history, the content of the tenets; moreover, the blind alleys to which theological argumentation may lead. I agree with the former statement, but I do not support his other idea to describe Leo as an innovative theologian who used Aristotle's teaching creatively. Leo's argumentation about the icons is of a one-track mind, and his interpretation about icon veneration is subjected to the circumstances of the Komnenian Iconoclasm. The metropolitan bolstered his theory systematically, illuminating the hypostatic unity of iconic representation and prototype from the aspects which need explanation. However, he only created a *cento*, a mosaic consisting of elements of patristic teaching which lacks the needy binding. Anna Komnene's topical statement regarding Leo's theological logic cannot be refuted.

Chapter Three focuses on Leo's miracles. During the period of Leo's exile, the *Dream of Thomas the Deacon* circulated in Constantinople which is the topic of the first unit. The dream description survived alongside with the metropolitan's correspondence and presents Leo wearing an imperial garb and having a golden crown on his head. According to the content of the description, Leo appeared to Thomas, one of the patriarchal deacons, who saw the metropolitan performing the liturgy in the church of Saint Euphemia despite the fact that he was at that time exiled to Sozopolis. M. Angold realised that Leo appears in the dream as a defender of faith, opposing Alexios I by abusing imperial clothes. However, this interpretation can be further refined, which adds to the scholarly knowledge about Leo of Chalcedon. The imperial clothes and particularly the crown (*phakiolion*) show close similarity with the crown which one finds in the *Constitutum Constantini*. The *Constitutum* is a diploma deriving allegedly from Constantine the Great (r. 324–337) which gave privileges to Pope Sylvester I (r. 314–335); however, scholarship demonstrated that it had been forged in the eighth century. Pope Leo IX (r. 1048–1054) used the diploma again in his *Libellus*. On the basis of the *Constitutum*, the pope claimed that the expression 'royal priesthood' in the *First Letter of Peter* (1 Pet 2) referred also to the popes and not only to the ensemble of Christian faithful. In 1054, during the negotiations of the so-called 'schism' the *Constitutum Constantini*, as part of the *Libellus*, was brought to Byzantium. As scholars assume, the content of the *Constitutum* influenced the Constantinopolitan patriarch Michael Kerouarios (1043–1058) to use imperial insignia, such as the purple baskins, already in the mid-eleventh

century. Moreover, the patriarch considered that between his title as a high-priest and the imperial title the difference had been negligible. In the *Dream of Thomas the Deacon* the imperial clothes, the crown of the pope, and the passage of Peter's letter reappear. Patriarch Kerouarios wore purple baskins, by contrast, Leo is portrayed in full imperial garment. The author of the dream presented Leo as the defender of faith who defied the emperor and was equal to him. This image was, in my view, influenced by elements which were, on the one hand, already present in patriarch Michael Kerouarios's self-representation and, on the other hand, were found in Leo IX's *Libellus*. The portrayal of the *Dream of Thomas the Deacon* does not match the representation of Leo known from other sources. Nonetheless, the description shows that certain groups promoted the image of the holy defender of orthodoxy about the exiled Leo. Signs of Leo's cult occur in the *Alexiad*, too, which is part of the afterlife of the Komnenian Iconoclasm and discussed as the second unit of Chapter Three.

In Book 7 of the *Alexiad* Anna Komnene preserved the account of Leo of Chalcedon's second apparition miracle. In Book 5 Anna gave a negative portrayal about Leo being, at least from Anna's perspective, the adversary of Alexios' unifying church policy. Conversely, in Book 7 the metropolitan appears as a holy man and wonderworker. According to Anna's testimony, in 1087 the metropolitan appeared near Dristra in the lost battle against the Pechenegs and gave a horse to George Palaiologos who fled from the hand of the nomads. Scholarship so far could not pinpoint why Anna recorded the event, or gave an explanation (P. Buckley) which misinterprets the passage, falling into the trap of Anna Komnene's sophisticated rhetorical presentation. In my view, Anna Komnene aimed at preserving the proper memory of his father, Alexios I. Anna refused the idea that Alexios I's deeds proved inferior compared to the results of his successors, his son John II, and his grandson Manuel I, as it has been argued by court rhetoricians. I think that Anna Komnene launched a discourse with the encomiasts of Manuel I, in particular, and replied to late eleventh-century critics, too. Anna's description of the Battle at Dristra and of Alexios' Pecheneg wars becomes clearer in the light of the opinions of eleventh-, and twelfth-century critics. Anna does not simply narrate events, but writes back to such views that his father was a hot-headed and irresponsible military commander and that God punished Byzantium. I pay particular attention to the latter which has been expounded by John the Oxite in the oration of 1091. Surveying the broader context of the Battle of Dristra in the *Alexiad*, I arrive to the conclusion that Anna Komnene does not believe that Alexios I lost the battle, because God punished him. I believe that Anna shared the views of Michael Psellos (1018–1078) about history who contends that history can be understood as the sequence of events, and even the forces of nature and physical laws, such as a sudden storm or an injury in the battlefield, determine the outcome of a battle. On the basis of the latter, it is obvious why Alexios I hid the relic of the

Theotokos at the end of the battle which he brought with him on a standard: Alexios was injured and the wind was strong. This is not an *omen*, but a logical consequence. In spite of that, Anna Komnene addressed an audience which could not go beyond the ‘vices, therefore punishment’ scheme. The princess sews together elements of logical and religious explanation; however, certain contradictions remained in the text which give access to Anna’s authorial technique.⁶ On the basis of what has been said so far, I think that Leo’s apparition scenario bears two narrative roles in the *Alexiad*. It counterbalances, on the one hand, the heavy-handed church policy of Alexios I and the alienation of holy objects which was censured in the light of Manuel I’s lavish donations to the church. On the other hand, argues against the view that God punished Alexios’ empire at Dristra, since the emperor and his family were delinquents. Anna’s reply brings together elements of religious and rational explanation. The battle was lost, because the sequence of events was not favourable and the Byzantines became outnumbered. At the same time, God sent his help in the form of Leo’s apparition who aided the imperial family. Anna Komnene, in all likelihood, used a late eleventh-century biographical source which was written for the Palaiologos family.

The Conclusions enlist characteristics of the model Leo of Chalcedon represented in comparison to twelfth-century Byzantine metropolitans. In my opinion, there was not another prelate under the Komnenoi who in one person was bishop, influential political actor, canonist, and holy man.

⁶ As P. Buckley pinpointed: P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene: artistic strategy in the making of a myth* (Cambridge, 2014), 156.

4) PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

Bara, P., ‘The apparition of Leo of Chalcedon. Anna Komnene’s reproduction of a lost family account of the Doukai’, *Transmitting and circulating in the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds*, eds. M. Ivanova, H. Jeffery (Leiden, Boston, 2019/2020), 199–223.

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Bara, P., ‘Chalkédóni Leó Apologosa: egy főpapi invektíva a 11. század végi Bizáncból’, [Leo of Chalcedon’s Apologos: A late-eleventh-century invective] Ζωοδόχος Πηγή, szerk. Z. Szegvári, T. Véghseő (Nyíregyháza, 2020), forthcoming

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Bara, P., ‘Philotheos of Opsikion: a new saint in twelfth-century Thessalonike?’, *Chronica: Annual of the Institute of History, University of Szeged* 13 (2017), 17–28.