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## **THE LATIN WEST IN THE EYES OF THE ORTHODOX EAST: THE PARADIGM OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF OHRID DEMETRIOS CHOMATENOS**

**Abstract:** *This paper is a contribution to the issue of the relations between the Latin West and the Orthodox East after the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204. Due to considerable scholarly interest over the years, many aspects of this multifaceted topic have already been investigated, though under the light of different theoretical analyses. Some scholars stressed the mutual animosity between the two worlds of differing culture and mentality, which grew when they came into closer contact while others juxtaposed the close communication and long-term symbiosis between Eastern and Western societies which were evident in nearly all fields of their everyday life. Focusing on Demetrios Chomatenos, a prominent Archbishop of Ohrid (first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and his contradictory attitudes on the Latin Church, the paper argues that the adherents of both interpretations are partly right in their assumptions, because they depict differing manifestations of the same phenomenon with conflicting aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Demetrios Chomatenos, Ohrid, Latin Church, Patriarchate of Constantinople, Despotate of Epirus, Empire of Nicaea, East-West Relations*

### **Introduction**

This paper is a contribution to the issue of the relations between the Latin West and the Orthodox East after the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204. Due to considerable scholarly interest over the years, many aspects of this multifaceted topic have already been investigated, though under the light of different theoretical analyses. The more traditional approach has stressed the mutual animosity between the two worlds of differing culture and mentality, which grew when they came into closer contact culminating in the aftermath of the conquest of Constantinople in 1204<sup>1</sup>. Being among the main proponents of this theory, S. Runciman asserted with a sense of bitterness:

“There are idealists who fondly believe that if only the peoples of the world could get to know each other there would be peace and goodwill forever. This is a tragic delusion. It is indeed possible for men and women of education to enjoy the company and customs of foreigners and to feel sympathy for them. But simpler folk who find themselves in a country whose language and habits are unintelligible to them are apt to feel at a loss and resentful. So it was with the crusader soldiers and pilgrims who passed in their thousands through the Byzantine Empire in 1096 and 1097. They had set out to rescue Eastern Christendom, but

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<sup>1</sup> Runciman 1955; Nicol 1993, 4 ff.

when they came to the land of the East Christians they found it strange and unwelcoming. The language was incomprehensible, the great cities unfamiliar and alarming. The churches looked different; ... Nor did the people seem glad to see their rescuers.”<sup>2</sup>

Lately, however, scholars have been critical towards such interpretations juxtaposing to the ideological, religious and military conflict the close communication and long-term symbiosis between Eastern and Western societies which were evident in nearly all fields of their everyday life<sup>3</sup>. Commercial contacts, the existence of Latin communities in Constantinople and other Byzantine cities, Western soldiers and officials serving the Byzantine army and administration and vice versa, as well as intermarriages among the aristocracy, are paradigms of the friendly interconnections which had already developed before the crusaders made their appearance in Byzantine territories<sup>4</sup>. Along these lines, M. Angold remarked that:

“Events in the immediate aftermath of the crusader conquest of Constantinople suggest that cooperation with the Latins rather than hostility to them was upper most in the minds of many Byzantines. In some cases, hatred of the Byzantine elite took precedence over any objections to the Latins.”<sup>5</sup>

Both theories provide convincing arguments based on solid evidence which makes it difficult to draw a clear picture of what the case really was. At the same time, they both assent that the events of 1204 gave rise to mutual feelings of hatred and enmity. Within this context this paper aims to reconsider these opposing interpretations focusing on Demetrios Chomatenos, a prominent Archbishop of Ohrid (first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and his attitudes on the Latin Church. At that time the Latin invasion in the Byzantine territories and the concomitant collapse of Byzantine rule instigated anti-Western sentiments and strengthened the anti-Latin faction among lay and clergy. Meanwhile, despite mutual hostility and antagonism, short-lived alliances were formed between the newly emerged Latin, Byzantine and Slavic dominions, which strove for predominance and hereditary rights to the throne of Constantinople. Given that according to imperial tradition, the head of the Church legitimized the rise to imperial power, the Orthodox high priests were also involved in this political and ideological conflict. An indicative case is that of Demetrios Chomatenos, who while encouraging the political aspirations of the ruler of Epirus, Theodore Doukas, at the same time laid claim to patriarchal status. In this setting, his contradictory views towards the Latin Church offer a meaningful insight to the issue under analysis.

### **Between Nicaea and Epirus. Chomatenos and the Political and Ecclesiastical Conflict**

Demetrios Chomatenos became Archbishop of Ohrid<sup>6</sup> at a time when the loss of

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2 Runciman, 1955, 79-80.

3 Bryer 1973, 77-94; Jakoby 2001, 1-44; Magdalino 1989, 87-110.

4 Harris 2014, 1-5.

5 Angold 1995, 514.

6 The Archbishopric of Ohrid came into existence at the beginning of the 11th century, when it was recognized as an autocephalous Church by the Byzantine Emperor, Basil II, who had just defeated the Bulgarian Tsar, Samuil, and annexed his dominion to Byzantium. The ecclesiastical status of the Bulgarian lands was regulated by three imperial sigils (1018-1025). They confirmed that the Archbishopric was in fact the Bulgarian Church whose seat was transferred to Ohrid, the capital of the Bulgarian state that was re-established by Samuil, after having been temporarily conquered by Basil's predecessor, Ioannis Tsimiskis. See: Gelzer 1980, 3-4. The Archbishopric of Ohrid exerted its ecclesiastical rule over the Bulgarians for about two centuries, until the formation of the second Bulgarian state at the end of the 12th century (1185) and the ensuing establishment of the Patriarchate of Tirnovo. Despite this political and ecclesiastical change, the Archbishopric of Ohrid remained autonomous. See: Snegarov, 1995a; Delikari, 2014. With Archbishops of Greek culture at its see, and a mixed Greek and

Byzantine sovereignty in the East brought about chaos and disorder in the political, socio-economic, and religious affairs of the region. The fall of Constantinople and the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire constituted a turning point not only in East-West relations, but in historical developments in Europe and the Middle East. The once mighty Eastern Imperium was replaced by a mosaic of Latin, Byzantine, and Slavic states, which were engaged – the one against the other – in a hard and relentless fight for survival and territorial expansion.

In the ecclesiastical field, the Latin invasion brought to the fore the dogmatic and ritual differences that had led to the schism of 1054, deepening the breach between Eastern and Western Christianity and making any attempt at reconciliation extremely difficult. Papal policy in regards to the ecclesiastical organization of the conquered territories also played a significant role to this alienation. In place of the Orthodox Patriarch John Kamateros who had fled, a Latin Patriarch was elected in Constantinople together with a Latin Emperor. Although the Pope was very skeptical and displeased by the diversion of the crusade, he could not but approve the outcome which gave him the opportunity to declare the much desired Church unity under his jurisdiction<sup>7</sup>. This enforced unification, however, was not welcomed by the Orthodox clergy. Many clerics, mostly of high rank, refused to comply and were either expelled from their posts or went into self-exile being replaced by Latins despite papal instructions for moderation<sup>8</sup>. They found shelter in the emergent autonomous Byzantine states, which had taken advantage of the failure of the crusaders to control all the former Byzantine provinces. Members of the Byzantine imperial family formed the Empire of Trebizond, the Empire of Nicaea, and the Despotate of Epirus, the last two competing for the recapture of Constantinople in order to restore the rightful heirs to the throne of the Eastern Roman Empire. These political developments were another serious obstacle to the Pope's plans to unite West and East under his authority.

In this setting, the ruler of Nicaea, Theodore Lascaris, the son-in-law of Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195-1203), convened an ecclesiastical synod in 1208, which elected Michael IV as Orthodox Patriarch because John Kamateros had died in exile in Thrace. Immediately afterwards, Michael crowned Theodore Emperor, legitimizing in this way his hereditary rights to the throne of Constantinople which the Latins had usurped<sup>9</sup>. Similar aspirations were being harbored in Epirus by the Despot Michael Komnenos Doukas, cousin of Alexios III, and particularly by his half-brother, Theodore Doukas, who succeeded him in 1215. Having annexed to his dominion the town of Ohrid in 1216, previously under Bulgarian rule, the latter appointed Demetrios Chomatenos Archbishop of Ohrid<sup>10</sup>, following the tradition according to which such a decision lay with the Emperor<sup>11</sup>. By his overall conduct, Theodore Doukas challenged the imperial claims of Theodore Lascaris, promoting himself as the Empire's legitimate heir. In this way, the legacy of Byzantium became a field for ideological,

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Slavic flock, it expanded its jurisdiction over an area, which succumbed to the authority of different Byzantine and Slav rulers as Byzantine power gradually collapsed. See: Naxidou 2000, 26-31. The Archbishopric of Ohrid even survived the Ottoman conquest of Southeastern Europe, up until 1767 when it was finally subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. See: Snegarov 1995b. Lately scholars in the Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia claimed that the Archbishopric of Ohrid was a national Macedonian Church employing thus its legacy as the basic argument for the proclamation of an autonomous Macedonian Church in 1945. See: Belchovski 1990; Mojanovski 2004.

7 Runciman 1955, 151-155.

8 Angold 1995, 515; Gill 1973, 99 ff.

9 Nicol 1972, 295.

10 Nicol 1957, 49.

11 Prinzing 2012, 359-360.

politico-military, and ecclesiastical rivalry between Nicaea and Epirus<sup>12</sup>, through which the former gradually gained the lead<sup>13</sup>.

Demetrios Chomatenos (second half of the 12th century - soon after 1236) was an influential clergyman who also produced a significant body of written work, discussed below. There is little information about the early period of his life. Taking into account his later career, together with evidence of a person under the name of John Chomatenos serving in the Patriarchate as logothete in 1191, it is very likely that Demetrios was related to the ecclesiastical elite in Constantinople through family ties. Moreover, his expertise as canonist indicates a high-level of education, particularly in law. His first official assignment in the Patriarchate of Constantinople that we know of was that of apocrisiarios for the Archbishops of Ohrid. He also held the post of chartophylax in the Church of Ohrid before he was elevated to the post of Archbishop<sup>14</sup>.

Chomatenos sought to increase his prestige and influence by taking advantage of the Nicaea-Epirus struggle. In several of his written works he used the title «Δημήτριος ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῆς Πρώτης Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας» (By God's Grace, of All Bulgaria and Justiniana Prima Archbishop Demetrios)<sup>15</sup> adopting, thus, the false theory that the church of Ohrid was identified with the Archbishopric of Justiniana Prima, which with the authorization of Pope Vigilius, Emperor Justinian had founded in the 6th century<sup>16</sup>. In this way, he aspired to enhance the position of his church by relating it to an older autocephalous Byzantine ecclesiastical organization that drew its privileges from the Pope and an Emperor. Moreover, Chomatenos tried to extend his authority to the patriarchal dioceses under the rule of the Despots of Epirus<sup>17</sup> an indicative example being the election by his Synod in 1223 of the bishop in the town of Servia which lay in the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Thessaloniki<sup>18</sup>. His patriarchal aspirations culminated in 1227 when Chomatenos assisted Theodore Doukas to further his candidacy for the imperial throne in Constantinople by crowning him Emperor in Thessaloniki, which had previously been seized from the Latins (1224)<sup>19</sup>. This development led to a temporary ecclesiastical schism between Nicaea and Epirus, together with an exchange of letters between Chomatenos and the Patriarch in Nicaea with mutual accusations of violating each other's rights<sup>20</sup>.

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12 Bulgarians joined them in this conflict especially during the reign of Ivan Asen II. See: Bredenkamp 1996, 191 ff.

13 Karpozilos 1973; Stavridou-Zafraka 1991.

14 Chomateni, Ponemata 2002, 3\*-14\*.

15 *Ibidem*, 55, 110, etc.

16 Chomatenos was the second Archbishop of Ohrid to use this title, the first being John (Adrian) Comnenos in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was then adopted by all his successors until the abolition of the Archbishopric in 1767. See: Prinzing 1978; Naxidou 2006.

17 The administrative area of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, which initially expanded almost over the entire northwestern and central Balkans, was gradually confined to its western dioceses. Losses were due to the expansion of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the formation of the Serbian and Bulgarian autocephalous Churches in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century at a time that Chomatenos was Archbishop. Moreover, the Archbishopric's boundaries fluctuated because of the continuous shifts in the political borders in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. See: Naxidou 2000, 48-54; Prinzing 2012, 364-366. Furthermore, the state of Epirus included in its territories both bishoprics of the Church of Ohrid and metropolises subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It was in the latter that Chomatenos aspired to exert his authority in cooperation with the influential metropolitans John Apokaukos of Naupaktos, Basil Padiadites and George Vardanes of Corfu. See: Prinzing 2009, 28.

18 Chomateni Ponemata, 263-264.

19 Nicol 1972, 308-309; Bredenkamp 1996, 123-124.

20 Prinzing 2004, 175; Nicol 1957, 92-95.

The ecclesiastical controversy was settled a few years later only after Epirus had suffered a serious blow in the battlefield. This happened in 1230 when Theodore Doukas was defeated and captured by the Bulgarian army in the battle of Klokotnitsa. As a result of the ensuing military advance of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Asen II, the once powerful Despotate of Epirus shrank in size, its rulers being obliged to abandon their ambitious plans. In an effort to avoid pressure and escape political and ecclesiastical dependence from the Bulgarian state, the new Despot of Epirus, Manuel turned to Nicaea trying to open channels of communication with his former enemies through ecclesiastical reconciliation. Church relations were restored at a Synod convened in 1233 in Thessaloniki<sup>21</sup> with the clergy of Epirus recognizing the authority of the Patriarch in Nicaea in the presence of his exarch, the Metropolitan of Ankara Christophoros<sup>22</sup>.

Under such circumstances Chomatenos' influence declined beyond repair. However, being head of an autocephalous Church, he retained his position -probably until his death and certainly until 1236- along with his longing to rise in patriarchal rank. He referred to himself as «*ἡ μετριότης ἡμῶν*», an expression used by the Patriarch<sup>23</sup>.

Chomatenos emerged as a prominent canonist through his *Πονήματα Διάφορα* (*Miscellaneous Works*), a collection of 152 resolutions on various legal issues, which is his most significant written work. The corpus includes judgments, expert opinions, legal advice and rulings for ecclesiastical penalties, forty of which are addressed to rulers, state and ecclesiastical officials, his brother and a cousin. The rest are responses or court decisions to unknown recipients, some of which were issued by his Synod<sup>24</sup>. The remainder of his produced work comprises replies to questions of a similar nature posed by the Metropolitan of Dyrrhachion, Constantine Kavasilas and the Serbian ruler Stefan, a treatise *Περὶ βαθμῶν συγγενείας*, (*On Kinship*), and four acrostic canons on Clement of Ohrid. The short life of Clement of Ohrid is also attributed to him<sup>25</sup>.

## Chomatenos and his Views on the Latins

### The Responses to Constantine Kavasilas

From the extensive body of Chomatenos' writings, the three texts through which he expressed his opinion on the Latins are examined below<sup>26</sup>. The first one is a reply to the following question set by Constantine Kavasilas: *Πῶς λογίζονται τὰ παρὰ τῶν Λατίνων ἱερουργούμενα ἄζυμα, κοινὰ ἢ ἁγία; ὡσαύτως καὶ τὰ ὑπουργούμενα τούτοις σκεύη καὶ τὰ ἱερατικὰ ἄμφια καὶ εἴ τι τοιοῦτον; καὶ εἰ εὐλογὸν ἐστὶ τὸ τούτους δακτυλιοφορεῖν* (Should the azymes of the Latins, the vessels used in their church service, and their priestly vestments be considered common or sacred? and if it is proper for the clergy to wear rings)<sup>27</sup>.

21 It is not known whether Chomatenos attended the Synod or sent to it the letter which he addressed to the Patriarch justifying himself for having elected a bishop in Serbia in 1223, a diocese under patriarchal jurisdiction as mentioned earlier. See: Chomateni, *Ponemata*, 26\*-27\*.

22 Nicol 1957, 113-121; Bredenkamp 1996, 199-215; Stavridou-Zafraka 1991, 85.

23 Chomateni, *Ponemata*, 27\*.

24 The corpus was edited by G. Prinzing in 2002: Demetrii Chomateni, *Ponemata Diaphora*.

25 J. Pitra published a large section of Chomatenos' work: Pitra 1891. For a description of Chomatenos' writings see: Chomateni, *Ponemata* 46\*-59\*; PRINZING 2009, 29-31.

26 In his edition of Chomatenos' works Pitra includes a resolution which forbids intermarriages between Latins and Orthodox. See: Pitra 1891, 713-714. According to Darrouzès, however, this text was written by the metropolitan of Kitros John. Therefore, it was wrongly attributed to Chomatenos. Darrouzès 1973, 320. See also: Simon 1986.

27 The text is published by Pitra 1891, 625-630.

In his response Chomatenos stated that the church canons considered the Jewish azymes (unleavened bread) as a heretic custom, and for this reason forbade the faithful to take communion and celebrate with the Jews. He, however, noted that no canon referred to the azymes of the Latins, which, it appears, were introduced in the Western Church later. He then recalled that many clerics in the East, showing excessive zeal through their writings had criticized strongly the Latins not only about this practice and many others, but about the issue of the procession of the Holy Spirit as well. Some others, he added, among them the Archbishop of Ohrid, Theophylact<sup>28</sup> were more benevolent towards the Latins. Recognizing that they were a barbaric people they showed leniency for their traditions, with the exception of their position on the procession of the Holy Spirit, which they found unacceptable and unforgivable<sup>29</sup>.

Having cited long excerpts<sup>30</sup> from Theophylaktos' treatise entitled *Προσλαλιά τινι τῶν αὐτοῦ ὁμιλητῶν περὶ ὧν ἐγκαλοῦνται Λατῖνοι* (Address to those speakers on the matters for which they accuse the Latins)<sup>31</sup> Chomatenos concurred with his predecessor's view that the only serious error of the Latins -capable of causing a breach- was their amendment to the doctrine, while their deviations in ritual customs were not so significant as to threaten the unity of the Church. In this way, he concluded that the azymes of the Latins, the vessels used in their church service, and the vestments of the Latin clergy should be considered holy, even more so since the Latins accepted eastern worship as such. To reinforce his opinion, he reminded his addressee of the fact that the ordinations performed by heretics were canonical if the ordained was or became Orthodox<sup>32</sup>. Likewise, he assumed that the habit of the Latin clergy to wear rings was not reprehensible, because the Latins were simply giving material substance to the symbolic importance of the ring in the Christian religion<sup>33</sup>.

In a similar vein, in the second text, Chomatenos replied to another question by Kavasilas: *Εἰ πρόκριμα τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ τὸ εἰσερχεσθαι εἰς τὰς Λατινικὰς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ προσκυνεῖν, ἥνίκα ἂν προσκληθεῖ παρ' αὐτῶν, καὶ εἰ μεταδόσει τούτοις κατακλαστοῦ, ὅταν εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐν τῇ λειτουργίᾳ παραγίνωνται;* (If it is acceptable for Orthodox priests to participate in services in Latin churches when invited, and if it is permissible for them to give Holy Communion to the Latins, when they in turn attend the Orthodox liturgy)<sup>34</sup>. After pointing out that some of the Latins followed the eastern doctrine and ritual as well, and thus to a certain respect belonged to both religious traditions, Chomatenos evoked the principle of economy and answered in the positive to the put question<sup>35</sup>. He supported his view with the following arguments. First of all many laymen and clerics from the East prayed and worshiped in the churches of Italy. Moreover, according to Theodore Balsamon, Patriarch of Antioch, Latin prisoners were allowed to take communion from Eastern priests. Finally, he noted that the Latins had never been proclaimed heretics by any Synod. In the end he referred to Theophylaktos' opinion which he shared that clemency was preferable to intolerance<sup>36</sup>.

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28 Theophylact was a prominent clergyman of high education who became Archbishop of Ohrid at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. For his life and work see: Theophylacte d' Achrida, *Discours, Traités, Poesies* 1980; Theophylacte d' Achrida *Lettres* 1986.

29 Pitra 1891, 625-626.

30 *Ibidem*, 626-629.

31 Theophylacte 1980, 247-285.

32 Pitra 1891, 629-630.

33 *Ibidem*, 630.

34 *Ibidem*, 727-730.

35 *Ibidem*, 727-728.

36 *Ibidem*, 728-730.

In the responses presented above, Chomatenos did not consider the papal Church schismatic, approving, therefore, religious communication between Western and Eastern Christians. In this way, he emerged as a member of the moderate faction of the Eastern clergy, who still at that time regarded the Latins as brothers, be they erring brothers.

### The Reply to Monk Gregorios

In the third text, Chomatenos expressed a contradictory view towards the Latins in response to the question on whether the monks of Mount Athos who adhered to the Eastern tradition should come into communion with those who had followed the Latin ritual: *Περὶ τοῦ, εἰ χρὴ συγκοινωνεῖν τοῖς περιτραπεῖσιν ἐν καιρῷ δυσχερείας καὶ προσελθοῦσιν Λατίνοις καὶ τοῖς τούτων ἔθεσι κοινωνήσασιν*<sup>37</sup>. More specifically, a monk under the name of Gregorios Oikodomopoulos, appeared before the synod of the Archbishopric that met under Chomatenos and raised the following issue. In one of the monasteries of Mount Athos, Greek and Iberian monks had lived and prayed together until the conquest of the region by the Latins, who had tried to force them to recognize the papal authority and adopt the Western ritual. Although most of the monks had refused to obey, despite the persecutions and hardships that they suffered, the Iberians complied and acceded to the Pope's rule. Gregorios, thus, wanted to know if the former should continue as before to be in communion with the latter.

In his response Chomatenos initially remarked that because of its many different religious beliefs and practices, of which the most objectionable were the filioque and the use of the azymes, the papal Church was in schism with the Eastern Patriarchates. For this reason, he assumed that whoever embraced the western dogma and customs did not belong to the Orthodox community, but should be considered alien<sup>38</sup>. He continued by praising the monks who had remained loyal to their ancestral traditions despite Latin pressure, describing them as martyrs who deserved the crown of righteousness. In contrast, those who had succumbed to the papal will were characterized as outcasts and traitors who envied Judas<sup>39</sup>. Finally, Chomatenos' verdict was that Greek monks should not come into communion with the Iberians and all those who had committed the same error; the only exception being if they repented, purified themselves through fasting and prayers and returned to the true faith<sup>40</sup>.

In this decision, Chomatenos deemed that the Latins were alien because of the schism between the Western and Eastern Churches. For this reason, he completely prohibited any kind of religious relations with them and with all who adopted the Western dogma even temporarily. Comparing the third text with the previous two, it is obvious that Chomatenos did not remain firm in his stance towards the Latins. In his settlement of the problem with the monastic community of Mount Athos, he conformed to the intolerant views of the anti-Latin faction of the Eastern clergy<sup>41</sup>.

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37 The text is published by Prinzing: Chomateni, *Ponemata*, 198-201.

38 *Ibidem*, p. 199.

39 *Ibidem*, p. 200.

40 *Ibidem*, p. 200-201.

41 In the East, two factions were formed among the clergy: the moderate and the irreconcilable with the latter gradually prevailing. Ecclesiastical policy towards the West depended on which group controlled church issues in Constantinople. Many Eastern clerics were involved in the East-West dispute by writing treatises. See: Demetrakopoulos 1872; Methodius Phougias 1994.

## An Attempt to Interpret the Contradiction

Any attempt to interpret the contradiction we are confronted with needs to look into the reasons for this remarkable inconsistency. These are certainly related to many factors, the most significant being Chomatenos' personality and activities as archbishop, the particular circumstances under which each of the texts was written, as well as the unstable and volatile political climate of his epoch. In the first place, it should be taken into account that Chomatenos was an ambitious and determined clergyman who, for a certain period of time, played a significant role in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Eastern Church and claimed patriarchal status. Moreover, he refused to abandon his patriarchal aspirations even after the decline of the state of Epirus and the concomitant ecclesiastical reconciliation with Nicaea. At the same time, he was involved decisively in the political life of Epirus, the biggest demonstration being the crowning of Theodore Doukas as Emperor. Given his active engagement in politics, it was only natural for him not only to adapt his goals and strategies according to developments and turn of events, but also change his views in order to please the rulers of Epirus and favor their policies. It is within this context that his 'ideological flexibility' can be understood.

In addition, each of the documents under examination was written under completely different circumstances. The replies to Constantine Kavasilas' queries did not concern any specific problematic situation which required attention. They were more in the vein of a theoretical discussion on the issue of the ecclesiastical controversy between the Eastern and the Western Church. Besides, they were addressed to a friend<sup>42</sup> in the context of a private communication. In contrast, the response to monk Gregorios was of a public nature. It was a collective decision that Chomatenos took together with the Synod of the Archbishopric in order to settle a serious problem that had upset and divided the monastic community of Mount Athos. In other words, it concerned a very delicate matter which had to be handled with great care, taking into account both the sentiments of the Orthodox monks and the prevailing anti-Western climate. Gregorios himself, in the way that he described the situation, implied -and in some respects "demanded"- a verdict that would reward those who had remained steadfast in their Orthodox faith and punish the 'defectors'. How was it ever possible to ignore that the former had endured tremendous hardships, whereas the latter having succumbed to the will of the Italians did not suffer at all? Leniency would have provoked a sense of injustice and discontent. The most important diversity in this case was that it was not simply the Western Others one had to deal with, but defectors of Orthodoxy.

Last but not least, Chomatenos' unclear disposition towards the Latin Church was influenced by the interplay between the fluctuating political and ecclesiastical developments. For this reason, an attempt to date the texts under analysis can provide a better understanding of his frame of mind. His resolution concerning the religious anomaly on Mount Athos was most likely issued shortly after 1224, when Theodore Doukas conquered Thessaloniki from the Latins as already mentioned. At a time that the reestablishment of the Eastern form of Christianity to the monasteries of Mount Athos constituted an important priority, it was only natural to turn to a prominent clergyman and canonist closely related to the Despot of Epirus to settle the dispute. In all probability, the third text was written in the period between 1224 and 1230 when Theodore Doukas was a sworn enemy of the Latins. Since his rise to power in 1215, his primary concern was to expand his dominion to continental Greece at the expense of the Latin hegemonies and to open the way for the conquest of Constantinople in order to

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42 Nicol 1952, 222.



restore his imperial rights, as he, himself, saw it<sup>43</sup>. The capture of Thessaloniki was the first and most decisive step of his campaign in Macedonia and Thrace, the second being the peaceful surrender of Adrianoupolis<sup>44</sup>. During this race, his relations with the Pope, who sided with the Latin Empire, were also very tense and hostile, the reasons obviously being political and not religious. Two are the most indicative episodes of this hostility in the period of 1224-1230. Pope Honorius III supported in 1225 an unsuccessful military expedition against Doukas which aimed to protect Latin interests in the East. Having disembarked in the bay of Volos, the Latin army never made its way against Thessaloniki due to a disease which killed many soldiers together with the leader of the venture, Marquis William of Montferrat<sup>45</sup>. A few years later in 1229, Theodore Doukas in his turn, provided military aid to Frederic II of Sicily fighting in Italy; Frederic was a papal enemy with whom Doukas had established friendly ties<sup>46</sup>. Within such an anti-papal climate, it was impossible for Chomatenos to express moderate or conciliatory views towards the Latin Church.

As for the two texts addressed to Constantine Kavalas these may have been written in the time span of 1230 when the policies of the new ruler of Epirus towards the Pope had shifted and Chomatenos' death in 1236. As mentioned before, after the defeat of Theodore Doukas in Klokotnitsa, his successor Manuel, totally weakened, sought allies in order to confront the Bulgarian threat and secure his dominion. During his reign (1230-1237) he tried to contact the Pope more than once, offering the submission of his Church to papal authority in return for protection<sup>47</sup>. At the same time Patriarch Germanos in Nicaea also approached the Pope in 1232<sup>48</sup> and 1234 aiming to reunite the Eastern and the Western Churches. In 1234, meetings were held with the Pope's representatives in Nymphaeum, which however, failed to bridge the dogmatic and ritual differences between the two sides<sup>49</sup>.

It may be assumed that in this setting, the spirit of moderation towards the papal Church was welcomed since it served both Manuel's and the patriarchal plans.

## Conclusions

Chomatenos' attitudes towards the Latin Christians enhance our understanding of how the Western Other was perceived in the Orthodox East. His indecisive stance towards the Latins shows how East-West relations fluctuated even after 1204, ranging from sympathy and tolerance to antipathy and hostility. It is an indicative example of the complexity and multiformity of the issue which is far from easy to describe in terms of an understanding-

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43 Nicol 1957, 47 ff.; Bredenkamp 1996, 65 ff.;

44 It is not clear when Doukas set foot in Adrianoupolis. According to Nicol this happened in 1225, while Bredenkamp argues that the city surrendered in 1227/28 after Doukas' coronation. See: Nicol 1957, 104; Bredenkamp 1996, 109 and 133.

45 Setton 1976, 53.

46 Nicol 1957, 109; Bredenkamp 1996, 149-150;

47 Manuel made this proposal in a letter he addressed to the Pope in 1231 before he changed plans and decided to heal the schism with the Patriarch in Nicaea instead. Even after reconciliation with Nicaea, however, he still considered the possibility of an alliance with the Pope. With the same offer, he sent to Rome in 1235 the Metropolitan of Corfu, George Vardanes who was delayed in Otranto by a serious illness and called back before completing his mission. Nicol relates the two incidents (the letter to the Pope and the mission of Vardanes) dating them both in 1231/32. See: Nicol 1957, 115-117. However, more recent research has defied this connection. See: Hoeck und Loenertz 1965, 164-167; Setton 1976, 58-59.

48 Bredenkamp 1996, 208.

49 Nicol 1972, 311-312; Angold 1989, 78-79.

misunderstanding, accord-discord, convergence-divergence categorization. In fact, we are confronted with a love-hate relationship, to use M. Angold's expression<sup>50</sup>; in other words, a friendly and simultaneously hostile interaction depending on multiple factors mostly political. Moreover, Chomatenos' ambiguity demonstrates that while leniency might be possible at the level of theory, it was much more difficult to apply in practice. In this way, this paper argues that the adherents of the two theories presented in the introduction are both partly right in their assumptions, because they depict differing manifestations of the same phenomenon with conflicting aspects.

All in all, Chomatenos' views reflect the confusion in people's minds, which was due to the instability and uncertainty that reigned in the East during those turbulent years. They demonstrate that, although contradictory, tolerance and intolerance were intertwined, forming two coexisting sides of the same complex reality in Medieval Christian Europe.

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**Η ΛΑΤΙΝΙΚΗ ΔΥΣΗ ΣΤΑ ΜΑΤΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗΣ ΑΝΑΤΟΛΗΣ: ΤΟ  
ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΓΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΑΧΡΙΔΑΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ  
ΧΩΜΑΤΗΝΟΥ**

Το παρόν άρθρο είναι μια συμβολή στο ζήτημα των σχέσεων μεταξύ της λατινικής Δύσης και της ορθόδοξης Ανατολής μετά την κατάκτηση της Κωνσταντινούπολης από τους σταυροφόρους το 1204. Εξαιτίας του διαχρονικά μεγάλου επιστημονικού ενδιαφέροντος, πολλές πλευρές αυτού του πολυσύνθετου θέματος έχουν ήδη διερευνηθεί, από τη σκοπιά διαφορετικών θεωρητικών αναλύσεων. Μερικοί μελετητές τόνισαν την αμοιβαία εχθρότητα μεταξύ δύο κόσμων με διαφορετική κουλτούρα και νοοτροπία, η οποία μεγάλωσε όταν ήρθαν σε στενότερη επαφή, ενώ άλλοι επεσήμαναν τη στενή επικοινωνία και τη μακροχρόνια συμβίωση ανάμεσα στη δυτική και την ανατολική κοινωνία, η οποία ήταν εμφανής σε όλους σχεδόν τους τομείς της καθημερινής τους ζωής. Εστιάζοντας στον Δημήτριο Χωματηνό, έναν σημαντικό αρχιεπίσκοπο Αχρίδας (πρώτο μισό του 13<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα), και στις αντιφατικές του απόψεις για τη Δυτική Εκκλησία, το άρθρο επιχειρεί να δείξει ότι οι υποστηρικτές και των δύο παραπάνω ερμηνευτικών προσεγγίσεων έχουν δίκιο στις διαπιστώσεις τους, καθώς περιγράφουν τις διαφορετικές συνιστώσες ενός φαινομένου το οποίο εμπεριέχει αφεαυτό αντιθετικές όψεις.

