

Fundamental aspects of the christological teaching of Severus of Antioch and the Chalcedonian Definition of Faith

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Introduction.

Severus of Antioch (465-538AC) is the most significant theologian of the antichalcedonian ecclesiastical tradition and also one of the most prolific authors within the entire tradition of the ecclesiastical literature¹. His works, especially his *Ex Cathedra Homilies*, show a significant biblical theologian who, in some cases, such as within his *77th Ex Cathedra Homily*, -his only work which has survived intact in its original Greek text- provides beneficial hermeneutical solutions for complex hermeneutical problems. Consequently, the loss of the Greek original text of most of his work is a great misfortune for scholarly theological research as well as for the Greek ecclesiastical literature.

1. Some important clarifications concerning the Christological teaching of Severus of Antioch vis-a-vis the synousiastic² christological views of his era.

a. The cyrillian-antisynousiastic character of Severus' christological teaching.

Despite his keen antichalcedonism, in the unfolding of his Christology Severus follows to the letter the cyrillian Christology. Indeed, the antichalcedonian Patriarch believed that in the writings of St. Cyril of Alexandria the orthodox christological doctrine found its most perfect formulation, as we gather even from his enthusiastic declaration, that "every word of Cyril should become a law of the Church"³. Thereby, the notion of the Divine Incarnation in the christological teaching of Severus is clearly cyrillian, as it becomes additionally evident even by the fact that he rejected and condemned all the synousiastic christological views of his era, and especially for the same soteriological reasons, for which Cyril had opposed to all these heretical views before him.

More specifically, Severus believed that, when the fullness of time came, the Only-Begotten Word of God, who is begotten of the Father timelessly, eternally, passionlessly and incorporeally, in order to save man from decay and death, was truly incarnate immutably and unconfusedly, as he assumed, through the Holy Spirit and the Ever-Virgin Mary, a humanity complete and totally

¹ There are three biographies of Severus of Antioch: 1) *Vie de Sévère, par Zacharie le Scholastique*, (ed. M. A. Kugener) Turnhout 1971, P.O. 2. 2) *Vie de Sévère, par Jean, supérieur du monastère de Beth Aphthonia*, P.O. 2, (ed. M. A. Kugener) Turnhout 1971, P.O. 2. 3) *The Conflict of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch. Ethiopian and English. With the remains of the coptic versions*, (ed. W. E. Crum- J. Goodspeed) 1909, P.O. 4. The first and the second of these biographies were originally written in Greek. However only the Syriac translation of both biographies has survived. There is also another posterior biography of Severus, written by an Arab bishop named George. This biography is of a lesser value. See, K. E. Mc Vey, *George, bishop of the Arab Tribes, The Memra on the Life of Severus of Antioch. Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 1977.*

² In the patristic texts, as "Synousiasts" are repeatedly characterized those heretics, who confuse and merge the two natures and essences of Christ by teaching that the hypostatic union resulted, either in the absorption of the human nature and essence by the infinite divinity of the Word or in a new compound divine-human essence. This erroneous view of the union of Christ's two natures by the *Synousiasts* we, therefore, characterize as *synousiastic*.

³ . Severus of Antioch, *Select Letters I. 9* (ed. Brooks), p. 45.

co-essential with our human nature. Thus, according to Severus, the humanity of Christ had a reasonable soul just like ours albeit without our tendency towards sin⁴. In this vein Severus, based on a clearly Orthodox Soteriology, rejected all Christologies of his era which assumed an admixture of natures. Specifically, he rejected Apollinarism, stressing the serious ramifications for the salvation of mankind caused by the absence of a human mind in the humanity of the Incarnate Word. In this respect Severus, following the great Cappadocian Theologians, maintains that, if the Word –according to the insanity of Apollinarius- had not assumed a human intelligent soul, by which death has become strong and powerful, the human mind would have remained under the enslavement of death. In reality, however, underlines Severus, the Holy Virgin brought forth God to the world, who was immutably incarnate as a small child endowed with reason and intellect, in order to grant us as gift a complete salvation⁵. It is noteworthy that Severus even added that Apollinarius' teaching renders the Word bound to passion in his very divinity. For instance, in his *letter 65, to Eupraxious*, Severus quotes against Apollinarism Mt 26, 37-38, <He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them. The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me>, commenting as follows:

*<But it is plain to everyone that distress and grief happen to a rational and intellectual soul. But, if they (i.e. the Apollinarians) say that the Godhead of the Only one took the place of intellect, this is in truth without intellect, for us to assign the passion of distress to the impassible nature of God. Accordingly the Only God the Word became perfectly man, that he might bestow upon us perfect salvation.>*⁶.

Severus also explicitly rejected and anathematized Docetism, emphasizing that the docetic Christology clearly contradicts the biblical data, leading inevitably to the abolition of the Divine Economy⁷. For the very same soteriological reasons Severus unreservedly rejected and anathematized Eutychianism⁸, Aphthartodocetism⁹ and Manichaeism¹⁰. Against all these

⁴ See *Homily 14*, P.O. 38, p. 411 · *Homily 20*, P.O. 37, p. 61: <...celui qui par sa nature est fils de Dieu, le même s'est fait sans changement et sans confusion, selon la chair, fils du divin David, quand il s'est uni la chair qui (vient) de l'Esprit Saint et de Marie Mère de Dieu, la Vierge, (chair) qui nous (est) consubstantielle, qui est animée par une âme vivante, raisonnable et intelligente...>.

⁵ . *Homily 58*, P.O. 8, p. 228: <...si le Verbe n'a pas pris une des choses pour lesquelles la mort est devenue forte et puissante, celle-ci est demeurée sous l'esclavage de la mort: par conséquent, si l'esprit n'a pas été pris, ainsi que le prétend Apollinaire, il n'a pas recouvré la liberté. Mais tout a été pris et c'est par tout cela qu'a été brisée la puissance de la mort> · *Homily 14*, P.O. 38, p. 409 · *Homily 22*, P.O. 37, p. 103. See also J. A. Grammer, *Catena Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*, Vol. III, p. 143. See also, Ioannis Th. Nikolopoulos, *Ἡ Χριστολογία τοῦ Σεβήρου Ἀντιοχείας καὶ ὁ Ὄρος τῆς Χαλκηδόνας* (Doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Department of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). Thessaloniki 2002., pp. 58-62.

⁶ . *Letter 65, To Eupraxious*, P.O. 14, p. 19.

⁷ . *Homily 14*, P.O. 38, p. 407 · p. 409. See also *Homily 42, (Catechetical)*, P.O. 36, p. 55.

⁸ . *Homily 21*, P.O. 37, p. 81: <Par conséquent, il faut anathématiser ceux...qui nient qu'il s'est incarné (en prenant) une chair véritable et qui nous est consubstantielle, ou conçoivent celle-ci (comme) sans âme ou sans intelligence, et qui par ces (opinions) rendent notre salut faux ou imparfait> · For the same point, See also *Homily 109, (Catechetical)*, P.O. 25, p. 770-771..

⁹ . *Letter 35, "To the Monks of the East"*, P.O. 12, p. 286-287 · *La polemique antijulianiste IIB. Le Advesus apologiam Juliani*, C.S.C.O. 302, *Scriptores Syri* 127, p. 247, where Severus ridicules the peculiar and illogical teaching of his Aphthartodocetist opponent for "an indifferent difference" between the humanity and the divinity of Christ, as follows: <En effet si tu (i. e. Julian of Halicarnassus) appelles la différence même une non-différence, que le Christ, ainsi que le veut ta stupidité, soit dit consubstantiel à nous par la divinité et consubstantiel au Père par l'humanité, et que d'autre part elles passent et se transforment continuellement, suivant ta façon de voir, [l'une] dans l'autre! Et que la chair passe dans l'essence du Verbe lui-même et que d'autre part le Verbe se transforme dans l'essence de la chair même, pour que nous nous moquions de ta différence indifférente!>.

¹⁰ . In his *123th Homily (his 6th Catechetical)* Severus refutes Manichaeism in a systematic way. See also *Homily 80*, P.O. 20, p. 329: <...Comme les Manichéens qui vont au delà de tout blasphème inique et de (toute) impiété...> · *Catena Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*, (ed. J. A. Grammer), Vol. VIII, p. 159-160: «Τοιοῦτοι γάρ τινας

synousiastic christological heresies, based on biblical sources and data, Severus stressed the reality of the Divine Incarnation, which he perceived as a true emptying (*kenosis*), devoid of alteration, of the Word. For that matter, in his 4th *Catechetical homily*, Severus writes the following:

*<All this is the richness which he poured out upon us he who emptied himself –not that he has ceased to be full but that willingly he made himself poor- and shared our smallness, so that we might be rich>*¹¹.

At the same time Severus -again for clearly soteriological reasons- stressed the full co-essentiality of Christ's humanity with common human nature, appealing directly to *Rom. 11, 16*. According to him, the humanity of the Incarnate Word constitutes a sort of transforming yeast, which remodels all remaining human leaven towards deification. However, this deification of mankind according to grace, emphasizes Severus, would be impossible if the leaven, that is the humanity of Christ, was heterogeneous as compared to the rest of the human dough, namely the whole mankind¹². Besides, Severus categorically rejected as "a thing beyond all impiety and profanity" the viewpoint of the Synousiasts that, after his resurrection, Christ's humanity was assimilated and dissolved by his divinity¹³.

To support this rejection he quoted the Gospel narrations on Christ's appearances after his resurrection¹⁴ and the writings of Gregory the Theologian and of Cyril of Alexandria *against Synousiasts* (*Κατά Συνουσιαστῶν*). Indeed, it is noteworthy –and a matter of paramount importance for the core and essence of the severan Christology- the fact that Severus unreservedly adopted the basic ontological presupposition of Cyril of Alexandria on the essential unbridgeable ontological chasm between created and uncreated being. He, thus, proclaimed and emphasized, on the one hand, that it is impossible for that which is by nature uncreated to be deprived of its uncreated being, so as to become created in its very essence and, on the flip side of the coin, that it is equally impossible for that which is by nature created in its being to transcend its createdness and be transformed in essence into the realm of uncreated. What gives a special value to this *credal proclamation* of Severus, is the fact that it constitutes an essential part of his catechetical teaching,

ᾠφθησαν, οἱ ἀπό Οὐαλεντίνου καὶ Μαρκίωνος μέχρι τῶν ἀνοσιωτάτων καὶ βδελυρῶν Μανιχαίων καταγόμενοι χρόνων ... Κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσι μίαν γὰρ θεότητα καὶ κυριότητα οὐχ ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀρχὴν εἶναι τῶν πάντων ἀλλ' ἕτερον μὲν ὑπάρχειν τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης Θεόν, πονηρόν τινά καὶ τιμωρητικόν καὶ αἵμασι χαίροντα· τῆς δὲ νέας ἕτερον, τὸν ἐν τοῖς Εὐαγγελίοις καὶ Ἀποστόλοις λαλήσαντα· ἢ καὶ δύο ἀρχάς ἀντιτεταγμένας ἀλλήλαις, πονηράν τε καὶ ἀγαθὴν ἐπιστάσι πάση τῇ κτίσει καὶ ἀμφοτέρας ἀγεννήτους λέγουσι· καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐναντίαν εἶναι τῶν ἀγαθῶν· τὴν δὲ τῶν κακῶν· ὅπερ ἐξαιρέτως περὶ τοῦ ἄλλου τῆς τοῦ Μάνεντος διανοίας ἀπόβρασμα γέγονε. Ἐξ οὗ τὸ πονηρόν σμῆνος τῶν Μανιχαίων κατάγεται. Οἱ οὕτως οὖν ἔχοντες, καὶ τὴν κυριότητα ἀθετοῦντες, τουτέστι, τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον Κύριον ἐπὶ πάντων Θεόν, ἀναγκαιῶς καὶ τὰς δόξας βλασφημοῦσιν· *Homily 79, P.O. 37, p. 69-71.*

¹¹ . *Homily 90, (Catechetical), Orthodoxy, January-March 1995, p. 69 · Homily 56, P.O. 8, p. 78.*

¹² . *Homily 10, "Sur l'Épiphanie", P.O. 38, p. 361, par. 15: <A cela que nous dites-vous, vous qui soutenez la sottise fantasmagorique d' Eutychès et de Manichéens athées? Si le Verbe de Dieu, en effet, ne s' est pas uni hypostatiquement la chair, qui est de notre race et qui nous est consubstantielle, en quoi la descente de l' Esprit devait- elle nous être profitable, après être venu sur d' autres prémices et non pas sur celles de notre race? Et comment la grâce elle-même est-elle passée chez nous, cette grâce par laquelle notre Sauveur opérait toute chose, si la pâte était étrangère et non la même que le reste de l' oeuvre (Rom. 11, 16), qu' il voulait précisément pétrir chez lui?> · *Homily 63, "Sur la Nativité ou l'Épiphanie", P.O. 8, p. 298: <Celui qui a créé et formé est venu restaurer et créer de nouveau non une autre créature, mais celle qui était tombée et avait subi la corruption du péché, par le moyen de l' incarnation divine, quand il s' est jeté lui-même come une ferment dans toute la masse du genre humain, qu' il est devenu le second Adam, qu' il nous a délivrés par sa réurrection et qu' il nous a fait repasser de l' état mortel et terrestre à la vie incorruptible et céleste>.**

¹³ . *Letter 25, "To Emesenes", P.O. 12, p. 226-227 · See also the Greek Original excerpt of Severus' 5th homily to Philicisimus in Doctrina Patrum, (ed. F. Diekamp), p. 23: «Ἡ σὰρξ τοῦ Ἐμμανουὴλ τό ἐκ γῆς εἶναι καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν οὐ μετέβαλε καὶ μετεχώρησεν εἰς θεότητος φύσιν, ἀλλ' ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας».*

¹⁴ . *Homily 24, "Sur l' Ascension de notre grand Dieu et Sauveur Jésus-Christ", P.O. 37, p. 137-139 · Homily 71, "Sur l' Ascension du Dieu Grand et notre Sauver Jésus-Christ", P.O. 12, p. 66.*

as we read it in three of his *Catechetical homilies*! To be sure, in his 90th Homily we read the following explicit declaration:

*< I understand that the Word of God, the intelligent Light, who was united to flesh endowed with an intelligent soul, is one hypostasis from two, without the Word being changed into the body, nor the body changing into the divine nature –for that is impossible..>*¹⁵.

In addition, one should also take into account that in his 5th catechetical homily Severus explicitly anathematized anyone who espouses the viewpoint of the Synousiasts, that the human flesh of the Lord was changed into, or mingled with, the divine essence, even to the point of delivering any such person to the eternal and cruel torments of hell!¹⁶ Admittedly, one could hardly find a more explicit renunciation and condemnation of what we –the Orthodox Chalcedonians- commonly reject and condemn as the core and essence of Monophysitism. Severus promptly adds that the humanity of Christ maintains fully its natural createdness even after his resurrection, despite the fact that it is not subject to deterioration and human blameless passions, and despite its -this all based on biblical data- obvious enrichment with attributes it did not possess before the resurrection. For instance in his *Letter 96, to Solon*, Severus declares the following:

*<... Christ after the Resurrection from the place of the dead is made known in flesh as it is written (Lc. 24, 39), having, as he had, that body and no other, but no longer susceptible of hunger, or of any similar thing, nor yet one sustained by foods... the fact that he ate and drank with the disciples as it is written and received food should be ascribed to dispensation, because he did this same thing in order to confirm the nature of the body that had risen and cast the supposition of phantasy>*¹⁷

According to this same line of thought Severus refuted the viewpoint of the Aphthartodocetists that Christ's passion was only an illusion. Against any such notion Severus insisted that, before the resurrection, the Word truly experienced in his person voluntarily -and certainly not compulsorily as if he were a "mere Man-" the sum total of all natural blameless psychosomatic passions of his humanity, with death itself as the culmination of these passions remaining, however, as God perfectly impassible in his divinity¹⁸. In his *Philalethes* Severus explains that Christ's body is

¹⁵. Homily 90, (*Catechetical*), *Orthodoxia*, June-March 1995, p. 80 · Homily 58, "Sur l' Économie de l' avènement dans la chair du Christ notre Dieu", P.O. 8, p. 216-217: <Il n' a pas changé sa (nature) divine et entièrement et véritablement il s' est fait homme, sans s' être changé lui-même en l' âme ou en la chair, **et sans avoir non plus mêlé l' âme ou la chair à l' essence de la divinité; car il est impossible, ou que la nature incréée et immuable soit changée en une créature, ou que quelque chose de fait soit changé et passe en l' essence incréée.**> · Homily 42(*Catechetical*), P.O. 36, p. 51: "quel est celui qui, ayant des pensées saines pourrait dire que le Verbe de Dieu incréé a souffert un changement (en son) corps, ou encore-ce qui est différent-que le corps qui vient de la Vierge sainte et qui nous est consubstantiel, s' est retiré de sa propre nature et est passé à l' **essence divine, celle qui est inaccessible et incompréhensible pour tous les (êtres) créés**" · Homily 109, (*Catechetical*), P.O. 25, p. 771.

¹⁶ Homily 109, (*Catechetical*), P.O. 25, p. 771: < .. **et si quelqu' un dit que la chair a été changée ou a été mêlée à l' essence divine, qu' il soit anathème et qu' il soit livré aux tourments cruels et sans fin**>.

¹⁷. *Letter 96, "To Solon"*, P.O. 14, p. 189. See also, Homily 67, "Sur Marie, Sainte mère de Dieu et toujours Vierge", P.O. 8, p. 360-361 · *Le Philalethes*, C.S.C.O. 134, p. 275: <En effet, bien que le corps fût divin, -par l' union au Dieu Verbe il resplendissait de la gloire qui convient à Dieu-vivifiant, incorruptible et saint, **il n' a pas cependant pas renoncé à être palpable et véritable**. C' est pour cela, en effet, qu' il le faisait toucher par l' un des disciples, Thomas, qui avait douté> ·

¹⁸. Homily 87, "Sur le carême", P.O. 23, p. 83: < ..la créature elle-même ne pouvait pas supporter la vue du créateur qui en vérité est crucifié et qui souffre, et cela dans la chair; il était impossible, en effet, qu' il (souffrît) autrement; car c' est l' impassible, mais (l' impassible) qui s' est incarné, qui est monté sur la croi, afin que le même, acceptant la souffrance dans ce qui est capable de souffrir, émoussât par l' impassibilité le pouvoir de la souffrance et de la mort qui ne peut toucher l' impassible, bien que par l' intermédiaire de la chair il soit entré en lutte avec ce (pouvoir). > · Homily 101, "Sur la Nativité ou l' Épiphanie", P.O. 268: <C' est par tous ces états qui nous sont propres, et sans en omettre (un seul), en effet, qu' est venu le médecin et le Sauveur, ayant participé de la même manière que nous...au sang et à la

incorruptible not by nature, but because it is united with the Incorruptible God-Logos. He further explains that, if Christ's body was incorruptible in itself by nature all along from the beginning it would then originate from the very essence of God, and not from the seed of Abraham¹⁹. For that matter is very informative and revealing the following passage of Severus's *1st Letter to Sergius the Grammarian*, in which he initially explains why Sergius' denial of accepting the real blameless corruptibility of Christ's flesh before the resurrection inevitably leads to the abolition of the divine Economy. Severus finally proceeds applying correctly the fundamental orthodox principle of communication of idioms:

*< For unless we say the flesh was capable of receiving the things which belonged to it, with the exception of sin –for this is not a part of the ousia, but a sickness which ... occurs as a result of inattention- he was able neither to suffer the cross on our behalf nor to endure death. But it is well known that he was undergoing these things in that of which it was natural to suffer. And he who was incarnate is also he who suffered in the flesh, while he remained, in that he is God, impassible. And if we separate him from our statement that he suffered, we separate him as well at an earlier point from the flesh in which he willingly underwent suffering>*²⁰.

As a natural and logical consequence of all the above christological positions comes Severus' perception of deification of reasonable creation in a clearly orthodox way, as a condition brought on only by the action of grace, a condition which could never be according to nature and essence²¹. Despite the different opinion of some contemporary orthodox critics of the severan Christology, who accuse Severus of a heretical-synousiastic understanding of deification of mankind, without, however any specific quotation on their part, for supporting their viewpoint²², Severus' position on the matter in hand is very clear and unnegotiable. Besides, in his *4th Catechetical Homily*

chair, et ayant évité seulement la ressemblance dans le péché, afin que, dans toutes le (conditions) où nous sommes, il nous ménageât le salut et la guérison> ·*Homily 38, "Sur les Lumières"*, P.O. 36, p. 501: <Et cette tentation de la faim, comme aussi les autres, toutes celles contre lesquelles il n' y a aucune accusation de péché, il les a prises volontairement sur lui; ayant accepté pour un temps les limites de la nature, celles qui surviennent par ce qui leur est propre, et il n' était pas porté vers ces choses par une quelconque nécessité; car c' est comme en modèle et pour notre instruction que de telles choses ont eu lieu; ceci est clair ... >.

¹⁹ . *Le Philalethes, C.S.C.O. 134*, p. 291. See also *Catena Graecorum Patrum* (ed. J. A. Gramer), Vol. III, p. 224-225: «Ψεύδεται γοῦν ὁ λέγων ὁμολογεῖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ παθητόν, ἥτοι παθῶν δεκτικόν· καὶ κατὰ ταυτὸν λέγων αὐτό καὶ πρό τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἄφθαρτον, τουτέστιν ἀπαθές καὶ ἀθάνατον· τὴν γὰρ κατὰ τὸ ἀναμάρτητον ἀφθαρσίαν πρόδηλον ὡς εἶχεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ καιροῦ τῆς σαρκώσεως. Διὸ καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει, οὐ δώσεις τὸν ὄσιόν σου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν (Πρ. 2, 27)».

²⁰ . *Letter 1, "To Sergius the Grammarian"*, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 158. See also *Letter 65, "To Eupraxius"*, P.O. 14, p. 42: <Therefore he permitted his body to suffer, while even he himself also was not alien from suffering, for he was united to a suffering body, and, as it is his body, so also it is called his suffering; nevertheless as God he remained without suffering, for God is not touched by suffering>. See also the excerpt of the greek original of Severus in P.G. 86, 929B: "Καθ' ὃ Θεός ἦν ἀπαθής μηδενός τὸ παράπαν συναισθανόμενος τῇ σαρκί, ὥστε εἰ καὶ τῆς σαρκός ἦν τὰ πάθη καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ φύσιν, ἀλλ' ἴδια τοῦ Λόγου τοῦ σαρκωθέντος τὴν ἐνψυχωμένην νοερῶς σάρκα τὴν καὶ περφυκίαν ταῦτα παθεῖν λέγεται" · The Greek original excerpt of the *42th homily* of Severus (*Catechetical*), in *Contra Monophysitas*, P.G. 86, 1849A.

²¹ . *Homily 43, "Sur Jean 1, 16"*, P.O. 36, p. 77: <Car nous avons vu, moi et ceux qui sont avec moi, sa gloire: gloire comme celle de l' Unique du Père, qui est rempli de grâce et de vérité, comme celui qui dirait: **ce n' est pas en tant que j' ai vu son essence de Verbe, qui est ignorée de tous; et il ne précise pas qu' elle a été vue, ni non plus qu' elle a été comprise**; je dis ce que je dis: **mais à partir de ces actions et de ses paroles qui conviennent à Dieu, je voyais sa gloire clairement** et de mes yeux mêmes, mais la gloire, non pas celle qui fut donnée en participation, comme à l' un des justes du début, ni à la façon de Moïse qui recevait la loi et dont le visage fut illuminé et glorifié, selon ce qui a été dit par Dieu: Ceux qui me glorifieront, je les glorifierai, mais la gloire comme celle de l' Unique du Père qui est rempli de grâce et de vérité (*Jn. 1, 14*), c' est-à-dire comme ce qui convient d' être au Fils lui-même, l' Unique, qui en nature et en essence est en lui>.

²² . See. Ἱ. Μονὴ Ὁσίου Γρηγορίου, *Εἶναι οἱ Ἀντιχαλκηδόνιοι Ὀρθόδοξοι*; Ἀγ. Ὅρος 1995, p. 103ff.

Severus emphasizes that even the higher angelic dominions and powers have no access in the divine essence ²³.

b. The analogical examples used by Severus for the Divine Incarnation.

As models for the better comprehension of the Divine Incarnation Severus used the analogical examples of the burning bush not consumed by fire ²⁴, red-hot iron ²⁵, burning coal ²⁶ and finally, the synthesis of Man from a body and an intelligent soul ²⁷. Undoubtedly, any excessive consideration and application of all these analogical examples as precise models for a thorough understanding of the union between the two natures of Christ, would contradict the ineffable character of the Divine Incarnation leading, inevitably, to the abolition of integrity and perfection of both, the divinity and the humanity of the Incarnate Word. However, Severus unreservedly used all the above mentioned analogical examples of union mainly because they had been used in the past by respectable Ecclesiastical-Fathers and also because they have biblical origin. What has to be emphasized is that, in all these examples of union, Severus stressed the unconfused character and indivisibility of the constituent elements of the union, which manifest unified or synthetic items and entities. Indicative is the way that Severus used the example of the burning coal in his ^{4th} *Catechetical homily*:

<...just as fire, when it takes hold of wood, prevails over it, and surrounds it, and penetrates into the middle, and makes it entirely fire, yet by no means changing it from what it is as wood, even though it has the appearance and power of fire –for (the fire) brings about in (the wood) everything which is in it for it burns and shines- and from fire and wood, which are two (things), there is one coal which appears, which may not again be split into those (elements) out of which it is constructed, nor may it be divided into two, so long as the coal remains and is not consumed and brought to an end by the fire. In the same way, so far as possible, and as by subtle theories, I understand that the Word of God, the intelligent Light, who was united to flesh endowed with an intelligent soul, is one hypostasis from two, without the Word being changed into the body, nor the body changing into the divine nature –for that is impossible- nor the one Christ being dismantled again into those (elements) from which there is the union>²⁸.

In addition, in his effort to illustrate how the incarnate Word suffered in his flesh remaining, however, simultaneously perfectly impassible in his Godhead, Severus used the analogical example of red-hot iron in the following impeccable way:

<As when iron or another similar substance is abundantly warmed by fire, and is heated by flame we know that the iron does not pass out of its own nature the iron which has passed into a complete flame and has been made to hiss and to glow by it, it appears to be all fire, and while it is in this state, blows are applied to it, it being smitten by a hammer or by means of other kinds of strokes, but the iron is exposed to the blows themselves, being expanded and

²³. A. Maï, *Scriptorum novacollectio IX*, p. 738=Homily 90 (*Catechetical*), P.O. 23, p. 126: «Γνωσιν ἡγουν φαντασίαν εἶλκεν εἰς ἑαυτά, καί ταύτης τῆς μετουσίας μόλις ἀπήλανε, καί οὐκ αὐτῆς δόξης, ἀλλ' ὁμοιώματος δόξης Κυρίου, μήτι γε οὐσίας Θεοῦ πόθεν, πολλοῦ γε καί δεῖ... Μή πως ὅλη θέα προσλαβόντα τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι, καί μὴ ἐνεγκόντα, καί τό μέτριον ἀπολέση τῆς εἰς αὐτά κατιούσης ἐλλάμψεως, ἧς τοσοῦτον αὐτοῖς ἐστι θεατόν, ὅσον ἂν ἰδεῖν δυνηθεῖην πρόσωπον κατακαλυπτόμενον πτέρυξιν· τοῦτο δέ κέντρον τι φωτός μικρόν ὑποφαίνει καί ἀμυδρότατον».

²⁴. Homily 109 (*Catechetical*), P.O. 25, p. 754-755.

²⁵. Letter 65, "To Eupraxius", P.O. 14, p. 41 · Homily 42, (*Catechetical*), P.O. 36, p. 61.

²⁶. A. Maï, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, t. IX, p. 725ff = Homily 48, P.O. 35, p. 317 · Homily 90, (*Catechetical*) · Letter 1, To Oecumenius, P.O. 12, p. 180.

²⁷. Letter 25, "To Emesenes", P.O. 12, p. 229-230 · Homily 44, "Sur la commémoration des justes", P.O. 36, p. 97ff · Homily 70 (*Catechetical*), P.O. 12, p. 37 · Homily 23, P.O. 37, p. 117 · Homily 58, P.O. 8, p. 217-218.

²⁸. Homily 90, (*Catechetical*), (*Orthodoxia, June-March 1995*), p. 80.

narrowed at the same time, while the nature of fire is in no way injured by the smiter, so must we also understand the mystery concerning Christ also, even although all the power of speech shrinks from the glory of the fact.>²⁹

We deem it necessary, however, to point-out some facts, concerning the way Severus used – particularly in his correspondence with Sergius the Grammarian³⁰ – his favourite analogical example; that of the human body-soul constitution, as a model for the union of the two natures in the one Christ. What has to be underlined is that in his *2nd Letter to Sergius*: a. Severus utilized the human body-soul analogy mainly because of its New-testamental (*Heb. 2, 14*) origin. b. Following the precedent of st. Cyril of Alexandria in his using of the anthropological example (particularly in his *Scholia* in P.G. 75, 1376C-1377A) Severus simultaneously underlined to Sergius that the human constitution from soul and body is *a natural coming together* (*φυσική συνδρομή*), which transcends the human comprehension, since no human being is able to specify how the human intelligent soul is composed with its own body, **as this coming together of two natures is neither a mixture or mingling nor a juxtaposition**. c. **The understanding of Emmanuel is particularly inexpressible and apophatic**, which means that no analogy, including the human body-soul analogy, could be used as accurate in every respect. Indeed, although Severus frequently used the anthropological analogical example, however, he never accepted and applied its exact consequences in the case of the particularly inexpressible union of Emmanuel. On the contrary, he unreservedly accepted the double perfection of Christ according to both, his divinity and his humanity, into the one hypostasis of the pre-eternal Word. The Word Himself in his person, according to Severus, assumed in its totality the human element without accepting any sort of addition, and therefore without suffering any mutation, either in his divine essence or in his divine person, which definitely becomes also the unique person of the assumed humanity³¹. In other words, the one person of the Incarnate Word is not a product of the union³², as it is the case of every human person, which is a perfect unconfused unity, a

²⁹ . *Letter 65, To Eupraxius*, P.O. 14, p. 41 · See also, *Homily 42 (Catechetical)*, P.O. 36, p. 61.

³⁰ . *The Letters Between Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Grammarian, Part Two* (ed. I. Torrance), p. 172ff.

³¹ . *Homily 42, (Catechetical)*, P.O. 36, p. 63: <Celui-la, après être ressuscité, est monté aux cieux; **celui qui est descendu sans corps est monté avec un corps. Étant l' un de la Trinité, il n' a pas jouté a son sujet un quatrième nombre, ou en fait de personne, ou en fait de nature, ou en fait d' hypostase**> · *Philalethes, C.S.C.O. 134*, p. 107: <...il s' est uni un corps naturellement apte à être conçu et enfanté, -possédant, il s' entend, un âme raisonnable et intelligente-, **sans assumer le corps pour l' achèvement de son hypostase; il était, en effet, sans déficience et parfait en tout, comme Dieu**>.

³² . Unfortunately, this erroneous conception of Christ's person -as a new compound product of the hypostatic union- was attributed to Severus by the antichalcedonian Prof. V. C. Samuel, who failed to understand that Severus never attributed absolute primal importance to the anthropological example in his Christology. For this erroneous viewpoint of Samuel, which remained unanswered for more than 30 years see, V. C. Samuel, *The Christology of Severus of Antioch*, in *Abba Salama*, Athens 1973, p. 168 · 172-173 · Of the same, *One incarnate nature of God the Word*, in *G.O.Th.R* 1964, p. 49. See also Samuel's Doctoral Dissertation, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Christology of Severus of Antioch*, Yale University, May 1957, p. 444. Prof. Samuel even came to the point of criticising the doctrine of enhypostasia as... monophysitizing and virtually docetic! According to his viewpoint: <*The theory of enhypostasia ...has to answer at least three questions. Firstly, in uniting manhood in Himself, did God the Word assume it as an abstract reality only, without its own hypostatic or personal status? In other words, does the theory of enhypostasia guarantee anything more than the mere presence of the human reality in Christ? ..Thirdly, since as nature manhood is incapable of existing by itself without its own person, does its subsistence in the person of God the Word, who is in itself invisible and beyond all limitations of the space-time world, make Jesus Christ a concrete reality in this world? Or if Jesus Christ is really what the theory of enhypostasia makes Him out to be, could He have lived in this world at all?*> (*Ἐκκλησιαστικός Φάρος* 58 (1976), p. 290ff. Evidently prof. Samuel was, unconsciously, not only an Antichalcedonian but a Nestorian as well! For a thorough presentation and refutation of Samuel's unacceptable views, see Ioannis Th. Nikolopoulos, «*Ἡ Χριστολογία τοῦ Σεβήρου Ἀντιοχείας καί ὁ Ὄρος τῆς Χαλκηδόνας (The Christology of Severus of Antioch and the Chalcedonian Definition of Faith)*», Doctoral Dissertation submitted to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 238-249.

synthetic entity, consisted of two imperfect natures; a body and an intelligent soul. Besides, we should take into consideration that in the case of every ordinary human being the soul indeed co-suffers along with the body, not simply appropriating the bodily passions. Severus, being fully aware of this inherent danger of the anthropological example, immediately emphasizes that the Word being uncreated, immutable and unchangeable, remains perfectly impassible in his divinity, simply appropriating in his person the blameless passions of his humanity³³. Evidently, therefore, despite the different -still ungrounded- opinion of some contemporary prejudiced orthodox critics on the matter in hand³⁴, Severus certainly did not attribute absolute primal importance to the anthropological example. As an additional and conclusive evidence, we have to point out that in his *Homily 23* Severus not only clarifies that the anthropological example offers –up to a point- some help for the better comprehension of the mystery of the Divine Incarnation, but he also condemned as blasphemous any precise application of this particular example in Christology³⁵.

2. The dogmatic terminology of Severus' Christology.

a. The meaning of crucial theological-philosophical terms used by Severus.

For the dogmatic formulation of his Christology Severus used the terms “essence”, “nature”, “hypostasis”, “existence” and “person”. Through references to Holy Scripture and to earlier ecclesiastical-Fathers, such as the Cappadocians and Cyril of Alexandria, Severus accepted that, both terms “essence” and “nature” are synonyms on the field of Theology, expressing the common reality of the Holy Trinity, in contrast with the term “hypostasis”, which signifies the specific characteristics proper to each of the three divine persons considered individually³⁶. However, in his view, in their christological application the terms “nature” and “hypostasis” are identical and signify a specific independent existence in contrast with the term “essence”. For Severus this latest term signifies the sum total of characteristics considered common amongst the hypostases, which make up a genus or species, including the sum total of the hypostases also. On the matter in hand, Severus wrote in his *Letter To Maron*:

³³. *Catena Graecorum Patrum* (ed. J. A. Gramer), Vol. VIII, p. 71: «Προδηλος δεικνυσι δια του προσδιορισασθαι και ειπεν σαρκι ως ο αυτος απαθης υπηρχε θεοτητι και ου συναιθανόμενος των αικιων, καθα δη και συναιθανεσθαι πεφυκεν η του καθ' ημας ανθρωπου ψυχη. Το γαρ θειον απαθες, και ουδενι των αλγυνειν πεφυκωτων, ουδε κατα τι των της απαθειας εξιστάμενον ορων: αλλ' αυτος των παθων παθος γινόμενον και αμβλυνον του θανάτου το κέντρον, καν ει δια σαρκός παθητής τουτο συμπλέκοιτο.» ·*Philalethes, C.S.C.O. 134*. p. 179: <Toutefois, notre âme ressent les meurtrissures de la chair avec elle et, à cause de la douleur qui en résulte, elle subit la souffrance de la terreur, de la crainte et d'autres sentiments semblables; et c'est par crainte de tout cela qu'elle se soumet aux lois divines et accepte d'accomplir ce qui lui est imposé. Or, le Dieu Verbe, à cause du mode de l'union naturelle, était appelé à ce qu'il est dans l'ordre de souffrir, s'il y en avait eu possibilité. Mais comme il n'est pas sujet aux souffrances à cause du caractère increé, immuable et inalterable de sa nature, il s'approprie les souffrances de la chair, mais n'en reste pas moins dans sa propre nature inaccessible à la souffrance>.

³⁴. See, *Είναι οι Αντιχαικηδόνοι ορθόδοξοι; Άγιον Όρος*, 1995, p. 90-92 · 94-97.

³⁵. *Homily 23*, P.O. 37, p. 117: <Or, de cette comparaison de l'enfant et de l'homme que nous sommes, il faut se servir seulement pour rendre vivante et représenter l'unité; car telle est la valeur des comparaisons que, d'une certaine manière, elles restent en dehors de la ressemblance. Car également, pour ce qui est de l'homme que je suis, l'âme, personne ne l'a vue venir à l'existence en dehors d'un corps, ni non plus un corps sans âme. Mais à propos de l'Emmanuel, c'est un blasphème de penser ou de dire quelque chose de pareil. Pour Dieu le Verbe en effet, ce n'est pas l'Incarnation qui est pour lui la cause de son être, car il est celui qui est avant les siècles, au-dessus de la cause, de la raison et du temps, étant, comme le Père et le Saint Esprit, cause pour toutes les créatures de leur venir et leur vie.> ·*Homily 58*, P.O. 8, p. 219.

³⁶. *Letter, "To Maron"*, P.O. 12, p. 196 · *Letter 65, "To Eupraxius"*, P.O. 14, p. 28.

<But when we say “one incarnate nature of God the Word” as Athanasius the prop of the truth and the apostolic faith said in the books on the Incarnation of the Word (P.G. 28, 28) we use nature in place of individual designation, denoting the one hypostasis of the Word himself, like that of Peter also or Paul, or of any other single man. Wherefore also, when we say one nature of the Word himself clearly denote the one hypostasis>³⁷.

The peculiarity of the Severan theological-philosophical terminology is extensively revealed by the fact that Severus distinguished two kinds of hypostases: a. The self-subsistent hypostases and b. The non-selfsubsistent or dependent hypostases. Severus is convinced that only the self-subsistent hypostases are personal. In this connection he wrote in his *letter to Oecumenius*, clearly referring to the union of Christ’ s two natures:

<..the natural union was not of generalities, but of the hypostases of which Emmanuel was composed. And do not think that hypostases in all cases have a distinct person assigned to them, so that we should be thought, like the impious Nestorius, to speak of a union of persons... When hypostases subsist by individual subsistence, as for instance, those of Peter and of Paul, whom the authority of apostolship united, then there will be a union of persons and a brotherly association, not a natural junction of (one) hypostasis made up out of two that is free from confusion>³⁸.

Evidently, therefore, for Severus a self-subsistent hypostasis is a person; a concrete reality carrying a name, such as Peter or Paul. As to the non self-subsistent or dependent hypostases, these are simply individual though impersonal realities or entities which, however, exist as such, only in union with a self-subsistent, that is a personal, hypostasis, forming this way synthetic entities. For Severus hypostasis neither deny the existence and identity of the human species nor reduce it to non-existence, but simply distinguishes and defines the subject by its hypostatic idioms ³⁹. Severus was certainly aware of the fact that in the past some venerable ecclesiastical-Fathers, had used the term “essence” in order to specify the individual being, designating hypostasis by the name of essence. However, Severus rejected as unscientific and as novelty this interpretation, as he identified “essence” with “genus”, which comprises the sum total of all the homogeneous hypostases of a species ⁴⁰.

It is generally known that the terms “nature” and “hypostasis” had been used during the 4th century in the Patristic Literature for the exposition of the Trinitarian doctrine against the Trinitarian heresies. In this context the Cappadocian Fathers distinguished and opposed the terms “nature” and “hypostasis”, speaking of one nature of the Holy Trinity –in the sense of one common essence- in three hypostases, that is persons. The Christology expressed by the *Chalcedonian Definition of Faith* apparently adopted this distinction between the two terms, transferring it also to Christology ⁴¹. Hence, according to the chalcedonian Christology, the double co-essentiality and perfection -at the same time- of the one Christ according to both, his heavenly Father as to his divinity, and to us humans as to his humanity, can only be safeguarded if necessarily one confesses two natures, namely essences, in one hypostasis. This is exactly what John the Grammarian did by interpreting the dyophysite formula “in two natures” of the *Chalcedonian Definition*, as meaning “in two essences”, the divine and the human. However,

³⁷. *Letter, “To Maron”, P.O. 12. P. 197. See also Letter 65, “To Eupraxius”, P.O. 14, p. 29.*

³⁸. *Letter, “To Oecumenius”, P.O. 12, p. 189ff · Letter, “To Thomas the Syncelus”. P.O. 12, p. 210: <...the hypostases are in composition and are perfect without diminution, but refuse to continue an individual existence so as to be numbered as two, and to have its own person impressed upon each of them...>.*

³⁹. *Homily 125, P.O. 29, p. 237.*

⁴⁰. *Letter 2, “To Oecumenius”, P.O. 12, p. 192 · Contra Impium Grammaticum 2, 33, C.S.C.O. 112, p. 209.*

⁴¹. This is the view of St. Anastasius the Sinite. See “Ὁδηγός”, in *Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi* (ed. Diekamp), p. 44.

according to Severus, even this interpretation would never effectively exclude the danger of Nestorianism, given that Nestorius himself in some of his texts supported the view that Christ exists “in two natures and essences”⁴². Moreover for Severus, this interpretation would create another problem, given that, according to Athanasius the great and the Cappadocians, the divine essence is a concrete reality including the whole Trinity. Therefore, taking also into consideration the fact that the human nature in the generic sense of essence is also inclusive of the whole human race, Severus insisted that this interpretation of the *Chalcedonian Definition* would inevitably lead to the Incarnation of the whole Trinity into the whole human race!⁴³ For Severus, the only solution for evading this ridiculous and impious consideration is to distinguish “essence” from “nature” on the field of Christology, taking “essence” in the sense of the second essence of Aristotle, and understanding “nature” as signifying the first essence of Aristotle⁴⁴. Evidently, therefore, Severus concludes that the terminology of the Cappadocian Fathers is proper only for formulating the Trinitarian doctrine, whereas it is totally unsuitable for the proper formulation of the orthodox christological doctrine. This philosophical basis of Severus –to say the least- disregards the practice –already from the 4th century- of numerous Greek and Latin ecclesiastical-Fathers to transfer also on the field of Christology, the total of the Cappadocian Trinitarian terminology. Indeed, Amphilochius of Iconium followed this practice in formulating his Christology, although he was contemporary to Diodor of Tarsus, the essential forerunner of Nestorius. His example was followed a few decades later by Proclus of Constantinople without any hesitation, although the later was contemporary to Nestorius and posterior to Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, thus becoming the essential forerunner for the *Chalcedonian Definition*. In any case, the conceptual identification of “nature” and “hypostasis” in Christology is the necessary presupposition for the proper understanding of Severus’ Christology.

b. The concept of union of Christ’s natures according to Severus.

In his Christology Severus categorically rejects the Nestorian union “by conjunction” or “by condescension”⁴⁵ and maintains, as does Cyril of Alexandria, that Christ’s natures were united “by hypostasis”⁴⁶, “by nature” and “by essence”⁴⁷. Thus, this union is “natural”⁴⁸, “essential”⁴⁹

⁴². *Contra Grammaticum* 2, 30, C.S.C.O 112, p. 180: <Quod ridiculum est id, quod dicunt isti impii, nempe se dicere Christum in duabis naturis, ne deprehendantur dicentes, ut Nestorius, in duabus hypostases Christum esse: nam ipse quoque Nestorius tum in duabus substantiis, tum in duabus naturis Christum subsistere dicebat.>

⁴³. *Letter 2, “To Oecumenius”*, P.O. 12, p. 192 · The Greek original text of Severus in P.G. 86, 920D.

⁴⁴. J. Lebon, “*Le Monophysisme Sévérien*”. p. 354 · 376 · 388.

⁴⁵. *Letter 2, “To Sergius the Grammarian”* (ed. I. Torrance), p. 175ff: <And so how are we not cast outside of the truth, when we treat a conjunction by relationship in honour an (in)dwelling and an equality of the name of sonship as equal to hypostatic union, and speaking against (the words) of the holy and theological Fathers, we call the incarnation an inhabiting... For in the case of a conjunction by relationship, the independently existing infant has its own person and hypostasis, and similarly, the Word which dwelt in him is seen in his own hypostasis and person and a union by relationship of the two persons takes place, which is only yoked by equality of name and by the honour of sonship.>

⁴⁶. *Homily 23*, P.O. 37, p. 115: «..ἀλλ’ ἐνώσαντα ἑαυτῷ σάρκα τὴν ἡμῖν ὁμοούσιον ἔμψυχόν τε καὶ ἔννοον ἐνώσει τῇ καθ’ ὑπόστασιν» · *Catena Graecorum Patrum*, (ed. J.A. Gramer), Vol. 3, p. 143 · 145 · *Letter 1, “To Oecumenius”* P.O. 12, p. 177 · *Homily 47*, P.O. 35, p. 313 · *Homily 48*, P.O. 35, p. 333.

⁴⁷. *Homily 58*, P.O. 8, p. 218: <.et il y a été uni en essence et en nature sans avoir éprouvé ni changement ni confusion..>

⁴⁸. A. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio, t. IX*, p. 726= *Homily 90*, P.O. 23, p. 148: <..ἀλλ’ ὅλος ὢν ἐν παῖσι, καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ πᾶν ἀπεριγράπτως, ὅλως καὶ ἐν σώματι γέγονεν, ψυχὴν ἐχούση νοεράν· οὐχ ὡς ἐν μετοχῇ τινὶ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ τῇ ὑποστάσει δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ ἐνώσει τῇ φυσικῇ.> · *Homily 23*, P.O. 37, p. 117: <.et nous savons qu’ il y

and “true”⁵⁰, comprising a “natural composition”⁵¹ of divinity and humanity. As such, the “**natural composition**” or “**synthesis**” **differs completely from unions “by admixture” and “blending”**, which are rejected for two reasons: a. Because they cause the confusion of their elements in a new self-contained product. b. Because they are comprehensible by the human mind. In contrast, **Christ’s natures exist “in synthesis”**, that is, **they do not have existential independence, so as to be numbered as two, although their natural quality and otherness is maintained intact**. On the matter in hand we read in Severus’ 2nd *lettre to Sergius*:

*<Since therefore, as you have heard many times, composition possesses the (quality) of being above reason and inexpressible, why do you resort to mixture and damaging confusion, and openly attribute inexpressibility to that? For if the divine union of inhomination and incarnation, and those (natures) from which there is one Christ indivisibly, suffered the same thing as bodies which are mixed, or (if) one of them departed from its own natural quality and ceased being that which it was, I do not see what is then remarkable and inexpressible>*⁵².

In conclusion, Severus confesses, once more, that comprehending the manner of the union of Christ’s natures is an inexplicable and ineffable mystery⁵³.

3. The dogmatic character of Severus’ Christological formulae

a. “One Incarnate nature of God the Word”

This cyrillian formula holds a central place in Severus’ Christology. Severus always used in its totality this “*mia-physite formula*”, which he interpreted strictly within the context of its cyrillian interpretation. Thus, he declared that the term “nature” signifies the one hypostasis of the pre-eternal Word, whereas the participle “Incarnate” signifies that the humanity acquired from Mary subsists “in composition” vis-à-vis the Word, retaining intact its natural createdness, without, however, ever attaining existential independence, so as to become a second self-subsistent reality(=nature in the severan theological language)⁵⁴. We have to emphasize, however, that Severus repeatedly disapproved ironically the synousiastic viewpoint that the addition of the

a là une union naturelle..> · *Homily 70, (Catechetical)*, P.O. 12, p. 37: <..mais que, par le fait de cette réunion naturelle, des deux il résulte un seul animal.>

⁴⁹. *Homily 4*, P.O. 38, p. 301: <Si donc ce Verbe qui a été vu et touché est proclamé à cause de cette union essentielle avec le corps..>

⁵⁰. *Homily 109*, P.O. 25, p. 762: <... il se soit incarné lui-même sans semence humain..cette qui convient à Dieu, par l’ union hypostatique; et vraiment> · *Letter 65, “To Eupraxius”* P.O. 14, p. 17: <..While he remained invariable as God, he himself assumed the whole of me by a true and hypostatic union..> · *Philalethes, C.S.C.O. 134*, p. 129: <S’ ils avaient, en effet, confessé l’ union véritable et hypostatique.>.

⁵¹. *Letter 2, “To Sergius the Grammarian”*, (ed. Torrance), p. 176: <But in the case of hypostatic union and natural composition which is proper to God as well..> · p. 191: <..natural composition or hypostatic union..>.

⁵². *Letter 2 of Severus, To Sergius the Grammarian*, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 174 · See also the Greek original text of Severus in *Contra Monophysitas, P.G. 86, 1845D*: «Καί τῶν ἐξ ὧν ἡ ἔνωσις μενόντων ἀμειώτων καί ἀναλοιώτων, ἐν συνθέσει δέ ἑφεστώτων καί οὐκ ἐν μονάσιν ἰδιοσυστάτοις.. Καί ὡς τὰ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστός ἐν τῇ συνθέσει, τελείως καί ἀμειώτως ὑφέστηκεν» · *P.G. 86, 912D*: «Τῶν μὲν ἐξ ὧν ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός μενόντων ἀμειώτων καί ἀναλοιώτων, ἐν συνθέσει δέ ὑφεστώτων».

⁵³. *Letter 2, “To Sergius the Grammarian”*, (ed. Torrance), p. 172 · *Homily 109(Catechetical)*, p. 753.

⁵⁴. *Letter 2, “To Sergius the Grammarian”*, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 176: <..Athanasius (who is) wise in this divine matters, said that there is one nature of the Word, so that by means of this utterance which is utterly secure we may acknowledge the indisseverability of the union. For the Word himself, who had existence before the ages and is forever together with the Father, and is seen in his own hypostasis and is simple in ousia, became composite in the economy and (that) the Word incarnate ensures that it is understood that the flesh endowed with a reasonable soul existed in relationship to the Word himself, and was not independently completed in its own hypostasis> · *Philalethes, C.S.C.O. 134*, p. 113.

participle “incarnate” leads to the nestorian division of Christ, indicating that the absence of this participle leads to the negation of the flesh. On the matter in hand Severus wrote in his 2nd letter to Sergius:

*<For what they say (i.e. the Synousiasts) is old and foolish and laughable in a variety of ways, for instance, their claim that, when we say “One nature of God the Word” and add incarnate, we are introducing the other nature. They have become many times over foul by the denial of the flesh and the confession of the Word as simple after the union. But it is well known that the word incarnate indicates composition, and one hypostasis from two, and removes distinction of the hypostases and natures>*⁵⁵.

To this end it is significant that **Severus condemned as heresy the notion that Christ has only one essence**⁵⁶, **discerning in this viewpoint the essential confusion of created and uncreated.**

b. The formulae “two natures in contemplation” and “from two natures one Christ”

These two dyophysite christological formulae are frequently used by Severus, who through these cyrillian expressions interpreted all dyophysite formulations of previous ecclesiastical Fathers, which were quoted by the supporters of the chalcedonian dyophysitism, albeit in their case to prove the Orthodoxy of the *Chalcedonian Definition*. According to Severus’ interpretation, because the divinity and humanity of Christ remained unconfused “in synthesis”, the human mind, in its attempt to comprehend how the Incarnation came about, as it acknowledges the natural otherness of created and uncreated within the union, it accomplishes a logical abstraction or dissolution of the union “according to synthesis”; a division only in the realm of imagination. Thus, given that every union presupposes the convergence towards unification of at least two things, it imagines the divinity and the humanity of Christ as two independent entities, that is to say, natures, which contribute towards unity in order to constitute the “one incarnate nature of the Word”⁵⁷. This interpretation of the two aforementioned dyophysite formulations is clearly Cyrillian, since Severus even rejected the Eutychian interpretation “from two natures before the union” and unreservedly accepted that **Christ is “from two natures after the union or Incarnation”**⁵⁸. In other words, for Severus, the real –and not imaginary⁵⁹– otherness of Christ’s divinity and humanity within the state of

⁵⁵. Letter 2, “To Sergius the Grammarian”, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 190.

⁵⁶. See the Greek original text from the same letter in P.G. 86, 1848C: «..οὐ χρή λέγειν τόν Ἐμμανουήλ μᾶς οὐσίας τε καί ποιότητος καί ἑνός ιδιώματος.. Οὐκ ἄν τις νοῦν ἔχων εἶποι τήν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου, καί τήν ἔμψυχον καί ἔννοον σάρκα, τήν ἐνωθεῖσαν αὐτῷ καθ’ ὑπόστασιν, γεγενῆσθαι μᾶς οὐσίας καί ποιότητος».

⁵⁷. See the Greek original text in P.G. 86, 1845: «..τήν διαφοράν δεξάμενοι, **δύο τάς φύσεις ἐν αὐτῷ νοούμεν τήν μὲν κτιστήν, τήν δέ ἄκτιστον**» · See also its continuation in P.G. 86, 921B: «Συνεισιούσα δέ τῇ διανοίᾳ καί ἡ τῆς ἐνώσεως δύναμις, καί τήν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν δεῖξασα μίαν ὑπόστασιν, τά ἐπινοία σκοπηθέντα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει δύο μένειν οὐ συγχωρεῖ· μετά γάρ τήν τῆς ἐνώσεως ἔννοια, ἀναφαινομένης μᾶς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένης, ἡ ἐπινοία τῶν φαντασθεῖσθαι δύο προσώπων ἢ φύσεων ἢ ὑποστάσεων ὑπεξίσταται».

⁵⁸. Homily 80, P.O. 20, p. 330: <.en cela il est de la même essence que le Père et en ceci (il est de la même essence) que nous, lorsqu’ **il est un de deux et cela même après l’ union** sans être divisé par la dualité> · *Contra Impium Grammaticum* 3, 14, C.S.C.O. 94, p. 168:<.duas naturas ante unionem nullus ex iis, qui recta sentiunt, commentus est...Si ergo ante unionem et incarnationem simplex fuit Verbum et corporis experts, **post incarnationem vero unum ex duobus est**, ubi sunt qui ante unionem duae naturae cominiscuntur?>.

⁵⁹ Prof. J.C.LARCHET after discussing the meaning of the formula “two natures in contemplation” in Severus’ Christology, comes to the erroneous conclusion that: <Ce qui est mis en cause par la théologie antichalcédonienne...> est donc la réalité même de la nature humaine du Christ> (*Personne et Nature. La Trinité - Le Christ- L’ homme. Contributions aux dialogues interorthodoxe et interchrétien contemporains*. p. 85). The problem is that prof. Larchet approaches Severus’ Christology through the chalcedonian terminology, which

synthesis is still visible through the human intellect. Nevertheless, Severus is blameworthy because he did not want to accept that the dyophysite formula “*recognized in two natures*”, as it stands in the *Chalcedonian Definition* means nothing different than what he himself accepted, to wit, that the difference of Christ’s natures is comprehended (discerned) “only in contemplation”.

c. “One synthetic energy” and “one synthetic will”.

An additional aspect of the cyrillian character of Severus’ Christology is also his teaching on the preservation of the natural otherness of Christ’s natures “in natural quality” or “in the particularity that belongs to their nature”⁶⁰. As manifestations of natural otherness in this synthesis Severus considers the declaration of “one synthetic (θεανδρική) energy” and of “one synthetic (θεανδρικό) will” in the one Christ. On this point Severus adopted the distinction between he who acts, the energy itself or activity and those acted upon by the energy or effected by the activity, as found in the *4th Pseudovasilian Homily Against Eunomius*⁶¹. More specifically he accepted that the one who acts, the Incarnate Word, in using his power in one energetic or active movement acts as God inhuman, thus rendering divine and human works⁶². Simultaneously Severus rejected the doctrine of the two hypostatic energies which, on the

Severus explicitly rejected. Evidently, for Larchet, contemporary theological research should always be “confessionally directed and orientated”! He steadily disregards that Severus repeatedly rejected any idea of mixture, blending and confusion of divinity and humanity within Christ, at least in his own terms, by admitting the union in synthesis, which for him entails an internal visible duality, according to natural otherness. Actually Severus never said that there is a new compound essence in the one Christ. We could never accept that Severus, contrary to his ontological presuppositions, lastly intended to establish as orthodox what he actually anathematized, even in his catechetical teaching, as the abominable heresy of the Synousiasts! Apart from his terminological one-sidedness, which led him to a verbal miaphysitism, in our view, Severus remained essentially Cyrillian.

⁶⁰. *Letter 1, “To Sergius the Grammarian”*, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 152: <But now, when we say from two natures and acknowledge one God who was immutably incarnate and inhuman and believe that there was an unconfused union, we are obliged to acknowledge as well the particularities of the natures from which Emmanuel is. And we call this a particularity and name it (that is), that which (lies) in difference of natural quality, which (definition) I will not cease repeating many times, and not that (which lies) in (independent) parts, and natures in independent existence are implied, for to say this belongs to those who mutilate (Christ) with a duality after the inexpressible union, and not to us, who profess him to be one from two > · See also *Letter “To Eleusinius”*, P.O. 12, p. 203 · 204.

⁶¹. *Letter 1, “To Sergius the Grammarian*,(ed. I. Torrance), p. 152: For Basil, great and wise in divine matters, wrote, in the Treatise of refutations against Eunomius (P.G. 29, 689C), that he who acts is one thing, and activity is another, and another that which was enacted, and these things are quite removed from each other. For he who acts is he who is impelled towards doing something, but the activity (is) like an active movement and impetus of the will which is directed on and indicates doing something, and is set in motion at once. In the case of activity, that which wills (it) remains complete and momentarily impelled to action but (activity) is not a hypostasis, but the things which are enacted, which are brought to completion as a result of this and exist, (are hypostases)... Therefore what has thus been clarified and made known is that he who acted is one thing, and activity is another, and another (still) that which was acted upon, or effected. And activity is something in the middle, that is, an active movement, between him who acted and the accomplishment of an action and it is not easy to find that which is in the middle, when everything exists in a moment, and as in the blink of an eye, as Paul says> · See also *Letter “To Eleusinius”*, P.O. 12, pp. 203-204.

⁶². *Homily 109, (Catechetical)*, P.O. 25, p. 756: <.Le Verbe qui s’ est incarné et s’ est fait homme sans changement et sans division, fait tout, ce qui convient à Dieu (θεοπεριής) et ce qui appartient à l’ homme, et personne ne dit que le Verbe de Dieu a fait ceci et la nature humaine cela; car c’ est là la difficulté du mystère. Il faut savoir avec sagesse et avec intelligence qu’ autre est celui qui opère, et autre l’ opération, et autre l’ oeuvre, et ces choses sont bien éloignées les unes des autres. Car celui qui opere, s’ est celui qui se meut pour faire quelque chose; l’ operation est ce mouvement opérant pour ainsi dire et l’ intention impulsive qui (pousse) à cela; l’ oeuvre

basis of his presuppositions, is expressed by the acceptance of two natures where each acts only within its “own domain”⁶³. With respect to this issue Severus wrote *to Sergius*:

*<For if each form or nature does those things which are its own, those things are of a bastard partnership of friendship, such as a master’s taking on himself the things which are performed by a servant, or vice versa, a servant’s being glorified with the outstanding possessions of a master, while those things which are not properties of human nature are ascribed to him out of a loving friendship. For he is a man clad with God, who in this way makes use of a power which is not his own, and is impelled by one who acts, like an inanimate instrument, perhaps a saw or an axe, which is used by a craftsman>*⁶⁴.

Severus does not consider the natures -which he sees as two independent entities externally connected “by condescension”- as the center of energetic action, but rather the Incarnate Word, who acts simultaneously “according to his divinity and according to his humanity”, manifesting “one synthetic (θεανδρική-theandric) energy”⁶⁵, adjusted according to his salvific intention.

Certainly this teaching is strongly reminiscent of Apollinarism and therefore is subject to serious criticism from an orthodox stance, as it lacks dogmatic precision in relation to the teaching of the two natural(=essential) energies of the Word. However, Severus’ *mia-energetic* teaching does not imply that the humanity of the Word was empty or devoid of human energy, for he accepted that the Incarnate Word experienced “the energy of the (blameless) passions in reality”⁶⁶, thus accomplishing human works through his humanity. Besides, **for Severus it is indeed a soteriological necessity the active participation of Christ’s humanity to the salvific -for mankind- work of human renovation, through its natural cooperation.** It is very characteristic the viewpoint of Severus on the crucial matter of Christ’s victory over Satan. In his 66th homily, the antichalcedonian Patriarch, using in actual fact the concept of the incarnate Word’s emptying, asserts that **the dismissal and defeat of the Devil by Christ in the desert was accomplished** by way of the befitting humble and human words, **in a human fashion, as the Lord put aside and in a manner deserted his divine power, in order to**

est ce qui est accompli grâce à cette (dernière).> · p. 758: <Que si nous confessons le Christ un de deux je veux dire de la divinité et de l’humanité, et une personne, et une hypostase, et une seule nature incarné du Verbe, conséquemment, un sera celui qui opère et un sera son mouvement qui le (pousse) à opérer, quoique différentes soient les oeuvres, je veux dire les (faits) complètement terminés qui (viennent) de l’opération. Car les unes conviennent à Dieu(θεοπρεπής), et les autres appartiennent à l’homme sans changement>.

⁶³. See the Greek original text of Severus from his *Letter “To Prisdocius the physician in Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi* (ed. F. Diekamp), p. 310: «Ἡ σύνοδος Χαλκηδόνος καὶ ὁ Λέων ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἡγῆσάμενος ἐκκλησίας, δύο φύσεις ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ καὶ δύο τούτων ἐνεργείας ὀρισάμενοι μετὰ τὴν ἄφραστον ἔνωσιν, δικαίως ἀναθεματιζέσθωσαν ὡς τὸν ἕνα Χριστὸν εἰς δύο πρόσωπα καταμερίσαντες· οὐ γὰρ ἐνεργεῖ ποτέ φύσις οὐχ ὕφεστῶσα προσωπικῶς».

⁶⁴. *Letter I, “To Sergius the Grammarian”*, (ed. I. Torrance), p. 154.

⁶⁵. *Philalathes, C.S.C.O. 134*, p. 286: <..Le Verbe étant devenu chair pour nous, sans changer, c’ est lui qui agissait et parlait comme il convient à Dieu et d’ une manière humaine, étant entendu que **la cause de ces manières d’ agir et de parler qui conviennent à Dieu, c’ est la divinité, mais que l’ humanité étant (la cause de) ces manières d’ agir et de parler conformes à l’ humanité**> · Mansi 11, 444: «Μιᾶς γὰρ ὑποστάσεως ὁμολογουμένης τοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ἀκόλουθον μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογεῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένην, καὶ αὐτὴν ἐνεργοῦσαν τὰ θεοπρεπῆ καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα. Καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὸν Λέοντος τόμον, ἐνεργούσας δύο φύσεις καὶ μορφᾶς ὑποτιθέσθαι κοινωνούσας ἀλλήλας κατὰ συνάφειαν σχετικὴν. Τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτῷ βούλεται τὸ βλάσφημον ἐκεῖνο ἐνεργεῖ μετὰ τῆς θατέρου κοινωνίας ἐκατέρα μορφή».

⁶⁶. See the Greek original text of Severus in P.G. 86, 929B: «Ὡσπερ ὁ θάνατος αὐτοῦ βουλομένου συνέβαινε φυσικῶς, ἐπηκολούθει δὲ ὑπὲρ φύσιν τὸ θεοπρεπές θαῦμα τῆς ἀναστάσεως, οὕτω καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἐκπνευσιν, ὡς ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης φησί, **φυσικῶς τρωθείσης τῇ λόγῃ τῆς πλευρᾶς ἴδιον γὰρ σώματος, εἶ καὶ ἐμψύχου, τέμνεσθαι**, θεϊκὸν δὲ ἐνέργημα καὶ τῶν θεοσημειῶν τὸ μέγιστον συνήπτετο ῥύσις παράδοξος τοῦ θεοῦ αἵματος, ὕδατι ζωοποιῶ συμμιγής... **Ἰδοῦ πανταχοῦ περὶ τὴν σάρκα τὴν αἰσθανομένην καὶ ἀλγοῦσαν, ὡς πέφυκεν σῶμα ἔμψυχον αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ ἀλγεῖν τῶν παθῶν ἢ ἐνέργεια κατὰ ἀλήθειαν**».

indicate to us, humans, the science and model of a human victory. Severus even addet that if Christ's dominion and victory over the Devil was an achievement exclusively of his divine power, then the imitation of this achievement by humans would be by far beyond our human capability. For this reason, he further explains, Christ permitted to be himself tempted in a similar way to Adam, in order to be able to heal through the befitting remedies the ancient wound of sin⁶⁷. Severus' *mia-energetic teaching*, also, does not imply that Christ had "a blended or mixed energy", for, according to him, synthetic does not mean blended or mixed. In our opinion, Severus' "synthetic energy" does not differ essentially from the "*new θεανδρική-theandric energy*" of the author of the "Areopagite" works. This "*theandric energy*" was accepted by, both, st. Maximus the Confessor and st. John of Damascus as being dogmatically identical with the doctrine of the *two natural energies* of the Word⁶⁸. Nevertheless, the 6th Ecumenical Council condemned Severus as a forerunner of mono-energism and mono-theletism, in all probability because Severus associated his aforementioned dogmatic position with his categorical rejection of the doctrine of the two natural – for the Chalcedonians essential and not hypostatic- energies and wills, even anathematizing the supporters of this doctrine!

The difference between the orthodox chalcedonian and the antichalcedonian severan approach is that the former, contrary to the severan viewpoint, identifies the energy with its effect, accepting therefore, that two energies necessarily entail two sets of effects⁶⁹. For the neo-chalcedonian Fathers the severan distinction between energy and its effects –which in actual fact was introduced by Didymus the Blind and not Basil the Great as Severus believed- is clearly an inconsistency and contradiction. For instance, the neo-chalcedonian Eustathius the Monk expresses the viewpoint that Severus by recognizing simultaneously two sets of attributes, actions and effects performed by Christ, while anathematizing the doctrine of the two energies in Christ, in actual fact at times anathematizes and at other times admits and confesses the doctrine of the two united energies in Christ!⁷⁰ Moreover Severus overlooked or

⁶⁷. Homily 66, "Sur l' Epiphanie", P.O. 8, p. 346: <Mais le Christ, abandonnant la puissance qui convient à Dieu, le chasse et le repousse par des paroles convenables, d' une manière humain, douce et humble, afin de nous montrer à nous, pour lesquels il agissait conformément à l' économie, la science et l' exemple (τύπος) d' une victoire humain. Si en effet il l' avait chassé, après l' avoir blâmé comme Dieu, l' imitation serait elle-même loin de notre pouvoir. C' est pourquoi c' est encore par des choses semblables à celles par lesquelles (Satan) tenta Adam qu' il permettait que la tentation lui fût présentée, afin de guérir par des remèdes convenables l' ulcère ancien du péché>.

⁶⁸. Ιωάννου Δαμασκηνού, *Ἐκδόσεις ἀκριβῆς τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεως, III, ΙΘ'*, P.G. 94, 1080-1081: «Τοῦδε οὖν δηλοῖ ἡ θεανδρική ἐνέργεια, ὅτι ἀνδρωθέντος Θεοῦ, ἤγουν ἐνανθρωπήσαντος καί ἡ ἀνθρώπινη αὐτοῦ ἐνέργεια θεία ἦν, ἤγουν τεθεωμένη, καί οὐκ ἄμοιρος τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ ἐνεργείας, καί ἡ θεία αὐτοῦ ἐνέργεια οὐκ ἄμοιρος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης αὐτοῦ ἐνεργείας, ἀλλ' ἑκατέρα σὺν τῇ ἑτέρα θεωρουμένη».

⁶⁹. See, Anastasius of Sinai, *Ὁδηγός, in Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi*, xiii, p. 78: «Ὅτι ταῦτον ἐνέργεια καί ἐνέργημα παρά τισι καί τί ἐνέργεια καί ποσαχῶς ἡ ἐνέργεια καί περί τοῦ δεῖν ἑκατέρας φύσεως γνωρίζειν τά ἴδια ἐν ᾧ ὅτι καί τά πάθη τά φυσικά ἐνέργεια κυρίως καλοῦνται, καί ὅτι τό ἴστασθαι καί καθέζεσθαι καί περιπατεῖν ἐνέργεια εἰσι, καί ὅτι μετά τήν ἀνάστασιν ἡ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἐνέργεια σώζεται ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ» · xvi, p. 103: «Πρός τοὺς λέγοντας ὅτι τά ἀνθρώπινα τοῦ κυρίου οὐκ ἐνεργείας δεῖ καλεῖν ἀλλά πάθη, διά τοῦτό τε παραιτούμενος τό δύο λέγειν ἐπί Χριστοῦ ἐνεργείας».

⁷⁰. See, Eustathius the Monk, *Letter, "To Timothy the Scholastic, about the two natures against Severus*, P.G. 86, 913B: «Περί δέ ἐνεργειῶν καί ιδιοτήτων...ὅπως διαφωνεῖ, πότε μὲν ἀναθεματίζων τοὺς λέγοντας, πότε δέ ὁμολογῶν αὐτάς ὁ αὐτὸς πολύμορφος Σεβήρος, γινώσκουσιν οἱ φιλαληθῶς ἀναγινώσκοντες τά αὐτοῦ». We are convinced that Severus would have no difficulty to endorse the orthodoxy of the following text of st. Maximus the Confessor: «Ἐνήργει γάρ τά μὲν θεία σαρκικῶς, ὅτι διά σαρκὸς φυσικῆς ἐνεργείας οὐκ ἄμοιρούσης· τά δ' ἀνθρώπινα θεικῶς, ὅτι κατά θέλησιν ἐξουσιαστικῶς, ἀλλ' οὐ κατά περίστασιν τήν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων παθημάτων προσίετο πείραν. Οὔτε γάρ τά θεῖα θεικῶς, ὅτι μὴ γυμνός ὑπῆρχε Θεός· οὔτε τά ἀνθρώπινα σαρκικῶς, ὅτι μὴ ψιλός ἄνθρωπος ἦν».(Πρός Πύρρον τόν ὀσιώτατον πρεσβύτερον καί ἡγούμενον, P.G. 91, 593A). Besides, for

was silent about a whole plethora of patristic dyo-energetic and dyo-theletic references, similar to the dyo-energetic expressions of st. Leo's *Tome*, apparently based on the extreme notion that the appearance of Nestorianism had rendered these expressions dangerous for the proper emphasis on the unity of actions or energies of the Incarnate Word⁷¹. Severus' theological inflexibility on this point is certainly culpable and issues from his insistence to consider the *two natural energies* of the Chalcedonians as being *two hypostatic energies*. However, this stance led also to his wholesale rejection and condemnation of the entire *dyo-energetic* and *dyo-theletic* patristic tradition as Nestorian! Thus, ultimately, the 6th Ecumenical Council, by proclaiming boldly the directly opposite analogous approach "paid him the same dues". For it considered that the one synthetic energy, which Severus referred to, could not be other than the single essential or blended energy of Apollinarius, from which, besides, as was proved in time, originated the formula "one energy and will"⁷² and it refused to accept that Severus' "synthetic" means unalterably and unconfusedly one. Had he taken a more conciliatory approach on the dyo-energetic and dyo-theletic terminology, admitting positively that earlier ecclesiastical Fathers had spoken infallibly on two energies and wills in Christ then, we believe, the 6th Ecumenical Council would have recognized in Severus' "one synthetic energy and will" the essentials of its own doctrine on the "two natural energies and wills" of Christ. Besides, this precisely is what major ecclesiastical Fathers had done with the "*new θεανδρική-theandric energy*" of the "Areopagite" writings. Furthermore, with his teaching on the "one synthetic (θεανδρικό-theandric)will" Severus does not mean that the humanity of Christ was empty –or devoid of- of its human volitional attribute, given that he explicitly accepted **the existence of a human volitional soul in Christ, through which the Incarnate Word expressed judgments and choices of ethical content**⁷³. Severus also accepted the existence of indivisible wills of the Word, which, based on his presuppositions, he refused to attribute to two natures⁷⁴, that is to say, to two autonomous or self-subsistent entities connected "by condescension". Therefore, Severus in reality rejected the two hypostatic wills and not the existence also of one *enhyposstatic* human will in the incarnate Word, fully harmonized with his divine will.

Severus it is ridiculous for anyone to speak of only two properties or energies in Christ, since each one of Christ's natures has many attributes, such as -for Christ's humanity- being tangible, visible, corruptible, susceptible of hunger and thirst. As for Christ's divinity, being invisible, untangible, preeternal, indescribable. Similarly for the effects: there are as many and different, as one could name every human and divine act of Christ. See the greek original excerpt from Severus in P.G. 86, 909A.

⁷¹. See the Greek excerpt from the *Letter of Severus "To Prosdocius the Physician"* in *Doctrina Patrum*, (ed. F. Diekamp) 41, XXVII, p.310: «Εἰ δὲ τῆς οἰκειᾶς διαίρεσεως ποιοῦνται πρόφασιν τοὺς ἁγίους πατέρας, δύο φύσεις ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ καὶ δύο τούτων φυσικὰς ἐνεργείας εἰρηκότας καὶ δυάδα θελημάτων, τολμηρῶς ἡμῖν ὀρίζεσθωσαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο φανερώς εἰρήκασιν οἱ πατέρες. Ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ πρὸς τὴν Ἀρείου κτισματολατρείαν ἀράμενοι τὴν μάχην, πολλαῖς ἐχρήσαντο φωναῖς, ἅς οὐ δεῖ προφέρεσθαι νῦν ὡς ἀλυσιτελεῖς τοῖς τό μυστήριον διαγυμνάζουσι τῆς ἀπορρήτου σαρκώσεως, ἐφ' οὗ τὸ δυϊκὸν δογματίζεσθαι οἱ μετὰ ταῦτα παντελῶς ἀπηγόρευσαν, ἐκάστῳ νοήματι προσφόρως ἐπινοήσθαι φωνὰς ἐκδιδάξαντες».

⁷². See, Apollinarius' excerpt from his *Treatise against Diodor of Tarsus*, in *Doctrina Patrum*, p. 77: «Ὅργανον καὶ τό κινοῦν μίαν πέφυκεν ἀποτελεῖ τὴν ἐνέργειαν. Ὡν δὲ μία ἡ ἐνέργεια, μία καὶ ἡ οὐσία. Μία ἄρα γέγονεν οὐσία τοῦ Λόγου καὶ τῆς σαρκός». See also, Lietzman, *Apollinarius*, p. 247

⁷³. *Homily 83*, P.O. 20, p. 416, where Severus commenting on *Is. 7,15*, pointed out that : <Ces (mots): "il a méprisé" et "il' n' a pas obei" et cet (autre): "il a choisi" nous montrent que le Verbe de Dieu s' est uni hypostatiquement **non seulement la chair, mais encore l' âme douée de volonté et de raison, afin de faire pencher vers le choix du bien et vers l' aversion du mal nos âmes penchées vers la méchanceté; car Dieu, en ce qu' il est Dieu, ne choisit pas le bien, attendu qu' il est bon par essence (οὐσία); mais, lorsque a cause de nous il a participé à la chair et à l' âme intelligente, c' est pour nous qu' il faisait ce redressement**>.

⁷⁴. *Contra Grammaticum 3, 33, C.S.C.O. 101*, p. 132: <...proptereaquod **duas in salvifica passione voluntates exhibuit, unam quidem deprecantem, alterum autem promptam et unam quidem humanam, alteram autem divinam.**> · p. 134.

4. The antichalcedonian argumentation of Severus.

- a. The exoneration and restoration of Theodoret of Cyrus and Hiba of Edessa to their bishoprics by the 4th Ecumenical Council.

This is the first accusation launched by Severus against the Council of Chalcedon. Severus considered the afore-mentioned antiochian bishops as outspoken Nestorians for the following reasons: a. Their sheer dyophysitism. b. Their shared belief in the orthodoxy of Theodore of Mopsuestia's Christology. c. Their anti-Cyrrillian past⁷⁵.

The Rev. professor John Romanides has expressed the view that Theodoret of Cyrus up to 451 was a Crypto-nestorian, capable to concealing skilfully his pro-nestorian convictions⁷⁶. The intense dyophysitism of *the Tome of Leo of Rome*, in combination with his unilateral initiative to accept and exonerate Theodoret of Cyrus⁷⁷, although the later was universally defrocked by the 2nd council of Ephesos in 449, rendered the Pope Leo particularly detestable and suspicious for Nestorianism in the eyes of Severus. According to professor Vlassios Feidas, the Christology of *Leo's Tome* effected a blow not only to Eutychianism, as it intended, but also to the alexandrian Christology in general, which had a liking for the terminology of *one (incarnate) nature of Christ after the union*⁷⁸. Evidently, although *Leo's Tome* was suitable for refuting the synousiastic and docetic doctrine, however it could hardly be considered equally suitable –at least by any conservative Alexandrian- for refuting Nestorianism. Severus was, undoubtedly, totally incapable to detect underneath the expressed dyophysite wording of *Leo's Tome* the very same christological faith of Cyril of Alexandria. Nevertheless, Severus was silent on the condemnation by default of the two antiochian bishops by the *Robber Council of 449* as Nestorians, which constituted a violation of the holy canons. Therefore, the reconsideration of their condemnation by the Council of Chalcedon was a restoration of the canonical order of the Church. Subsequently, as shown by the Council's minutes, the reinstatement of both bishops by the 4th Ecumenical Council was absolutely justified, for both of them conformed fully with the express demand of the Council that Nestorius and his teaching be unequivocally anathematized by them⁷⁹, showing this way in practice that they both considered Nestorianism as utterly incompatible with the *Chalcedonian Definition of Faith*. Consequently, the condemnation of Severus against the Council of Chalcedon, due to this decision, is totally unfair and unjustified, albeit we acknowledge that the logic of the papal legates on the orthodox belief of Hiba of Edessa, despite his derogatory comments on Cyril of Alexandria and his admiration of Theodore of Mopsuestia, were rash and excessive⁸⁰. We are

⁷⁵. See, *Letter 31, "To Sergius the Physician"*, P.O. 12, p. 265.

⁷⁶. See, John Romanides, *St. Cyril's one Physis or hypostasis of God the Logos incarnate and Chalcedon*, in *G.O.Th.R. 10*, 1964-1965, p. 91.

⁷⁷. Mansi 6, 589BC · 592

⁷⁸. See, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία, Τομ. 1*. Αθήναι 2002. p. 634.

⁷⁹. For the condemnation of Nestorius by Theodoret of Cyrus, see Mansi 7, 189BC: «Θεοδώρητος...εἶπεν· ἀνάθεμα Νεστορίῳ, καὶ τῷ μὴ λέγοντι τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον Μαρίαν Θεοτόκον, καὶ τῷ εἰς δύο υἱούς μερίζοντι τὸν ἕνα υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ». For the similar condemnation of Nestorius by Hiba of Edessa, see Mansi 7, 268C-269A: «Πάντες οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι ἐβόησαν· πάντες τὰ αὐτὰ λέγομεν. Νεστόριον καὶ Εὐτυχεῖα ἀναθεματίσθη. Ἰβας ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος εἶπε· καὶ ἤδη ἐγγράφως ἀνεθεμάτισα Νεστόριον, καὶ τὸ δόγμα αὐτοῦ, καὶ νῦν ἀναθεματίζω αὐτὸν μυριάκις. Τό γάρ ἅπαξ μετὰ πληροφορίας γενόμενον, κἄν μυριάκις γεγένηται, οὐ λυπεῖ. Καὶ ἀνάθεμα καὶ αὐτῷ Νεστορίῳ, καὶ Εὐτυχεῖ, καὶ τῷ λέγοντι μίαν φύσιν. Καὶ πάντα δέ τὸν μὴ φρονούντα ὡς φρονεῖ ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος αὕτη, ἀναθεματίζω».

⁸⁰. Mansi 7, 261B: «Πασχασίνος καὶ Λουκῆνσιος οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι, καὶ Βονιφάτιος πρεσβύτερος, ἐπέχοντες τὸν τόπον τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου, διὰ Πασχασίνου εἶπον· ἀναγνωσθέντων τῶν χαρτῶν, ἔγνωμεν διὰ

convinced that the motivation behind this logic of the papal legates was nothing else than reasons of ecclesiastical policy. What we mean to say is that the papal legates, by proclaiming Hiba, both, innocent from the accusation of Nestorianism and Orthodox, despite of his rejection of the *twelve anathemas* of Cyril -and the cyrillian christological terminology in general- as Apollinarian and Synousiastic, they intended to introduce and stress the superiority of the papal theological authenticity of Leo to the Cyrillian! This policy became for them indispensable after the raising of doubts on the orthodoxy of some excerpts of *Leo's Tome* by the bishops of Eastern Illyricum under the leadership of Atticos of Nikopolis, an incident which was a serious blow for the authenticity and the supposed christological supremacy of Leo. In any case, this logic expressed by the mouth of Pascasinus offered quite a plausible argument in Severus' favour, based upon which the latter seriously questioned the genuinity of the cyrillian convictions of the chalcedonian Fathers, and consequently their christological orthodoxy. In his *letter to Sergius the Physician* Severus quotes unaltered from the Councils' minutes the logic of the papal legates for the exoneration of Hiba, taking as an indisputable proof of the "anticyrillian" and "cryptonestorian" convictions of the chalcedonian Fathers the fact that, unfortunately, none of them objected against this logic, neither demanded from Hiba to renounce, both, his derogatory comments on Cyril and his admiration of Theodore of Mopsuestia –the actual forerunner of Nestorius- as an Orthodox and ecumenical teacher of the Church! In the exact words of Severus:

< ..what will anyone say about those who assembled at Chalcedon, who received Theodoret and Hiba, who not merely hid the foul heresy of Nestorius in the heart, but actually displayed it with open face. When the contents of the minutes on account of which Hiba's deprivation took place had been read, and his *letter to Mari the Persian*, which was full of blasphemies the representatives of Leo, who had become prelate of the church of Rome, pronounced him blameless, making the following declaration: *Pascasinus and Lucentius the reverend bishops and Boniface the presbyter representing the apostolic throne said by the mouth of Pascasinus: from the reading of the documents, and from the statement of the reverend bishops we know that the reverend Hiba has been shown to be innocent. For, when his letter was read, we recognised that it is orthodox, and therefore our decision is that the episcopal rank, also and the church from which was wrongfully ejected in his absence be restored (Mansi 7, 261B). And to these things the whole synod assented and they promulgated the same decision*> ⁸¹.

This argument of Severus was so convincing for many, particularly in the Eastern and South-eastern provinces of the Roman empire, that even Anthimos of Constantinople was converted by Severus to the antichalcedonian camp, although he had been a distinguished member of the pro-chalcedonians at the colloquy of Constantinople in 533 between Chalcedonians and Antichalcedonians. Evidently this unfortunate event significantly contributed to Justinian's decision to seek and finally attain the synodal condemnation of the, so called, *Three Chapters*, namely the person and the theological works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, as well as the anticyrillian works of Theodoret of Cyrus and of Hiba of Edessa, by the 5th Ecumenical Council in 553.

Severus would also adduce the fact that, unfortunately, none of the council's bishops demanded from Theodoret to explicitly renounce not only his anticyrillian past but also his convictions about the assumed orthodoxy of Theodore of Mopsuestias' Christology. However,

μέν ἀποφάσεως τῶν εὐλαβεστάτων ἐπισκόπων, ἴβαν τόν εὐλαβέστατον ἀνεύθυνον ἀποδεχθῆναι ἀναγνωσθείσης γάρ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς αὐτοῦ, ἐπέγνωμεν αὐτόν ὑπάρχειν ὀρθόδοξον. Καί διά τοῦτο δογματίζομεν, καί τήν τιμήν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, καί τήν ἐκκλησίαν, ἀφ' ἧς ἀδίκως ἐξεβλήθη, ἀνανεωθῆναι».

⁸¹. In his *Letter 31, "To Sergius the Physician"* in P.O. 12, p. 265. .

we have to emphasize that the non-condemnation of Theodore by the Chalcedonian Fathers certainly should not be considered, in any way, as an acceptance or endorsement of his Christology by them, as the Chalcedonian Fathers expressly condemned the virtually identical christological teaching of Nestorius, and composed a *Definition of Faith* which -as contemporary scientific research has proven- adopted the core and essence of the Cyrillian Christology. In reality, in avoiding to condemn by name the deceased Theodore of Mopsuestia the Chalcedonian Fathers simply followed the wise example of the moderate ecclesiastical-policy of Cyril himself, when in 433 he later did not impose to the Antiochians, as an indispensable condition for ecclesiastical communion between the two Patriarchates, their condemnation of the deceased Theodore as heretic, but only insisted that they endorse the condemnation of Nestorius and his teaching.

b) The substitution of the Cyrillian "from two natures" with the formula "in two natures" within the *Chalcedonian Definition*.

The second serious accusation of Severus against the 4th Ecumenical Council, is that Cyrillian Christology was ignored in the *Chalcedonian Definition*, as long as the final version of the *Definition* had none of the most typical Cyrillian expressions, namely: "from two natures", "union by hypostasis", "natural convergence", "one incarnate nature of God the Word"⁸². The fact that, from these Cyrillian expressions, the only one which existed in the *original Definition*, namely the formula "from two natures", was replaced in the *final Definition* by the formula "*in two natures*"-which, incidentally, Nestorius himself used in some of his works- was for Severus an indisputable proof that the Chalcedonian bishops, on the pretext of Eutychianism not only abandoned the Cyrillian Christology as "monophysitizing", but also adopted the core of the Nestorian Christology⁸³. Moreover, the fact that none of the Chalcedonian bishops objected to

⁸². See, the excerpt in the Greek original from a work of Severus quoted by Leontius of Byzantium in his *Contra Monophysitas*, P.G. 86, 1841BC: "Δύο τὰς φύσεις ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ νοοῦμεν, τὴν μὲν κτιστὴν, τὴν δὲ ἄκτιστον, ἀλλ' οὐδεὶς ἐγράψατο τὴν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι σύνοδον, τὴν ἄλογον ταύτην γραφήν· τί δὴποτε δύο φύσεις ὠνόμασαν περὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἐμμανουὴλ ἐνώσεως διαλαμβάνοντες; Οὐδεὶς ταύτην ἐστήσατο τὴν κατηγορίαν, ἀλλ' ἐκείνην μάλα δικαίως· τί δὴποτε μὴ ἀκολουθήσαντες τῷ ἁγίῳ Κυρίλλῳ ἐκ δύο φύσεων ἔφασαν εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν· οὐ παυσόμεθα λέγοντες τοίνυν, ὡς δεῖξατό τις τὴν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι σύνοδον, ἢ τὸν τόμον Λέοντος, τὴν καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἔνωσιν ὁμολογήσαντας, ἢ σύνοδον φυσικὴν, ἢ ἐξ ἀμοιβῶν ἓνα Χριστόν, ἢ μία φύσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένην· καὶ τότε γνωσόμεθα ὡς κατὰ τὸν σοφώτατον Κύριλλον θεωρία μόνη ἀνακρίνοντες τὴν οὐσιώδη διαφορὰν τῶν συνεχεθέντων ἀπορρήτως εἰς ἓν ἴσασιν καὶ ὡς ἕτερα ἢ τοῦ Λόγου φύσις καὶ ἕτερα ἢ τῆς σαρκός, καὶ ὡς δύο τὰ ἀλλήλοις συνενηγεγμένα καθορώσι τῷ νῶ διστῶσι δὲ οὐδαμῶς".

⁸³. *Contra Grammaticum* 2, 30, C.S.C.O. 112, p. 181: <...in oratione cui inscribitur: *Expositio fidei*...in capitulo quinto decimo dicit: **Itaque, in duabus naturis unum Filium et iudicem omnium nostrum expectamus, visibilem simul eundem et invisibilem; sed visibilem quatenus nostram visibilem substantia accepit eamque in saecula inseparabilem a se fieri dignatus est, invisibilem vero secundum divinam substantiam, secundum quam eum nullus hominum vidit, sed nec videre potest, ut divus Apostolus dixit. Manifeste eim vides Nestorium in duabus naturis, sicut synodus Chalcedonensis dixit, dixisse unum Filium, et nomen naturae, sicut ipse facis, ad "substantiae" appellatione adduxisse. Illas autem naturas, in quibus Christum esse dicitis, etiam hypostases vocari a iudaica turba eorum, qui eadem ac Nestorius sentiunt...> (Loofs, *Nestoriana* p. 330) · *Contra Grammaticum* 3, C.S.C.O. 94, I 3, p. 19: <Hac vocula ἐξ sanavit sagacissimus Cyrillus confessionem patrum accuratam Orientalium; illam autem impugnavit Nestorius, ut audivimus; impugnavit autem illam cum ipso etiam synodus Chalcedonensis, quae se armavit adversus hanc voculem, reiecit definitionem ex ipsa efformatam quae ἐκ δύο φύσεων oportere ut confiteamur Christum asserit, et eius loco alteram induxit, quae legitimam statuit formulam κατ' ἀντιπαράθεσιν oppositam, nempe oportere ut confiteamur ἐν δύο φύσεσιν proclamandum esse Christum, cum veneranda adiunctione ἀδιαρέτως καὶ ἀχωρίστως ita ut videantur et proferre et confiteri eadem cum ipso Nestorio, qui eodem modo ac illi scripsit de Christo, sicut ostendi: (Fr. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, p. 330): ...sed unus et idem qui videtur in natura increata et creata.> · *Contra Grammaticum* 3, C.S.C.O. 94, p. 113: <Ipsi autem Nestorio adhaesit synodus Chalcedonensis, quae formulam "ex**

Hiba's opinion about the "assumed orthodoxy of Theodore of Mopsuestia", was for Severus an indisputable proof that the Council interpreted the formula "in two natures" in the light of Theodore's Christology! Hence, the condemnation of Nestorius by the Council of Chalcedon was, for Severus, simply hypocritical. At this point Severus in order to prove his accusation that the Chalcedonian bishops understood the one hypostasis of Christ not in its ontological sense, but in the sense of the "Nestorian person", he even adduced in his *Philalethes* the explanation of Theodoret to John of Aegi, that the Council of Chalcedon understood the one hypostasis as the one person⁸⁴.

Even professor John Meyendorff maintained in a substantiated manner that up to the year 518 in Syria and in Constantinople there had prevailed a theological tendency with the sleepless monks at its centre which, while supporting the Council of Chalcedon, however essentially professed the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, although they rejected Nestorianism. According to Meyendorff, the antichalcedonians considered this theological tendency as Nestorian, and as they connected its members with the Council of Chalcedon, they would erroneously identify the Council itself with Nestorianism, despite the Council's condemnation against Nestorius⁸⁵.

However, we have to emphasize that in the preamble of the *Chalcedonian Definition* as well as in its main text, there are all elements, based upon which contemporary theological research has proven, beyond the shadow of a doubt, its absolutely Cyrillian character⁸⁶. More specifically, as proven by the careful study of the Council's minutes, the Cyrillian expression "from two natures" of the *original Definition* was not replaced for doctrinal reasons - as insufficient and monophysitizing - but rather clearly due to reasons of ecclesiastical policy, in order to avoid a nonsensical and painful schism with the Western Church. The reaction of the papal legates to the strong refusal of the vast majority of the Council's bishops against any modification of the *original Definition* with the formula "from two natures" is very revealing⁸⁷. However, it is clear that the dyophysite formula "in two natures", which replaced it, was rooted in the dyophysite confession of Basil of Seleucia at the *Home Synod* of 448⁸⁸, who made it clear to all in the Council that not only he legitimately produced this christological formula from Cyril, but also that he understood it within the context of the Cyrillian teaching on recognizing the essential difference of Christ's natures "only in contemplation". Obviously the

duobus" removit atque reiecit, id autem quod in duabus naturis non separatis definiatur Christus, recepit atque elegit>.

⁸⁴. *Philalethes*, C.S.C.O. 134, p. 146: <..Theodoret montre que le synode a compris l'unique hypostase pour la personne, suivant les vains énoncés de Nestorius que nous venons de citer: On reconnaît donc que ceux qui ont mentionné les deux natures et l'union sans confusion, comprennent aussi que l'unique hypostase n'est pas l'essence ni la nature, mais la personne. C'est pourquoi le saint synode a posé une unique hypostase, non pas en comprenant, comme je l'ai dit, que l'hypostase est la nature, mais bien la personne. C'est, en effet, ce que le symbole lui-même fait comprendre: à la personne est joint l'hypostase! (unknown excerpt of Theodoret). See also the view of J. Meyendorff, in *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, Washington and Cleveland 1969, p. 20.

⁸⁵. J. Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, Washington and Cleveland 1969, p. 22-23.

⁸⁶. See, Γ. Μαρτζέλου, *Γένεση και πηγές του Όρου της Χαλκηδόνας. Συμβολή στην ιστορικο-δογματική διερεύνηση του Όρου της Δ' οίкуμενικής συνόδου*. Θεσσαλονίκη 1986.

⁸⁷. See Mansi 7, 101 · A.C.O. 2, 1,2, 123 [319]

⁸⁸. See, R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon. A historical and doctrinal survey*. London 1961, p. 121 · Th. Šagi Bunić, "Duo perfecta' et duae naturae in definitione dogmatica chalcedonensi" in *Laurentianum* 5 (1964), p. 325ff. Of the self-same, "Deus perfectus et homo perfectus" a Concilio Ephesino (a 431) ad Chalcedonense (a 451), *Romae-Friburgi Brisg.-Barcinone* 1965, p. 219ff · M. van Parys, "L' evolution de la doctrine christologique de Basile de Séleucie" in *Irénikon* 44 (1971), p. 405ff · A. de Halleux, "La définition christologique à Chalcedoine" in *R.Th.L.* 7 (1976), p. 160ff · Geo. Martzelos, *Γένεση και πηγές του Όρου της Χαλκηδόνας. Συμβολή στην ιστορικοδογματική διερεύνηση του Όρου της Δ' Οίкуμενικής Συνόδου*, Θεσ/νίκη 1986 · Of the same, *Η Χριστολογία του Βασιλείου Σελευκείας και η οίкуμενική σημασία της*, Θεσ/νίκη 1990, p. 235ff.

chalcedonian Fathers concluded to replace the cyrillican "from two natures" of the *original Definition* with the basilian "in two natures", not because they intended to justify Nestorius indirectly, as Severus believed, but because from the whole synodal activity of Basil of Seleuceia they were convinced for his absolutely cyrillican convictions. It is exactly because Basil's cyrillican convictions were widely known to the Alexandrians, that this antiochian bishop was selected to be one of Dioscoros' five close collaborators at the *Robber Council of Ephesos* in 449. Justifiably, then, the Fathers of the revisionary commity for the *Definition* judged that this specific formula perfectly served the delicate ecclesiastical-political goals of the *Final Definition*, without harming its essentially cyrillican character. Besides this holds even more, considering that Cyril himself in two instances talked of Christ "in both" (ἐν ἀμφοῖν)⁸⁹, proving this way that he regarded both formulae "from two" and "in two" as compatible and virtually equivalent.

Furthermore, the christological formula "in two natures" reflected a common -in East and West- patristic tradidion⁹⁰, and we see it as very significant that Proclus of Constantinople used, along with Nestorius, this particular formula from an orthodox stance without any hesitation, although the divisive Christologies of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia had preceded⁹¹. This fact in itself was enough to refute in the best way the Severus' exaggerated and, in any case, unacceptable argument that, although some previous ecclesiastical Fathers used the formula "in two natures", nevertheless, the appearance of Nestorianism had rendered it dangerous and unsuitable for the accurate wording of the christological doctrine⁹². According to this logic Severus should have also abandoned as dangerous even the cyrillican *mia-physite* formula⁹³, for Eutyches and antichalcedonian

⁸⁹. See Cyril's *Letter 41, "To Accacius bishop of Scythopolis*, in P.G. 77, 220D: "...κἄν εἰ δύο χιμάρους παρεκόμισεν ἢ χρεία πρὸς παράδειξιν τοῦ κατὰ Χριστόν μυστηρίου, κἄν εἰ δυάς ὀρνίθων ἦν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἣν ὁ ἐν ἀμφοῖν, καὶ ὡς ἐν πάθει καὶ ἔξω πάθους, καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ, καὶ ὑπὲρ θάνατον...". See also Cyril's *Letter "To Xystus bishop of Rome*, in P.G. 77, 288A: "...κἄν τῇ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος φύσει, καὶ ἓνα ἐν ἀμφοῖν καὶ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν τὸν Χριστόν".

⁹⁰. Ambros of Mediolanum frequently used this christological formula in certain variations. See, Mansi 7, 468B= *De fide* 2, 9. 77, P.L. 16, 576: <Servemus distinctionem divinitatis et carnis. Unus in utraque loquitur Dei Filius, quia **in eodem utraque natura** est et si idem loquitur, non uno semper loquitur modo. Intende in eo nunc gloriam Dei, nunc hominis passiones> For the Christological formula "unus in utroque" in the latin theology and especially in Ambros of Mediolanum see, R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon. A historical and doctrinal survey*. London 1961, p. 116 · G. Bardy, "Sur une citation de Saint Ambroise dans les controverses christologiques", R.H.E. 40, 1944-1945, p. 171-176.

⁹¹. C. Martin, *Une florilège grec d' homélies christologiques du IVe et Ve siècles sur la Nativité* (Paris Gr. 1491), in *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), p. 43 : "...ἓνα οὖν νοοῦμεν τὸν Χριστόν ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ὁμολογεῖν μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, θεότητος καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος." · P.G. 65, 846A: <Igitur dicamus... **Christum in duabus naturis subsistere** divinitatis atque humanitatis, unum esse Jesum Christum, unicum filium dominum Jesum Christum. Etenim duarum naturarum unio in unica filiatione perata est. Unio fuit non confusio, unio non immutatio, unio, inquam, non permistio>. Leontius the Byzantian also quotes the following excerpts from Gregory of Nyssa with the same formula: P.G. 86, 1828B: "Κἄν γάρ ἀρήρητῳ καὶ ἀφράστῳ ἐνώσει τὰ συναμφοτέρα ἐν, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ φύσει, διὰ τὸ ἀσύγχυτὸν φημί· ἕτερον γάρ τὸ θεῖον παρά τὸ σῶμα, ἐπέισακτον γάρ · ὁ τοῖνον Χριστός δύο ὑπάρχων φύσεις καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀληθῶς γνωριζόμενος, μοναδικὸν πρόσωπον, ἀσύγχυτον ὁμῶς" · P.G. 86, 1828B=Mansi 7, 829: "Εἰ γάρ καὶ ἐν δύο φύσεσιν νοεῖται καὶ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλ' ἓνα ἴσμεν Υἱόν".

⁹². See the relative declarations of Severus in his Greek original, quoted by Leontius the Byzantian in his treatise *Contra Monophysitas*, P.G. 86, 1841D-1844A. See also P.G. 86, 904D-905A · P.G. 89, 104D · 109D-112A. According to this logic of Severus, as the Neochalcedonian Leontius points out, even the Scriptural passages that Nestorius misinterpreted should also be abandoned. See, P.G. 86, 1852D: "Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν εἰπεῖν· Νεστόριος, φασί, κατεχρήσατο τῇ τῶν δύο φύσεων φωνῇ ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ, ἢ καὶ ὑμεῖς. Λέγομεν οὖν ὅτι καὶ Γραφικαῖς φωναῖς πολλαῖς ἐχρήσατο· μηδ' αὐταὶ οὖν ὀνομαζέσθωσαν ἡμῖν, εἰ συνοράτε".

⁹³. See the answer of Leontius the Byzantian in P.G. 86, 1852D-1853A: "...ἀλλά καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν φωνὴν τὴν λέγουσαν μίαν φύσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένην, ἔστι κατὰ Ἄρειον, ὡς οὐ πάντῃ ἀτρέπτου φύσεως ὄντος

Synousiasts such as Sergius the Grammarian and Julian of Halicarnassus, whom Severus himself had repeatedly confronted in the past, misinterpreted this formula. In this instance, however, Severus considered its cyrillic interpretation as sufficient, thus employing a double standard, and he did not correctly evaluate that the "*one and the same Christ, Son and Lord, Only-begotten, who is recognized in two natures...*" as it is explicitly emphasized in the *final Definition*, is no other than the God-Logos⁹⁴. Nestorius would never accept such an explicit identification between God the Logos and Christ, since, according to his presuppositions, the name "Logos" was strictly indicative of the divine essence, and would never indicate the person of a created nature, such as the humanity of Jesus. The only concession that Nestorius could allow, as an alternative to any exchange of properties of the two natures on the Person of the Word, was an exchange of names between two hypostatic entities, that is, the Logos and Christ. In this context Nestorius admitted the name "*Christ*" for the God-Logos, because of the perpetual conjunction of the God-Logos with Christ!⁹⁵.

Furthermore, Severus degraded as misleading and deceitful the numerous anti-Nestorian elements within the full text of the *Chalcedonian Definition*, despite the fact that Nestorius was characterized as "mentally deranged" (*φρενοβλαβής*) by the authors of the *Definition*⁹⁶. Obviously such a severe characterization for Nestorius could only demonstrate the great extent of aversion of the chalcedonian Fathers for Nestorius and his Christology. Therefore, we cannot accept Severus' argument that the chalcedonian Fathers deceitfully condemned Nestorius by this name in their doctrinal *Definition*.

Severus also ignored and considered as being deceptive the beatitudes in Cyril of Alexandria's favour, as well as the honourable reference of Cyril's *synodal epistles to Nestorius* and *John of Antioch* in the preamble of the *Chalcedonian Definition*⁹⁷. This fact clearly demonstrates that the Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council approved and adopted the content of those epistles with all their typical cyrillic expressions⁹⁸.

All of these elements prove in our opinion blatantly the extent to which Severus' antichalcedonian rhetoric was, in the last analysis, unfounded and unjustified, for he thus

τοῦ Υἱοῦ νοεῖν· καί κατά Ἀπολινάριον, ὡς αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου ἀντί νοῦ ψυχικοῦ γενομένου, τῇ ἐμψυχωθείσῃ ἀλόγῳ σαρκί λογίζεσθαι· καί κατά Εὐτυχεᾶ ὡς αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου εἰς σάρκα μεταποιηθέντος ἐκδέχεσθαι. Ἐάν οὖν μή τά νοήματα ἀνακρίνωμεν τῶν ὁμολογούντων καί ταύτην κἀκεῖνην οὐκ ἄλλως προσιέμεθα τήν φωνήν" · See also, Anastasius of Sinai, P.G. 89, 120B, where this Neochalcedonian Church-Father underscores that according to Severus' logic: "Πάλιν τε, δι' Εὐτυχεᾶ ...ἀποδοκμασθήσεται ἡ φωνή ἢ μίαν φύσιν φάσκουσα τῆς θεότητος καί τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος αὐτοῦ· καί ἔσται λοιπόν κενόν τό κήρυγμα, καί ματαιαί ἡ πίστις, καί οἰχήσεται ἡ εὐσέβεια, γενομένη πανταπώλεια".

⁹⁴ . See, Mansi 7, 112D-113A: «...οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον, ἀλλ' ἓνα καί τόν αὐτόν υἱόν μονογενῆ Θεόν Λόγον κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν...».

⁹⁵ . See, Fr. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, p. 275: "Διά τοῦτο καί Χριστός ὁ Θεός Λόγος ὀνομάζεται, ἐπεὶπερ ἔχει τήν συνάφειαν τήν πρός τόν Χριστόν διηνεκῆ. Καί οὐκ ἔστι τόν Θεόν Λόγον ἄνευ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος πράξαι τι. Ἀπὸ κριβῶται γάρ εἰς ἄκραν συνάφειαν, οὐκ εἰς ἀποθέωσιν κατά τούς σοφούς τῶν δογματιστῶν τῶν νεωτέρων". See also, I. Θ. Νικολόπουλου, *Ἡ Χριστολογία τοῦ Σεβήρου Ἀντιοχείας καί ὁ Ὅρος τῆς Χαλκηδόνας*, p. 440.

⁹⁶ . Mansi 7, 113, where the Chalcedonian Fathers explicitly declare that they accept the *synodal epistles* of the blessed Cyril *to Nestorius* "εἰς ἔλεγχον μέν τῆς Νεστορίου φρενοβλαβείας, ἐρμηνείαν δέ τοῦ σωτηρίου Συμβόλου ποθοῦντων τήν ἔννοιαν ...".

⁹⁷ . Mansi 7, 113BC.

⁹⁸ . See, Leontius the Byzantinian, *Contra Monophysitas*, P.G. 86, 1844B, where this Neochalcedonian Father, after repeating Severus' rejection of the Council of Chalcedon "...διότι μή καί ἐκ δύο λέγει, καί τήν καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἔνωσιν Χριστοῦ", he then carries on to answer in the following words: "Ὅτι δέ λέγει (i. e. the Council) τάδε, τίς ἀμφιβάλλει; Εἰ γάρ ἡ σύνοδος ψηφισομένη φησὶν οὕτως, τάς τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου τοῦ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας Ἐκκλησίας γενομένου ποιμένος συνοδικᾶς ἐπιστολάς πρός Νεστόριον καί πρός τούς τῆς Ἀνατολῆς δεχόμεθα ἀρμοδίας οὔσας εἰς ἔλεγχον τῆς Νεστορίου φρενοβλαβείας, αἷς ἐπιστολαῖς καί τήν φυσικήν καί τήν καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἔνωσιν ἔρη ὁ Πατήρ, πῶς οὐχί τά αὐτά ὁμολογεῖ, ὃ συμφωνεῖ, καί ὄν ἀποδέχεται ἐν τοῖσδε;".

ignored the patristic tradition widely established in East and West, and stubbornly insisted on judging the *Chalcedonian Definition* based on pre-chalcedonian alexandrian presuppositions, preferring these to be universally accepted, at the expense of the doctrinal *Definition* of an Ecumenical Council! Subsequently, from an ecclesiological point of view, it was logical, legitimate and to be expected that the neochalcedonian Fathers of the 6th and 7th centuries would judge negatively and condemn the doctrinal formulations of Severus, based on the universally established -by the 4th Ecumenical Council, also for Christology- terminology of the Cappadocian Fathers, "repaying Severus his just deserts". In our opinion, the inclusion of Severus of Antioch amongst the Apollinarians and the Synousiasts in the Orthodox dyophysite tradition has to be interpreted within this context. Consequently, we believe that the true reason for the synodal condemnation of Severus as heretic was not due to his christological formulations *per se* -which in any case are essentially Cyrillian and therefore acceptable within the prism of the alexandrian conceptual identification of nature and hypostasis in Christology- but rather his acute, caustic and obstinate antichalcedonism, which made him one of the foundational forerunners for the perpetuation of the first great schism in the life of the one, unified Church of Christ.

Conclusions

An objective and thorough study and analysis of Severus' theological works demonstrates that, despite his caustic and obstinate criticism against the 4th Ecumenical Council, Severus in reality did not go away from the essence and core of the cyrillian Christology. As we have seen, Severus explicitly rejected and anathematized all Christologies of his era which assumed an admixture of natures, based on a clearly Orthodox Soteriology. It is very significant that Severus in his *catechetical Homilies* –and not only- fully adopted the basic ontological presuppositions of Cyril of Alexandria on the essential unbridgeable ontological chasm between created and uncreated, renouncing this way the core and essence of Monophysitism. Nevertheless, despite the essentially cyrillian character of his Christology, his antichalcedonian interpretation of Cyril's Christology is erroneous and also his criticism against the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon and its *Doctrinal Definition* is totally unacceptable.

In fact Severus denied to the chalcedonian Fathers the right to convey the terminology of the cappadocian Fathers from the field of Triadology on the field of Christology. The fact that even after 433 Cyril of Alexandria continued to use his famous miaphysite formula in its classical form, speaking of "one incarnate nature of God the Word after the union", instead of "two united and undivided natures", was assumed by Severus as proof that Cyril rejected as inappropriate the use of the cappadocian terminology also on the field of Christology. However, it is also undeniable that Cyril never sought to impose to the Antiochians his own *miaphysite* christological terminology as the only proper and Orthodox for Christology. Otherwise Cyril would have rejected the *Formulary of Reunion* of the Antiochians as insufficient and Nestorianizing, particularly since none of his own most-typical christological expressions existed in its text. Besides, contrary to Severus, Cyril of Alexandria never set the point of abandoning the dyophysite confessions of the anterior ecclesiastical Fathers, with a view to the unrealistic argument that the appearance of Nestorianism had rendered these expressions dangerous for a sound and Orthodox Christology. It is also a fact that Cyril in two instances talked of one Christ "in both" (ἐν ἀμφοῖν), a formula which is virtually identical to the formula "in two" (ἐν δύο) of the *Chalcedonian Definition*.

Nevertheless, we wish to express our complete disagreement to any attempt of contemporary orthodox critics to dissociate essentially the Christology of Severus from the

Christology of Cyril, by claiming that Severus distorted in a synousiastic way the authentic cyrillian meaning of the afore-mentioned cyrillian formulae. We do not overlook the negative criticism and the anathemas of the neochalcedonian Fathers against Severus, as well as his synodal condemnation by the 6th and the 7th Ecumenical Councils. However, we should always have in mind that the Orthodox Fathers do not really care, *as Academics*, to give an accurate account of Severus' Christology, as they rejected (justifiably) as appolinarizing his alternative christological terminology⁹⁹. For them what really matters is that the 4th Ecumenical Council in the most official way has endorsed the use of the cappadosian terminology also on the field of Christology, as anterior Fathers -such as Proclus of Constantinople and Amphilocheus of Iconium- had already done. Severus rejected this terminology, breaking in this way the catholic unity of the Church. Therefore, he should be branded as a traitor of the catholic unity and the Orthodoxy of the Church. Besides, we should never forget that the ecclesiastical Fathers were most of all pastors of human souls, commissioned for keeping the Catholicity of the Church. At any rate, Severus' antichalcedonian interpretation of Cyril's Christology was for them utterly unacceptable, overshadowing the fact that he essentially followed the letter of this Christology. In addition, the neochalcedonian Fathers –justifiably- could never tolerate Severus' restrictive theory concerning the use of number and enumeration, not merely as an indication of differentiation and otherness but of division as well.

In our view, the only essential difference of Cyril of Alexandria from Severus of Antioch is that Cyril, being an ecumenical teacher and Father of the Church, was capable to discern the essence of Orthodoxy -whenever Orthodoxy existed- underneath a different wording of the Church's faith. This is precisely what Cyril did by accepting the Orthodoxy of the *Formulary of Reunion* in 433, despite the fact that the Antiochians had used in it a wording different from his own, as Cyril himself admitted in his *Epistle 40, "To Accacius of Meletene*. In this way, Cyril was able to avoid empty dogmatisms and sterile conflicts. However, we would never be able to say the same for Severus, since the later was self-imprisoned in his prechalcedonian alexandrian presuppositions -mainly the conceptual identification between nature and hypostasis in Christology- to the effect that he essentially denied the ecumenical spirit, which Cyril had displayed especially after 433, by endorsing the Orthodoxy of the *Formulary of Reunion*. In other words, Severus was, if we may say so, an implacable Cyril, a tragic leading figure in the history of the 5th and 6th century Christianity, who, in the end, failed in his objective to become the "new Cyril after Cyril", and he ended up as being considered a controversial theologian.

If then, as we believe, the Christology of Severus in itself preserved the essence of the cyrillian Christology, this is a fact of great importance for the contemporary theological dialogue between the Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches and the non-Chalcedonian Oriental Churches, in the sense that there is indeed common ground for a blessed ecclesiastical unity between both families of Churches, providing that our non-chalcedonian brothers would admit and accept unequivocally the Orthodoxy of the *Chalcedonian Definition of Faith* and the seven Ecumenical Councils. Any other attempt of contemporary theological dialogue to get-around such an explicit acceptance, on the part of our Non-chalcedonian brothers, by means of

⁹⁹ . Although we are convinced that the monophysitism of Severus is more terminological and verbal than real, however, we couldn't disagree with the following supposition and conclusion of prof. Larchet: <a supposer même que le vocabulaire des monophysites puisse être utilisé dans un sens acceptable orthodox (comme chez Cyrille), le vocabulaire chalcedonien et néochalcedonien devrait lui être préféré, tandis que le vocabulaire précédent s' est prêté au contraire à une utilisation par diverse hérésies manifestes (comme par exemple le monoénergisme et le monothélisme, et plus tard l' iconoclasme)>(Personne et nature... p. 132).

common declarations and ambiguous interpretations most probably will collide with orthodox consciousness, leading to further discord and divisions.