

# Ἀσεβῆς Εὐσέβιος: Eusebius' of Caesarea image in 14<sup>th</sup> century Byzantium and its sources

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The majority of late Byzantine theologians and polemicists unanimously passed a guilty verdict on Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339): the father of ecclesiastical history and one of the creators of early Byzantine political theory was labeled as a heretic *par excellence* – not only an Arianist, but also an iconoclast, and moreover, a predecessor of the Hesychast doctrine or, on the contrary, of the teaching of Gregory Palamas' adversaries (dependent on which party's source we are dealing with). The link allowing to establish a connection between the three controversies – Arian, iconoclastic, and Palamite – was a proto-iconoclastic *Letter to Constantia Augusta* allegedly written by Eusebius and fragmentarily preserved in the *Acts* of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council (787)<sup>1</sup> and *Contra Eusebium*<sup>2</sup> of the Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople (758-828).<sup>3</sup> The problem of genuineness of this source<sup>4</sup> is of minor impor-

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<sup>1</sup> *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J. D. Mansi, vol. 13, Florentiae 1767, 313A-D.

<sup>2</sup> *Nicephorus, Contra Eusebium*, in: J. B. Pitra (ed.), *Spicilegium solesmense complectens sanctorum patrum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum anecdota hactenus opera*, Parisiis 1852, vol. 1, 371-503; A. CHRYSSOSTALIS, *La reconstitution d'un vaste traité iconophile écrit par Nicéphore de Constantinople (758-828)*, *Semítica et classica* 2 (2009) 203-215; idem, *Recherches sur la tradition manuscrite du Contra Eusebium de Nicéphore de Constantinople*, Paris 2012, provides convincing evidence that this work should be treated as an integral part of a more vast composition comprising also Nicephorus' *Apologeticus maior* and the three *Antirrhethici*.

<sup>3</sup> On his life, theological and literary legacy, see: P. J. ALEXANDER, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople. Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 1958; T. PRATSCH, *Nikephoros I. (806-815)*, in: *Die Patriarchen der ikonoklastischen Zeit. Germanos I. – Methodios I. (715-843)*, hrsg. R.-J. Lilie (= *Berliner byzantinistische Studien*, 5), Frankfurt am Main – Berlin – Bern 1999, 109-147; L. BRUBAKER – J. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850). The Sources. An Annotated Survey* (= *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs*, 7), Aldershot – Burlington 2001, 256-257.

<sup>4</sup> There has been much debate on this issue, see: G. FLOROVSKY, *Origen, Eusebius, and the Iconoclastic Controversy*, *Church history* 19/2 (1950) 77-96; S. GERO, *The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered*, *The journal of theological studies* 32/1 (1981) 460-470; A. I. SIDOROV, *Poslanije Evseviija Kesarijskogo k Konstancii. K voprosu ob idejnyh istokach ikonoborčestva*, *Vizantijskij vremennik* 51 (1990/91) 58-73; A. VON STOCKHAUSEN, *Einige*

tance for the purposes of the present study, suffice it to say that no one of the 14<sup>th</sup> century authors we are dealing with has ever expressed any doubts concerning its authenticity. Be it as it may, the spiritualistic doctrine of the Divine Glory absorbing Christ's human nature and thus rendering impossible any pictorial representation of His personality elaborated by the author of the *Letter* acquired particular relevance, first, within the iconoclastic controversy,<sup>5</sup> and second, during the Hesychast polemics (at least, since late 1340s).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, at the very same time, a completely opposite image of Eusebius existed; it went back to the Byzantine historiographic tradition praising Eusebius as a staunch supporter and, later, a biographer of the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great. As such, Eusebius, quite expectedly, should have been free of all charges of heterodoxy. The present paper will propose a possible explanation for this apparent inconsistency: first, it will focus on several 14<sup>th</sup> century texts, and then proceed to determine the earlier sources and polemical traditions that could influence later authors.

A good example of a derogatory attitude towards Eusebius may be found, e.g., in writings of a prominent anti-Palamite philosopher Theodore Dexios. In the *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle* (early 1360s, according to I. D. POLEMIS)<sup>7</sup> he brands him as “impious” (ἄσεβης),<sup>8</sup> “accursed” (ἐπάρατος),<sup>9</sup> and “hating God” (θεομισής),<sup>10</sup> while his teaching as “most loathsome nonsense” (βδελυρώτατοι λῆροι).<sup>11</sup> It may be noted also that Dexios has no doubts as to whether Eusebius had actually taken part in the debate

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*Anmerkungen zur Epistula ad Constantiam des Euseb von Cäsarea*, in: Die ikonoklastische Synode von Hiereia 754, hrsg. T. Krannich – C. Schubert – C. Sode (= Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 15), Tübingen 2002, 91-96; C. SODE – P. SPECK, *Ikonotheismus vor der Zeit? Der Brief des Eusebios von Kaisareia an Kaiserin Konstantia*, Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik 54 (2004) 113-134.

<sup>5</sup> F. WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea und seiner Vita Constantini im Griechischen Osten*, in: Byzantinistische Beiträge, hrsg. J. Irmscher, Berlin 1964, 91-119; D. M. GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism: The Construction of Christian Tradition in the Iconoclast Controversy*, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 47 (2007) 225-251.

<sup>6</sup> J. M. FEATHERSTONE, *An Iconoclastic Episode in the Hesychast Controversy*, Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik 33 (1983) 179-198; Л. ЛУКHOVITCKIJ, *Historical Memory of the Byzantine Iconoclasm in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The Case of Nikephoros Gregoras and Philotheos Kokkinos*, in: Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium, ed. S. Mariev – W.-M. Stock (= Byzantinisches Archiv, 25), Berlin – Boston 2013, 205-233.

<sup>7</sup> *Theodore Dexios, 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle*, in: I. D. Polemis (ed.), *Theodori Dexii opera omnia* (= Corpus christianorum. Series graeca, 33), Turnhout – Leuven 2003, 187-223.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, 7<sup>4</sup> (197 Polemis).

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, 8<sup>31</sup> (200 Polemis).

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 9<sup>43-44</sup> (202 Polemis).

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, 7<sup>26</sup> (198 Polemis).

over the veneration of the sacred images; elsewhere, he explicitly states that Eusebius “impiously raged against the divine icons” (ἀσεβῶς κατὰ τῶν θείων εἰκόνων λυπήσαντα).<sup>12</sup> Such confidence is by no means surprising, as the participants of the iconoclastic controversy themselves always sought to interpret the patristic texts (in reality having only little to say on the issue) in a proto-iconophile / iconoclastic way; replaced from their original context, such quotations were often full of distortions.<sup>13</sup> Similar epithets are attributed to Eusebius by Nicephorus Gregoras in the *1<sup>st</sup> Antirrhetici* (“impious” – ἀσεβής)<sup>14</sup>, and the *Roman history* (“accursed” – κατάρματος),<sup>15</sup> and by his ardent opponent Philotheos Kokkinos in the *Dogmatical speeches against Gregoras* (“impious” – δυσσεβής).<sup>16</sup>

Still, Kokkinos’ and Gregoras’ treatment of Eusebius’ figure is quite different. The first seems to possess at least a few pieces of reliable evidence on the historical Eusebius: he mentions the epithet Παμφίλου,<sup>17</sup> and is also aware of the chronological distance between Eusebius and iconoclasts, as he explicitly states that to the time of the iconoclastic controversy Eusebius “had been thrown away long ago” (πάλαι... ἐκποδῶν ἦν).<sup>18</sup> In Kokkinos’ interpretation, Eusebius may be called iconoclast only in a figurative sense: Kokkinos does say that Eusebius “stood at the head of the iconoclastic heresy” (προεστηκότα τῆς τῶν Εἰκονομάχων αἱρέσεως),<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Dexios, Tractatus breve*, 7<sup>36</sup> (241 Polemis).

<sup>13</sup> For instance, see: K. DEMOEN, *The Philosopher, the Call Girl and the Icon. Theodore the Studite’s Ab(use) of Gregory Nazianzen in the Iconoclastic Controversy*, in: *La spiritualité de l’univers byzantin dans le verbe et l’image. Hommages offerts à E. Voordeckers*, éd. K. Demoen – J. Vereecken (= *Instrumenta patristica*, 30), Turnhout 1997, 69-83; idem, *The Theologian on Icons. Byzantine and Modern Claims and Distortions*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91/1 (1998) 1-19.

<sup>14</sup> *Nicephorus Gregoras, Antirrhetici*, II 5, 15. H.-V. Beyer (ed.), *Nikephoros Gregoras, Antirrhetika I* (= *Wiener byzantinistische Studien*, 12), Wien 1975, 317<sup>6</sup>. According to idem, *Eine Chronologie der Lebensgeschichte des Nikephoros Gregoras*, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 27 (1978) 127-155, here 135, Gregoras began to work on these treatises in Winter 1346/47.

<sup>15</sup> *Gregoras, Roman history*, XIX 3. I. Schopen. – I. Bekker (ed.), *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, 3 vols., Bonnae 1829-1855, III 943<sup>11</sup>. These chapters of the *Roman history* were composed between early June and late August 1352: J. L. VAN DIETEN, *Einleitung*, in: *Nikephoros Gregoras. Rhomäische Geschichte*, 4. Teil (= *Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur* 39), Stuttgart 1994, 1-58, here 1-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Philotheos Kokkinos, Dogmatical speeches*, 11<sup>549</sup>, in: D. B. Kaimakes (ed.), *Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου Δογματικά ἔργα* (= *Θεσσαλονικεῖς βυζαντινοὶ συγγραφεῖς*, 3), Thessaloniki 1983, 423. The date of these treatises is still debatable, the latest date (after 1363) was proposed by A. RIGO, *L’epistola a Menas di Gregorio Palamas e gli effetti dell’orazione*, *Christianesimo nella storia* 9/1 (1988) 57-80, here 61, n. 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Kokkinos, Dogmatical speeches*, 11<sup>1262</sup> (446 Kaimakes); 11<sup>1313</sup> (447 Kaimakes).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 11<sup>1315-1316</sup> (447-448 Kaimakes).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, 11<sup>458</sup> (420 Kaimakes).

but only implying that he was their predecessor – an Arianist whom they were erroneously imitating.<sup>20</sup>

Gregoras, on the contrary, tends to blur the chronological gap between Eusebius and the iconoclastic controversy. Speaking about Eusebius and Theodore Graptos (an iconophile saint credited, according to Gregoras and other 14<sup>th</sup> century theologians, with the authorship of the treatises actually composed by Nicephorus of Constantinople), he intentionally and repeatedly uses the adverb “at that time” (τότε): Graptos “came into a fight with Eusebius, the first of the learned iconoclasts of the time” (Εὐσεβίῳ τῶν τότε λογίων εἰκονομάχων τῷ πρώτῳ συμπλακείς).<sup>21</sup> He also omits every detail that might possibly indicate that Eusebius was not Graptos' contemporary: there are no connections to Arianism, no references to the addressee of the *Letter* (mentioned, e.g., by another anti-Palamite Issak Argyros).<sup>22</sup>

What makes it all the more striking is that in fact Gregoras had abundant information on Eusebius' life and literary production. This conclusion follows from the analysis of his *Life of Constantine the Great*,<sup>23</sup> since one of its main sources was Eusebius' *Encomium of Constantine* (a text extremely rich in autobiographical details),<sup>24</sup> a fact quite remarkable in itself, as it is commonly believed that Eusebius' *Encomium* didn't enjoy much popularity in Middle and Late Byzantium and had minimal influence on later hagiographical tradition.<sup>25</sup> For instance, other roughly contemporary texts dealing with Constantine the Great (*Encomia* written by Constantine Acropolites – BHG 368 – and John Chortasmenos – BHG 362) do not mention Eusebius at all.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 11<sup>702-703</sup> (428 Kaimakes); 11<sup>2285</sup> (478 Kaimakes).

<sup>21</sup> Gregoras, *Antirrhēti* II 5, 14 (Beyer 313<sup>3</sup>). Cf.: Gregoras, *Roman history*, XIX 3 (940<sup>19-20</sup> Schopen); XXXIV 47 (464<sup>9-10</sup> Bekker).

<sup>22</sup> M. CANDAL, *Argiro contra Dexio (Sobre la luz tabórica)*, *Orientalia christiana periodica* 23 (1957) 80-113, here 94<sup>19-21</sup> (πρὸς τὴν τότε βασιλίσσαν).

<sup>23</sup> BHG 369. *Nicephorus Gregoras, Vita Constantini*, ed. P. A. M. Leone, Catania 1994. This *Life* was written before 1341/42.

<sup>24</sup> F. FUSCO, *Costantino in Niceforo Gregora*, in: *Costantino il Grande dall'Antichità all'Umanesimo*, Colloquio sul Christianesimo nel mondo antico, Macerata, 18-20 Dicembre 1990, a cura di G. Bonamente – F. Fusco, Macerata 1992, 433-444, here 434, 436-437; M. HINTERBERGER, *Les vies des saints du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle en tant que biographie historique: L'oeuvre de Nicéphore Grégoras*, in: *Les vies des saints à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique?* Actes du II<sup>e</sup> colloque international philologique, Paris, 6-7-8 juin 2002, sous la direction de P. Odorico – P. A. Agapitos (= *Dossiers byzantins* 4), Paris 2004, 281-301, here 297-298; idem, *Die Konstantinsvita im Späten Byzanz. Vorläufige Ergebnisse einer Gegenüberstellung palaiologenzeitlicher Metaphrasen*, *Graeco-latina Brunensia* 16/2 (2011) 41-60.

<sup>25</sup> WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 107-112; A. CAMERON – S. G. HALL, *Introduction*, in: *Eusebius. Life of Constantine*, Oxford 1999, 1-53, here 48-49.

Gregoras, though, not only borrows whole passages from Eusebius, but considers it necessary to indicate his source – ὁ Παλαιστινήος Εὐσέβιος.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter he retells a story inspired by one of the autobiographical episodes of the Eusebius' *Encomium*:

...τὴν δὲ τῶν ἱερῶν βιβλίων ἀπασῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας κατασκευὴν ἀνέθηκεν Εὐσέβιῳ τῷ Καισαρείας ἐπισκόπῳ τῷ Παλαιστινήῳ σὺν μεγάλαις καὶ σφόδρα δαψιλέσι δαπάναις· ἡγάπα γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα διὰ τε τοὺς ἄθλους, οὓς ἐν τοῖς Διοκλητιανοῦ καὶ Μαξιμίνου καὶ Λικινίου διωγμοῖς ὑπέμεινε ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας, καὶ ἔτι διὰ τοὺς λογικοὺς ἀγῶνας, οὓς κατὰ τοῦ Ἀρείου πλέον τῶν ἄλλων ἠγώνισται, ὥς αἱ τὰς πράξεις ἐκείνης ἀναγράφουσαι τῆς συνόδου πᾶσαι διατρανοῦσαι βιβλοί.<sup>28</sup>

[Constantine] entrusted Eusebius the Palestinian, the bishop of Caesarea, with a mission to produce all the sacred books of the Church, supplying him with extremely generous funding, since he highly appreciated him for exploits for the sake of piety during the times of Diocletian's, Maximinus' and Licinius' persecutions, and also for his spiritual battles against Arius, in which he was more militant than others, as we are clearly informed by all books that contain the minutes of that Council.

As a character of this particular *Life*, Eusebius is not anymore a heterodox: he is free from charges not only of iconoclasm, but of Arianism as well. Thus, in Gregoras' writings we encounter two by no means identical images of Eusebius: the first is a 4<sup>th</sup> century orthodox bishop and supporter of Constantine the Great, while the second – a 9<sup>th</sup> century iconoclast of an unknown background. Whereas the origins of the first image are quite evident (Eusebius himself), the provenance of the second is less clear. In order to explore its development I will now turn to 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century sources.

The very first iconoclastic steps taken by Leo III ca. 726<sup>29</sup> gave an

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<sup>26</sup> These and other late Byzantine hagiographical sources were available to me for full-text search in the database "Hagiography of the Later Byzantine Period (1204-1453)" of the Department of Byzantine Research (Institute of Historical Research, Athens): <http://byzhadb.eie.gr>.

<sup>27</sup> *Gregoras, Vita Constantini*, 16 (15<sup>25-26</sup> Leone); 19 (17<sup>24</sup> Leone); 62 (76<sup>2-3</sup> Leone). He never refers to Eusebius in such a way in theological and historical writings.

<sup>28</sup> *Gregoras, Vita Constantini*, 42 (49<sup>8-16</sup> Leone). The story of Eusebius' mission to prepare copies of the Sacred Scripture was frequently borrowed by early church historians and later chroniclers: *Socrates, Church history*, I 9, 50-55, in: G. C. Hansen (hrsg.), *Sokrates, Kirchengeschichte*, Berlin 1995, 38; *Theodoret, Church history*, I 15, 1-4, in: L. Parmentier (hrsg.), *Theodoret, Kirchengeschichte*, Leipzig 1911, 60; *Theophanes, Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Lipsiae 1883, I 27<sup>18-20</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> The exact chronology of the events and the issue of an imperial edict against icon veneration have been recently discussed in: L. BRUBAKER –

impetus to a “concerted bibliographic effort”<sup>30</sup> on the side of both parties (iconoclasts and iconophiles), who sought to find support for their claims in patristic literature. At this stage, Eusebius' of Caesarea “heterodox record” seems to be clean,<sup>31</sup> as far as both iconophile and iconoclastic polemicists attempted to ascribe to themselves his authority by proving that he had been a proto-iconoclastic, or on the contrary, a proto-iconophile theologian. Apparently, Eusebius was credited to have been orthodox, but for partisans of the two factions the very notion of “orthodoxy” implied opposite beliefs.

Due to the scarcity of extant iconoclastic sources, it is impossible to determine which party was the first to rely on Eusebius' authority. The earliest evidence for this appropriation-stage of the debate is the *Letter to Thomas, bishop of Claudiopolis* of the Patriarch Germanus I (715-730), where Germanus alludes to a famous episode from Eusebius' *Church history* (VII 18) about a bronze thaumaturgic statue in Paneas representing the haemorrhissa receiving blessing from Christ.<sup>32</sup> One may or may not agree with F. WINKELMANN's idea of this Eusebian passage as actually hostile towards veneration of sacred images (in his interpretation, for Eusebius such practices are a mere “heidnisches Relikt”).<sup>33</sup> Obviously, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, this possible underlying layer was not recognized by iconophile polemicists, since this episode was used as a proof of icon veneration being an ancient Christian tradition going back to Apostolic times<sup>34</sup> not only by Germanus, but by other iconophile authors as well, among them John of Damascus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Oration against the calumniators of the holy icons*.<sup>35</sup> Whenever this treatise

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J. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850). A History*, Cambridge 2001, 117-127.

<sup>30</sup> C. MANGO, *The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850*, in: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Washington, DC 1975, 29-45, here 30.

<sup>31</sup> GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism*, 231-233.

<sup>32</sup> CPG 8004. *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 125<sup>C-E</sup>. This is the latest and the most ambiguous of the three iconophile letters ascribed to Germanus. It could have been composed either between 726 and Germanus' abdication in January 730, or immediately after the abdication: BRUBAKER – HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850). A History*, 104-105.

<sup>33</sup> “Eusebs Urteil darüber ist eindeutig negativ, er sieht nur in der heidnischen Vergangenheit der Bewohner dieser Stadt einen Milderungsgrund”: WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 98.

<sup>34</sup> Cf.: M.-F. AUZÉPY, *La tradition comme arme du pouvoir: L'exemple de la querelle iconoclaste*, in: *L'autorité du passé dans les sociétés médiévales*, éd. J.-M. Sansterre (= Collection de l'École française de Rome, 333), Rome 2004, 79-92.

<sup>35</sup> CPG 8045. *John of Damascus, Orations against the calumniators of the holy icons*, III 69, in: P. B. Kotter (hrsg.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Bd. 3 (= Patristische Texte und Studien, 17), Berlin – New York 1975, 171; 173. Cf. other Eusebius' passages in the same *Oration: John of Damascus, Orations*, III 67; III 70 (171; 173 Kotter).

may have been composed,<sup>36</sup> it clearly illustrates the first stage of the process in question: neither Germanus nor John of Damascus feels any need to give an account for quoting a heterodox thinker, which means that Eusebius was not under suspicion yet.

The problem arose when the opposite party made the same claims: the authors of the *Horos* of the iconoclastic Council of 754 (extant within the *Acts* of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council of 787) also relied on Eusebius' authority. It is noteworthy that they too did not feel it necessary to introduce Eusebius in any special way. A quotation from his *Letter to Constantia Augusta* is preceded by a matter-of-fact presentation: "Likewise Eusebius, [the disciple] of Pamphilus... says the following" (Ὀμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Παμφίλου Εὐσέβιος... τοιάδε λέγει).<sup>37</sup>

For the iconophile party this clearly meant an unexpected complication but not a stalemate situation, as they still had at their disposal two options:

1. to question the authenticity of the *Letter*, detect the forgery, and prove that Eusebius had been orthodox (meaning proto-iconophile);
2. to accept Eusebius' authorship of the *Letter*, proclaim him heterodox (meaning proto-iconoclast), and abandon any further attempts to rely on his authority.

Both tactics were applicable, e.g., the first one was used with certain quotations from Theodotus of Ancyra included in the same *Horos*:<sup>38</sup> they were rejected by the bishops of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council as forged.<sup>39</sup> The case of Eusebius, though, was different from that of Theodotus: the iconophile bishops of 787 renewed the charges against Eusebius, that had been mostly forgotten since the period of the Arian controversy,<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See: BRUBAKER – HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850). The Sources*, 248-249.

<sup>37</sup> *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 313<sup>A-D</sup> = *Die ikonoklastische Synode von Hiereia 754*, 54-56.

<sup>38</sup> CPG 6133. *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 309<sup>E</sup>-312<sup>A</sup> = *Die ikonoklastische Synode von Hiereia 754*, 54.

<sup>39</sup> Προφανῶς γὰρ δέδεικται, ὅτι οὐ Θεοδότου ἡ χρησίς ἐστι: *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 309<sup>C</sup>. Nevertheless, this quotation was not left aside after 787 and the iconoclastic Council of 815 used it once again. In *Refutatio et eversio*, a treatise dealing with the refutation of this new *Horos*, Nicephorus of Constantinople could only confirm the verdict: "[We should] not believe that these are Theodotus' of Ancyra works" (μὴ δὲ ἡγεῖσθαι τοῦ ἐξ Ἀγκύρας Θεοδότου ὑπάρχειν τὰτα γεννήματα): *Nicephorus of Constantinople, Refutatio et eversio*, 93<sup>24-25</sup>, in: J. M. Featherstone (ed.), *Nicephori patriarchae Constantinopolitanae opera* (= *Corpus christianorum. Series graeca*, 33), Turnhout, 1997, 175. Cf. other examples of this tactics: MANGO, *The Availability of Books*, 30-33; GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism*, 237.

<sup>40</sup> GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism*, 231-233. Eusebius' actual stance in the Arian controversy was ambiguous: "Eusebius war kein theologischer, geistiger Führer des Arianismus, sondern lediglich in Parteikämpfe verwickelt gewesen,

and proclaimed him an Arian sympathiser: “Who of the pious [sons] of the Church and those who possess knowledge of the true doctrines does not know that Eusebius, [the disciple] of Pamphilus turned *over to a reprobate mind* (Rom 1:28) and was agreeing and of the same opinions as the followers of Arius?”<sup>41</sup> It must be stressed, though, that the bishops of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council had a very poor knowledge about the actual theological contents of the Arian debate, but the “Arianist” label perfectly fitted to their polemical purposes.<sup>42</sup>

An interesting point is that the inventors of this strategy of pejorative labeling had at their disposal more than one option, since, in Eusebius' case, a theological link could have been made not only to the Arian, but also to the Origenist controversy.<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that such attempts were actually made both during<sup>44</sup> and after the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council, for instance, in *De haeresibus et synodis*, an anti-heretical opusculum previously attributed to the Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople but recently proved to be seriously interpolated after the Council of 787.<sup>45</sup> The unknown author claims that Eusebius “defended” (ὑπεραπολογούμενος) Origen,<sup>46</sup> but then abandons this line of argumentation and passes to usual defamation of Eusebius as an Arian supporter.<sup>47</sup> This preference towards the charges of Arianism instead of those of Origenism is quite understandable, since the author of *De haeresibus* accuses of Arianism Origen himself (Ἀρειανίζων). An “Arianist” label was apparently considered to be more effective, as it implicitly presupposed that the accused was simultaneously guilty of Origenism and other less notorious heresies. In the same manner, in later epochs, accusations of all other heresies seemed inadequate in comparison with that of iconoclasm, as Arianism (alongside with Nestorianism, docetism, and Manichaeism) was proved to be its constituting part and predecessor.

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ohne immer die notwendige Klarheit des Standpunktes zu haben”: WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 95.

<sup>41</sup> Τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἔγνω τῶν πιστῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ γνῶσιν εἰληφότων ἀληθινῶν δογμάτων, ὅτι Εὐσέβιος ὁ Παμφίλου εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν παραδοθεὶς, ὁμόδοξος καὶ σύμφρων τοῖς τοῦ Ἀρείου θρησκειούουσιν: *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 314<sup>E</sup>-316<sup>A</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> “...der Begriff “Arianer”, je grosser die zeitliche Entfernung ist und je unklarer die Vorstellungen bei breiten Schichten über den wahren historischen Ablauf der Ereignisse werden, zu einem der schlimmsten Schimpfworte wird, um dogmatische Gegner zu diffamieren”: WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 95.

<sup>43</sup> WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 177<sup>D</sup>-180<sup>C</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> CPG 8020. BRUBAKER – HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850). The Sources*, 247-248.

<sup>46</sup> *De synodis et haeresibus*, ed. A. Mai, in: PG 98, Paris 1865, 48<sup>A</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, 48<sup>B</sup>-52<sup>B</sup>.



The most fervent supporter of this approach was Nicephorus of Constantinople – in 814, he made every effort to ensure that Eusebius' quotations (χρήσεις) would not be taken into consideration in the reopened discussion of the iconoclastic issue: Eusebius “proved himself a real Arianist” (δείκνυται Ἀρειανὸς γνήσιος) declaring things “completely opposite to the teaching of the oecumenical Church” (ἐναντία παντάπασιν τῷ τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας φρονήματι). Like Origen and other philosophers “standing out of the Church” (τῶν ἔξω τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὄντων), Eusebius did “deserve some credit” (εἰ δέ τι καὶ ἐπαινεῖται) for his services to the Church, but they are negligible if compared with his wrongdoings.<sup>48</sup> The omittance of Eusebius' quotations in the *Horos* of 815<sup>49</sup> did not prevent Nicephorus from permanent allusions to his impiety in later compositions. Over and over again, he stressed that Eusebius had been “the head of the Arian folly and the first teacher of the new Arianists, that is Manichaeists” (ὁ τῆς Ἀρειανικῆς μανίας ἑξαρχος καὶ τῶν νῦν ἀρειανιζόντων, ταῦτόν δὲ εἶπεν μανιχαῖζόντων, διδάσκαλος κορυφαῖος)<sup>50</sup> and “the most ardent and true supporter of the blasphemy of impious Arius” (τῆς βλασφημίας δυσσεβοῦς Ἀρείου ὑπέρμαχος ὁ θερμότατος ἦν καὶ γνησιώτατος).<sup>51</sup> Apparently, for Nicephorus, every explicit quotation or even remote resemblance to Eusebius' teaching equated with Arianism. His polemical intention was to prove that even if his adversaries did not quote Eusebius *verbatim*, it only meant that they were simply too crafty and cautious to do so: the *Horos* of 815 declared loyalty to Constantine V and the bishops of the iconoclastic Council of 754,<sup>52</sup> who made extensive usage of Eusebius' citations, and thus was open to the same critique.

Notwithstanding with the prevalence of the tactics described above, the initial idea of appropriating Eusebius' authority did not come to an end within the iconophile party even in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century. A good example is the *Chronicle* of George the Monk, who retells the same trivial story of a bronze statue in Paneas but with a special remark concerning Eusebius' alleged proto-iconoclastic sentiments: “This episode is also recalled in the *Ecclesiastical history* of Eusebius, a great teacher of iconoclasts” (περὶ οὗ καὶ ὁ μέγας παρὰ τοῖς εἰκονομάχοις διδάσκαλος Εὐσέβιος ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησιαστικῇ

<sup>48</sup> Nicephorus, *Apologeticus minor*, 11, ed. A. Mai, in: PG 100, Paris 1865, 848<sup>B-D</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> According to M. Featherstone, they were “dropped... on account of the furore it had incited in Nicaea”: M. FEATHERSTONE, *Opening Scenes of the Second Iconoclasm: Nicephorus's Critique of the Citations from Macarius Magnes*, *Revue de études byzantines* 60 (2002) 65-112, here 66.

<sup>50</sup> Nicephorus, *Refutatio et eversio*, 46<sup>4-6</sup> (93 Featherstone). Cf. Ἐυσέβιος, τῶν Ἀρειανῶν ἡ ἀκρόπολις: Ibidem, 196<sup>15-16</sup> (313 Featherstone).

<sup>51</sup> Nicephorus, *Contra Eusebium*, 8 (380<sup>33</sup>-382<sup>1</sup> Pitra).

<sup>52</sup> Nicephorus, *Refutatio et eversio*, 71<sup>3-12</sup> (115 Featherstone).

ιστορία μνημονεύσας).<sup>53</sup> This remark is indicative for George's polemical stance: he admits his awareness of his adversaries' attempts to "lure" Eusebius onto their side, but tries to prove that their claims are ill-founded, as far as the real Eusebius was adhering to proto-iconophile beliefs. This reading of the later version of the *Chronicle* (so-called *vulgata* composed after 872) is confirmed by a 14<sup>th</sup> century slavonic translation (*Letovnik*) representing the earlier stage of the textual transmission of the text going back to 845/846:<sup>54</sup> "Ô njem že i vĕlikyi vĭ ikonoborcexŭ učitelĭ Evseviĭe vĭ *Crkvnĭmŭ ustavljennĭ* vĭ spomenuvŭ..." (fol. 362).<sup>55</sup> The later interpolators, though, failed to understand George's intention and replaced εἰκονομάχοις with a much more rare term εἰκονοτύποις,<sup>56</sup> thus ruining the consistency of George's initial polemical idea.

As F. WINKELMANN has brilliantly demonstrated, two opposite trends in depicting Eusebius are clearly discernible already in the writings of the early Byzantine ecclesiastical historians, but before Nicephorus Gregoras, the ambiguity of Eusebius' image never resulted in creation of two independent figures. What possible explanation can be offered for such a change?

In the case of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and other early church historians who admitted that Eusebius had been somehow involved in the Arian controversy and his stance was by no means irreproachable, but still praised him as the first church historian, and consequently their predecessor,<sup>57</sup> these images coexisted in different layers and did not ever meet, so there was no need to reconcile them. As WINKELMANN puts it, "So stehen beide Urteile... nebeneinander, ja nach dem Themenkreis, zu dem sie sich äußern".<sup>58</sup> E.g., for Theodoret, Eusebius was one of "the old teachers of the Church" (παλαιῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας διδασκάλων), who "armed their tongue against the falsehood" (κατὰ τοῦ ψεύδους τὰς γλώττας καθώπλισαν) in an anti-heretical context,<sup>59</sup> and an Arian sympathiser in a historical narrative.<sup>60</sup> Besides, at that period, on the one

<sup>53</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, cur. P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978, vol. 2, 786<sup>16-18</sup>. Cf.: Ibidem, 739<sup>11-740</sup><sup>15</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> D. AFINOGENOV, *The Date of Georgios Monachos Reconsidered*, Byzantinische Zeitschrift 92 (1999) 437-447; idem, *Le manuscrit grec Coislin. 305: La version primitive de la Chronique de Georges le Moine*, Revue des études byzantines 62 (2004) 239-246.

<sup>55</sup> A facsimile edition of the codex *Mosq. synod. 148*: Izdaniĭa Imperstorskogo obščestva ljubitelej drevnej pis'mennosti, vol. 69, Moscow 1881.

<sup>56</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon breve*, ed. E. de Muralt, in: PG 110, Paris 1863, 992<sup>C</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> Theodoret, *Church history*, I 1, 4 (4<sup>17-21</sup> Parmentier).

<sup>58</sup> WINKELMANN, *Die Beurteilung des Eusebius von Cäsarea*, 102-107.

<sup>59</sup> Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, in: PG 83, Paris 1864, 340<sup>A</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Theodoret, *Church history*, V 7 (286<sup>6</sup> Parmentier); I 5, 5 (27<sup>8-9</sup> Parmentier).

hand, the Arian crisis was not of any importance anymore, while on the other, not so much time had elapsed since the end of the controversy and certain details could not have been easily omitted.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, those deeply involved with the iconoclastic issue, like Nicephorus of Constantinople and the bishops of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council, could not reconcile these images too. But their polemical purposes and genre restrictions (after all, they were not composing an ecclesiastical history and thus did not have any obligations towards the creator of this genre) allowed them to sacrifice Eusebius-historian for the sake of Eusebius-heterodox. It is worth noting that Nicephorus did once try to stand up for Eusebius' reputation, but it was a feeble attempt:

Ζητεῖν ἄξιον ἐνταῦθα, εἰ ἐκεῖνος οὗτός ἐστιν Εὐσέβιος, ὁ ταῦτά τε λέγων, καὶ ὁ τὴν καλουμένην Ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστορίαν συνθεῖς. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἕτερος οὗτός ἐστιν, ἀσεβείαν αὐτῷ μόνον ἐγκλητέον, καὶ τὴν εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σωτῆρος οἰκονομίαν ὕβριν· εἰ δὲ εἰς ὁ κάκεϊ καὶ ὥδε φθεγγόμενος τυγχάνει, πῶς οὐχὶ πρὸς τῇ ἀσεβείᾳ παραπληξίας ἤδη καὶ παρανοίας ἀλώσεται, ὥς τὰναντία ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ λόγοις ἀποφαινόμενος.<sup>61</sup>

At this point, it is worth asking, if the author of these words is the same Eusebius with the one who composed the so-called *Ecclesiastical history*. If it is another person, he will be guilty only of impiety and imprudence against our Savior's dispensation; if they are one and the same person, how can he possibly avoid being charged with madness and insanity together with impiety, as his words contradict each other?

A completely different approach characterizes authors who were not taking active part in any theological controversy that could have possible connections with Eusebius. The Patriarch Photius of Constantinople (858-867, 877-886) provides a perfect example of a much more nuanced and sophisticated approach. When mentioning Eusebius in a polemical anti-Arian context (The 15<sup>th</sup> *Homily* delivered on February 23, 867), he condemns him as Arianist and makes it clear that he enjoyed authority (quite logically and justly, as, for Photius, Arianism equates to proto-iconoclasm) over iconoclasts of the 9<sup>th</sup> century: "...the Bishop of that city [sc. Caesarea] was an Arian (it was Eusebius, whom the Iconoclasts recognize as their father)" (ὃν πατέρα οἱ εἰκονομάχοι ἐπιγράφονται).<sup>62</sup> While, on the other hand, evaluating Eusebius' literary achievements, he presents him as a self-contradictory figure with certain strengths and weaknesses: "His style (φράσις) is neither agreeable nor brilliant; however, he is a man of

<sup>61</sup> *Nicephorus, Contra Eusebium*, 58 (460<sup>15-24</sup> Pitra).

<sup>62</sup> Translation quoted after C. Mango: C. MANGO, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople: English Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*, Cambridge, Mass. 1958, 251. Cf.: GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism*, 247-249.

great learning (πολυμαθής), although wanting (ἐνδεέστερος) in the shrewdness and firmness of character (τὴν ἀγχίνουαν καὶ τὸ σταθιρὸν τοῦ ἤθους) so necessary for the accurate discussion of questions of dogma”.<sup>63</sup> Eager to attack Eusebius because of certain biased omissions in presenting the course of the Arian debate, he still admits that the style of the *Encomium of Constantine* is more refined: “...his language is obliged to be somewhat more brilliant (μικρόν τι πρὸς τὸ λαμπρότερον), and words are inserted here and there that are more flowery (εἰς τὸ ἀνθηρότερον) than usual”.<sup>64</sup> GWYNN’s interpretation of this and other passages of the *Bibliotheca* dealing with Eusebius as unequivocally negative<sup>65</sup> is not quite convincing. In fact, it is the ambiguity of Eusebius’ image that attracts Photius and allows him to draw a clear borderline and juxtapose Eusebius’ highest erudition, quite moderate literary skill and the heterodox contents of his writings. Sensitive to genre restrictions as he is, Photius may severely criticize Eusebius in an anti-heretical homily intended to public recitation, but adopt a more differentiated view within a philological context, still being quite sure that he is referring to one and the same person.

Nevertheless, such a conciliatory attitude was useless when – in the 14<sup>th</sup> century – time came to remember Eusebius once again in the course of a theological controversy. The main sources employed for the reconstruction (and consequently, rewriting) of the iconoclastic past of the Empire quite accidentally appeared to be the writings of Nicephorus of Constantinople, the most ardent proponent of the strategy of polemical labeling and defamation of Eusebius. Had the later polemicists used other sources (for instance, those dating from the appropriation-stage of the debate – John of Damascus and Germanus of Constantinople),<sup>66</sup> Eusebius’ image could have been completely different. Besides, the farther from the time of the Arian and the iconoclastic controversy, the more vague became the ideas about their contents and driving forces: if the participants of the iconoclastic debate had a very rough idea of what

<sup>63</sup> English translation quoted after J. H. FREESE, *The Library of Photius*, London 1920, vol. 1, 22-23. The unnamed writings described here may be identified with *Preparatio* and *Demonstratio Evangelica*: W. TREADGOLD, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (= Dumbarton Oaks studies, 18), Washington, DC 1980, 76-78.

<sup>64</sup> *Photius, Bibliotheca*, 127, in: R. Henry (éd.), *Photius, Bibliothèque*, t. 2, Paris 1959, 100.

<sup>65</sup> GWYNN, *From Iconoclasm to Arianism*, 245.

<sup>66</sup> This was, e.g., the case of late 11<sup>th</sup> century theologians, who were likewise involved with the iconoclastic issue, but mostly based on the *Acts* of the 7<sup>th</sup> Oecumenical Council, and the writings of Theodore Studite and John of Damascus, while Nicephorus’ works were of minor importance: J. GOUILLARD, *Le procès officiel de Jean l’Italien: Les actes et leurs sous-entendus*, Travaux et Mémoires 9 (1985) 133-174; T. SCHUKIN, *Iconoclastic Fragment of the Apologetic Note by John Italos*, *Scrinium* 4 (2008) 249-259.

the Arian debate was actually about, the polemicists of the 14<sup>th</sup> century could not anymore distinguish between the two periods. As a result, Eusebius, first, transformed from a proto-iconoclast into an actual protagonist of the iconoclastic controversy, and second, split into two figures. If Nicephorus of Constantinople could wonder if the author of the *Ecclesiastical history* and the heretic quoted by his opponents had been one and the same person, Gregoras could not anymore pose such a question – he was quite confident that they had been two different persons.