Several Remarks on Eustratios of Nicaea's Dialogue

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https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.22633

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To cite this article:

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1081 Alexios Komnenos was in desperate need of money in order to finance his campaign against the Normans. Struggling to meet his obligations, he finally decided to melt down church treasures. The emperor’s action caused an outcry and generated a heated debate among the clergy and the court, which was not settled until the mid-1090s. The leader of the opposition was Leo, Metropolitan of Chalcedon, who was forced into exile in 1086, due to his constant efforts to call the emperor out on his policy in regard to church treasures. Around that time the same Leo wrote a treatise, now lost, which essentially turned the affair into a theological discussion about the veneration of icons. The dispute over the icons, in which prominent figures of the aristocracy and the Church, including the emperor’s brother, Isaak Komnenos, were involved, was finally put to an end at a Synod that was held in late 1094, which forced Leo to recant and thus reconcile with Alexios1.

* I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions; also Dr. Maria Tomadaki for her assistance in my quest for secondary sources.

1. On the history of the dispute, see A. Glavinas, Η ἐπί Αλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (1081-1118) περί ἱερῶν σκευῶν, κειμηλίων καὶ ἁγίων εἰκόνων ἔρις (1081-1095) (Βυζαντινά κείμενα καὶ μελέται 6), Thessaloniki 1972, esp. 117-126 (the Synod of 1186 and Leo’s exile); 120 (Leo’s treatise on the worship of the icons); 151-177 (literature on the worship of the icons before the Synod of 1194); 179-193 (the Synod of 1194, which Glavinas dates to early 1195). Cf. A. Cameron, Byzantine matters, Princeton – Oxford 2014, 97-99; Eadem, Arguing it out: Discussion in twelfth-century Byzantium, Budapest – New York 2016, 15-16.
On the occasion of the Synod of 1094, Eustratios, Metropolitan of Nicaea, a former pupil of John Italos and by this time protegé of Alexios Komenos, as well as one of the most erudite theologians of his time and a skilful dialectician (so described by his future patroness, Anna Komnene, in her celebrated Alexiad), composed two texts on the icons, which seem to be confuting the views of those who opposed the emperor’s policy. The two texts in question are a dialogue (hereafter: Dialogue) and a treatise (hereafter: Treatise), which are excellent examples of Eustratios’ impressive prowess in theology and dialectic, a point to which we shall return. Given that both texts deal with the theological aspect of the veneration and the worship of the icons, and therefore seem like direct responses to the views expressed by those who opposed Alexios between 1086 and 1094, especially Leo, modern scholarship tends to date them to the early 1090s, shortly before the Synod of 1094. As regards Eustratios’ preferences, he was clearly on the emperor’s side. Within this context, the Dialogue in particular has been described as: “the equivalent of a modern dossier brought to support an unpopular government initiative”.


6. See Cameron, Byzantine matters (cited n. 1), 98 and Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 99.

7. Cameron, Byzantine matters (cited n. 1), 99.
PROSOPOGRAPHY OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

Leaving the Treatise aside for the moment, we cannot help but notice the unconventional character of the Dialogue. Indeed, it is the sole text in dialogical form that pertains to the dispute over the icons during Alexios’ reign. Moreover, the mise-en-scène is worth-noting, for although there are echoes of an unspecified Synod taking place, the overall setting is clearly fictitious and the discussants, called Φιλαλήθης and Φιλοσυνήθης, loosely based on Eustratios and Leo respectively, function in a rather symbolic than realistic way. The content of the Dialogue is also exceptional, for the accumulation of intertextual references deriving from Church Fathers and Ecumenical Councils (characteristic of basically all other primary sources that are associated with the dispute and present its theological aspect8), has here been replaced by sophisticated syllogisms and, as Barber has demonstrated, Aristotelian argumentation9, a method that eventually results in a refined mixture of philosophy and theology. This remark does not intend to downplay the other sources as “simplistic” or “uninspired”, for even they testify to the era’s ambiguous fascination with debate and dialectic10. Nevertheless, the Dialogue does appear to approach its subject with a subtlety that these other sources lack.

The σκέμμα, that is the subject of the Dialogue, is the kind of veneration that is appropriate for the icons. Φιλοσυνήθης argues that the icon, as a physical object, is worthy of worship (λατρευτικῶς ἡ προσκύνησις),

8. See Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 131-149. These include two letters of Leo, one to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nikolaos Grammatikos [ed.: A. Lauroti, Ἰστορικὸν ζήτημα ἐκκλησιαστικὸν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια 20 (1900), 405a-407a], and another to Nikolaos of Adrianopolis [ed.: Lauroti, Ἰστορικὸν ζήτημα, cit., 414a-416a; 445b-447a; 455b-456b]; a letter of Basil of Euchaita to Isaak Komnenos (411b-413a); the σημείωμα of the Synod of 1094 (ed.: PG 127, 971-984). We should also add to these the now lost florilegium of Isaak Komnenos [see Glavinas, Ἡ ἐπὶ Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (cited n. 1), 174-177 and Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 143].

9. Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 113: “What Eustratios presents to us is a very strong sense of the continuing power of the logical, ultimately Aristotelian definition of the work of art”.

10. See Cameron’s remark on the “Sacred arsenals” of the 12th century (Arguing it out [cited n. 1], 55), which essentially follow trends that were set in the last decades of the previous century.

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whereas Φιλαλήθης counter-argues that the icon is worthy solely of relative veneration (σχετικῶς ἢ προσκύνησις), for it functions as a “reference” to the prototype that it depicts (ἀξιοπροσκύνητον διὰ τὸ πρωτότυπον, πρὸς δὲ ἀναφέρεται)11. Rather unsurprisingly, the outcome is in favour of Φιλαλήθης, who is in any case the undisputed driving force during the whole discussion. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Φιλοσυνήθης, although eventually unable to refute his discussant’s arguments, does not accept complete defeat. This last point leads us to the anthropological aspect of the Dialogue, which is equally important for our understanding (or at least exploration) of its poetics in full.

Despite the fact that we lack concrete evidence as regards the Dialogue’s impact on the dispute over the icons, it is self-evident that the text supports Alexios and opposes Leo. In order to get this message across to the reader, Eustratios not only employs logical appeal, but also constructs a narrative that exposes the character of Φιλοσυνήθης. An outline of the Dialogue’s setting is useful here: Φιλοσυνήθης is paying a visit to Φιλαλήθης. He has come from the palace and informs the latter of the discussions that took place there, during which the “longtime primate of the Church and the Synod”, until then a well-respected figure, was accused of heresy12. The whole text is essentially a discussion on the opinion expressed by the “primate of the Church” about the worship of the icons, which opinion is shared by Φιλοσυνήθης. However, it becomes apparent that the latter’s views, which are based on feeble arguments anyway, are significantly influenced by his personal feelings towards the accused prelate. Indeed, his friendly predisposition towards the man is so strong that at the end of the debate he is forced to admit defeat but also argues that if the “primate of the Church” were present, the debate would have continued, for he would be able to refute the arguments of Φιλαλήθης13.

So, Φιλοσυνήθης is depicted as a rather superficial and impulsive individual, whose opinion on such a complex issue as the veneration of the icons is based on misconceptions. Indeed, it is by and large the result

11. DIMITRAKOPoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 149-150.
12. DIMITRAKOPoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη, 129: ὅπερ δὲ ὑπὲρ χρόνον πλείστον τῆς ἑκκλησίας καὶ τῆς Συνόδου πρωτεύοντα ἔσχομεν...
13. See DIMITRAKOPoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη, 150-151.
of relying too much on the knowledge of other people, namely those he admires. But these are not his only personality traits, for in the middle of the dialogue he comes across as somewhat hot-tempered and curt, accusing his discussant of using sophisms and fallacies, to which Φιλαλήθης responds calmly, simply exhorting Φιλοσυνήθης to abandon his quarrelsome ways (φίλεριν) and focus on the topic in hand. And yet, despite these anything but flattering qualities, Φιλοσυνήθης is not exposed as a clueless fool. To the contrary, Eustratios’ attitude towards him is rather sympathetic, if just a little condescending, but nowhere do we get the impression that his intention is to humiliate Leo, who is the one hiding behind the veneer of Φιλοσυνήθης. Indeed, the interaction between the two discussants resembles more the relationship between a tutor (Φιλαλήθης) and his pupil (Φιλοσυνήθης) than that between two equally well-educated literati, something that is also reflected in the long monologues of Φιλαλήθης, which outnumber far and away the brief interventions of Φιλοσυνήθης.

Eustratios’ stance against Φιλοσυνήθης/Leo corresponds to Alexios’ attitude against Leo in real life, whereas it is generally in agreement with the metropolitan’s portrait as illustrated in Anna Komnene’s Alexiad, several decades after the Dialogue was written. Truly, although Leo had been tenaciously critical of Alexios during the whole controversy, the emperor’s tone from 1086 onwards was conciliatory, even during the metropolitan’s exile. For her part, Anna describes Leo as righteous, yet coarse and difficult to get along with. As regards his views on the icons, she attributes them either to his rivalry (ἔριν – cf. Eustratios’ φίλεριν in the previous paragraph) against the emperor or to his ignorance about theological matters. In

14. See Dimitrakopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη, 135.
15. Perhaps we could make a connection here with several dialogues written in Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period, where: “the instructional relationship between the speakers undermines a truly dialogic exchange” (A. Rigolio, Christians in conversation: A guide to Late Antique dialogues in Greek and Syriac, Oxford 2019, 24).
16. See Glavinas, Ἡ ἐπὶ Αλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (cited n. 1), 142.
17. See Annae Comnenae Alexias (cited n. 3), 145,17-19. Leo’s quarrelsome personality is reflected palpably in the imperial σημείωμα of the Synod of 1086 as well [see Sakkelion, Documents inédits tirés de la bibliothèque de Patmos. I. Décret d’Alexis Connède portant déposition de Léon, métropolitan de Chalcédoine, BCH 2 (1878), 102-128, 113-128].
addition, Anna suggests that Leo’s hostility was further fuelled by several “insidious people” (χαιρεκάκοις ἀνδράσι πειθόμενος)\textsuperscript{19}. It is easy to see that Eustratios’ Φιλοσυνήθης, with his well-meaning, yet unsophisticated and (somewhat) contentious manner, as well as his dependence on other people, is quite similar to Anna’s Leo.

Let us return now to the unnamed “longtime primate of the Church and the Synod”, who, although not present when the debate purports to take place, is an important component of the Dialogue, especially in order to understand what exactly the name Φιλοσυνήθης means. First, a brief prosopographical survey is required. We can be quite sure that the phrase “primate of the Church” denotes the patriarch of Constantinople. We cannot be certain whether the κοιναὶ συζητήσεις and the ζήτησις δόγματος that were being held in the palace, as Φιλοσυνήθης informs Φιλαλήθης at the beginning of the Dialogue\textsuperscript{20}, refer to actual events, for they could be fictitious elements whose function is to set the tone of the ensuing debate. However, it would not be far-fetched to argue that, to some extent, they echo the tumultuous Synod of 1086, which had forced Leo into exile\textsuperscript{21}. Shortly afterwards, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nikolaos Grammatikos, who presided at the Synod of 1086 (and that of 1094, as συνεδριάζων of the emperor\textsuperscript{22}), refused to sign a σημείωμα against Leo. For his part, while in exile Leo sent a letter to Nikolaos, in which he elaborated on his views about the veneration and the worship of the icons\textsuperscript{23}.

All this shows that Leo and Nikolaos were on friendly terms during the controversy. Furthermore, we may tentatively surmise that the Patriarch was not completely hostile to Leo’s views. As far as the Dialogue is concerned, it is safe to assume that, since Φιλοσυνήθης was based on Leo, the “primate of the Church and the Synod” was based on Nikolaos. There is only one problem with this identification: Nikolaos was never accused of heresy (Φιλοσυνήθης speaks explicitly about κακοδοξίας ἐγκλήμα\textsuperscript{24}) during the controversy over the icons, nor did he fall, as far as we know, into disfavour with the court.

\textsuperscript{19.} Annae Comnenae Alexias (cited n. 3), 145,42-43.
\textsuperscript{20.} Dimitrakopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 127 and 129 respectively.
\textsuperscript{21.} Cf. Glavinas, Ἡ ἐπὶ Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (cited n. 1), 126-128.
\textsuperscript{22.} PG 127, 976.
\textsuperscript{23.} See Glavinas, Ἡ ἐπὶ Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (cited n. 1), 126-128.
\textsuperscript{24.} Dimitrakopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 130.
or the Church due to his relationship with Leo. The solution to this problem probably lies in the unique character of Eustratios’ Dialogue, which blends freely true events with fictional elements. In this instance, it seems that Eustratios purposefully exaggerates the friendly relationship between Nikolaos and Leo, as well as Nikolaos’ overall role during the controversy, in order to highlight the fact that Leo was not capable of forming his own theological arguments. In any case, Eustratios cleverly avoids mentioning any real names, in this way blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction.

As far as the perspective of Φιλοσυνήθης on Nikolaos Grammatikos is concerned, here is the right place to discard Glavinas’s suggestion that the Patriarch had passed away when the Dialogue was written and therefore the text should be dated later than 1111. Glavinas based this argument on a passage in the Dialogue, where Φιλοσυνήθης says that the “primate of the Church” is criticized for his views, ὥσπερ ὀστράκου μεταπεσόντος. Although not stated explicitly, the scholar, who also identifies this primate with Nikolaos, has presumably misinterpreted the ancient expression as referring to the passing of a person, whereas it actually denotes a sudden change in status, in this case the prelate’s abrupt fall from grace, as alleged in the Dialogue. At any rate, it would not make much sense for Eustratios to have written a work such as the Dialogue after the controversy over the icons had ended. The dating of the Dialogue shortly before 1094 could also justify the claim of Φιλοσυνήθης that he is coming from the palace (the Synod of 1094 was held in the palace of Blachernai) and also that the prelate has been “the primate of the Church” for “a very long time” (διὰ χρόνου πλείστου); in 1094 Nikolaos had been Patriarch of Constantinople for ten years, a considerably longer period than the three-year tenure of his predecessor, Eustratios Garidas.

As regards the dating of the Dialogue, it is useful to remind ourselves of another hint that we have at our disposal, namely a reference to the Treatise in a Logos by Niketas of Serres, written within the frame of Eustratios’

25. See Glavinas, Ἦ ἐπὶ Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ (cited n. 1), 197-198.
26. Dimitrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 129.
27. Dimitrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη, as in previous note.
28. The logos of Niketas has been edited by P. Ioannou [Le sort des évêques hérétiques]
condemnation as a heretic in 1117, due to his views on the relationship between the Divine and the Human Nature of Christ. Eustratios had insinuated that the Natures were not equal, inasmuch as the former was worshipped by the latter. Niketas aptly points out that Eustratios had essentially made the same claim in his Treatise, which was written πρὸ πολλοῦ. Barber translates this πρὸ πολλοῦ as “many times before”, but it would be more accurate to understand it as “long before”. This would mean that, according to Niketas, the Treatise was composed “long before 1117”. Eustratios’ elaboration on the submission of the πρόσλημμα to the Divine Nature is to be found in the Treatise but not in the Dialogue, and thus we may assume, although with great caution, that the Dialogue precedes the Treatise. Therefore, although this πρὸ πολλοῦ is not very precise, it should be taken into consideration in future attempts to date the two texts.

ΦΙΛΟΣΥΝΗΘΗΣ: A “LOVER OF FRIENDSHIP”?
The relationship between Φιλοσυνήθης and the “primate of the Church” can help us decipher the true meaning of the former’s name. First of all, it seems that Eustratios has constructed the name of the two discussants in the Dialogue by means of analogy. If Φιλαλήθης is the one who loves (φιλεῖ) ἀλήθειαν, then Φιλοσυνήθης must be the one who loves συνήθειαν. According to LSJ, the second definition of the noun συνήθεια is “habit, custom”, which corresponds to its modern Greek usage. Based on these, the name of Φιλοσυνήθης has been translated as either “Lover of habit”

30. See Dimitrakopoulos, Έκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 152-154.
31. Darrouzès, Documents inédits (cited n. 28), 302,26-27.
32. See Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 129.
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(Cameron) or “Lover / Friend of custom” (Spingou). However, it is important to engage in a close reading of the text, in order to see the context in which συνήθεια appears each time.

The first time we come across the proper noun συνήθεια in the Dialogue, it is placed right next to φιλία. The passage starts with Φιλοσυνήθης informing his discussant that the “primate of the Church” is accused of impiety. Φιλοσυνήθης does not attempt to hide his feelings towards this person. On the contrary, he first confesses that he holds the man in high esteem and then admits that this unequivocal admiration prevents him from being objective. For his part, Φιλαλήθης warns him that φιλία and συνήθεια may well cloud one’s judgement and thus distract one from the pursuit of truth. Φιλία is easily understood as “friendship” or “friendly disposition”; the case of συνήθεια is not so simple. According to LSJ, the primary definition of this word is “habitual intercourse, acquaintance, intimacy”, whilst the secondary is “habit, custom” (but vice versa in Montanari). Apparently, the primary definition contains the meaning of “habit”, thus συνήθεια may refer to an intimate relationship that has resulted from a long-standing acquaintance. Φιλοσυνήθης himself lays emphasis on the aspect of time with regard to his friendly disposition towards the primate, whom he calls “a good man” (άνηρ χρηστός).

Nonetheless, although the relationship between Φιλοσυνήθης and the primate is defined both by “habit” and “friendship / friendly disposition”, the response of Φιλαλήθης to his discussant’s latest claim clearly stresses the aspect of “friendship”; for according to him, Φιλοσυνήθης is certainly allowed to “love” (φιλεῖν) the man, but it is “absurd” (ἀτοπώτατον ἅμα καὶ ἀλογώτατον) to prefer φιλίαν and ἥθος over God and God’s truth. Since the sole concern of Φιλαλήθης as regards the issue that the two men

33. See Cameron, Arguing it out (cited n. 1), 16.
35. See Dimitракopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 129.
36. Καὶ πῶς ἀρνησαίμην διάθεσιν διὰ πλείστου βεβαιωθεῖσάν μοι τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ χρονίαν ὑπόληψιν πρὸς ἄνδρα χρηστότατον ἵππος ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ συνήθειας; Dimittrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 129.
37. See Dimittrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 129-130.
are about to discuss is the pursuit of truth, whereas the real problem of Φιλοσυνήθης is that he is unable to look past his relationship with or his feelings towards the primate, then we should consider reading the Dialogue as a clash of mindsets. That is why Φιλαλήθης insists on the notion of φιλία (and φιλεῖν), which he regards as the reason for Φιλοσυνήθης being blind to the truth. Moreover, ἠθος, a word that here clearly denotes “moral character”, not habit 38, appears to be a direct reference to the characterization of the primate as ἄνηγ χρηστὸς by Φιλοσυνήθης, with respect to the relationship between the two men.

The proper noun συνήθεια makes one final appearance towards the end of the Dialogue, in a passage that has been mentioned already, where Φιλοσυνήθης insists that if the primate were present, the debate would not have ended, for he would be able to overcome Φιλαλήθης with his arguments. The latter responds calmly that he knew from the start that it is extremely difficult for someone to ignore a longtime συνήθεια, which is why his discussant refuses to accept that the man he admires is inferior to another person 39. As in the previous instance, συνήθεια here refers primarily to the relationship between the two men, with an emphasis on the feelings of Φιλοσυνήθης towards the primate – in fact, we never actually learn if these feelings are mutual. Given that φιλία (also φιλεῖν) and συνήθεια are employed interchangeably by Φιλαλήθης, we may assume that Eustratios considers their respective meaning close, which would not be the first time in Greek literature 40. Let us also repeat that the notion of “habit” is relevant in this discussion, however the point Φιλαλήθης is really trying to make seems to be that one should be ready to sacrifice friendship (in the broad sense) for the sake of truth.

38. Although it should be stressed that a person’s character is shaped by habit, as Aristotle famously argues in the Nicomachean Ethics (1103a): ἡ ἠθικὴ [ἀρετὴ] εξ ἔθους περιγίνεται.
39. See Δημήτριακόπουλος, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 150-151.
If so, how should we translate the name of Φιλοσυνήθης? “Lover of friendship” is apt, provided that we keep in mind that “friendship” refers here more to an “accustomed friendly disposition due to longtime admiration”, an interpretation which covers all the nouns and verbs used by the two discussants to describe the relationship in question (φιλία-φιλέω, συνήθεια, ἥθος, ὑπολαμβάνομαι). Alternatively, we may assume that the second component of φιλοσυνήθης is not συνήθεια but συνήθης, an adjective whose primary definition is, according to LSJ, “acquaintance”, “well-acquainted or intimate with one” and, less frequently, “friend”. In that case, the discussant’s name would mean “He who loves his friend (more than truth itself)”, which eventually brings us back to the more convenient “Lover of friendship”.

It should be also noted that φιλοσυνήθης is not a neologism, for it already appears in Late Antiquity. The earliest author who uses it is Plutarch in his Moralia, in the essay Πώς ἄν τις διακρίνει τὸν κόλακα τοῦ φίλου (How to tell a flatterer from a friend). The word is interpreted in LSJ as “loving one’s associates”, and in Montanari as “fond of company, friendly, sociable”. Barber surmises that Eustratios’ use of the word is a reference to Plutarch and thus translates Φιλοσυνήθης as “Lover of one’s associates”. It is useful to correlate Barber’s assumption with Trizio’s remark that Eustratios was particularly fond of Plutarch, for the latter’s name appears frequently in the former’s commentary on Aristotle. In addition, it should be noted that the word φιλαλήθης can also be found in Plutarch’s Moralia, in the essay Περὶ τοῦ ἀκούειν (On hearing), where it is juxtaposed with φιλόνεικος and δύσερις (contentious and quarrelsome) – and as we saw previously, on one occasion Φιλαλήθης characterizes the attitude of Φιλοσυνήθης as «φίλεριν».

As regards other primary sources, the word φιλοσυνήθης is rather common in the astrological treatise of Vettius Valens, where it could be

42. See Barber, Contesting the logic (cited n. 5), 101, n. 8.
44. Plutarche, Oeuvres morales (cited n. 41), 41.
interpreted as “sociable”, or even “popular”\textsuperscript{45}. Apart from these two authors, TLG offers more results. Leaving aside those that are from Eustratios’ Dialogue, we are left with only a few passages that are again associated with an individual’s friendly disposition and the need (or will) to socialize with other people\textsuperscript{46} – or human beings, when it refers to the social behaviour of animals\textsuperscript{47}. Therefore, as far as the history of the word is concerned, “Lover of friendship” is preferable to “Lover / Friend of habit / custom”.

AN EXERCISE IN “SELF-PERFORMANCE?”

We have seen how Φιλοσυνήθης can be understood as a moral quality, with regard to the Dialogue’s “realistic” pretensions – its “plot”, as we would say. Blinded by friendship, Φιλοσυνήθης is unable to see the truth. But “truth” is the sole concern of his discussant, the lonesome thinker who dislikes socializing and is uninformed about public affairs, preferring to stay at home, undistracted by everyday worries and thinking about ways to improve himself. The discussion is about a demanding theological topic and indeed the very last words of Φιλαλήθης constitute a “confession of faith” in the authority of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church\textsuperscript{48}. However, explicit intertextual references to ecclesiastical authority are completely absent from the Dialogue, with the exception of pseudo-Dionysios, whom

\textsuperscript{45} Vettius Valens refers to the influence of the planets on human character. Φιλοσυνήθης appears next to such words, as εὐσυμβίωτος [D. Pingree (ed.), Vettii Valentinis Antiocheni anthologiae libri novem, Leipzig 1986, 41,27; LSJ: “easy to live with”] and πολύφιλος (op. cit., 39,22; LSJ: “having many friends, dear to many”), thus it has a similar meaning.

\textsuperscript{46} In the Διδασκαλίαι of Dorotheus of Gaza, for instance, we read: φιλοσυνήθης ὄν καὶ ἀγαπῶν τοὺς ἑταίρους μον [L. Regnault – J. de Préville (eds.), Dorothee de Gaza, Œuvres spirituelles (SC 92), Paris 1963, § 10,105]. The use of φιλοσυνήθης in the Life of Saint Loukas of Stiris is similar, although at first it may give the impression it denotes “a fondness for a habitual lifestyle”: φιλοσυνήθης ψυχή καὶ τὰς μεταβάσεις ἐπιεικῶς δυσχεραίνουσα [D. Sophianos (ed.), Ο μίος τοῦ οὐδον Λουκᾶ τοῦ Στειριώτη, Athens 1989, § 66,5]. It actually refers to the saint’s loving care towards the faithful, as related in previous chapters.

\textsuperscript{47} The dove, for instance, is described by John Chrysostom as (ἀρνευόν) φιλοσυνήθες (PG 53, 234), which probably means “well-disposed towards humans”.

\textsuperscript{48} Ὅσα μὲν γὰρ τοῖς θεόπταις καὶ Ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς θεοπνεύστοις Πατράσιον ἡμῖν παραδόθησαν, ταῦτα ὡς ἀναγκαία ἠγοῦμαι καὶ ἀπαραίτητα … Ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῶς εἰ ποτὲ τι ἄγονής ἔρως, καὶ γανὴ τοῦτο ἀπάθον τῶν ἀποστολικῶν καὶ πατριαρχῶν παραδόσεων, ἀμύσταμα τοῦτον μὴ ἐνδοιάζον μηδὲν, ὡς τὴν ἀλλήλης καὶ ἐαυτοῦ προτιμήν: Dimitrakopoulos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 151.
Φιλαλήθης mentions in a slight ironic way, in order to expose, as it seems, the unfamiliarity of Φιλοσυνήθης with this writer, in contrast to what the latter claims⁴⁹. Moreover, the arguments of Φιλαλήθης during the debate make good use of dialectic, with syllogisms and source material that showcase Eustratios’ familiarity with Aristotle⁵⁰. All this suggests that Eustratios engaged consciously in a crossover between philosophy and theology, in the pursuit of theological “truth”.

Based on the above, we may ask ourselves if there is more to the name of Φιλοσυνήθης than the mere characterization of a man’s character, as someone who is too dependent on his friends for his own good. In other words, are there any deeper theological connotations in his name? With the aid of Lampe’s Patristic Greek Lexicon⁵¹, we come across several passages from Early Christian and Early Byzantine texts that relate συνήθεια with idolatry, pagan life and Judaic traditions, always in contrast to the Christian way of life, which of course is identified with the truth (ἀλήθεια)⁵². In other instances, early Church Fathers talk about the πονηρὰ συνήθεια, when referring to a non-Christian way of living⁵³, or about the παλαιὰ or ἀρχαία συνήθεια, in relation either to belief in the Greek gods or to Judaism⁵⁴.

⁴⁹. Dimetrapaoulos, ‘Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 134. It should be noted that Leo appeals at least twice to Dionysios’ authority in two of his letters that are associated with the dispute (see Lauriotis, Ἰστορικὸν ζήτημα [cited n. 8], 405b – letter to the patriarch Nikolaos Grammatikos; 445b – letter to Nikolaos of Adrianopolis).
⁵⁰. See note 9.
⁵¹. See Lampe, s. v., 1. In LBG, συνήθεια is registered as a financial term, which does not concern us here.
⁵². On the συνήθεια of idolatry and paganism as opposed to Christian truth, two passages from Clement of Alexandria’s Προσπερτηκάς πρὸς Ἐλλήνας (Exhortation to the worshippers of the ancient Greek religion) are relevant here ὡς μὲν οὖν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὰ ξύλα, καὶ συνελόντι φάναι, τὴν ὑλὴν ἀγάλματα ἀνθρείελα ἐποίησατε, οἵς ἐπιμορφάζετε εὐσέβειαν, συκοφαντοῦντες τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἣδε μὲν αὐτόθεν δῆλον (PG 8, 136 A); and: Φύγωμεν οὖν τὴν συνήθειαν, φύγωμεν, οἵς ἐκείνης χαλεπήν, ἢ Χαρύβδεως ἀπειλήν, ἢ Σειρῆνας μυθικάς (op. cit., 237 B). On συνήθεια denoting Jewish traditions, we read in the Constitutions Apostolorum (4th century): Δι’ ὧν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ὑμῖν ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἀπέχεσθαι παλαιᾶς συνηθείας καὶ δεσμῶν ματαίων [F.X. Funk (ed.), Didascalia et Constitutions Apostolorum, v. 1, Paderborn 1905, 347, 8-9].
⁵³. See, for instance, in John Chrysostom’s Περὶ μετανοίας (On repentance) signifying sin: ἔκκοψον ... συνήθειαν πονηρῶν (PG 63, 833).
⁵⁴. See note 52, and add to these John Chrysostom’s ἀρχαία συνήθεια (PG 63, 691) and παλαιὰ συνήθεια (op. cit., 520)
Although we have to be careful here, for συνήθεια had been used in past Christian literature in a positive way as well, signifying Christian Orthodox life and customs\textsuperscript{55}, our impression that in the Dialogue it acquires negative theological associations is reinforced by several points:

First and foremost, by the emphatic urging of Φιλαλήθης: συνήθειαν ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἀρνήσασθαι, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς δ’ ἀντέχεσθαι\textsuperscript{56}. Second, by the very name of Φιλαλήθης, which had been employed in past ecclesiastical Greek literature as an attribute of such prominent figures of the Christian religion, as Matthew\textsuperscript{57}, but also of God himself\textsuperscript{58}. Third, by Eustratios’ correlation of Leo’s views on the icons with paganism and Judaism in the Treatise\textsuperscript{59}, which reminds us of the association of συνήθεια with pre-Christian belief systems, as we saw in the previous paragraph. To these we may add the word πρόληψις, which is once more employed by Φιλαλήθης in order to describe the shortsightedness of Φιλοσυνήθης, this time as an antonym of τάληθς. The noun here clearly means “predisposition” or “prejudice”\textsuperscript{60} and can be found right next to συνήθεια in a passage from the fourth Homily of (pseudo-) Makarios of Egypt, where it is argued that Evil has become, συνηθείᾳ καὶ προλήψει πολλῇ, the nature of man\textsuperscript{61}.

Naturally, theology was both the means and the end of the whole controversy, and all related primary sources are interspersed with quotes deriving from Ecumenical Councils and Church Fathers. What distinguishes Eustratios’ Dialogue is the almost complete lack of explicit intertextuality, which has already been mentioned, and its highly sophisticated style, which is already reflected in the author’s unconventional choice of composing a

\textsuperscript{55} See Lampe, s.v., 3.
\textsuperscript{56} Dimitrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 129.
\textsuperscript{57} See Lampe, s.v.
\textsuperscript{59} οὐδὲς χριστιανὸν πρὸς αὐτὴν [sc: ὁμολογίαν], εἰ μὴ ποινής τοῦ χριστιανὸν πενίθεται ἑλληνικὸν τῇ γνώμῃ καὶ πολυθεΐς πιθήκων: Dimitrakopoulos, Εκκλησιαστική βιβλιοθήκη (cited n. 4), 152. However, this statement could also be viewed as an ironic answer to Leo’s exact same claim in his letter to Patriarch Nikolaos Grammatikos (see Lauriotis, Ἱστορικὸν ζήτημα [cited n. 8], 405b).
\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Lampe, s.v. 3 & 4.
\textsuperscript{61} PG 34, 477 D.
REMARKS ON EUSTRATIOS OF NICAEA’s DIALOGUE

Platonizing dialogue. As far as argumentation is concerned, Eustratios’ arsenal comprises the use of dialectic, syllogisms and Aristotelian logic (and perhaps also Neoplatonism?), in order to tackle a theological matter. Moreover, as we have already seen, in the Treatise the author elaborates his own views on the relationship between the two Natures of Christ, which eventually led to his condemnation and abdication from his see more than twenty years later.

All this makes us wonder about Eustratios’ intention in composing these two works. Were they really meant to assist Alexios during the last phase of the controversy over the icons, against Leo and any other opponent of the emperor’s will? We have already seen that the Dialogue relates to real events, although in a singular, if not unique, way. Furthermore, the veneer of Φιλαλήθης highlights the way Eustratios wants to present himself, namely as a reclusive sage, who is interested only in his theology and philosophy, shunning everyday worries and ignoring important events taking place in the palace. By taking all this into consideration, I would suggest that the Dialogue and the Treatise were possibly meant to be received as statements of “self-performance” or “performance of one’s self”, rather than up-to-date essays against current problems. This could also explain, at least to some extent, the absence of any mention of Eustratios or these two works in the σημείωμα of the Synod of 1094, as well as Anna’s silence about Eustratios’ involvement in the controversy – and let us remember that she speaks very highly of him on another occasion.

62. Neoplatonic associations are possible, since we know, thanks to Trizio (Eleventh-to-twelfth-century Byzantium [cited n. 43], and: Neoplatonic source material in Eustratios of Nicaea’s commentary on Book VI of the Nicomachean Ethics, in: Medieval Greek commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics [cited n. 5], 71-109), that Eustratios’ comments on Aristotle were heavily influenced by Neoplatonism, especially by the writings of Proklos. Within this frame, it could be of some use to cite Iamblichus, a Neoplatonist, who, in his Προτρεπτικὸς ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν (Exhortation to the study of philosophy), defines ἄμαθια (ignorance), which he regards as the opposite of the study of philosophy, as συνήθεια πονηρῶν λόγων [H. Pistelli (ed.), Iamblichi protrepticus ad fidelis codicis Florentini, Leipzig 1888, 99,24-25]. For πονηρῶν συνήθεια, see note 53.

63. Cf. Cameron, Arguing it out (cited n. 1), 16: “Lover of Truth ... is a veritable hermit”.

64. According to Glavinis (Ἡ ἐκτι Αλεξίου Κομνηνὸς [cited n. 1], 196), this is another indication that the Dialogue was written at a later date. However, his assumption is also based on the misinterpretation of a passage in the Dialogue, as we have already shown.
If so, is it possible to specify the Dialogue’s intended audience? Trizio has perceptive pointed out that the readers of Eustratios’ commentaries on Aristotle must have been “highly educated” and I see no problem in picturing a similar set of recipients for the Dialogue. Eventually, the “audience” of this text would automatically become part of the “performative” procedure, thus sharing the experience of a Platonizing dialogue that mixes philosophy and theology in a highly sophisticated style. Given that one of the things Eustratios was accused of in 1117 was the use of Aristotelian logic in talking about Christ, and the Dialogue makes good use of Aristotle, another question arises on the shared ideology between Eustratios and his audience with regard to the text in question.

Kaldellis has argued that Eustratios was condemned as a heretic because he had been an “Outsider” for too long, meaning that he had regarded philosophy, not as “ancilla theologiae”, but as an autonomous discipline. For his part, Trizio maintains that such characterizations, as “Neoplatonist”, “Christian” or “Christian Neoplatonic”, are not applicable to a complex personality such as that of Eustratios. Be that as it may, the Dialogue certainly surpasses all other primary sources that surround the controversy, and at the same time it urges us to assume that it was composed for the “initiated” few who would have been able to appreciate all its aspects in full. This means that a private gathering, and not the public space of the Synod or the court, would have been more appropriate for the “delivery” (whatever this word could mean: recitation, performance of some sort) of the Dialogue.

66. Ioannou, Trois pièces inédites (cited n. 29), 34: Ὅτι πανταχοῦ τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ θείων λογίων ὁ Χριστὸς συλλογίζεται ἀριστοτελικῶς. For his part, Trizio, Il neoplatonismo (cited n. 2), 12 considers this accusation exaggerated and undue.
68. See Trizio, Neoplatonic source material (cited n. 62), 109.
69. On public performances and recitations of dialogues written in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, see Rigolio, Christians in conversation (cited n. 15), 15.
CLOSING REMARKS

For all its merits and intriguing aspects, Eustratios’ Dialogue is part of a bigger picture. It was composed within the framework of a debate, and judging by the flourishing of discussions and, by extension, the composition of a significant number of dialogues during the next century, it could be argued that, in a way, the whole controversy over the icons set the tone for future developments in the domain of theology. Certainly, when Φιλοσυνήθης accuses Φιλαλήθης of sophistry, or when the latter urges his discussant to leave ἔρις aside, we think primarily about Leo and his efforts to impeach the emperor during the last two decades of the 11th century. And yet, at the same time, we are somehow transferred to the reign of Manuel Komnenos, an era in which scholars pondered over the use of dialectic and the use of syllogisms, and thus challenged the boundaries between the theological and the secular – although frequently an ambiguous stance was involved; a time of lively debates, when someone could be easily accused of being σοφιστικὸς or ἐριστικὸς.

What distinguishes Eustratios from this evolution is his firm position with regard to dialectic and syllogistic reasoning. Indeed, the Dialogue constitutes an impressive example of an erudite scholar who believed that theology and philosophy could co-operate on equal terms. As regards characterization and self-representation, it is Eustratios’ adversary who is described as ἐριστικὸς and probably comes across as σοφιστικὸς, whereas Φιλαλήθης, the alias of Eustratios, does not feel the need to explain himself for his extensive use of syllogisms. Even if we take into consideration that eventually he was condemned as a heretic and then forced to sign a confession of faith, all this does not make him necessarily an “Outsider” – and let us not forget that envy must have played an important part in his conviction. Probably the best way to describe him would be as an intellectual characterized by his bold and creative way of thinking – which,

70. See Cameron, Arguing it out (cited n. 1), 50-51 & 74. Cf. K. Chryssogelos, Nikolaos Mouzalon’s resignation from the patriarchal throne and Manuel Komnenos as the new Socrates, Parekbolai 10 (2020), 43-63, esp. 53-54.
71. Unsurprisingly, Eustratios was brought to trial a year before the seriously-ill emperor passed away. See Trizio, Il neoplatonismo (cited n. 2), 13 and Ioannou, Le sort des évêques (cited n. 28), 6-7.
to some extent, surely benefited from having powerful patrons, namely Alexios and, later, Anna. Ultimately, the notable character of the Dialogue, with its blending of reality, fiction, Aristotelianism and theology, testifies to its author's artistry.

ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΙΑΣ

Αντικείμενο της μελέτης αποτελεί ο Διάλογος που συνέγραψε ο Ευστράτιος Νικαίας στο πλαίσιο της πολύχρονης διαμάχης που είχε ξεσπάσει τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες του 11ου αιώνα, εξαιτίας της απόφασής του Αλεξίου Α’ να λιώσει εκκλησιαστικά κειμήλια, προκειμένου να χρηματοδοτήσει τις εκστρατείες του. Άλλα από μία σύντομη εισαγωγή, όπου εκτίθεται το ιστορικό πλαίσιο που περιβάλλει τον Διάλογον, η μελέτη διαρθρώνεται σε τρεις βασικές ενότητες, όπου κατά σειρά μελετάται η σχέση των προσώπων του κειμένου με κάποια από τα ιστορικά πρόσωπα που συμμετείχαν στη διαμάχη, διερευνώντας οι πιθανές δηλώσεις και συνδηλώσεις των ονομασιών που έχουν δοθεί στους δύο συνομιλητές (Φιλαλήθης και Φιλοσυνήθης – με έμφαση στον δεύτερο) και προτείνεται μία νέα προσέγγιση ως προς τη συγγραφική πρόθεση του Ευστρατίου. Μαζί με τον Διάλογον συνεξετάζεται, όπου χρίνεται σχόπτιμο, και η επίσης συναφής με τη διαμάχη Συλλογιστικὴ ἀπόδειξις του Ευστρατίου.