THE LETTERS OF NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN HIS SECOND PATRIARCHATE 912-925

BY

JACQUILYNE E. MARTIN

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

(c) November 1991
The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

THE LETTERS OF NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND 
CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN HIS SECOND PATRIARCHATE 
912-925

BY

JACQUILYNE E. MARTIN

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of 
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements 
of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

© 1991

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to 
the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.
I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

I authorize the University of Manitoba to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Jacquilyne E. Martin

I further authorize the University of Manitoba to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Jacquilyne E. Martin
ABSTRACT

THE LETTERS OF NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN HIS SECOND PATRIARCHATE 912-925

Much of the extant correspondence of Nicholas Mysticos, Patriarch of Constantinople, was previously related to the Tetragamy Affair, which dominated his first patriarchate (901-907) and led to his deposition and schism in the church. A more recent dating of the letters to his second patriarchate (912-925) allows for new insights into this latter period when church and state grappled with the results of the Tetragamy.

This study addresses the historical context of the period, Nicholas' character, the letter-genre and problems in dating and interpreting the letters. Specific letters, dealing with matters of contention between Nicholas and the secular authority, are analyzed with regard to Nicholas' return to the patriarchate, two instances where the secular authority imposed levies upon church property and two occasions when the state interfered in the doctrinal affairs of the church to end the schism.

Nicholas, clearly understanding the inter-dependence of church and state, adjusted his own agenda where necessary to address the concerns of the secular government. He initiated a working relationship between church and state and, when the vital needs of the state required, he placed his own support and that of the church behind the secular government. Thus, his attitude and actions significantly influenced the course of events.
I wish to sincerely thank my advisor, Dr. John Wortley, for his advice and assistance in the preparation of this work. Particular thanks are due to my husband and family for all their moral support, most especially their patience and understanding in the completion of this task.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.Z.</td>
<td>Byzantinische Zeitschrift (Leipsiz, 1982- )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFHB</td>
<td>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae (Berlin, etc., 1967- )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOP</td>
<td>Dumbarton Oaks Papers (Cambridge, Mass., 1941- )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.E.</td>
<td>Vita Euthymii Patriarchae Cp., text, trans., and commentary by P. Karlin-Hayter (Brussels, 1970)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An intelligent man must also be aware that time is a factor of great importance, which realizes many of our plans in a way not according to the wish of the planner and sometime to his intense annoyance.

Nicholas Mysticos,
Letter 40 to the Patrician Malacinos.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION TO NICHOLAS AND HIS LETTERS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Literature</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE TIMES, THE MAN, AND HIS MEDIUM</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical Background to Nicholas' Patriarchates</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Patriarchates of Nicholas</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Character of Nicholas</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Genre of the Letter</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PROBLEMS OF DATING AND INTERPRETATION</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating and Interpretation of the Letters</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of the Extant Source Material</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND THE INTER-DEPENDENCE OF CHURCH AND STATE</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Emperor Alexander and the Direction of Ecclesiastical Politics</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Patriarch and Levies Imposed on the Administration of the Church by the Secular Authority</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas, Romanos and the Resolution of the Doctrinal Question Within the Byzantine Church and With Rome</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END NOTES</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO NICHOLAS AND HIS LETTERS

Nicholas Mysticos (ca. 852-925) was a dominant political and ecclesiastical figure in the Byzantine world in the first quarter of the tenth century. He was raised to the patriarchate of Constantinople in 901, only to be deposed in 907, when he was unable to procure a dispensation for the Emperor Leo VI’s uncanonical fourth marriage, the celebrated Tetragamy affair. He was restored as patriarch in 912 and then retained his position until his death in May 925.

The Tetragamy affair, which dominated Nicholas’ first patriarchate, highlights the confrontation between the emperor and the patriarch and Leo’s victory in achieving legitimization of his marriage. The doctrinal and moral issues of the Tetragamy plunged the church into a schism, which was not resolved until well into Nicholas’ second patriarchate. Therefore, the Tetragamy affair provides an excellent opportunity for historians to evaluate to what degree the emperor increased his authority over the church and to what extent the church retained autonomy or even increased its prestige and power.

Nicholas’ valuable corpus of letters is a major primary source for this period. Until quite recently, historians considered that Nicholas wrote much of this correspondence in his first patriarchate during the heated
Tetragamy debate and the time of his deposition and exile. Consequently, many letters have been used to establish the course of events during that turbulent period. However, the more recent dating of Nicholas' correspondence to his second patriarchate provides an opportunity to expand understanding of this latter period, when church and state grappled with the consequences of the Tetragamy. An unstable political situation, caused by rapid changes in secular leadership, and complicated by war with the Bulgars, affected relations between the secular government and the patriarchate. The turbulent situation enflamed the schism within the Byzantine Church and also led to schism with Rome. The doctrinal question and schism were only formally resolved within the Byzantine Church in 920 and with Rome ca. 922/23.

Nicholas wrote specific letters in the face of interference from the state in matters which, strictly speaking, impinged on the authority of the church. When he returned to the patriarchate in 912, the Emperor Alexander protected Arethas (Nicholas' chief adversary during the Tetgramy affair) from the disciplinary action which Nicholas tried to impose. On two occasions necessitated by the conduct of the Bulgar War (one under Zoe's administration, the other under Romanos Lecapenos), the state imposed unprecedented levies on church revenues. The Emperor Romanos interfered twice in the doctrinal affairs of the church, first to resolve the schism within the Byzantine
Church, then to end the schism with Rome. Nicholas' reaction to these actions by the state will be traced in his letters in order to provide insights into why he acted in a particular fashion, how he understood the relationship between church and state and how both his attitude and actions influenced the course of events.

To begin this investigation, the extant primary sources will be identified and the secondary works in the field to the present time will be discussed. Then, in order to gain insights into the complexity of church-state relations in the period under review, the historical background to Nicholas' patriarchate will be sketched. Following this, Nicholas' attitudes, priorities and convictions will be compared with those of the Patriarch Photios, his mentor, and Arethas of Caesarea, the leader of opposition to Nicholas in his second patriarchate. Attention will then be drawn to the letter genre; since tenth century letter writers imitated the style of letter writers from the fourth and fifth centuries, Nicholas' letters will be compared with those of a preferred model for letter writing, Basil of Caesarea (329-379). The vexing problems of dating and interpreting many of Nicholas' letters will be addressed. Then, an attempt will be made to understand the value of the primary sources by comparing Nicholas' letters with the other extant material available. The analysis of specific letters in Nicholas' correspondence will provide insights
into how Nicholas understood relations between church and state in his second patriarchate, how he was inclined to react in specific situations which brought him into a potential or real conflict with the state, and how his actions influenced the course of events. The study begins with a perusal of the available sources.

1.1 THE PRIMARY SOURCES

The primary sources are not extensive, although they vary in genre and content.

Nicholas' letters (ca. 912-925) cover a wide range of topics. He corresponded on behalf of church and state and maintained, as much as possible, personal correspondence with friends. He had access to official documents, the vast diplomatic correspondence of the state and the various records of the patriarchate. His letters mention some official documents regarding the Tetragamy debate and his return to the patriarchate.

The Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete (ca. middle of the tenth century) begins with the creation of the world and ends with the death of Romanos Lecapenos (948). It has been preserved in several versions, which are all redactions of the original chronicle with a few interpolations in each. The Logothete Chronicle also forms the basis for the first part of Book VI in the collection known as Theophanes Continuatus, the official history of the Macedonian Emperors.³
The *Vita Euthymii* (ca. 920-925), i.e. of the Patriarch Euthymios, who replaced Nicholas on the patriarchal throne between 907 and 912, is the earliest narrative source for this period. Unfortunately some parts of the manuscript have been lost and several vital *lacunae* occur in the narrative. In its present form, it covers events from the death of Basil I (886) to the death of Euthymios (917). The writer of the *Vita* had access to official documents in the patriarchal archives and in Euthymios' monastery at Psamathia. Twenty-six documents pertaining to the Tetragamy and Nicholas' return to the patriarchate are mentioned; portions of nine more are quoted.

The orations, treatises and letters of Arethas of Caesarea (ca. 901-917) provide information on the individuals and events surrounding the Tetragamy and Nicholas' return to the patriarchate. Arethas' letters indicate that he had access to the documents at Psamathia. Letters of Nicetas the Paphlagonian to Arethas (ca. 906/07) also provide information on events leading up to Nicholas' deposition.

The *Life of Basil the Younger* (ca. after 944 or 952, depending upon which date is preferred for Basil's death) provides information on the rebellion of Constantine Doucas (June 913) and Nicholas' role in the events. Three poems on the death of Leo VI (ca. 912) detail the change of power from Leo to Alexander. Luidprand of Cremona's romantic
account of life in Constantinople (ca. after 962)\textsuperscript{10} gives
the Western view on events during this period while the
Patriarch Eutychius provides the common understanding in
Alexandria (ca. 937-940).\textsuperscript{11}

Official documents pertaining to Nicholas' patriarchates include his alleged letter to the rebel
Andronicos Doucas (ca. 905), three versions of his letter of
resignation from the patriarchate (February 907), the Act of
Deposition for the metropolitan who deserted him before his
resignation (May 913) and the Tome of Union (July 9, 920),
with several altered versions.\textsuperscript{12}

These rich, though limited, primary sources have
spawned considerable historical investigation and secondary
literature.

1.2. SECONDARY LITERATURE

Historians used to consider Nicholas a rigorist
defender of the church against secular intervention on a
doctrinal and moral issue. Nicholas' contention that his
consistent opposition to a dispensation for Leo VI's fourth
marriage led to his deposition was accepted.\textsuperscript{13} Although the
Vita Euthymii contradicts Nicholas' interpretation, most
scholars did not consider that to be a reliable source.\textsuperscript{14}

Runciman (1929)\textsuperscript{15} considered Nicholas an ambitious
rigorist, who was zealous for the patriarchate and prepared
to go to any lengths to enhance its prestige. Gay (1930)\textsuperscript{16}
suggested that Nicholas enhanced his rigorist stance
in his correspondence and showed considerable personal ambition. Bréhier (1946),17 Dvornik (1948)18 and Vasiliev (1952)19 continued to see Nicholas as a rigorist.

In the 1950s the whole Tetragamy affair and Nicholas' role in it came under review. Jenkins began publishing the works of Arethas of Caesarea;20 Karlin-Hayter published a new edition of the Vita Euthymii and several more works of Arethas.21 Arethas' works tended to confirm the Vita's interpretation of the Tetragamy affair and of Nicholas' return to the patriarchate. Nicholas began to be viewed as a moderate who had worked compliantly with the secular authority to procure a dispensation for Leo VI's fourth marriage. Increasingly, it seemed that Nicholas and Arethas had subordinated the interests of the church to their own powerful ambition and that certain character-traits were important motivating factors in their actions. However, historians recognized that concern for the interests of the church also figured in many of Nicholas' and Arethas' actions. In particular, it seemed that Nicholas would not create a new schism in the church in order to satisfy Leo's desire for a dispensation. When historians turned their attention to Nicholas' second patriarchate, personal ambition and zeal for the patriarchate dominated explanations for his actions. Grégoire (1966)22 emphasized Nicholas' ambition, whilst Ostrogorsky (1968)23 saw Nicholas' actions motivated by zeal for the patriarchate.
Throughout the 1960s numerous articles appeared dealing with specific debatable points with regard to the Tetragamy affair. Although the chronicles state that Nicholas was restored to the patriarchate by Alexander, Jenkins (1963) contended that Nicholas had been restored to the patriarchate, or at least recalled to assume the patriarchal functions, by Leo VI.24 Nicolas Oikonomidès (1963, 1964)25 stressed even more strongly that Leo restored Nicholas to the patriarchate. Karlin-Hayter (1964)26 vehemently opposed this view; she maintained that Alexander restored Nicholas.

In 1970, Karlin-Hayter27 published her investigation of the sessions of the Synod of Constantinople (886-912) and the role of Nicholas in the Tetragamy. She concluded that Nicholas' actions in the short time between his exile and resignation were motivated by his personal ambition to return to the patriarchate. She found Nicholas' explanation of his role in the Tetragamy and his recall by Leo a fabrication to justify his return as patriarch. Her republication of the Vita Euthymii (1970), with English translation, introduction and commentary, expressed similar views.28

The 1973 edition of Nicholas' Letters by Jenkins and Westerink facilitated examination of Nicholas' correspondence. The text and translation is followed by Westerink's summaries of the letters, which is invaluable in providing the available data pertaining to each and in
trying to establish a more precise dating for the majority of the letters. Westerink considered Nicholas a moderate who desired harmonious relations between church and state, and yet was at times moved by personal ambition and zeal for the patriarchate.29

Nicholas Itsines (1973)30 in an unpublished doctrinal dissertation, traced Nicholas' entire history, through his two patriarchates. He argued that Nicholas was not motivated by political or personal considerations in the Tetragamy. Rather, he was upholding the traditional Byzantine teaching on marriage and was sincere, in both his patriarchates, in efforts to preserve unity and peace in the Byzantine Church. Itsines also claimed that Nicholas would have granted a dispensation if he could have gained unanimity among his metropolitans. Unfortunately, Itsines lacked the advantage of the Jenkins and Westerink edition of the Letters. As a consequence, he used many of Nicholas' letters, now dated to his second patriarchate, to support Nicholas' stand on the Tetragamy and his actions and attitude in exile. Itsines suggested that Nicholas and Euthymios tried to prevent Leo VI from changing the marriage laws (Nicholas by remaining firm and Euthymios by granting the dispensation). Itsines saw that the church increased its authority over marriage in the final resolution of the Tetragamy in the Tome of Union.
Oikonomidès (1974) published two articles on the Tetragamy dispute. He saw Nicholas as a conciliator who attempted to reach the compromise that all the parties wanted. Oikonomidès considered that this failed due to stubbornness on the part of all those involved and errors made in assessing and handling the situation. To Oikonomidès, the question of the dispensation was a disciplinary problem that evolved into a major issue on the limits of the emperor's authority to defy the law and intervene in the church. He found that the final resolution of the matter in the Tome of Union (920) resulted in an increase in the moral authority of the church. Oikonomidès further suggested that Basil's novels never concerned fourth marriages (since Leo VI was the first individual to contemplate such an act) and that the relevant passages concerning fourth marriages are interpolations (ca. 907) in the original text of the Procheiros Nomos, the first Macedonian code on civil law (ca. 870-879). Oikonomidès maintained that Leo intended to legislate to make fourth marriages legal in 906 but did not do so. Rather, Euthymios agreed to grant Leo the dispensation for his fourth marriage in exchange for a stronger law on marriage.

Runciman (1977) briefly surveyed Nicholas' two patriarchates. He now acknowledged Nicholas' moderate leanings and his desire to allow Leo VI a dispensation for his fourth marriage, since by so doing, Nicholas asserted
the moral authority of the patriarchate. Runciman concluded that a compromise would have been reached but for Arethas' intervention and that the resolution of the Tetragamy affair slightly limited the emperor's power.

Hussey (1986)33 made a brief survey of Nicholas' patriarchates. She noted Nicholas' personal ambition and zeal for the patriarchate but concluded that he was one of the great exponents of inter-dependence between church and state.

Therefore, historical investigation at the present time tends to see Nicholas as a moderate. He understood the delicate relationship between church and state but at times his ambitions for himself and for the prestige of the patriarchate conflicted with his aim to maintain a smooth working relationship with the state. The present study will examine specific letters in Nicholas' correspondence to determine how he acted in specific incidents that brought him into real or potential conflict with the state in his second patriarchate and how his attitudes and actions influenced the course of events. To arrive at such an understanding, the historical context in which these events occurred, the character of the man under investigation and the genre of the medium he used will first be examined.
CHAPTER II
THE TIMES, THE MAN AND HIS MEDIUM

The emperor's relationship with the church was bound to create areas of contention between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. In theory, the emperor and empire were reflections of God and the heavenly kingdom; the emperor was the vicegerent of God. The church always viewed the emperor as its protector, the guardian of the the True Faith, the convenor of church councils and the promulgator of laws decided by such councils. Nonetheless, ecclesiastical appointments and matters of doctrine were decided at first by the church in synod. However, after the sixth century, it became the practice for the emperor to decide church appointments, which would then be approved by the synod. Since the office of patriarch required qualities of statesmanship and a capacity for administration, emperors normally chose men of sound reputation, who co-operated with the secular government and administered the church with proper regard for the wishes of the state. The church, meanwhile, resisted secular interference in doctrinal matters and claimed responsibility for the morality of the empire and, particularly the emperor. Clashes between the patriarch and the emperor often resulted when an emperor asserted secular control in these two areas and the church could become deeply divided over the moral and doctrinal issues.
2.1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO NICHOLAS' PATRIARCHATES

From the eighth century, two currents of opinion existed in the Byzantine Church. One, quite moderate, saw that the empire required harmonious relations between church and state and worked for compromise and accommodation with the secular authority; the other, more conservative in approach and outlook, sought the autonomy of the church and tended to resist imperial control. The problems Nicholas faced in the tenth century developed from moderate and conservative attitudes in confrontations between church and state in the proceeding two centuries.

Iconoclasm\(^2\) provoked the traditional Byzantine problem of defining the degree of authority the emperor should hold over the church. In two separate periods (728-787 and 814-843), when Iconoclast emperors sought to impose dogma upon the church and enforce imperial edicts against the veneration of icons, the imperial will prevailed but fostered a strong opposition, primarily in the monastic community. Theodore the Studite and his followers challenged the state's intervention into the doctrinal affairs of the church with a fanaticism that earned them a formidable reputation as persecuted Iconodules and guardians of the autonomy of the church. The Studites scrutinized the more moderate secular church and attempts by the patriarchate to seek methods of accommodation with the state.\(^3\)
The controversy spurred both Iconoclasts and Iconodules to seek arguments in the Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers to support their theological positions. This then led, in the later stages of the struggle, to a revival of secular learning (particularly among the higher secular clergy). The monastic community, which placed great emphasis upon the teachings of the Church Fathers and the Scriptures, became increasingly suspicious of this learning and associated secular humanism with the tendency to compromise with the state.

The official victory over Iconoclasm achieved in 843 did not solve the difficulties within the Byzantine Church. Neither of the next two patriarchs, the moderate Methodios (843-847) nor the conservative Ignatios (847-858), was able to resolve the schism created by Studite opposition to the reintegration of Iconoclasts into the church. Moreover, church-state relations in the ensuing period were further complicated by concerns of the secular government, both with regard to internal politics within the Empire and foreign policy and diplomacy.

Due to the unstable political situation in Constantinople in this period, the secular authority often found it expedient to secure the ecclesiastical support of either the conservative or moderate party. This led to a polarization of the opposing views, known as "Ignatian" and
"Photian." 5 First one, then the other party, guided the affairs of the church. 6

The so-called "Photian Schism" further polarized the opposing conservative and moderate views. 7 In the reigns of Michael III and Basil I the secular authority attempted to control the patriarchate by appointing amenable candidates. This in effect meant that political expediency lent support first to the conservative and then to the moderate parties and thus exacerbated the schismatic tendency within the church. Rome, too, was drawn into the dispute and encouraged to interfere in internal and doctrinal matters at Constantinople. Papal support for the conservative party led to a wider schism with Rome, which was only resolved in 878, when most of the recalcitrant conservatives also made their peace with the church.

The chaotic political situation from the eighth to late ninth centuries, which resulted in so much intervention by the emperor in the affairs of the church, found expression in Photios' preface to the Epanagoge (the law-book commissioned by Basil I), composed during Photios' second patriarchate (ca. after 879). 8 Here, Photios itemized many of his concerns for the church during this turbulent time. He attempted to define the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers and to safeguard the rights of the Byzantine Church to decide disciplinary and doctrinal matters without the interference of the papacy. However, it
is likely that the secular government took a negative view of this distinct separation of powers and never published the *Epanagoge*. Nonetheless, it indicates the preoccupation with the jurisdiction of church and state in the Byzantine mind at this time. Moreover, having once been set down, the precepts were always available for any future patriarch's use. Nicholas was well aware of the provisions laid down, in view of his close association with Photios during the latter's second patriarchate.

Leo VI tried to control the patriarchate through amenable appointees. Shortly after his accession (886) he deposed Photios and placed first his own brother, Stephen (886-893), and then Antony Cauleas (893-901) upon the patriarchal throne. Leo was instrumental in the final healing of the schism just before the death of Antony Cauleas in February, 901. Leo then elevated his own friend and secretary, Nicholas Mysticos, to the patriarchate on March 1, 901.

The internal tensions between the secular government and the patriarchate are just one level of the relationship between church and state. Of equal importance is the conduct of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in foreign affairs. The foreign policy of the secular government in the second half of the ninth century concerned expansion of the imperial authority into the Balkans and Southern Italy. The church too was looking westward with
extensive missionary activity in the Balkans. Church and state had compatible interests in diplomatic endeavours with the Franks and the papacy.

Suzerainty, particularly in Bulgaria, was vital to Byzantine defence. The new influx of barbarians from the north and east into the Balkans provided incentives for both church and state to work towards converting the heathen to Byzantine Christianity. However, competition between Rome and Constantinople for domination in the Balkans was intense. The papacy repeatedly raised the old Illyrian Dioceses question and Photios attempted to ward off papal interference in the Balkans by an attempted rapprochement with the Western Emperor Louis II (867). Basil I's creation of the Dalmation Theme (ca. 867-872), strenuous missionary activity in the Balkans and forays into Southern Italy were all directed against both Frankish and papal claims to suzerainty in these regions.

Nicholas was conversant with the concerns both of the secular government and of the church in the Balkans and Southern Italy, since he held a position in the civil bureaucracy during Photios' second patriarchate (877-886), most probably under his supervision. Although Leo VI deposed Photios in 886 and Nicholas, possibly fearing reprisals due to his close association with Photios, embraced the monastic life, Leo quickly appointed Nicholas as his private secretary (mysticos). Thus, for fifteen
years before his elevation to the patriarchate, Nicholas was privy to information of vital importance to the state, in particular efforts to secure Byzantine Italy and prevent war with Bulgaria.

2.2 THE TWO PATRIARCHATES OF NICHOLAS

At Nicholas' elevation to the patriarchate, Leo VI charged him with maintaining the fragile union achieved in the church but the events of the Tetragnathy plunged the church once more into schism. Leo, widowed after three marriages that produced no surviving male offspring, approached the church for a dispensation to marry his mistress, Zoe, who had provided him with a son. Remarriage in the Eastern Church required a special dispensation from the synod, which had been granted for Leo's second and third marriages. However, a dispensation had never before been granted for a fourth marriage and a small faction within the church considered that the marriage canons established by Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century should be upheld. In the midst of the debate on this issue, Nicholas persuaded his metropolitans to baptize Zoe's infant on the condition that Leo would separate from Zoe. Leo then complicated the matter by overriding the canons and marrying Zoe without the required dispensation. Under the inspired leadership of Arethas of Caesarea, the old conservative tendencies resurfaced to challenge imperial interference in a doctrinal and moral issue. Various threats and inducements were
attempted to obtain unanimity on a dispensation, to no avail. Although appeal was even made to the Pentarchy (which in effect meant appeal to Rome) to secure a favourable ruling for the emperor, at length, Leo despaired of Nicholas ever achieving the desired result. Nicholas and those metropolitans who opposed the dispensation were exiled from Constantinople. Nicholas was subsequently forced to resign (evidence either real or contrived of conspiracy being used as leverage) and deposed.

The imperial will prevailed, but yet another schism was created in the church. Many of the metropolitans who had opposed the concession reversed their position and embraced the new patriarch, Euthymios, an ascetic monk, much admired for his piety. Arethas, too, soon followed suit. However, a small conservative faction recognized Nicholas as the legitimate patriarch and considered Leo's fourth marriage null and void. Thus, Nicholas found himself leading some of those who had opposed him. By the time Nicholas returned to the patriarchate in May 912, the positions of the two parties had almost completely reversed. Euthymios and his followers, especially Arethas, opposed Nicholas' attempts to regain control of the church on the death of the Emperor Leo VI (May 912). Reprisals taken against the Euthymians during the reign of Alexander (May 912-June 913) plunged the church into yet deeper schism.
On Alexander's death (June 913), Nicholas headed a regency council for the child-emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitos, and he conducted the affairs of church and state for a period of nine months. Several important political events dominated his regency: the conspiracy of Andronicos Doucas (in which Nicholas himself might have been involved), the outbreak of war with Bulgaria, and negotiations by Nicholas with Symeon of Bulgaria to affect his withdrawal from the very walls of Constantinople.

The Empress Zoe ousted Nicholas as regent in February 914 and she assumed the regency herself. Poor relations initially existed between the patriarchate and the secular authority (enflamed by official preference for the Euthymian faction), although the situation improved somewhat due to the crisis of the Bulgar War. The secular administration continued to correspond with Symeon of Bulgaria through Nicholas.

In due course, Zoe, too, fell victim to a coup and Nicholas again headed a regency council for a few short weeks. Then, in 919, stable leadership returned to the empire, when Romanos Lecapenos (919-945) attained the imperial power. His reign saw improved relations between church and state. He pressed the opposing factions in the church to a compromise on the doctrinal question of the Tetragamy and to a resolution of the schism within the Byzantine Church. Later, the combined efforts of the
patriarch and emperor resolved the doctrinal question and schism with Rome. Romanos, too, took advantage of Nicholas' political experience. Nicholas served Romanos as foreign minister and was involved in the political concerns of the empire until his death (May 925).

Nicholas had considerable understanding of the external and internal needs of church and state. A perusal of his character will indicate more clearly how one could expect this knowledge to translate into action in relations between the secular authority and the patriarchate.

2.3 THE CHARACTER OF NICHOLAS

Nicholas emerges from the primary sources as a complex individual, who seemed at times cruel, calculating and unfeeling, at others genuinely sensitive and sympathetic to individuals in need. In this respect, his own correspondence reveals much about his personality. Diplomatic dispatches on behalf of the secular government reveal extensive bureaucratic training and accompanying political astuteness. In official letters on behalf of church or state, Nicholas is authoritative and haughty, very much aware of the prestige of the empire and his own high office. On the other hand, his letters to missionaries demonstrate empathy and support. Likewise, personal letters are compassionate, when he communicates with friends, provides letters of introduction, or seeks relief from oppression for specific individuals. In all
of his letters, he justifies his own actions when he refers to the Tetragamy affair\textsuperscript{21} his return to the patriarchate,\textsuperscript{22} his relations with the secular authority\textsuperscript{23} or his conduct during the schism.\textsuperscript{24} He implores his own supporters to be charitable to Euthymians\textsuperscript{25} and yet he stubbornly opposes the return of unrepentant members of the opposition to the church.\textsuperscript{26}

The other primary sources present less flattering portraits of Nicholas. According to the \textit{Vita Euthymii}, he was a conniving, self-serving individual, ambitious but cowardly, clinging to power and making any concession to the secular authority in order to retain it.\textsuperscript{27} The \textit{Vita} portrays heinous acts of revenge and vindication on Nicholas' return to the patriarchate, co-operation with the Emperor Alexander in actions detrimental to the church and permitting Alexander's bizarre religious activities.\textsuperscript{28} Moreover, Nicholas is cast in the role of a political conspirator, suspected in an assassination attempt on Leo VI (May 11, 903) and implicated in two unsuccessful rebellions.\textsuperscript{29}

The chroniclers confirm Nicholas' complicity in the revolts\textsuperscript{30} and his collaboration with Alexander in the deposition of Euthymios.\textsuperscript{31} Arethas accuses Nicholas of considerable vacillation during the Tetragamy debate, of subordinating the interests of the church to personal
ambition and of seeking revenge on his return to the patriarchate.32

The primary sources indicate a complex personality. A better understanding of Nicholas' character emerges when one compares his attitudes, priorities and actions with those of the Patriarch Photios, his mentor, and Arethas of Caesarea, his chief adversary in the Tetragamy affair and for much of his second patriarchate.

Photios, the great scholar of the ninth century, had a successful civil career as protosecretis (head of the imperial chancery) under Michael III before becoming patriarch.33 Although a moderate, his family's prestige as persecuted Iconophiles made him acceptable to conservative opinion on his elevation to the patriarchate; on the other hand, his close association with the bureaucracy and secular learning also made him suspect.34 As a moderate, Photios opposed the extremist tendencies in the politico-religious struggle of his day and he championed the independence of the Byzantine Church from Rome, with regard to matters of internal discipline and doctrine.35

Generally Photios' political views were consistent with the concept of the universal empire centered at Constantinople, embodied in the one emperor appointed by God. By extension, the Byzantine Church claimed suzerainty over entities on the periphery of the empire that embraced Byzantine civilization. Thus, for both political and
ecclesiastical reasons, Photios sponsored extensive missionary endeavours, particularly in the Balkans. The secular government needed firm control of the area north of the Thracian Theme for defensive purposes; the church resisted papal designs that threatened the authority of the Byzantine church in the region. Photios could temper the theory of universal empire when reasons of state required, as in the case of the Western Emperor Louis II to whom he offered Byzantine recognition of his imperial title.

Photios' motives in the wording of the preface to the *Epanagoge*, Basil I's Law Book, which distinguishes between the jurisdictions of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities, are more difficult to gauge. Kazhdan considered the preface to be a manifestation of the secular revival and the accompanying tendency to compile and organize the existing body of knowledge. Dvornik suggested that Photios was influenced by his sufferings under Iconoclasm and wanted to protect the church from heretical emperors. It might well be that Photios' first deposition, as well as the whole Photian-Ignatian controversy, also influenced his outlook and spurred him to protect the church from arbitrary interference by the state.

Political opportunism seems obvious in Photios' political alliances during Michael III's reign and his acceptance of Basil I after the murders of the Caesar Bardas and Michael. In addition, lust for power could underlie his
alleged control of Basil I in the latter part of his reign and hostility towards Leo VI, with the supposed bad relations he caused between father and son. However, despite recognizable personal ambitions, concern for church and state and a moderate attitude towards church-state relations are the dominating facets of Photios' personality. A similar composition marks his protégé, Nicholas Mysticos.

Although Photios was obviously of aristocratic background, Nicholas' social status is much more open to question. Knowledge of his early life derives from the Vita Euthymii where he is associated with Photios' household as oikogenes, which translates literally as a "slave". Although many historians reject this status for Nicholas and consider him a distant relative of Photios, the present study concurs with Jenkins in considering Nicholas a manumitted slave. The Vita states that Nicholas and the Emperor Leo VI were fellow-schoolmates under Photios, despite the discrepancy in their ages (Nicholas born ca. 852, Leo VI born 866) and spiritual brothers. Jenkins interprets this to mean that Photios was spiritual father to both: as godfather to the manumitted slave, Nicholas, and as spiritual father to the imperial family. Arethas' derogatory remarks regarding Nicholas' obscure beginnings would have no foundation if Nicholas were a relative of Photios. Moreover, many former slaves achieved influential civil, military and ecclesiastical careers in
the tenth century. To Jenkins' evidence one might also add
the lack of a complete classical education. Nicholas wrote
his letters in Koinê Greek, not the convoluted Attic Greek
customary in epistolary communications and Mangol considers
that his style lacked the cultivation of Photius, his
mentor.45 Although a member of Photios' literary circle,
Nicholas' only known contribution to scholarship is the
commissioning of manuscript copying.46 Moreover, Nicholas'
letters indicate that he considered that God had appointed
him to his high office of patriarch.47 He seems to have
sincerely believed that all his advancements, both
ecclesiastical and secular, were a sacred trust.

Both Nicholas and Photios had extensive bureaucratic
training before assuming the office of patriarch and neither
chose the clerical life. Conservative opinion questioned
Nicholas' close association with the moderate elements
within the church, although he seemed to be regarded as
equipped to retain the fragile church union achieved just
prior to his election.48

Nicholas held Photios' views with regard to the
universal empire, missionary endeavours, independence of the
Byzantine church from Rome and the retention of control by
Constantinople over the Bulgarian Church.49 The duties of
the emperor and patriarch as specified in the Epanagoge
also appear in Nicholas' correspondence. However, his references
to imperial responsibilities are not addressed to the
secular authority at Constantinople. In his letter (No. 32) to Pope Anastasius III, he reminds the pope that the emperor is not above the law but subject to it and required to uphold it as an example to his people. 50 The ruler embodying justice and respect for the law is also portrayed in letters to Symeon of Bulgaria and several Moslem leaders. 51 Nicholas relates his own responsibility for the moral actions of the emperor in his letter (No. 32) to Pope Anastasius. 52 Several letters to imperial officials under Zoe's administration express the patriarch's responsibility for the empire and imperial family's spiritual welfare. 53 Nicholas' actions in the Tetragamy affair and in consolidation of his position with the secular administrations in his second patriarchate indicate some political opportunism. Yet he was also sincere in his desire for peace in the church, and political realities often dictated his choice of action in matters of ecclesiastical and secular policy. He saw it prudent to offer Symeon of Bulgaria imperial recognition in 913 in view of the threat presented to the empire at that time. 54 Nicholas was a remarkable successor to Photios and he demonstrated the same kind of individuality in matters of state.

Arethas was well educated and from a noble family in Patras. Like Photios, he was a dedicated scholar, much involved in manuscript copying and textual criticism. 55
He originally had moderate leanings and his secular learning was suspect to conservative ecclesiastical opinion, resulting in two trials for impiety.\textsuperscript{56} Leo VI appointed Arethas, then a deacon, as court orator (ca. 900) and raised him to the second seat in the church, the Archbishopric of Caesarea (ca. 902/903). The \textit{Vita Euthymii}, his own correspondence and the \textit{scholia} in his edited works provide scant personal information about Arethas. According to Westerink, the \textit{scholia} indicate a man, proud of his secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, opinionated in his judgements, who utilized his \textit{marginalia} for propaganda and self-justification.\textsuperscript{57}

The friendly relationship Nicholas first enjoyed with Arethas dissolved during the Tetragamy debate when Arethas strengthened the arguments of the conservative forces within the church to incite protracted resistance to Nicholas. Jenkins suggests that Arethas was offended by Nicholas' low social status and, since he himself had ambition for the patriarchate, he was jealous that such an individual had been raised to the patriarchal throne.\textsuperscript{58} Karlin-Hayter also indicates that Arethas' attitude towards Nicholas was partially due to a pro-aristocratic bias.\textsuperscript{59} Jenkins traces Arethas' hatred of Nicholas to 902, when Nicholas would not prosecute those who had brought a charge of impiety against Arethas.\textsuperscript{60} Further, Jenkins considers that Arethas viewed
himself as a patriarch in waiting during the patriarchate of Euthymios.61

Compassion and concern for others seem totally lacking in Arethas. Historians have generally seen him as narrow-minded, morbidly ambitious, a treacherous friend and a formidable and cold-hearted enemy.62 His opposition to Nicholas, his sudden volte-face and his betrayal of his former pupil, Nicetas the Paphlagonian,63 seem to confirm this assessment.

Although Karlin-Hayter recognized that Arethas had no affection for Nicholas during the Tetragamy debate, she considered that Arethas was more motivated by a respect for canon law than hatred of Nicholas.64 This correlates well with Oikonomidès' suggestion that Leo would have changed the law to allow fourth marriages but, rather, in exchange for receiving a dispensation for his fourth marriage, he reinforced the existing law.65 Since Arethas was an expert in canon law, Euthymios might have utilized his expertise in changing the marriage laws. Karlin-Hayter has shown that Leo VI valued Arethas' opinion on canon law66 and Westerink points out that Arethas himself claims that Romanos Lecapenos utilized his expertise to draw up the Tome of Union.67 Arethas might have seized the opportunity presented to increase the power of the church and, at the same time, to enhance his own prestige.
Historians have placed considerable emphasis on the personalities of Photios, Nicholas and Arethas in order to determine their course of action in church-state relations. However, certain similarities in their ecclesiastical careers have more to do with political realities than personal character traits or interests. The high position and visible profile of all three involved them in the affairs of state and such involvement was often dangerous. The patriarch's place (second only to the emperor) naturally involved him in the political concerns of the state; it was also a political reality that the support of the patriarch would be sought, if not obtained, by anybody seeking to overthrow the existing regime. As a result, the patriarch was potentially dangerous, suspect to the secular government and often drawn into the political arena. The charge of conspiracy to commit treason was also a ready device used by the emperor to remove an undesirable ecclesiastic. Photios, Nicholas and Arethas were all accused of involvement in political conspiracies during their ecclesiastical careers. Photios and Nicholas were deposed; all three were exiled and yet returned to their influential positions in the church.

Personal character traits and political exigencies influenced the attitudes and actions of all three of these dynamic individuals. None shared the ascetic and detached attitude of the monastic world toward scholarship and Hellenism; each, at one time or another, was suspect to
conservative opinion.70 All were undoubtedly shrewd and
good strategists. Photios and Nicholas commanded respect
from their contemporaries, even their bitterest enemies, but
the only favourable treatment Arethas is known to have
received is in the Vita Euthymii. None of the chronicles
refer to him by name, which has prompted Itsines to suggest
that Arethas was little admired.71 In defense of Arethas it
might be suggested that despite his great scholarship, he
lacked the extensive secular experience that was second
nature to both Nicholas and Photios. Arethas had a much
more narrow focus pertaining to the interests of the church,
whereas Photios and Nicholas modified their attitudes,
decisions and actions out of lengthy familiarity with the
needs of church and state.

Nicholas emerges from the sources as a complex
individual with a variety of motives. The letter-genre is
likewise complex, with prescribed parameters for form, style
and content.

2.4 THE GENRE OF THE LETTER

Letter-writing in the tenth century was highly
influenced by the revival of learning identified with this
period. Writers chose the Christian writers of the fourth
and fifth centuries as models for form, style and content.
A comparison of Nicholas' letters with those of Basil of
Caesarea (329-379), a preferred model for tenth century
writers, indicates marked similarity.
Modern letters are generally thought of as a means of communicating information, but ancient letters were a vehicle by which individuals performed specific actions. According to Mullet, the function of the letter was as important as the actual information it relayed. The synthesis of classical rhetoric and Christian tradition in the fourth century produced a "golden age" of letter writing. Judicial and deliberative rhetorical techniques are evident in the rather stereo-typed letters of friendship, consolation, recommendation, praise, blame and apologetic. The Ancient Greek letter stressed brevity and clarity in style and endeavoured to express the friendly relationship between two people, who were physically separated, by means of a dialogue in writing. This aspect continued to influence the form, style, phraseology and content in Byzantine letters. A conversational style, intended to be a half-dialogue, attempted to close the distance between persons by using illusions of actual presence. However, according to Mullet, Byzantines valued the content of a letter more than the display evident in ancient letters. If a letter performed a useful function it was even more highly regarded; many letters dealt with problems of everyday life. A Christian connotation and more personal quality permeated the classical conventions regarding concern for health, greetings, thoughts and prayers. An intensely
emotional and spiritual quality was added to the ancient idea of the letter as a "gift". Correspondents tastefully adorned their letters to reflect their status and intimacy and avoided the mention of third persons, especially by name. Ideally, letters were short and restrained, although many individuals, including Nicholas, often produced lengthy specimens. Figures of speech, derived from the Scriptures or classics, were used extensively.

Some modern historians have criticised the very things which the Byzantines prized about the letter—its rhetoric, difficulty, adherence to classical models and stereotyped responses. Jenkins considers that the letter’s message could be couched in an obscure and allusive fashion, since it would be communicated orally by the bearer. However, Mullet takes exception to this interpretation. She feels that much valuable information was imbedded in the letter itself, although various levels of meaning must first be pared away in order to understand it. Moreover, she maintains that correspondents often complained when a bearer arrived without the letter, since his communication usually complemented the letter’s message. Nonetheless, historians find Byzantine letters deficient in many respects, particularly in the lack of concrete historical detail. Since abstract forms of address were preferred, the addressee is often not named. Moreover, letters rarely indicate the place or date of writing.
After the fifth century, the works of a few standard authors in the early Greek tradition were chosen for their style, but the preferred models for letter-writing became Basil of Caesarea, the other Cappadocian Fathers and John Chrystosom. In the "dark ages" of the seventh to ninth centuries letters became functional and political in content and dealt with practical problems. Many letters of the ninth century, however, indulged in extensive scholarly discussions. In the tenth century, writers returned to the formulations of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Nicholas' letters are similar in style and form to those of Basil of Caesarea (329-379). The ascetic nature of Basil is in sharp contrast to the more worldly prelate seen in Nicholas, although ascetics were greatly admired in Nicholas' day. Indeed, Nicholas could find similarities of experience with Basil, who also had been deliberately opposed in his endeavours for the church.

Basil's letters (ca.357-378) were written when the church in the East was subject to great unrest and persecution. According to Way, Basil's letters range from friendly greetings to profound explanations of doctrine, denunciations, recommendations, petitions, messages of sympathy and bitter laments regarding the evils suffered by the church from within and without. In official letters, his tone is noticeably formal; his sophistic training is
evident in friendly letters of appeal, admonition, encouragement and consolation.\(^6\)

Nicholas' letters range from personal greetings, petitions, denunciations, letters of sympathy, requests and exhortations to an apologetic offering and doctrinal treatise. Many of his letters are formal, as would be expected, where he addresses influential individuals or government officials, or corresponds with heads of state on behalf of the church or the Byzantine government. In many of his letters, points of form and style are similar to Basil's.

The common expressions of "present/absent", "united in spirit" and the letter as a "gift" are best illustrated in the traditional letter of friendship. The circumstances of isolation and opposition that Nicholas experienced were suited to the similar situations described by Basil. Particularly in letters to Tryphon the Monk\(^7\) (a sincere friend of Nicholas throughout all his troubles), Nicholas uses the same expressions of "separation by distance", "united in spirit", seeing with "the eyes of the soul" that Basil used in a letter to Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria.\(^8\)

The consolatio was highly esteemed by Christian letter writers of the fourth and fifth centuries. Traditional arguments against grief developed traditional commonplaces such as "life as a loan" and the universality of human suffering.\(^9\) Nicholas' correspondence provides two examples
of the consolatio, one to the Emperor Romanos, on the death of his wife, the other to the Chamberlain Constantine, on the death of his sister. Both bear striking resemblances to the consolatio of Basil to Nectarius and his wife, on the death of their son. Similar allusions are made to God’s providence, separation (as travellers on a journey), the universality of human suffering and the reasonableness of grief.

Letters of mediation (the request to one person on behalf of another) are strikingly similar. In letter 251 (pp. 153-55), Basil recommends a pious individual for protection from the intrigue of plotters within the church; likewise, in letter 147 (p. 463), Nicholas seeks an individual’s dismissal from obligation and service to an abbot, since the man in question was being harassed by the opposition in the church. Both these letters illustrate a popular metaphor used by fourth and fifth century ecclesiastics, when describing conditions in the church. The unrest in the church is referred to as "a tempest", "surf", "a dark cloud". On the other hand, peace is referred to as "calm." Nicholas’ letters thus show a style and form common to his age and demonstrate the rhetorical art of letter-writing in the appropriate phraseology and themes derived from the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries. Therefore, certain problems are presented for the historian, in both
dating and interpretation of the correspondence, since Nicholas often adhered to the letter genre, with its tendency to reduce the letter to an intimate conversation between two individuals and the aversion to mentioning individuals, especially third parties, by name.
CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS OF DATING AND INTERPRETATION

Attempts to establish the correct date and interpretation for Nicholas' letters meet with several difficulties. Dating of the letters must rely on placement in a manuscript copy or interpretation of the contents of a particular letter. Both methods are less than reliable; the date assigned a given sequence of letters will affect interpretation; on the other hand, the interpretation derived from any given letter is often contingent upon a probable date. The following review of historians' attempts to date and to interpret the letters, and a comparison of Nicholas' letters with the other extant primary material for this period, indicate the problems and the rewards of continued historical research.

3.1 DATING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LETTERS

Only one independent manuscript, Patmos 178, contains the majority of the collected letters of Nicholas (166 letters), but three different epistolographic collections reproduce some of these and also provide an additional twenty-eight letters.\(^1\) The first extensive attempt to establish a chronology for the correspondence was undertaken by V. Grumel.\(^2\) However, he omitted twenty-two of the Patmos collection and assigned sixteen of the remaining letters to Nicholas' first patriarchy. Darrouzès subsequently published twenty additional letters which can
be assigned to Nicholas from Patmos 706.3 Westerink and Karlin-Hayter note that there is no pressing reason to date any of the letters to the first patriarchate. Westerink has concluded that, with the exception of perhaps three letters, the whole of the correspondence can be dated to the second patriarchate.4 He suggests that the correspondence of Nicholas' first patriarchate was destroyed, either by Nicholas himself before his arrest, or by the secular authorities after it. Karlin-Hayter considers that Nicholas destroyed anything that was detrimental to him concerning the Tetragamy and that the letters published by Darrouzès were stray items that Nicholas was unable to control.5

Care must be taken in relying on sequence or content in both dating and interpretation. Jenkins, Darrouzès and Westerink point out that the order of the letters in the manuscript is not haphazard; long sequences often fall within the same period.6 The problem, of course, lies in determining whether or not the group of letters being referred to has been properly dated. One particular example is illustrative of the problem.

In examining Letter 40 to the Patrician Malacinos, Jenkins took the "intelligent man" who should have understood that timing was the most important factor in achieving any plan (lines 11-12) to be Leo VI and that the plan referred to the attempts to procure the desired marriage-dispensation. He also noted the placement of
letter 40 between letters 39, 41 and 42 (dated by Grumel to 906/07). From this understanding, Jenkins considered that the letter (No. 40) was written either just before or after Nicholas' deposition (February 907). However, Karlin-Hayter has subsequently shown that letters 39, 41 and 42, and a further letter (No. 48), all addressed to Gregory of Ephesos, refer to the schism of Nicholas' second patriarchate. The Metropolitan of Cyzicos, mentioned at Letter 39, lines 8 to 13, was Ignatios (appointed by Nicholas in 912); moreover, the circumstances regarding the situation of the church at Ephesus referred to in the letters, do not fit the events at the capital during 906/07. Once this was established, it was subsequently possible to determine, through Letter 89, that Gregory also was appointed by Nicholas and that the deportation of Gregory and Photios of Heraclea (referred to in letter 132) took place during the regency of Zoe; hence, it does not relate to the arrest of the metropolitan by Leo in February 907.

Thus, considerable valuable information is gleaned with regard to Nicholas' second patriarchate and Jenkins' interpretation of letter 40, which relies in part on the place of the letter in the manuscript, is called in question. Westerink considers that this letter can quite easily be placed in the second patriarchate, along with letters 39, 41 and 42. It is yet another example of
Nicholas' dire circumstances during Zoe's regency, when he was unable to grant favours for his friends.¹¹

Dating of the letters to the second patriarchate narrows the period in which they were written but does not solve the dating problem. It is extremely difficult at times to assign a specific date to Nicholas' letters, since, in his second patriarchate, the attendant schism and rapid changes of secular leadership further complicate the matter. Letters can usually be assigned to a particular broad period, such as the regency for Constantine Porphyrogenitos or the reign of Romanos Lecapenos, by relying on the addressee or Nicholas' attitude expressed in a letter. For example, it is generally understood that in letters dealing with the schism within the church, Nicholas' attitude is hostile towards Euthymians during Zoe's regency, but much more conciliatory under Romanos, when a compromise was in the offering.¹² Likewise, an authoritative and confident attitude on the part of Nicholas, in both secular and ecclesiastical matters, is generally taken to indicate the period of Nicholas' own regency or the reign of Romanos.¹³ A more precise chronological order and interpretation is scarcely possible.

Where historical research has not provided corroborating factual evidence, in order to narrow the dating further, one can only rely upon the contents of the letters themselves. Since the letter genre frowned upon
mentioning individuals by name, in many cases, the addressee of a particular letter is identified by the contents and by the form of greeting used in the introduction. For instance, it can usually be determined whether Nicholas was addressing a secular official or an ecclesiastic.\textsuperscript{14} Westerink noted that Nicholas appears to reserve the formulation, "my most holy son," for Gregory of Ephesos.\textsuperscript{15} Also, he concluded that, although Nicholas addresses ecclesiastics with a simple greeting, he rarely corresponds with monks below the rank of abbot nor with any individuals of low rank.\textsuperscript{16}

References to third persons are often vague, such as a "man of sense" and "an intelligent man" (Letter 40, lines 3 and 11) or "the bearer of the letter" and "a widowed woman" (letter 42, line 6). Specific emperors are usually unnamed; they are referred to as "the emperor loved by God" or "the Christ-loving emperor" (letter 53, line 47); when the political exigencies of the moment were even more vague, the term, "the government of our commonwealth" (letter 94, line 30) is often used. "Our beloved lady" has been identified as signifying the Empress Zoe (letter 183, line 39).\textsuperscript{17} A dating to the regency of Nicholas and Zoe is usually confirmed by Nicholas' reference to Constantine Porphyrogenitos as "an infant and an orphan " (letter 5, line 14). However, caution must always be exercised. Westerink and Jenkins note that mistaken dating has occurred
by a too rigid adherence to the term used to designate the power configuration at a given time. Letters clearly identifiable by content to the time when Romanos Lecapenos was consolidating his control over the *imperium* have been assigned to the regency for Constantine Porphyrogenitos since Nicholas refers to only one emperor. After Romanos' coronation on December 17, 920, Nicholas thereafter refers to "the emperors".

Attempts to specify a period by identifying the circumstances referred to in the letters meet with varying degrees of success, as in the case of letter 40 discussed above, which Jenkins thought referred to the Tetragamy. Westerink has established that the letter indicates the precarious situation of Nicholas under Zoe’s administration. He has interpreted the letter to mean that Nicholas was unable to grant a simple request that his correspondent had sought on behalf of another individual. Likewise, it can now be determined that the "exiles" referred to in letter 132 above, which Grumel, Karlin-Hayter and Itsines identified with the Tetragamy, actually relate to Zoe’s administration and indicate the dire circumstances existing between church and state in the early part of her regency. The fact that levies were twice imposed on the church by the secular administration, once under Zoe and again under Romanos, led Grumel and Karlin-Hayter to suggest a dating of letter 92 to Alexander’s reign, as evidence of the *Vita*’s
contention that Nicholas willingly collaborated with the emperor in the levies. Westerink has indicated that the letter really refers to the levies under Romanos.21

Despite the difficulty in analyzing Nicholas' letters in view of the problems of dating and interpretation, considerable information can be extracted from the correspondence. A comparison of the letters as source-material with the Vita Euthymii, the Logothete Chronicle and the works of Arethas of Caesarea indicates the valuable addition Nicholas' correspondence makes in arriving at an understanding of the period under review.

3.2 A COMPARISON OF THE EXTANT SOURCE MATERIAL

Nicholas' letters often provide a narrative of events and outline his attempts to work through difficult situations. At times, his correspondence was concerned with establishing initial relations with an individual, re-establishing contact that was lost over time, or replying to letters received.

Ascertaining specific sentiments or motives is largely conditional upon the type of letter written: an official communiqué, a matter of ecclesiastical administration, a problem regarding church-state relations, or personal and private considerations. Nicholas' position at the time of writing is also important since the political situation of the moment often determined the liberty with which he wrote. In some instances he was deliberately concealing particular
information in matters pertaining to church and state, which
had nothing to do with the genre of the letter, but much
with his own aims and ambitions or those of a particular
secular administration. In his numerous letters to Symeon
of Bulgaria, Nicholas' desire to keep the Bulgarian church
under the jurisdiction of Constantinople can be determined,
but, at the same time, historians recognize that he was
putting forward the policies of the secular government (Zoe
or Romanos Lecapenos) at the time of writing.22 The
combination of personal aims and secular policy, as well as
considerable secrecy, is evident in his correspondence with
the papacy and various individuals in Byzantine Italy in his
attempts to resolve the doctrinal question of the Tetragamy
and the schism with Rome.23

Nicholas' interpretation of events often contradicts the
other sources in areas where he was personally involved and
had personal ambitions. His lengthy letter (No. 32) to Pope
Anastasius III, in which he indulges in a long doctrinal
treatise on the canonical interpretation of marriage in the
East, is a masterful work of apologetic. Nicholas explains
(in as favourable a way to himself as possible) the various
twists and turns of the Tetragamy affair and also attempts
to enlist the support of the papacy. Much ink has flowed in
attempting to determine how much Nicholas' concern was for
himself or how much it was for the patriarchate in this
regard.24 All his correspondence regarding his return to
the patriarchate indicates a great need to justify his position.25

According to Karlin-Hayter, the writers of the Vita Euthymii and the Logothete Chronicle and Arethas of Caesarea were members of the same social class and exhibited a strong pro-artistocratic and pro-monastic bias.26 Moreover, various degrees of interconnection can be identified between these individuals' works.27 All exhibit hostility towards the Emperor Alexander, which Karlin-Hayter attributes to the fact that he aroused the wrath of a powerful faction in the court and church. Alexander alienated the officials of Leo VI by dismissing them and replacing them with his own partisans from the lower levels of society, who were viewed with fear and disdain by the aristocracy.28 Moreover, this hostility is also evident towards Nicholas who, like Alexander, was popular with the lower classes.29 Jenkins found Arethas' hatred of Nicholas in part based upon pro-artistocratic bias because Nicholas had risen from the position of slave to the highest pinnacle of power in the church.30 Arethas' derogatory remarks about new church-appointments by Nicholas on his return to the patriarchate imply association of Nicholas with these unsavoury elements.31 This is also evident in the Vita's references to the "support of the rabble" for Alexander and Nicholas.32 The Euthymians were further incensed by Alexander's support of Nicholas in the deposition of
Euthymios and his metropolitans; the pro-monastic community was enraged by confiscation of church property from the Euthymians.\textsuperscript{33}

Karlin-Hayter has determined that the Logothete and \textit{Vita} drew on common sources, but, in addition, the chronicler also used the \textit{Vita} as a source.\textsuperscript{34} Dvornik also notes that chroniclers used contemporary saints' lives for information and that this tends to establish the reliability of the hagiographies.\textsuperscript{35}

A close association is also evident between the \textit{Vita} and the letters of Arethas of Caesarea, two of which are quoted in the \textit{Vita}. Arethas' treatises and letters (ca. 906-914) are often quite specific concerning individuals and events surrounding the Tetragyamy and Nicholas' return to the patriarchate.\textsuperscript{36} The strong correlation between the \textit{Vita} and the funeral oration Arethas delivered for the Patriarch Euthymios (ca. 917) enhances our understanding of the Euthymian position during the schism, but it also provides considerable insight into Arethas' motives and priorities.\textsuperscript{37}

Might one suggest that the interconnection of these sources and their close association of Nicholas with low born elements of society indicate his former slave status? Nicholas was one of those "unsavoury elements" that had attained an important bureaucratic position and then the highest pinnacle in the church. Karlin-Hayter indicates that the chamberlains, Samanos and Constantine, both of
humble origins, receive a similarly bad press at the hands of these writers.38

Karlin-Hayter points out that modern historians have quite readily accepted the profile of the Emperor Alexander as presented by the Logothete and the Vita, often even using the same descriptive adjectives.39 She has identified more favourable opinions of Alexander in popular poetry and the Arab sources, free of the aristocratic bias.40 The negative portrayal of Alexander by the Logothete, the Vita and Arethas is not evident in aristocratic poems identified by Ševčenko, written at the time of Leo's death and Alexander's accession.41 These seem to support Karlin-Hayter's contention that animosity towards Alexander was related to his subsequent actions. Moreover, these poems seem to indicate that Leo repented of his actions in the Tetragamy before his death and that, as Dikonomidès suggested, he had been granted a dispensation in exchange for strengthening the existing marriage laws.42 The Chronicle of Eutychius also indicates that Leo restored Nicholas to the patriarchate before his death.43

Another obvious facet of the Vita Euthymii relates to its particular genre. Themes and devices common to hagiography are easily recognizable. According to Karlin-Hayter,44 the author of the Vita Euthymii intended to clear Euthymios' memory and explain the circumstances of the Tetragamy. The moral victory achieved by Nicholas at the
church union of July 920 showed him as the champion of the church, who resisted immorality in high places and was deposed and replaced by a "usurper who pandered to imperial vice." To restore Euthymios' memory, the *Vita* compares the virtuous actions of Euthymios with the unscrupulous activities of his opponents, most particularly Nicholas, but also others, including the Emperor Alexander.

The *Vita* shows Leo in a good light, but essentially uses him as a foil for the troubles and persecution endured by Euthymios. The repentant Leo is repeatedly pictured groveling at the feet of Euthymios and being rescued from the wiles of the devil by the intervention of the saint.45 Although Leo is prevented from taking the damnable step of overruling the canons of the church, the dialogues between Leo and Euthymios are reminiscent of those related in the hagiographical works of the previous century, in which the iconophile saint rejected the emperor's attempt to assert his control of the church.46 Likewise, all those, who stand in the way of Euthymios' advancement and eventual occupation of the patriarchal throne are used to contrast the piety and humility of the saint. Narrative passages pertaining to Nicholas are introduced in large measure to contrast the foul and worldly nature of Nicholas to the saintly and ascetic attitude of Euthymios. Nicholas and the Emperor Alexander are portrayed as the authors of many of Euthymios' misfortunes.47
Karlin-Hayter considers the *Vita* a fairly truthful account (since the author lived through the events and was an "eye witness" to many of the scenes he describes); yet, she also freely admits that the *Vita* is a skillful defense of Euthymios, justifying his ascent of the patriarchal throne during Nicholas' lifetime.\(^48\)

The most impartial of these three sources is the Logothete *Chronicle*. Karlin-Hayter has indicated that in addition to the hostile *Vita Euthymii*, the Logothete also had access to a source favourable to Nicholas.\(^49\) According to Jenkins and Karlin-Hayter, the Logothete was partial to the great aristocratic houses of the East and hostile towards all the Macedonian sovereigns.\(^50\) Nicholas is certainly not the main focus of the Logothete in the case of Leo VI and the Doukai. Nicholas' importance is directly related to the way in which his actions reflect upon the emperor and the rebels. By implicating Nicholas in the two unsuccessful revolts, the Logothete attempts to legitimize the rebellions of the Doukai by stressing that the rebels had patriarchal approval. Andronicos Doucas was preferable to the incompetent Leo, who mishandled the Tetragamy affair;\(^51\) Constantine Doucas was the strong leader required to handle the political crisis in Constantinople after the death of Alexander.\(^52\) Nicholas had very little in common with the Doukai but, faced with hostility from the aristocracy on his return to the patriarchate, he would have
felt quite confident and comfortable in offering church appointments to those who, like himself, were drawn from the secular bureaucracy.53

A perusal of the primary sources reveals the wealth of rich detail available for the period under review. Attempts to date and interpret Nicholas' letters and continued historical investigation of all the sources indicate the extent to which new understanding can be forthcoming. Nicholas' letters can provide yet further insights into the complicated affairs between church and state during his second patriarchate.
CHAPTER IV

NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND THE
INTER-DEPENDENCE OF CHURCH AND STATE

Relations between church and state in Nicholas' second patriarchate underwent considerable adjustment due to the unstable political situation and the rapid changes in secular leadership. Nicholas expresses his understanding of political matters in Letter 40 to the Patrician Malacinus during the regency of the Empress Zoe, when his circumstances made it impossible to grant favours for his friends. He tells Malacinus: "An intelligent man must also be aware that time is a factor of great importance, which realizes many of our plans in a way not according to the wish of the planner and sometimes to his intense annoyance."¹ This pragmatic attitude dominated Nicholas' actions in those instances where the state impinged on the affairs of the church. In order to satisfy the needs of church and state, he devised strategies, changed tactics and adjusted his own personal ambitions in reaction to changing circumstances.

Nicholas' correspondence provides several examples of actual or potential conflicts between the patriarchate and the secular government. Immediately after his return to the patriarchate, he attempted to impose disciplinary action against his chief adversary, Arethas of Caesarea, but was faced with interference from the Emperor Alexander. During the regency of Zoe, the secular government imposed
unprecedented levies on church property, an action which was repeated during the reign of Romanos Lecapenos. Romanos also interfered twice in the doctrinal affairs of the church, first to end the schism within the Byzantine Church and then to restore relations with the papacy. An examination of these instances determines that Nicholas well understood the inter-dependence between church and state.

4.1 THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER AND THE DIRECTION OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICS

The first instance of potential conflict between church and state developed as a result of Nicholas' need to regain control of the church shortly after his return to the patriarchate. Many historians have considered that Nicholas enjoyed considerable support from the Emperor Alexander and willfully exacerbated the schism within the church by unnecessary reprisals inspired by revenge or a desire for vindication. The turbulent circumstances certainly provided Nicholas with an opportunity to avenge himself on those who, in his opinion, shamefully misused him and deserted him at the time of his resignation and deposition. However, the change in attitude and tactics in Nicholas' dealings with his opponents rather indicates that Nicholas did not enjoy sufficient support from Alexander.

Nicholas first attempted to procure the voluntary resignations of Euthymios and his metropolitans. When the Euthymians resisted, Nicholas took steps to quell the opposition with secular support. However, his adversaries'
vocal opposition required him to advance explanations for his actions during the Tetragamy debate and to justify his return to the patriarchate. His attempts to gain compliance by explanation and persuasion proved ineffectual against his old adversary, Arethas of Caesarea. Nicholas then took disciplinary action against Arethas, but found that Alexander would not, in this instance, lend his support. Further attempts at persuasion proved ineffectual and forced Nicholas to change tactics yet again. As many ecclesiastics had done before him, he approached the papacy for a ruling in his favour in order to quell opposition to his leadership in the church. Again, however, Alexander’s protection of Arethas limited Nicholas’ ability to manoeuvre. Moreover, the papacy did not reply to his request and the zealous actions of his supporters in the provinces enflamed the schism into an uncontrollable dilemma. An examination of the events proceeding and following Leo VI’s death (May 11, 912), sheds considerable light on the influence of the Emperor Alexander upon Nicholas’ actions.

Historians have long grappled with the problem of ascertaining the actual political situation within church and state at the time of Leo VI’s death. Understanding is hampered by the conflicting explanations given in Nicholas’ correspondence (Letter 32 to Pope Anastasius III) and the Chronicle. Nicholas claims that he was recalled and restored by Leo VI before his death. The Chronicle states
that he was restored by Alexander. The Logothete certainly
had reason to prefer the restoration of Nicholas by
Alexander. Repentance and restoration by Leo showed the
emperor in a good light, which was contrary to the
chronicler's aim. Since the Logothete held considerable
animosity against Alexander and the Vita Euthymii confirmed
all of Alexander's misdeeds, it was preferable to credit the
restoration of Nicholas to Alexander. This would be
consistent with Jenkins' contention that tenth-century
historians tended to suppress what was favourable to the
other point of view and elaborate what was beneficial to
their own.

Since both Leo VI and Nicholas sincerely desired peace
in the church, there is much to suggest that, as Jenkins and
Oikonomides point out, Leo VI recalled Nicholas and placed
the administration of the patriarchate in his hands, while
retaining Euthymios as titular head of the church. A
smooth transition of total power on Euthymios' death would
have been the best method of assuring an end to the schism.
Euthymios himself seems to indicate that Nicholas
administered the affairs of the church before Leo's death
with considerable support in the capital. When his
abdication was demanded, Euthymios expressed fear that the
rabble would blame the Euthymians for the church's troubles
and rise up against them should he not resign. The
understanding was probably very much like the one that
existed when Photios, already recalled to the patriarchate, officially resumed the office on the death of Ignatios.8

Leo's impending death complicated the matter in the case of Euthymios and Nicholas. Two explanations for Nicholas' official assumption of the patriarchal office are possible. One would suggest that Leo made a death-bed repentance and restored Nicholas as de facto patriarch. If, in addition, the official announcement of the restoration was made by Alexander after Leo's death, the Logothete saw no reason to elaborate further.9

On the other hand, it is quite possible that Alexander was not prepared to accept the compromise-arrangement made by Leo. Although Leo had made provisions for church and state to the best of his ability, he could not control events after his death. As Karlin-Hayter points out, a new emperor normally surrounded himself with individuals he could trust. Alexander ousted many senior government officials who had served under Leo and replaced them with men of his own choice.10 If he also discarded Euthymios and made Nicholas de facto patriarch, Alexander did no more than his brother, Leo, had done before him by removing Photios. Tenth-century Byzantines were quite aware of the political realities surrounding a change in the secular power. Alexander's actions were not out of the ordinary. As Karlin-Hayter indicates, however, the aggrieved individuals' animosity does colour the primary sources.
The debate, as to whether Nicholas was officially restored by Leo on his death bed or recalled by Alexander, cannot be resolved completely. However, it is probable that events concerning Nicholas' restoration moved very quickly. Both Nicholas and the Euthymians were faced with a changed situation. Nicholas was *de facto* patriarch. As long as Euthymios was titular head of the church, Leo would have been unsympathetic to Euthymian protests against Nicholas' ecclesiastical administration. However, Leo's death and the accompanying change in leadership, with Nicholas' assumption of the *de facto* role of patriarch, provided the Euthymians with both personal incentive and a legitimate reason to protest. They feared reprisals from Nicholas; moreover, his former resignation canonically disqualified him from officially resuming the patriarchate. It was in a confused state of affairs that Nicholas attempted to gain control of the church.

Nicholas thought he could at once satisfy the desire of the state, maintain the good of the church and realize his own objectives, but the task proved impossible. When Nicholas demanded the abdication of Euthymios and the metropolitans who had deserted him before his deposition, he could not foresee opposition from Arethas. His actions against Euthymios and the metropolitans, even if inspired by revenge, could be justified. Conservative opinion
considered Euthymios a usurper and the metropolitans, deserters.

Nicholas might have expected Euthymios and the metropolitans to accept the political realities and resign. Even compromise was possible at this moment. Euthymios was prepared to abdicate in the interests of peace in the church if the metropolitans were allowed to retain their appointments.11 Again, however, the situation changed. Arethas stiffened his resistance to Nicholas and prevented Euthymios from resigning by telling him that he would be viewed as having deserted his flock.12 With the entrance of Arethas into the conflict, all hope of resolving this difficulty peaceably was lost. Arethas sabotaged Nicholas’ attempt to gain control of the church with a minimum of difficulty.

The actual strength of the Euthymian opposition is hard to gauge. Some historians consider that the moderates and conservatives were not hard-and-fast groups. Individuals chose their positions independently and the political exigencies of the moment convinced many to accept the view of the group in power.13 Arethas himself indicates that the opponents to the dispensation for Leo VI’s marriage had been very small in number.14 If the majority of Euthymians had prudently become reconciled with Nicholas, the opposition might have been quite small.
Arethas was the real leader of the opposition. He instigated the resistance to a peaceful transfer of power from Euthymios to Nicholas and he directed the attack against Nicholas, based on the illegitimacy of his return to the patriarchate in view of his previous resignation. Immediately after his demand for the abdications of Euthymios and the metropolitans, Nicholas was required to defend and justify his return to the patriarchate. This is clear from the Act by which Nicholas then deposed the metropolitans who had deserted him and the letter-debate which ensued between Nicholas and Arethas.

Before Nicholas took any action against the Euthymians, he informed the Emperor that Euthymios and the metropolitans refused to obey Alexander's orders to abdicate and he received Alexander's approval to take measures against them. Yet, Nicholas proceeded cautiously to quell the opposition and gain control of the church. He only deposed four of the metropolitans who had deserted him during the Tetragamy debate. In the Act of Deposition, Nicholas states that Leo had repented of his actions and had intended to recall him before deposing him. Nicholas berates the metropolitans for deserting him, for preventing Leo from recalling him and for insisting that Leo depose him. Nicholas then quotes what he alleges to be the abdication he had given at that time and shows how it was invalid, since he had not resigned the archpriestly functions, and the
resignation from the patriarchate had been obtained under duress.

Neither his action nor his explanation quelled the opposition and the metropolitans refused to obey his order. Nicholas took the normal action of the party in power to gain repentence and a return to the church. He confiscated the metropolitans' church property. The *Vita* stresses the difficulties Nicholas experienced in convincing Alexander to take this action, which might indicate that Nicholas could not take imperial support for granted and would not proceed without it. Nicholas' actions were intended to demonstrate the futility of further resistance to Euthymios but they did not succeed in procuring his voluntary resignation. Nicholas was now hard pressed to demonstrate his control of the church and he proceeded with Alexander's support to the deposition of Euthymios in the presence of the Emperor and some members of the senate. This was followed by a triumphant procession to the Great Church, the removal of Euthymian clergy serving at the altar and an act of purification. Although these two public displays of his authority were intended to convince the remaining Euthymians to be reconciled with the church, Nicholas was again disappointed; for with the removal of Euthymios, Arethas came forward as the acknowledged leader of the opposition.
Arethas now wrote to Nicholas challenging his authority and the legitimacy of his restoration. In his letter, Arethas addresses every point made in the *Act of Deposition* and disqualifies Nicholas as patriarch on the grounds of his previous resignation. He states that Leo never intended to reinstate Nicholas and that a document purporting to indicate the same was a blatant forgery by Nicholas himself. According to Arethas, Leo had made fun of Nicholas' "invalid" resignation and had told him [Nicholas] so in a letter. Arethas indicates that Nicholas has shown his total lack of character by the reprisals taken against Euthymians.

On receipt of this letter, Nicholas knew that much more drastic action would be necessary. Arethas had instigated the first intransigence of the metropolitans and Euthymios; he now openly challenged Nicholas' leadership. Arethas was a formidable adversary, articulate, and obviously well equipped by the evidence he had accumulated. If allowed to continue, he would further undermine the patriarchal authority and severely hamper the attempt to gain control of the church. Nicholas now decided upon the deposition of all Euthymians, which, according to the *Vita*, the synod, with Nicholas presiding, carried out on the following Sunday.

Although the *Vita* claims Nicholas instigated the action himself, in anger, with fearful oaths and writs in his own hand (despite opposition from his own party), his principal reason was to forestall Arethas and his
activities. Nicholas knew the ramifications of this drastic measure. He had lived his entire life in the shadow of schism within the church, he had suffered from reprisals taken, and, in his first patriarchate, he had attempted to retain the fragile union in the church.26 During the whole Tetragamy debate, Nicholas had been loath to take drastic action against the rigorist opposition. In order to quell the dissension then, he had temporarily removed Arethas from the scene and increased the pressure on the remaining opponents.27 However, the experience had also taught him that dissension would continue to be vocal, and might even grow in strength under Arethas' leadership. Although Nicholas had hoped to achieve his restoration with a minimum of difficulty and had only gradually increased the pressure on Euthymians by the measures taken, he now saw no other alternative means of forestalling Arethas.

The Vita implies that Nicholas' character was so foul that even his rigorist supporters were moved to be more conciliatory than he was. Why would Nicholas' own party be opposed to depositions and exiles? Those who had held out against Leo VI were a small minority, according to Arethas himself,28 but they were amongst the most conservative in outlook, fanatically adhering to the canons. Such individuals seldom saw the wisdom of restraint. Attempts at conciliation more probably came from "moderates" who had seen the wisdom of abandoning the Euthymians and joining
Nicholas. The opposition, with whom he contended at this
time, might have been a small but vocal minority; the
silencing of the most vocal of all, Arethas, seemed both
prudent and necessary.

Immediately after the depositions, the *Vita* relates how
Nicholas "now endeavoured to catch Arethas in his penalties"
and describes a meeting where Arethas openly challenged
Nicholas. According to the *Vita*, Arethas refused to
acknowledge Nicholas as the rightful patriarch (due to his
detrimental actions to the church during the Tetragamy
debate and his resignation from his office) and informed him
that evidence of his three resignations was held by his
opponents. The *Vita* begins this incident by stating:
"Now Arethas the protothroner was known, not to the
highpriest, but to the emperor who reigned that year." This
stresses the importance of Arethas' ecclesiastical
position (the second place in the hierarchy of the
patriarchate of Constantinople, ranking right after the
patriarch) and indicates that Arethas had some special
status with Alexander which would have been an
insurmountable obstacle to Nicholas. If he could have
relied upon the complete support of Alexander at this point,
Nicholas might have prevailed; unfortunately for him, he
could not. When Arethas refused to recognize Nicholas or
his rulings and would only vacate his seat if the emperor
sent troops to remove him forecably, Alexander did
nothing.\textsuperscript{33} This seriously undermined Nicholas’ authority and he was left with very few options. Protected by Alexander, the most dangerous of his adversaries was able to continue his campaign against Nicholas. The Patriarch returned to persuasion as a means of quelling the opposition.

He addressed his letter (No. 49)\textsuperscript{34} to the metropolitan outside the church, but he was replying to the arguments put forward in Arethas’ two previous letters. He labels the metropolitan as a curse on both him and the church (lines 1-6) and chastizes them for their desertion, even if he were wrong. He hastens to deny this and then calls upon God to witness to the same (lines 6-15). At this point, the letter, unfortunately, breaks off.

From this letter, it can be clearly seen that the problem of justifying his return to the patriarchal throne continued to plague Nicholas. Blocked by Alexander, he was not able to take action against Arethas, hence other paths had to be followed. Nicholas saw it prudent to strengthen his case by appealing to the papacy for a ruling in his favour. He sent a detailed explanation to Pope Anastasius III (Letter 32).\textsuperscript{35}

Nicholas’ letter to the pope could be considered a "state of the union" address because the political situation within the church and in church-state relations can be clearly discerned from its well-planned and organized
contents. The cogent argument, presented from the rigorist position, naturally divides into three complete sections: Nicholas' role in the Tetragamy (lines 1-216); the separation of the secular and ecclesiastical authority (lines 217-451); the steps the papacy should take to correct errors made and to restore affairs of the church to their proper order (lines 452-504). This determined attempt to enlist the support of the papacy might have been the only alternative left to Nicholas.

He attempted to justify his return to the patriarchate and to explain the circumstances of his actions during the Tetragamy affair. He accepted as his own the position of the rigorists within the church on the doctrinal and moral questions relating to the Tetragamy. Nicholas' explanations have been found wanting; he has been branded a hypocrite and has been accused of "pretending" to be a rigorist in his second patriarchate. Could he have done otherwise? The Tetragamy affair had completely reversed the traditional roles of rigorists and moderates. Nicholas returned to the patriarchate as the acknowledged leader of the rigorists, who had suffered for the autonomy of the church. He was opposed by the Euthymians and at this point he could hardly have divested himself of his rigorist supporters or their doctrinal position.

Nicholas also knew how detrimental the pope's sanction of the dispensation for Leo's fourth marriage had been to
the prestige and authority of the Byzantine Church. At

times, he could hardly contain his anger at the actions of

the former pope, Sergius. His attitude and tone have led

some to conclude that this letter (No. 32) to Pope

Anastasius III was useless as a means of reconciliation with

Rome.37 However, Nicholas' anger is understandable, since

he was protesting against Rome's intervention in a matter of

internal church discipline regarding canon law and the

invasion of the secular power into the church's realm by

defying the law.38

In the last section of this letter (lines 452-504),

Nicholas' difficulties within the church and with the

secular government can be discerned. He implores the pope
to realize the folly of granting the dispensation for Leo

VI's fourth marriage as a favour to the emperor, and to

reverse and anathematize the former decision, procured by
deceit and malice (lines 452-480). He absolves Leo VI and

the former pope, Sergius: Leo, because he repented of his

actions before his death, restored Nicholas to the

patriarchate and entrusted to him the administration of the

church, in conformity with the canons; Sergius, since, now
dead, he faces God's judgement (lines 481-492). Nicholas

concludes by seeking the condemnation of all the living who

had a part in the affair; he indicates that the pope will be

duty-bound to condemn the dispensation, and those guilty, by
the accompanying letter of the Emperor Alexander, which names those responsible and their offenses (lines 493-503).

In his letter Nicholas was seeking to resolve his difficulties by inducing Rome to reverse its former ruling. Since many of the Euthymians were former rigorists, impressed by the pronouncements of Rome, if an adequate explanation could be found, which Rome would sanction, the schism might be brought to an end. It is probable that Leo did recall Nicholas in some capacity before his death. If the actual move from de jure to de facto patriarch was an embellishment by Nicholas, it nonetheless established the official position of the church under his leadership. By his repentance, Leo restored the proper balance between the ecclesiastical and secular authority. In a sense, Nicholas afforded Rome an opportunity to make yet another foray into ecclesiastical affairs at Constantinople, albeit, this time, to his advantage. Rome could reverse its former ruling on the dispensation, since it had been based upon fraudulent information. The approval of Rome would do much to defuse the Euthymians' charge of illegal occupation of the patriarchal throne. For the same reason, Nicholas singled out some of the Euthymian hierarchy for condemnation (probably the metropolitans who had deserted him, although they are not named). By disqualifying them as part of the plot to subvert the papal delegation (which had given approval to the dispensation, his deposition and the
elevation of Euthymios to the patriarchate), he provided further inducement for a ruling in his favour.

The major problem at this time was Arethas and since no specific action was sought against him, certain constraints had probably been placed upon Nicholas. He told the pope that Alexander would name the guilty and their crimes in an accompanying letter. Alexander certainly supported Nicholas against his former metropolitans who had deserted him, but he again blocked Nicholas from taking any action against Arethas. However, Nicholas gained as much political advantage from this situation as possible. He made it appear that he himself was not naming the guilty; rather, he was relying upon the emperor's testimony as corroboration of the justice of his cause.

All Nicholas' actions appear to have been calculated to put increased pressure on Euthymians to abandon an untenable opposition to the party in power; it is probable that many individuals had made their peace with him. However, some Euthymian intransigence, under the leadership of Arethas, and the emperor's attitude and actions frustrated Nicholas' attempts to gain control of the church during Alexander's brief reign. The Vita claims that numerous bishops and clergy were exiled and transferred.41 This can be confirmed by Nicholas' correspondence, which indicates that his supporters exacerbated the situation within the church.42 No doubt Nicholas anticipated this possibility when the
synod took drastic action against the intransigent Euthymians. However, the risk seemed necessary in order to curtail the activities of Arethas. Nicholas could not challenge Alexander directly regarding Arethas; he needed support from the secular arm. In such circumstances, if the papacy had complied with Nicholas' requests, much of Arethas' argument against him would have been invalidated, and his acceptance by the last Euthymian dissidents would have been more likely. Unfortunately for the patriarch, the pope did not reply and the actions of his overzealous supporters quickly intensified the situation in the provinces into an uncontrollable dilemma. The situation was to be exacerbated further when the Empress Zoe assumed the regency (February 914) and demonstrated considerable animosity towards Nicholas and distinct preference for the Euthymian faction.

4.2 THE PATRIARCH AND LEVIES IMPOSED ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH BY THE SECULAR AUTHORITY

Two instances of impingement by the secular power on the administration of the church can be identified in Nicholas' correspondence: One, under Zoe's regency, the other, under Romanos Lecapenos. An examination of these two incidents provides insights into Nicholas' attitude with regard to relations between church and state and how his actions influenced the course of events.

Nicholas experienced many difficulties in administering the patriarchate under the Empress Zoe (February 914-918).
His relationship with the secular government was initially poor. He was relegated to the affairs of the church, warned not to meddle in affairs of state and forbidden access to the palace unless summoned. The empress demonstrated her willingness to undermine his position further; she sent two metropolitans appointed by him during Alexander's reign into a brief exile; she also encouraged the machinations of the Euthymians against him.

Two factors led to a gradual improvement in relations between the secular authority and the patriarchate. First: state and church ceremonial threw secular and ecclesiastical officials into frequent contact with one another. Second, the interests of church and state were compatible with regard to Bulgaria. By 917, Zoe was using Nicholas' expertise in corresponding with Symeon of Bulgaria; Nicholas had every reason to want a peaceful resolution of the crisis in order that the Bulgarian Church would remain under the authority of the patriarchate. An examination of Nicholas' correspondence suggests that Nicholas himself was instrumental in improving relations between the patriarchate and the secular government.

The dire financial concerns of the government in preparing an offensive against Symeon of Bulgaria prompted the imposition of levies on the revenues of the church in order to finance a treaty with the Pechenegs against the Bulgars (ca. 915/16). Since Nicholas was neither informed
nor consulted, this encroachment by the government further increased his difficulties; yet, at the same time, it provided him with a means of approaching the secular government.

Since his conservative supporters looked to him to safeguard the interests of the church, he first attempted to reverse the government’s action by direct appeal to state officials in the provinces, using his patriarchal authority.46 However, the government overruled his actions, further undermining his authority and prestige. Moreover, his correspondence with a young military official indicates that his attempt to fend off the officer’s encroachment on church property met with scorn and verbal abuse.47 This was personally damaging to Nicholas and a severe blow to the prestige of the patriarchate. That a young officer could address him with such disrespect indicated the low state in which the patriarchate was viewed by the secular government. A personal approach to the throne was necessary, but this was dangerous and perhaps futile, in view of the empress’ attitude and restrictions. However, Nicholas saw that the attempt to conclude the treaty with the Bulgars provided him with a means of approaching the government on a purely spiritual matter. Under the circumstances, he had little to lose—and much to gain. If he could improve his relationship with Zoe’s government, he would regain a semblance of prestige and authority. If he were
unsuccessful, at least he would have demonstrated his efforts on their behalf to his conservative supporters.

Three letters to Constantine the Chamberlain (Nos. 183, 61, 72) indicate Nicholas' situation, the strategy he employed in making an initial approach to the government, and the initial response he elicited from the chamberlain. Nicholas pressed his case further with Constantine (Letter 66) when the government succeeded in ratifying a treaty with the Pechenegs. Three letters (No. 67 to Constantine the Chamberlain, No. 9 to Symeon of Bulgaria and No. 58 to a conservative supporter) indicate the further response Nicholas elicited and the modus vivendi he achieved with the government.

Nicholas first attempted to establish contact with the secular government during the most perilous stage of the war (ca. 915/16), when negotiations were underway for an alliance with the Pechenegs against Symeon of Bulgaria. He wrote to Constantine the Chamberlain, who was at least Zoe's most trusted advisor, at most, the director of the secular government. In this letter (No. 183) Nicholas begins by indicating that he had often felt impelled to write but checked the impulse, and he pleads that what he is about to say will be taken as the admonition of a father to his son (lines 1-6). He then praises the chamberlain, as a godly man with concern for the churches, before he proceeds to the offensive matter of the complaints received about him.
concerning the confiscation of the reserves of the churches (lines 7-20). He warns that bad council has been followed, if an alliance with the Pechenegs for gold is more beneficial than God's favour, since the action taken will unleash God's anger against the empire, the imperial family and government officials (lines 21-38). He ends by stating that he has proven his love for "our beloved lady" [the empress] many times before, although she might not acknowledge it (lines 39-41).

Nicholas' situation and the strategy he was pursuing are clear. He exhibited hesitancy and anxiety in approaching the chamberlain due to his precarious relationship with the government and he was careful to cast no aspersion on Constantine's character. He had not been consulted regarding the levies and he distanced himself from complaints regarding them. He stressed his spiritual concern for the empire's welfare (more particularly that of the imperial family and government) and he warned of the possible negative spiritual repercussions from the action taken. Moreover, he indicated that he had previously demonstrated considerable concern for the empress in spiritual matters and implied his willingness to be of further service. If he were to elicit a favourable response from the chamberlain, one assumes that he would have achieved the first step towards an improved relationship with the government.
A further letter (No. 61)^55 to Constantine indicates that Nicholas did not receive a favourable reply, but rather, a negative reaction. It appears that Constantine thought Nicholas held him personally responsible for detrimental actions against the church. In this second letter Nicholas denies the gossip which says that he holds a grudge against the chamberlain, since this news caused Constantine grief (lines 1-5). Nicholas praises Constantine’s love for him and his piety towards the churches as befitting a godly man (lines 5-7) (much as in letter 183 above). However, he concludes by stating: "Even in honoring God there is a certain dread (since we cannot know if we are honoring him worthily), while to offend Him is incomparably more fearful and dreadful." (lines 8-10).

This letter indicates that Nicholas had found a responsive chord. Since his standing with the secular administration was poor, the chamberlain’s concern for Nicholas’ feelings indicates fear that the government’s actions were displeasing to God. Nicholas assured Constantine that he had no personal animosity towards him, but he emphasized the danger in offending God by one’s actions. Moreover, he again intimated his willingness to co-operate in looking to the empire’s spiritual welfare.

Letter 7256 is probably yet a further development of the overtures that Nicholas was making to Constantine.
The argument is again presented in spiritual terms and similarities with the previous two letters (No. 183 and No. 61 above) are indicated. Nicholas begins by acknowledging Constantine's virtue and then implores him to return the stipend to the clergy "who pray for the life and salvation of the emperor, of you, and of all subjects" (lines 1-4). He exhorts the chamberlain to honour God instead of following the bad example of others, who previously maladministered the state and cut off the stipend; he compares the insignificance of the stipend for the treasury to the benefit for the poor and the lasting spiritual dividends provided for the chamberlain (lines 4-19). He concludes with a warning to honour God and to do His will (lines 20-23).

Here, Nicholas continued to press his case. Personal rewards accrued to those who honoured the church. The warning issued was similar to that expressed in letter 61 (above). Nicholas implied it would be extremely beneficial to have the patriarch, the keeper of the empire's spiritual welfare, at hand in order to avoid unseen pitfalls.

Nicholas was using all his ingenuity to remind the government of the need for co-operation between church and state. He realized the dire situation for the government in preparing for an offensive against the Bulgars. He had the experience of long years as private secretary to Leo VI, when Leo negotiated with the Bulgar leader, Symeon.57
Moreover, Nicholas himself dealt personally with Symeon in 912 during his own regency and arrived at a compromise agreement with Symeon to persuade him to withdraw his forces from the walls of Constantinople. Nicholas might not have agreed with Zoe's foreign policy (offense rather than compromise) but he clearly understood the seriousness of the situation for the government. In a letter to one of his own appointees, the Metropolitan of Iconium (No. 58), who had written to Nicholas protesting against the levies exacted against the churches, Nicholas replied: "... my own grief at this captivity of the Churches of God is far more bitter and painful. But what can we do, when such a need has come upon us?" (lines 3-4). Nicholas' protest was an attempt to gain the government's ear, to advise against unilateral action on the part of the secular authority and to indicate his willingness to co-operate with the government, if only the prestige and authority of the patriarchate were given at least token recognition. The ratification of the treaty with the Pechenegs gave him a dramatic opportunity to demonstrate the co-operation necessary between church and state.

When news that a treaty had been ratified with the Pechenegs reached Nicholas, he wrote to Constantine the Chamberlain (Letter 66) to apprise him of the serious offense that had been committed. In this letter he begins by informing Constantine that the said treaty was against
the canons and Christian order. He states that this must be remedied and the participants penalized, lest offense be caused to the church (lines 1-23). Although he indicates that all are to blame (with the exception of the emperor, who is a child,) he specifically singles out the chamberlain and lords of the state for censure (lines 23-30). Nicholas urges the chamberlain to dispose of this matter, detrimental to both church and state, and he indicates that the offense can be pardoned, since the measures taken were necessary and the blame really lies with the Bulgarians (31-41). He concludes that, without remedy, present and future generations will slander and condemn him and all of them (lines 41-44).

Here, Nicholas had again found a legitimate target for his concern, which he could express to the government in spiritual terms. He was able to link the interests of church and state, since the treaty brought serious accusations, blame and condemnation on both. He showed his eagerness to resolve the situation amicably for the government but still held out the possibility of dire consequences, particularly for the members of the government, if a suitable remedy was not sought. Nicholas was obviously seeking a means of establishing a modus vivendi with the government and the sequel to this letter confirms that, in this instance, he achieved the response he was seeking.
In this letter (No. 67), the patriarch is replying to a communication received from Constantine. Nicholas begins by expressing his gratitude to the chamberlain for the obedience and honour shown to the church and assures him of God’s favour and reward (lines 1-9). He then states that because he does not have the facilities to accommodate the delegation that Constantine proposes to send to meet with him, he will send three metropolitans to the palace to appear before the chamberlain and the lords and acquaint them with the penance ordained (lines 10-15). He concludes by assuring Constantine that God will reward his reasonableless and salutary submission, raise him up and make him prosper (lines 16-18).

Here Nicholas achieved greater success: the government had approached him for a remedy. However, his position was still precarious; his joy at the turn of events could not hide the obvious relief he felt at not being rebuffed by Zoe’s government. Also, it might be asked why he was sending the metropolitans to the palace instead of appearing in person. A public display in the palace would have been more politically expedient for him than a delegation sent to St. Sophia, but since he did not intend to make a personal visit to the palace, the restrictions placed upon him by the Empress Zoe might well have been in effect. He was, however, deriving as much benefit from the turn of events as possible. He publicly sent his representatives to the
government to create the impression that he was able to
uphold the jurisdiction and authority of the church and the
patriarch, and thus enhance his prestige and position.

Nicholas' correspondence with Constantine the
Chamberlain and the meeting between Nicholas' metropolitans
and representatives of the government resulted in improved
relations between Nicholas and the secular government.
After the disastrous defeat for the Byzantine forces at the
Achléous (August 20, 917) Nicholas acted as intermediary for
the government with Symeon of Bulgaria. In this letter
(No. 9) Nicholas recalls the events of 916 surrounding the
conclusion of the treaty with the Pechenegs. He says that
he stormed the palace unannounced and uninvited to protest
the treaty, to berate officials for their failure to consult
with him, and to plead for peace (lines 66-196).

Here, of course, he was relating the events after the
fact and under changed circumstances. The defeat of the
Byzantine army at the Achléous had made a peace settlement
necessary for the government. Since he was now being used
by Zoe's government to approach Symeon, he could enhance his
previous stature with government officials and enlarge the
role he had played. Apart from this, Nicholas was also
eager to show Symeon that he had an influential friend
[Nicholas] in Constantinople, since he was determined that
the Bulgarian Church would remain under the control of
Constantinople.
Nicholas' reactions, during the incidents provided by the secular authority's imposition of the levies, is most enlightening in determining his priorities and convictions. Pressed by his conservative supporters, he first attempted to resolve the matter personally by using the patriarchal authority, only to be overruled by the secular government and suffer personal loss of face, which in his understanding also reflected badly upon the prestige of the patriarchate. He then sought a means of approaching the secular authority in a purely spiritual manner to improve his relationship and he seized the opportunity provided by the secular government's attempt to negotiate a treaty with the Pechenegs to make initial overtures. When he elicited a response, he pressed his case further and he used the conclusion of the treaty to demonstrate the delicate interdependence of church and state. When given the opportunity to prove his effectiveness and sincerity, he strove unceasingly in his correspondence with Symeon of Bulgaria to reach a peaceful settlement in the dispute.

The situation Nicholas faced under Romanos Lecapenos with regard to levies imposed on the church was quite different from that under Zoe. The unstable political situation at home during the last months of Zoe's administration and the ravishment of the Thracian Theme by Symeon of Bulgaria convinced Nicholas that the time had come for strong leadership at the helm of government. Nicholas
assisted Romanos in consolidating his hold on the secular government. He put his own bureaucratic expertise to good use in advising Romanos on the administration of the state and how to deal effectively with hostility towards the new secular administration by turning it to advantage. Moreover, he also offered advice on the conduct of the Bulgar War. Romanos recognized Nicholas' ability in foreign affairs and offered him an influential position at the court. Moreover, he afforded Nicholas the honour and authority due to the patriarch. Romanos showed his further confidence in Nicholas by placing the administration of the levy in his hands. Two letters (No. 94 to Gregory of Ephesos, his most trusted friend, and No. 92, a circular letter to the metropolitans) indicate Nicholas' problem in the administration of the levies and his reaction to this challenge.

In his letter to Gregory of Ephesos (No. 94), Nicholas is replying to a letter received from him, alleging that the metropolitan had been cast aside for "persons of greater importance" and Nicholas assures him that there is no change in his own feelings; rather, the letter Gregory received from him had been a circular letter to all the metropolitans regarding ordinations as established by the common synod [July 920] (lines 1-27). Nicholas then provides information regarding the contribution levied by the government on every church and indicates that, although imperial agents have
been sent to each diocese, he has ensured they will act in collaboration with the bishops (lines 28-33). He concludes by instructing Gregory to make a survey and collection from the bishoprics and monasteries in his diocese and convey it to Constantinople personally or through a trusted agent by the month of March (lines 34-39).

The information in this letter is corroborated by the contents of letter 92 to the metropolitans. Here, Nicholas begins by advising his addressees of the critical situation for the empire and that the crisis of the Bulgar uprising requires each to provide with goodwill a sum of gold from his own church and all churches and monasteries in each diocese (lines 1-15). He justifies the collection as the means of saving the whole community, provides instructions for the collection and advises that it should be conveyed in person or by a trusted servant before the month of March (lines 16-27). He concludes by placing the metropolitans under a bond to complete the collection and warns how vexatious it would be, if delay required that imperial agents be sent to make the collection and take note of the metropolitans' negative attitude (lines 28-39).

Complaints from his most ardent supporter, Gregory of Ephesos, alerted Nicholas to the difficulties he was likely to experience in collecting the levy. If Gregory, one of his most trusted friends, was upset merely by Nicholas' association with the new government, he could expect even
greater resistance from conservative supporters in assisting in the collection of the levy. Moreover, since the situation for the government was critical, he knew that the collection would have to be made in any case and he remembered very well the resulting chaos, when Zoe acted unilaterally with regard to levies on the church, and his loss of prestige and authority as a result. If he could procure the support of his metropolitan and bishops, much as the Patriarch Sergios had done long before him, he could voluntarily hand over the revenues of the church for the common good of church and state. Therefore, he took steps to ensure the levy would be collected by sending a circular letter to all the metropolitans, as senior bishops in the empire. He understandably feared that rigorist ecclesiastics might not see that the needs of the state required such a sacrifice on the part of the church and he placed them under bond and warned of the dire consequences of refusal. The "month of March" is stressed as the date by which the collection must reach Constantinople, which indicates either the period Romanos had allowed Nicholas to effect the collection or the deadline to meet Romanos' military objectives. If time limits had been placed on him, Nicholas was demonstrating, to the new holder of the secular power, as well as his own metropolitans, that the patriarch clearly understood the interdependence of church and state and knew how to exercise his authority properly. Since
obvious results were expected, he attacked the problem head on and he employed all his skill to ensure an orderly collection by the ecclesiastical authority.

In both cases of the levies imposed, first under Zoe and then under Romanos, Nicholas understood the precarious position of the state and the delicate interrelationship between church and state. Under Zoe’s administration, he seized the opportunity presented by the levies to improve his precarious position with the secular government by reminding the secular authority of the co-operation necessary between church and state in matters which concerned both. Under Romanos, Nicholas’ situation had improved; he had assumed an influential position at the court, his authority and the prestige of the patriarchate were recognized. He moved quickly to ensure an orderly collection of the levy in the face of the dire circumstances facing the state. The spiritual welfare of the empire could only be assured if the church assisted the emperor in providing for its material wellbeing. Nicholas was to demonstrate this understanding again in resolving the doctrinal issue of the Tetragamy within the Byzantine Church and then with Rome.

4.3 NICHOLAS, ROMANOS AND THE RESOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINAL QUESTION WITHIN THE BYZANTINE CHURCH AND WITH ROME

Co-operative relations between church and state are in evidence during the reign of Romanos Lecapenos (914-944). He was instrumental in bringing an end to the schism within
the Byzantine Church and then with Rome. In the first instance, Romanos sought to achieve domestic stability; in the second, foreign relations demanded a resolution. In each case, Nicholas' initial objective was to satisfy his own personal needs and those of the church, as he himself interpreted them. The resolution of the schism within the Byzantine Church brought Nicholas a moral victory and enhanced the prestige of the patriarchate; it also served the domestic concerns of Romanos. The resolution with Rome was less satisfying to Nicholas personally but it addressed the needs of church and state more adequately.

Romanos' endeavours to end the schism within the Byzantine Church met with considerable success. The moment was opportune and offered benefits to most of the major participants. Romanos could assume the role of conciliator since he himself was not a participant in the Tetragamy debate. Moreover, as some historians have suggested, he could use the resolution of the doctrinal question to his advantage by discrediting the legitimate house. A resolution of the matter in favour of the patriarch and church could ease his transition to senior emperor and provide a reason for the precedence in rank of his own son over Constantine Porphyrogenitos.

Nicholas gained a personal moral victory in the terms of compromise worked out and the prestige of the church was enhanced as the guardian of doctrine and morality against
imperial interference. Some historians consider that Nicholas and Romanos were natural allies in their hatred of the legitimate house. However, Itsines cautions placing too much emphasis on this point. He considers that Constantine Porphyrogenitos would never have survived his minority and association with the Lecapeni had Nicholas not consistently safe-guarded the young emperor's interests. It is also probable that Nicholas and Romanos had much in common as individuals from the lower class, who rose to positions of power and subsequently were viewed with suspicion by the elite. Westerink points out that the offer of an influential position at the court might have greatly influenced Nicholas' decision to compromise.

Romanos also brought Arethas to the negotiating table. Arethas himself claims that he and Romanos were the real authors of the Tome of Union agreed upon. Arethas' expertise in canon law would have been of value and offered him some measure of prestige. In his eulogy for Euthymios in 918, Arethas confidently predicted the imminent removal of Nicholas from the patriarchate. If, as Jenkins suggests, Arethas did desire to become patriarch, Romanos' acknowledgement and support for Nicholas dashed such aspirations for ever. Political realities indicated compromise as the best policy for Arethas too.

The schism had dragged on for a long and difficult twelve years and some among both the Euthymians and
Nicholains were seeking ways to compromise. After the death of Euthymios many of his supporters saw that little more could be achieved by further opposition.\textsuperscript{76} According to the \textit{Vita Euthymii}, Nicholas had reconciled with Euthymios before the latter's death and he would have allowed Euthymios' burial in his monastery at Psamathia except for vehement protests against this action by his rigorist supporters.\textsuperscript{77} This strong conservative element within Nicholas' party greatly concerned him. In reply to several appeals from supporters asking him to receive the Euthymians back into the church, Nicholas indicated that he could not risk losing his own supporters to gain the support of the Euthymians.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover, he stated that he could not receive the unrepentent into the fold, nor could he accept a solution to the problem unless it brought honour to the church.\textsuperscript{79} He indicated the same to the Emperor Romanos in a letter (No. 75) during the initial negotiations between the two regarding ending the schism.\textsuperscript{80}

Certainly Nicholas saw advantage for himself in acquiescing in Romanos' desire to end the schism, but the interests of his supporters and the church in general were also part of his deliberation in the matter. In the end, Romanos was able to induce Nicholas and his opponents to arrive at a compromise and the Tome of Union was achieved on July 9, \textsuperscript{920}.\textsuperscript{81} The reconciliation was more formal than real and, as Nicholas had feared, a small but intransigent
group of his own supporters and Euthymians still resisted the union.82

It has generally been accepted that Nicholas' efforts to resolve the doctrinal question of the Tetragamy and to end the schism with Rome were motivated by the need to quell the final resistance to the union achieved in the Byzantine Church and that Romanos co-operated with Nicholas to achieve this end.83 However, the gradual change in attitude and tactics in Nicholas' dealings with the papacy in this period seem to indicate the prime motivating factor was the crisis for the empire in Byzantine Italy, particularly Longobardia. In order to end the schism, the patriarch and emperor arrived at a compromise agreement with the papacy related to the long-standing Illyrian Dioceses question, whereby jurisdiction over part of Illyricum passed to Rome.84

Nicholas' appeal to the papacy proceeded through three distinct stages. In the first stage, Nicholas approached the papacy on his own initiative and terms (letter 56 to Pope John X). In the second stage, Nicholas' attitude and tactics changed; Nicholas and Romanos combined efforts to pressure the papacy for a resolution of the doctrinal question and schism (letter 53 to Pope John and letters 54 and 55 to individuals in Byzantine Italy). In the third stage, the patriarch and the emperor intensified efforts to obtain Rome's agreement (letter 84 to the Protospatharios Gaidon and letter 77 to Pope John X). The resolution of the
doctrinal issue and schism can be determined by letter 28 to Symeon of Bulgaria.85

Nicholas first approached the papacy shortly after the Tome of Union of July 920. In this letter (No. 56) to Pope John X, he seemed to be seeking a resolution of the doctrinal question in terms similar to those offered in 912 to Pope Anastasius III.86 He wanted Rome to issue a statement acknowledging its error in interfering in the internal affairs of the church at Constantinople and in sanctioning the fourth marriage of Leo VI. Nicholas begins by indicating previous fruitless attempts, through various individuals, to induce the pope to send envoys to Constantinople to end the schism caused by circumstances in Constantinople and the actions of former popes (lines 1-11). He relates the peace achieved in the Byzantine Church, although a few still remain outside, who are attempting to create disturbances (lines 12-17). He concludes by requesting envoys to denounce the fourth marriage and arrive at a common dogma to annul the dispute and restore normal relations (lines 17-23).

Here Nicholas was acting on his own initiative. He was seeking the help of the papacy in quelling the final resistance to the union, but no mention was made of either Romanos or the terms by which union had been restored in the Byzantine Church. Most particularly, there was no clear indication that the fourth marriage had been allowed as a
concession to the imperial dignity, which Nicholas had rejected as a valid reason in his letter to Pope Anastasius III in 912 (letter 32, lines 293-395). Nicholas was attempting to retain as much prestige as possible in dealing with the papacy and his anger at the interference of Rome in the affairs of the Byzantine Church was not assuaged. He was not willing to admit to Rome that the resolution had been achieved by the acceptance of one of the papacy's reasons for allowing the marriage in the first place: as a concession to the imperial dignity.

However, shortly thereafter, political events impinged on the patriarch's prerogatives and made a rapprochement with the papacy a prime objective of the secular government. On the domestic front, Romanos was fending off continued conspiracies against him in the capital and some resistance to the union in the church still prevailed to threaten domestic peace. These might have been adequate reasons to seek resolution of the schism with Rome. However, a review of the external factors facing Romanos shows that the perennial problem of too few resources to handle too many frontiers was taking its toll. Byzantine diplomacy had to step into the breech and this included increased efforts to reach a settlement of the doctrinal issue with Rome.

By the end of 920, Romanos was planning a new offensive against Symeon of Bulgaria, which forced the emperor to remove military forces from Byzantine Italy and transfer
them to the Bulgarian front. The Longobordian Revolt of February 921, caused by the depletion of military forces there, put additional pressure on Romanos and his limited resources and little overt action could be taken. In typical Byzantine diplomatic fashion, the government sought as much assistance as possible in Italy to bolster the Empire's sagging prestige and position. A _detente_ with Rome became an increasingly important factor. Nicholas' initial aim had been to resolve the schism with Rome to his own personal satisfaction, but he saw that his priorities paled in comparison to the vital needs of the state and he adjusted his tactics accordingly. Nicholas' next letter to the pope (No. 53) and letters 54 and 55 to individuals in Byzantine Italy were dispatched either before the revolt occurred in Longobardia or in the early stages of it.

In letter 53, Nicholas begins by waiving the guilt of others and the need to repeat the scandal and announces the union achieved in the Byzantine church (lines 1-21). He expresses his desire for a resumption of normal relations with Rome since the scandal has been removed, although a few still cause trouble (lines 22-33). He indicates relations can be restored if the pope confesses the marriage, determined by regard for the emperor, was improper and must be corrected lest a precedent for such behaviour be established. Bearers from him and the emperor will inform the pope how conformity with the ruling achieved at
Constantinople can be achieved (lines 34-51). Nicholas casts no aspersion or condemnation on those who took the action. He presses the need to acknowledge the error of the marriage as a concession to the imperial status, since it was against the church’s ordinances, confirmed by the enclosed letters of Pope Sergius and his followers (lines 51-63). Nicholas asks for envoys and exhorts the pope to act with the dignity and wisdom pleasing to God and in the interests of the church (lines 64-84).

In a letter (No. 54), to a relative in Byzantine Italy, Nicholas approaches the individual after a long break in their relationship, chastizing him for lack of support during Nicholas’ previous dire circumstances and for failure to approach the papacy regarding the fourth marriage (lines 1-22). He then tells his relative about the peace achieved in the Byzantine Church and his desire to restore relations with Rome (lines 23-45). In conclusion, he advises that the bearer of the letter (intercepted on pilgrimage to Jerusalem) is returning to Italy to procure the relative’s assistance with the efforts underway with the papacy by Nicholas and the emperor (lines 46-54).

In a letter (No. 55), to a Roman official, Nicholas begins by asking his addressee to reflect on seizing an occasion to correct an injustice such as that suffered by Nicholas through his own church and Rome (lines 1-16). He relates the end of the schism at Constantinople and his
desire for a return to normal relations with Rome, through the papacy's confession that the marriage, granted as a concession to the emperor, contrary to the canons, must be denounced lest a precedent for such behaviour be set (lines 17-35). The letter is incomplete, but Nicholas begins to absolve his addressee from reproach in the matter before it breaks off (lines 36-38).

There are obvious similarities in all three letters. Nicholas announced the end to the schism and expressed a desire to resolve the doctrinal question and to resume normal relations with Rome. There was increased urgency in his tone and he was now forthright in presenting the terms of the Tome of Union (as compared to Letter 56 to the pope where he did not divulge the terms by which union had been achieved nor employ the emperor's assistance). In the letters to the pope and his relative, Nicholas' efforts had the support of Romanos and verbal instructions accompanied the letters, which might well have been the case in the incomplete letter to the official.

The increased importance placed upon resolving both the doctrinal question and the schism with Rome might reflect nothing more than the exasperating domestic situation that Nicholas and Romanos faced. Certainly, this matter had considerable importance in itself. However, the secular government could have been taking preventative measures or attempting to deal with a rapidly deteriorating situation in
Byzantine Italy, by eliciting as much support as possible in the surrounding area. Runciman thought that the support of the papacy would have been valuable in raising the stature of the imperial government in the region. It was quite normal for the real message of the letter to be carried by the bearers; as well, the politically unstable situation would have advised secrecy. These letters, in themselves, would be insufficient to establish that the political situation in Byzantine Italy necessitated the resolution of the doctrinal question and schism with Rome. However, a clearer indication of the connection between the political crisis in Longobardia and the appeals to the papacy can be identified in two further letters.

The political situation in Longobardia had rapidly deteriorated by the time Nicholas wrote a letter to the Protospatharios Gaidon (No. 84) and yet another letter to Pope John X (No. 77), both concerning relations with Rome. The rebellion had been successful and the legitimate governor had been murdered. The victorious rebel leader had written to the Byzantine government, seeking imperial sanction for his actions and his confirmation as the new legitimate governor. The government had complied on the pretext that the former governor had been incompetent.

Nicholas begins his letter to the protospatharios (No. 84) by stating that he knows of the events and crimes in the addressee's country from his letter and others (lines 1-3).
Nicholas indicates that the imperial government has pardoned the offence and issued a mandate to that effect; he admonishes Gaidon to support this policy and to encourage the people to submit to the imperial authority and lordship (lines 4-9). He then states he has no further instructions with regard to ecclesiastical matters, beyond those which he had previously written: Gaidon should act quickly on his previous orders and go to Rome in order to accomplish the task assigned (lines 10-13). He closes by assuring Gaidon of a reward from God, the imperial government and Nicholas himself, when he has accomplished this (lines 13-16).

There might be no connection between the two issues addressed in this letter. Nicholas might have taken the opportunity afforded by writing an official government communique to provide further instructions on an entirely ecclesiastical matter. However, the tone of Nicholas' letter, the urgency detected, and the incentives offered to gain swift action (in seeing his instructions with regard to Rome carried out) indicate a very close association between the two issues. Nicholas had written a previous letter to Gaidon providing instructions regarding Rome,94 which supports the importance for the government in achieving a rapprochement with Rome earlier in 921 (letters 53, 54, 55) and the increased urgency by the summer (letter 84). It is improbable that the situation in the capital regarding the schism had deteriorated so rapidly in a few months to
warrant more drastic action. However, matters in Longobardia certainly had and the patriarch and emperor took steps to deal with the crisis for the government. A final letter from Nicholas to Pope John X confirms the urgency and priority of gaining the compliance of the papacy to resolve the doctrinal question and end the schism.

Nicholas begins this letter (No. 77) by stating he need not repeat what he had told the pope and his predecessors in previous letters, particularly since clear details were provided in the letter carried by the cleric Adeodatos and the native Roman, Peter (lines 1-11). Nicholas indicates that he also wrote to the protospatharios [letter 84 to Gaidon] who had received a mandate from the emperors to relay gifts to Rome and procure envoys to Constantinople (lines 11-17). He then states he expects envoys will be sent if these individuals have arrived, but, if they have not, the present bearers will relay the required information and return with the envoys "so that the Church may no longer be injured by anything unreformed that stands in need of reformation" and the whole church can be united (lines 18-26). He reaffirms the union of the Byzantine Church, except for a few dissenters, and states: "it is right, if anything remains of the malice of the ever-disturbing demon, that this should be removed, and concord reign perfect and full in the Church of God." (lines 27-30). Nicholas concludes by stating he need say no more since he can rely
on the pope's wisdom to understand the course of events from the time he first became archpriest until the present time (lines 31-37).

Here, as before, considerable urgency is expressed but the situation in Byzantine Italy is not indicated. However, the effort expended on the part of the patriarch and the emperor, in approaching the papacy personally and instructing others to act on their behalf, seems to point to more than the resolution of the doctrinal question and achieving peace in the Byzantine Church. The political situation for the empire was desperate. The offensive against Symeon of Bulgaria had depleted the military resources in Byzantine Italy to the point that diplomacy became the mainstay of policy in the area. These political ramifications made improved relations with the papacy a priority.

Again stress was placed on the verbal instructions carried by the bearers and the same instructions and letters had been delivered by two other individuals, representing the patriarch and emperor. This is the only reference to these specific bearers and their letters, which leads one to conclude that at least one of Nicholas' communications with the papacy has been lost. It might well be asked why the patriarch would be so confident that the efforts of the protospatharios, his previous bearers and the presents ones would ensure the desired envoys would be sent. A close
examination of Nicholas' wording at lines 19 and 27 (above) indicates that he might here have made a veiled reference to a situation beyond the circumstances of the Tetragamy debate. When Nicholas refers to "anything unreformed" and "anything [that] remains of the ever-disturbing demon" he might well have been indicating wider implications: a partial resolution of the Illyrian Dioceses question.

Nicholas indicates that the bearers of his previous letter (the communication now lost) had not returned and, therefore, that he had not yet received the favourable response he was expecting from the pope. However, Nicholas does not explicitly state that "no information" had reached him with regard to his previous two communications to the papacy (No. 56 and No. 53). He merely indicates that the pope had not personally communicated; he might well have had private information from the bearers of these two letters. It is quite possible his bearers had, on their return, informed him that the papacy was withholding its compliance to achieve a resolution of the Illyrian Dioceses question, a continual papal grievance for nearly two centuries. Ample past evidence suggests, when a matter in which the Roman Church could withhold desired approval existed, and the political situation warranted it, the question was raised. Certainly Pope Hadrian I and Pope Nicholas I attempted to use it as leverage in negotiations surrounding similar doctrinal issues.96 Therefore, Nicholas' urgency, in
sending this additional letter and the same instructions with the bearers, might indicate he had complied with the papacy's demand.

On the other hand, Nicholas might have been completely ignorant as to how his overtures to Rome were being accepted. Perhaps none of his bearers had returned to Constantinople. The idea of offering the return of some part of the Illyrian Dioceses to the papacy (as an inducement to gain papal compliance) could have originated with Nicholas and Romanos in view of the desperate political situation in Longobardia and with Symeon of Bulgaria. Nicholas could have put the needs of the state above personal considerations and the vested interests of the church. Union with Rome would be achieved in a way less palatable to him but which served the needs of church and state more adequately.

Nicholas' confidence that the papacy would agree with the information carried by his bearers leads one to suggest that, in fact, a compromise proposal had been agreed upon, or was being offered. Two previous papal demands had concerned Illyricum. In addition, Rome was also now concerned with confirmation of its authority in Dalmatia. Extensive missionary activity and encouragement of the Slavic liturgy in Croatian Dalmatia had resulted from Basil I's creation of the Dalmatian Theme. The papacy viewed these developments with growing discomfort.
Confirmation of papal authority in these two regions that had been heatedly contested by Rome and Constantinople would assuage many of the papacy's fears. A compromise in these areas would not be much of a sacrifice for Byzantium. Control over northern Illyricum (Croatia and Bosnia) had been uneven and was constantly threatened by the influx of barbarian hordes. The region was presently being assailed by the fierce Hungarians. Of much more importance to the empire was the retention of Bulgaria. The long battle with Symeon indicated how necessary it was to have a "friendly" influence to the north of the Thracian Theme. In addition, Nicholas had been intent upon maintaining authority over the church in Bulgaria throughout his entire patriarchate. In his eyes, more would be gained than lost, if a bargain could be made. A compromise agreement, discussed with the pope, at some point, by the Byzantine envoys carrying the above discussed correspondence, (letter 56, 53, the communication now lost and letter 77) would appear to be indicated by the details Nicholas provides with regard to the resolution of the doctrinal question and schism with Rome.

In a letter to Symeon of Bulgaria (No. 28), Nicholas indicates that the awaited papal delegation arrived in Constantinople (ca. June 922 to May 923). Some have concluded that the transfer of part of Illyricum occurred at this meeting and that the papal delegation could have proceeded from Constantinople to Spalato and confirmed the
Nicholas begins his letter (No 28) to Symeon by indicating that he is writing on the initiative of the pope who, troubled by the war, has sent two bishops with a letter to Symeon in order to persuade him to end it (lines 1-21). Nicholas then states that, although the pope had requested that these envoys be sent to Bulgaria in order that Symeon’s compliance with the pope’s desire could be achieved, due to Symeon’s past habit of detaining and confining envoys, he is forwarding their letters instead (lines 22-38). Nicholas warns Symeon of the consequences of spurning or insulting the Archpriest of the Romans (lines 39-52). Nicholas then announces that, when the pope’s envoys arrived, the fourth marriage was bilaterally anathematized, the appropriate remedy was applied to all questions needing healing, and the churches were united (lines 53-60). He concludes by taking the opportunity to chastize Symeon for writing to the senate instead of to the legitimate emperors and he reiterates his desire to attain peace with Bulgaria (lines 61-95).

From the sketchy details Nicholas provides in this letter, it appears that the idea of approaching Symeon originated with the pope. Nicholas told Symeon the reason for the pope’s concern was the war between Christians. It might, however, be asked what had prompted the pope’s action, other than Christian concern. As Bulgaria formed a large part of Illyricum, it would seem likely that the pope
would have welcomed the opportunity to intervene in an area over which the papacy claimed legitimate jurisdiction. This had certainly been the case with Pope Nicholas I (ca. 863-4) who had attempted to persuade Symeon’s father, Boris, to come under the umbrella of Rome. Since the pope was supporting the jurisdiction of the Byzantine Church in Bulgaria, it is probable that a compromise arrangement had been reached on the Illyrian Dioceses question with respect to Illyricum.

It is even possible that Nicholas and Romanos had asked for papal support against Symeon as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the papacy. If the pope could be induced to send a written communication to the Bulgarian leader, supporting both the Byzantine ecclesiastical and imperial authority over Bulgaria, this could be used as additional evidence to Symeon that his pretensions to the Byzantine throne were ill founded. Nicholas’ reason for detaining the Roman delegation in Constantinople bears examination. He quite rightly states that Symeon had treated former envoys from Constantinople harshly, but was this the only reason that Nicholas had for keeping the envoys from Symeon? Nicholas would hardly have trusted his new-found allies completely. What, beyond the given word, would prevent the delegation from making overtures and providing enducements to Symeon to align his church with Rome? If indeed the papal envoys honoured the commitment to
Constantinople, the arrangement made might inadvertently have been revealed to Symeon, thus exacerbating rather than alleviating the situation with him. Symeon was not reconciled to the status quo at Constantinople; he even refused to communicate directly with Romanos. In either case, Nicholas was well advised to keep the Roman delegation under his careful scrutiny. A face-to-face meeting between the Roman delegation and Symeon could have led to increased difficulties for both church and state.

When Nicholas announced the end of the schism with Rome in the letter, he stated that "all questions that called for healing met with the appropriate remedy" (lines 56-57). This statement might very well indicate that a compromise had been reached with regard to Illyricum. The schism was only formally healed after these "questions" had been resolved and the offense arising from the fourth marriage had been anathematized (lines 56-60). As the papal delegation was in possession of the written communication for Symeon, an agreement must have been arrived at through Nicholas' correspondendence with the pope prior to their arrival at Constantinople. The formal signing of the agreement, with the promised conditions met, led to a resolution of the doctrinal question and an end of the schism with Rome.

Nicholas could be reasonably satisfied with the outcome. There are indications that he acted on his own
initiative and indulged his own personal considerations in his first approach to the papacy under Romanos Lecapenos (letter 56). He sought a resolution of the doctrinal question surrounding the Tetragamy, as previously laid out in his initial approach to the papacy in his second patriarchate (letter 32). However, the deteriorating political situation in Byzantine Italy required that Nicholas put his personal considerations aside in the interests of the state, hence, a change in his tactics can be identified in his subsequent correspondence with the papacy. The resumption of relations with the papacy would bolster the imperial prestige in Byzantine Italy; the pope's support in dealing with Symeon would provide yet another avenue to pursue in attempting to gain the Bulgarian leader's acceptance of the political realities at Constantinople. However, the needs of the state did not preclude Nicholas' safeguarding the interests of the church.

A compromise with the papacy with regard to Illyricum was not to the disadvantage of the patriarchate. On the contrary, since control of Croatia and Bosnia was virtually impossible (due to the incursions of the Hungarian hordes) and jurisdiction over Bulgaria was in great jeopardy, the papal recognition of the imperial and ecclesiastical authority in Bulgaria served the needs of church and state more adequately.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

An intelligent man must also be aware that time is a factor of great importance, which realizes many of our plans in a way not according to the wish of the planner and sometimes to his intense annoyance.¹

Nicholas' observation to his friend, the Patrician Malacinos, during the regency of the Empress Zoe (February 914-918) typifies Nicholas' attitude in his actions with the state, for his own benefit and for the welfare of the church. Nicholas was no saint; he had both personal and political ambitions. However, he clearly understood that situations would arise in relations between the patriarchate and the secular authority which would require adjustment of his own priorities and demand compromise of the church to maintain the delicate balance necessary to serve the needs of church and state.

Specific letters in Nicholas' correspondence, now dated to his second patriarchate, have been examined in order to provide new insights into Nicholas' attitude and how his actions affected the relations between church and state. Historians have generally considered that, in his efforts to gain control of the church on his return to the patriarchate in 912, Nicholas willfully exacerbated the schism within the church by reprisals motivated by revenge or vindication. However, the present study has demonstrated that Nicholas was also attempting to quell Euthymian opposition by forestalling the activities of Arethas. The Emperor
Alexander frustrated Nicholas' attempts to gain control of the situation by his protection of Nicholas' chief adversary, Arethas. Nicholas tried various methods and tactics to surmount his difficulties, but these proved to be unsuccessful.

Nicholas' actions in two instances where the state impinged upon the administration of the church by imposing levies on church property have been compared. With regard to the Empress Zoe's administration, it has been long understood that the circumstances of the Bulgar War provided areas for co-operation between the patriarchate and the secular government. This study has determined that Nicholas was instrumental in improving relations with the secular government. He used the levies imposed to approach the government and warned of the repercussions of unilateral action on the part of the state. Moreover, he indicated his willingness to co-operate with the secular government, on the condition that the prestige and authority of the church were recognized. Further, where the vital needs of the state were concerned, he supported government policy under both secular administrations. He threw his own support and that of the church behind the Emperor Romanos' campaign against the Bulgars and he took steps to facilitate an orderly collection of funds necessary to the state to ensure the survival of the empire.
Two instances where the Emperor Romanos Lecapenos intervened in the doctrinal affairs of the church were examined. In the case of the schism within the Byzantine Church, Nicholas lent his own support and that of the church to Romanos. Romanos was able to satisfy Nicholas' personal considerations and concern for the church in order to induce him to compromise with the Euthymians on the doctrinal question of the Tetragamy. With regard to the resolution of the doctrinal question with Rome, the matter was initially one surrounding domestic concerns. Historians have focused on the need to achieve a resolution of the doctrinal question with Rome in order to quell the final resistance to the union in the Byzantine Church. However, the present study has determined that Nicholas first approached the papacy on his own initiative and his own terms to resolve the dispute until the political situation for the empire, particularly in Byzantine Italy, made a resolution of the matter with Rome imperative. Thereafter, distinct changes in Nicholas' approach and priorities occurred as the political crisis intensified, which resulted in a compromise-agreement with Rome and a partial settlement of the Illyrian Dioceses question with regard to Illyricum.

This investigation has determined that Nicholas clearly understood the inter-dependence of church and state. He had his own personal concerns as well as a desire to safeguard the interests of the church. However, as an astute
politician, he realized quite clearly that his aims and ambitions for himself personally and for the church corporately would sometimes clash with the needs of the state. When a change of plan or tactics was warranted, he acted accordingly. He balanced his own interests with those of the church and state and compromised to address the needs of all. His attempts to achieve a harmonious balance in church-state relations had a significant influence on the course of events.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO NICHOLAS AND HIS LETTERS

1 The standard works for this period are Louis Bréhier, Le Monde Byzantin I, Vie et mort de Byzance (Paris, 1946); A. A. Vasiliev, History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453 (London, 1952); George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, 2nd English Edition, 1968, based on the 1963 German edition (London: 1968). All these general overviews are somewhat dated with regard to Nicholas' two patriarchates and lack the benefit of more recent specialized investigations of the main historical issues. This is also true of Steven Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign, A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium (Cambridge, 1929; reprint ed., Cambridge, 1968), whose focus is directly on the period under review. A more concise and up-to-date account is R.J.H. Jenkins, Byzantium the Imperial Centuries AD 610-1071, 1966; reprint ed. (London, New York, Buffalo, 1987).


The English translation of this edition has been used throughout this study.

A great debt is owed to Jenkins for his editing and translation of the letters. At the time of his death, he had completed the work on 160 of the letters and the remaining 30 were subsequently edited and translated by Westerink. Jenkins dated some of the letters to Nicholas' first patriarchate and his interpretation differs in certain areas from that of Westerink. The latter has indicated all relevant discrepancies of interpretation and dating in a section which summarizes the letters.

3 The later versions are: George Monachus (or Hamaratolus) Continuatus, Leo Grammaticus, Theodosius of Melitene and an Old Slavonic Chronicle. References in the present work are to Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, Book VI, ed. J.P. Migne, PG, Vol. 109, (Paris, 1857-66). The chronicle known as Pseudo-Symeon is based on Theophanes Continuatus.


Nicholas' letter (No. 32) to Pope Anastasius III, June 912, pp. 215-227.

De Boor discovered and edited the \textit{V.E.}, in the late nineteenth century. However, since his attempt to establish the chronology of Leo VI's reign based on the \textit{Vita} failed, historians regarded the \textit{Vita} itself with considerable suspicion. See Karlin-Hayter, \textit{V.E.}, Forward, 1.

Runciman, \textit{The Emperor}, 42-50.


Vasiliev, \textit{History}, 333-34.

Jenkins, Laourdas and Mango, "Nine orations of Arethas," 1-40; Jenkins and Laourdas, "Eight letters of Arethas," 293-372. An overview of Jenkins' opinion can also be found in \textit{Byzantium}, 212-226.


Ostrogorsky, 259-60.


See P. Karlin-Hayter, "Le synode à Constantinople de 886 à 912 et la rôle de Nicolas le Mystique dans l'affaire


33Joan Hussey, The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire (Oxford, 1986), 102-110.

CHAPTER II: THE TIMES, THE MAN AND HIS MEDIUM


2Concise, but comprehensive treatment of the Iconclast period is provided by Jenkins, Byzantium, 74-89 and 130-139; Hussey, The Orthodox Church, 30-68; various specialized articles in Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin, eds., Iconoclasm (Birmingham, 1977).

3Hussey, The Orthodox Church, 52.

4Warren Treadgold, "The Macedonian Renaissance," 84-86, in Warren Treadgold, ed., Renaissance Before the Renaissance, Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Stanford, 1984); Meyendorff, 73.

It would be anachronistic and misleading to think of this humanism as "secular" in the ordinary sense of the word. To scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries, the traditional Christian heritage as transmitted through the Church Fathers far outweighed any secular opinion, which was considered only secondary.
5 Concise but comprehensive coverage of the Ignatian and Photian Controversy is provided by Jenkins, *Byzantium*, 168-182; Hussey, *The Orthodox Church*, 69-101.

6 The conservative Ignatios was deposed and the moderate Photios elevated to the patriarchate in 858; he was subsequently deposed and Ignatios restored in 867, only to be deposed again and replaced by Photios in 877.

7 The so-called "Photian Schism" was a complex matter which involved ecclesiastical claims on the part of the papacy and political necessity on the part of the Byzantine secular authority. The classic work on the Photian Schism, which, although dated, is still extremely useful, is Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism, History and Legend* (1948). Dvornik, 241, has conclusively proven that there was in fact no second Photian Schism with Rome.


According to the preface, the emperor is responsible for the material welfare of his subjects and he is obliged to act justly and to be subject to the laws he promulgates. A new tone is evident in the patriarch's duties; he is to judge the disobedient with gentleness but severity (regardless of their station) and speak the truth fearlessly before the emperor in defense of the holy dogmas.


10 The resolution of the Illyrian Dioceses question had been a major point of contention between Rome and Constantinople since the dioceses (Calabria, Sicily and Illyricum) had been transferred from Rome to Constantinople by Leo III (*ca.* 732). M. V. Anastos, "The Transfer of
Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily to the Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 732-33," Studi Bizantini e Neoeìlenici 9 (1957), 23-26, details attempts by the papacy to regain the dioceses in 787, as a prerequisite to recognition of the secular authority's return to orthodoxy during the reign of Constantine VI and Irene and in 860, as a prerequisite to recognition of Photios as the legitimate patriarch. Claims over Bulgaria, as part of Illyricum, were made by the papacy at the council of 869-70 at Constantinople, but Constantinople's authority over Bulgaria was recognized by the council. The point was raised again at the Council of 879-80 at Constantinople, which resolved the schism between Rome and Constantinople. Photios proclaimed himself willing to comply with the papacy's request, if imperial sanction could be obtained. See Hussey, The Orthodox Church, 80-86.

11See Jenkins, Byzantium, 179-181; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 78. But see also Dvornik, Photian Schism, 121, where he argues against Photios' attempting a rapprochement with Louis against Pope Nicholas I.

12See Jenkins, Byzantium, 190-91; Ostrogorsky, 234-237.

13V.E. II, 10.

14For a concise account of Nicholas' patriarchates see Westerink, Letters, Introduction, "Life of Nicholas," xv-xxvii. For a perusal of conflicting historical opinion on specific points, pages 6-11 (above).

15For example, Nos. 15 to 17, pp. 101-21, to Symeon of Bulgaria by which he tries to find a suitable compromise that will satisfy Symeon, facilitate peace and keep the Bulgarian Church under the control of Constantinople.

16For example, Nos. 82 to 85, pp. 339-47 to individuals in Byzantine Italy, No. 32 to Pope Anastasius III, pp. 215-45.

17No. 52, pp. 281-87 and Nos. 133-35, pp. 433-43 to Peter, Archbishop of Alania. See also No. 79, p. 335, No. 51, pp. 279-81 to the Prince of Abasgia.

18For example, No. 33, p. 245 and No. 120, pp. 411-13 to the Monk Tryphon.

19For example, No. 147, p. 463.

21No. 32, pp. 215-45 to Pope Anastasius III.

22No. 49 to the Metropolitans Outside the Church, pp. 277-9.

23 No. 183, pp. 515-17, No. 72, pp. 319-21, Nos. 66 and 67, pp. 311-15, all to Constantine the Chamberlain, No. 75, pp. 323-29, to Romanos Lecapenos.


25No. 113 to Nicetas of Athens, pp. 399-401, No. 117 to Leo of Sylaeum, pp. 405-07, No. 58 to the Metropolitan of Iconium, p. 301.


27V.E., XI, 70.

28Ibid., XIX-XX, 120-128

29Ibid., XXII, 136-8, XIII, 84-90, XXI, 130-32.

The V.E. indicates that Nicholas' involvement in the Revolt of Andronicos Doucas (ca. 905/06) was the reason for his deposition and that, although Nicholas was the instigator of the Constantine Doucas Revolt (ca. June 913), he tried to cover up his own part in the plot by vile acts against the conspirators.


Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 162; John V. A. Fine Jr., The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century (Ann Arbor: 1983), 122; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 106-110; Dvornik, "The Patriarch Photius: Father of Schism or Patron of Reunion?" Report of the Proceedings at the Church Unity Octave (Oxford, 1942), 24, In Dvornik, Photian and Byzantine, III.

Obolensky, 84-86, 184; Runciman, 83; Fine, 154-56; Dvornik, Photian Schism, 119; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 89.

See page 17 and note 13 above.

Kazhdan and Constable, 121-36.


Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Introduction, 337-40; Jenkins, Byzantium, 181; Runciman, Byzantine Theocracy, 93-4.

V.E. II, 10.


V.E. II, 10.


47 See for example Letter 8 to Symeon of Bulgaria, p. 47, lines 1 and 2: "I, the humble yet deemed to be archpriest by God, through what mercies He knoweth." See also Letter 11 to Symeon, p. 75, lines 112-16, expressing similar sentiments.


49 Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 83; Obolensky, 84-86; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 109; Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxiii.

50 No. 32, page 235, lines 320-346.

51 For example, Letter 3, p. 17, lines 1-18 and letter 5, p. 35, lines 26-7 to Symeon and Letter 1 to the Emir of Crete (the Caliph Al-Muqtadir), p. 5, lines 9-13, and Letter 2 to the Emir of Crete, p. 17, lines 4-7.

52 No. 32, pp. 235-9, lines 347-395.

53 No. 183, pp. 515-17, No. 61, p. 305 and No. 66, pp. 311-13, all to Constantine the Chamberlain.

Itsines, 152-56, considers that the Epanagoge was a great influence on Nicholas throughout his whole ecclesiastical career.


56 Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 202; Jenkins "Eight Letters", 369-70. Both consider that the suspicion of secular learning held by the conservative element in the church made it possible for the secular government to use a charge of impiety for political purposes.

57 Westerink, "Marginalia by Arethas," 201-202. See also Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 204-207.


62Westerink, "Marginalia", 196-201; Jenkins, "Eight Letters," 341-2; Itsines, 132-33; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 89-90; Runciman, Byzantine Theology, 98-99.

63Although Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 219, again disagrees, it is otherwise accepted that Arethas' betrayal of his pupil, Nicetas (V.E. XVI, 104-108), a thoroughly genuine conservative who consistently opposed the granting of the dispensation, is but a further indication of a hateful and vengeful personality. See Jenkins, "Eight Letters," 341-42; Itsines, 198-99; Westerink, "Nicetas the Paphlagonian at the End of the World," 178-82.

64Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 204-207.


68Hussey, Orthodox Church, 79; Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Conclusion, 58 and note 1.

69According to Theophanes Cont., 355-56, 371-72, 387-88 and V.E. II, 10, XIII-XIV, 82-96, Leo VI used the charge of treason to affect the resignations and depositions of Photios and Nicholas. See Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Introduction, 58, Commentary, 157, 162; "Le Synode," 63-69; Every, 118; Itsines, 6, 18-19; Ostrogorovsky, 241, note 1; Runciman, Byzantine Theocracy, 94-95; Hussey, Orthodox Church, 89; Jenkins, Byzantium, 200-201, 222-4; Dvornik, Photian Schism, 241; Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xvi. Arethas faced charges of treason, and near deposition under the Emperor Romanos (ca. 922), when he was accused of complicity in the Peloponnesian Revolt. See Jenkins, "The Date of the Slav Revolt in Peloponnesian Under Romanus I,"
Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies (1955), 207-8, in Jenkins, Studies, XX.


71Itsines, 132 and note 7.


74Doty, 11-14, Stowers, 20.

In form, the ancient Greek letter consisted of the introduction, which was a prescript or greeting including the name of the sender, addressee, greetings or a wish for health, followed by the text or body of the letter, and then a conclusion, composed of greetings, wishes (especially for persons other than the addressee), final greetings or a prayer and sometimes the date in official letters.

The earliest extant discussion of the letter (ca. first century B.C) is in Demetrius' manual of letter models, in which the letter was designated as "a gift," which should be brief and clear, avoiding elaborate rhetorical devices and excessive ornamentation. Friendship and the presence/absence of the individuals were the topics discussed using brief quotations or references; proverbs and comic phrases were popular. See Doty, 14-15; Sister M. Monica Wagner, C.S.C., "A Chapter in Byzantine Epistolography, The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrus," DOP 4 (1948), 167; Mullet, 82-3.

75Mullet, 78; Wagner, 131-33, 145-6.

The fusion of classical and Christian aspects can be identified in the Pauline letters, where the dialogue
quality is retained but the correspondence is permeated with exhortation and advice on personal situations. The standard phrase of absent/present is given a Christian nuance in the body/soul opposition. See Doty, 26-7, 37-8, 42-47; Stowers, 41, 46; Mullet, 82-84; John L. White, Light from Ancient Letters (Philadelphia, 1986), Introduction, 19.

76 Mullet, 81. As both Mullet and Wagner, 131, point out, Basil of Caesarea considered daily matters a suitable subject to be discussed in the letter. In letter 231 (volume II, p. 154) he states: "...there was nothing to hinder my letters from being, as it were, a daily record of my life, notifying your Charity of the happenings of each day."

77 Byzantine letters were permeated with the images of friendship derived from the classics, separation, the fusion of classical and Christian expressions of loneliness (presence/absence, body/soul) and illness, which presented a complete spiritual picture of the correspondent, the "icon of the soul." See Mullet, 78-85; Wagner, 131-3.

78 Mullet, 78-85; Wagner, 145-6.


80 Mullet, 81, Jenkins, "The Hellenistic," 45.

81 Treadgold, Renaissances, Introduction, 6-9, C. Mango, "Discontinuity with the Classical Past in Byzantium," 57, in Mullet and Scott, Byzantium and the Classical; Mullet, 85-86.


According to Alexander, Theodore the Studite used the letter to hold together his scattered followers. Mullet identifies certain parallels with centuries' past "letters from exile" in Theodore's correspondence and the use of epistolographic commonplaces and concrete information on local
administration in letters of Ignatios of Niceae, in the first half of the ninth century.

83 Treadgold, "Photius and The Reading Public," 123-6; Warren Treadgold, The Nature of the 'Bibliotheca' of Photius (Washington, 1980), 103 and note 3. Treadgold considers Photios' Bibliotheca to be a lengthy letter, which took much knowledge for granted and required interpretation based on the appropriate texts.

84 Mullet, 86-7.


86 Ibid., xii-xii.

87 Nicholas, Letters, No. 33, p. 245, No. 120, pp. 411-413.


89 Stowers, 142.

90 Nicholas, Letters, No. 156 pp. 475-479.

91 Ibid., No. 47, pp. 367-275.

92 St. Basil, Letters, Nos. 5 and 6, pp. 14-19.

93 Wagner, 169-70.

CHAPTER II: PROBLEMS OF DATING AND INTERPRETATION

1 Vienna, Phil. gr. 342 (17 letters), Patmos 706 (27 letters) and Angelicus gr. 13 (7 letters). For a complete history of the manuscript tradition of the letters, see Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxi-xxv.

2 Grumel, Les Regestes du patriarchat de Constantinople, 1, 2 (Chalcedon, 1936), 133-221.


6. Darrouzès, Epistoliers 45; Jenkins, "Three Documents Concerning the 'Tetragamy'," DOP 16, 1962, 235. Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxx, points out, with reference to the Patmos 178 collection, that letters 1-32 are long official documents, consisting of the letters to the Emir and Caliph (913/14), the Bulgarian dossier (in chronological order 912/925) and the letter to Pope Anastasius III (913).


12. Ibid., Introduction, xxii-xxiii.

13. Ibid., xxi, xxxiv-xxv.

14. Ibid., Summaries, 551, 556.

15. Ibid., 546, 589.

16. Ibid., 547, 567.


20. Letter 132 is not in Grumel, but he refers to these exiles by Leo VI (ca. 907) under No. 634; Karlin-Hayter, "Datation de quatre lettres," 494; "Le synode, 71, note 28; V.E., Commentary, 216; Itsines, 199-200. Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxii, Summaries, 576.
21 Grumel, No. 688; Karlin-Hayter, "The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name," 393-94 and note 19, indicating the controversy over which of the levies letter 92 refers to; Westerink, Summaries, 563.

22 Letters 4-31 to Symeon of Bulgaria. See Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 81; Obolensky, 79, 110-111; Westerink, xxiii, xxvi-xxvii.

23 Letters 53, 56 and 77 to Pope John X and letters 54, 55, 84 to individuals in Byzantine Italy.


25 Letter 49 to the Metropolitanans Outside the Church, letter 113 to Nicetas of Athens.


30 See Jenkins, "A Note on the Patriarch Nicholas," 145-7 and pages 23-24, 26 above.


32 V.E., XVIII, 114.

33 Karlin-Hayter, "The Emperor Alexander," 594-5. See also Fine, Medieval Balkans, 142.


35 Dvornik, Photian Schism, 39.


38 Ibid., 591.
39 Ibid., 586.

40 Ibid., 586, 595-6, citing the Vision of Cosmas the Monk, Synaxarion constantinopolitanum, 108, 49, ed., H. Delehaye (Brussels, 1902), and the folk-song reprinted by Henri Gregoire, Byzantion VII (1932), 272, in which, since Alexander is the living emperor, he has taken the place of the hero in the song.


42 Oikonomides, "Leo VI's Legislation on Fourth Marriages," 173-93. See also pages 10, 29 above.


45 P. Karlin-Hayter, "When Military Affairs were in Leo's Hands, A Note on Byzantine Foreign Policy (886-912)," Traditio 23 (1967), 15.


49 Ibid., Introduction, 16-17.


51 Theophanes Continuatus, 370.
CHAPTER IV: NICHOLAS MYSTICOS AND THE INTER-DEPENDENCE OF CHURCH AND STATE

1 Letter 40 to the Patrician Malacinos, page 257, lines 11-13.

2 For overview of historical opinion on this point see above, pages 6-11.


4 Theophanes Cont., 377.

5 Jenkins, "The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Logothete' for the Years A.D. 867-913," DOP 19 (1965), 96. See also pages 46-48, 50-51 above, where the motives of the chronicler are discussed.

6 See Jenkins, "A Note on the 'Letter to the Emir'," 399-401; Oikonomidès, "La dernière volonté de Leon VI," 46-52 and "La 'préhistoire' de la dernière volonté," 265-70. See also page 8 above.

7 U.E., XVIII, 114. According to the U.E., Arethas told Euthymios that he would be condemned if he deserted his flock.

8 Jenkins, "A Note on the 'Letter to the Emir'," 401.

9 As a means of reconciling the variance in the sources, Oikonomidès, "La 'préhistoire' de la dernière volonté," 269-70, has suggested that the order was carried out by Alexander.


11 U.E., XVIII, 14.

12 Ibid., XVIII, 114.

13 See, for example, Karlin-Hayter, "Le synode à Constantinople," 90 ff.; Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of St. Sophia," 162. Whereas Dvornik, Photian Schism, 251, sees the Euthymian-Nicholain Schism as a continuation of the Photian Schism, Karlin-Hayter maintains that the Photian-Ignatian quarrel of the ninth
century was healed but the passions remained and resurfaced in the Tetragamy affair. The divisions in the tenth century were not the result of a power struggle between "two parties" but, rather, represented the constant opposition between conservative and moderate opinion within the church and individuals often changed sides according to their personal choice of the moment.

14 Jenkins & Laourdas, "Eight Letters," 293-389, Letter 2, Summary, 352. See also Itsines, 139, where he makes reference to the small segment of metropolitans opposed to the fourth marriage.


The Act was formerly thought to be a letter addressed by Nicholas to the deposed metropolitans. See Grumel, No. 612, p. 141, and Karlin-Hayter, "Vita S. Euthymii (Continuation)," 749-757. Westerink, Miscellaneous Writings, Summaries, 145-46, has determined that this is not a letter but the actual act which was read out before the metropolitans in the gallery of the Great Church as stated by the Vita, XVIII, 116.


17 U.E., XVIII, 114.

18 Westerink, Miscellaneous Writings, "Nicholas the Patriarch," 23-31, and Summaries, 145-46. In Nicholas' Letter No. 113 to Nicetas of Athens, pp. 399-401, he gives a list of the metropolitans deposed which is similar to those named by the Vita, XVIII, 114-16.


20 In Letter 53, pp. 287-9, lines 13-18, after the Tome of Union was proclaimed in July 920, Nicholas announced to Pope John X that the reconciliation had been achieved without depositions, exiles, confiscations or any other such methods usually employed to gain compliance against conscience.
According to the *V.E.*, XVIII, 116-18, Nicholas enlisted Alexander's assistance by telling him that the metropolitans were foretelling the emperor's early death and then suggesting that Alexander solve his monetary problems by imposing a levy against the metropolitans' church property. The *V.E.* indicates that the first attempt failed to move Alexander to act and that the second attempt was partially sabotaged when the Euthymians handed over the revenues to the poor. Arethaś confirms the levy in a subsequent letter to Nicholas and in his funeral oration for Euthymios. See Karlin-Hayter, "Vita S. Euthymii (Continuation)," 757-71, where she translates the letter, and 763, note 1, where she cites the Epitaphios of Arethaś on Euthymios, in A. Papadopoulus-Kerameus, Monumenta Graecae ad hist., Photii pert., 1, 30 (St. Petersburg, 1889).

*V.E.*, XVIII-XIX, 118-24. The deposition is confirmed by Theophanes Cont., 378-379.

Karlin-Hayter, "Vita S. Euthymii (Continuation)," letter 3, 757-71.

*V.E.*, XIX, 124.

Ibid., XIX, 124.

Oikonomidès, "Leo VI and the Narthex," 163; Itsines, 11.

Arethaś, Letter 7, as cited by Jenkins & Laourdas, "Eight Letters," 335-36; Jenkins, *Byzantium*, 222-3; Itsines, 115. Westerink, "Nicetas the Paphlagonian," 178-82, states that the pressure exerted against the rigorists and the pains that Nicholas took to reason with the opponents to the dispensation for the marriage can be established by two letters of Nicetas: one to his uncle, in reply to a warning to disassociate himself from Arethaś; the other, to Arethaś, describing an interview with the patriarch and his uncle and the pressures brought to bear to get him to join forces with the bishops against Arethaś.

Jenkins & Laourdas, "Eight Letters," Letter 2, Summary, 352. See also Itsines, 139, where he makes reference to the small segment of metropolitans opposed to the fourth marriage.


*V.E.*, XX, 126-28.

Karlin-Hayter, "Vita S. Euthymius (Continuation)," 747, considers that the *V.E.* has here copied remarks of Arethaś.
from a letter to Nicholas. She notes the similarity in argument to Arethas' reply to the Act of Deposition, but concludes that this is another letter dealing with the same matter. From the contents, it can be determined that the deposition of all the Euthymians has just occurred.

31 See Westerink, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 19-21, for the actual wording of the versions of the abdication, and Summaries, 144-5.

Three Acts of Abdication are extant. The *V.E.*, XIV, 90-92, preserves the first two and indicates the existence of a third. A second version of the first Act is preserved in some canonical manuscripts, which Westerink considers to be the official version circulated in 912 in order to prove the resignation void, by the addition of the essential point of the second Act: the retention of the functions of the archpriesthood. The Act of Deposition quotes only the second Act (without the preamble), the essential point being that Nicholas had not resigned the archpriestly functions. The third Act (which, according to the *V.E.*, XVI, 94, the metropolitans possessed before approaching Euthymios and offering him the patriarchate) was a plain resignation, which made no mention of retaining the archpriestly functions.

32 *V.E.*, XX, 126, lines 1-2.


The connection between Arethas and Alexander is unclear. Westerink, *Letters*, Introduction, xx, considers that Alexander was impressed by Arethas' success in thwarting his brother, Leo VI, with whom the *V.E.*, IX, 54, XI, 66, indicates Alexander had very bad relations. Karlin-Hayter, *V.E.*, Commentary, 227, considers that the passion with which Arethas later attacks Alexander is suitable for a former friend.

34 Jenkins, "Three Documents," dates this incomplete letter to June 912, supposing it to be an unfinished version of Grumel, No. 632, p. 149, *The Act of Deposition*. However, Westerink, Summaries, 548, points out that the metropolitans are already outside the church so this letter can hardly be the preliminary to deposition. He dates this letter to February 914 or 919, in view of the metropolitans' ability to argue effectively against Nicholas. Westerink is correct in designating this as a subsequent letter to the deposition, but Jenkins' date of June 912 is preferable.
since it has been demonstrated that Arethas was quite able to argue effectively against Nicholas at that time.

35 No. 32, pp. 215-45. Westerink, Summaries, 432-43, dates this letter to after Nicholas’ restoration in May 912; Grumel, No. 635, p. 151, to 912.


37 See for example, Karlin-Hayter, V.E., Commentary, 196-99; Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xx.

38 Oikonomidès, "Leo VI and the Narthex," 161-2; Itsines, 279-87.

39 Euthymios had considered the approval of Rome, in the granting of the dispensation, the deposition of Nicholas and his own elevation to the patriarchate, essential to his acceptance of the office. See V.E., XV, 98-100, and Karlin-Hayter, "Le synode," 91-2.

40 Oikonomidès, "Leo VI and the Narthex," 166-7; Itsines, 155-6.

41 V.E., XX, 128.

42 No. 113, pp. 399-401.

43 V.E., XXII, 136; Theophanes Cont., 386.

Nicholas and Zoe had had a stormy relationship. Nicholas had finally taken a hard stand against the dispensation for Zoe’s marriage to Leo VI (906/07) and, according to the V.E., XX, 130-32, he had consistently and deliberately excluded her from affairs of state under the Regency Council (June 913/Feb. 914). She was tonsured and relegated to a monastery on his orders, although allowed to return to the palace due to the pleading of the child emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitos. When Zoe engineered a coup in February 914, the V.E., XX, 132, indicates that Nicholas hid in fear in the Great Church for three weeks, then pleaded with Zoe for release, which was granted contingent upon his strict attendance to the affairs of the church. The latter fact is confirmed by Theo. Cont., 386. When the Regency Council held power Nicholas had engineered a marriage arrangement for the young emperor with Symeon of Bulgaria’s daughter (Theo. Cont., 386). Zoe immediately repudiated this when she seized power (Nicholas, Letter 16, p. 109, lines 70-74).

Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxiii; Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 53; Fine, Medieval Balkans, 149-50; Itsines, 255.

Eleven of Nicholas' letters refer to these levies imposed by the state. Seven of them, two to his own clergy, four to provincial government officials and one to a high government official in Constantinople (letters 35-37, 150, 164-6), concern Nicholas' attempts to reverse the government's decision by personally intervening, using the patriarchal authority, with no apparent success. See Westerink, Letters, Summaries, 543-4, 582, 586-7, and Introduction, xxiii-xxiv.

No. 166, p. 493, particularly lines 5-9.

No. 183, pp. 515-17, No. 61, p. 305, No. 47, pp. 267-75, No. 72, pp. 319-21.

No. 66, pp. 311-13.

No. 67, pp. 313-15, No. 9, pp. 53-69, No. 58, p. 301.

Karlin-Hayter, U.E., Commentary, 195; Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 52-3.

No. 183, pp. 515-17, and Westerink, Summaries, 591; Jenkins, "A Consolatio of the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus," 162. The addressee is identified by Jenkins. The letter can be dated on the internal evidence of the negotiations of Bogas with the Pechenegs, lines 25-28, which occurred in 915/16.

Jenkins, "A Consolatio," 164, note 2, identifies "our beloved lady" as the Empress Zoe.

Nicholas may here be referring to his attempts in his first patriarchate to procure a dispensation for Zoe's marriage or to the fact that he dined with her and blessed her womb before the birth of her son, Constantine Porphyrogenitos, recorded by the U.E., XII, 80. Likewise the U.E., XVII, 110, 134-36, states that Nicholas promised to proclaim Zoe in church, which Euthymios had steadfastly refused to do.

Westerink, Summaries, 552, does not conclusively identify the addressee of this letter, although he observes
that there might be a connection between letter 61 and 183 in which case the addressee would be Constantine the Chamberlain or one of his officials and the date would be ca. 916.

56Letter 72, pp. 319-20. Westerink, Summaries, 556, and Grumel, No. 652, pp. 159-60, date this letter between 914 and 918. Westerink concludes that it was probably addressed to Constantine the Chamberlain, although a treasury official cannot be ruled out.

57See page 17 above.

58See page 20 above.

59No. 58, p. 301. Grumel, No. 690, p. 181, dates this letter to 921 on the assumption that the levy referred to was that under Romanos. Westerink, Summaries, 552, denotes angry resignation in Nicholas which better fits the levy under Zoe.


62V.E., XXII, 116.

63No. 9, pp. 53-69, which Westerink, Summaries, 529-30, dates to 917, after the battle of the Achelous (August 20, 917). Westerink, Summaries, 529, dates the preceding letter (No. 8) to Symeon of Bulgaria to Spring or Summer 914, since in this letter Nicholas refers to his meeting of "last year" (August 913) with Symeon at lines 88-93.

This letter makes no mention of the secular government and appears to be Nicholas' own initiative, inspired by the reneging of the marriage arrangements made between Nicholas and Symeon by the Empress Zoe. Nicholas' concern at that time was for the patriarchal authority over the Bulgarian Church.
64. No. 95A, p. 363. Westerink, Letters, Summaries, 564-5, dates this letter to between Sept. 17, 920 and Dec. 17, 920 (since Romanos' rank is identified as "Caesar" at line 1). This letter was considered to be part of letter 95 by Grumel, No. 674.


66. No. 95, p. 363. Westerink, Letters, Summaries, 564, dates this letter to between Sept. 17, 920 and Dec. 17, 920.

67. No. 94, pp. 359-61, and Summaries, 564; No. 92, p. 357, and Summaries, 563. Westerink dates No. 92 to between Sept. and Dec. 920 on internal evidence. As Nicholas is "associating with the great" (lines 11-12) and no mention is made of an emperor or emperors, but rather a vague "those who govern the commonwealth" (line 31), this seems to indicate Romanos' rule before his coronation (Dec. 17, 920). The gold levy was decided upon after Romanos became Caesar on Sept. 24, 920. The latest date Westerink sees possible is March 921. Grumel, No. 688, p. 180, suggests that the synod regulating ordinances (lines 20-22) was the synod of union of July 920. Westerink dates No. 92 to between Sept. and Dec. 920, a few days after No. 94.

68. In 615, the Patriarch Sergios freely handed over church revenues to the state under the pressure of the Persian War. See Runciman, The Byzantine Theocracy, 55.


70. Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 65; Ostrogorsky, 271.

71. Itsines, 265-6 and note 103.

72. Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxv.


74. Ibid., I, 89.7-12; 92.9-18, cited by Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxiv.

75. Jenkins, "A Note on the Patriarch," 145-7. Also see page 28 above.


77. V.E., XXIII, 146.

Ibid.

No. 75 to Romanos Lecapenos, p. 325, lines 25-28, p. 327, lines 63-66.

Tome of Union, Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, Miscellaneous Writings, ed., Westerink, pp. 57-85, particularly pp. 61-63 and Westerink, Summaries, pp. 147-50.

The Tome acknowledged that the fourth marriage of Leo VI had been improper, in that it controvenered canon law, but it would be allowed as a concession to the imperial dignity. Fourth marriages were completely forbidden in the future and steps were taken to standardize the penances imposed on second and third marriages.


Westerink, Letters, Introduction, xxvi; Jenkins, Byzantium, 238; Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 65.

See page 17 and note 10 above.


No. 56, p. 299. Grumel, No. 671, p. 172, and Westerink, Summaries, 551, date this letter to shortly after the Tome of Union of July 9, 920. Grumel notes that it is a first communication, which was followed by letter 53 when no reply was received. For discussion of Letter 32, see pages 64-68 above.

See Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 187 and notes 2 and 3. He considers that The Bulgar War had necessitated the reduction of imperial troops in Italy and since Pope John X had considerable influence in Italy, the frantic efforts of Nicholas to gain support at the papal court reflected an attempt to ward off the dangers foreseen.

Letters 53-55, pp. 287-299.

Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 187 and note 3, suggests that the reason for the intensified communication with the papacy
was the imperial government’s realization of the possibility of revolt in Longobardia and efforts were being made on all fronts, in whatever way possible, to forestall this eventuality. However, Runciman considers that Nicholas corresponded in 920, following Grumel, No. 675, pp. 173-4, who believes that letter 53 was written before Romanos’ coronation (December 17, 920) due to the use of "our Christ-loving Emperor" (line 47). However, Jenkins, "Letter 101 of the Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus," 78-9, identifies several instances of Romanos being addressed as "the emperor" and as Westerink, Summaries, 549-50, notes, Basil is named as Romanos’ personal envoy (line 48). He dates these letters to between February 921 and January 922, on the internal evidence in letter 53 which speaks of the "fifteenth year of the scandals" (counting from Nicholas’ deposition).

Therefore, the situation was much more critical for the government than Runciman realized.

89See Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 187, notes 2 and 3. He suggests that news of the disastrous Bulgar War had reached the area and that Romanos’ scramble for the throne reflected badly on the imperial government’s prestige.


91Letter No. 84, p. 345. Grumel, No. 696, pp. 183-4, made a connection between letters 54, 84, and 77, considering Gaidon to be the relative of Letter 54. Westerink, Summaries, 550-51, disagrees. To Westerink, the instructions of letter 54 were different and Nicholas was acting on his own initiative, but Westerink agrees that Gaidon is the protospatharios mentioned in letter 77 to the pope.

92Letter 77, pp. 331-333. Westerink, Summaries, 558, dates this letter to between February 921 and May 923, after letter 54 (February 921/January 922) and letter 84 (summer 921) but before the union with Rome. Therefore, the actual dating can be further shortened to after the summer of 921 but before May 923.

93See letters 82-85, pp. 339-347, to individuals in Longobardia, and Westerink, Summaries, 560-1, for details of the course of the rebellion and the actions taken by the government.

94Either this was a communication now lost, or Gaidon was the addressee in letter 54 (the unidentified relative of Nicholas). See note 91 above.
95 See Itsinas, 292.

96 See page 17 and note 10 (above).


98 Letter 28 to Symeon of Bulgaria, pp. 191-197, lines 53-60. Grumel, No. 712, pp. 193-4, dates the resolution with Rome on the prophecy of Euthymios in the V.E., XXI, 134, that peace would be achieved in the tenth year of Nicholas' second patriarchate. Westerlink, Summaries, 539, and Karlin-Hayter, V.E. Commentary, 231-32, concur. Jenkins, Byzantium, 238, acknowledges Nicholas' claim of the council held at Constantinople but also indicates that there is no corroboration in the papal records.

99 For the synod held at Spalato in 924, see Itsinás, 295, citing Philippus Jaffe, et al, Regesta Pontificum Romanorum, Nos. 3571-72, Vol. 1, 452. See also Every, 127, 134; Runciman, The Emperor Romanus, 217-19; Fine, 266-270; Dvornik, Byzantine Missions, 237-9.

100 Jenkins, Byzantium, 174-178.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

1 Letter 40 to the Patrician Malacinos, p. 257, lines 11-13.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY LITERATURE

BOOKS


Gay, J. *L'Italie méridionale et l'Empire byzantin depuis l'avènement de Basile Ier jusqu'à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867-1071).* Vols I, II. Paris, 1904.


_________ *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*. Oxford, 1986.


Mullet, Margaret and Scott, Roger, eds. *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*. Birmingham, 1981.


PERIODICALS


Browning, R. "The Correspondence of a Tenth-Century Byzantine Scholar." Byzantion 24 (1954), 397-452.

Da Costa-Louillet, G. "Saints de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe, Xe siècles (suite)." Byzantion 24 (1954), 453-511.


"A Note on Nicetas David Paphlago and the Vita Ignatii." **DOP** 19 (1965), 241-46.

"A Note on the "Letter to the Emir" of Nicholas Mysticus." **DOP** 26 (1963), 399-401.


"The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Logothete' for the years A.D. 867-913." **DOP** 19 (1965), 91-112.


"Three Documents Concerning the Tetrakamy." **DOP** 17 (1962), 229-41.


Jenkins, R. J. H. and Grierson, Ph. "The Date of Constantine VII's Coronation." Byzantion 32 (1962), 133-38.

Karlin-Hayter, P. "Arethas et le Droit D'Asile." Byzantion 34 (1965), 613-17.

"Basileopator." Byzantion 38 (1968), 278-281.


"When Military Affairs Were in Leo's Hands' A Note on Byzantine Foreign Policy (886-912)." Traditio 23 (1967), 15-40.


———. "La 'préhistoire' de la dernière volonté de Leon VI au sujet de la Tetragamie." *B.Z.* 56 (1963), 265-70.


Treadgold, W. "Photius and the Reading Public for Classical Philology in Byzantium." In *Byzantium and the*

---


---


---

