

Theological and Political Aspects of the Council of Chalcedon

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Introduction

The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) was certainly an event of very great historical importance.¹ Its decisions and their enforcement by the Roman imperial government created lasting divisions in the Christian Church. It hastened the development of Christian Churches whose services used Syriac and Coptic instead of Greek.² The implementation of the decisions of Chalcedon turned large numbers of the inhabitants of its eastern provinces against the imperial government, and thus assisted, and perhaps even made possible, first the Persian,³ and then the Arab conquest, and the subsequent Islamization of the oriental provinces of the Roman Empire.⁴ While the debates of the assembled bishops were entirely about theological and ecclesiastical issues, the underlying secular issues, which were to have such far-reaching political consequences, had had no place whatsoever in those debates.

Chalcedon: The Definition of the Faith

Christianity differed from other religions in the Roman Empire in many respects, but above all in the fact it laid down rules not only for ritual observance and moral conduct, but also required correct belief. Membership of the Church involved (and involves) acceptance of the Church's doctrines. Christianity demands from its followers not only attendance at Christian worship, and adherence to a strict code of morality, but also

¹ First of all I want to thank the reviewer of *Scripta Classica Israelica* for a number of corrections and other helpful suggestions for improvement of this paper.

The basic text: *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. Eduard Schwartz, vols. II.1-3, Berlin 1933-35. English translation: *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, translated with an introduction and notes, by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, 3 vols., Liverpool Translated Texts 45, Liverpool 2007. A.J. Festugière, *Ephèse et Chalcédoine, Actes des Conciles*, Paris 1982 (includes French translation of Sessions I & II of Chalcedon), Festugière has also translated Session III-VI in 'Concile de Chalcédoine: Sessions III-VI, la Définition de la Foi', in *Cahiers d'Orientalisme* 4, Geneva 1983. General discussions: R. Price and M. Whitby (eds.), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400-700*, Liverpool 2009.

² Fergus Millar, 'Ethnic Identity in the Roman Near East 324-450: language religion and culture', *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998), 159-76; idem, 'The evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the pre-Islamic period: from Greek to Syriac', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21.1 (2013), 43-92.

³ *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles*, introduced, translated and annotated by Andrew Palmer, *Liverpool Translated Texts* 15, Liverpool 1993, 125-26 (*Dionysius Reconstituted* 21-22).

⁴ See account of Arab conquest of Egypt: *ibid.*, 158-60 (*Dionysius Reconstituted*, 69-71).

belief in its theological doctrines. The Church was — as it still is — an organization of believers, and the holding of correct belief was, and is, a condition for acceptance into the fellowship. It was therefore doctrinal differences, rather than any underlying more worldly disagreements which were debated by the bishops at the Council.

The early history of the Church saw an ever more precise definition of Christian beliefs. It was probably the only body in the Empire which attached such value to belief. Pagan cults held their followers because they were closely related to local history and traditions. For the Christians shared belief provided a substitute for the bond of a traditional common culture.⁵ Shared belief was therefore an important factor in creating cohesion among Christians of different classes and regions. But as the number of Christians grew, and as Christian communities sprung up in widely different parts of the Empire, it became more and more difficult to maintain the uniformity of belief, or rather the universal acceptance of a single interpretation of the meaning of that belief. The Church potentially and ideally had the cohesion of a nation, and even of a family. But the maintenance of this unity was very difficult. The history of the Church in the Later Empire is largely a story of doctrinal conflicts and attempts to settle them.

The course of these theological debates can be followed in the Acts of the successive church councils assembled to settle these bitter disputes.⁶ The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon do bring out some of the factors which made the aspired unity so difficult to bring about.⁷ The canons of Chalcedon regulate a variety of issues. They record decisions about personalities, as well as general rules concerned with ecclesiastical order and discipline. But the most important session of all was the Sixth Session at which the bishops formally acclaimed a new formulation of belief. That this was the central issue of the whole Council is evident from the records of that, and of the preceding fifth session.⁸

The Council of Chalcedon had been called by the emperor. Its purpose was to reverse decisions of Ephesus II. In the last years of his reign Theodosius II had come to favour the one-nature theology supported by Cyril of Alexandria and many eastern bishops,⁹ while his successor Marcian favoured the two-nature theology which was maintained by the pope Leo and most bishops in the West. A great many of the bishops assembled at Chalcedon were reluctant to reverse a definition of the faith that they had themselves approved so recently. This was made absolutely clear in the debates of the Fifth session. The ultimate resistance to the new definition, which was the one favoured by the

⁵ As the letters of Paul show, the insistence on correct belief was a kind of substitute for strict observation of the Law in Judaism.

⁶ R. MacMullen, *Voting about God in Early Church Councils*, 2006, ISBN 0-300-11596-2.

⁷ Richard Price and Mary Whitby (eds.), *Chalcedon in Context, Church Councils 400-700*, Liverpool UP 2009. A. Grillmeyer and H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalcedon, Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 vols., Würzburg 1951-54.

⁸ Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 206-40.

⁹ R. Price, 'The Council of Chalcedon: a Narrative', in Richard Price and Mary Whitby, *Chalcedon in Context*, pp. 70-91 on p. 72. R.V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*, London 1953, pp. 3-29. R. Mac Mullen, *Voting about God in Early Church Councils* (2006), ISBN 0-300-11596-2.

emperor, was only overcome when the imperial official chairing the meeting threatened to dismiss the bishops, and call a second conference, and to hold it in the West.¹⁰

The following session, the sixth of the conference, was for both the government and the bishops the most important day of the council of Chalcedon. This was signaled by the fact that it was the only session to be attended and presided over by the emperor himself. It was the session where the new statement of the faith was formally read out. Marcian opened it with a speech¹¹ which culminated in the demand that the assembled bishops should acclaim the new definition of faith.¹² The bishops duly complied. In fact most of the bishops' signatures had already been collected before the meeting, and few more were induced to sign after it. There were 457 signatures in all. After the acclamation Marcian threatened with punishment anybody, whether a private individual, official, or cleric, who in future would gather a crowd in order to discuss questions of the faith. If the offender lived at Constantinople he would be expelled from the city, if he was an official he would lose his post. The bishops welcomed the emperor's threat with another acclamation.

That final acclamation of the emperor included anathemata both of Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria, and of Eutyches the influential archimandrite of a monastery at Constantinople, the principal promoters of the one-nature doctrine and the decisions of Ephesus II, but it also condemned the views of Nestorius, who was seen as the principal author of the two-nature theology.¹³ The emperor's hope was clearly that the compromise embodied in the new definition would end the controversy which had divided the Church once and for all. In fact it did nothing of the kind. The unity signaled by the acclamations of the sixth session, and published in the canons of the Council, was only apparent. Important factors underlying the dogmatic controversies had not at all figured in the debates, and continued to exercise their divisive influence.

The Council had been a meeting of the bishops of the eastern empire together with two representatives of the Pope, 342 bishops in all at the first session. The principal item on their agenda had been the discussion of a difficult and controversial problem of theology, how to define the relationship of the divine and human in the incarnate Jesus. The supposedly unanimous decision of the assembled bishops was then taken to have been a confirmation the one true faith, the faith of the fathers and of the apostles, the faith that had saved the world.¹⁴ It was assumed that this one and only correct decision could not have been achieved by the compromise of a counting of votes, but only by a unanimous acclamation, which would confirm that the divine will had indeed been revealed to the assembled bishops.¹⁵ In fact the acclamation did not represent the

¹⁰ *Acta of Chalcedon* (E. Schwartz), V.22 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 199).

¹¹ *Ibid.* VI.10 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 215-16).

¹² *Ibid.* VI.10 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 240). On the importance of acclamation at Church Councils, as in secular decision making, see H.-U. Wiemer, 'Akklamationen als Surrogat politischer Partizipation im spätrömischen Reich', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 76 (2006), pp. 27-73; also 'Voces populi, Akklamation als Surrogat politischer Partizipation im spätrömischen Reich', in E. Flegon Flaig and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Genesis und Dynamik der Mehrheitentscheidung*, Munich 2013, pp. 173-202.

¹³ *Ibid.* VI.13-15 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 241).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* VI.11 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 240).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* VI.11-14, most explicitly 13 (Price and Gaddis *ibid.*, pp. 240-1).

unanimous opinion of the assembled bishops. The Egyptian bishops would clearly have been opposed to the new definition, but they were given permission postpone their vote until Dioscorus, their patriarch, who had been deposed by the council, had been given a successor.¹⁶ In fact they never gave their consent. Moreover events were to show that the consent given by a considerable number of bishops did not reflect their true opinion.

The Council as a Political Assembly

The very full Acts of the Council¹⁷ read remarkably like the report of the debates of a secular political assembly, in fact like a fifth century Hansard. Some of the problems debated, particularly in the later sessions, were indeed of the same kind as those discussed in a modern parliament,¹⁸ and the contributions of the bishops were of the same kind as those of members in a parliamentary debate. So also the response of the presiding official to a speech of a bishop, or to an acclamation by the Council, often reads very much like that of a minister acknowledging 'the views of the House'. Moreover the new definition of the faith shows that the debate did produce a certain amount of compromise to satisfy opposing views.¹⁹ Indeed the fullness with which the debate and the precedents cited in the debate were recorded, shows that genuine debate had taken place, and also that the ecclesiastical authorities thought it important that the fact there had been genuine debate about important issues should be widely known. It was clearly not enough for only the canons, that is the final decisions of the council, to be published.²⁰ A wider public had a right to learn how the decision had been reached.

While the bishops assembled at Chalcedon were not organized as political parties, the principal debate was nevertheless between partisans of two opposite opinions, the theologies which scholars now distinguish as monophysite (or miaphysite) and dyophysite, maintaining respectively a one-natured and a two-natured Christology. It must however be remembered that the titles by which the two bodies of opinion are distinguished by modern scholars for their own convenience, were not used by the two parties themselves,²¹ for each party insisted that its views, and its views alone, were orthodox.

¹⁶ Ibid. IV.48-62 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 151-3).

¹⁷ The council as a political assembly: H. Gelzer, 'Die Konzilien als Reichsparlamente', in H. Gelzer (ed.), *Kleine ausgewählte Schriften*, Leipzig 1907, pp. 142-55.

¹⁸ E.g. the Seventh Session concerned with a dispute over the jurisdiction of respectively the bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem.

¹⁹ E.g. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 189-90 on compromises in the formulation of the bishops' declaration of faith.

²⁰ *Canons of Chalcedon* 1-27 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, pp. 94-103). They appear to have been issued, without confirmation by the assembled bishops, by Anatolius bishop of Constantinople. *Canons* 4, 8, 18, 23, 9 and 17 relate to situations not discussed in any session of the Council, but of direct interest to the see of Constantinople.

²¹ On introduction of this term for followers of the one-nature theology by its opponents see Fergus Millar, 'Evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Islamic Period: From Greek to Syriac?', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21.1 (2013), pp. 43-92, on 51-2. 'Miaphysite' was invented by a modern Scholar.

Belief and Proof-Texts

The subject matter of the debates was of course different from that of a secular parliamentary assembly. An important consequence of the centrality of belief in Christianity was that incorrect belief was not only condemned as mistaken, but also as positively wicked, and dangerous, and condemned by God.²² This clearly provided a strong incentive to accept the creed upheld by the Church authorities. It also meant that the acceptance of correct belief was not only a matter of reasoned conviction but also a moral decision. Since doctrinal error was not only mistaken but wicked, any debate that involved questions of faith was bound to be passionate, and hence difficult, and in some cases impossible to resolve.²³ Today it is difficult to understand how disputes over a doctrinal definition, concerned very largely over the choice of words, to define something which would seem to be indefinable, should cause such passion and irresolvable division. Theological definitions do not create divisions of that kind today — at least not in the western world.

The Christological issue, that is the relation between the divine and the human in Christ, raises problems which philosophers can discuss, but which are impossible to resolve conclusively. So the assembled bishops did not discuss them philosophically, but rather as they might a legal issue, arguing the case for or against the orthodoxy or heresy of doctrinal propositions in terms of selected proof texts. Passages from the New Testament and the canons of Nicaea, and also writings of Cyril of Alexandria, were cited by both parties as agreed standards of orthodoxy. The Egyptian party argued that certain passages in the writings of their opponents advocated doctrines of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius which had been condemned as heretical, while their opponents cited views of Eutyches, an archimandrite of Constantinople, and of Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, to discredit the Egyptians. The problem of a debate carried on in this way was that the citation of one authority could usually be countered by citing another of seemingly opposite significance. In fact it tended to enhance differences rather than to reconcile them.²⁴

Moreover the debates at this and other ecclesiastical councils were less like the debate between members of opposing parties in a democratic multi-party parliament, than like debates under a one party system. Decisions were not reached by majority vote but by acclamation. At least in theory, it was not the object of the debate to enable majority opinion prevail after a vote, or even to reach an agreed compromise between opposing opinions, but to recover the divine truth and the divine will. So the bishops were under pressure to achieve unanimity. The decisions eventually reached were treated as unanimous, and as binding on all parties, and they would be duly enforced by

²² That is why the central concern of all these councils starting with Nicaea was to define as precisely as possible Christian belief about the nature of God, e.g. A.H.M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, pp. 87-8 (on Nicaea of 325), pp. 165-6 (on Constantinople of 381), as well as at both Ephesus I and II, and at Chalcedon.

²³ The imperial officials sometimes had to intervene, as in 5.21, to obtain any decision.

²⁴ The actual views of Cyril and of Nestorius were not in fact as opposed as the tendentious use of their names made them appear to be, see Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy*, Oxford 2004.

the secular power. In fact the formulae which were acclaimed by the bishops at Chalcedon, and promulgated as the decisions of the Council, like those which had been acclaimed and promulgated at earlier Councils, were inevitably closer to the objectives of some of the contending factions than to those of the others. In a functioning parliamentary system the minority accepts the majority vote. This is indeed what probably happened in the case of the numerous disciplinary and organizational rulings debated at the later sessions at Chalcedon, and issued among the Canons of the Council. Of course these decisions too were strongly influenced by the secular government, as they would be in a parliamentary system.²⁵ But the central doctrinal division, with its roots in regional differences, could not be finally settled in this way.

Episcopal Power Politics

The debates that preceded the acclamations do reveal the existence of the opposed groups and irreconcilable differences which are feature of a multi-party system, and at least with hind-sight it is easy to see why the unanimity of the vote apparently achieved by the bishops at Chalcedon did not put an end to controversy and diversity in the cities and countryside elsewhere, and why the most important decisions were far from being accepted by all the assembled bishops, even though they embodied considerable political compromises.²⁶

Underlying the debates about theological definition there were rival episcopal power politics, as well as diverse local traditions. One powerful factor in the debates, from the beginning to the end of the synod, was straight forward political: rivalry of Constantinople and Alexandria. Early in the century Theophilus of Alexandria had brought about the downfall of John Chrysostom bishop of Constantinople. At Ephesus I Cyril brought about the condemnation of Nestorius of Constantinople, and at Ephesus II Dioscorus achieved the deposition of both Flavian of Constantinople and of Domnus of Antioch. Ephesus I and II had been victories of Alexandria over Constantinople. Chalcedon represented a reversal of those Alexandrine victories. In the third session Dioscorus of Alexandria was deposed. In the sixteenth session it was decided, rather ambiguously, that Constantinople should both enjoy privileges equal to those of Rome, and also be second after her'. It was also decided that the metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thracia were to be consecrated by the bishop of Constantinople.²⁷ Of the eastern patriarchates it was Antioch which lost out at Chalcedon. The bishop of

²⁵ For imperial influence on Sessions XI-XIII see n. 31; at Sessions VIII-X, the formal restoration of Theodoret to the see of Cyrrhus, and the restoration of Ibas to that of Edessa, were reluctantly decided by bishops, clearly under some imperial pressure. In Session VII the bishops confirmed an agreement between Maximus of Antioch and Juvenal of Jerusalem made by them together with high officials (VII.3 = Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 247).

²⁶ On the most important vote the Egyptian were allowed to abstain in order to consult their patriarch. Bishops from elsewhere than Egypt too had shown in the debate that they thoroughly disagreed with the proposition, but this did not stop them from joining in the acclamation (IV.60-62 = Gaddis and Price, vol. 2, p. 153). But the Egyptians never signed. A general survey of the rivalry of the two great eastern sees: Philippe Blandeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople*, Rome 2006.

²⁷ *Acta of Chalcedon* XVI, 18-46 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, pp. 86-91).

Jerusalem was made patriarch of the three provinces of Palestine, which as part of the diocese of Oriens had previously been subject to the patriarch of Antioch.

The Pope was concerned above all to maintain the primacy of the Roman see. That is why Pope Leo approved the theological decisions of the Council, which had already approved the *Tome* of Leo, Pope Leo's letter to bishop Flavian of Constantinople explaining his rejection of the teachings of Eutyches. What Pope Leo rejected was the 28th canon of the Council which defined the privileges of the bishop of Constantinople.²⁸ The item attacked by Leo was not the statement of the primacy of Constantinople in the East, but the formal assertion of the right of the bishop of Constantinople to consecrate the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria.²⁹ In other words the Pope presented himself as concerned to prevent any infringement of the rights of the two ancient patriarchates. Pope Leo's protests were ignored. However the episode marked a stage in a long term development. The Church in the West and the Church of the emperor in the East were drifting apart, even though they both upheld a dyophysite theology.³⁰

In a sense every bishop represented the people of the city which had elected him.³¹ However the assembled bishops at the great synods of the fifth century did not speak and vote as spokesmen of their cities, but rather as members of a diocesan group. In the reports of the debates the names of a few speakers, above all of the bishops of provincial capitals, occur again and again. At Chalcedon the bishops of the dioceses of Oriens, Pontus, Asia and Thrace favoured a two-natured Christology, as did the two western bishops, who attended as delegates of the Pope. The one-natured Christology was strongly upheld by the bishops of Egypt, led by Dioscorus bishop of Alexandria. The bishops of Illyricum and Palestine changed sides from monophysite to dyophysite in the course of the conference. The bulk of the bishops merely expressed or withheld consent. It looks as if the bishops of a diocese had agreed in advance who their spokesmen would be, and the positions they would take at the meetings of the council. The fact that most of the bishops were quite ready to reverse their opinions to match those of a new emperor, might suggest that the majority of bishops were motivated by worldly ambition, but it is perhaps equally likely that the bishops of the many smaller cities thought that the abstract issues debated at the councils were simply not relevant to their pastoral work.

²⁸ See the introduction to the report of the Sixteenth Session in Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, pp. 67-73.

²⁹ See letters of Pope Leo among 'Documents after the Council', Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, pp. 167-8, nos. 9, 10, 12, 13.

³⁰ See comments of Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, Appendix 2, pp. 202-03; F. Hofmann, 'Der Kampf der Päbste um Konzil und Dogma von Chalcedon von Leo dem Grossen bis Hormisdas (451-519)', in Grillmeier und Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalcedon*, vol. 2, pp. 13-94. On developments in the West see articles in Claire Sotinel, *Church and Society in Late Antiquity and Beyond*, Ashgate: Variorum Series, 2010 and particularly 'Council, emperor and bishop: authority and orthodoxy in the Three Chapters controversy', *ibid.*, pp. 1-26.

³¹ A.H.M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire 284-602*, Oxford 1964, vol. 2, pp. 915-20.

The Essential Role of the Emperor and His Officials

If we look at the Council of Chalcedon as a political assembly, the role of the government was performed by the emperor and his chief officials. The emperor had convoked the Council, and he had largely decided the agenda. Before the end of the sixth session Marcian proposed three 'articles' which he claimed were more fittingly enacted by the Council than by imperial laws, though they were obviously highly relevant to the secular government's task of maintaining public order.³² The most important of the three laid down rules governing the behavior of monks, who had been causing disorder and disruption. Henceforth no new monasteries were to be established in cities without the permission of the bishop, or on a country estate without the permission of the owner. Monks were to be subject to bishops, and not to cause annoyance either in ecclesiastical or in secular affairs. Monks were not to become lessees or administrators of estates.³³ The dramatic growth of monasticism had created a new power in the countryside which it was clearly in the interest of the secular authorities to control. This was of course an interest which bishops shared with the secular authorities, for the activities of monks had become a very serious public order problem.³⁴ At the same time monks enjoyed enormous prestige among country folk, and not only among country folk. It was obviously very desirable that measures to discipline these holy men should have the backing of the Church. The last sessions of the Council were thus concerned with judicial business condemning or absolving individual bishops in the light of the decision acclaimed in the sixth session, and with other business which the emperor had insisted that they must discuss.³⁵ The bishops actually wanted to go home, but the emperor insisted that they must stay and take these decisions.³⁶

The manner in which the debate had been carried on made it inevitable, that even though the debate was religious and among bishops, the emperor and high officials of his government played an essential role, in these assemblies.³⁷ The minutes (*acts*) of Chalcedon record that a committee of high lay officials was present at every meeting,³⁸

³² *Acta* VI.16 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 241-42).

³³ *Ibid.* VI 6.16-18 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 242).

³⁴ *Ibid.* V.34 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 203-04); H. Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchlichpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalcedon (431-519)', in Grillmeyer and Bacht, vol. 2, pp. 193-314.

³⁵ Session VIII, reinstatement of Theodoret; Session IX and X, case of Ibas of Edessa; Session X, Ephesus II annulled; Sessions XI and XII, filling the see of Ephesus; Session XIII, dispute between bishops of Nicomedia and Nicaea; session XIV, rival claims to see of Perrhe in Syria Euphratensis; Sessions XV-XVI, the most significant of these late sessions in the long term: the ranking of Rome and Constantinople.

³⁶ *Acta of Chalcedon* VI.23 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 243).

³⁷ Roland Delmaire, 'Les dignitaires laïques au concile de Chlcédoine', *Byzantion* 54 (1984), pp. 141-75.

³⁸ Price and Gaddis, vol. 1, p. 41, n. 154; 19 officials at the first session, 18 at the second, 38 at the sixth. See also R. Haacke, 'Die kaiserliche Politik in den Auseinandersetzungen um Chalcedon', in Grillmeyer und Bacht, vol. 2, pp. 95-177. Now H. Amirav, *Authority and Performance, Societal Perspectives on the Council of Chalcedon*, Vandenberg and

and that a general, the *magister militum* Anatolius, was not only present at almost every meeting, but also acted in effect as chairman. He intervened in debates, decided what was relevant, and tried to hold the balance between conflicting parties. At crucial moments the officials consulted the emperor.³⁹ The aim of the government was to restore unity. As good Christians the officials were also genuinely concerned to preserve unity of the Church, but in their secular role it was their duty to promote unity, and law and order in the provinces. It is likely that without pressure from the presiding officials the bishops would not have been able to reach any unanimous decisions at all.

The emperors distanced themselves from the actual debates. Theodosius II had not at all attended Ephesus II. Marcian was present at only a single session of Chalcedon, but that was the session which was intended to be the most important of all, the session at which the new explanation of the faith was to be acclaimed.⁴⁰ However, whether the emperor was present or not, his known views were the decisive factor in the outcome of these debate. Marcian, like Theodosius II before him, and indeed like most of the Christian emperors since Constantine,⁴¹ was convinced that the Church must remain united by the universal acceptance of a shared definition of the faith. But unlike his predecessor he favoured a two nature theology. Marcian and his ministers were quite aware of the strength of the opposition to this view in the East, and so they used their influence to achieve what they thought was a reasonable compromise. They guided the council to accept a definition which had elements of both views,⁴² and accompanied this with a condemnation of both Nestorius and Eutyches, as the originators of the two views which the council rejected. At Chalcedon, as at earlier Church councils, it was the view of the emperor that prevailed, but this did not mean that the controversy was settled.⁴³ The succession of Anastasius brought another reversal, because the new emperor favoured the one-nature theology. Then Justin I, his successor, favoured and enforced the dyophysite theology, and this remained the theology upheld by his successors.

Ruprecht: Göttingen 2015. E. Rebillard and C. Sotinel (eds.), 'Les frontières du profane dans l'antiquité tardive', Rome: École Française 2010.

³⁹ *Acta of Chalcedon*: I.26 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 1, p. 134); *Acta* IV, 14 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 147); IV.88 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 151); IV.113 (Price and Gaddis, p. 163); V.21-22 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 199); VI, passim (Price and Gaddis, pp. 215-43); VII.3 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 247); IX.4 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, p. 254); XI.4ff (Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, pp. 5-6); XIII.3 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, p. 26; XIV.3 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, p. 38).

⁴⁰ VI.4-7, 10, 16 (Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 215-16, 240-1). The overall decisive influence of Theodosius II is demonstrated by Hugh Elton, 'Imperial politics at the court of Theodosius II', in Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski, *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, Farnham: Ashgate 2009, pp. 133-42.

⁴¹ A.H.M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, pp. 94-5 (Constantine), pp. 166-7 (Theodosius I), pp. 285-7, 296-7 (Justinian).

⁴² On the compromise in the final draft see Price and Gaddis vol. 1, pp. 71-5 and vol. 2, pp. 189-90: "The definition attempted to take the sting out of the assertion of the two natures in Christ... by expressing it in language taken from Cyril, and placing it in the context of a strong assertion of Christ's oneness"; cf. the compact summary of G. Bardy in ch. 6 of A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'Église*, vol. IV, pp. 228-40, on p. 240.

⁴³ For the aftermath of Chalcedon see Philip Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople*, Rome 1959.

Theodosius II and Marcian, Anastasius and Justin I were all pious Christians. All wanted to achieve unity of correct belief among all Christians. They were also conscientious rulers concerned to maintain the unity of the Empire. The religious and the secular objectives might seem to be complementary, both aiming at unity. In fact they were not, because while political unity can be achieved by give and take and compromise, doctrinal unity could not be achieved in this way, or at least only to a very limited extent. Certainly the officials tried to get doctrinal compromises accepted, but divisions were too deep for compromise. Because pressure to conform to the view favored by the administration had been very great, bishops acclaimed decisions at the council, which they would reject when they returned to their sees.

After Chalcedon

That the compromises of Chalcedon did not satisfy everybody in the eastern provinces soon became apparent. In Palestine the monks drove out Juvenal bishop of Jerusalem, and had one Theodorus consecrated in his stead, whereupon Marcian and Pulcheria reinstated Juvenal by force. At Alexandria, Proterius the Chalcedonian, successor of Dioscorus, was lynched. Egypt continued to honour the memory of Dioscorus who had been deposed at Chalcedon, and remained firmly miaphysite. In the east discontent became more widespread, and in 482 the emperor Zeno tried to reconcile the conflicting views with the Henoticon which neither endorsed nor condemned Chalcedon, and was promptly rejected by both sides. Rome went as far as to break with Constantinople because of its failure to uphold Chalcedon to which Rome and the West were now firmly committed.

With Athanasius (491-518) the Empire again had an emperor who personally favored a miaphysite theology. During the early part of his reign he treated the two tendencies fairly even-handedly, but he then came under the influence of a remarkably gifted monk called Severus, who was developing a consistent miaphysite theology.⁴⁴ The emperor's support got Severus elected patriarch of Antioch in 512. Severus immediately proceeded to call a conference of bishops and monks of his patriarchate, and asked it to denounce both the Tome of Leo and Chalcedon. The assembled bishops and monks did as he asked, with only the monks of Syria II and most of the monks of Palestine abstaining. In the following year (514) he held a Synod of bishops of his patriarchate at Tyre which annulled the Council of Chalcedon. It is surely significant that on the subject of the definition of the deity, the central dogmatic issue of the age, very many bishops, probably the majority, were ready to change their dogmatic commitment to Chalcedon for that of the emperor. But once again the unity broke up after the conference, when the bishops of Syria II turned against Severus and his theology.⁴⁵

By now division was too deep to be ended by the emperor favouring one side or the other. Towards the end of his reign Anastasius had to make concessions to the

⁴⁴ Frédéric Alpi, *La Route Royale, Sévère d'Antioche et les églises d'Orient 512—518*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 188, Paris 2010; Pauline Allen, *Severus of Antioch*, London, Routledge 2004.

⁴⁵ Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, pp. 228-9.

dyophysites,⁴⁶ and Justin I his successor reversed Anastasius' religious policy to become a strong upholder of dyophysite theology, which his government proceeded to enforce in the principal town.⁴⁷ Upholders of the miaphysite theology were expelled from cities, and there were martyrs. This policy was maintained during the early years of Justin's successor Justinian, although Justinian did make a number of serious but unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the two theologies.⁴⁸

The reigns of Justin and Justinian represent a turning point in the controversy. Up to then the miaphysites had remained within the single Church. They might strive get somebody who represented their view elected bishop locally, and they certainly also wanted their view to be accepted as the only true view of Christ by the Church as a whole. Under Anastasius they had come close to achieving of that objective, while Severus of Antioch had even encouraged the consecration of explicitly miaphysite bishops in a number of cities across the Persian frontier.⁴⁹ Then, in the 530 and 540, John of Tella and subsequently James Bar'adai proceeded to create a separate miaphysite hierarchy.⁵⁰ There were repeated tempts to reconcile the two parties but they were unsuccessful. The imperial and ecclesiastical ideal of one emperor, one Church, could not be restored.

Regional Factors Frustrate Ecclesiastical Unity: The Case of Syria

It is certainly a considerable simplification to see these doctrinal disputes as nothing more than conflicts between rival factions of bishops.⁵¹ These divisions were so passionate and so difficult to settle because they were rooted in the opinions of lay people, whose divergent views had a regional basis.⁵² The fact that local and historical factors helped to determine whether a region opted for a miaphysite or a dyophysite theology did not of course prevent the chosen doctrine from being sincerely, and often passionately, held. Precisely why certain areas preferred the dyophysite theology while

⁴⁶ Frend, *ibid.*, pp. 231-2.

⁴⁷ Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, pp. 233-54; Price and Gaddis, vol. 1, pp. 53-4.

⁴⁸ P. Gray, *The Defence of Chalcedon in the East 45-533*, Leiden 1979; R. Price, *The Acts of Constantinople of 553, with Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy*, Liverpool 2009, vol. 1, pp. 7-16.

⁴⁹ Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, p. 283.

⁵⁰ Frend, *ibid.*, pp. 284-8; A. van Roey, 'Les débuts de l'Église jacobite', Grillmeier und Bacht, vol. 3, pp. 339-60.

⁵¹ See the very interesting study: Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People, Social Networks and Religious Conflicts in Late Roman Syria*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2011.

⁵² Well summed up by G. Dagron, 'Constantinople, la primauté après Rome', in F. Elia (ed.), *Politica Rhetorica e Symbolismo del Primato Roma e Constantinopoli (secoli iv-vii)*, Catania 2002, pp. 23-8, on p. 28, "Ce ne sont pas seulement les formules de foi qui opposent ou rapprochent les églises d'Alexandrie, Antioche, Constantinople et Rome, mais des modèles ecclésiologique conçus à partir d'histoires chrétiennes différentes, qui ne donneront naissance à des 'nationalismes' régionaux que beaucoup plus tard."

others preferred the miaphysite one is not at all obvious.⁵³ The motivation was certainly complex and varied from region to region.

This can be well observed in the history of patriarchate of Antioch, which was politically the weakest of the patriarchates; though intellectually the church of Antioch was a match for that of Alexandria.⁵⁴ The two-natured theology, a version of which was ultimately proclaimed at Chalcedon, had been developed at Antioch, and it reflected the character of that patriarchate, which covered two quite distinct Christian cultures, that of the Greek cities of Syria, and that of the churches of Mesopotamia. The early history of Mesopotamian Christianity is quite different from that of the Christianity of Syria. It was centered on the city of Edessa,⁵⁵ and the language of many of its worshippers and of its services was not Greek but Aramaic, which had of course been the language spoken by Jesus; and it used an Aramaic version of the Hebrew Bible. Mesopotamian Christianity produced some notable writers using Syriac, not ably the unorthodox Bardaisan (c. 154-222 C.E.), Aphraates (c. 270-345 C.E.), and most famous of all the poet Ephrem (c. 306-373 C.E.), a contemporary of Eusebius of Emesa.

At the same time Mesopotamian Christianity was also influenced by the fact that the Church of Edessa was subordinated to that of Antioch,⁵⁶ and that the upper class and the system of government of Edessa were strongly Hellenised.⁵⁷ The Mesopotamian technique of the Biblical exegesis, like that of the schools of Antioch and Alexandria, and indeed like that of Jewish exegesis,⁵⁸ was ultimately derived from the technique used by Greek grammarians to explain and interpret secular texts such as the poems of Homer,⁵⁹ a technique which had been adopted for the Christian exegesis by Origen and

53 E. Honigmann, *Evêques et évêches monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VIe siècle*, CSCO, Subsidia 2, Louvain 1951; E. Honigmann, 'La Hierarchie monophysite au temps de Jacques Baradée 542-578', CSCO Subsidia 7, Louvain 1954. Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, p. 250-1: plan showing bishops adhering to a monophysite (miaphysite) theology in patriarchate of Antioch 512-18; *ibid* p. 258-9: shows monophysite (miaphysite) areas c. 560. On the changing fortunes of miaphysitism and dyophysitism in Antioch itself see G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton 1961, in chs. 17 and 18, pp. 476-534. Palestine moved from being monophysite to being strongly dyophysite (Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, pp. 189, 223, 230 and below, p. 117).

54 D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, Cambridge 1982, 117-50; K.F. Wiles, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia as representative of the Antiochene School', *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol.1, ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans, Cambridge 1970, pp. 489-510.

55 On history of Edessa and its Church see *DACL* 4.2, 2058-2110, *sv. Edesse* (L.H. Leclercq: 1921); J.B. Segal, *Edessa the Blessed City*, Oxford 1970, esp. pp. 41-3, 100-04 on Jewish community; pp. 62-82 on legends and facts about coming of Christianity.

56 R. Devrèsse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche*, Paris 1945.

57 F. Millar, 'Greek and Syriac in Edessa and Osroene (C.E. 213-363)', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 32 (2011), pp. 93-111; *idem*, 'Greek and Syriac in Edessa; from Ephrem to Rabbula (C.E. 363-435)', *Semitica et Classica* 4 (2011), pp. 99-113.

58 F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the formation of Christian Culture*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 91-4; R.P.C. Hanson, 'Biblical exegesis in the early Church', *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Cambridge 1975, pp. 412-53, esp. pp. 412-14.

59 C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zur Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese*, Theophaneia 23, Cologne and Bonn 1974, *passim*; F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis, op. cit.* (n. 54), pp. 76-96.

Eusebius of Caesarea.⁶⁰ But Mesopotamian exegesis also had important local characteristics, for Mesopotamian Christianity had undergone a strong Jewish influence, which is reflected in the Syriac translation of the Bible.⁶¹

Mesopotamian exegesis is best known from Ephrem's exegesis of Genesis. This, as indeed the whole of his theology, is strongly focused on the unity of God. It would seem that his object was to counter the dualist theologies of Marcion and Mani, as well as the semi-Gnosticism of Bardesan, which had many followers in the neighbourhood of Ephrem's native Edessa and in northern Syria.⁶² This concern would explain Ephrem's distrust of allegory, and his emphasis on the literary meaning: for allegorical interpretation could be used, and were used, to read heretical interpretations into the strict monotheism of the Bible. The same concern probably explains his repeated insistence that God did not create the world out of preexisting matter.⁶³

Mesopotamian forms of ascetic life developed quite independently around the cities of Edessa and Nisibis.⁶⁴ These ascetics were recognized as a group within the community. They were men and women who led some kind of consecrated life after committing themselves to life long celibacy at their baptism. Their role was to be a model for the Christian community as a whole. Baptism was probably not restricted to men and women committed to life-long celibacy, but it remained the privileged route to salvation. Apart from these so called *Ihidaye* there was a more radical form of asceticism. The men who practised this lived in the desert or on mountains, and unlike Egyptian ascetics they lived not in buildings, but in the open or in caves.

The theology of Mesopotamia and Mesopotamian forms of asceticism influenced the theology and the asceticism of Syria. This is not surprising. Most of the writers of the School of Antioch had Mesopotamian links. Though the culture of Chrysostom was

⁶⁰ On Syriac's culture's threefold inheritance, Greek, Syriac and Jewish, see S. Brock, 'Syriac Culture 337-425', in ch. 23a, *CAH XII*, Cambridge 1998, pp. 708-19; also H.J.W. Drijvers, 'Edessa und das jüdische Christentum', *Vig. Christ.* 24 (1970), pp. 4-33.

S.P. Brock, 'Jewish traditions in Syriac sources', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979), pp. 212-32.

⁶¹ R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century to the Conversion of Constantine*, Harmondsworth 1986, pp. 277-80.

⁶² Theodoret of Cyrhus converts eight villages of Marcionites: *Ep.* 81; writes treatise against 'the madness of Marcion'; *Ep.* 82. On Marcionites and Jews in Mesopotamia and northern Syria see W. Bauer, *Rechtsgläubigkeit und Ketzerei*, Tübingen 1964, p. 27; M. Tardieu, 'Le Marcionisme Syrien: problèmes de géographie et d'ecclésiologie: 1. Arabie, 2. Cyrhestique', *Annuaire du Collège de France* 8 (1997-98), pp. 596-605.

C.W. Mitchell, A.A. Bevan and F.C. Burkitt (eds.), *St Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan*, 2 vols., London 1912 and 1921.

⁶³ In E.G. Matthews, J.P. Amram and K.Mc. Vey, translation of Ephrem, *Commentary on Genesis*, Washington 1994, pp. 49-50, Prologue 4; Section 1.2; 3.2; 5.1-2; 14; 15.1-2: insistence against followers of Bardaisan, Marcionites and Manichaeans, that matter did not pre-exist the creation. 1.1: rejection of all allegorical interpretations of the story of creation in six days. 1.7: rejects the allegorical interpretation of the *wind* (or the *spirit*) of God hovering over the face of the waters in *Gen.* 1.2 as meaning the Holy Spirit. He insists that wind is simply wind.

⁶⁴ See S.B. Brock, *The Luminous Eye, the Spiritual World View of Ephrem the Syrian*, Kalamazoo, Michigan 1992, on pp. 131-2.

totally Greek — at least as far as he lets us know — Eusebius of Emesa certainly,⁶⁵ and probably Theophylus of Antioch,⁶⁶ were natives of Mesopotamia. Diodorus, was an Antiochene, but are told that he, together with Flavianus, introduced the antiphonal chanting of psalms, a Syriac practice, into the Greek liturgy of the church of Antioch.⁶⁷ The learned writings of Theodoret of Cyrhus are in Greek, but he was bilingual, and profoundly interested in the hermits of Mesopotamia.

So the school of Antioch represented a religious culture which combined elements of Greek Christianity with those of the Aramaic Christianity of Mesopotamia. The Mesopotamian insistence that God created matter out of nothing, its distrust of allegory, and insistence on the literal as opposed to the allegorical meaning of biblical texts is shared by the writers of the school of Antioch. Insistence on the literal meaning of the Gospel text was what led the theologians of the school of Antioch to adopt a two nature theology. However, in Syria the Antiochene theology was a diminishing force.⁶⁸ Unlike the bishops, monks were overwhelmingly simple men. They were more influential in the country than in cities, and it is likely that for many Aramaic was the first, if not the only language. But the ascetic ideal had a strong appeal to men of all classes, not least among intellectuals, like Theodoret and Severus of Antioch.

While the influence of Antiochene theology was declining, that of monasticism was growing all over the Near East.⁶⁹ Monasticism in Syria was above all a rural phenomenon. Up to the Islamic conquest only the dyophysite bishop of Antioch resided in the city. The miaphysite bishop of Antioch resided in a village monastery, and it was only under the Arabs that he could move into the city. For the Arabs thought that they could work with a miaphysite bishop, while a dyophysite bishop would inevitably feel allegiance to the imperial religion of Constantinople. In the hilly area to the east of Antioch where the remains of villages have been remarkably well preserved, in the fifth

⁶⁵ Sources on life: Socrates *HE* 1.24 and 2.9; Sozomen *HE* 3.6.1-7 R.B. Ter Haar Romeny, 'The use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac in Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis', in *A Syrian in Greek dress*, Louvain 1997, pp. 97-100; also 'Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis and the origins of the Antiochene School', in J. Frishman and L. van Rompay (eds.), *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretations*, Louvain 1997, pp. 125-42. Fergus Millar, 'Community, Religion, Language in the Middle Euphrates Zone in Late Antiquity', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 27 (2008), pp. 67-93.

⁶⁶ Robert Grant, *Theophilus, Ad Autolyicum*, Oxford Early Christian Texts 1970, deduces a Mesopotamian origin from *Ad Aut.* 2.24.

⁶⁷ Theodoret *HE* 2.19; see M. Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus und das antiochenisch syrische Mönchtum*, Zürich and Freiburg 2000, on pp. 73-4.

⁶⁸ According to Price and Gaddis, vol. 1, pp. 71-5: the essentially Cyrillian character of the Definition of Chalcedon reflects the widespread sympathy with the miaphysite position among the bishops.

⁶⁹ H. Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalcedon', in A. Grillmeyer und H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalcedon*, vol. 2 (1951), pp. 193-314. On social and political consequences of these religious divisions see: Wendy Meyer, 'Antioch, the intersection between religious factionalism, place and power', in A. Cain, N. Lenski, *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, Aldershot 2009, pp. 357-67.

and sixth centuries almost every village had a monastery,⁷⁰ and the theology of these monasteries appear to have been largely miaphysite.⁷¹ While the cities of Syria II appear to have remained Chalcedonian even in the reign of Anastasius,⁷² the monasteries in at least the north of that province also appear to have been Miaphysite. The layout of monastery and its church left them open to the local populations, and the monks were able to leave their monasteries to put pressure on dyophysite opponents in cities.⁷³ Monastic buildings in Syria II seem to have differed from those in Syria I in that they were totally enclosed. However the architectural planning of their monasteries does not necessarily reflect their theological allegiance.⁷⁴

It was a feature of Syrian and Mesopotamian monasticism that the monasteries were largely independent of the bishops. They exercised a powerful influence on the local population, more often than not in alliance with the miaphysite bishops of Alexandria, and in opposition to the dyophysite bishops appointed by the imperial government.

Religious developments in Palestine and Roman Arabia are particularly well documented. The monks of Arabia eventually opted for a miaphysite theology.⁷⁵ They were probably influenced by their patrons the miaphysite Ghassanids, whose choice of a Christianity distinct from that of the emperor is perhaps comparable to the choice Arianism by the Goths. It is however not the case that the monks of the East inevitably became miaphysites. The monks of Palestine⁷⁶ for a time favoured the miaphysite theology. At the *Latrocinium* of 449, and early in the council of Chalcedon Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, was strongly miaphysite, and indeed one of the leaders of that tendency. However he changed sides in the course of the Synod — as some thought, because he hoped to be rewarded with the title and office patriarch⁷⁷ — as indeed he was. But the monks of Palestine remained miaphysite, and indeed briefly⁷⁸ succeeded in expelling Juvenal, and installing a miaphysite bishop. But eventually, after 490, most of the monasteries of Palestine had returned to the dyophysite Christianity of the emperor and the West.

⁷⁰ Listed in Georges Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord. Le Massif du Bélus à l'Époque Romaine*, vol. 3, Paris 1958, pp. 56-106.

⁷¹ A. Caquot, 'Les Couvents du Massif Calcaire dans quatre Lettres Monophysites du VI^e Siècle (AD 567 & 568)', in G. Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord*, vol. 3 (1958), pp. 63-83.

⁷² W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge 1972, pp. 248-9 and 250, fig. 1.

⁷³ P. Escola, *Monachisme et église, le monachisme Syrien du IV^e au VII^e siècle*, Paris 1999, ch. 9, 'Les moines dans les conflits ecclésiastique', pp. 347-94.

⁷⁴ Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord*, vol. 1 (1953), pp. 173-82; J. Pourdrin, *Les Couvents Paléochrétiens de la Apamène*, Paris 1990, p. 274.

⁷⁵ Robert Hoyland, 'Late Roman Provincia Arabia, Monophysite Monks and Arab tribes', SEM Class 2 (2009), pp. 117-39.

⁷⁶ John Binns, *Ascetics as Ambassadors of Christ, the Monasteries of Palestine 314-631*, Oxford 1994. R.M. Price and J. Binns (eds.), *Cyril of Scythopolis, Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, Kalamazoo 1991.

⁷⁷ E. Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), pp. 209-79.

⁷⁸ AD 452-453.

Conclusion

Cynics might suggest that the debates at Chalcedon, and at the preceding councils have little to do with religion and that the issues were essentially power political. This was not the case. It is clear that the Alexandrian theology as explained by Cyril did have considerable appeal all over the East, even among the bishops who eventually followed the imperial lead, and accepted the decisions of Chalcedon.⁷⁹ The issues dividing the synod and discussed at the synod were genuinely theological and the important debates were about problems of theology. These problems were then — and would still be today — highly appropriate for debate among bishops, as they are for of academics. The bishops however played a double role that of politicians as well as that of theologians. So the differences that the Councils were summoned to settle were in fact only partly theological.

Yet Schor was surely wrong to see in the debates of Chalcedon as essentially the conflict between two systems of patronage.⁸⁰ The factors that made the controversy so passionate and irresolvable were much more complex. As we have seen they involved the diverging interests of the pope, of the three eastern metropolitans, and above all those of the imperial government. Underlying the disagreements of the bishops there also were cultural differences that between the Greek East and the Latin West and within the East between the traditions of Constantinople and Asia Minor, and those of Syria, and those of Egypt, differences which ultimately led to the coming into existence of nations and nation-like communities. This development has been convincingly traced for the Syriac-speaking communities of the Near East by Haar Romeny and the Leiden School.⁸¹ The fact that these secular differences were not admitted obviously made the disputes which they helped to produce much more difficult to settle, and in the end irresolvable. That the unity of the Church could not be maintained was one aspect of a wider phenomenon, the breaking up of the unity of the Roman Empire. Regional diversity was reasserting itself.

Appendix

Adam Schor has recently made Theodoret a central figure, in an interesting attempted to make the theological issues which were so difficult to resolve intelligible sociologically in terms of network theory. His book is a very stimulating attempt to explain the intensity and passion engendered by these disputes over verbal formulation of theological propositions, intensity and passion which are difficult to understand in today's world. There is certainly some truth in Schor's theory, but it nevertheless does not provide a full explanation. Theodoret certainly figured prominently in the early stages of the controversy, and he was turned into a hate-figure by the monophysites/miaphysites.

⁷⁹ That is why the final definition was drawn up, not by the assembled bishops, but by a committee appointed by the imperial government (V.22).

⁸⁰ Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People, Social Networks and Religious Conflicts in Late Roman Syria*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2011, see Appendix below.

⁸¹ Summarised by Fergus Millar, 'The evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church' (n. 2 above), pp. 51-2.

However one reason why Theodoret figures prominently in modern histories of the controversy is that his writings are a principal source for the history of the early stages of the controversy. This very prominence of Theodoret in the sources has in my opinion led Schor to assign to Theodoret a more active leadership role in the dispute than this extremely learned intellectual was actually able to exercise. He was after all only bishop of a minor see. He was also a very controversial figure who attended the first session of Chalcedon as a plaintiff, sitting apart from the other bishops. As a pupil of Diodorus and of Theodore of Mopsuestia he was a convinced upholder of the Antiochene tradition, and he was very reluctant to agree that the views Nestorius, and of the teachers of Nestorius, Diodorus and Theodore Mopsuestia, were heretical. He was an ideas man, and a publicist, not a political leader. When the Council, under pressure from the imperial authorities, in the eighth session finally restored him to his see, many of the bishops were evidently still very reluctant to see him restored.⁸²

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⁸² See Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 250-1 introducing the eighth session. On Nestorius George Bevan, *The New Judas, the Case of Nestorius in Ecclesiastical Politics*, Late Antique History of Religion 13, Louvain: Peeters, forthcoming.