

Imperial Government and the Maintenance of Orthodoxy: Justin I and Irregularities at Cyrrhus in 520*

Fergus Millar

1. Introduction

In the summer of 520 reports reached the Imperial court in Constantinople of demonstrations which were said to have taken place in the city of Cyrrhus in the province of Euphratensis. Two clerics had allegedly taken a portrait of Theodoret, who had been bishop there between the 420's and about 460, had placed it on a wagon and made a ceremonial entry into the city singing hymns. When a newly-elected bishop had subsequently arrived, he was reported to have held an assembly in honour not only of Theodoret but of other theologians of the late fourth century or the first half of the fifth who were accused of denying Christ's true divinity, Diodore (of Tarsus) and Theodore (of Mopsuestia), and even Nestorius himself. In response, the Emperor gave strict orders, addressed to no less a figure than the *Magister Militum Orientis*, to have the truth of the matter investigated.

Why should such religious observances, conducted in a middle-ranking city, which was not even the *metropolis* of the distant province in which it was located, have been of such direct concern to the Imperial court? Where does this episode belong in the conflict-ridden history of the Greek-speaking Church of the fifth and sixth centuries? How and in what context did the orders issued by Justin (518-27) in response to these reports come to be quoted to an Oecumenical Council 33 years later? How did Justin's orders relate to the other religious policies of the early years of his reign? What light do the documents shed on communications between periphery and centre, on decision-making at the Imperial court, and on the enforcement of the Imperial will in the provinces? Finally, how far does the evidence available allow us to trace the working-out of major theological divisions within the framework of this particular Near Eastern province?

In short, the two documents concerned, of which a text and translation are given below, allow us to ask a series of questions about State and Church in the sixth century, and to suggest some partial answers.

* This article has been greatly improved by learned and helpful comments from Geoffrey Greatrex, Richard Price, J.N. Adams and an anonymous reader for *SCI*. Very valuable improvements were also suggested at a seminar in November 2008 in the Dept. of Classics at the University of Chicago, arranged by Prof. Cliff Ando, especially by Profs. W.E. Kaegi and Harm Pinkster

2. Background: The Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites and the 'Three Chapters' Controversy

To give only the most bald of summaries, the controversy which dominated the life of the Greek Church in the fifth and sixth centuries owed its origin to Nestorius, who as bishop of Constantinople in 428-31 had faced accusations of representing Christ as a mere human being.¹ Nestorius was condemned as a heretic in 431 at the First Council of Ephesus, and subsequently exiled, and the opposed 'monophysite', or 'one-nature', doctrine was triumphant at the Second Council, held there in 449. But in the following year the Emperor, Theodosius II, died, and his successor, Marcian (450-7), convoked in 451 a new Council at Chalcedon which was required to produce a new Definition of Faith which did incorporate the words 'in two natures'.² To the monophysites of the Greek world, almost entirely dominant in Alexandria and Egypt, and very strongly represented in most of the Near Eastern provinces, this reversal was unacceptable, both because it had improperly superseded the creed adopted at Nicaea in 325 and because the Definition was seen as heretical, in using these words. Nestorius himself, who was still alive and in exile in Egypt, was not rehabilitated at Chalcedon; but none the less, to monophysite opinion, the Council had been 'Nestorian' in character. Worse still, it had explicitly based its new Definition on the doctrines of the contemporary bishop of Rome, Leo the Great (440-61). And even worse, as things were to turn out, the Council had readmitted Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, the most prominent theologian on the 'two-nature' side, and Ibas of Edessa, both of whom had been deposed at the Council in 449. It is one sign among many of how alive these issues still were in the sixth century that a Syriac translation of those sections of the Acts of Ephesus II which concerned Ibas and Theodoret was copied in a monastery near Apamea in CE 535.³

We may leave aside for the moment the complex history of these divisions over the next six decades, to focus, first, on the last decade of the reign of Anastasius (491-518), which saw the predominance of two major monophysite bishops and theological writers in the Near East, Philoxenus, bishop of Hierapolis in 485-519, and Severus, patriarch of Antioch in 512-18, with firm support of their position by the Emperor.⁴ Then, with his

¹ For the wider background, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (1972); P.T.R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East, 451-553* (1979); H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (2001); S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: the Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (2004); R.M. Price, 'The Three Chapters Controversy and the Council of Chalcedon', in C. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (eds.), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene* (2007), 17; V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (2008).

² On Chalcedon, E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (henceforward ACO) II.1-6 (1933-68); see now G.E.M. Ste Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom and Orthodoxy* (ed. M. Whitby and J. Streeter, 2006), ch. 6; and above all the presentation, translation and commentary on the *Acta* by R. Price and M. Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon I-III (Translated Texts for Historians 45, 2005)*.

³ English trans. (only) in S.G.F. Perry, *The Second Synod of Ephesus* (1881). See F. Millar, 'The Syriac Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus, CE 449', in R. Price and M. Whitby (eds.), *The Council of Chalcedon in Context* (2009), 45.

⁴ See now F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (2006). On Philoxenus see esp. A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*

death in 518, came a sudden reversal by his successor, Justin; his reassertion of Chalcedon was propelled by mass demonstrations in Constantinople, and was eagerly welcomed by Chalcedonians in Syria, Phoenicia and the Three Palestines (which since 451 made up the independent Patriarchate of Jerusalem).⁵ Severus of Antioch had to flee to Alexandria to avoid arrest, and monophysite writers record the deposition of over fifty bishops in the Patriarchate of Antioch.⁶ As we will see, the episode in Cyrrhus, taking place in 520, falls at the end of the initial phase of the deployment of Imperial power to enforce orthodoxy.

A period of relative calm followed in the later years of Justin (518-27) and the first years of Justinian (527-65), and in 532 the Emperor even convoked a conference of Chalcedonian and monophysite bishops in Constantinople, aimed at settling differences.⁷ But a renewed period of monophysite assertion led to a reaction, and to the decisive condemnation of the main monophysite leaders at the synods of Constantinople and Jerusalem in 536.⁸ Even after that, however, major efforts were made to adjust the Chalcedonian position so as to rid 'orthodoxy' of the taint, derived essentially (see above) from steps taken at Chalcedon, of apparently having accepted as orthodox Theodoret and Ibas, and also Theodore of Mopsuestia, a major theologian who had died earlier, in 428. Hence there arose a new source of dissension, labelled at the time, and ever since, the 'Three Chapters' controversy — the attempt on the 'Chalcedonian', or 'neo-Chalcedonian', side to satisfy the monophysites by having the writings of Theodoret, Ibas and Theodore formally condemned.⁹ This topic formed the subject-matter of the Fifth Oecumenical Council, called by Justinian, which met in Constantinople in May 553. It was in the course of these proceedings that reference was made, and supported by the citation of a letter of Justin, to the episode in Cyrrhus in 520, 33 years earlier.

(1963). On Severus there is no complete treatment, but see the excellent introduction by P. Allen and C.T.R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch* (2004).

⁵ See A.A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First: an Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (1950), ch. iv: 'The Religious Policy of Justin'; on the dossier of anti-monophysite documents from these years which was presented at the Synod of Constantinople in CE 536, whose *Acta* were edited by E. Schwartz, *ACO III. Collectio Sabaitica* (1940), 52-106, see now F. Millar, 'Not Israel's Land Then: the Church of the Three Palestines in CE 518', in H.M. Cotton, J. Geiger and G. Stiebel (eds.), *Israel in His Land* (in press).

⁶ See the classic works of E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au sixième siècle* (1951); R. Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Église jusqu'à la conquête arabe* (1945).

⁷ See S. Brock, 'The Conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), 87 = *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology* (1992), no. XIII, and now also H. Leppin, 'Zu den Anfängen der Kirchenpolitik Justinians', in H.U. Wiemer (ed.), *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (2007), 187.

⁸ For the *Acta* of the Synods of Constantinople and Jerusalem (n. 5 above), see now F. Millar, 'Rome, Constantinople and the Near Eastern Provinces: Two Synods of CE 536', *JRS* 98 (2008), 62-82.

⁹ For this controversy, especially in the Latin West, see the papers in Chazelle and Cubitt (eds.), *op.cit.* (n. 1 above).

3. The *Acta* of 553, the letter of 520 and the Imperial Government

The Council met in eight sessions in May-June, and the detailed record of it which we have takes the form of a contemporary Latin translation, magisterially edited by Johannes Straub in *ACO* IV, and now the subject of an English translation and presentation by Richard Price.¹⁰ The issues at stake were complex, and involved very strained relations with the Pope, Vigilius, who was currently in Constantinople, and with a group of African bishops. It would be out of place to tabulate all this material here, but suffice to say that there was vigorous resistance in the Latin West to the idea of condemning the ‘Three Chapters’,¹¹ and that the bishops meeting in 553 gave repeated attention to the writings of fifth-century theologians, including Cyril of Alexandria, Rabbula of Edessa, Theodoret, and Caelestinus, bishop of Rome (C.E. 422-432), as well as to extracts from the *Acta* of Chalcedon and from laws issued by Theodosius II.

Since the focus of this paper will in the end be on the episode of local history in Cyrrhus in 520, it will be worth drawing attention also to a truly remarkable dossier quoted in the proceedings of Session V, on May 17, and recording events in 550. This relates to communications between Justinian and the bishops in Cilicia, in which they produce in immense detail evidence designed to show that, whatever might have been alleged, Theodore of Mopsuestia was *not* the subject of honorific mention in the diptychs of their churches (*ACO* IV, pp. 115-129). Both as an example of the extreme formality of the documentation which characterised the workings of government in the age of Justinian, and as another specimen of local history, this dossier has no peer.¹²

The case of Cyrrhus is presented in the proceedings of the seventh and second-last session of the Council on May 26. The entire session was taken up with an address to the Council, on behalf of the Emperor, by the current Quaestor Sacri Palatii, Constantinus, one of the major figures in Justinian’s government (*PLRE* IIIA, Constantinus 4), and with the reading-out of the documents mentioned below. Most of the speech concerns the negative attitude of Pope Vigilius to the proposal to condemn the ‘Three Chapters’, and a series of five letters written by Vigilius, and an oath taken by him, which are referred to by Constantinus, are then attached in full to the record of his address. At the end of his speech, however, Constantinus turns quite abruptly to a loosely-related topic, which the

¹⁰ J. Straub (ed.), *ACO* IV.1 *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano habitum* (1971); see R. Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553 with Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy* (Translated Texts for Historians, in press). I am extremely grateful to Richard Price for providing me with copies of the relevant parts of his presentation and draft translation in advance, and for permitting me to exploit his translation.

¹¹ See esp. the major work by the African theologian, Facundus of Hermiane, *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulum I-XII*, *CSEL* 90A, 1974, 3-398; J.M. Clément, R. Vander Plaetse and A. Fraïsse-Bétoulières (eds.), *Facundus d’Hermiane, Défense des Trois Chapitres (à Justinien)*, *SC* 471, 478-9, 484, 499 (2002-6), and the essays in Chazelle and Cubitt (eds.), *op. cit.* (n. 1 above).

¹² See the discussion by G. Dagron, ‘Two Documents concerning Mid-Sixth-Century Mopsuestia’, in A.E. Laiou-Thomadakis (ed.), *Charanis Studies: Essays in Honor of Peter Charanis* (1980), 19, repr. in *La Romanité chrétienne en Orient* (1984), no. VI. I owe my knowledge of this paper, as of much else, to the illuminating new book of Volker Menze (n. 1 above).

Emperor (as he says) had specifically asked him to put before the bishops, namely the episode at Cyrrhus, and how Justin had responded to it. Constantinus will certainly have addressed the bishops in Greek, so what we read here must be understood as a contemporary translation (*ACO* IV, pp. 186-7, para. 6, with some variation in conventions and punctuation):

Et hoc autem iussit mihi piissimus imperator ad vestram beatitudinem dicere. quoniam Vigilus religiosissimus et clerici eius frequenter ad piissimum dominum dicebant quod decet eius serenitatem statum ecclesiae servare, qui temporibus piae recordationis patris eius obtinebat, volens piissimus imperator ostendere vestrae beatitudini, quam et piae recordationis pater eius de his quae nunc moventur, voluntatem habebat, divinam epistolam ab illo scriptam ad Hypatium tunc Magistrum Militum Orientis misit vestrae beatitudini, ut ex hac cognoscatis quod piae recordationis patris sui voluntatem sibi traditam non tantum hactenus custodivit, sed etiam zelum circa rectam fidem amplificavit. cum enim quidam Orientales suggestissent Iustino piae recordationis quod clerici Cyrensis venerabilis ecclesiae Theodoretum imaginem currui imposuerunt et in praedictam civitatem psallentes introduxerunt, et Sergius tunc temporis episcopus collectam celebravit Theodori et Diodori et Theodoretum et Nestorii cuiusdam quasi unius de sanctis martyribus, litteras destinavit ad Hypatium Magistrum Militum tunc tempore Orientis, ut ea requirat et suggerat. quo facto eiectus quidem est ab episcopatu Sergius, et usque ad mortem in tali mansit infamia, sicut cognoscunt omnes quidem Theopolitani clerici, praesertim vero Dionysius religiosissimus episcopus Seleucia sanctae ecclesiae, et Hermisigenes, reverentissimus presbyter sanctae ecclesiae huius regiae urbis, et Heraclius, vir reverentissimus presbyter Theopolitanae sanctae ecclesiae, quod usque ad mortem Sergius permansit sacerdotio eiectus propter condemnationem tunc temporis contra eum factam.

With Richard Price's kind permission, this translation is essentially based on that in the draft of his excellent presentation of these *Acta*:

(6) The most pious emperor has ordered me to say this to your beatitudes. Because the most religious Vigilus and his clergy have often said to the most pious lord that his serenity ought to preserve the state of the church as it obtained in the time of his father of pious memory, the most pious emperor, wishing to show your beatitudes what the will of his father of pious memory had been over the matters that are now being mooted, has sent to your beatitudes a divine letter written by his father to Hypatius, then Magister Militum in the East, so that you would learn from it that he has hitherto not only abided by the will that his father of pious memory had handed down to him, but even increased his zeal for the orthodox faith. For when certain of the Easterners informed Justin of pious memory that the clergy of the venerable church of Cyrrhus had placed a portrait of Theodoret on a cart and brought it into the aforesaid city, singing psalms, and that Sergius, who was bishop at that time, had held an assembly (in honour) of Theodore, Diodore, Theodoret, and also of a certain Nestorius, supposedly one of the holy martyrs, he [Justin] sent a letter (*litterae*) to Hypatius, then Magister Militum in the East, ordering him to investigate the matter and inform him. When this had been done, Sergius was ejected from the See, and remained till his death in the corresponding ill repute as a result. All the clergy of Theopolis [Antioch], and in particular the most religious Dionysius, bishop of the holy church of Seleucia, the most devout Hermisigenes, presbyter of the holy church of this imperial city, and the most devout Heraclius, presbyter of the holy Theopolitan church, know that Sergius remained till his death deposed from the priesthood because of the condemnation pronounced upon him at that time.

As will be evident, this is a justificatory narrative designed to demonstrate that, in taking action against the memory of the authors of the ‘Three Chapters’, Justinian was in fact following a precedent set by his uncle and adoptive father, whose piety the bishops had been urging him to imitate. The narrative provided here abbreviates the record of the procedures set out in the contemporary *litterae* referred to (see below), but also goes beyond the content of the letter, first in affirming that bishop Sergius of Cyrrhus had in fact been deposed, and had never been restored, and secondly, in calling as witnesses three clerics from Antioch, Dionysius, bishop of Seleucia, Hermisigenes, presbyter in Constantinople, and Heraclius, presbyter of the church of Antioch itself.

The other details, or alleged details, of the demonstration and celebrations in Cyrrhus appear more concretely in the letter — *epistola* or *litterae* (see below) — addressed to Hypatius, which is the last item in a dossier of documents attached at the end of Constantinus’ speech. Hypatius had not merely been Magister Militum Orientis (or ‘per Orientem’), and thus the overall commander of Roman forces in the Near East, but was one of the key figures in the tumultuous political history of the period (*PLRE* II, Hypatius 6). The nephew of the Emperor Anastasius, he had been consul already in 500, had served many successive terms as Magister Militum, during one of which he had been captured in 513 by the rebel Vitalian (see below), and was to be executed in 532 after being proclaimed as a rival Emperor to Justinian during the Nika riot. The fact that the letter was addressed to him, rather than (for instance) to the civilian Comes Orientis, is very significant. As Geoffrey Greatrex has recently pointed out, quoting this episode among others, it is characteristic that Magistri Militum do play a role in addressing social problems, and have the function of intervening in ecclesiastical disputes.¹³ Greatrex suggests that this interventionist role may have served to alienate the civilian population from the Imperial forces, and hence may have contributed to the lack of popular support for resistance to the Arab conquests in the next century.

The letter which is set out below, followed again by a translation based on that of Richard Price, will of course have been written in Latin, but had been quoted to the bishops in Greek translation. What we read here may therefore be a re-translation into Latin, or may be a copy of the original, taken from the Imperial archives. As such, it offers an important and illuminating comparison with the numerous Imperial letters of the Late Antique period, as preserved in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the *Codex* of Justinian, in that these documents are themselves, almost without exception, letters addressed to individual high officials. Similarly, these letters, like that to Hypatius which is printed below, are generally extracts, shorn of the original address and introductory material, and often without the original concluding instructions for publication. They too also, in very many cases, owe their origin to reports or memoranda (*suggestiones*) emanating from particular local contents. What is different, however, about those preserved in the legal *Codices* is that they owe their inclusion in these collections to their also embodying some general principle. The letter to Hypatius, however, does not, but is concerned solely to give very precise instructions as to the steps which Hypatius is required to take. As such, it can be categorized in the official vocabulary of the time, as a

¹³ See G. Greatrex, ‘Moines, militaires et la défense de la frontière orientale au VI^e siècle’, in: A. Lewin and P. Pellegrini, eds., *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest* (BAR International Series 1717, 2007), 285.

‘divine pragmatic sanction’ (‘sancimus igitur ...’), and is a precise parallel to that issued by Justinian thirteen years later on the fiscal status of Didyma, which repeatedly refers to itself as a θεῖος πραγματικὸς τύπος.¹⁴ The letter of 520 was evidently also to be found in the Imperial records, but was not of a suitable character to be used for the *Codex*. Precisely because it represents a not very well-attested genre of Imperial communication, its precise formulation is illuminating for the procedures, style and ambitions of sixth-century government (*ACO IV*, 199-200, para. 12, again with some variation in conventions and punctuation).¹⁵

ITEM EX ALIA CHARTULA RECITATVM EST

Lecta sunt nobis gesta confecta apud Antiochenae civitatis defensorem, quibus inferebantur testimonia militum significantium, ut compendiose dicamus, quod, priusquam Sergius reverentissimus Cyrestenam civitatem accederet, quidam, id est Andronicus presbyter et defensor et Georgius diaconus, accipientes imaginem Theodreti qui undique inculpatur propter fidei errorem, currui imposuerunt et in Cyrestenam civitatem introduxerunt psallentes et ostendentes quod eiusdem illi sectae sunt. Sergius autem postea cum civitatem accessisset, et collectionem celebravit ipsius Theodreti et Diodori et Theodori nec non et Nestorii cuiusdam quem martyrem esse dixit, cum provincia nullum habeat martyrium huic appellationi conveniens. evidentem igitur mirati sumus primo quidem, si latuerunt tuam eminentiam talia gesta in civitate confecta, deinde, si, cum cognovisses quod factum est, non sine dilatione quaestionem fecisti negotii, maxime cum ibi degere Sergius diceretur et cum Paulo reverentissimo esse.

verum etiam lecta sunt nobis paulo post gesta confecta apud Cyrestenae civitatis defensorem, quae reverentissimi responsales Sergii reverentissimi adduxerunt, multorum voces continentia quod nulla umquam nec praedicata est nec facta est collectio in Nestorii cuiusdam nomine. super haec autem gesta et preces audivimus tam ipsius Sergii quam reliquorum episcoporum Eufraensis provinciae, qui repellunt ubique Nestorii nomen et declinare quidem eius sectam confitentur, consentire autem sanctis quattuor conciliis.

sancimus igitur nihil subtilitatis vel studii eminentiam tuam relinquere, sed convocare quidem sine dilatione Cyrestenae civitatis episcopum ibi degentem, sicut audivimus, trahere autem ad se milites etiam, qui testimonia in gestis Antiochiae confectis praestitisse inveniuntur de numero tertio Stabilisianorum, nec non etiam Andronicum et Georgium, qui ea quae de imagine dicta sunt, fecisse dicuntur, et singula cum subtilitate requirere. hoc est si, quod dicitur de imagine, factum est, et si psalmum cuius mentio gestis Antiochiae confectis inserta est, psallentes ad imaginis honorem praecedebant, et si Sergius reverentissimus, cum haec postea cognovisset, et clericos admisit et divinis eis communicavit mysteriis, et si collectionem Theodreti et Theodori et Diodori praedicari fecit aut celebrari concessit, et si hoc idem factum est et in Nestorii nomine, et omnem circumire viam tua magnitudo festinet, ut nihil subtilitatis possit latere.

¹⁴ See the masterly publication of this inscription, by D. Feissel, ‘Un rescrit de Justinien découvert à Didymes (1^{er} avril 533)’, *Chiron* 34 (2004), 285, and *Bulletin Épigraphique* 2006, no. 548.

¹⁵ For an alternative translation see P.R. Coleman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church* III (1966), no. 559.

ne autem eminentia tua nostram tantummodo timeret indignationem, sed etiam Dei iram, non piget nos et iuramentum ei inponere in nomine Domini et Salvatoris Christi Dei nostri, ad quem talia pertinent, ut ipsam veritatem undique requiras. et si quidem inveniantur milites per omnia falsa dixisse et neque pro imagine neque pro collectione vera dixisse, non tantum ea quae in Nestorium referuntur, sed etiam illa quae in Theodoretum et Theodorum et Diodorum, mox fortissimo numero eiciantur, in quo noscuntur militare, et omnibus tormentis eorum corpora crucientur. si autem veritatem in suis depositionibus dixerunt sive pro imagine sive pro collectione vel Nestorii vel aliorum trium, de omnibus nobis suggere, ut cognoscere possimus eos qui in veram et immaculatam quam et nos colimus fidem peccaverunt.

ne quid autem ex his quae nobis lecta sunt, tuam magnitudinem lateat, iussimus eadem gesta quae Cyri confecta sunt et ad nos relata, nec non rescripta eorum quae Antiochiae confecta sunt, tibi transmitti, ut post confecta omnia quae iussimus, iterum nobis remittantur ipsa quae in Cyro confecta sunt. pro hac etenim causa destinavimus Thomam devotissimum agentem in rebus et subadiuvam. *legi.*

DATA VII AVG CONSTANTINOPOLI RVSTICO VC COS.

LIKEWISE THERE WAS READ FROM ANOTHER DOCUMENT

There were read to us proceedings transacted before the *defensor* of the city of Antioch, in which was contained the testimony of soldiers who gave evidence, to speak summarily, that, before the most devout Sergius reached the city of Cyrrhus, certain persons, that is, Andronicus, the presbyter and *defensor*, and George the deacon, taking a portrait of Theodoret, who is everywhere accused of error over the faith, placed it on a cart and brought it into the city of Cyrrhus, singing a hymn and showing that they are of that same heresy. Sergius, afterwards, when he had reached the city, even held an assembly (in honour) of Theodoret, Diodore, Theodore, and also for a certain Nestorius whom he claimed to be a martyr, although the province has no martyrdom corresponding to this name. We were therefore naturally astonished, first, if such proceedings transacted in the city escaped the notice of your eminence, and then if, when you had learned what had taken place, you delayed investigating the matter, especially since Sergius was said to be residing there [in Antioch] in the company of the most devout Paul.

There were also read to us, slightly later, proceedings transacted before the *defensor* of the city of Cyrrhus, which the most devout secretaries of the most devout Sergius produced, containing the statements of many to the effect that no assembly had ever been proclaimed or celebrated in the name of some Nestorius. In addition we heard proceedings and petitions from the same Sergius and other bishops of the province of Euphratensis, who unanimously reject Nestorius' name, and declare that they shun his heresy, and assent to the holy four councils.

We therefore enact that your eminence should neglect no precision or zeal, but summon without delay the bishop of the city of Cyrrhus residing there, as we heard, and also bring before you the soldiers from the third cohort of Stabilisiani who are found to have given testimony at the proceedings at Antioch, and also Andronicus and George, who are alleged to have performed what was reported about the portrait, and to investigate with particular precision whether what was reported about the image took place: whether in honour of the image they walked in front singing the hymn of which mention was made in

the proceedings at Antioch; whether the most devout Sergius, when he had afterwards learned of this, both received the clerics and communicated with them in the divine mysteries; whether he caused an assembly (in honour) of Theodoret, Theodore and Diodore to be announced, or allowed it to be celebrated; and whether the same thing was also done in the name of Nestorius. And may your greatness hasten to explore every path to ensure that no detail can remain hidden. And, so that your eminence should fear not only our anger but also the wrath of God, we are not reluctant to make you take an oath in the name of the Lord and Saviour Christ our God (to whom such matters pertain) to carry out a thorough investigation of the truth. If the soldiers are found to have lied throughout, and to have told the truth about neither the portrait nor the assembly, over not only what relates to Nestorius but also what relates to Theodoret, Theodore and Diodore, they are to be immediately expelled from the most gallant unit in which they are known to serve, and their bodies are to be subjected to every torture. If, however, they have told the truth in their depositions about either the image or the festival, of Nestorius or of the three others, then inform us about everything, so that we can take cognizance of [*or 'sit in judgment on'?*] those who have sinned against the true and irreproachable faith which we too venerate.

Lest anything of what has been read to us escape your greatness, we have given orders that the same proceedings that were transacted at Cyrrhus and reported to us, and also copies of the transactions at Antioch, be sent back to you, so that, after all our commands have been fulfilled, the transactions at Cyrrhus may again be sent to us. We have dispatched for this business the most devoted *agens in rebus* and adjutant Thomas. *I have read (this).*

ISSUED SEVEN DAYS BEFORE THE IDES OF AUGUST AT CONSTANTINOPLE IN THE CONSULSHIP OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS RUSTICUS, V(IR) C(LARISSIMUS), CO(N)S(UL).

For the moment, we will be concerned only with the formal and procedural aspects of the document, and the light which it throws on the workings of the Imperial government. The place of this episode, or alleged episode, in the complex religious history of Cyrrhus and the province of Euphratensis will be considered in the final section below.

The letter is dated to 520 by the consulship of 'Rusticus', in fact the western consul of the year, whom most other evidence names as 'Rusticius'.¹⁶ The fact that only one consul is named derives from a very significant event in that year. Rusticius had been the western consul, and the eastern one had in fact been another of the major figures in the history of this period, Flavius Vitalianus (*PLRE* II Vitalianus 2), who as a military *comes* in Thrace in 513 had rebelled against Anastasius in the name of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Under Justin he had become a *Magister Militum*, and was known as an important supporter of the Emperor's Chalcedonian position. But in July of 520 he had been murdered in Constantinople, according to several sources on the orders of the Emperor's nephew, Justinian.¹⁷

The evidence on which Justin based his instructions to Hypatius consisted of two sets of *gesta*. Firstly, there had been proceedings before the *defensor* of Antioch at which

¹⁶ See R.S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S.R. Schwartz, K.A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (1987), 574-5.

¹⁷ For this assassination see G. Greatrex, 'The Early Years of Justin I's Reign in the Sources', *Electrum* 12 (2007), 99-113, on pp. 105-6.

some *militēs* had offered *testimonia* about unorthodox religious practices in Cyrrhus. There is no obvious explanation of why this procedure should have taken place before an Antiochene city official, given that Cyrrhus and Antioch were in different provinces, Euphratensis and Syria I. At any rate the Emperor expresses in very formal terms his surprise that no action had yet been taken (by Imperial officials) to investigate the matter. Then there were subsequent *gesta* recording proceedings before the *defensor* of Cyrrhus itself, at which members of the staff of the current bishop had asserted that no such events had taken place. Both of these documents had been read out before the Emperor ('lecta sunt nobis gesta'), as was the normal practice. We can take it that, literally speaking, no missives directed to the Emperor were read *by* him, but were always read aloud *to* him. So when Justin goes on to say that 'we have heard' proceedings and petitions ('gesta et preces audivimus') from Sergius and the other bishops in Euphratensis, this will not mean that they had appeared before him in person, but that these documents had been read out to him (Sergius is said to have been staying in Antioch with 'the most devout Paul', namely the current bishop, or Patriarch, of 519-21).

The channels through which this documentation had reached Justin are not indicated, and no individual witnesses are mentioned other than some soldiers. In the narrative of these events which the Quaestor Sacri Palatii, Constantinus, delivered to the Oecumenical Council in 553 (see above) he speaks of 'Orientales' as the originators, and uses the verb 'suggerere' ('cum enim quidam Orientales suggestissent Iustino'). *Suggestio* (ἀναφορά in Greek) was the standard term for a memorandum from an official to the Emperor.¹⁸ We might have expected some intermediate role on the part either of the governor (*praeses*) of Euphratensis or of the *consularis* of Syria I, or of the Comes of the civil diocese of Oriens (to which both the province of Euphratensis and that of Syria I belonged). It is worth noting that the *acta* of the Synod of Constantinople of 536 incorporate long and detailed records of two proceedings (the term used is πρᾶξις) conducted before the *comes et praeses* of Syria Secunda in 518 or 519, and designed to provide evidence for a dossier of complaints against the monophysite bishop of Apamea, Peter, which would be sent on to high officials in Constantinople.¹⁹ But if there was such an intermediate stage, conferring higher authority on the dispatch of material to the capital, it is not attested here. It is still most likely that the *gesta* concerned had been attached to a covering letter from some higher official. In that case, the letter as quoted to the Council of 553 lacked both the Imperial titulature and address to Hypatius (whom we know from Constantius' speech to have been the recipient), but also the normal reference to receipt of a communication from the official concerned.

This official was clearly not Hypatius, the Magister Militum, himself. As we saw above, Justin, in his first paragraph, expresses surprise at his inaction. In his second paragraph, setting out his instructions, he tells Hypatius to summon without delay the bishop of Cyrrhus 'residing there' ('ibi degentem' — meaning, it seems, Cyrrhus, rather than Antioch), as well as the soldiers who had provided *testimonia* at the hearing in Antioch, and the clerics concerned.

¹⁸ For this term as used in the fifth century see F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408-450* (2006), esp. 207-14.

¹⁹ ACO III (n. 5 above), pp. 92-106. See PLRE II Eutychianus 4.

Given the very high social and official rank of Hypatius, and the well-established convention by which, in the full original texts of Imperial letters to officials, a tone of (apparently) personal warmth was maintained,²⁰ Justin's letter is strikingly authoritarian in tone and content, requiring his addressee to take an oath by the name of Christ. It is very possible, as Geoffrey Greatrex suggests, that Hypatius was suspected of unreliability as regards the enforcement of Chalcedonian orthodoxy.²¹ Not only that, but precise directions are given for the procedure to be followed: the *gesta* from Cyrrhus are to be sent to Hypatius along with copies of the *gesta* at Antioch, while those from Antioch are to be returned afterwards to Constantinople (why this distinction is made is not clear). An *agens in rebus* and *subadiuva*, Thomas, is dispatched, evidently in order to ensure that the Imperial orders are followed.

It is possible that Hypatius is not even permitted to conclude the investigation on his own authority. If it appears that the soldiers had given false testimony, Justin says, they are to be dismissed from service and subjected to physical torture. If, however, Hypatius finds that they have spoken the truth, he is to give a detailed report ('de omnibus nobis suggere' — the cursory second-person-singular imperative is striking) so that Justin himself can judge the offenders: 'ut cognoscere possimus eos qui in veram et immaculatam quam et nos colimus fidem peccaverunt'. 'Cognoscere', followed by a direct object, might mean 'sit in judgment on', in the formal, legal sense. But, alternatively, it may mean simply 'take cognizance of'.

As we saw earlier, the document is cited only to demonstrate to the bishops in 553 that Justinian's severity with regard to heretics had a precedent in the piety of his uncle and adoptive father, Justin (for the significance of these measures as a precedent, see further below). So we do not know what happened next, either in Antioch or, perhaps, in Constantinople. All that is clear is what the Quaestor, Constantinus, records in his speech, namely that Sergius was indeed deposed and exiled. It is time to look more closely at the context in Cyrrhus, and more broadly in Euphratensis. Since the wider history of monophysites and Chalcedonians in the patriarchate of Antioch has been treated by major specialists,²² the discussion here will focus primarily on Euphratensis itself.

4. Cyrrhus, Euphratensis and Christological Controversy

Euphratensis, or Euphratesia, was a new province formed in the Constantinian period out of the northern and eastern areas of Syria (see the map on p. 131).²³ The territory of the former kingdom of Commagene represented a significant part of it, but it also extended westwards to include Germanicia and Cyrrhus, and a long way down the right bank of the Euphrates to cover Hierapolis, which became its *metropolis*, as well as small places along the river, Europos, Barbalissos, Neocaesarea and Sura, as well as Resafa, out in the steppe on the road to Palmyra; by the fifth century this was already an episcopal See,

²⁰ See e.g. Millar *op. cit.* (n. 18 above), esp. 20-5.

²¹ See G. Greatrex, 'Flavius Hypatius, "quem vidit Parthus sensitque timendum": an investigation of his career', *Byzantion* 66 (1996), 120.

²² See the works listed in nn. 1 and 6 above.

²³ For a very useful survey see A. Breitenbach, S. Ristov *s.v.* 'Kommagene (Euphratesia)', *RAC* 163 (2004), 233.

and in Justinian's time was re-named Sergiopolis. It was a not insignificant aspect of the social and cultural history of the Imperial period that this remote area, which was fertile in the north in the foothills of the Taurus, but very largely semi-barren steppe further south, should have contained at least thirteen Greek cities. It was equally significant that these same cities were the Sees of thirteen bishops, who could all speak and write in Greek. But, given that it bordered Osrhoene, the heartland of Syriac culture and literature, immediately across the Euphrates to the East, it is not surprising to find writers of treatises and letters in Syriac among the Euphratesian bishops. As we will see, writings in Syriac both by and about bishops from this region who were involved in the Christological controversies, as well as translations of their works into Syriac, are a marked feature of the story. But it would be quite wrong to explain the division between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, or monophysites, as a function of a linguistic or ethnic division between 'Greeks' and 'Syrians'.

Euphratensis gives every sign of having been an artificial creation, whose rationale is not explained in any ancient source. But it is a very important feature of the structure of the Church within the Late Roman system that it had been laid down from the Council of Nicaea onwards that each province should have one effective 'metropolis', and one only, and hence had one 'metropolitan' bishop with the right to approve the election of the others, and to summon provincial synods (or, if more than one city in a province came to be granted 'metropolis' as an honorific title, as did happen, the metropolitan powers still remained with just one).²⁴

Whether or not there was any feeling of a common 'provincial' identity, or any secular organisational structure which united the cities of the new province, the new system certainly conferred a potential sphere of common activity on the episcopal Sees of the province. Outside the province itself, the structure of the Late Roman state was relevant again, in that, with the creation of the civil *diocese* of Oriens, under a Comes Orientis resident at Antioch, the bishop, and later Patriarch, of Antioch, came to have a certain authority, not easily defined, over the Church through all the provinces of Oriens, at least in approving the election of provincial metropolitans, and taking action against bishops regarded as guilty of heresy.

It was perhaps just an accident, rather than the product of some profound features of a regional theology, or Christology, that the most famous 'heretic' of all, Nestorius, came from Germanicia in Euphratensis, and was plucked from relative obscurity as a monk near Antioch to become bishop of Constantinople in 428, only to have his strongly-expressed 'two-nature' conceptions condemned at the first Council of Ephesus three years later. 'Nestorian' was henceforward used as a term of abuse ('whoever says two natures is a *Nestorianos*'); but as time went on the attention of opponents of the 'two-nature' position tended to focus on the influence of the doctrines and writings of Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia in the neighbouring province of Cilicia II, in 392 to 428 (hence the anxiety about the status of his memory at Tarsus, still felt in 550, see above);

²⁴ See F. Millar, 'Tyre and Berytus in the Fifth Century: Metropolitan Status and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy', *Mario Mazza Festschrift* (in press). For a valuable study of the relevant hierarchical relationships, in a province which came under the Patriarchate of Antioch, see H. Elton, 'Ecclesiastical Politics in Fifth- and Sixth- Century Isauria', in J. Drinkwater and B. Salway (eds.), *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected* (BICS Suppl. 91, 2007), 77.

or on those of the earlier figure of Diodore, who had been bishop of Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia I, in 378 to 391/2.

Without it being necessary to rehearse in detail here the conflicts expressed in the Council of Ephesus in 431, it is relevant to note that the large majority which condemned Nestorius was led by Cyril of Alexandria in conjunction with representatives from Rome, and that Nestorius' supporters were led by Ioannes, bishop of Antioch, and were characterized as 'Easterners' (Ανατολικοί or 'Orientales'). Only a couple of paragraphs in the *Acta* of Ephesus record meetings of this minority group: on June 26, 431, there are forty-three names, of whom three come from Euphratensis: Alexander of Hierapolis, Meletius of Neocaesarea and Heliades of Zeugma; the same three names are listed again at an undated subsequent meeting. But when on July 17 the Cyrillian bishops met and declared anathema on Ioannes of Antioch and 33 of his associates, Alexander of Hierapolis and Meletius of Neocaesarea were again named. Heliades of Zeugma is not, but Theodoret of Cyrrhus is; he was to play a prominent part in the negotiations which lasted until the Autumn, when Theodosius finally came down on the side of Cyril.²⁵

Perhaps even more significant is the record of resistance over the next five years to the doctrines proclaimed at Ephesus, to the anathema on Nestorius and then to the formula of reconciliation which Ioannes of Antioch accepted in 432/3. The term 'record' is noteworthy here in three different senses; meaning, first, the exchanges which took place between a group of bishops centred in Euphratensis, but extending to Cilicia; second, the contemporary history of this 'resistance-movement' which was written in Greek under the title *Tragoedia* by a lay associate of theirs, Irenaeus; and, third, the abbreviated version of the *Tragoedia* which was produced in Latin by the deacon Rusticus, and printed by Schwartz in *ACO* I.4. Rusticus, the nephew of Pope Vigilius, with whom, as we saw briefly, the Fifth Oecumenical Council had been in systematic conflict, exhibits in his own person the intensity of the involvement of the sixth-century Church with the doctrinal disputes, and the historical record, of the fifth century. Accompanying his uncle to Constantinople, he was exiled to the Thebaid for opposing the condemnation of the 'Three Chapters' by the Council, and wrote a *Disputatio contra Acephalos* against monophysite doctrines. Later, after the death of Justinian in 565, and his own return to Constantinople, he produced his Latin version of Irenaeus' *Tragoedia* under the title *Synodicon*.²⁶ The purpose was clearly to provide for the Latin West a fully-documented record of the resistance in the five years or so after the first Council of Ephesus.

In doing so, Rusticus also preserved, however imperfectly, the outlines of a major work of polemical contemporary ecclesiastical history, which, even through the medium of an abbreviated Latin version, would deserve a place, even a quite prominent place, in

²⁵ See *ACO* I.1.5, para. 151 (pp. 119-24), the meeting of the 'Anatolikoi' on June 26; I.4, para. 95 (pp. 43-6), Latin translation of *acta* of subsequent meeting; *ACO* I.1.3, para. 89 (pp. 21-6), meeting of the Cyrillian side on July 17, and excommunication of Ioannes of Antioch and 33 named associates.

²⁶ See A. di Berardino (ed.), *Patrologia IV. Dal Concilio di Calcedonia (451) a Beda: i Padri Latini* (1996), 242-3.

the canon of Late Antique Greek historiography.²⁷ If we turn to the content of the *Tragoedia*, and to the actual events of 431-435/6, we find, first, that Irenaeus had quoted, and Rusticus reproduces in Latin translation, some 200 contemporary documents. Second, Irenaeus' story related primarily to a specific geographical area, namely Euphratensis and the two provinces of Cilicia. Thirdly, the documentation is largely made up of letters exchanged between the bishops from this area. The central figure in the correspondence is Alexander, the bishop of Hierapolis, the *metropolis* of Euphratensis;²⁸ and a prominent role is played also by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. This correspondence is noteworthy as illustrating the currency of Greek as the language used by bishops, even those from small places along the Euphrates, where we might have expected that Syriac would have come to play a more prominent role. (In fact, as we will see, works written in Syriac do begin to play a significant part at just this moment, but not in the story as told by Irenaeus). The letters quoted by Irenaeus cover the years 431 to 435 or 436, and give a very clear impression of a regional network centred on Euphratensis and its *metropolis*, Hierapolis. In summary, bishops of the following places appear in this dossier:

Euphratensis: Hierapolis (the *metropolis*), Cyrrhus, Samosata, Germanicia, Doliche, Zeugma, Urima, Europus, Barbalissus, Neocaesarea

Cilicia I: Tarsus (the *metropolis*), Adana, Zephyrium, Mallus

Cilicia II: Anazarbus (the *metropolis*), Mopsuestia, Castabala, Irenopolis (Alexandria and Rhodus are also mentioned)

This bare list, represented also on the map on p. 131, hardly gives an impression of the prominence of the metropolitan of Euphratensis, Alexander, who is the author or joint author of twenty-six letters, and the recipient of thirty others. The regional or provincial solidarity which is revealed here is very striking, but is not quite province-wide. The two southernmost episcopal Sees, Sura and Resafa, are not represented. None the less we can derive a strong sense of episcopal cooperation from, for instance, the letter (*ACO* I.4, no. 223) addressed to the 'Augustae' (Pulcheria and Eudocia) by Alexander of Hierapolis, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Abbibus of Doliche, Maras of Urima, David of Europus and Aquilinus of Barbalissus, complaining of oppression by the Patriarch of Oriens, Ioannes of Antioch (who had in their eyes betrayed their cause when he changed sides in accepting the formula of reunion with Cyril of Alexandria in 432/3). Such complaints were in any case in vain, and in 435/6 Alexander, Abbibus and Aquilinus were deposed, along with a list of bishops from other provinces (*ACO* I.4, no. 279).

²⁷ For some observations on Irenaeus' *Tragoedia*, which would deserve a much fuller study, see Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 18), ch. V, and 'Community, Religion and Language in the Middle Euphrates Zone in Late Antiquity', *SCI* 27 (2008), 67, esp. 77-80, and the Appendix 91-3.

²⁸ See P. Éviéux, 'Alexandre de Samosate. Un adversaire de Cyrille d'Alexandrie durant la crise nestorienne', *Rev. Ét. Byz.* 32 (1974), 253, a masterly paper which constitutes the best account of the ecclesiastical politics of Euphratensis and neighbouring areas in the first half of the 430's. For theological disputes at this stage see also L. Abramowski, 'The Controversy over Diodore and Theodore between the two Councils of Ephesus', in her *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought* (1992), no. I.

Map



Both Theodoret and Andreas of Samosata, among others, had by now compromised sufficiently to remain in office and avoid exile. Yet Andreas too was a prominent contemporary controversialist. We may note in particular his letter of 432 (*ACO* I.4, 132) to Alexander of Hierapolis, in which he reports that Rabbula of Edessa, having previously supported the ‘Orientals’, had now changed sides, anathematising (the memory of) Theodore (of Mopsuestia), and having a *codex* of his writings burnt — which we might well see as the first step in the ‘Three Chapters’ controversy of the next century. It seems however to have been in Syriac, not Greek, that Andreas corresponded with Rabbula, as Rabbula did also with another bishop from Euphratesia, Gemellinus of Perrhe.²⁹ These were indeed the years in which the dossier of material which would stimulate the debates which ultimately focused on the ‘Three Chapters’ was built up. Theodoret’s subsequent reputation as someone of dubious orthodoxy rested on his vigorous responses to Cyril of Alexandria’s XII Anathemas against Nestorius; Theodore had died some years earlier, but his writings were regarded on all sides as the basis of ‘two-nature’ Christology; and in the aftermath of the First Council of Ephesus, Ibas, then

²⁹ For these letters, preserved only in Syriac, see the texts in J.J. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi edesseni Balaei aliorumque Opera Selecta* (1865), 222-3, 230-1, and F. Pericoli-Ridolfini, ‘Lettera di Andrea di Samosata a Rabbula di Edessa’, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 28 (1953), 153 (text and Italian translation), with L. Abramowski, ‘Zum Brief des Andreas von Samosata an Rabbula von Edessa’, *Oriens Christianus* 41 (1957), 51. While the correspondence in *ACO* I.4 shows that Andreas could and did write letters in Greek, it is perfectly possible that his exchange with Rabbula was in Syriac, and that the surviving text is original, and not a translation. There seems to be no clear proof either way.

a presbyter at Edessa, had given a strongly critical account of the proceedings there in a letter, written in Syriac, to an unidentified addressee, 'Maris the Persian'.

It was to be the steps taken at the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 in relation to persons regarded as tainted with heretical, two-nature, doctrines, and then their reversal at Chalcedon two years later, which established the framework for the 'Three Chapters' controversy. The Council of Ephesus condemned and deposed Ibas (who in the interval had become bishop of Edessa); Daniel of Carrhae; Irenaeus (who had by now been ordained and elected bishop of Tyre, and had already been deposed); Aquilinus of Byblus; Sophronius of Tella; Theodoret of Cyrrhus; and Domnus of Antioch.³⁰ Not all of these cases were taken up at Chalcedon, and some other related cases also came into the picture. Theodoret had been reinstated by the new Emperor, Marcian, and it was at Marcian's order that he was placed before the Council for readmission by it. The profound and long-standing discomfort of the 'Chalcedonians' at the prospect of enforced association with Theodoret is shown at its clearest at Session IX (VIII in the Latin version) of October 26, when deep hostility was exhibited, and he only gained admission, finally, by explicitly anathematizing Nestorius. Sophronius of Tella, John of Germanicia and Amphilochius of Side were admitted on comparable conditions.³¹ Two whole sessions were then devoted to the case of Ibas, who was eventually restored, partly on procedural grounds and partly because (at least in the opinion of the representatives from the See of Rome and of Maximus of Antioch) he had been cleared of heresy.³² It is no accident that a Latin translation of the verdict of the representatives from Rome was quoted by Facundus (see n. 11 above) in his *In Defence of the Three Chapters* (V.1.2).

So far as our evidence reveals, this particular aspect of Chalcedon, namely its acceptance of persons who could be regarded as tainted, did not immediately become the subject of controversy (it is none the less very relevant that the 'Chalcedonians' themselves had been uneasy about Theodoret and Ibas from the beginning). This acceptance seems to have been made into the focus of doctrinal and ecclesiastical controversy by the first of the two great figures in Near Eastern monophysitism of the fifth-sixth centuries, Philoxenus or Xenaias, bishop of Hierapolis in 485-519.³³ His significance lies also in his status as the earliest bishop occupying a See west of the Euphrates whose extensive writings were all in Syriac. But before we look at some relevant elements in his own writings, it will be worth recalling how he is described in the (Chalcedonian) *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius, written at the end of the sixth century, in the form of a quotation from a letter written in about 516 by the Chalcedonian monks of Palestine to Alcison, bishop of Nicopolis in Epirus:³⁴

³⁰ See Millar, *op.cit.* in n. 3 above. See now also R. Doran, *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula and Hibas in Fifth-Century Edessa* (2006), 109 f., with a translation of the relevant sections of the Syriac Acts of Ephesus on p. 133 f., including (pp. 169-73) the 'letter to Maris the Persian.'

³¹ *ACO* II.13, pp. 7-11 [360-70].

³² *ACO* II.13, pp. 11-42 [370-401]. These very complex proceedings, with citation of earlier documents, can be followed best in the introduction and translation of Price and Gaddis, *op.cit.* (n. 2 above), 258-309.

³³ For the most comprehensive treatment of Philoxenus, see de Halleux, *op. cit.* (n. 4 above).

³⁴ Evagrius, *EH* III.31, trans. M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (2006), 168-9.

Xeniaias [Philoxenus], who is truly a stranger to God, with what objective and in pursuit of what enmity towards Flavian [Patriarch of Antioch, 498-511] we know not, but, as many relate, on pretext of the faith — began to agitate against him and to slander him as a Nestorian. When that man had anathematized Nestorius along with his ideas, he switched again from him to Dioscorus [Diodore of Tarsus must be intended] and Theodore [of Mopsuestia] and Theodoret, and Ibas... [three other unknown names follow]. Whereas some of these in reality propagated the views of Nestorius, others, although suspected, anathematized him and were laid to rest in the peace of the Church.

A similar picture of Philoxenus' campaign against alleged Nestorians comes in the account of the reign of Anastasius (491-518) given in Ps-Zachariah's *Ecclesiastical History*, an anonymous sixth-century continuation in Syriac of Zachariah of Mitylene's original *History*, written in Greek, which had stopped in 491 with Book VI. In Book VII.8, in association with claims that Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople (495-511), had celebrated the memory of Nestorius, whereupon various suspected Nestorians had been arrested, Ps-Zachariah reports that Philoxenus had earlier sent the Emperor Zeno [474-91] a defence of his beliefs, in which he had written against the school of Diodore and Theodore, and against Nestorius, Theodoret, Ibas, Andreas (of Samosata) and two others.

It will already begin to be clear that the blurred and controversial boundary between Chalcedonians on the one hand and followers or alleged followers of Nestorius on the other had become a very live and controversial issue by the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries — and therefore that a firmly Chalcedonian Emperor such as Justin I might indeed be alarmed by reported demonstrations of Nestorianism, even in a minor provincial city.

For Philoxenus' attacks on the Chalcedonians on the basis of their association with — or at least failure decisively to repudiate — theologians of Nestorian beliefs, we are not dependent only on external testimonies, but have his own assertion, in his *Letter to the Orthodox Monks of the Orient* (written in exile, after his deposition in 519), that he had taken up this position as soon as he had been installed in Hierapolis (in 485).³⁵ He had, he says, removed from the diptychs the names of Diodore, Theodore, Theodoret, Andreas, Ibas, and of Alexander of Hierapolis itself, who had been deposed because he had refused to join the other bishops in anathematizing Nestorius. He had also abolished the services in memory of Alexander which his congregation had been accustomed to conduct. Similarly, he says, he had removed the name of Theodoret from (the diptychs of) the Church at Cyrrhus, and had cancelled the services held in his memory. This is thus concrete testimony to the identification, on the monophysite side, of a list of clerics tainted with Nestorianism, stretching from the 'founders', Diodore and Theodore, to Nestorius' supporters in the 430's, to the two persons, Theodoret and Ibas, whose rehabilitation at Chalcedon was to have such fateful consequences. Moreover, we gain something quite rare here, an insight into the ecclesiastical history of Cyrrhus itself, in that Philoxenus, as metropolitan of the province, reports his having cancelled earlier forms of recognition of the memory of Theodoret there.

³⁵ See J. Lebon, 'Textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabbug', *Le Muséon* 43 (1930), 17-84, 149-220. Syriac text of the passage referred to on p. 207, Latin trans. on p. 218.

At the beginning of the second decade of the sixth century the monophysite cause achieved a brief period of dominance, with the election of Severus to the Patriarchate of Antioch (512-18), the continuing role of Philoxenus in Euphratensis (who was one of the bishops who ordained Severus — as was the first of two bishops of Cyrrhus, both called Sergius, see below), and the support of the Emperor, Anastasius. In his initial allocution (*prosphōnēsis*) as Patriarch, Severus pronounced anathema on the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo — and on ‘Diodore and Theodore, the masters of Nestorius, and Theodoret his companion, who shared his doctrine, and Andreas and Ibas and Alexander...’³⁶ This is not the place to explore the years of the domination of Severus, and we also hear little of Euphratensis in this period. When a sudden reversal came about in 518, with the accession of Justin I and his adoption of a firmly Chalcedonian position, the dossier of documents detailing the crimes of Severus and of Peter of Apamea, dating from the early years of Justin, which was later produced before the synod of Constantinople in 536, derives from Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, and does not embrace Euphratensis.³⁷ But it is clear that in Euphratensis, as elsewhere in the Near East, the years 518-520 saw a decisive break, described in the monophysite tradition as a period of persecution, in which significant numbers of bishops were deposed and exiled.³⁸ In Euphratensis these included Philoxenus himself; Sergius of Cyrrhus (who was replaced, confusingly, by another Sergius, a Chalcedonian whose punishment for Nestorian tendencies is the subject of the documents of Justin and Justinian, discussed here); Marion of Soura; Eustathius of Perrhe; perhaps Philoxenus of Doliche, who was certainly, at this period, a monophysite; and Thomas of Germanicia. Though our evidence on expulsions relates only to a minority of the 13 episcopal Sees of the province, this was still a traumatic reversal, vividly illustrated by the surviving letters of Philoxenus written between his exile in 519 and his death in 523.³⁹ It was, correspondingly, a moment of triumph for the Chalcedonians, led by the new Patriarch of Antioch, Paul (519-21), and supported by the Imperial authorities. It is therefore striking, and paradoxical, that it should have been at this moment that official action was taken to repress commemoration of precisely some of those whose names had been, for some five decades, the prime objects of monophysite denunciation.

³⁶ For the Syriac text and French translation of the *Prosphōnēsis*, see M.-A. Kugener, *Sévère, Patriarche d'Antioche 512-518: textes syriaques publiés, traduits et annotés, Patrologia Orientalis* II.3 (1907), 322-4.

³⁷ For a list of the contents of this dossier see F. Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 5 above).

³⁸ See Honigmann, *op. cit.* (n. 6 above), 66f. Compare G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis* II (1988), 782-802. For a discussion of the scale, and the limits, of the deposition of monophysite bishops in these years see Menze, *op. cit.* (n. 1 above), esp. 43f.

³⁹ There is no consistent modern edition of the works of Philoxenus. For examples of letters of his written in this period, see the *Letter to the Orthodox Monks of the Orient* (n. 31 above); *Letter to Simeon, Archimandrite of Tella*, also edited by J. Lebon in *Le Muséon* 43 (1930), on pp. 166f.; *Letter to the Monks of Senoun*, ed. A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabboug: Lettre aux moines de Senoun, CSCO* 231, *Scriptores Syri* 98, text; 232/99, French trans. (1963).

5. Cyrrhus in 520

The two Imperial documents recording the ‘Nestorian’ scandal in Cyrrhus are not our only evidence concerning it. Severus of Antioch, in exile in Alexandria since the Autumn of 518, had evidently heard about it from some monks to whom he replied at this time, and also from other sources, as his words make clear (his letters, written in Greek, survive only in Syriac translation):⁴⁰

As to what you say has happened in the city of Cyrrhus, this news has come to us too: indeed the minute [PRKSYS — πρᾶξις] has also been sent [to Severus himself, it seems] in which he who in a Jewish spirit holds the presidency [QYWMWT] of that city made a confession to the effect that Diodore and Theodore and the detestable gang of Nestorius differ in no way from the Chalcedonian synod ...

This letter is important, as giving a glimpse of a ‘Chalcedonian’ position which did not accept that ‘Nestorian’ doctrines were heretical, and hence that the Council should be dissociated from them. The prevailing official view, however, was quite different. Going back to the two Imperial documents (pp. 121-125 above), we find that it was alleged, first, that before the second Sergius had arrived at Cyrrhus as the Chalcedonian occupant of the See, two local clerics, Andronicus, a presbyter and *defensor*, and Georgius, a deacon, had placed an *imago* — which Prof R.R.R. Smith kindly tells me will be a portrait-bust — or more probably a two-dimensional portrait, but not a statue — of Theodoret on a *currus*, and had made a ceremonial entry into the city singing hymns. This demonstration was the subject of *testimonia* by soldiers stationed there, which were included in the record (*gesta confecta*) of proceedings before a *defensor* of the city of Antioch (as above, it is quite obscure why a *defensor* of a different city, lying in a different province, should have held this hearing). The soldiers are later identified as belonging to the third *numerus* of the ‘Stabilisiani’. For what it is worth, the *Notitia Dignitatum*, of more than a century earlier, does record that there were units of ‘Stablesiani’, including ‘equites tertii Stablesiani’, under the command of the Magister Militum Orientis; but unfortunately the relevant sections of the *Notitia* do not give the location where each unit was stationed.⁴¹ It remains striking that these soldiers should have been aware that such a demonstration was irregular, and needed to be reported to the authorities. At any rate this phase seems to have been distinct from the later one, when Sergius arrived to take up his bishopric, and was alleged to have gone considerably further, celebrating a *collectio* in memory not only of Theodoret, the former bishop of the city, but of Diodore and Theodore, and even of Nestorius, whom he declared to be a martyr. Here again, there had been a local official response, and proceedings had been

⁴⁰ Severus, *Select Letters* V.12, trans. by E.W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac version of Athanasius of Nisibis* II.2 (1904), 341-2; Syriac text in I.2, 384-5.

⁴¹ *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck, *Or.* 7, 29-30: ‘equites secundi Stablesiani’ and ‘Equites tertii Stablesiani’ (evidently the same unit as attested in 520). ‘Stablesiani’ is the more normal spelling. See M. Speidel, ‘Stablesiani’, *Chiron* 4 (1974), 54, and *RE* Suppl. XIV (1974), cols. 743-4. Neither work refers to the document relating to Cyrrhus. See now C. Neira Faleiro, *La Notitia Dignitatum: Nueva edición crítica y comentario histórico* (2005), *ad loc.*

held before the *defensor* of Cyrrhus, at which many persons had attested that no *collectio* in memory of Nestorius had even been announced, or had actually taken place.

What procedures followed, or were due to follow, on the part of Hypatius, as the Magister Militum in Antioch, or possibly also before Justin in Constantinople, has been discussed earlier (p. 127 above). As regards events in Cyrrhus, it should be stressed that the Emperor, far from simply assuming that these alarming reports were true, gives orders for the most stringent examination to be conducted, with severe threats to the soldiers if their testimony turned out to be false.

All that we know of the results of subsequent proceedings is what is reported in the speech of Justinian's Quaestor, Constantinus, in 553, who affirms — and cites the names of witnesses — that Sergius had indeed been deposed, and had spent the rest of his life in exile. What happened to the two clerics who had allegedly celebrated the memory of Theodoret is not recorded.

Like the correspondence belonging to the first half of the 430's (pp. 129-131 above), the works of Philoxenus and the documents retelling the scandal of 520 serve to call attention to the centrality of that northern and eastern Syrian region which was now separated off as the province of Euphratensis. But both the literary and the archaeological evidence for the 13 episcopal Sees of the province as they were in Late Antiquity is very slight — though recent excavations cast some light on Doliche and Perrhe⁴² — and the extensive site of Cyrrhus (like the dense network of villages in its territory in Theodoret's time) invites exploration.

A deeper knowledge of the social and linguistic history of this region would in any case certainly not provide any simple explanation of why support was given to either the monophysite or the Chalcedonian position, or to the 'Nestorian' version of the latter. Alexander of Hierapolis had stayed loyal to Nestorius to the end, while half a century later Philoxenus had been the prime mover in the aggressive monophysite movement which denounced Chalcedon for its acceptance of 'Nestorian' thinkers. The first Sergius had followed him, and been exiled, while the second Sergius had, as it seems, publicly celebrated the memory not only of the main 'Nestorian' writers, but of Nestorius himself. As a result, Justin's commitment to ecclesiastical and doctrinal order was demonstrated by the fact that, in the years after 520, two bishops of Cyrrhus, both called Sergius, were both in exile, but for exactly opposite reasons.⁴³

So the evidence does not allow us to do more than glimpse the complex social and religious history of the area, and its links to the neighbouring provinces of Osrhoene, Syria I and Cilicia I-II. None the less, it can be suggested that the reactions, both local and Imperial, to the demonstrations and liturgical acts which were reported to have taken

⁴² For Doliche and Perrhe see most recently E. Winter (ed.), ΠΑΤΡΙΣ ΠΑΝΤΡΟΦΟΣ ΚΟΜΜΑΓΗΝΗ. *Neue Funde und Forschungen zwischen Taurus und Euphrat (Asia Minor Studien 60, 2008)*.

⁴³ The first Sergius, apparently exiled in 519/20, later took part on the monophysite side in the discussions in 532 in Constantinople called by Justinian. See S. Brock, *op. cit.* (n. 7 above). Somewhat earlier, it seems, Severus of Antioch, himself in exile, advises the archimandrite of a monastery, who needs a bishop to ordain priests and deacons for it, to turn to 'the saintly Sergius, bishop of Cyrrhus, and to the saintly Marion, bishop of the fortress called Sura' (E.W. Brooks, *op. cit.* [n. 37 above], II.1, 178-9). Both of these bishops were also in exile at the time.

place in Cyrrhus in 520 are of very real significance, and might indeed have deserved even more emphasis than Justinian was to give them, in having his Quaestor recall them to the bishops at the Fifth Oecumenical Council of 553. For this was the moment when, for the first time since the beginning of the monophysite campaign to discredit Chalcedon on the basis of its acceptance of 'Nestorian' theologians, an unambiguously Chalcedonian regime had been in power in Constantinople, and, along with that, had submitted to the terms for reunification demanded by Rome. But the reaction, both locally and in the capital, to the symbolic message of actions reported as taking place in a distant and quite minor provincial city was striking in its urgency. Should we not indeed see this as the earliest indication that the monophysite case against these allegedly heretical and Nestorian theologians had prevailed even in the minds of their opponents? Whatever a few local enthusiasts or extremists might wish, the vindication of Chalcedon was not, from now on, to be sullied by association with these discredited names.

Oriental Institute, Oxford