

CHAPTER 5

A Geological Approach to Syriac Miaphysite Christology (Sixth-Ninth Centuries): Detours of a Patristic Florilegium from Antioch to Tagrit

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Patristic florilegia are paradoxical texts. On the one hand, they are very eloquent, as they often deal at length with clearly defined topics: on the other hand, however, they are obstinately mute, as they speak through the voices of others and seem to lack their own. Thus, although they do say much, and what they say is quite clear, what they intend to communicate through the voices of the 'old masters' tends to escape our investigation. Their intention is of course closely related to their historical context, which is difficult to determine, since the purely theological content of these florilegia remains far from factual history. They are mosaics, but in a way, they are quite the opposite of proper mosaics, as we cannot enjoy their overall subject and intention with one comprehensive glance; in order to appreciate the sense and underlying strategy of their composition, we must rather auscultate the fine junctions between the individual tesserae. This is also true in the case of a large florilegium of Christological content that occupies a prominent position in six manuscripts of the eighth-tenth centuries preserved at the British Library and in the Mingana Collection. In this chapter, I shall present a few fieldnotes from an on-going exploration on this florilegium.

The florilegium discusses highly technical topics such as: 1) the persistence of a difference between the natures from which Christ derives; 2) the exclusion of any duality from Christ; 3) the apology of the alleged novelty of the Miaphysite doctrine through a collection of patristic authorities, from Dionysius the Areopagite to the Cappadocians; and 4) an overview of the definition and the debates held at Chalcedon. A first exploration of the patristic materials of this florilegium, their relationship with the above-mentioned topics, and their complex itineraries through the centuries has led to some provisional results concerning the context in which they were originally collected and the circumstances that may have prompted the production of the florilegium as we have it now. The topics discussed in our florilegium were the core of a rather obscure Christological debate of the end of the sixth century, which, however, was crucial for the theological self-consciousness of later Syriac Mia-

physitism, namely, the controversy around Probus, a Miaphysite theologian who converted to Chalcedonianism in the 580s. Much of what is discussed in our florilegium, especially the “natural characteristic” and the removal of the duality of Christ’s natures, is already present in this sixth-century controversy.

These very topics resurfaced in an age of renewed polemics between Miaphysites and Chalcedonians, between the end of the Umayyad caliphate and the first decades of the ‘Abbasid rule. A precious source from the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century is the letter of a man by the name of Elias, who converted from Chalcedonianism to the Miaphysite faith. This letter, addressed to the Chalcedonian syncellus Leo of Ḥarrān, shows us that the discussion still focused on the same points concerning the difference between the natures in Christ and the exclusion of any duality. The authorities quoted by Elias to defend his Miaphysite options are the same as in our florilegium and are organized in a similar way. At approximately the same time, we observe how Nonnus of Nisibis and his relative Abū Rā’īṭah used the same florilegium we now read for their polemic against the Melkites.

After a presentation of the contents, structure, and aims of the florilegium, the chapter will move on to a contextualization of its gradual appearance between the sixth and eighth century, touching upon ~~all~~ the relevant steps, including the debates between Probus and the Miaphysites, Elias’ Letter, and Nonnus of Nisibis’ Christological writings. In the conclusions, I shall try and argue why, in that age, Miaphysite intellectuals felt the need to mobilise the resources of their metaphysical and theological tradition once again and to such an extent.

My exploration of this long story is necessarily partial and incomplete, for it is difficult to determine the exact production context of the florilegium, and it will perhaps remain impossible.

1 The Florilegium; Manuscripts, Content, Structure, and Aims

1.1 *Manuscript Tradition*

The Christological florilegium is preserved in six manuscripts.¹ Applying and expanding the sigla used by Albert van Roey and Pauline Allen,² the FLOS project is indicating them as follows:

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- 1 This florilegium, as well as others preserved in the same manuscripts, will be published in a born-digital edition by the FLOS project.
 - 2 Albert van Roey and Pauline Allen, *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century* (OLA 56; Leuven: Peeters, 1994).

- A *London, British Library* Add. 12154: a portion of the Christological florilegium at fol. 17^v–28^r;³
- B BL Add. 12155: Christological florilegium at fol. 32^v–53^v;⁴
- C BL Add. 14532: Christological florilegium at fol. 1^v–36^r;⁵
- D BL Add. 14533: Christological florilegium at fol. 19^v–37^v;⁶
- E BL Add. 14538: Christological florilegium at fol. 80^v–101^v;⁷
- M *Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library*, Mingana Syr. 69: parts of the Christological florilegium at fol. 1^r–17^v.⁸

All these manuscripts, and especially B, C, and D, are invaluable repositories of Miaphysite writings throughout the centuries, which include not only florilegia, but also authored writings from the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh centuries, of which we would have otherwise lost trace.⁹ Suffice it here to mention the *libelli* of the Miaphysite monks against Probus, and the correspondence between the Chalcedonian monks of *Mar Marun* and the Miaphysites, both of which will be treated or mentioned later in the present chapter.

The Christological florilegium opens the most fine-looking and probably most ancient of its witnesses, manuscript C (BL Add. 14532), which William Wright dated to the eighth century. This manuscript was conceived in a unitary way; it is called ܘܡܫܘܿܬܘܢ ܕܒܘܠܘܢ ܕܟܬܘܒܐܢ ܕܗܘܘܢܘܢ ܕܗܘܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܘܢܐ (‘‘a volume of demonstrations of the holy Fathers against various heresies’’). This title is repeated as a running title ~~on top of the first leaf of every quire~~ throughout the manuscript, which in its present form contains 221 leaves and originally must have included at least 24 quires. The unitary conception of the volume is further confirmed by the presence of an overall index in the last

3 William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838* (3 vols.; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1870–1872), 2:978–979.

4 Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:923–927. Here Wright did not notice the overlapping with the Christological florilegium with the same text in the other manuscripts, as he does in the case of C, D, and E. He even cuts the florilegium into two different sections (II and III), whereas they belong to the same florilegium.

5 Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:955–958.

6 Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:968.

7 Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:1007.

8 Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts* (3 vols; Woodbrooke Catalogues 1–3; Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1933–1939), 1:173–178.

9 An overview of these manuscripts as markers of intellectual identity for the Syriac Miaphysite Church, see Yonatan Moss, ‘‘Les controverses christologiques au sein de la tradition miaphysite: sur l’incorruptibilité du corps du Christ et autres questions,’’ in *Les controverses religieuses en syriaque* (ed. F. Ruani; ES 13; Paris: Geuthner, 2016), 119–136.

folios (fol. 218^r–221^v), which is unfortunately incomplete at the beginning and at the end. The entire manuscript is subdivided into relatively short chapters that are numbered throughout the volume. This numbering starts from **One** with the first chapter on the first page and goes on without interruption until the last one we have, number 334, as if the whole volume were occupied by a single text, which, however, is not the case. Manuscript C shares this characteristic with various manuscripts containing florilegia; the greatest part of D, for instance, is structured in the same way, as well as part of the huge MS B, BL Add. 12155, which bears the same general title as BL Add. 14532, ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ ܠܗܘܘܢܝܘܢ. However, C, B and D do not contain a single running text; several discrete units, i.e., different florilegia, can be singled out, configuring these manuscripts as collections of florilegia (but also of other materials). Four florilegia recur more frequently in the manuscripts and are constantly grouped together, although in slightly different orders; these are our florilegium on Christology, a second one against the doctrines of Julian of Halicarnassus, a third one on Trinity (of which a longer form has been transmitted by B; see Bishara Ebeid's chapter in the present volume), and a fourth one against Origen.

William Wright had already noticed the recurrence of the Christological florilegium in C, D and E,¹⁰ whereas he had not noticed its presence in A (which contains only a small portion of it) and B, nor had Alphonse Mingana noticed that the first 17 folios of M contain a substantial part of it.

Except for A, the order in which the three florilegia are disposed is the following:

- B Trinitarian (in a longer form) – Christological – Anti-Origenist – Anti-Julianist
- C Christological (with lacunae) – Anti-Julianist – Trinitarian – Anti-Origenist (partial)
- D Christological – Anti-Origenist – Anti-Julianist – Trinitarian
- E Christological – Anti-Julianist – Trinitarian – Anti-Origenist (partial, same extension as in C)
- M Christological (with lacunae) – Anti-Julianist (with lacunae); the Trinitarian florilegium may well have featured in the manuscript, which, however, is heavily mutilated.

¹⁰ Wright, *Catalogue*, respectively 2:955, 2:968 and 2:1007.

ܠܫܘܢܐ ܠܫܘܢܐ ܠܫܘܢܐ)”; in M, as mentioned, the beginning is missing altogether. Two of these titles, then, explicitly refer to the Christological and, more precisely, anti-dyophysite nature of the florilegium. Thus, not only its content (Christology) would seem clear, but also its intention (a Miaphysite refutation of opposite views). At a closer inspection, however, things are less self-evident than they appear. While the florilegium certainly deals with Christology from a Miaphysite standpoint, we must ask a series of questions. At whom was this polemic aimed in the eighth and ninth centuries, to which most of these manuscripts must be dated? Why was it conducted through this specific selection of topics and authorities? When precisely was the florilegium composed? Who are these dyophysites? Were they East Syrians or Chalcedonians, even though both were doctrinally the same from a Miaphysite point of view? In other words, what was the context that prompted the compilation of this florilegium and how did the florilegium react to that context? Our answers can only come from a close reading of the florilegium, proceeding with small clues to illuminate the larger framework.

2 The Themes

Despite the different distribution of the chapters in the various witnesses, it is possible to enucleate five main thematic areas in the florilegium. This presentation of the contents will concentrate on the first four sections, and especially on the chapter titles, as they are the privileged place where the compiler reveals the implicit narrative and strategy of the selection.

2.1

■ please supply title



The compilation starts with a section (chapters 1–23) devoted to a crucial topic of Miaphysite Christology, the so-called “natural” or “essential characteristic (or quality, or predication),”¹¹ ܠܫܘܢܐ ܠܫܘܢܐ or ܠܫܘܢܐ in Syriac, which distinguishes a nature or essence from the others by marking its specific features. This section is mostly made up of excerpts extracted from works by Severus of Antioch, especially his treatise *Against the Grammarian* and his three Letters to Sergius the Grammarian, where the topic was discussed at length. The main argument is that the union of the divine and human natures in Christ rules out any real division (ܠܫܘܢܐ) between the two natures; however, a real difference (ܠܫܘܢܐ) between the two is preserved precisely because their respective nat-

¹¹ See the next footnote.

ural characteristics do not get lost in the union. On the one hand, the difference protects the union from confusion: this is made evident, for example, by the excerpt from *Against the Grammarian* III.30, which makes up the entirety of chapter 16 of the florilegium (the title of the chapter, which is itself a quotation from Severus' excerpt, reads as follows: "The otherness as to the natural characteristic preserves the union unconfused and [at the same time] does not dissolve the formula 'one nature of the incarnate Word:'). On the other hand, difference does not imply division. This is an argument *par excellence* of Cyrilian and Severan Miaphysitism,¹² but what the florilegium especially intends to underline in its opening section is that precisely this "natural characteristic" is key to preserve a perceivable difference of the natures after the union. Some examples will serve to illustrate this point. The title of chapter 22 (entirely con-

12 It is the argument of property $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu \pi\omicron\iota\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta\tau\iota \varphi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$, or of the $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota$. On this argument, which was "inlassablement développé" by the Miaphysites, see Joseph Lebon, "Le miaphysisme sévérien," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht; Vol. 1. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1951), 424–580 at 534–552; Theresia Hainthaler, "A Christological Controversy among the Severans under at the End of the Sixth Century—the Conversion of Probus and John Barbur to Chalcedonism," in *Christ in Christian Tradition Volume 11: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604): Part 3. The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600* (ed. A. Grillmeier, T. Hainthaler, T. Bou Mansour, and L. Abramowski; trans. M. Ehrhardt; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 386–418, at 393–398. This argument was first put forward by Cyril in his *Second Tome against Nestorius* (11, 6) and in his first letter to Acacius of Melitene (Cyril's Letter 40), and further developed by Severus against the emerging neo-Chalcedonianism in letters to Count Oecumenius and Bishop Eleusinius, in his *Against the Grammarian*, and in his correspondence with Sergius the Grammarian, all of which texts are lavishly cited in the first section of our florilegium. The topic became crucial, as we shall shortly see, in the controversies around the Chalcedonian convert Probus in the late 6th century and remained central in the following centuries. See Albert Van Roey, "Het dossier van Proba en Juhannan Barboer," in *Scrinium Lovaniense. Mélanges historiques—Historische opstellen Étienne Van Cauwenberg* (Recueil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie IV.24; Louvain: Bibliothèque de l'Université Bureau du Recueil, 1961), 181–190, especially 186, and Albert van Roey, "Une controverse christologique sous le patriarcat de Pierre de Callinique," in *Symposium Syriacum 1976: célébré du 13 au 17 septembre 1976 au Centre Culturel "Les Fontaines" de Chantilly (France)* (ed. F. Graffin and A. Guillaumont; OCA 205; Roma: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1978), 349–357, especially 350 and 354–357; Uwe P. Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century: A Study and Translation of the Arbitrator* (Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense: Études et documents 47; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 33–40. In his translation of John Philoponus's Christological treatises, where the expression recurs, Augustin Sanda translated $\kappa\lambda\iota\sigma\iota\alpha$ as "praedicatio", thereby adhering to the etymological meaning of the Syriac term, which is based on the Shafel (causative) of ܟܠܝܢ , "to know".

is directly brought to the fore in two excerpts from his *Apology of the Council of Chalcedon*, both taken from Severus' *Against the Grammarian*.¹⁸ In these excerpts, John maintains that the union, in order to be such, must preserve the two components that were united; many passages from Severus' *Against the Grammarian* quoted in the following chapters object that the union is not real if a duality of any kind persists in it. The natures of which Christ consists remain in him only in the form of the composition but they do not subsist separately, such as to be counted as really, concretely two. If one speaks of a union, it is obvious that the two, or many, from which the union derives, must be mentioned and necessarily appear to the mind that contemplates them (e.g., chapters 35, "The cutting and the duality which are in the thought cease [*scil.* after the union]"; 36, "From two natures or hypostases' is said [only] in theory"; 37, "Composed [things] are separated only in theory"; and 38 "Composition is divided only in [one's] mind"). However, the natures are only the theoretical origin of the union,¹⁹ the "from which", but they do not exist as such in the real Christ; indeed, Severus writes, Cyril never expected Nestorius not to *mention* two natures, but expected him not to divide them at the level of concrete reality (chapter 45: "Not the fact itself of mentioning two natures is bad, but the fact of speaking of two natures after the union is contemptible", $\text{لآ ذمى له ان ذكره بعد الاتحاد بل ذمى له ان يفرقه عند الواقع}$).

From the first two sections, it may seem difficult to determine whether the florilegium aims at a generic exposition of Miaphysite Christology against dyophysitism in general, or if it has a more specific polemical goal. It is not of secondary importance, however, that most of the excerpts come from a work that Severus had addressed against John the Grammarian, a champion of Neo-Chalcedonianism: chapter 26 is made up of John's objections to Miaphysitism and Andrew of Samosata's objections to Cyril's anathemas, while the following chapter contains Severus' replies in various passages from *Against the Grammarian* and the treatise to Nephalius. These elements are significant clues to the fact that we are dealing with a specifically anti-Chalcedonian collection. It is already striking at this point that the general tone of the collection and

ously unknown passages from *Against the Grammarian*, excerpted from the last chapters of the treatise, which are lost in the manuscripts transmitting [the treatise](#) in its entirety and edited by Lebon.

18 From Severus, *Against the Grammarian*, 11.14 and 11.31, 124 and 235 (text), 97 and 184 (trans.).

19 Theoretical here means "that can be contemplated exclusively in thought" as opposed to "concretely existing".

the way the Miaphysite arguments are presented tend to be apologetic and/or polemical, seeing as how the compiler selects and rearranges passages that serve as a polemical justification of the Miaphysite position against critical remarks coming from the Chalcedonian side. Some chapter titles in the first section are particularly eloquent, as they are formulated in a negative form and thus sound like replies to objections. See e.g. chapter 10: “The union did not take away difference”; and reciprocally chapter 22: “Speaking of union does not neglect the difference”; chapter 13: “Essential difference does not bring in with itself a cutting into two after the union”; chapter 14: “Division does not follow a difference of essence in any regard”; and the previously quoted title of chapter 17: “We do not avoid confessing the property of the natures from which the Emmanuel derives, in order to preserve the union unconfused”. Thus, even though the title of the manuscripts B and C is “demonstrations of the Fathers against various heresies”, in this florilegium, the demonstrations do not attack the alleged heresies but rather defend Miaphysitism from the attacks of the heretics. This hypothesis is further confirmed by the following sections of the Christological florilegium, where the compiler goes on to define the Miaphysite tenets in a defensive way. Indeed, at the end of chapter 46, a passage from Severus’ letter to his correspondent Eleusinius is quoted where Severus refers to Theodoret of Cyrus, who had written that the phrase “unity in hypostasis”, or “hypostatic union”, cannot be accepted insofar as it is stranger to the patristic tradition. Once again, an accusation coming from the Chalcedonian party.

2.3



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The next section of the florilegium (chapters 47 to 80, but especially 47–68) moves from the almost homogeneously Cyrillian and Severan selection of the previous sections to a wider variety of sources. The intention is to show that many Fathers, since the beginnings of Christianity, had known the Miaphysite union and all the related conceptual apparatus, including the concept of composition of the two natures in Christ and the theopaschite idea of God suffering and dying on the cross. In a way, this section is a patristic florilegium in the florilegium, where the universally accepted authority of the pre-Chalcedonian Fathers is evoked to support the Miaphysite tradition, which was mostly represented by Severus and Cyril in the previous 46 chapters. The title of chapter 49 is particularly telling: “The Fathers know that the union of the Word with His ensouled flesh was natural and hypostatic”. The same pattern can be identified in other titles where the term “Fathers” is present, for example in chapter 52: “Testimonia of the holy Fathers who confess that God the Word suffered and died for us in the flesh” or 53: “Although the Fathers separate two natures in theory, they see and say that the union occurred from those [two] and con-

fess **one nature of the incarnate Word** after the union, and do not divide in any way those which were united". "These chapters do not proceed in chronological order but start from Dionysius the Areopagite, who is seen as a genuine disciple of the apostles. Peter of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil, ps.-Gregory Thaumaturgus, the synod of Antioch that condemned Paul of Samosata, especially Malchion's letter against Paul, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom are then quoted in the following chapters. The compiler even adds a short selection of passages from the New Testament in chapter 50. Significantly enough, in B, where the structure is different, the block of chapters 47–68, which contains an apologetic selection of pre-Chalcedonian witnesses on the hypostatic union, opens the florilegium; the block containing chapters 1–47 immediately follows it. This cannot be the original order, because it is typical of florilegia to be appended to a piece of writing, not to precede it. Moreover, as stated above, at the end of chapter 46, a fragment from one of Severus' letters to Eleusinius mentions an objection to the Miaphysite Christology raised by Theodoret, to which the following block starting with chapter 47 indeed seems to reply. However, the rearrangement of B is understandable, since the pre-Chalcedonian Fathers antedate Cyril and Severus, and thus they should be put before the Miaphysite theologians, as if paving the way to them.

2.4

The anti-Chalcedonian nature of this florilegium becomes obvious in the fourth section of the florilegium (chapters 81–105), which contains a large and most interesting selection of translated excerpts from the Council of Chalcedon itself. In most manuscripts, these excerpts are indicated through *obeloi* in the margin,²⁰ in order to warn the reader that they come from heretical writings. These excerpts seem to be extracted from a sort of commented epitome of the Council, since they are occasionally accompanied by critical and historical remarks, which, however, may have been written by the compiler of our florilegium. This finding is surprising, since, except for the canons published by Schulthess more than a century ago,²¹ we do not have Syriac translations of

20 The use of these marginal signs was studied by Michael P. Penn, "Know Thy Enemy: The Materialization of Orthodoxy in Syriac Manuscripts," in *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology* (ed. L.I. Lied and H. Lundhaug; Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 175, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 221–241. See also Flavia Ruani's chapter in the present volume.

21 Friedrich Schulthess, *Die Syrischen Kanones der Synoden von Nicaea bis Chalcedon nebst einigen zugehörigen Dokumenten* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, N.F. X.2, Berlin: Weidmann, 1908).

the proceedings of this Council. In our florilegium, citations from the council of Chalcedon alternate with excerpts from dyophysite writers such as Theodoret and Nestorius and, as a counterpoint, with passages from Cyril and Severus, always with an apologetic flavour. What is also surprising is that this section adds a sort of historical framework to the previous sections, providing the readers of the florilegium with a “dogmengeschichtliche” perspective and allowing them to understand the stakes of the Christological debate in historical perspective. Chapter 82, for instance, contains the whole Chalcedonian definition of faith, which is followed, in chapter 83, by Severus’ harsh criticism of it in a letter to an Isaac Scholasticus; in chapters 89 and 96, we find passages from Cyril’s letters where he complains that his writings have been falsified so as to seem in agreement with the dyophysite tenets. Indeed, in chapter 98, we can have a look at the other side of this affair, with a quotation from Theodoret’s letter to Nestorius, communicating that Cyril has accepted the view of the dyophysites. All the chapters in between, 90–95, contain quotations from Nestorius and Cyril, aiming to show that Cyril may seem close to the dyophysites because he uses the language of unity too, but that the dyophysites conceive of unity in a wrong way, since they undermine it with a wrong conception of duality.

3 A Remote Root: The Probus Affair

A crucial clue to the original context that prompted the production of the material collected in this florilegium is provided by the last quotations in chapter 68. They are extracted from three different writings of Probus, a little-known Miaphysite and later Chalcedonian theologian of the end of the sixth century. Probus’ thought and writings received some attention in the last century; Albert Van Roey,²² Paolo Bettiolo,²³ José Declerck,²⁴ Theresia Hainthaler,²⁵ and Karl-Heinz Uthemann²⁶ wrote on him and published some of his works. Sebas-

²² Albert Van Roey, “Het dossier;” Albert van Roey, “Une controverse.”

²³ Paolo Bettiolo, ed. *Una raccolta di opuscoli Calcedonensi: Ms. Sinai Syr. 10* (CSCO 403–404, *Scriptores Syri 177–178*; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1979).

²⁴ José H. Declerck, “Probus, l'ex-jacobite et ses epaporemata pros Iakobitas,” *Byzantion* 53 (1983): 213–232.

²⁵ Hainthaler, “A Christological Controversy.”

²⁶ Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “Syllogistik im Dienst der Orthodoxie. Zwei unedierte Texte byzantinischer Kontroverstheologie des 6. Jahrhunderts,” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 30 (1981): 103–112, and Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “Stephanos von Alexandrien und die Konversion des Jakobiten Probus, des späteren Metropoliten von Chalkedon. Ein Beitrag zur Rolle der Philosophie in der Kontroverstheologie des 6. Jahrhunderts,” in *After Chal-*

tian Brock²⁷ has even suggested to identify him with the philosopher Probus, some of whose works are extant in Syriac.²⁸ Uwe Michael Lang touched upon this in his monograph on Philoponus' *Arbiter*.²⁹ According to the West Syrian patriarch Dionysius of Tell-Mahre³⁰ (ninth century; the pages on Probus are the only surviving ones from his chronicle) and to the twelfth-century historian Michael the Great, who elaborates on Dionysius' account, Probus was a Miaphysite theologian of the second half of the sixth century, an "erudite and intelligent" man,³¹ who had accompanied the Miaphysite patriarch of Antioch, Peter of Callinicum, during a visit to Alexandria in 581–582, together with the archimandrite John Barbur who, according to another hitherto unknown source, was his teacher.³² In Alexandria, the two men were seduced by the theories of an Alexandrian "philosopher" or "sophist", named Stephen (whose identity remains uncertain).³³ We know that, for a while, Probus had defended

cedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for His Seventieth Birthday (ed. C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, and L. van Rompay; OLA 18; Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 381–399.

- 27 Sebastian P. Brock, "The Commentator Probus: Problems of Date and Identity," in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad* (ed. J. Lössl and J.W. Watt; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 195–206.
- 28 On Probus the philosopher, see Henri Hugonnard-Roche, "Le commentaire syriaque de Probus sur l'Isagoge de Porphyre. Une étude préliminaire," *Studia graeco-arabica* 2 (2012): 227–243; Henri Hugonnard-Roche, "Un cours sur la syllogistique d'Aristote à l'époque tardo-antique: le commentaire syriaque de Proba (vie siècle) sur les Premiers Analytiques. Édition et traduction du texte, avec introduction et commentaire," *Studia graeco-arabica* 7 (2017): 105–170; Henri Hugonnard-Roche, "Probus," in *Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike* (ed. C. Riedweg, C. Horn, and D. Wyrwa; Die Philosophie der Antike 5.1–3; Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2018), 2465–2469.
- 29 Lang, *Arbiter*, 38–40.
- 30 Fac-simile of the account (from *Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* Vat. Sir. 144, f. 89^{ra-vb}) and German translation in Rudolf Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre, jakobitischer Patriarch von 818–845. Zur Geschichte der Kirche unter dem Islam* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 25.2. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1940), 138–144.
- 31 Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 139.
- 32 He is called Probus' ܠܘܒܘܣ in the preface (preserved in the MS Vat. Sir. 144, fol. 90^r) of Elias of Ḥarrān to the treatise *On Difference*, which will be mentioned shortly.
- 33 Much has been written on this Stephen, but any attempt at a precise identification has failed because of the presence of many Alexandrian "Stephens" in contemporary and later accounts; some of them may of course be one and the same person. See especially Declerck, "Probus;" Wanda Wolska-Conus, "Stéphanos d'Athènes et Stéphanos d'Alexandrie. Essai d'identification et de biographie," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 47 (1989): 5–89, Uthemann "Stephanos von Alexandrien," Hainthaler, "A Christological Controversy," 413–417. According to Uthemann, "Stephanos von Alexandrien," 388–399, and Wolska-Conus, "Stéphanos," 82–89, this Stephen was the sixth-century Alexandrian commentator of Aristotle of the same name.

the Severan Miaphysite orthodoxy against Stephen and had even written a refutation of his tenets. What did Stephen teach, which needed a Miaphysite reaction? We know little about Stephen's theories, but from our historical sources we know that he objected to the Miaphysites that one of their main arguments was absurd. He purportedly said that if one conceives of the unity in Christ as of a unity of nature, like the Miaphysites did, then any *difference* based on the preservation of the characteristics of the natures, not only any division, must disappear. Indeed, if a difference persists, one can still count two distinct natures. Indeed, Probus' initial refutation of Stephen, according to an indirect source, bore the title "Against those who affirm that one must not confess that the difference as to the natural characteristic is preserved after the union".³⁴ Many chapters in the first section of the Christological florilegium seem to respond precisely to this criticism, as the titles of chapters 8 and 9 indicate: "The difference, as far as essence is concerned, did not cease after the thought of the union"; "the difference, as far as essence is concerned, remained" (ܕܘܟܪܘܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܠܘ ܘܢܝܘܢܝܗܘܢ ܕܘܟܪܘܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܠܘ ܘܢܝܘܢܝܗܘܢ ܕܘܟܪܘܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܠܘ ܘܢܝܘܢܝܗܘܢ). Our sources relate Stephen's thoughts in this merely aporetic form, and we do not know what Stephen's *pars construens* was, if any.³⁵ We do know, however, that some time after following Stephen, Probus was expelled from Alexandria, returned to Antioch and, in 584/5, was condemned by a synod summoned at Gubba Barraya, in northern Syria, by Peter of Callinicum, who, after the synod, circulated a writing directed against Probus in all the churches and monasteries under his jurisdiction.³⁶ As a consequence, Probus and John converted to the Chalcedonian doctrine and were received by the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, Gregory (570–593).³⁷ Probus later confessed his new faith twice,

34 This title is quoted by the Miaphysite monks in their eighth *libellus* against Probus, in MS B, fol. 152r, and D, fol. 122v. This treatise is identical with Probus's "Treatise on difference", of which the monks quote a short passage in their seventh *libellus* against Probus (see note # below), and with Probus's so-called "Hypomnestikon", which is preserved in MS B, fol. 238v–240r.

35 It is reasonable, however, to suppose that Stephen was a Chalcedonian, if it is true that John Moschos and the future patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius (unsuccessfully) tried to pay him a visit, probably to attend one of his lectures, in Alexandria (see Moschos, *Pré spirituel*, 119). In Moschos' account, Stephen is also called "sophist" as in Dionysius of Tell-Mahre.

36 All these events are related by Dionysius of Tell-Mahre; see Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 139–140.

37 According to Dionysius of Tell Mahre (Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 141), they were received by Gregory's successor (and predecessor, as he held the patriarchate twice, in 559–570 and 593–598) Anastasius, but this is unlikely due to the long chronological gap

with two creeds addressed to Gregory and his successor Anastasius, respectively, which are both cited in chapter 68 of our Christological florilegium.³⁸ Peter of Callinicum's writing against Probus is unfortunately lost, but we know from Dionysius of Tell-Mahre that its main thesis was the following: "the difference of the natures from which Christ derives really exists and persists after the union, without implying number and division of the natures".³⁹ This is precisely what our florilegium tries to repeat throughout the first two sections; firstly, the persistence of difference and the cessation of division, and, secondly, the fact that the number two is not real in the incarnation, since only one is concretely subsistent. The problem seems to have raised many concerns and to have been strongly debated among Miaphysites at the end of the sixth century. Another treatise of those years, which has long been attributed to John Philoponus but was certainly not written by him, *On Difference, Number, and Division*,⁴⁰ tackles precisely the same topic, and seems indeed to be addressed against Stephen's tenets. In fact, I have recently discovered a preface to this treatise by an Elias of Ḥarrān (see below) appended to the MS *Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* Vat. Sir. 144, one of the manuscripts preserving this treatise. According to this preface, *On Difference, Number, and Division* was composed by three Syrians, Sergius of Ḥuzri, Thomas of the monastery of Mar Zakkai and Simeon of the monastery of Talil. These three men are also known to us as participants in

between the synod of Gubba Barraya and Anastasius' election in 593; see Van Roey, "Het dossier," 185 n. 1, and Van Roey, "Une controverse," 350.

38 See Appendix 1 for the titles of these texts.

39 Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 140: "Und sogleich schrieb der Patriarch Mar Petrus einen Brief oder Traktat in Vollmacht der ganzen Synode, in dem er die Meinung des Sophisten und des Probus vernichtete und zerstörte und durch Zeugnisse der Lehrer aufrichtete und bewies, daß wahrhaftig und wirklich der Unterschied der Naturen, aus denen Christus besteht, auch nach der Feststellung der Einheit gewahrt wird ohne Zählung und Unterscheidung dieser Naturen".

40 On this treatise, preserved in the MSS Vat. Sir. 144, *London, British Library* Add. 12171, and partially in BL Add. 14670, and published and translated among John Philoponus' works in *Opuscula monophysitica Ioannis Philoponi*, 95–122 (text), 140–171 (trans.), see Lang, *Arbiter*, 33–40. Lang convincingly argues against the attribution to Philoponus and suggests that it must be considered a work produced in Philoponus' circle. Van Roey suggested (Van Roey, "Het dossier," 187), but later on retracted (Van Roey, "Une controverse," 352 n. 9), that Probus may have been the author of this treatise during his Miaphysite phase, and that the treatise may have coincided with his work against Stephen (see note # above). This cannot be the case, since the only fragment we have from the treatise "On difference" against Stephen (identical with Probus's preserved *Hypomnestikon*, see again note # above) that the Miaphysite monks attribute to Probus in their seventh and eighth *libelli* does not overlap with any passage in the anonymous treatise *On Difference, Number, and Division*.^{x-ref}

legium, although they are quoted in a different order. The table in the appendix provides a partial idea of the correspondences; we can suppose that the quotations in these *libelli*, if summed to the quotations that certainly appeared in the six lost *libelli*, covered the greatest part of our florilegium.⁴⁴

Some of the excerpts quoted in the *libelli* are longer than the corresponding excerpts in our florilegium, whereas some others are much shorter. This means that the *libelli* are not, or not entirely, the direct source of the Christological florilegium. Therefore, it is tempting to venture a little speculation and turn to Peter of Callinicum as the initial source of this patristic material. We do not have his treatise against Probus of 585 but, judging by Peter's compilatory style in his massive extant work against the patriarch of Alexandria on tritheism, the *Contra Damianum*, which is largely based on patristic quotations, we can easily suppose that he made use of a large number of patristic sources in the lost treatise against Probus as well. Thus, one is easily led to suppose that Peter's lost treatise against Probus may be the source of the selections from Severus, Cyril, and the other Fathers that the monks also quoted in their *libelli* ten years later. More generally, one could say that our Christological florilegium selects, collects and rearranges patristic materials that were produced in the decade of 585–595, during the controversy between Probus and the Antiochene Miaphysites. The florilegium may have drawn at least a part of its patristic testimonia, which were also used in the *libelli* of the monks (and in the response of the Miaphysite monks to the monks of Mōr Marūn), from Peter of Callinicum's lost treatise, and it may have reassembled them into a new florilegium. Although speculative, the hypothesis that Peter of Callinicum's patristic materials were selected and rearranged in later Syriac florilegia is not unreasonable. As Bishara Ebeid has recently shown, the greatest part of the trinitarian florilegium that accompanies our Christological florilegium, in most of the manuscripts where it is preserved, consists precisely in a rearrangement of the patristic excerpts contained in Peter of Callinicum's *Contra Damianum*.⁴⁵ Thus, the Christolog-

44 Another Miaphysite source of the end of the sixth century that contains a great deal of excerpts also found in the Christological florilegium, exactly with the same form and length as in the florilegium, is the response of a group of Miaphysite monks, "partisans of Peter (of Callinicum), patriarch of Antioch", to five propositions of the Chalcedonian monks of Mōr Marūn (Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:945–946; partial translation in François Nau, "Les Maronites, inquisiteurs de la foi catholique du **vie** au **vii**e siècle," *Bulletin de l'Association de Saint-Louis des Maronites* janvier [1903]: 343–350; avril [1903], 367–383. I am also currently preparing a critical edition and complete translation of this correspondence).

45 Bishara Ebeid, "Metaphysics of Trinity in Graeco-Syriac Miaphysitism: A Study and Analysis of the Trinitarian Florilegium in MS British Library Add. 14532," *Studia Graeco-Arabica*

ical florilegium may be at least partially the result of an analogous operation made on Peter's work against Probus. Therefore, with Probus and the Miaphysite response to the monks of Mōr Marūn, we have brought to light the most ancient layer accessible to us of the geological stratification of our florilegium.

4 In Search of a Context: Why an Anti-Chalcedonian Florilegium?

Now that we have determined the likely context in which the materials of our florilegium originated, we must come back to the florilegium itself and necessarily ask two questions. What was the use of rearranging, in the late eighth century, the patristic archives that had informed an apparently remote and highly technical controversy of the sixth century? How important could the refutation of Chalcedonian Christology be in that age?

4.1 *Elias' Letter to the Chalcedonian Syncellus Leo of Ḥarrān*

In the last decades, the period between the end of the seventh and the beginning of the ninth century has been intensively studied by Syriac scholars as the age of the establishment of the Umayyad and then of the 'Abbasid rule in Syria and Mesopotamia, as well as the crucible of Christian Arabic literature and the heyday of anti-Islamic apology. Little attention, however, has been paid to Christological disputes of the same age involving the Syriac orthodox Church; as a matter of fact, only two articles by Ute Possekel were devoted to the topic in the last thirty years. Our sources are admittedly scarce, especially as far as the eighth century is concerned. One of Possekel's articles⁴⁶ sheds new light on a rather friendly dispute of the eighth (or possibly the beginning of the ninth) century that involved a Miaphysite convert from Chalcedonianism, a man named Elias, and his friend Leo, a syncellus of the Chalcedonian bishop of Ḥarrān. This Elias must not be confused with the Syriac orthodox patriarch Elias of Ḥarrān, who died in 723,⁴⁷ indeed, he must probably be identified with

11 (2021): 63–108; Albert Van Roey, "Un florilège trinitaire syriaque tiré du Contra Damianum de Pierre de Callinique," *OLP* 23 (1992): 189–203.

46 Ute Possekel, "Christological Debates in Eighth-Century Harran: The Correspondence of Leo of Harran and Eliya," in *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011* (ed. M.E. Doerfler, E. Fiano, and K.R. Smith; Eastern Christian Studies 20; Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 345–368.

47 Josephus Simonius Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (3 vols.; Romae: Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1719–1728) 1:467 was at the origin of this confusion as he suggested that Elias should be dated to ca. 640; the identification with the patriarch was made by Rubens Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1907), 378.

an Elias of Ḥarrān, by whom we have a treatise on the Eucharist addressed to Dionysius of Tell-Mahre, arguably before the latter was elected patriarch (Dionysius is called “of Qennešre” in the dedication),⁴⁸ in addition to a short preface to the above-mentioned pseudo-Philoponian treatise *On Difference, Number, and Division*. Specifically, we have an incomplete letter in twelve chapters addressed by Elias to Leo, in which he explains to his friend the theological rationale of his conversion; in the letter, Elias also quotes extensive passages from other works of slightly earlier Syriac Chalcedonian theologians, George, bishop of Martyropolis-Maipherqat, and Constantine, bishop of Ḥarrān, who had written against the Miaphysites. The letter was edited and translated in 1985 by Albert van Roey,⁴⁹ who had also published an extensive study on its contents and theology more than forty years earlier.⁵⁰

The topics tackled by Elias, which were singled out by Van Roey in his study,⁵¹ partially but significantly overlap with those tackled by the monks in their *libelli* against Probus, in the above-mentioned treatise *On Difference*, and in the Christological florilegium. Even after Van Roey’s fine doctrinal overview, Elias’ letter would still deserve a detailed commentary. Here, I will just isolate some samples in order to highlight how the choice and treatment of two topics in the letter are particularly close to our florilegium. These are; 1) the distinction between “difference” and “division” of the natures in Christ, and 2) the rejection of the use of the expression “two natures” after the thought of the union. What is even more significant with regard to the Christological florilegium is that, as we shall see, the whole letter is interspersed with patristic quotations, and the last part of the letter is a discussion on Leo’s wrong understanding of the patristic quotations he had displayed when writing to Elias.⁵² In fact, most of these quotations once again overlap with those in the florilegium, as can be seen from the selection provided in Appendix 3.

As to the first topic (difference vs. division and the natural characteristic), the fifth chapter of the letter rejects the dyophysite tenets by stating that one can only say “two natures” in the sense that in the union there remains a difference in their natural characteristic; any other affirmation of two natures cuts the union. As Elias writes, “why do you make of the difference in the natural

Albert Van Roey, “La lettre apologétique d’Élie à Léon, syncelle de l’évêque chalcédonien de Harran,” *LM* 57 (1944): 1–52, at 4–10, corrected the mistake.

48 This treatise is preserved in the MS *London, British Library* Add. 14726, fol. 59^v–71^v; see Wright, *Catalogue*, 2:830–831.

49 *Eliae epistula*.

50 Van Roey, “La lettre.”

51 Van Roey, “La lettre,” 21–51.

52 *Eliae epistula*, 89–106 (text), 64–76 (trans.).

characteristic a cause for the separation of the natures?”⁵³ This question was still urgent in the 8th–9th century as it implies a typical Chalcedonian argument, which by Elias’ time had already found full-fledged expression in John Damascene, and which requires a brief excursus on the opposed metaphysical presuppositions of Chalcedonians and Miaphysites.

In fact, both Chalcedonians and Miaphysites acknowledged the persistence of a “natural” or “essential” difference in the union, i.e., a difference on the level of nature between humanity and divinity in Christ. Since Cyril, the Miaphysites had called it, as we saw above, a difference as to the natural quality, ὡς ἐν ποιότητι φυσικῇ, concerning the *ratio* of the mode of being, λόγος τοῦ πῶς εἶναι. This level of difference is the level of the ἴδιον,⁵⁴ i.e., of the property that distinguishes the species, or specific universals, from one another. Neo-Chalcedonians, however, always distinguished the essence from the individual. They insisted on the fact that what distinguishes individuals, i.e. hypostases, from one another, and thus also makes it possible to count them, is a particular bundle of accidental properties (a terminology which can be traced back to Porphyry’s *Isagoge*).⁵⁵ According to John of Damascus, the individual, or hypostasis, is an essence with accidents, οὐσία τις μετὰ συμβεβηκότων.⁵⁶ This means, in turn, that every hypostasis is an instantiation of a specific universal essence through a peculiar bundle of accidental properties.⁵⁷ According to the Chalcedonians, any essence really exists only as instantiated in an individual hypostasis;⁵⁸ there are no uninstantiated universals, but,

53 *Eliae epistula*, 19 (text), 13 (trans.).

54 See e.g. Van Roey “La lettre,” 23.

55 Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 7, 19–27.

56 John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* III.6, 120.11.

57 Christophe Erismann, “A World of Hypostases. John of Damascus’ Rethinking of Aristotle’s Categorical Ontology,” *SP* 50 (2011): 269–287, at 276–277. This is the grounds of the typically Chalcedonian concept of *enhypostatos*, or instantiation of an essence in a hypostasis, which Erismann discusses at length in the same article at 280–287, and has recently been the object of intensive enquiry; see Benjamin Gleede, *The Development of the Term ‘enhypostatos’ from Origen to John of Damascus* (VChr Supplements 113; Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2012); Johannes Zachhuber, *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysics. Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), especially 196–197, 207–214, 219–237, 292–295; Dirk Krausmüller, “Enhypostaton: Being “in another” or “with another”: How Chalcedonian theologians of the sixth century defined the ontological status of Christ’s human nature,” *VChr* 71 (2017): 433–448.

58 “Universals subsist as *universals* in individuals” (Erismann, “A World of Hypostases,” 283). To indicate this principle, Zachhuber, *The Rise*, 193, created the siglum NNWH, “no nature without hypostasis”; Erismann devoted a whole article to it: Christophe Erismann, “Non Est Natura sine Persona: The Issue of Uninstantiated Universals from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages,” *Methods and Methodologies: Aristotelian Logic East and West*, 500–

two natures that are posited by the dyophysites according to the essential difference viz. to the difference in the natural characteristic ... are not united, as they guiltily state, but separated". Namely, the way the dyophysites conceive of the difference in the natural characteristic, i.e., as a reason to affirm a duality of nature, is illegitimate, because it reintroduces a separation—a duality—in Christ. Of course, although they maintained—opposite to the Chalcedonians—that the difference of properties is at the level of the individual nature/hypostasis, the Miaphysites did not draw from this the conclusion that there are two Christs, because their ontology was substantially different. While for the Chalcedonians two different sets of properties must be referred to two different, really existent essences (which in the case of Christ are instantiated within the same individual hypostasis), for the Miaphysites there are no such things as really existent essences to which properties must be referred, so that two different sets of properties can rest on the same individual without implying different essences in the background. An elegant illustration of this Miaphysite point of view is found in the above-mentioned sixth-century, treatise *On Difference*, where the authors explain that different sets of properties can exist within the same individual, without implying a multiplicity of individuals, since difference is not a matter of quantity but of quality—i.e., it falls under a different category. Division, on the contrary, belongs to the domain of quantity. Elias echoes this argument in the fifth chapter of the letter, where he responds to a Chalcedonian remark that “every difference, insofar as it is a difference, necessarily implies number”;⁶² against this, he affirms that “number is not connected to every difference ... that [type of] difference, to which number is not connected, does not produce a division”.⁶³

Since the natures are not separated, Elias writes in chapter 9, one can no longer use any expressions containing “two natures” (which is tantamount to *numbering* two natures) after thinking of the union that, as such, removes any “two”. Previously, in chapter 5, Elias had written that “those natures that you continue to count even after considering the union are separated, not united”,⁶⁴ because union must imply the disappearance of duality: “the force of a real union does

62 *Eliae epistula*, 16 (text), 11 (trans.).

63 *Eliae epistula*, 17 (text), 12 (trans.).

64 *Eliae epistula*, 21 (text), 15 (trans.). Here, once again, the misunderstanding between the two groups is based on contrasting ontologies (and not only on terminology); both agree that individuals are distinguished numerically, so that one cannot count more than one individual Christ. However, their differing conception of the universals, their concrete existence, and what an individual is, leads them to complete incomprehension. Chalcedonians count two natures but would never dare count two individuals; Miaphysites would never dare count two individuals either, but since nature is exclusively identical with the individual, they regard the Chalcedonians as counting two individuals.

not tolerate division and number and makes them cease”⁶⁵ (compare the title of chapter 79 in the Christological florilegium: “The force of the union makes every duality cease”). In chapter 9, after quoting a passage from Cyril’s first letter to Succensus, he writes: “(Cyril) did say that he sees two natures when he considers the way of the incarnation of the Word with the eyes of the soul;⁶⁶ but when he considers their concourse to the *real* union, he confesses one incarnate nature of the Word”⁶⁷ (compare with the title of florilegium chapter 53, on which see also above under 2.3: “Although the Fathers separate two natures in theory, they see and say that the union occurred from those [two] and confess one **nature of the incarnate Word** after the union, and do not divide in any way those which were united”); “they no longer remain two after the thought of the union”⁶⁸ (compare with the florilegium, title of chapter 75: “After the thought of the union, the cutting into two [that is present] in the thought ceases and departs”). Also, in the seventh chapter of his letter, Elias discusses another important point of our florilegium, that is, since the two natures of the Chalcedonians are not really united, they must actually be defined as two independent hypostases (see the title of Elias’ chapter 7: “the Chalcedonians know that the two natures that they affirm in Christ are two hypostases and two sons”).⁶⁹ Our florilegium treats this point as well, especially in chapter 65: “The expressions “in two” or “in each one” are understood [as referring to] two hypostases that subsist in their proper subsistence”. These arguments correspond to the second section of the Christological florilegium. What is most relevant here is that the patristic quotations of chapter 9, as can be seen in the appendix, correspond with few exceptions to a compact block of quotations that are included in the third section of our florilegium, in chapters 52–54, and often appear in Elias in the same order as in the florilegium; note that the title of chapter 53 was mentioned here above as a parallel to Elias’ arguments. This is a clear indication that Elias was using a collection of excerpts, the organization of which was already similar to that of the florilegium.

To sum up, Elias tackles precisely the same questions as in the first three sections of our florilegium, with the same apologetic tone, and, in doing so, he also abundantly quotes patristic authorities largely overlapping with those quoted in the florilegium. It must be noted, however, that Severus, the main authority quoted in the florilegium, is almost nowhere to be found in Elias’ letter. This

65 *Eliae epistula*, 26 (text), 18 (trans.).

66 Elias also reveals here the fundamental Miaphysite “nominalism”.

67 *Eliae epistula*, 66 (text), 48 (trans.).

68 *Eliae epistula*, 71 (text), 51 (trans.).

69 *Eliae epistula*, 51 (text), 37 (trans.).

must certainly be partially due to the fact that he intends to make use of authorities that also Chalcedonians could accept.⁷⁰ Thus, with Elias, we have reached a second geological stratum, which is much closer in time, and more similar, to what we see on the surface—the Christological florilegium.

4.2 *A Cumbersome Antagonist: Theodore Abū Qurrah*

Ḥarrān, the city of Elias' addressee Leo, and very likely of Elias himself, was, as Possekel has shown,⁷¹ a stronghold of Chalcedonian doctrine during the whole eighth century and beyond. Theodore Abū Qurra was the city's bishop at the beginning of the ninth century (the exact dates are unknown), thus he must have been roughly contemporary to Elias,⁷² and he was at the centre of a renewed moment of controversy between Chalcedonians and Miaphysites. Indeed, not later than 812/3, Abū Qurra went to Armenia with missionary purposes and sojourned at the court of prince Ašot Msaker. He tried to convert the prince's court to the Chalcedonian faith, but Ašot wanted him to debate with a Miaphysite theologian, and invited the Arabic-speaking scholar of Tagrit, Abū Rā'īṭah, who did not himself go, but sent, as is well known, his relative Nonnus of Nisibis (d. ca. 860),⁷³ even though he also wrote two letters to Ašot against Theodore Abū Qurra (Abū Rā'īṭah's third letter, written before the debate, and fourth letter, written after it).⁷⁴ The debate took place between 813 and 817, and according to all sources except for a Georgian one, which understandably considers the winner to be the Chalcedonian Theodore,⁷⁵ Nonnus pre-

70 It must be considered, however, that the letter abruptly ends at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, which is indeed devoted to the discussion of quotations from Severus.

71 Possekel, "Christological Debates."

72 According to Possekel, "Christological Debates," 358, the fact that Elias does not mention Theodore would indicate that Elias' letter was written before Theodore's theological floruit. Apart from the fact that we do not have the entirety of the letter, Elias' silence on Theodore may also have a strategic reason. Being a Ḥarranite convert from Chalcedonianism, Elias quotes Chalcedonian authorities of the recent past, such as George of Maipherqat or John Damascene, but he may have found it prudent, or simply respectful (considering the friendly tone of his letter), to avoid mentioning, and start a polemic with, his own former bishop.

73 [Van Roey, *Traité apologétique*, 5.](#)

74 See also Bishara Ebeid's chapter in the present volume, with secondary literature.

75 This information is drawn from Nikolaj J. Marr, "Аркауи, монгольское название христиан в связи с вопросом об армянах-халкедонитах," *Византийский временник* 12 (1906): 1–68, at 9 and n. 2 ("na gruzinskome jazike sohranilos' prenie Abukury s armjaninom. v pamjatnike imeem tendencioznoe izobraženie, po-vidimomu, togo religioznogo preniža ... Sudža po etomu halkedonitskomu istočniku armjanin pobežden"). Marr does not give any indication as to his source, which he only defines as "Chalcedonian" (halke-donitskij istočnik); he merely states that he found the information in the Georgian MS 51

vailed⁷⁶ and Theodore was expelled from Armenia. Unfortunately, no account of the debate is available to us but, in the preface to Nonnus' *Commentary on John*, the Armenian translator provides us with highly generic information on the topic of the confrontation. He writes that Theodore, whom he does not mention by name, "divided into two the inseparable unity of Christ after the indivisible and unconfused unity". Nonnus, however, reaffirmed the Miaphysite orthodoxy: "to confess one from two natures".⁷⁷ Nothing more can be gathered from this source, nor are we better informed by Michael the Great, who is our "only even moderately substantial source"⁷⁸ on Theodore's life; he mentioned these events, but mixed up Theodore Abū Qurrah with another figure, Theodoricus Pyglo or Puggolo, who is different from him in many respects.⁷⁹ We can only speculate whether Nonnus and Theodore debated on the same problems tackled by Probus, Peter of Callinicum and the Miaphysite monks more than two centuries earlier, and by Elias in his letter. The letters against the Melkites addressed to prince Ašot by Abū Rā'īṭah do not provide us with significant insight on the topics that were discussed in Armenia. Something more can be found on the other side of the controversy. Indeed, among the many

of the "Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians", which would contain, on fol. 67^r–68^r, a debate between Theodore Abū Qurrah and an Armenian, whom Marr assumes to be Nonnus of Nisibis. As far as I can see, however, in the catalogue of the Society (Э.С. Такаишвили, *Описание рукописей Общества распространения грамотности среди грузинского населения* [2 vols.; Тифлис: Типография К.П. Козловскаго, 1904–1912], 1:372–378), MS 51 has a part of the epic of Rustam (Rostomiani) from the Shah-Name and does not seem to contain the debate of Abū Qurrah and Nonnus. Currently I am not able to locate the manuscript, which must be preserved at the Abuladze centre of Georgian Manuscripts in Tbilisi as part of the S-collection, just as all the manuscripts once owned by the Society.

76 For an overview of our sources of information concerning the debate, see Marr "Аркант;" Albert Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe. Traité apologétique. Étude, texte et traduction* (Bibliothèque du Muséon 21; Louvain: Bureaux du Muséon, 1948), 3–15 and 18–21; Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et byzantins à l'époque de Photius: Deux débats théologiques après le triomphe de l'orthodoxie* (CSCO 609, Subsidia 117; Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 69–74; see also Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, xi–xviii. ~~No source, however, relates the contents of the disputation, except for some hints provided by the Armenian translator of Nonnus' Commentary on John (Nonnus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John*, 3).~~ According to Marr, the "Georgian source" (see previous note) reproduces the debate, but this information cannot yet be verified.

77 Nonnus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John*, 3. See also Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et byzantins*, 74.

78 See Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, xiv.

79 Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, 4:495 (text), 3:32 (trans.); Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et byzantins*, 69.

extant works of Abū Qurrah, we find two interesting writings in Greek and Arabic, respectively, a letter significantly addressed to the Armenians⁸⁰ and a short Confession of Faith,⁸¹ the occasion of which is unknown. In both texts, Abū Qurrah deals at length with the topic of “natural properties, natural energies, and natural wills”, in a polemic against Miaphysites and Monothelites. These three phrases remind us of the expression “natural characteristic” of the Miaphysites, which can indeed be regarded as a summary of the three. According to Abū Qurrah’s exposition of the Chalcedonian orthodoxy, the two natures must be present in the single hypostasis of the incarnate Logos also after the union, as substrata containing the potentiality of the properties, energies and wills that are actually present in the concretely existing single hypostasis of Christ. Here, I shall quote only an exemplary statement from the second writing: “in the same way [as the properties of the two natures in Christ], sight is said to belong to the eye and not to the ear, and hearing to the ear and not to the eye, while sight and hearing together belong to the single hypostasis that has the eye and the ear—for instance, St. Peter or St. Paul”.⁸² It is precisely against this kind of position that the Miaphysites recurrently argued over the centuries, i.e. in their opinion, even if different properties, belonging to different natures, rest on one single hypostasis, their difference cannot be explained through a duplicity of natures. Abū Qurrah, on the contrary, starkly states: “unlike Severus, the scholastic ass, I do not deny that he [*scil.* Christ] has two natural properties”, thereby meaning that the different properties point to the persisting existence of two natures in the incarnate Christ. For the Miaphysites, there is no admitting such a twofold “~~potential~~” substratum, for any duality whatsoever must be condemned. The Chalcedonians, on the contrary, do not see how a difference of properties may continue to subsist within a single individual, without the underlying persistence of such a duality, since it is clear that the unity of the hypostasis must be saved on the other side. Thus, although Abū Qurrah does not mention the concepts of “difference” and “division”, he shows that in his age the debate still focused on the correct comprehension of the natural properties and their relation to the natures and the one hypostasis. Furthermore, since Theodore also treated this point when writing to the Armenians,⁸³ we can legitimately suppose that the topic had some purport in the debate at the court of Ašot.

80 Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, 83–95.

81 Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, 151–154.

82 Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, 153–154.

83 Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Works*, 89–90.

4.3 A Pivotal Figure: Nonnus of Nisibis

As to Nonnus' writings, we do not have any work related to his debate with Abū Qurrah. However, it is worth reading his oeuvre to see whether his own concerns and the exchanges he had with his adversaries focused on the same topics as those displayed in our florilegium. This is indeed the case in his two extant letters of Christological content, which he sent to a monk named John and an anonymous person, respectively.⁸⁴ To a lesser extent, it is also the case as far as his longer Christological treatise against Thomas of Marga;⁸⁵ this, however, treats the specific topic of Christ's will, which plays no role in our Christological florilegium. Both letters are closely related to the themes of our florilegium. Here I will focus on the first part of the letter to the anonymous person, which is particularly telling, as it deals with the preservation of the natural, or essential, characteristic, the *šūdōō kyōnōyō* (ܫܘܕܘܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܘܬܐ) or *'ūsyōyō* (ܐܘܫܝܘܝܘܬܐ), of both natures from which Christ derives. Various passages in the letter repeat this concept in the very language used in the excerpts from Cyril and Severus quoted in the Christological florilegium, and in the titles of its chapters, although Nonnus never quotes patristic authorities explicitly. Compare, for example, the title of chapter 6 of the florilegium

“Division ceases and difference is preserved” (ܫܘܕܘܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ)

or sentences in the excerpts themselves, like this one from Severus' *Philalethes* quoted in chapter 10:

“The union does not put an end to the difference of the natures from which the Emmanuel derives, but it puts an end to the division” (ܫܘܕܘܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ),

with Nonnus' letter to the anonymous:

“We confess that the natural characteristic of the natures from which the Saviour derives is preserved” (ܫܘܕܘܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ ܠܫܘܕܘܘܟܝܘܢܘܝܘܘܬܐ, *London, British Library Add. 14594, fol. 64^{rb}*);

⁸⁴ Van Roey, *Nonnus*, 38–41.

⁸⁵ Van Roey, *Nonnus*, 33–37.

“because they were united, division ceased” (ܡܠ ܕܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ, BL Add. 14594, fol. 64^{va}),

where Nonnus’ expression “the natural characteristic” is just a synthetic way to say, “the difference as to the natural characteristic”. We can also compare an excerpt from Severus’ second letter to Sergius the Grammarian as quoted in chapter 1 of the florilegium:

“The difference of the natural characteristic stands firm and unchangeable” (ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ, BL Add. 14594, fol. 64^{va}).

with Nonnus:

“The essential characteristic of the natures from which Christ derives remained unmoved” (ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܘܢܢܘܫܝܢ, BL Add. 14594, fol. 64^{va}).

These few parallels, together with others that will not be listed here, suggest that Nonnus did know the Christological florilegium, in a form identical or very similar to that found in the British Library and Mingana manuscripts, to which he was approximately contemporary. This is further confirmed by the fact that his relative, Abū Rā’īṭah, also used the Christological florilegium in his letter on the Trisagion, by quoting 12 of the 17 excerpts of the florilegium’s chapter 52.⁸⁶ Indeed, if we are to trust the Armenian translator of his *Commentary on John*, we know that Nonnus used to do what we would call a long bibliographical research before writing: “with prompt zeal and through rigorous fasts and prayers, [Nanay] expended no little effort in going around for three years, traveling through the deserts in the land of Mesopotamia, where he hoped to find writings of orthodox teaching. Having attained his quest ... he composed the commentary ... in summary fashion, gathering from many [sources], one by one methodically”.⁸⁷ This is an accurate description of the method employed by a compiler, and it must also have been the work underlying the Christological florilegium—if only to some extent, since, as we have seen, many materials

86 Abū Rā’īṭah, *The Writings*, 84–86 (text), 104–107. On Abū Rā’īṭah’s use of the Christological florilegium see Bishara Ebeid, “Miaphysite Syriac Patristic Florilegia and Theopaschisim: Abū Rā’īṭah’s Defence of the Christological Trisagion Hymn,” *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 14 (2021), 231–269.

87 Nonnus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John*, 3.

had already been gathered in the sixth century. Given Nonnus' and his relative Abū Rā'iṭah's knowledge of the florilegium, it would not be so risky to speculate that they were directly involved in its final redaction.⁸⁸ Although once again speculative, this conclusion is the closest we can get to historical facts on the basis of a sheer reconstruction of geological strata. As in geology, we try and reconstruct a whole (textual) scenario through traces, fossils, and the chemical composition of the ground. Our traces and fossils are the citations of, and allusions to (as in Nonnus), recurrent patristic excerpts from the sixth to ninth century; our chemical composition is the recurrence of Christological motifs, especially that of the preservation of a difference as to the natural quality in Christ.

By way of conclusion, let us then try to imagine a historical scenario.

Conclusion

What kind of historical picture can we sketch with the clues we have collected?

It is understandable that discussing these doctrinal issues, which had been harshly debated centuries earlier and had mostly disappeared in extant sources of the seventh and part of the eighth century,⁸⁹ must have again raised interest in Elias' times, as Ute Possekkel has also recently shown.⁹⁰ By the middle of the

88 See also Bishara Ebeid's chapter in the present volume.

89 With some notable exceptions, like the Plerophories composed by John of the Sedre (d. 648) against the dyophysites and the Julianists preserved in MS *London, British Library* Add. 14536, and published by Jouko Martikainen, *Johannes I. Sedra* (Göttinger Orientalforschungen, 1. Reihe: Syriaca 34; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), and the monothelete florilegium of MS *London, British Library* Add. 14535 (on which see Sebastian P. Brock, "A Monothelete Florilegium in Syriac," in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for His Seventieth Birthday* [ed. C. Laga, J.A. Muniz, and L. van Rompay; OLA 18; Leuven: Peeters, 1985], 35–45; Jack Tannous, "In Search of Monotheletism," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 (2014): 29–67; Maria Conterno, "Three Unpublished Texts on Christ's Unique Will and Operation from the Syriac Florilegium in the ms. London, British Library, Add. 14535," *Millennium* 10 [2013]: 115–144 and Maria Conterno, "Byzance hors de Byzance: la controverse monothélite du côté syriaque," in *Les controverses religieuses en syriaque* [ed. F. Ruani; ES 13; Paris: Paul Geuthner, 2016], 157–180).

90 Elias certainly wrote his letter after 743 (Van Roey, "La lettre," 9). In 1944, Van Roey considered that the letter may even date to the beginning of the ninth century (Van Roey, "La lettre," 20–21). However, the lack of any reference to Theodore Abū Qurrah tends to keep the dating within the third quarter of the eighth century. Although this is a proof *e silentio*, it must be reminded that Elias is carefully up to date as to the Christological developments of his time, and these developments do not go beyond John of Damascus.

eighth century, Chalcedonian Christology was thriving in the Umayyad Empire, thanks to the prominent intellectual and political position of the Chalcedonian Church and his major representative, John of Damascus. Later on, between the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, the Chalcedonians were actively proselytising, especially among Miaphysites; Theodore Abū Qurrah, as we have seen, had attempted an unfortunate mission in Armenia, and among his writings we can also read a hortatory letter, in which Theodore tries to convince his Miaphysite addressee to convert to Chalcedonianism.⁹¹ As to the Damascene (together with other authors, such as George of Martyropolis and Constantine of Ḥarrān, of whom we know only through quotations in Elias's letters), he had raised once again the old polemical arguments against the Miaphysites, and this time within the framework of a majestic theoretical system, which surpassed the previous works of Leontius of Byzantium, Theodore of Raithou, or Anastasius of Sinai, all of them authors who, in any case, had lived within the borders of the Byzantine Empire. We can imagine that it was of no little concern for Miaphysite theologians to have such important adversaries as the Damascene and Abū Qurrah in the Chalcedonian party, which was also the most prominent of that day under the Umayyads. John's writing *Against the Jacobites*, as well as parts of his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, were particularly challenging for the Miaphysites. It is not by chance that both works are quoted by Elias in his letter.⁹² Michael the Great⁹³ informs us that Cyriacus of Tagrit, under whose patriarchate the debate in Armenia between Nonnus and Abū Qurrah took place, was particularly concerned with the challenges set by Chalcedonians (and Julianists), and that he actively engaged in negotiations and polemic issues with both parties, which, not surprisingly, are both represented as the polemical goal of two consecutive florilegia in our British Library and Mingana manuscripts. Considering the general lack of Miaphysite Christological sources between the death of George of the Arabs (708 CE) and the beginning of the ninth century, we are lucky to have at least Elias' and Nonnus' letters, since they add crucial elements to the picture of the Miaphysite position at the end of a long period of triumphant

91 Theodore Abū Qurrah, *Mayāmīr*, 104–139.

92 *Eliae epistula*, 46 and 96 (text), 33 and 69 (trans.) (from John's *Against the Jacobites*); 33–34 and 42–45 (text), 24 and 29–32 (trans.) (from John's *De fide orthodoxa*).

93 Chalcedonians: Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, 4:495–497 (text), 3:32–34 (trans.); Julianists: Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, 4:483–486 (text), 3:10–15 (trans.). On Julianism under Cyriacus, see Ute Possekkel, "Julianism in Syriac Christianity," in *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. P. Bruns and H.O. Luthé; Eichstätter Beiträge zum Christlichen Orient 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 437–458, at 454–456.

Chalcedonianism. These sources reveal that the main questions at stake were the same as those tackled in our florilegium in the same years, and that, to address these questions, Elias and Nonnus used pretty much the same collection of patristic quotations and ideas as can also be found in the florilegium. Indeed, it is likely that the Christological florilegium started circulating in the form in which we now read it under Cyriacus, since all its manuscript witnesses can be dated no earlier than the end of the eighth century. Wright's eighth-century dating of BL Add. 14532, which seems to be the earliest witness to the florilegium, is telling in this regard.

Elias' and Nonnus' letters show that, in the last years of the eighth century and at the beginning of the ninth, the questions⁹⁴ debated at the end of the sixth century under the patriarchate of Peter of Callinicum regained high relevance among Miaphysite theologians, who then turned to sixth-century sources and patristic collections (and certainly added to them) to construct their arguments and texts. The controversial themes of the past were recurring once again, but the Chalcedonian metaphysics had significantly evolved. It is to this evolution of old topics in a new form that Miaphysite theologians intended to react. The new Chalcedonian view on the questions of nature, hypostasis, and properties imposed on the Miaphysites a work of re-conceptualization and re-organization of their tradition. The Christological florilegium, which tackles the same topics and uses the same sources in the same years, may thus be seen as a further actor in the debate between Chalcedonians and Miaphysites, based on the same arguments and materials. Through Elias' letter, we can even have a look at these anthological materials in the making, just as they were drawing close to their final form. We could even suppose that Elias, perhaps writing *after* the florilegium had reached its final form, used the Christological florilegium as we know it—if he did not himself contribute to its compilation. It is tempting to conclude that Cyriacus, who was a successor of Peter of Callinicum and probably could still have access to materials from previous controversies and

94 Admittedly, the only chronological information provided by Elias' letter is that it was written after 743, to which the Damascene's *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, quoted in the letter, is dated. As I said, it is likely the Elias of the letter is the Elias of Ḥarrān (the city of which Abū Qurra was bishop at the beginning of the ninth century) who wrote the preface to the treatise *On Difference* and dedicated his treatise on the Eucharist to the not-yet patriarch Dionysius of Tell-Mahre (who governed 818–845. After Rudolf Abramowski's classical work, we now have a fresh monograph on this patriarch: Philip Wood, *The Imam of the Christians. The World of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, c. 750–850* [Princeton, NJ: Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021]). Thus, we should assign Elias's *floruit* between the end patriarchate of Cyriacus of Tagrit (790–817) and the beginning of Dionysius', which was also Nonnus' main period of activity.

especially from those involving Peter, may have ordered that those materials, which had already been organised in some way by the previous generations, be set up as structured handbooks to form his theologians for the urgent dogmatic controversies of his day against the predominant Church.

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Appendix 1. The Christological Florilegium: Chapter Titles 1–105

- 1 [The Fathers teach] what the difference is as to the natural characteristic of the [natures] from which Christ derives.
- 2 What does “as to the natural characteristic” mean?
- 3 We confess the difference, the property, and the otherness of the natures from which Christ derives.
- 4 Not confessing the otherness of *ousia* nor the difference [of *ousia*] does not fall outside of the iniquity of those who confuse the *ousiai*.
- 5 ~~When is a division also conceived along with the difference?~~
- 6 Division ceases and difference is preserved.
- 7 We see that the difference as to the natural characteristic does not vanish, thanks to the unconfused character of the union, but division has been taken away.
- 8 Difference as to the *ousia* did not cease after the thought of the union.
- 9 Difference as to the *ousia* remained.
- 10 The union did not take away difference, nor did it make it vanish nor cease; but it took away division into two. One thing is division, another one is difference.
- 11 We do not make the difference a cause of division.
- 12 Heretics try to introduce division through difference as to the *ousia*.
- 13 Essential difference does not bring in with itself a cutting into two after the union.
- 14 Division does not follow a difference of essence in any regard.
- 15 Difference as to the *ousia* denies duality after the union.
- 16 Otherness as to the natural characteristic also preserves the union uncon-

fused and does not dissolve the formula “one nature of the incarnate Word”.

- 17 We do not avoid confessing the property of the natures from which the Emmanuel derives, in order to preserve the union unconfused.
- 18 One [is] the nature of the incarnate Word and it is not divided into two after the union, and yet [this] does not suppress the essential difference.
- 19 Since the human being can be separated in theory, [Severus] shows the difference of the [components] of which he consists.
- 20 Taking difference away is tantamount to introducing confusion.
- 21 After the unutterable union, the hypostatic union does not mix up the difference as to the natural characteristic, nor does it leave [any] trace of a cutting.
- 22 Speaking of union does not neglect the difference but removes division.
- 23 Wherever we confess one nature of the incarnate Word, we also conceive of a difference as to the natural characteristic.
- 24 We do not maintain, nor confess, two natures before the union, in the union, or after the union.
- 25 The teacher [*scil.* Cyril] conceived of “after the union” and of “union” as [being] the same thing.
- 26 The Grammarian spoke of “two natures” in the union.
- 27 One is the nature and the hypostasis in the union and in the composition.
- 28 Two things or beings are one once they are gathered together.
- 29 Even though the two are one because of the gathering, they [are] such not [because they are] equal by nature or equal by *ousia*.
- 30 Saying “two” in whatever way is tantamount to cutting.
- 31 Separating [if only] in theory is tantamount to cutting.
- 32 Demonstration that “two” means cutting, and that not even conceptually does one say “two” without dividing in theory.
- 33 Not even in one’s mind can one say “two” without dividing Him who is from two.
- 34 Separation is a premise to duality.
- 35 The cutting and the duality which are in the thought cease.
- 36 ‘From two natures or hypostases’ is said [only] in theory.
- 37 Composed [things] are separated only in theory.
- 38 Composition is divided only in [one’s] mind.
- 39 The [natures] from which Christ derives appear two only in theory because of the difference as to the *ousia*, and because of inequality of species with regard to one another.
- 40 “Other and other” can be understood only as far as the essential characteristic is concerned, when what is composed is separated in theory.

- 41 Only in theory is one allowed to see the [natures] from which the union derives as “other and other”.
- 42 [Only] in theory do we know that two [entities that are] different as to the *ousia* were gathered together.
- 43 When one separates in the thought, one finds otherness as to the species and inequality of *ousia*.
- 44 Not because those [*scil.* the Chalcedonians] who are against the difference of the natures from which Christ derives say it is necessary that we avoid to [mention difference], too.
- 45 Not the fact itself of mentioning two natures is bad, but the fact of speaking of two natures after the union is contemptible.
- 46 No one before Cyril had spoken with the very words “hypostatic union”.
- 47 The union of the Word with the flesh is called composition.
- 48 Christ is one composite person.
- 49 The Fathers know that the union of the Word with His ensouled flesh was natural and hypostatic, and they teach that He was united with regard to the *ousia*.
- 50 What is composed in a natural union from entities different by [their] nature is named after its parts, and the whole is called after each of them, and each of them is named after the name of its whole.
- 51 God the Word became human and was begotten in the flesh.
- 52 Testimonia of the holy Fathers who confess that God the Word suffered and died for us in the flesh.
- 53 Although the Fathers separate two natures in theory, they see and say that the union occurred from those [two] and confess **one nature of the incarnate Word** after the union, and do not divide in any way those which were united.
- 54 Refusal of saying “two natures”.
- 55 Saying “two united [*scil.* natures]” is opposite to saying “one incarnate”.
- 56 “One” is said not only of simple things but also of composite ones, and whoever says: “if one is the **nature of the incarnate Word**, then confusion and mixture occur”, says oddities.
- 57 Let us refer all the words present in the Gospels to one person and hypostasis; the teacher confesses **one hypostasis of the incarnate Word**.
- 58 On the words “with” and “together”.
- 59 It is not necessary that we avoid all the things that the heretics say, [but] recognizing the difference is no cause for cutting the one Christ into two natures.
- 60 Those who confess Christ [as] two natures add a [word that] leads astray the simple: they define the [natures through] the word “undivided”.

- 61 As to the natures from which Christ derives, the holy Fathers know them as hypostases.
- 62 Two persons are ascribed to hypostases that [have] their proper subsistence and subsist separately.
- 63 We do not say that Christ [derived] from two persons in the same way as we say that [he derives] from two natures or hypostases.
- 64 It is abominable to say that the nature of God the Word changed into the flesh to the point that they were confused.
- 65 The expressions “in two” or “in each one” are understood [as referring to] two hypostases that subsist in their proper subsistence.
- 66 “From two” and “two” are not the same thing.
- 67 [Cyril] orders Nestorius, after he introduced the natures into the union, to avoid division.
- 68 For the adversaries it is the same thing to say “Christ in two natures” and “two natures in Christ”. [In this chapter we find three excerpts from Probus: “Of Probus, from the *chartis* he made as a confession of faith and gave to Anastasius, chief of the congregation in Antioch”; “Of the same from the *chartis* he produced at the synod held in Antioch under the direction of Gregory, who was patriarch, and of twelve bishops”; “Of the same from the sixth *chartis* against the monks”].
- 69 The Word is not known without the flesh after the union.
- 70 The natures or hypostases from which Christ [derives] are seen in one person and in one hypostasis and nature; they do not imply a division into two.
- 71 Only one Christ and Lord and Son is seen in one person and hypostasis and in his only nature, i.e. the incarnate [nature].
- 72 The natures or hypostases from which Christ [derives], by being in composition without diminution and without separation, make up one person.
- 73 When the natures from which Christ derives subsist in composition, the duality of hypostases and persons that [can be conceived of], as it were, in the phantasy of thoughts vanishes.
- 74 When the concept of the union is brought in, the presence of duality in the mind is removed.
- 75 After the thought of the union, the cutting into two [that is present] in the thought ceases and departs.
- 76 Seeing two [natures] is possible in theory alone, and the teacher [*scil.* Cyril] demonstrated that “after the union” is tantamount to “after the thought of the union”.
- 77 The [natures] that were united are not at all [any longer] two.

- 78 The expressions “the one Son is not two natures” and “duality dissolves the union” are asserted absolutely.
- 79 The force of the union makes every duality cease, and the **one nature of the incarnate Word** makes every confusion and division cease.
- 80 [Cyril] prohibits the cutting in every respect.
- 81 Those who were in Chalcedon were required by the [political] leaders to formulate a Creed.
- 82 The definition that was established by the Synod of Chalcedon.
- 83 Saying what is in agreement with the 318 Fathers is not prohibited.
- 84 The blasphemies of the Tome of Leo, which are exposed one by one with the other remaining ones that have the same meaning.
- 85 In his letter to the Emperor Marcian, Dorotheus attests that Leo in his Tome affirms two natures after the union.
- 86 On the acceptance of Eutyches.
- 87 Eutyches was accepted by Leo of Rome.
- 88 The condemnation of Dioscorus did not occur on account of faith.
- 89 “Knowing the difference of the words is one thing, separating the natures is another thing”: regarding these unlearned words, saint Cyril says that they are not his own.
- 90 It is foolish to say that the union of the Emmanuel derives from two persons.
- 91 Hypostases or natures are the [entities] that were united.
- 92 Nestorius did not affirm—in words—neither two Christs or two Sons or one and another Son.
- 93 Nestorius confesses ‘united natures’.
- 94 Nestorius affirms one person from two.
- 95 One thing [resulted] from two.
- 96 What the Easterners wanted the holy Cyril to quit and reject, and again what he wanted them to reject.
- 97 [Christ] is both [things] together, or, he is and is known as [both] ‘this’ and ‘that’.
- 98 Of Theodoret, from the things he wrote to those who had his same opinion in Constantinople, after Cyril’s union with the Easterners.
- 99 From the letter of Hiba to Mari the Persian, which was read to the Synod of Chalcedon in the tenth [but: eleventh] session.
- 100 Of Nestorius from the letter to the Constantinopolitans.
- 101 From a *dialalià* [Actio XI] of the Council of Chalcedon.
- 102 From the eighth [but: ninth] session on Theodoret.
- 103 Theodoret confesses two hypostases viz. natures.
- 104 Leo says that every nature preserves its property.

105 The holy Fathers say that sometimes the Emmanuel left the flesh that it might suffer its own [passions].

Appendix 2. A Sample of the Correspondences between the Christological Florilegium and the Miaphysite *Libelli* of 595 (MS D = BL Add. 14533)

TABLE 5.1 Extension of the Miaphysite *Libelli* against Probus in MS D: fol. 107^r–123



Excerpt in the 7th <i>Libellus</i>	Position of the same excerpt in the florilegium
fol. 111 ^{ra} , from Cyril, 2nd Tome against Nestorius	chapter 1
fol. 111 ^{rb} , from Severus, Contra Grammaticum	chapter 3, same interruption with $\omega\theta\iota\alpha$.
fol. 111 ^{rb} , from Severus, Letter to Eleusinius	chapter 1
fol. 111 ^{rb} , from Severus, Philalethes	chapter 10
fol. 111 ^{va} , from Severus, Apology of the Philalethes	chapter 6
fol. 111 ^{va} , from Severus, Letter 1 to Sergius the Grammarian	chapter 7, same interruption with $\omega\theta\iota\alpha$.
fol. 112 ^{ra} , from Severus, Contra Grammaticum	chapter 29
fol. 112 ^{rb-va} , from Cyril Letter 2 to Succensus	chapter 55
fol. 112 ^{vb} –113 ^{ra} , from Cyril, 2nd Tome against Nestorius	chapter 67
fol. 113 ^{ra} , from ps.-Athanasius, “De incarnatione divina Verbi Dei”	chapter 54
fol. 113 ^{ra} , from ps.-Julius of Rome, Discourse to those who fight against the divine incarnation of the Word	chapter 54
fol. 113 ^{ra} , from Cyril, Apology of the 8th anathematism, against Andrew	chapter 58
fol. 113 ^{rab} , from Cyril, Logos Prosphonetikos to Theodosius II	chapter 65
fol. 113 ^{rb} , from Proclus, Tome to the Armenians	chapter 27

Appendix 3

TABLE 5.2 A sample of the correspondences between Elias' Letter to Leo and the Christological Florilegium

Passage and position in florilegium	In Elias' Letter
From Cyril, 2nd Tome against Nestorius; chapt. 67	Chapter 5, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 25 text; 18 trans.
From Cyril, Letter to Eulogius; chapt. 53	Chapter 5, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 25 text; 18 trans.
From Cyril, Letter 1 to Succensus, chapt. 53	Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 65–66 text; 47 trans.
Immediately following in chapt. 53: From Cyril, Letter 2 to Succensus	Also immediately following in Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 68 text; 50 trans.
From Cyril, Letter to Eulogius, chapt. 59	Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 70 text; 51 trans.
From Cyril, Letter to Acacius of Melitene, chapt. 53	Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 70–71 text; 51 trans.
Following one in chapt. 53: From Cyril, Letter to Acacius of Melitene	Previous one in chapter 9; <i>Eliae epistula</i> 70 text; 51 trans.
From ps.-Gregory Thaumaturgus, Fides secundum partes, chapt. 54	Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 76 text; 55 trans.
Immediately following in chapt. 54 after a bridging formula: From ps.-Athanasius, “De incorporatione Verbi Dei”	Immediately following in Chapter 9, with the same bridging formula, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 76–77 text; 55 trans.
From Gregory Nazianzen, Letter 1 to Cledonius, chapt. 52	Chapter 9, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 77 text; 56 trans.
From John Chrysostom, 38th Homily on 1 Cor, chapt. 52	Chapter 11, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 94 text; 67 trans.
From ps.-Athanasius against Apollinaris, chapt. 49	Chapter 11, <i>Eliae epistula</i> 96 text; 69 trans. with the same interruption through ܨܐܕܝܐ

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