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ARGUMENTATIVE STRATEGIES IN PHILOXENOS OF MABBUG'S CORRESPONDENCE: FROM THE SYRIAC MODEL TO THE GREEK MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The shift in argumentative strategies utilized by Philoxenos in his polemical correspondence over the nearly forty years of his ecclesiastical career reveals an adaptation of his literary practice to the model of legitimation found in Greek Christological polemics. Four phases are identified here based on chronology and style. Over time Philoxenos moved from a disputational approach relying on scriptural arguments and the Syriac literary tradition of Ephrem to an emphasis on historical precedent and the orthodox pedigree of the Miaphysite tradition and finally to a more pragmatic strategy for the success of the Miaphysite Christology within the Imperial Church.

An overview of Philoxenos of Mabbug's correspondence allows one to trace noteworthy changes in the author's thematic focus, argumentative choices, modes of historical representation and rhetoric of self-representation, from his earliest epistolary attempts

to the letters written in the period of his exile.[1] While Philoxenos' doctrinal program remained essentially the same throughout his entire career, the manner in which he defended this program underwent various changes over the years.[2]

The main focus of Philoxenos' letters shifted from matters of doctrine (in the early correspondence) to issues of ecclesiastical practice and discipline (in the late correspondence). At the same time, his arguments gained in concreteness and started to focus on the history of earlier Christological controversies, echoing a need to find additional elements of legitimation. A shift can be discerned also from scriptural argumentation to patristic argumentation. These changes reflect Philoxenos' increasingly involved participation in the Christological controversies of the late fifth and early sixth century, and represent to a large extent an adaptation of his literary practice to the style of Greek Christological polemics.[3]

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[1] The correspondence is evenly distributed over four decades, from the early years of his episcopacy to his exile. Philoxenos was appointed bishop to the see of Mabbug in 485 (it is unclear, however, whether he was immediately able to exert his episcopal authority in a see where he seems to have had very limited support; see his *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 83). He was exiled soon after Justin I's accession, in 519. According to his biographer, Elias of Qartamin, he died in 523.

[2] Some points moved up or down in the author's priorities—for example, the impact of a Dyophysite

Christology on Trinitarian doctrine is among his main concerns in the early letters, but loses importance in the late ones.

[3] The larger background of the transformations analyzed in this paper is a more deep-rooted process of change (amply discussed by S. Brock; see, for example, S. Brock, "Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning") in which, starting from the late fifth century, Syriac writers appear inclined to move away from the Syriac heritage and to embrace the Greek cultural patrimony, in an effort to adapt their discourse to the requirements of contemporary controversies. See also the relevant changes analyzed by Lucas Van Rompay in "*Mallpânâ dilan Suryâyâ*: Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenos of Mabbog: Respect and Distance."

THE EARLY CORRESPONDENCE

Exhortations, threats, anathemas and various other severe pronouncements set the tone of Philoxenos' early correspondence.[4] The author requires from his addressees a full, direct and public doctrinal disclosure, along the lines of Matthew 10:32–33, which he quotes in the *Letter to the Monks*: "Everyone therefore who acknowledges Me before others, I also will acknowledge before My Father in heaven; but whoever denies Me before others, I also will deny before My Father in heaven." Philoxenos' unyielding intransigence sets the dominant tone of the three letters examined here:

> For anything that does not stem from the truth is cast out from the truth, whether [it stems from] fear or lie[s], whether [from] vanity or hypocrisy; whether [from] love of pleasures or [from] the deceitfulness of power. These and others that are similar are cast out from the truth. And, just as these things cannot be in the truth, so also the people who are under their sway cannot abide in the truth and possess faith.[5]

Within this context, the theme of voluntary martyrdom for the truth comes up frequently, in a variety of discursive arrangements, moving from personal disposition to general plea.

Philoxenos advocates a spirit of disputation, encouraging the monks he addresses to engage in theological discussions and to be prompt in countering the doctrinal arguments of the adversaries: "one should not only proclaim the truth in simple words before [one's] friends, but also profess it before [one's] enemies with the

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[4] This section of the paper deals with the following letters: the *Letter to the Monks* (dated to the period of the Trisagion controversy, written most likely in the first half of Calandion's patriarchate in Antioch, that is, sometime between 479 and 482), the *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda* (dated to the period 482-484) and the *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* (late 484/early 485).

[5] *Letter to the Monks*, 130 (95): ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܓܝܪ ܫܕܐ ܟܠܡܕܡ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܫܪܪܐ. ܐܢ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܘܐܢ ܕܓܠܘܬܐ. ܐܢ ܫܘܦܪܘܬܐ ܘܐܢ ܡܣܒ ܒܐ̈ܦܐ. ܐܢ ܪܚܡܬܐ ܕܒܣܡܐ. ܘܐܢ ܢܟܠܬܐ ܕܫܘ̈ܠܛܢܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܘܕܐܟܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܒܪ ܡܢܗ ܕܫܪܪܐ ܫܕܝܢ. ܘܐܝܟܢ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܗܘܝܢ ܒܫܪܪܐ. ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܩܘܘܢ ܒܫܪܪܐ ܘܢܩܢܘܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ.

steadfastness that fights with death."[6] On occasion, he provides them with actual scenarios for these confrontations; in the *Letter to the Monks*, he enjoins his monastic audience to reply to those who presumptuously raise the question of how God can die with a question of their own, namely, "how can God be born"?[7] Similarly, in the *Letter to the Monks of Teleda* he teaches the monks what they ought to retort to those provocatively asking them "who governed the world during the three days when God was dead," "if the angels cannot die, how can one say that God died?," or "how is it possible that He be mortal and immortal at the same time?"[8]

The largest part of Philoxenos' early correspondence consists of doctrinal expositions. Of main importance in these expositions is a strong and unremitting rejection of Dyophysite Christology, the defense of the term *Theotokos* and of the Trisagion hymn enlarged with the formula "Who was crucified for us," a fervent insistence on the unity of subject in Christ and constantly repeated affirmations of the genuine kenosis. In an effort to adapt this type of discourse to his audience, he explains to the monks how perseverance in monastic discipline does not, in and of itself, situate them among the righteous. Withdrawal from the world does not justify them, unless the practice of monastic spirituality is accompanied by public professions of the true faith:

> Do not stand in awe of men and do not stop from being zealous and fighting on behalf of it [the truth]; and say that: "We are diligent in the stillness of our ascetic life." Ascetic life is beautiful. The labors of righteousness are praiseworthy. But they are members and truth is their head. And if the head is cut off, the members are destroyed.[9]

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[6] *Letter to the Monks*, 128 (94): ܐܠܐ ܬܗܘܘ ܕܚܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܟܚܘ ܡܢ ܩܢܝܐ ܘܡܩܪܒܢܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܘܬܐܡܪܘ ܕܐܢܚܢ ܒܫܟܝܢܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܡܬܩܢܝܢ ܐܢܚܢܐ. ܫܦܝܪ ܗܘ ܚܝܐ ܕܢܣܝܐ. ܫܦܝܪ ܗܘ ܦܘܠܚܢ ܕܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ. ܐܝܟ ܐܒܪܝ ܗܢ ܘܫܪܪܐ ܗܘ ܪܝܫܗܘܢ. ܘܐܢ ܐܬܩܨܒ ܪܝܫܐ ܐܦ ܐܒܪܝ ܡܬܬܒܕܝܢ.

[7] *Letter to the Monks*, 136 (99).

[8] *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda*, 472; 486.

[9] *Letter to the Monks*, 143 (104): ܐܠܐ ܬܗܘܘ ܕܚܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܢܝ ܐܢܫܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܟܚܘ ܡܢ ܩܢܝܐ ܘܡܩܪܒܢܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܘܬܐܡܪܘ ܕܐܢܚܢ ܒܫܟܝܢܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܡܬܩܢܝܢ ܐܢܚܢܐ. ܫܦܝܪ ܗܘ ܚܝܐ ܕܢܣܝܐ. ܫܦܝܪ ܗܘ ܦܘܠܚܢ ܕܙܕܝܩܘܬܐ. ܐܝܟ ܐܒܪܝ ܗܢ ܘܫܪܪܐ ܗܘ ܪܝܫܗܘܢ. ܘܐܢ ܐܬܩܨܒ ܪܝܫܐ ܐܦ ܐܒܪܝ ܡܬܬܒܕܝܢ.

The Philoxenian letters dated to this period differ in tone and content both from the texts produced by the first generation of anti-Chalcedonians (whose most authoritative figure was Timothy Aelurus), and from those produced by Philoxenos' prestigious contemporary—and master in the polemics of this period—Severus of Antioch. In contrast with the former's pointed campaign against the Council of Chalcedon and Pope Leo I, Philoxenos' agenda appears at times imprecise. In contrast with the latter's keen preoccupation with linguistic clarity, Philoxenos' Christological vocabulary strives, at this early stage of his correspondence, for freshness of imagery more than it does for terminological precision.

The points of doctrine addressed in these letters are elaborated upon in a style which is reminiscent of Saint Ephrem the Syrian more than it is of fifth-century Miaphysite authors. The vocabulary and images chosen by Philoxenos to describe the mystery of the Incarnation are strongly evocative of one of St. Ephrem's favorite literary device: the paradox.[10] Side by side, below, are images drawing on two of the most intriguing paradoxical statements: "the Creator became creature" and "the Most-High became the lowest:"

> **Philoxenos**: "He Who, as God, fashions, molds, composes, joins, and creates new babies inside the wombs, He, as man, was fashioned and molded, and became a baby in person."[11]
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> **Ephrem**: "While His body was forming within the womb, His power was fashioning all members! While the Conception of the Son was fashioning in the

[10] The *Mêmrê against Habbib*, written around the same time as the letters examined in this section of the paper (482–484) further confirm Philoxenos' dependence on St. Ephrem—a more explicit dependence, this time: Philoxenos appended to his discourses against Habbib a *florilegium* of patristic authorities in which St. Ephrem is by far the most frequently quoted author (about half of the total number of excerpts). For a closer analysis of Philoxenos' relation with Ephrem in the *Mêmrê*, see Lucas Van Rompay, "*Mallpânâ dilan Suryâyâ*: Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenos of Mabbog: Respect and Distance."

[11] *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal*, 150 (108).

> womb, He Himself was fashioning babes in the womb."[12]
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> **Philoxenos**: "The Ancient of days became a child. And the Most High became a baby inside the womb. And God became man in the womb."[13] And further on: "[Although] of a divine nature, He became man according to nature; [although] of a divine nature, He was born to a creature according to nature. [Although] of a divine nature, He sucked milk according to nature. And [although] of a divine nature, He grew in His stature."[14]
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> **Ephrem**: "the Highest came down to the lowest."[15] And elsewhere: "The Holy One dwelt bodily in the womb."[16] And again: "The High One became as a little child, and in Him was hidden a treasure of wisdom sufficing for all! Though Most High, yet He sucked the milk of Mary, and of His goodness all creatures suck!"[17]

Similar statements occupy considerable portions of all of Philoxenos' early letters.

Like St. Ephrem, Philoxenos uses the rhetoric of the paradox to counter his adversaries' rational attempts at defining the Incarnation.[18] This can be understood as a tendency to criticize his opponents for their over-interpretation, going beyond paradoxical images, his opponents disregard the inexpressible character of the Incarnation. Although the rhetoric of the paradox is replaced by a more complex doctrinal discourse in the later correspondence, under the influence of the Christological controversies in which he

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[12] *Hymns on the Nativity* 3, 233.

[13] *Letter to the Monks*, 133 (97).

[14] *Letter to the Monks*, 134–5 (98).

[15] *Hymns on the Nativity* 3, 229.

[16] *Hymns on the Nativity* 3, 232.

[17] *Hymns on the Nativity* 3, 233. Habbib, the opponent who attacked Philoxenos' *Letter to the Monks*, saw this type of formulations as originating in the heretical writings of Bardaisan. In his reply to this, Philoxenos argues for Ephrem as the origin of these statements. See discussion in Lucas Van Rompay, "Bardaisan and Mani in Philoxenos of Mabbog's *Mêmrê against Habbib*."

[18] Cf. *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda*, 471–2.

became progressively more involved, Philoxenos preserves this concern with over-interpretation throughout the entire body of his correspondence. In the *Letter to Maron, a Lector of Anazarbos* (ca. 514/5–518), for example, he launches a vehement diatribe against those who, using "secular science," interpret the word "incarnate" in the formula "one incarnate nature of God the Word" as signifying a different nature;[19] similarly, in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (521), he states: "The things that are confessed by means of these expressions cannot be comprehended by science, but they are explained only by faith: and by this not because it comprehends them, but because it knows only to believe in them."[20]

An unusual feature in the context of contemporary Christological controversies, Philoxenos' early correspondence gives almost exclusive preference to scriptural—rather than patristic—proof texts. The argument from the Fathers is completely absent from the letters examined in this section.[21]

Moreover, the early correspondence contains surprisingly few concrete and direct references to contemporary historical circumstances. When present, these references play the role of basic contextualizing elements, and the polemics around them come into focus infrequently and only by way of allusions. Historical argumentation is lacking in these letters (aside from a few mentions of fourth-century arch-heretics such as Arius,

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[19] *Letter to Maron*, 42–44.

[20] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 10: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܢ ܡܠܝ ܩܠܝ ܡܡܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܢ ܒܡܕܥܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܗܕܐ ܡܛܥܡ ܕܡܕܥ ܡܕܥ ܐܠܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ ܠܗ ܐܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܥ ܐܠܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ ܠܗ ܒܠܚܘܕ.

[21] Philoxenos' lack of sophistication in using patristic proof texts in this period is further confirmed by the *florilegium* appended to the *Mêmrê against Habbib*, where about half of the number of quotations comes from St. Ephrem the Syrian. It was in the midst of a controversy over the orthodoxy of the Theopaschite Trisagion (approx. 482-484) that Philoxenos took up the practice of using proof texts in support of his position, and he refined this method of argumentation from tradition over time. A comparison between the *florilegium* appended to the *Mêmrê* and that incorporated in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* shows how, toward the end of his life, Philoxenos had come to use all the authorities commonly cited by participants in the Christological controversies, while at the same time reducing his use of St. Ephrem.

Eunomius, Apollinaris and Macedonius, which can hardly be seen as arguments from history, playing little more than a rhetorical-moralizing role).

Some historical references can be found in the *Letter to the Monks* where Philoxenos alludes to his being persecuted by those who pay allegiance to the powerful of the day and mentions the orthodoxy and the spirit of resistance manifested by the Syrian monasteries.[22] In the *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda* he mentions the addition "Christ King" made by Patriarch Calandion of Antioch during the early 480s in an attempt to render the enlarged Trisagion acceptable outside Miaphysite circles.[23] In the same *Letter to the Monks of Teleda* he alludes to treatises written against him by his adversaries.[24] The *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* is richer in historical references, having, at the same time, a more vehemently polemical tone. Philoxenos mentions his presence in Constantinople (484), makes a passing reference to contacts between the Syrian monastery and Zeno, and declares the orthodoxy of the emperor.

These historical references notwithstanding, the portrayal of his enemies in the *Letter to the Monks* and in the *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda* is veiled, being made up almost exclusively of doctrinal details (those who divide Christ into two, who dare to say "one and the other," who distinguish the actions of the divinity from those of the humanity, thus denying the unity of subject in Christ). In contrast to this, in the *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* Philoxenos provides his audience with more specific details about these enemies.[25] This mutation was certainly motivated by the favorable circumstances he had met with—and the support he must have gained–on the occasion of his visit in the capital around the year 484; by that time, Zeno had defeated the Isaurian complotters Illus and Leontius, and the Christological document published two years earlier—the *Henoticon*, a document in which

[22] *Letter to the Monks*, 131 (95), 143–4 (103–104).

[23] *First Letter to the Monks of Teleda*, 498. He does so, however, in a blurred manner, without mentioning the author of the addition or the magnitude of the conflicts it generated.

[24] Philoxenos, *Letter to the Monks of Teleda* 460–5.

[25] About one third of the *First Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* consists of long tirades against his opponents.

Philoxenos invested great expectations—was starting to show its unitive potential.

It is difficult to say to what extent the historical elusiveness of the early letters was a matter of political pragmatism (trying to avoid attracting blame—or even persecution—on account of his writings) or simply a matter of personal stylistic choice. After all, the *Letter to the Monks* was written at a time when, although ordained, Calandion could not exert his episcopal privileges in Antioch, due to popular opposition. In this case, it is unclear how great of a risk Philoxenos would have run, should he have decided to attack Calandion in a more personal manner and to attempt to steer the monasteries of the East in a direction that was not endorsed by the patriarch.

FIRST INTERMEDIARY PERIOD

The epistolary arsenal of doctrinal expositions produced by Philoxenos in the period leading up to 498, the year of the accession of Patriarch Flavian II of Antioch, is significantly more elaborate than that of his early correspondence.[26] His Christological language, though preserving the oxymoronic register of the Ephremian paradoxes, gains in precision and sophistication. His scriptural exegesis, however, is only seldom presented in the form of paradoxes (and in this intermediary period the Scriptures, mainly the New Testament, still represent his unique textual authorities).

Philoxenos' visit in the capital and his contacts with the Christological polemics there seem to have re-directed his theological interest from St. Ephrem, the local Syrian authority, to one with a larger-scale impact on the Christological controversies of the Greek world: Cyril of Alexandria. Philoxenos was probably influenced by an increasing awareness of the intense debates in which the Greek world became involved around this time concerning the true meaning of Cyril's works. Although Cyril is not mentioned by name in any of the two letters examined here (nor is, for that matter, any other patristic authority), in the *Second Letter to*

[26] This section of the paper examines two letters dated to the period 486–498: the *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* and the *Letter to Abu 'Afr, the Stratelates of Hira.*

the Monks of Beth-Gogal Philoxenos' allusions to the doctrines of the Dyophysites appear to be formulated as objections to Cyril's anathemas.[27]

His preoccupation with the interdiction regarding rational attempts at interpreting the divine mysteries is further pursued, to such an extent that it could be seen as a moral framework within which the theological "aberrations" of the adversaries are refuted; to be sure, its polemical potential is better exploited than in the early correspondence. The exhortations made to the monks to engage in theological arguments with their opponents are accompanied in the *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal* by a larger number of arguments—also formulated in a more precise theological language—offered to the monks for use in Christological confrontations.

In the two letters examined in this section, the "enemies" receive names, faces and a history of damnation: it is Theodore, his writings and his followers in the *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal*; it is (mainly) Theodoret—and his (in Philoxenos' view) duplicitous rejection of Nestorius—in the *Letter to Abu 'Afr*. In this latter text Philoxenos also proposes a genealogy of the "Nestorians," placing them in the direct lineage of the Jews and Arians.[28] While not exactly sophisticated, this genealogy is developed, in contrast to the considerably more random mentions of fourth-century arch-heretics which one finds in Philoxenos' early correspondence.

At the same time, Philoxenos makes several attempts at historical reconstruction in these letters. Some of them have deeper polemical implications, and reveal to us an author who is on the path to adapting his epistolary discourse to the style of contemporary controversies. Thus, in the *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Philoxenos presents the events that took place between 448 and 451 in such a way as to completely dissociate the name of Dioscorus of Alexandria from that of Eutyches. His solution is to leave out all mention of the Second Council of Ephesus (449). Eutyches was a fool who maintained that "the body of the Son of

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[27] See discussion in A. de Halleux, "La deuxième lettre de Philoxène aux monastères du Beit Gaugal," 18.

[28] *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Harb edition 188–195; Mingana translation, 353–5.

God came down with Him from heaven."[29] He was condemned and, after this condemnation, "Leo of Rome [...] sent an epistle to receive Nestorius and his impure interpretations."[30] From here, Marcian summoned a council in which Dioscorus was the only one who refused to side with the "renegades." The controversial Ephesus II, in defense of which, only a generation earlier, Timothy Aelurus had written extensively, is now completely eliminated from the picture drawn by Philoxenos, and the complications it was bound to bring along for the Miaphysites are thus by-passed.[31]

Another example of a similar reconstruction is the presentation of the events that took place in 457–8 in Alexandria: the murder of Proterius, the Chalcedonian Bishop of Alexandria, and Timothy Aelurus' role in the bloody events. According to Philoxenos, Timothy left Alexandria for Abyssinia immediately after Chalcedon, willingly withdrawing from among those who had condemned Dioscorus in 451, and only returned to Alexandria after Proterius' death.[32] Philoxenos relates:

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[29] *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Harb, 201: ܗܘ ܕܢܚܬ ܥܡܗ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܥܠ ܒܗ ܐܬܐ ܠܡܩܒܠ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ ܘܠܬܪܓܘܡܗ ܕܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܕܫܘܐ ܕܐܬܪ̈ܝ ܥܠ ܗܘ ܐܓܓܪܬܐ ܕܐܦܣܘܣ ܘܫܕܪ ܠܗ ܠܓܢܣ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܠܡܩܒܠ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ ܘܠܬܪܓܘܡܗ ܕܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܕܫܘܐ. Translation from Mingana, 357.

[30] *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Harb, 201: ܗܘ ܐܓܓܪܬܐ ܕܐܦܣܘܣ ܘܫܕܪ ܠܗ ܠܓܢܣ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܠܡܩܒܠ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ ܘܠܬܪܓܘܡܗ ܕܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܕܫܘܐ. Translation from Mingana, 357.

[31] The same representation can be found in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 17.

[32] Timothy's whereabouts in the period 451–457 are not entirely clear. A note in Liberatus' *Breviarium* (XIV, 124) suggests that, upon their refusal to recognize the new Chalcedonian Patriarch Proterius, Timothy Aelurus and Peter Mongus were condemned by Proterius. According to John Rufus' *The Life of Peter the Iberian* (92, 141), Proterius made himself guilty of extreme violence against Timothy on this occasion, and the condemnation was accompanied by exile: "Finally, he [Proterius] did not refrain from rushing in against the divine baptistery, and from the holy Jordan, that is, from the font of the worshipful baptism, like a rebel he took by force the holy Timothy along with Anatolius, his brother, and they led him to Taposiris, a desert fortress thirty miles distant from the city. There they imprisoned him under guard by soldiers, so that from then on that impious Proterius, finding a time that was opportune for his madness, again manifested many evils against those monks and laypeople who were unwilling to take part in his wickedness, especially against those responsible for the ordination of the blessed Timothy." Philoxenos

> "The inhabitants of Alexandria, stirred up with the zeal of God, entered his house [Proterius'], stoned him, killed him, dragged him out, and threw him into the sea. When the priests, the deacons and the laymen that had fled from Alexandria with Timothy, disciple of Dioscorus, heard that the accursed syncellus was dead, they returned and implored the faithful Bishops to elect Timothy their Patriarch, because they had heard that the holy Dioscorus had died in exile in Gangra."[33]

His presentation of the events leading up to Chalcedon, which omits Ephesus II, and his presentation of Proterius' death, which excludes Timothy, point to Philoxenos' intention to dissociate the Miaphysite past from all circumstances which might bring the orthodoxy of his side into question. Dioscorus is redeemed from his ill-fated association with Eutyches by the complete elimination of the Council of 449 from the narrative; Timothy is redeemed from the accusations of unlawful ordination and murder by means of a conveniently-timed trip to the distant region of Abyssinia.

As a counterpoint, Philoxenos increases the number of undesired associations on the side of his opponents, for example, Theodoret of Cyrrhus is made into a blood relation of Nestorius, namely his first cousin.[34] It is unclear how widespread this legend was among the Miaphysites, since no other source refers to it. Philoxenos' defamation of Theodoret, although less developed in

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preserved the "trip," but eliminated the negative elements of condemnation and exile. The difference in toponyms given by John Rufus and by Philoxenos as Timothy's place of residence after his condemnation (Taposiris vs. Abyssinia) may be accounted for by a confusion in the literary/manuscript tradition, but can be equally understood as an intentional alteration by Philoxenos, meant to present Timothy as far removed as possible from the stage of conflict in Alexandria.

[33] *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Harb, 204–205: ܘܡܕܝܢܝܐ ܐܬܬܥܝܪܘ ܐܠܟܣܢܕܪ̈ܝܐ ܒܛܢܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܥܠܘ ܗ̣ܘܘ ܥܠܘܗܝ، ܘܪܓܡܘܗܝ، ܒܟܐܦ̈ܐ، ܘܩܛܠܘܗܝ، ܘܓܪܘܗܝ، ܘܒܝܡܐ ܫܕܐܘܗܝ. ܘܟܕ ܫܡܥܘ ܗ̣ܘܘ ܩܫܝ̈ܫܐ ܘܡܫܡ̈ܫܢ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܕܥܪܩܝܢ ܗ̣ܘܘ ܠܟܘܫ ܥܡ ܛܝܡܬܐܘܣ ܬܠܡܝܕܗ ܕܕܝܘܣܩܘܪܘܣ ܕܡܝܬ ܠܗ ܗ̇ܘ ܣܘܢܩܠܐ ܠܝܛܐ، ܗܦܟܘ ܘܐܦܝܣܘ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘ̈ܦܐ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢܝܗܝ، ܠܛܝܡܬܐܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܫܡܥܘ ܕܡܝܬ ܠܗ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܝܘܣܩܘܪܘܣ ܕܒܗ ܒܓܢܓܪܐ ܒܐܟܣܘܪܝܐ. Translation from Mingana, 357.

[34] *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, Harb edition 191–195; Mingana translation, 354–355.

style and plot, mirrors similar attempts made by his contemporary, Severus of Antioch.[35] In his *Thirtieth Cathedral Homily* (about St. Simeon the Stylite), for example, Severus craftily portrays Theodoret as a villain who tried to mask his own blasphemous actions with pious narrations of St. Simeon's good works.[36] Further, Severus compares Theodoret with Eusebius of Caesarea, who, "contaminated with the disease of Arius, narrated the heroic deeds of the glorious martyrs of Palestine."[37]

These historical arguments, although much more in line with the discourse of contemporary Christological controversies, and within the Greek-speaking world, were not produced in that particular context. The letter that contains them was addressed to a Persian official. We do not know whether Philoxenos' account was endorsed by the *stratelates* of Hira and further disseminated on Persian territory, but there is some evidence that this may have indeed been the case. The *Chronicle of Seert* suggests a growing concern among Persian Dyophysites with the Miaphysite "corruptors," who, in this period, "started to spread their doctrine in Persia and to corrupt the faith of the people."[38] Philoxenos and his party must have been in a tough competition with the Persian Dyophysites for winning over certain segments of the Persian society (monasteries, as is the case in the *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal*, or secular rulers, as is the case in the *Letter to Abu*

[35] Analyzing the legendary blood relationship, F. Nau makes an interesting comment, namely that the anti-Chalcedonian tradition "identifie le plus possible Théodoret avec Nestorius pour avoir quelque raison d'affirmer que le concile de Chalcédoine en absolvant le premier a aussi absous le second" (F. Nau, "La Naissance de Nestorius," 425). Yet Philoxenos' narrative does not explicate this association; as already noted, arguments from historical reconstruction slowly make their way into the Philoxenian letters, but—at this stage—they are not fully developed, nor are they artfully exploited.

[36] *Cathedral Homily* 30, Patrologia Orientalis 36/4, 609–10.

[37] *Cathedral Homily* 30, 610: ܕܐܝܟ ܕܒܚܕ ܕܐܝܬܝ ܕܡ ܟܬܝܒܬ ܕ ܠܬܝ ܣܝܣܝ ܕܒܚܕ ܕܐܬܝ ܥܡ ܟܬܝܒܬ ܕ ܒܚܕ ܕܐܬܝ ܥܡ ܟܬܝܒܬ ܕ.

[38] *Chronicle of Seert*, 122. (English translation adapted from the French translation of Addaï Scher)

'Afr).[39] Philoxenos' interest in the situation in Persia therefore determined the inclusion of historical representations in the letters from this period; however, the source of inspiration for this change in argumentative strategies was most likely Philoxenos' contact with the discourse of contemporary Greek polemics on Christology.

SECOND INTERMEDIARY PERIOD

Sources from this period include the extant fragments of two Philoxenian letters[40] produced circa 509–512 (the years of the controversy that led to the condemnation of Flavian of Antioch), as well as the *Letter to Maron, a Lector of Anazarbos*, written sometime during the patriarchate of Severus in Antioch (most likely between 514/515 and 518).[41]

These letters reflect in their doctrinal treatments the Christological canon that had developed among the Greek Miaphysites over the fifty years following Chalcedon (arguments which were continuously receiving new emphases with each new debate). Philoxenos' accounts in this period are now more in line with those written in the same period by Severus of Antioch, offering the same types of arguments (with scholastic emphases at times) for the refutation of Chalcedon and of its supporters, and the same attacks on neo-Chalcedonian attempts at peace by compromise. Ultimately, as the stress in his argumentation shifts from winning others over to his position to simply winning an argument, legitimation from historical precedent becomes significantly more important to his rhetorical strategy.

At this stage, Philoxenos' fight was by no means one over doctrine alone. The points of doctrine Flavian had accepted (including the approval of Cyril of Alexandria's *Twelve Anathemas*) were not significantly different from those Philoxenos had

[39] *Chronicle of Seert*, 126. A Dyophysite counterpart to Philoxenos' *Letter to Abu 'Afr* is mentioned in an episode of the Chronicle of Seert: Eliseus, under Acacius' commission, writes for Kawad "a work on the true religion, divided into thirty-eight chapters," a work which eventually obtained the favor of the king.

[40] The *Letter to the Monks of Palestine* and the *Letter concerning The Council of Ephesus*.

[41] See De Halleux, "Textes Inédits de Philoxène de Mabboug I," 30.

required. The fight was now at least as much over tradition and authority as it was over doctrine.[42] This change of focus is not surprising, if one takes into consideration the type of accusations Philoxenos and the Miaphysites had to withstand: condemnations for their heretical past, unlawful ordinations, forgeries, and, not the least important, made-up misdemeanors.[43] These accusations could

[42] The ultimate stumbling block in the "conversion" of Flavian was his refusal to reject Dyophysites who either inspired or followed Nestorius at some point in their careers: Diodore, Theodore, Theodoret, Ibas, Cyrus (of Hierapolis), Eutherius (of Tyana), and John (of Antioch). The *Letter of the Palestinian Monks to Alcison of Nicopolis*, a Chalcedonian bishop, written around 515–6 (quoted by Evagrius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 31) construes this additional request as a proof that Philoxenos was by no means inclined to peace alleging that despite Flavian's numerous compromises, Philoxenos kept making new, unacceptable claims.

[43] An example from the latter category can be found in the Letter of the Palestinian Monks to Alcison of Nicopolis, in which the Miaphysites are accused as follows (Letter of the Palestinian Monks to Alcison of Nicopolis in Evagrius, Ecclesiastical History, III, 31, tr. M. Whitby, 171, emphasis added): "Meanwhile they also demanded from the bishop of Jerusalem a written statement of faith; this he produced and dispatched it to the emperor by means of men **who were followers of Dioscorus**. They presented this, which contained an anathema of those who spoke of two natures. But the bishop of Jerusalem himself, **asserting that it had been forged by them**, presented another without such an anathema. And no wonder: for indeed they have forged many works of the Fathers, and many works of Apollinaris they have through their headings attributed to Athanasius and Gregory the Wonder-Worker and Julius. By these means above all they attach many to their particular impieties." Although not impossible to imagine, it is nevertheless hard to believe that Elias of Jerusalem would have chosen to send his Chalcedonian profession of faith to the Emperor through "followers of Dioscorus." Moreover, Cyril of Scythopolis, a Chalcedonian himself, would have probably mentioned this incident, had it actually occurred. In the place of this doubtful incident, Cyril relates the episode of St. Sabas' mission to Constantinople, sent by Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem in 511, "since the emperor Anastasius, in utter exasperation, was attempting to reverse and overturn the whole state of the churches of Palestine." (Lives of the Monks of Palestine, 149) An accusation of this kind necessitated more than

not be repelled with doctrine alone. Doctrinal expositions become more formulaic in the Philoxenian letters from this period, and a switch of interest can be observed, from strictly doctrinal polemics to issues of ecclesiastical practice and discipline. A large part of the *Letter to Maron* is dedicated to dismantling the neo-Chalcedonian claim that Chalcedon should be received for its anathemas against Nestorius and Eutyches, and not for its Christology. The necessity of anathematizing certain Dyophysites by name is emphatically formulated. The main arguments produced by Philoxenos are those of proper ecclesiastical practice, not of doctrine. Little is left of the pronouncedly symbolic, markedly Ephremian style of the early correspondence.

Philoxenos is significantly more concerned in this phase with the condemnation of writings and persons than he is with the formulation of doctrinal explanations. For example, his preoccupation with Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas*—which, as was mentioned in the analysis of the *Second Letter to the Monks of Beth-Gogal*, set the tone of Philoxenos' doctrinal pronouncements in the previous phase—is preserved; however, his main interest now lies not with the refutation *qua* content of doctrinal expositions which are inconsistent with the *Anathemas*, but with the personal condemnation of those who had written against the *Anathemas* at the time of the First Council of Ephesus (431). Philoxenos mentions both the "usual suspects," Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Andew of Samosata, and others who, although known to have been vehement adversaries of Cyril of Alexandria, are not mentioned by other sources as authors of refutations of Cyril's Anathemas, namely Alexander of Mabbug and Eutherius of Tyana.[44] Philoxenos would later deny the zeal he manifested in this period with regard to personal condemnations, claiming that he had always been guided by tolerance in the field of ecclesiastical politics.[45] But, this time around, he was not alone in his zeal.

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doctrinal arguments, and Philoxenos, embracing more efficient argumentative strategies, was now prepared to offer them.

[44] See the *Letter to the Monks of Palestine*, 34.

[45] This zeal is confirmed not only by the letters analyzed in this section, but also by other sources. Cf. Evagrius, III, 31 (the *Letter of the Monks of Palestine to Alcison of Nicopolis*): "When that man had anathematized Nestorius along with his ideas, he switched again from him to Dioscorus, and Theodore, and Theodoret, and Ibas, and Cyrus, and

Severus himself, who later in the period of his exile would entreat Simeon of Teleda to receive repentant Dyophysites to communion, manifests a keen interest in personal condemnations in the period of his patriarchate in Antioch.[46]

The changes in argumentative focus referred to in the previous section are further pursued in the letters dating from this period, though not with remarkable advances. Philoxenos starts dealing with issues which will be of major interest to the sixth-century Miaphysites under Justinian, such as providing an explanation for Dioscorus' reception of Eutyches to communion in 449.[47] Philoxenos' argument is but a faint attempt (as far as we can tell from the fragments preserved): he explains that Dioscorus had only received Eutyches because he was not aware of his heresy, which he later anathematized, both at the Council of Chalcedon and afterwards. This position is consistent with Philoxenos' above-mentioned attitude in the *Letter to Abu 'Afr*, where, by leaving out Ephesus II altogether, he tried to dissociate the name of Dioscorus from that of Eutyches. A similar attempt can be found in Philoxenos' last preserved letter, the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, where the author seems to purposely downplay the accusations against Eutyches by calling him a Manichean, thus trying to divert attention from the more common—and, to Philoxenos and his party, who were associated with Eutyches by their opponents, more concretely detrimental—accusations of Apollinarianism.[48] Philoxenos is evidently concerned with tradition in this period: he constructs and defends the legitimacy of the Miaphysite tradition; at the same time, he attacks the illegitimacy of the Dyophysite tradition (beyond the mere establishing of a heretical lineage).

Eutherius, and John, and we know not who else or from where he collected them." For Philoxenos' denial, see the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 84.

[46] Severus of Antioch, *Letter to Simeon the Presbyter and Archimandrite of the Monastery at Teleda*, 323–4.

[47] Cf. the Conversations of 532.

[48] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 11. This strategy had already been used by the first generation of anti-Chalcedonians, especially by Timothy Aelurus.

THE LATE CORRESPONDENCE

In 519, with the accession of Emperor Justin I and his restoration of Chalcedon, Philoxenos—like numerous other anti-Chalcedonian bishops—was sent into exile, first to Gangra in Paphlagonia, and then to Philippopolis in Thrace. The letters he wrote in exile are characterized by thematic and stylistic unity, and they differ in many respects from all the previous stages of Philoxenos' correspondence.[49] In these letters the reader can discover Philoxenos as a mature author, in whom the polemical tendencies had been tempered by the awareness that controversy had reached a stage where compromise alone—if anything—could restore the lost unity of the Imperial Church.

Philoxenos' historical representations are now visibly more developed, and fully consistent with those commonly produced by the Miaphysites: the condemnation of Eutyches was essentially a smokescreen meant to conceal an ill-intentioned attack on Cyril of Alexandria, the repudiation of Chalcedon is the defense of Cyril, and the association between Nestorius and Chalcedon is not only doctrinal, but also historical:

> And this took place at the end of Nestorius' life, as is said. And everything was written and sent to him while he was in exile: the act [drawn up] before Flavian, and also the Letter of Leo. And had the judgment of the Lord not come fast and taken him away before the council gathered, he was summoned to come together with the other bishops. And I say these things not simply from hearsay, but because I learned them in truth from the one who was sent after him.[50]

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[49] Two letters will be analyzed in this section: the *Letter to Simeon of Teleda* (520–522) and the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (521).

[50] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 17–18: ܗܕܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܣܘܦ ܚܝܘܗܝ ܕܢܣܛܘܪ̈ܝܘܣ ܘܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܐܬܟܬܒ ܘܫܕܪ ܠܗ ܟܕ ܒܓܠܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܐܓܪܬܐ ܩܕܡ ܦܠܒܝܢ ܘܐܦ ܟܬܒ ܠܐܘܢ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܢ ܘܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܩܕܡ ܕܢܬܟܢܫ ܣܘܢܗܕܘܣ ܐܬܩܪܐ ܗܘ ܠܡܬܟܢܫ ܥܡ ܫܪ̈ܝܪ̈ܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢ̈ܐ ܘܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܠ̈ܐ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܫܡܥܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܫܬܡܥ̈ܢ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܫܕܪ ܐܚܪ̈ܝܗ ܒܫܘܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܫܬܡܥ̈ܢ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܫܕܪ ܐܚܪ̈ܝܗ ܒܫܘܪ̈ܬܐ

A similar reconstruction (in a weaker formulation) comes up in a letter sent by Severus of Antioch to the Church of Emesa (sometime

And a few paragraphs further:

> Likewise Nestorius praises those things that were done by Flavian against Eutyches. And he affirms that they are also his: because it is defined in them to call Christ two natures and because, through Eutyches, Flavian sought to attack also the [sayings] of blessed Cyril. For in the [sayings] of Eutyches it is Cyril who was being accused, by Nestorius and by all those who agreed with his doctrine, and said about his [Cyril's doctrine]: "Cyril adheres to and is in agreement with the doctrines of Mani and of Apollinaris and of Eutyches." And because of this Nestorius says here: "I know those things that were done by Flavian against Eutyches and those who share his [belief]." For by this he refers to blessed Cyril. For through these things, as I have said, Cyril was reviled by all. And with him so also were all the Fathers and those doctors who had orthodox beliefs. For Cyril supported his teaching with these testimonies which he collected and brought from their writings.[51]

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during Severus' patriarchate, 512–518): according to Severus, Dorotheus of Marcianopolis—one of Nestorius' fiercest supporters—petitioned the new Emperor Marcian for the recall of Nestorius. Severus quotes a fragment of this petition: "Therefore, merciful kings, in consideration of their so ridiculous, that is lamentable, opinions, renew the firm maintenance of the connaturality while it is possible, while there is time, by recalling Nestorius from exile, and join together the people of Christ who are divided, lest, as I pray may not happen, the past be repeated." (*A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch from Numerous Syriac Manuscripts*, XXV, 65–66). Nestorius' recall is also mentioned in another contemporary source, John Rufus' *Plerophories* (36, 83–85). Most interestingly, Rufus reports having taken this story from the *History* of Timothy Aelurus. He thus places it in a strong lineage going back to the first generation of anti-Chalcedonians. For further evidence concerning the invitation extended to Nestorius to take part in the Council of Chalcedon, see G. Bevan, *The Case of Nestorius: Ecclesiastical Politics in the East 428–451*, 432–440.

[51] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 19–20: ܫܒܚ ܗܟܢܐ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘ̈ܝ
ܡܢ ܦܠܒܝܢܐ ܀ ܟܕ ܕܐܟ ܗܘܐ ܠܐܘܛܘܟܐ. ܘܐܘܕܝ ܘܐܦ ܕܕܝܠܗ ܐܢ̈ܝܢ ܀ ܥܠ
ܕܡܬܚܡܐ ܒܗܝܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܥܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܘܥܠ ܕܒܝܕ ܐܘܛܘܟܐ ܘܐܦ
ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܛܘܒܢܐ ܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ ܒܥܐ ܦܠܒܝܢܐ ܕܢܩܘܫ. ܒܗܠܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܘܛܘܟܐ ܀

The growing presence of the historical element in Philoxenos' correspondence matches a growing awareness of the necessity to prove that the doctrine he and his party supported was not only orthodox, but also mainstream, and that their tradition identified itself with that of the orthodox Imperial Church.

In these last letters Philoxenos uses more arguments from historical precedent than in his entire earlier correspondence. Most of these arguments are built on examples taken from the period of the Arian controversy. In the *Letter to Simeon of Teleda*, Philoxenos argues that the anti-Chalcedonians should be lenient in receiving repentant Dyophysites to communion, just as the Fathers of the Council of Constantinople in 381 had been in receiving repentant Arians.[52] Further, he argues that the baptism, the ordination and the consecration of churches performed by Dyophysites are valid; to support his claim, he reminds his addressees that Meletius of Antioch and Basil the Great had been ordained by Arians, and that this did not diminish the validity of their ordinations.[53] Conversely, in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, he argues for the invalidity of the excommunications performed by the heretics: Athanasius of Alexandria, Peter of Alexandria and others had not lost their episcopal authority once they had been deposed by heretics; by the same principle, Philoxenos' deposition and that of the other anti-Chalcedonian bishops are invalid.[54]

It is somewhat surprising that Philoxenos takes the arguments from historical precedent as far back as the Arian controversy.[55]

ܘܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ ܡܬܟܬܫ ܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ ܕܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ : ܘܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܬܪܥܝܬܗ ܥܠܝܗ. ܘܐܡܪܘ ܗܘܘ ܟܠܗܘܢ : ܕܡ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܠܗ ܕܡܐܢܝ ܘܕܐܦܘܠܝܢܪܝܣ ܘܕܐܘܛܘܟܐ : ܐܝܟ ܕܡܬܐܡܪܐ ܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ. ܘܥܠ ܗ̇ܢ ܐܡܪ ܗܪܟܐ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ : ܕܢܚܬ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܗ̈ܘܘܢ ܡܢ ܦܠܘܓܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܘܛܘܟܐ : ܘܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܪܥܝܢ ܕܝܠܗ. ܟܕ ܪܕܦ ܚܕ ܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܐܘܛܘܟܐ ܘܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ. ܒܗܝܢ ܚܢ̈ܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܫܠܛܢܐ ܗܘܐ. ܘܥܡܗ ܬܘܒ ܘܐܦ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܦܝܣܩ̈ܘܦܐ ܘܡ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܪ̈ܝܢܘ ܐܬܚܪܬ : ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗ̇ܘ ܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ ܟܕ ܡܘܕܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܒ ܘܐܬܝ ܡܢ ܬ̈ܫܒܚܘܗܝ ܢܣܒ ܡܠܦܢܘܬܗ :

[52] *Letter to Abbot Simeon of Teleda*, 175.

[53] *Letter to Abbot Simeon of Teleda*, 176.

[54] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 78–79.

[55] His approach is not exceptional. Severus of Antioch uses examples from the time of the Arian controversy quite often. See, for example,

There are, however, certain features of this controversy that may have made it appealing to the anti-Chalcedonians: the Nicenes, who had lost almost everything by 350, were able to make a startling recovery (Philoxenos emphasizes this aspect); it was a historical episode which, by the late-fifth century, was beyond all debate, and was thus safe to use as historical precedent; moreover, as E. Schwartz noted, Antioch had been construed in the fifth century as the centre of orthodoxy at the time of the Arian controversy (by Theodoret, mainly); this may have increased the appeal of examples from the Arian controversy in the eyes of Antiochene anti-Chalcedonians.[56]

Philoxenos' discourse appears to be more and more inspired by Greek models. His refutation of Pope Leo's *Tome* in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* is evocative of that written by Timothy Aelurus (it follows the same arrangement: excerpts from the *Tome* followed by their association with ideas of Nestorius and then by their disproof).[57] He even takes over Timothy's play on the word "tomos" (from the Greek *tomein*, "to cut"): Leo's letter "was justly called the Tome, on account of the divisions that occurred because of it."[58] Philoxenos has internalized the Greek tradition of opposition to the Council of 451, reaching as far as its linguistic stereotypes.

In the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, Philoxenos adopts yet another familiar aspect of anti-Chalcedonian literature: he made extensive use—for the first time in his correspondence, as far as we can tell by the extant letters—of patristic argumentation, in the form of a *florilegium*.[59] He uses this literary device more persuasively

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Severus' *Letter against those who say that men who have communicated with the Synod of Chalcedon and are penitent [...] must be re-anointed*, 294–5.

[56] E. Schwartz, *Publizistische Sammlungen*, 242.

[57] Cf. *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 22–25.

[58] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 48: ܗܘ ܕܫܡܝܗ ܬܘܡܐ [ܩܪܝ] ܠܗ ܥܠ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܕܐܬܪܫܡ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܕܐܬܥܒܕ.

[59] There are in fact two well-separated *florilegia* in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (33–43). Interestingly, the first one contains authentic citations and resembles more, by the names it includes, his earlier *florilegium* from the *Mêmrê against Habib*; the second one is composed almost entirely of Apollinarian forgeries, out of which none was present in

than in his earlier work, the *Mêmrê against Habib*: while in this latter work the *florilegium* was simply appended to the main text, and no other explanations were formulated, in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* the citations are incorporated in the letter and commented upon with great interest; more generally, they are exploited in a systematic manner.

The most striking feature of the *florilegium* contained in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* is the almost complete absence of citations from St. Ephrem, in contrast with Philoxenos' earlier *florilegium* of the *Mêmrê against Habib*, in which St. Ephrem had the highest representation. If one adds to this the fact that, in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, Philoxenos even criticizes St. Ephrem for lack of terminological precision, it becomes very clear that the author had turned away from the Syriac tradition to embrace the Greek.[60] As the analyses included in the previous sections of this paper have demonstrated, this was not a sudden turn, but, rather, a progressive transformation.

In his late correspondence Philoxenos denies his earlier intolerance, both that manifested in the field of doctrine (he now advises his addressees to follow the example of the bishops who took part in the First Council of Constantinople in 381 and who, in order to avoid disturbances, did not ask those whom they were receiving back to communion to give detailed professions of faith)[61] and that manifested in ecclesiastical affairs (in the *Letter to the Monks of Senun* he relates how, upon his becoming a bishop, he did not ask for the condemnation of his "heretical" predecessors, Alexander and Cyrus of Mabbug).[62] At the same time, Philoxenos encourages the monks to be more diplomatic and to show more reserve in pronouncing anathemas.

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his earlier piece, all of them being present in another famous Miaphysite *florilegium*, the one from *Vat. Gr.* 1431.

[60] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 53–55. See discussion of this in Lucas Van Rompay, "*Mallpânâ dilan Suryâyâ*. Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenos of Mabbog: Respect and Distance," 25–27.

[61] *Letter to Simeon of Teleda*, 176.

[62] *Letter to the Monks of Senun*, 84. Cf. his earlier insistence on the anathematization of the name of Cyrus, during the conflict with Flavian of Antioch.

In the *Letter to Simeon of Teleda* (520–522), Philoxenos joins all these new elements in a perfectly fitting ethical framework: that of *oikonomia* (flexibility) vs. *akribia* (strictness). Doing away with the zealous, militant polemicist of the early correspondence, who confessed his willingness to embrace martyrdom, Philoxenos characterizes himself here as one who has always abided by the principles of *oikonomia*, which he also recommends to his addressee:

> I have always preferred to act according to *oikonomia*, which is helpful, rather than according to *akribia*, which harms. I also convinced others to take the course of *oikonomia* if they wished to achieve the peace of the churches and the confirmation of the true faith. In fact, *akribia*, agitating the Church and troubling the faith, is to be considered cruelty, something that angers God. *Oikonomia*, on the other hand, strengthens the faith and brings peace to the Church; it is the right course of action, which greatly pleases even our Lord God. Therefore, it was those who knew how to administer the affairs of the Church wisely that used *oikonomia*.[63]

Indeed, he could have hardly found a better form of presentation for his new stance. *Akribia* and *oikonomia* had a long history in Church literature. They were often used to pass judgment on various figures of the past, and, while *akribia* was admired in a select few, who had found a righteous way to stand by their principles, those who had acted according to *oikonomia* were almost always presented in a very good light by Church historians.[64] It is likely that Philoxenos appropriated this conceptual framework from contemporary Greek anti-Chalcedonian literature (it occupies, for example, an important role in the Miaphysite collection of the Vaticanus Gr. 1431).

CONCLUSION

During the patriarchate of Calandion (who seems to have enjoyed limited popular support in Antioch), and while addressing the monks of the East with limited involvement in wider controversies

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[63] *Letter to Abbot Simeon of Teleda*, 179. (English translation mine, from the Latin translation of Lebon)

[64] See, for example, Theodoret's characterization of Acacius of Beroea in *A History of the Monks of Syria*, II, 9.

that affected the Imperial Church, Philoxenos could afford to fight under the mantle of confessorship, construing scriptural arguments as the most powerful weapons, and the Syriac literary tradition of St. Ephrem as the most valid framework for achieving legitimation. The need for more developed argumentation and confrontational strategies was reduced. However, by the time of his conflict with Flavian of Antioch, this situation had changed radically, and, for the remainder of his career, Philoxenos' correspondence reflects very closely, with growing acumen, the fight to monopolize orthodoxy in which the Chalcedonians and the anti-Chalcedonians were equally engaged. This required significant changes in argumentative strategies. Key among them was the adoption of the argument from historical precedent.

We can, if we choose to, look at Philoxenos in the same way in which Eduard Schwartz looked at Peter Fuller, when he wrote about him that "in order to gain recognition and status, Peter Fuller gathered some 'Apollinarian' (that is, anti-Chalcedonian) monks around him and campaigned with extremism for the liturgical formula of the 'crucified God.'"[65] Yet the historical benefit of such an approach would be minimal. Looking at seemingly small textual and literary details with a view to establishing their more profound implications brings more profit for the understanding of these authors. They were not as monolithic as a characterization in the vein of Schwartz's would have us believe. And, more often than not, their argumentative choices were dictated less by personal caprice and more by changing political and intellectual contexts.

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[65] Ed. Schwartz, Publizistische Sammlungen, 182.

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