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The Latin Controversial Dialogues of Late Antiquity

By

Charles Nestor Kuper

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Submitted to the Faculty of Bryn Mawr College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Greek, Latin, and Classical Studies

Abstract

This dissertation addresses how the literary genre of the philosophical dialogue was used by Latin authors in late antiquity (300–700 AD) to negotiate ongoing anti-heretical debates. Traditional scholarship on this topic has focused mostly on the Greek dialogues. When the Latin material received attention, it was read in terms of its appropriation of and deviation from classical models. More recent scholarship has acted as a corrective to this model, and one key question that has emerged is whether true dialogue persisted into late antiquity at all. Some scholars have provocatively suggested that the democratic aims of the dialogue are inconsistent with the totalitarian discourse characterized by the Christian Roman Empire. Is late antiquity, in fact, the end of the dialogue? This thesis is an answer to this ongoing discussion. It argues that late antique Latin dialogues provide important evidence against a teleological understanding of the formation of Christian orthodoxy. This public discourse, though often characterized as authoritarian and monolithic, was lively, fragile, and actively interested in engaging with dissent. In addition to tracing the evolution of this subgenre of Latin literature and situating it within the context of classical rhetorical theories, this thesis includes close readings of two dialogues as case-studies: Jerome's *Contra Luciferianos* (4th century) and John Maxentius' *Contra Nestorianos* (6th century). Chapter One provides an overview of the genre of dialogue in both Greek and Latin literature, from Plato through Cicero. It illuminates the non-linear nature of the history of this genre and cautions against a derivative model for understanding the late antique dialogue. It concludes with a definition: "A dialogue is a text, written in either mimetic or narrative form, whose intention is to relate the verbatim conversation of two or more interlocutors and shows a self-awareness of its place within the genre." Chapter Two establishes the first exhaustive catalogue and discussion of the twenty-one controversial dialogues from late antiquity. In addition to providing a synoptic view of the entire corpus, it also treats the historical context and argumentation for each individual dialogue. Chapter Three illustrates how Jerome used both the form and content of his dialogue to address the Luciferian controversy in the late fourth century. By contrasting the methods of eristic and didactic dialogue and connecting them with contemporary events, Jerome models not only what arguments can solve the impasse, but just as importantly, how they must be presented. Chapter Four sheds light on how John Maxentius used and defied genre-expectations in his *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* to defend what was widely understood to be a heterodox position. Self-deprecation, humor, anger, and even sympathy towards its opponents are all tactics used by this dialogue, which concludes with the absurd situation where both sides agree but refuse to acknowledge it. A commentary on contemporary politics, this dialogue demonstrates the dangers that pride and partisanship present to the truth. Appendix A complements Chapter Two, including a digestible catalogue of the late antique controversial dialogues composed in Latin. Appendix B includes the first translation of the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* into any modern language.

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Abbreviations

Budé	Les Belles Lettres, Collection Budé
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, Brepols
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOML	Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, Harvard University Press
FCNT	The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, CUA Press
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, T. & T. Clark
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts, Oxford University Press
PL	Patrologia Latina, Migne
PG	Patrologia Graeca, Migne
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques</i>
SC	Sources chrétiennes, Les Éditions du Cerf
Teuber	B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft
WSA	The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21 st Century, New City Press

Chapter 1: Prolegomena for the Latin Dialogue of Late Antiquity

Cuius [operis] stilum ideo uerti in dialogum quia summis philosophis, Socrati scilicet et Platoni ac Tullio nec non nostro Augustino et Boetio, uisum est id genus docendi quam maximam uim optinere introducendi.

I composed this work as a dialogue because the greatest philosophers—namely Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, but no less our own Augustine and Boethius—believed that this method of instruction possessed the greatest power for introducing [a subject].

—Honorius Augustodunensis, *Clavis Physicae*, 1.8–11¹

Introductions

In this passage from his *Clavis Physicae*, itself a summary-commentary in dialogue form on another dialogue, Eriugena's *Periphyseon*, the twelfth-century theologian Honorius Augustodunensis² makes a number of observations that serve as a useful starting point for introducing the Latin dialogue. First, he provides a genealogy, well attested in both ancient and modern sources, for the history of the literary form of the dialogue. Socrates “invented” the elenchic, dialectical method of the dialogue, and Plato was the first to compose these dialogues as texts. Cicero followed them, translating (in more than one sense) this philosophical genre into the literary consciousness of the Latin-speaking Roman world. After the Christianization of this Roman world, Augustine and Boethius, then, loom over their contemporaries as the figureheads representing the height of achievement for dialogues in Christian Latin literature. Honorius also

¹ Quoted in Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, p. 57, n. 23 (p. 243), though he cites it as “*Clavis Physicae*, 3.” Novikoff's recent book is similar in some of its aims to my project here, though the time period of his study is much later. He begins with Lanfranc of Pavia and Anselm of Canterbury and only looks backwards at the earlier tradition. As a rule, all translations in this thesis are my own unless otherwise noted. The only exception is when I cite the Bible, in which case I use the NRSV.

² Otherwise known as Honorius of Autun, among many other names. See Novikoff, *ibid.* and PL 172.13ff.

makes a claim about both the content and function of the dialogues. On the one hand, dialogues are philosophical and naturally those who write them are philosophers (*summi philosophi*). On the other hand, Honorius points out that there is consensus among these philosophers that the form of the dialogue is conducive for teaching, especially when introducing new materials to students.

Honorius' portrait of the ancient dialogue is classical and traditional, and it is also accurate insofar as it represents this traditional view. Yet one of the fundamental claims of this thesis and this chapter in particular is that the traditional ways of reading and understanding dialogues are poorly equipped for approaching the numerous and variegated texts that constitute the entire corpus of Latin dialogues from Late Antiquity. There are about fifty Latin dialogues from this period,³ and Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues and Boethius' *Consolatio*, though justly lauded, represent only a minority of these texts. Other examples from these authors include Boethius' dialogic commentary on Porphyry's *Eisogoge* and Augustine's *De Musica* and *De Grammatica*.⁴ There are hagiographical dialogues such as John Cassian's *Conlationes*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, and the *Life of Saint Helia*.⁵ Literary criticism was sometimes written in the form of a dialogue, such as Fulgentius the Mythographer's *Expositio Vergilianae Continentiae* and Macrobius' *Saturnalia*. Furthermore, there is a great number of "controversial" dialogues, which constitute an agonistic debate between a representative of Christian orthodoxy (according to the author at least), and a member of a heretical Christian sect or follower of a non-Christian religion, including examples such as Minucius Felix' *Octavius*, Jerome's *Dialogus Contra*

³ See appendix A for the relevant details for these dialogues, including critical editions and translations. This appendix, however, cannot be said to be exhaustive yet.

⁴ For what is known about Augustine's *De Grammatica* and its potential form as a dialogue, see Guillaume Bonnet, *Abrégé de la grammaire de Saint Augustin*. Série latine, 405. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013, at xvii–xviii.

⁵ My thanks to Professor Lucy Pick for bringing this latter text to my attention.

Pelagianos, and the anonymous *Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae*. Honorius' portrait of the dialogue, therefore, represents only a partial picture of the dialogue, and in order to see the dialogue more clearly, it is first necessary to dismantle some thinking on the dialogue.

After disassembling the structure, in a sense, the ground will be clear and the foundations ready. Then bricks must be made so that new construction can commence. To accomplish this, I shall first discuss the current state of scholarship on dialogues composed in Late Antiquity, especially those in Latin, pointing out biases similar to those held by Honorius above. Then, I shall turn to the topic of the dialogue itself, addressing the various approaches and literary tools used by writers and interpreters of dialogues, both ancient and modern, to create a grammar and syntax for articulating the structure of these complex texts. These include the following:

Diogenes Laertius' definition of (Plato's) dialogues, the intersection of the literary form of the dialogue with rhetorical theory and figures, the "philosophical" content of the dialogue, the structural makeup that differentiates dialogues from other written texts, and the historical tradition of dialogue-writing represented by authority figures such as Plato and Cicero. A holistic and inclusive approach, I shall argue, is essential for reading ancient dialogues. Dialogues meant different things to different authors at different (and even the same) times. It is imperative, therefore, to be familiar with the diversity found among ancient writers of dialogues in order to understand more fully the variety of texts that we read.

Previous and Recent Work on Dialogue

Dialogues have always generated interest, and this is no exception for modern scholarship in the fields of Classics, History, Philosophy, and other academic disciplines.⁶ Much

⁶ For ancient reception, see the note below under "Literary Form of the Dialogue," which contains Demetrius' discussion of this subject.

of the work on dialogue as a literary form both in the Classical Period and also for Latin Dialogues of Late Antiquity in particular was done in Germany in the late nineteenth through the middle of the last century. Most notably this includes Rudolf Hirzel's magisterial two-volume study that attempts to treat the history of dialogues as a whole, as well as the later work of Voss, Hoffman and Schmidt that focuses more closely on the Latin dialogues of Early Christianity and Late Antiquity in particular.⁷ Vittorio Hösle's recent work on the poetics and hermeneutics of the philosophical dialogue deserves mention too.⁸ All of these studies are of great value for their almost encyclopedic attempt to systematize and catalogue the texts of the dialogues themselves and subdivide them into thematic groupings. In fact, Chapter 2 of this thesis owes a great debt to of Schmidt's discussion of the "controversial dialogues." At the same time, the underlying assumptions of some of these scholars about the period of Late Antiquity shaped their findings and conclusions. The long-standing view that the "Later Roman Empire" was in a state of decline, including not only political but also social and cultural decline, is pervasive, for example. This longstanding historical narrative has led to interpretations of late antique dialogues that can be characterized as the following: it is not that dialogues were not composed during this period, but there are few, if any, worth reading. Minucius Felix's *Octavius* and Augustine's *Cassiciacum Dialogues* stand alone like rare beacons shining through the mist of mediocrity.⁹

⁷ Rudolf Hirzel, *Der Dialog: ein literarhistorischer Versuch*. 2 vols. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1895; Peter L. Schmidt, "Zur Typologie und Literarisierung des frühchristlichen lateinischen Dialogs." In *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'Antiquité tardive en Occident: 23-28 août 1976 : huit exposés suivis de discussions*. p. 101–190. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique (Series) vol. 23 Vancouver-Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1977; B. R. Voss, *Der Dialog in der frühchristlichen Literatur*. Munich: Fink, 1970; and Manfred Hoffman, *Der Dialog bei den christlichen Schriftstellern der ersten vier Jahrhunderte*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966.

⁸ Vittorio Hösle, *The Philosophical Dialogue: A Poetics and Hermeneutics*. Steven Rendall, trans. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

⁹ Cf. Schmidt's summary of mid-twentieth century views on Latin dialogues of this period: "We arrive at the literary rank of Latin that culminates with the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix and in the *Cassiciacum Dialogues* of Augustine," Schmidt, "Zur Typologie," 101.

Following in the footsteps of these more structural approaches has been the recent work of English and French scholars on dialogue or rather the “dialogic” literature of Late Antiquity. The beginning of the conversation was a collection of essays edited by Simon Goldhill, *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity* (2008), which was the result of a 2006 colloquium on dialogue at Cambridge. This controversial volume has spurred further discussion and in some cases, even backlash. Following shortly thereafter was a similar colloquy of French scholars at the 2012 Celtic Conference of Classics in Bordeaux, which was published in 2015 by Sandrine Dubel and Sophie Gotteland, who are affiliated with the related DIALOGOS research group.¹⁰ Finally, Averil Cameron’s short book, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (2014), which is in part a direct response to the Goldhill collection,¹¹ remains the only single-authored study of dialogues in late antiquity, although this slim volume is concerned primarily with the Greek or “Byzantine” material.¹²

The focus of the analyses throughout these more recent pieces seesaws from dialogue qua literary genre to dialogue qua social discourse with the Bakhtinian notion of the “dialogic” hiding somewhere in between. What results is a series of crisscrossed arguments, many of which are accurate, but which never actually intersect because of the different angles of their approach.

¹⁰ *Formes et genres du dialogue antique*. Sandrine Dubel & Sophie Gotteland, eds. Scripta antiqua, 71. Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2015. The DIALOGOS group is affiliated with the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme de Clermont-Ferrand. <http://www.msh-clermont.fr/spip.php?article3489>

¹¹ Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*. Washington D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2014. For this book as a response to Goldhill, see, p. ix.

¹² This excludes a number of very good studies on individual authors or subgroups of dialogues written by an individual author. See Brian Stock, *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; and Seth Lerer, *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary Method in The Consolation of Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. Furthermore, Cameron along with Niels Gaul have recently published an edited volume on this topic, but because it was published only a few weeks ago I have not been able to read it myself. Averil Cameron and Niels Gaul, eds. *Dialogues and Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium*. London: Routledge, 2017. None of the chapters from this volume is focused on a Latin text, and most of the texts were composed significantly later than Late Antiquity.

Goldhill's provocative suggestion, for example, that "Christians didn't do dialogue," that is, the quasi-totalitarian Christian Roman Empire suppressed the dissenting voices of minority views,¹³ is not necessarily contradicted by the counterclaim of Cameron that there is a rich corpus of debate in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac dialogues from Late Antiquity, and that dialogues continued to be composed, or even experienced a rejuvenation, in the Christian period.¹⁴ To summarize then, dialogue has served, and appropriately so, as an arena for different scholars to investigate different problems, a crossroads that can and has been taken in divergent directions, and it is the aim of this thesis to continue the conversation, giving attention to the Latin dialogues of Late Antiquity (300–700).

What is a Dialogue? Diogenes Laertius' Definition of (Plato's) Dialogue

The first question then to be answered is the most fundamental: what is a dialogue? This is appropriate, as the first order of business for many ancient dialogues was to provide, or at least attempt, a definition of the term in question.¹⁵ However, the definition of dialogue immediately becomes murky the closer one looks. For example, the concept of dialogue destabilizes somewhat when juxtaposed with the related studies of disputation and dialectic,¹⁶ and sometimes it becomes unclear about what exactly is being talked about.

¹³ Goldhill, "Introduction: Why don't Christians do dialogue?," (p. 1) in Simon Goldhill, ed. *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹⁴ Cf. the chapter title, "Did Christians 'Do Dialogue'" in Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 7–21, & K. Cooper and M. Dal Santo, "Boethius, Gregory the Great and the Christian 'afterlife' of classical dialogue," in Goldhill, *Dialogue*, 188–9.

¹⁵ Often, finding this definition is the entire enterprise of the dialogue. Cf. Evodius' desire to know "what we are," (*quid simus nos*) at the beginning of *De Quantitate Animae*, I.1.

¹⁶ Richard Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995; D. V. Nikulin, *Dialectic and Dialogue*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010; & Alex J. Novikoff, *Disputation*. The connections between dialogue, disputation, and dialectic will, I hope, become clearer as this dissertation progresses. Defining "disputation" and "dialectic" is no easier task than defining "dialogue." Cf. *Dialectica est bene disputandi scientia. De Dialectica* 1.1 (possibly by Augustine), and *ego uero plura [de dialectica] quam de quavis parte philosophiae [scio]. Contra Academicos* 3.13.

One of the most useful passages for clearing this muddy water and shedding some light on approaches to dialogues in the postclassical world comes from Diogenes Laertius (*fl.* third century). In this passage, Diogenes provides a thorough and roughly contemporaneous definition and description of (Platonic) dialogues at the advent of Late Antiquity, and although his *Life of the Eminent Philosophers* is composed in Greek, his discussion of Plato and his dialogues serves as a representative example of thinking about dialogues just prior to this period. It also happens to be the most often cited passage in the modern scholarship about dialogues from all periods. Its overall great importance justifies quoting it in full.¹⁷

It is said that Zeno of Elea first wrote dialogues, but Aristotle in the first book of his *On the Poets* says that it was Alexamenos, either of Styra or Teos. Favorinus says the same in his *Memorabilia*. Plato, it seems to me, perfected the form (εἶδος) and would rightly carry first prize, both for his aesthetic sophistication (κάλλους) and for his invention (εὐρέσεως). A dialogue (διάλογος) is <a discourse (λόγος)>¹⁸ consisting of question and answer (ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως) about philosophical and political topics (περί τινος τῶν φιλοσοφουμένων καὶ πολιτικῶν) with the appropriate personification (ἡθοποιίας) of the characters involved and the choice of language. Dialectic is the art of discourse (διαλεκτικὴ δ' ἐστὶ τέχνη λόγων) by which we confirm or deny something through the questioning and answering of interlocutors.

The Platonic dialogue has two general types, the expository type (ὀφηγητικός) and the investigative type (ζητητικός). The expository type is subdivided into two subtypes, the theoretical (θεωρηματικόν) and practical (πρακτικόν). The theoretical [is further subdivided] into physical (φυσικόν) and logical (λογικόν); the practical into ethical (ἠθικόν) and political (πολιτικόν). Of the investigative type, there are also two main subtypes, the pedagogical (γυμναστικός) and the antagonistic (ἀγωνιστικός). The midwifery-type or maieutic (μαιευτικός) and the experimental (πειραστικός) [are the subtypes] of the pedagogical. Of the antagonistic there are the probative (ἐνδεικτικός) and the refutative or anatreptic (ἀνατρεπτικός).

¹⁷ It would be futile to attempt an exhaustive list. See Andrew Ford, “The beginning of dialogue: Socratic discourses and fourth-century prose,” in Goldhill (2008), p. 29 n. 1, Nikulin (2010), pp. 4–5, and Sandrine Dubel, “Avant-propos: théories et pratiques du dialogue dans l’Antiquité,” in Dubel & Gotteland, eds. (2015), p. 11.

¹⁸ Some authorities omit the word λόγος.

I am not unaware that others claim that the dialogues can be categorized differently. They say that some of them are dramatic (δραματικοί), others are narrative (διηγηματικοί), and others are a mixture of the two (μεικτοί), but they label the dialogues in a literary fashion (τραγικῶς) rather than philosophically (φιλοσόφως).

The *Timaeus* is the example of the physical. The *Statesman*, the *Cratylus*, the *Parmenides*, and the *Sophist* are examples of the logical. Examples of the ethical are the *Apology*, the *Crito*, the *Phaedo*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*, the *Menexenus*, the *Clitophon*, the *Epistles*, the *Philebus*, the *Hipparchus*, and the *Rival Lovers*. Of the political are the *Republic*, the *Laws*, the *Minos*, the *Epinomis*, and the *Atlantis (Critias)*. Of the maieutic are the *Alcibiades I & II*, the *Theages*, the *Lysis*, and the *Laches*. Of the experimental are the *Euthyphro*, the *Meno*, the *Ion*, the *Charmides*, and the *Theaetetus*. The *Protagoras* is the example of the probative. The *Euthydemus*, the *Gorgias*, and the *Hippias I & II* are examples of the anatreptic.

Διαλόγους τοίνυν φασὶ πρῶτον γράψαι Ζήνωνα τὸν Ἐλεάτην· Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ ἐν πρώτῳ Περὶ ποιητῶν Ἀλεξαμένον Στυρέα ἢ Τήιον, ὡς καὶ Φαβωρίνος ἐν Ἀπομνημονεύμασι. δοκεῖ δέ μοι Πλάτων ἀκριβῶς τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὰ πρωτεῖα δικαίως ἂν ὥσπερ τοῦ κάλλους οὕτω καὶ τῆς εὐρέσεως ἀποφέρεισθαι. ἔστι δὲ διάλογος <λόγος> ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως συγκείμενος περὶ τίνος τῶν φιλοσοφουμένων καὶ πολιτικῶν μετὰ τῆς προεπούσης ἡθοποιίας τῶν παραλαμβανομένων προσώπων καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν λέξιν κατασκευῆς. διαλεκτικὴ δ' ἐστὶ τέχνη λόγων, δι' ἧς ἀνασκευάζομεν τι ἢ κατασκευάζομεν ἐξ ἐρωτήσεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως τῶν προσδιαλεγομένων. Τοῦ δὴ <δια>λόγου τοῦ Πλατωνικοῦ δύο εἰσὶν ἀνωτάτω χαρακτῆρες, ὃ τε ὑφηγητικὸς καὶ ὁ ζητητικὸς. διαιρεῖται δὲ ὁ ὑφηγητικὸς εἰς ἄλλους δύο χαρακτῆρας, θεωρηματικόν τε καὶ πρακτικόν. καὶ τῶν ὁ μὲν θεωρηματικὸς εἰς τὸν φυσικὸν καὶ λογικόν, ὁ δὲ πρακτικὸς εἰς τὸν ἠθικὸν καὶ πολιτικόν. τοῦ δὲ ζητητικοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ δύο εἰσὶν οἱ πρῶτοι χαρακτῆρες, ὃ τε γυμναστικὸς καὶ ἀγωνιστικὸς. καὶ τοῦ μὲν γυμναστικοῦ μαιευτικὸς τε καὶ πειραστικὸς, τοῦ δὲ ἀγωνιστικοῦ ἐνδεικτικὸς καὶ ἀνατρεπτικὸς.

Οὐ λανθάνει δ' ἡμᾶς ὅτι τινὲς ἄλλως διαφέρειν τοὺς διαλόγους φασί—λέγουσι γὰρ αὐτῶν τοὺς μὲν δραματικούς, τοὺς δὲ διηγηματικούς, τοὺς δὲ μεικτούς—ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοι μὲν τραγικῶς μᾶλλον ἢ φιλοσόφως τὴν διαφορὰν τῶν διαλόγων προσωνόμασαν.

εἰσὶ δὲ τοῦ μὲν φυσικοῦ οἷον ὁ Τίμαιος· τοῦ δὲ λογικοῦ ὃ τε Πολιτικὸς καὶ ὁ Κρατύλος καὶ Παρμενίδης καὶ Σοφιστής· τοῦ δ' ἠθικοῦ ἢ τε Ἀπολογία καὶ ὁ Κρίτων καὶ Φαῖδων καὶ Φαῖδρος καὶ τὸ Συμπόσιον Μενέξενός τε καὶ Κλειτοφῶν καὶ Ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ Φίληβος Ἴππαρχος Ἀντερασταί· τοῦ δὲ πολιτικοῦ ἢ τε Πολιτεία καὶ οἱ Νόμοι καὶ ὁ Μίνως καὶ Ἐπινομίς καὶ ὁ

Ἀτλαντικός· τοῦ δὲ μαιευτικοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδαι Θεάγης Λύσις Λάχης· τοῦ δὲ
πειραστικοῦ Εὐθύφρων Μένων Ἴων Χαρμίδης Θεαίτητος· τοῦ δὲ
ἐνδεικτικοῦ ὡς ὁ Πρωταγόρας· καὶ τοῦ ἀνατρεπτικοῦ Εὐθύδημος Γοργίας
Ἰππίαί δύο. καὶ περὶ μὲν διαλόγου τί ποτέ ἐστι καὶ τίνες αὐτοῦ διαφοραί,
<τοσαῦτα> ἀπόχρη λέγειν.¹⁹

Similar to the quotation from Honorius Augustodunensis that began this chapter, Diogenes' discussion of (Platonic) dialogues serves as a useful example for understanding thinking in Late Antiquity about the literary genre of dialogue. If ancient dialogues are a meadow filled with beautiful flowers, then Diogenes' account is a sophisticated ecphrasis describing them. As to be expected with any written description of an object that exists in reality, the description is incomplete and necessarily has a subjective, partial bias. It is not surprising that Diogenes focuses on certain varieties of flowers, his favorites, and only makes passing reference to others that are less to his taste. Yet even what he mentions only in passing is illuminating. It is useful here to examine his observations about dialogue more closely.

First and like Honorius, Diogenes highlights the importance of authority for dialogues, that is, that certain authors are associated with dialogue, and also that some are better than others. Plato, of course, is undeniably the best (cf. κάλλος and εὔρεσις), and as Honorius points out centuries later, this view persists well into the Middle Ages. This picture can be contrasted with the entirety of the corpus of late antique dialogues, and the fact that many of these dialogues are anonymous or spurious should not be dismissed too quickly as insignificant to their later readership (or lack of it). Second, there is a method to dialogue according to Diogenes, and it is none other than dialectic or "question and answer." This is ostensibly so obvious that it should merit no comment, but this issue is not so simple. The power dynamics and the (in)equality of the interlocutors in any given dialogue often play out in the demarcation between that of the

¹⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 3.48–51.

questioner and the answerer. It is often true that there is the understanding that all interlocutors are equal, but this ideal usually breaks down.²⁰ For example, there is an awkward shift of power in Plato's *Protagoras* when Socrates and the eponymous interlocutor switch roles,²¹ and in Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, the most critical moment of the dialogue coincides with the Luciferian's submission to the Orthodox' authority, agreeing to ask him simple questions rather than to attack him antagonistically.²² Third, Diogenes limits the content of dialogue to topics that are philosophical or political. This is both helpful and frustrating for the reader of dialogues as both of these terms are fuzzy and variously defined throughout the tradition.²³ It suffices to say that defining the limits of what can be discussed in dialogues too narrowly falls short of the actual content of dialogues themselves as will be discussed below. Fourth, Diogenes couches his definition of dialogue in language associated with rhetorical literature, here ἡθοποιία or personification.²⁴ The connections between literary dialogues and rhetorical theory are intricate and bilateral. The title of Augustine's "dialogue" *Soliloquia* provides an example of how innovations made in literary dialogues were later adopted in the rhetoric literature as a *figura*.²⁵ Fifth, the corpus of dialogues, Diogenes claims, can be divided into many subtypes such as dialogues that contain mostly exposition (ὁφηγητικός), dialogues whose subject is natural philosophy or science (φυσικός), and dialogues that are contentious in

²⁰ See the note below on Augustine's *De beata uita* (2.16), and Conybeare's discussion of it.

²¹ Cf. "(Socrates speaking) εἰ μὴ βούλεται Πρωταγόρας ἀποκρίνεσθαι, οὗτος μὲν ἐρωτάτω, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποκρινοῦμαι, καὶ ἅμα πειράσομαι αὐτῷ δεῖξαι, ὥς ἐγὼ φημι χρῆναι τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον ἀποκρίνεσθαι," *Protagoras*, 338C9–D3.

²² This will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

²³ See the subsection below.

²⁴ Cf. "Ἡθοποιία ἐστὶ μίμησις ἡθους ὑποκειμένου προσώπου, οἷον τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους Ἀνδρομάχη ἐπὶ Ἐκτορι," Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata*, 9.

²⁵ Isidore of Seville, for example, includes it in his *Etymologies*: "Peusis, id est *soliloquium*, cum ad interrogata ipsi nobis respondemus," *Etymologiae*, 2.21.47. Cf. "Ridiculum est si te pudet, quasi non ob id ipsum elegerimus huiusmodi sermocinationes: quae quoniam cum solis nobis loquimur, soliloquia uocari atque inscribi uolo; nouo quidem et fortasse duro nomine, sed ad rem demonstrandam satis idoneo," Augustine, *Soliloquia*, 2.14. See also below.

nature (ἀγωνιστικός). This variety is an important reminder that not all dialogues are the same—they should not be in fact according to Diogenes. Returning to the *Altercatio* discussed above, Jerome exploits these categories to make a philosophical point when the dialogue shifts from the ἀγωνιστικός-type to the γυμναστικός-type.²⁶ Sixth, Diogenes points out, via *praeteritio*, that other readers divide the dialogues differently from him (ἄλλως διαφέρειν τοὺς διαλόγους). Diogenes' view then is only one perspective on dialogues, and though shrugging off the importance of this alternative view, he articulates the enduring tension between literature (τραγικῶς) and philosophy (φιλοσόφως). Does the dialogic form itself have an essential impact on the meaning of the text, or does it add merely literary delight? Seventh and finally, Diogenes concludes by meticulously categorizing all of Plato's extant dialogues (including those traditionally attributed to him) into his system of dialogic subtypes. One way this list can inform the reader of Latin dialogues is through contrast. Unlike Diogenes, many late antique writers of Latin dialogues had very limited access to Plato, namely the translations of the *Timaeus* by Cicero (partial) and Calcidius.²⁷ The *Timaeus* of course is a dialogue that—besides its introduction (which Cicero omits completely)²⁸—contains only a lengthy, unbroken exposition by Timaeus about the cosmos. When the discrepancies between these two views of Plato are triangulated with our modern perspective, Plato's importance on the late antique tradition is destabilized, and perhaps even our own thinking about the content of Plato's dialogues is challenged.

The brief discussion of this rich passage is not meant to be exhaustive, and in some cases, it raises more questions than it answers. This is not unwanted. Through this process, a number of

²⁶ See Chapter 3 below.

²⁷ John Magee, ed. and trans. *On Plato's Timaeus*. DOML 41 Washington, D.C.: Harvard University Press, 2016, pp. vii–viii.

²⁸ See note below.

the elements and issues relevant to dialogues have emerged, demanding further exploration. This is the task of the subsections that follow where many of these issues will be treated at greater length. Through the exercise of grappling with the most important elements of dialogues, a fuller picture will hopefully emerge, which will be utilized in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Latin Rhetorical Definitions of Dialogue

The intersection between the rhetorical literature and the literary dialogue is profound, and an understanding of this relationship is useful for elucidating the “make-up” of the dialogues. In fact, the word “dialogue” itself (διάλογος in Greek, usually *sermocinatio* in Latin) is one of the rhetorical *figurae*. Quintilian describes it in the following way.

A bolder figure and requiring, according to Cicero, greater rhetorical power,²⁹ is personification, which [the Greeks] call *prosopopoeia*. For this figure adds both diversity and excitement to oratory. By its use we can include the thoughts of our adversaries as if they were speaking with themselves—but their thoughts will only be credible if we have them speak words that would be appropriate for them to think—and we can also introduce our conversations with others or others’ mutual conversations, advancing personas that are conducive to persuasion, reproach, complaint, praise, and compassion. Moreover, it is also permissible in this figure to bring down the gods and raise the dead; even cities and entire peoples can take on a voice. Now there are those who restrict the term “prosopopoeia” to the combination of bodies and words that we compose, preferring to call the fabricated speeches of humans “dialogues,” which some call “*sermocinationes*” in Latin. I, however, follow the accepted norm and call both by the same name, for no speech can be composed without a persona being created to give it.

Illa adhuc audaciora et maiorum, ut Cicero existimat, laterum, fictiones personarum, quae προσωποποιίαι dicuntur: mire namque cum variant orationem tum excitant. his et adversariorum cogitationes uelut secum loquentium protrahimus (qui tamen ita demum a fide non abhorreant, si ea locutos finxerimus, quae cogitasse eos non sit absurdum), et nostros cum aliis sermones et aliorum inter se credibiliter introducimus, et suadendo, obiurgando, querendo, laudando, miserando personas idoneas damus. quin deducere deos in hoc genere dicendi et inferos excitare concessum est. urbes etiam populiue uocem accipiunt. ac sunt quidam, qui has demum

²⁹ Literally, “greater lung power.”

προσωποποιίας dicant, in quibus et corpora et uerba fingimus: sermones hominum adsimulatos dicere διαλόγους malunt, quod Latinorum quidam dixerunt sermocinationem. ego iam recepto more utrumque eodem modo appellaui: nam certe sermo fingi non potest, ut non personae sermo fingatur.³⁰

As Quintilian states at the end of this quotation, a number of rhetorical experts use the terms “dialogue” and “conversation” (*sermocinatio*) to describe the moment when orators adopt the persona of another speaker and speak in his, her, or its voice. As expected, different thinkers subdivide these figures differently. There is “personification” (elsewhere called “*conformatio*,”³¹ composed speech of fictitious persons or inanimate objects) and “dialogue/*sermocinatio*” (composed speech of historical persons), among many other nuanced and slightly varied systems.³² An important related figure, for example, is what Isidore of Seville calls *soliloquium*, “*Peusis*, that is *soliloquium*, is when we respond to our own questions,”³³ and Longinus provides a more extensive, and mimetic, discussion of this *figura*, which he calls “πεύσεις καὶ ἐρωτήσεις,” in his treatise *On the Sublime*.³⁴

The discussion of *sermocinatio*, *conformatio*, *interrogatio*, *soliloquium*, and other related terms found in the rhetorical literature is productive for understanding elements of the literary dialogue, and the presence of such figures has already been noted in Diogenes’ definition of dialogue.³⁵ It is not surprising that these *figurae* can be found in abundance in the literary

³⁰ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX.2.30.

³¹ A word that is used to make a point of theological significance by the “Nestorian” in *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*. See *Contra Nestorianos*, 1.10.

³² See, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV.51.65–66; Cicero, *Orator*, 25; Publius Rutilius Lupus, *Schemata Lexeos*, II.6; Aquila Romanus, *De Figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*, 3–4; Priscian’s translation of Hermogenes’ *Progymnasmata*, 9; and Isidore of Seville, *De rhetorica*, XIII–XIV.

³³ Isidore of Seville, *De rhetorica*, XXII.47 Isidore of Seville himself composed a soliloquy, the *Synonyma*.

³⁴ Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 18.1.

³⁵ Especially, “A dialogue is a discourse consisting of question and answer about philosophical and political topics with the appropriate personification of the characters involved and the choice of language.” For more on this, see Andrew R. Dyck, “Cicero the Dramaturge: Verisimilitude and Consistency and Consistency of Characterization in Some of His Dialogues,” in *Qui Miscuit Utile Dulci. Festschrift Essays for Paul Lacklan MacKendrick*. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1998. pp. 151–164.

dialogues themselves, and their relationship to the mimetic structure of the dialogue is explicitly acknowledged.³⁶ Perhaps the earliest example is when the Laws of Athens take on a voice of their own and question Socrates in the *Crito*.³⁷ In fact, many authors of dialogue, who also happened to be professional teachers of rhetoric, are explicit in their application of these elements to their own works. Cicero explains his decision to remove Scaevola from the scene after the first book of the *De re publica* as one of appropriateness. Scaevola's participation in the conversation in the subsequent books, as Cicero writes to Atticus, would not have been consistent with his character and would therefore have detracted from the persona's believability, one of the requirements of *sermocinatio*.³⁸ In a similar vein, Augustine implies that the conversations contained within the Cassiciacum Dialogues are not simply representative of the characters of the interlocutors but based upon the records kept by stenographers,³⁹ though Augustine often plays with this "reality" throughout these dialogues, insinuating that there were some modifications to this record.⁴⁰ Finally, the accurate and sincere portrayal of the philosophical and theological views of one's opponent was seen as essential for the success of the controversial dialogues, which was also true for rhetorical "dialogue" (cf. Quintilian's claim

³⁶ For a good example of this, see my extended discussion in Chapter 4, where Cicero (through the persona of Laelius) discusses the implications of prosopopoeia within his friend Terence's comedies, creating a Russian doll-like structure of self-reference.

³⁷ Plato, *Crito* 50A–54D.

³⁸ *Epistulae ad Atticum*, IV.16.3. Cicero makes similar remarks about including Cato in his dialogue *De Senectute* and Laelius in his *De Amicitia*, *De Amicitia*, I.4–5.

³⁹ Cf. "Adhibito itaque notario, ne aurae laborem nostrum discernerent, nihil perire permisi," Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, I.1.4.

⁴⁰ The most obvious example is the beginning of *De Ordine*, where, immediately after informing Zenobius of his practice of using stenographers, Augustine begins the dialogue with an auspicious conversation that occurred in the dead of night when no stenographers could be present (*De Ordine*, I.2.5f). This issue was the preoccupation of scholarship a century ago. See B. L. Meulenbroek, "The Historical Character of Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues" *Mnemosyne*, Third Series. Vol. 13.3 (1947): 203–229; and John J. O'Meara, "The Historicity of the Early Dialogues of Saint Augustine." *Vigiliae Christianae*. Vol. 5.3 (July, 1951): 150–178.

that fictive personae are useful only if they are portrayed accurately: *qui tamen ita demum a fide non abhorreant, si ea locutos finxerimus, quae cogitasse eos non sit absurdum*).⁴¹

To summarize, the stipulations about διάλογος/*sermocinatio* found in the rhetorical literature are often found within literary dialogues, and an awareness of this corpus is essential to the reader of dialogues.

Furthermore, rhetorical theory and *figurae* can also provide the reader of dialogues with some much needed perspective on what constitutes the “Socratic method,” that is, whether the presence of question and answer is essential for dialogue and if so, what question and answer entails. When discussing the proper methods for questioning or cross-examining witnesses (*interrogatio*) in Roman legal cases, Quintilian discusses a number of strategies for questioning the witness in order to get not only the *right answer*, but also the right answer in the *right way*. Emotion and general temperaments (and the manipulation thereof), Quintilian claims, can sometimes play an important role. Irascible witness can be brought to anger for benefit; unintelligent witness can be deceived and befuddled; the ambitious flattered and pandered to. Other times, orators need to question in such a way so as to minimize the witness’ prejudice, and sometimes *interrogatio* must be abandoned entirely for continuous speech (*interlocutio*), especially when the witness is too clever.⁴² Quintilian’s motives, of course, are either nefarious or practical depending on one’s view of strategies for coercing witnesses and winning arguments: “The [prudent and constant, or inimical and clever witness] must be refuted by a brief speech (*breui interlocutione*), not by question and answer (*interrogatione*).”⁴³ Just after this

⁴¹ Quoted above. The sincerity in representing the opinions and thoughts of the heretical other is a possibility that is often too quickly dismissed in scholarship.

⁴² *Institutio oratoria*, IV. 7.3–26.

⁴³ *Prudens vero et constans vel tamquam inimicus et pervicax dimittendus statim vel non interrogatione, sed breui interlocutione patroni refutandus est. ibid., V.7.26.*

remark, Quintilian then explicitly makes the claim that dialogic literature should be read by lawyers to improve their rhetorical skills (the influence between rhetorical and literary “dialogue” is bilateral!). Lamenting the fact that neither the theory nor the practice of the cross-examining of witnesses is taught in schools, Quintilian’s only advice for improving at this craft is to read the Socratic dialogues of Plato, though Plato, I think, would not be pleased with Quintilian’s assessment of his methods.⁴⁴

Negative appraisals of this one-sided “dialogue” (*interlocutio*) are common in some modern scholarship, and this is particularly true for moments of long-winded expositions of orthodox belief against a heretic.⁴⁵ Such modes of communication and their appropriateness to dialogues, however, were viewed as normative among ancient writers. In the prologue of the *Tusculan Disputations*, for example, Cicero less contentiously explains the value of the format of the dialogue to Brutus, the dedicatee of this text, in the following way:

So I included the discourses, as the Greeks call them, of five days into as many books. They are so arranged that after my interlocutor gives his opinion, I then oppose it. For this, as you know, is the old Socratic method of opposing the views of one’s opponent. Socrates believed that this was the easiest way for the “verisimilitude” to be discovered. But so that our discussions might be expressed in a more readable format, I shall write them this way—as if they were being performed, not narrated.

Itaque dierum quinque scholas, ut Graeci appellant, in totidem libros contuli. Fiebat autem ita, ut, cum is, qui audire uellet, dixisset quid sibi uideretur, tum ego contra dicerem. Haec est enim, ut scis, uetus et Socratica ratio contra alterius opinionem disserendi. Nam ita facillime quid ueri simillimum esset inueniri posse Socrates arbitrabatur. Sed quo commodius disputationes nostrae explicentur, sic eas exponam, quasi agatar res, non quasi narretur.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Eius rei sine dubio neque disciplina ulla in scholis neque exercitatio traditur, et naturali magis acumine aut usu contingit haec virtus. si quod tamen exemplum ad imitationem demonstrandum sit, solum est quod ex dialogis Socraticorum maximeque Platonis duci potest: in quibus adeo scitae sunt interrogationes, ut, cum plerisque bene respondeatur, res tamen ad id, quod volunt efficere, perveniat. *ibid.* V.7.28–9.

⁴⁵ Cf. Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 8 et passim.

⁴⁶ *Tusculan Disputations*, I.4.8.

A number of Cicero's dialogues take the format of a series of long opposing speeches rather than the back-and-forth of the elenchus. The *Tusculan Disputations* are a case in point, and *De Finibus* is another good example. But this format is not particular to Cicero. Once again, Diogenes Laertius' division of Plato's dialogues is helpful here. According to his system, the primary divisions of the dialogues are the expository (ὁμηγητικός) and the investigative (ζητητικός) types, meaning that one of the major subdivisions of Plato's dialogues is for those containing sets of long speeches (expository). A number of Plato's take this form,⁴⁷ and they served as models for later authors in Late Antiquity.⁴⁸ Most importantly and relevant to Latin literature, the *Timaeus* contains the eponymous interlocutor's lengthy excursus on the physical universe. As the only Platonic dialogue that had a Latin translation available in late antiquity, it is significant that this dialogue contained no real dialogue at all. Cicero's translation, in fact, omitted the opening dialogue among Socrates, Timaeus, Hermocrates, and Critias, but began with Timaeus' speech.⁴⁹

An awareness of ancient rhetorical theory, therefore, advances our understanding of the literary dialogues in many ways. It sheds light on the structure of these dialogues, giving a rich context within which ancient authors might have understood their own works and how they might understand the effectiveness of these texts. Relatedly, these insights can ground the modern reader of dialogue, bridging the cultural distance between our understanding and their understanding of these issues.

⁴⁷ The *Symposium* is famous for its sets of speeches on the subject of *eros*, a dialogue that was imitated through Late Antiquity. Also there is the *Menexenus*, a "dialogue" in which Socrates that he can give a better funeral than what was just given at Pericles' home.

⁴⁸ Methodius' own *Symposium* is the most obvious example. Like the late antique dialogues in general, interest in Methodius' works has increased in the past few years, though its connections with Plato have long been noted. See, L. G. Patterson. *Methodius of Olympus: Divine sovereignty, human freedom, and life in Christ*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997; Jason König, "Sympotic dialogue in first to fifth centuries CE." in Goldhill, *Dialogue*, 85–133, esp. 102–106; and Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 39–44.

⁴⁹ See above.

Expected (Philosophical) Content

Next, Diogenes makes the ostensibly uncontroversial claim that a dialogue is “a discourse consisting of question and answer about philosophical and political topics with the appropriate personification of the characters involved and the choice of language.” Averil Cameron also begins her recent book about dialogues from late antiquity with this comment about the connection between dialogues and philosophical discourse, “This book is about a particular form of writing by Christians in late antiquity, sometimes referred to as ‘the philosophical dialogue’—although by no means all the dialogues in question can be regarded as philosophical.”⁵⁰ Likewise, Peter Schmidt divides the Christian Latin dialogues into a five different categories: controversial dialogues, philosophical dialogues, pedagogical dialogues, hagiographical dialogues, and introspective dialogues.⁵¹ For Schmidt, Augustine’s dialogues and only a subset of them receive the appellation “philosophical.”⁵² These observations, with which I disagree to varying degrees, are illustrative of a problem concerning many traditional readings of the “Christian” dialogues from Late Antiquity.

The historical narrative that these two scholars, among others, are reacting to and have done their part to reshape through their work goes something like this: during the period of late antiquity, dialogues, if they did in fact continue to be written in this period, lost their rigorous philosophical nature with the exception of a few notable outliers such as Augustine or Gregory of Nyssa.⁵³ In response to this bias, Schmidt and Cameron both emphasize the differences

⁵⁰ Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 1.

⁵¹ Kontroversialdialoge, philosophische Dialoge, didaktische Dialoge, hagiographische Dialoge, and selbstbetrachtende Dialoge, Schmidt, “Zur Typologie,” 174–180.

⁵² *Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine*, *De quantitate animae*, *De libero arbitrio*, and *De magistro*, *ibid.*

⁵³ Gregory of Nyssa’s *De Anima*, a *Phaedo*-inspired dialogue between Gregory and his beloved sister Macrina, is often cited as the standard-bearer for classically influenced Byzantine dialogues, though understandably so. See Hubertus R Drobner, “Gregory of Nyssa as Philosopher: *De anima et resurrectione* and *De hominis opificio*.” *Dionysius*. 18 (2000): 69–102.

between the later dialogues and their earlier classical predecessors. By carving out this new literary space through contrast, room is created for the Christian dialogues to exist and be read. To summarize Cameron's point in her recent book, it is not that Christians "didn't do dialogue," but they did it differently. This is not untrue, but the similarities between the classical models and the "philosophy" of the dialogues from Late Antiquity need to be reexamined. The content of the dialogues of Late Antiquity, *mutatis mutandis*, is in fact consistent with the traditional themes found in classical dialogues in both Greek and Latin (and described succinctly by Diogenes above).

A first step in making this realization is to distinguish between the meaning of philosophy in antiquity and how it is used today, and a good place to start is with Augustine himself and the period in which he wrote the majority of his dialogues, 386–389, or rather his retrospective view on this period of his life. In one of his final works, the *Retractationes*, whose title evokes his understanding of dialogue when he was a young man,⁵⁴ Augustine recounts his other literary activity, much of which is lost, while he was in Milan preparing for baptism. He writes:

At the same time, when I was in Milan preparing for baptism, I also attempted to compose books about the liberal arts, questioning those who were with me and who were not opposed to studies like this, because I desired to arrive, as if by logical steps, from corporal matters to incorporeal matters, and lead [others to them]. Of these arts, I only completed the book *De grammatica*, which I lost from our library later on, and the six-volume *De musica*, insofar as it pertains to what is called "rhythm." . . . of those works about the other five liberal arts that I began—*De dialectica*, *de rhetorica*, *de geometrica*, *de arithmetica*, and *de philosophia*—only the beginnings remain, and I lost even those, though I think some still have them.

Per idem tempus, quo Mediolani fui baptismum percepturus, etiam disciplinarum libros conatus sum scribere, interrogans eos qui me cum

⁵⁴ Cf. *Soliloquia* 2.14, where *Ratio* reminds Augustine that one of the benefits of inner-dialogue is the ability to retrace one's steps and correct one's errors. The *Retractationes* are also an inner-dialogue in a sense, the conversation between Augustine's present self and his former self via correction of his written errors.

erant atque ab huiusmodi studiis non abhorrebant, per corporalia cupiens ad incorporalia quibusdam quasi passibus certis uel peruenire uel ducere. sed earum solum de grammatica librum absoluere potui, quem postea de armario nostro peridi, et de musica sex uolumina, quantum attinet ad eam partem quae rithmus uocatur. . . . de aliis uero quinque disciplinis illic similiter inchoatis—de dialectica, de rethorica, de geometrica, de arithmetica, de philosophia—sola principia remanserunt, quae tamen etiam ipsa perdidimus; sed haberi ab aliquibus existimo.⁵⁵

Instantly recognizable are the (mostly) complete collection of the traditional seven liberal arts, which are famously portrayed in Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, sometimes also called *De septem disciplinis*.⁵⁶ In this text, the bride Philology receives seven maidens as her wedding gifts, each of whom personifies one of the seven liberal arts. This division, however, is much more ancient than Late Antiquity. Augustine almost certainly has Varro's now lost *Disciplinarum libri IX* in mind in his project,⁵⁷ and the divisions can be traced to similar systems found in Plato's dialogues, or even Pythagoras.⁵⁸

But what do the seven liberal arts have to do with philosophy? The nature of this relationship can begin to be understood in the quotation from Augustine above, and it is further brought into focus by recalling the meticulous divisions described by Diogenes: "The *Timaeus* is the example of the physical. The *Statesman*, the *Cratylus*, the *Parmenides*, and the *Sophist* are

⁵⁵ *Retractationes* 1.6. With regard to the survival of these texts, fairly convincing arguments posit that the beginning of *De dialectica* and an abridgement of *De grammatica* are in fact extant. See B. Darrell Jackson, *Augustine: De Dialectica*. Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1975, and Guillaume Bonnet, *Abrégé de la grammaire de Saint Augustin*. Série latine, 405. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013. Jackson argues that what remains of the *De Dialectica* indicates that Augustine intended the final version to take the form of a dialogue, pp. 27–9, and Bonner suggests that the unabridged original of the *De Grammatica* was also a dialogue, p. xx. The extant *De Musica* is also composed as a dialogue. There are fragments of a *De rhetorica*, printed in PL 32, col. 1439–1443, but they are very unlikely to be written by Augustine.

⁵⁶ For a thorough discussion of this passage and Augustine's views on the liberal arts, see Danuta R. Shanzer, "Augustine's Disciplines: *Silent diutius Musae Varronis*?" (pp. 69–112) in *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions*. Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, and Hessbrüggen-Walter, Stefan. "Augustine's Critique of Dialectic: Between Ambrose and the Arians," (pp. 184–205) in *ibid*.

⁵⁷ B. Darrell Jackson, *Augustine: De Dialectica*, 2, and Shanzer, "Disciplines," *passim*.

⁵⁸ For Plato, see Plato's *Republic* VII.525a–530d, and for this system originating with Pythagoras, see Plato's *Republic* VII.530d and Proclus' *Commentary on the first book of Euclid's 'Elements'*, 'xii.

examples of the logical,” and so forth.⁵⁹ For Diogenes, it is completely unremarkable that the the subject of the *Timaeus* is natural science or “natural *philosophy*,” that the subject of the *Cratylus* is grammatical and etymological, and that the subject of the *Sophist* and *Stateman* is dialectical. For Diogenes, they are *parts* of philosophy, and for Augustine, if they are not parts, they are steps to philosophy (cf. *per corporalia cupiens ad incorporalia quibusdam quasi passibus certis uel peruenire uel ducere*).⁶⁰ Much the same can be said for the subjects found in the dialogues of Cicero such as the discussions of rhetoric in *De Oratore* and the *Brutus*; likewise for Early Christian dialogues. Even ostensibly unphilosophical outliers such as Gregory the Great’s “hagiographical” dialogues have a deeply philosophical purpose.⁶¹

It is dangerous, therefore, to retroject a modern understanding of philosophy onto ancient dialogues, using these modern categories in order to mark differences between the contents of ancient and late antique dialogues. As will hopefully become clear, the dialogues from Late Antiquity are better understood as a continuation of rather than an aberration from the classical model of the dialogue.

Literary Forms of the Dialogue

Diogenes Laertius’ dismissiveness of subdividing the dialogues via literary (τραγικῶς) criteria represents an extreme view on an issue noted by critics and writers of dialogue since antiquity. This dismissiveness points to the relationship between form and content in the literary dialogues. For some, the dialogic form of the text is merely a vehicle to facilitate enjoyment, a

⁵⁹ Quoted above.

⁶⁰ Quoted above.

⁶¹ I have recently argued at the 2017 annual meeting of the SCS that Gregory the Great used the hagiographical material contained in Book IV of his *Dialogues* in order to make an argument about the immortality of the soul, perhaps the “classic” subject of the philosophical dialogue. It has come to my attention that Kate Cooper and Matthew Dal Santo make a somewhat similar observation in Goldhill’s volume. See Kate Cooper and Matthew Dal Santo, “Boethius, Gregory the Great and the Christian ‘afterlife’ of classical dialogue,” (pp. 173–189, at 185–7), in Goldhill, 2008.

spoonful of sugar to help the philosophical medicine go down more easily. For others, the dialogic form has an essential and powerful impact for advancing the argument of the dialogue.⁶² To put it another way, “Would something be ‘lost in translation’ if a dialogue were converted into a treatise?” That dialogues commonly produced enjoyment and wonder in the reader is attested both second-hand and even within many of the dialogues themselves, from antiquity onward. The third century BC theorist Demetrius of Phalerum recounts that the dialogues of Plato and Aeschines met with great popularity when they were introduced, astounding readers with their lifelike vividness and their ability to instruct.⁶³ (The personas of) Evodius and John Cassian also speak of their astonishment at the words of their interlocutors.⁶⁴ Henry Aristippus, the twelfth-century translator of some of Plato’s dialogues into Latin, remarks on the literary dialogue’s ability to entertain (in addition to its utility for teaching) in a letter that accompanied his translation of the *Phaedo*.⁶⁵ But leaving the enjoyment or delight caused by the structure of dialogues aside for the moment, it is appropriate first to discuss the two basic literary structures of the dialogue to which Diogenes Laertius alluded, and through this discussion the potential “usefulness” of the dialogic form will become clearer.

⁶² See A. E. Douglas, “Form and Content in the *Tusculan Disputations*,” (pp. 197–218) in *Cicero the Philosopher*. J. G. F. Powell, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

⁶³ Εὐημέρησαν δ’ οἱ τοιοῦτοι λόγοι τότε ἐξευρεθέντες τὸ πρῶτον, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐξέπληξαν τῷ τε μιμητικῷ καὶ τῷ ἐναργεῖ καὶ τῷ μετὰ μεγαλοφροσύνης νουθετικῷ. Demetrius, *On Style*, 289.

⁶⁴ Ego uero et hac oratione tua ita sum adfectus. Augustine, *De Quantitate animae*, XXXVI.81; Ad haec obstupefactos nos [Iohannem et Germanum] intuens senex et ad uerba narrationis suae inexplebili ardore succensus. John Cassian, *Conlationes*, I.23.

⁶⁵ Cf. Humanam scienciam duo articuli iugem servant, docere et doceri, labentem duo erigunt, redarguere et redargui; quorum utraque tam laudabilia quam iocunda et utilia . . . inuenies in presenti dialogo [Fedone], in quibus te meditari plurimum oblectabit, subtilissima . . . argumenta . . . de morte Socratis, de reliquis altissime philosophe articulis tam admiratione quam studio dignis. *Epistula Henrici Aristippi ad Roboratum*, 89, lines 1–3; 90, lines 18–4.

The two basic forms that dialogues take are the mimetic form and the narrative form.⁶⁶

The former, which is more common than the latter, can be thought of as the script of a play or the notarized copy of a public debate. For these texts, only the direct speech of each interlocutor is represented on the page, and the speakers' names or initials are often included in the margins in order to assist the reader in identifying the changes between the speakers.⁶⁷ Sometimes, though, these markers are absent, resulting in some obscurity. Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma*, a soliloquy between himself and his soul, is a frustrating example of this problem.⁶⁸ Because this form only includes the direct words of the interlocutors, its major limitation is that most extralinguistic information is absent, including the *mise-en-scène*, the posture or positioning of the actors, their emotions, and the pacing of the conversation (more on this below).

The second form, the narrative dialogue, records the conversation through the lens of a single person's perspective. In Latin literature, the narrator is often the author, or the persona of the author. Instead of the changes of speaker being marked in the margins as in the mimetic dialogues, these dialogues constitute a narrated, continuous prose text, the composition of which is sometimes portrayed by authors as a more burdensome task because the conversations must be divided by phrases such as "he said," "she said," and "I said" (for example, Latin, *dixit, inquam*; Greek, ἔφη, εἶπον).⁶⁹ Despite the ostensible annoyance sometimes expressed within the dialogues

⁶⁶ Other names are found in the scholarship, the most common alternative being direct (for mimetic) and indirect for (narrative).

⁶⁷ For explicit discussions of this practice by Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus, see Chapter 4, under "Literary Precedents."

⁶⁸ This dialogue is frustrating for the reader because, though it is clearly a dialogue, one must intuit the divisions between speakers. Though Schmidt lists this text, he does not give any extended treatment of it. See his discussion of *der selbstbetrachtende Dialog* (pp. 124–126).

⁶⁹ Plato, *Theaetetus* 143B–C is the locus classicus. Eucleides tells his interlocutor Terpsion that he composed a dialogue containing the conversation that he heard Socrates have with Theodorus and Theaetetus "not as Socrates related it to me," but "as if he was speaking with those with whom he originally spoke," in order that the digressions between speeches (αἱ μεταξύ τῶν λόγων διηγήσεις) might not be an annoyance. For Latin literature, the prologue of Cicero's *De Amicitia* has had similar influence. Cf. *De Amicitia*, I.3. Even Petrarch, who wrote a dialogue in which he conversed with Augustine, quotes this passage as his justification for using the mimetic form. Cf. Hunc nempe

themselves about this form, the attitude towards this form of the dialogues is more nuanced than has been treated in scholarship—there are great advantages for using this form as well, and the ancient authors were aware of this. In my view, the disdain expressed about this form is more a rhetorical excuse than an expression of a real belief.

In fact, these advantages can be seen throughout the tradition. In Plato's *Lysis*, a dialogue related in the first-person by Socrates, the narrative frame allows Plato to cue the reader to Hippothales' nonverbal reaction when he is asked about his handsome companion (in addition to what his interlocutor actually said). For example, the reader is told that the young Hippothales blushes, not unexpectedly, at Socrates' question about his lover, and as the questioning progresses, he continues to redden with embarrassment.⁷⁰ Read out of context this may seem to be no more than a playful joke, but because the central theme of the *Lysis* is love, these extralinguistic cues are essential for interpreting how the conversation and the entire dialogue play out. Throughout the text, Socrates also takes note of the positioning of the interlocutors: who is within whose sightline (especially significant for the *erastes* and the *eromenos*), and what emotional reactions various persons have to the dialogue. Such observations, it has been argued, as well as the great detail devoted to describing the scenery and locale of the *Lysis*, are integral to reading the dialogue as a whole. The *Lysis* would be a very different dialogue—both aesthetically and philosophically—were its form different.⁷¹

scribendi morem a Cicerone meo didici; at ipse prius a Platone didicerat. *De secreto conflictu curarum mearum*, 26, cited in Vittorio, *Philosophical Dialogue*, 168–9.

⁷⁰ Cf. Καὶ ὃς ἐρωτηθεὶς ἠρυθρίασεν . . . καὶ ὃς ἀκούσας πολὺ ἔτι μᾶλλον ἠρυθρίασεν. *Lysis*, 204B–C.

⁷¹ For a fuller discussion of the *Lysis* in particular, especially the importance of its prologue for the content of the rest of the dialogue, see Francisco J. Gonzalez, “How to read a Platonic Prologue: *Lysis* 203A–207D.” in *Plato as Author: The Rhetoric of Philosophy*. Ann N. Michelini, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2003. For a more general discussion of this topic in the Platonic corpus and dialogues in general, see Vittorio Hösle, *The Philosophical Dialogue*, 48–68.

The embarrassment, or inequality, of some of the interlocutors is also an important factor in Augustine's Cassiciacum dialogues, which are also narrative in form. Perhaps most famously, during the banquet set for Augustine's birthday—the setting of the *De beata uita* is not unrelated to his mother Monica's important role in the dialogue⁷²—Augustine notices that the others present have missed the intellectual joke that he and Licentius had just shared.⁷³ Licentius and he had laughed, but the rest remained mum in awkward silence. The awkward situation is resolved when Augustine shares a smile with his mother, who then dispels the dilemma with a quip simultaneously wise and “vulgar.”⁷⁴ Monica explains who the obscure Academics are by calling them epileptics (*caducarii*). To add to the interest of this remarkable passage, Augustine also breaks the frame of the dialogue during this episode, directly addressing Theodore who was the work's dedicatee. By connecting the inner dialogue with the outer—that is, his conversation with Theodore or any other reader—Augustine allows the reader to reflect on his own knowledge or lack thereof and what this means within the context of the discussion of the blessed life.⁷⁵ Once again, the narrative form, as well as its interaction with the frame impacts the meaning of the text, and were the *De Beata Vita* composed in the mimetic form, Augustine would not have been able to perform this multilayered conversation.

Finally, Diogenes Laertius' third category requires brief comment. The “mixed” form, as the name suggests, is simply a dialogue that utilizes both of the aforementioned forms, the mimetic and the narrative. For the entire history of the dialogue, the mixed form can almost

⁷² See Conybeare, *Irrational*, 64ff.

⁷³ Cf. animaduerti ceteros rei totius ignaros et scire cupientes, quid inter nos solos tam iucunde ageretur, sine risu nos intueri. *De beata uita*, 2.16.

⁷⁴ See Conybeare, *Irrational*, 76–80, 76 n. 48 for the “vulgarity” of Monica's comment.

⁷⁵ The most natural reading of this passage might be to assume that every reader shared Augustine and Licentius' joke, but I must admit that when I first read the *De beata uita*, I had a poor understanding myself of the Academics, and I, like Navigius, sat in silence while Licentius and Augustine laughed.

exclusively be limited to some of Plato's dialogues, and therefore does not have much impact on the Latin dialogues of late antiquity.⁷⁶ The most famous example is the *Symposium*, where Apollodorus relates to his companion the story, which was partially but incorrectly related to the companion by a certain Phoenix, an account he received from Aristodemus, who was actually present at the party but supplemented by Socrates' later testimony.

If there is a good example of the mixed form in dialogues from Late Antiquity, it is perhaps found in the dialogues attributed to Gregory the Great. Composed in four books, this dialogue, which is mimetic in form, includes the discussion between Gregory and his student Peter, a conversation that is mostly one-sided. Gregory, at Peter's request, related what he knew about the saints who lived in Italy, sometimes speaking at great length about conversations related to him by others. Of additional interest is the rich discussion between Peter and Gregory that serve as interludes between Gregory's stories, providing a second layer of analysis and sort of meta-commentary to the dialogue as they discuss why the lives of the saints should be recounted in the first place. Because of this format, Gregory's dialogic persona inevitably relates the words and deeds of many other people, which approaches some of the mixed dialogues.⁷⁷

One might also add those dialogues that are framed as letters. While discussing the diction appropriate for letter-writing, Demetrius of Phalerum includes a comment that Artemom, the editor of Aristotle's letters, made about the form of a letter. He wrote, "A letter should be considered as half of a dialogue" (εἶναι γὰρ τὴν ἐπιστολὴν οἷον τὸ ἕτερον μέρος τοῦ διαλόγου).⁷⁸ It is compelling sometimes to use this model when reading some of the later Latin dialogues

⁷⁶ For a discussion of these dialogues, see William A. Johnson, "Dramatic Frame and Philosophic Idea in Plato," *The American Journal of Philology*. Vol. 119.4 (Winter 1998): 577–598. See also, Vittorio, *Philosophical Dialogue*, 167.

⁷⁷ For a fuller discussion of this dialogue and related bibliography, see the final section of this chapter.

⁷⁸ *On Style*, 223. This observation is by no means unique to Demetrius. See Gillian Clark, "'Let's (not) talk about it': Augustine and the control of epistolary dialogue," in Goldhill (2004), pp. 135–148.

composed as letters, for example, Faustinus' letter to the Empress Flaccilla, the dialogue *De Trinitate*, and Evagrius' letter to Valerius, *Altercatio legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum*.

In summary, it should not be forgotten that writing dialogues was a choice, which according to the evidence was made by authors with the expectation that the form of the dialogue would shape how their texts were read and understood. The benefits offered by the narrative form have been disproportionately discussed here, but in the following chapters, the special clarity that the mimetic form of the dialogue brings will be discussed at length.⁷⁹

The Importance of Plato and Tradition in the History of Dialogues

Finally, something must be said about the importance of authority figures within the tradition. First stands Plato and to some extent rightly so. Plato's impact on the western understanding of the literary dialogue is nearly impossible to overestimate. Although the above-quoted passage from Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* is from the book that is entirely devoted to the Athenian philosopher and is therefore Plato-centric in its discussion of dialogue, this gravitation toward Plato with respect to dialogue is representative of nearly all discussion of dialogue since antiquity. Plato is synonymous with dialogue. Plato is dialogue. Even among authors who have never read a word of Plato, his name represents the wellspring of dialogue-writing. (A persona of) Augustine, for example, is pitched against Plato in the sixth-century anonymous dialogue, *Contra Philosophos*, though the author almost certainly had little or no direct knowledge of Plato's writings.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ For one example, see Chapter 4, under "Method of Interpretation: *quo facilius obiectionum absolutio legentibus elucescat*."

⁸⁰ For issues of dating and other relevant information about *Contra Philosophos*, see its corresponding section in Chapter 2.

That said, Plato is not the only name associated with this form, and it is necessary for the reader of later dialogues, especially those composed in Latin, to swim against the Platonic current. Over time, other authors also became known for their compositions of dialogues, and shortly after the period known as Late Antiquity, a sort of “Mt Rushmore of Dialogue” can be seen to have developed among Christian authors, a grouping which is still active and meaningful in modern scholarship. These four monumental figures are Plato, Cicero, Augustine, and Boethius. Their importance can be seen clearly in the quotation from Honorius Augustodunensis with which I began this chapter, and just as clearly in the volume of essays edited by Goldhill a few years ago, as this book is subdivided into five parts, the first four of which correspond closely to these four authors.⁸¹ Not only that, but scholars have made an effort to connect each of the latter three authors with his immediate predecessor, revealing not only their individual importance but also creating a sort of genealogy of dialogue writers.⁸² There is certainly some evidence to support this picture as well. Cicero is explicit about his debt to Plato. Many of his dialogues are modelled after Plato’s, and he often elaborates on Plato’s influence in many of his letters to his friends.⁸³ Likewise, Augustine often refers to Cicero’s works, notably remarking at the beginning of the *Contra Academicos*, the first of the Cassiciacum Dialogues, that he and his

⁸¹ Part 1, entitled “Classical Models,” contains two chapters (of three total) on Plato: Andrew Ford, “The beginnings of dialogue: Socratic discourses and fourth-century prose,” pp. 29–44, and Alex Long, “Plato’s dialogues and a common rationale for dialogue form,” pp. 45–59. Part 2, entitled “Imperial Models,” contains one chapter (of two total) on Cicero: Malcolm Schofield, “Ciceronian Dialogue,” pp. 63–84. Part 3, entitled ‘Christianity and the Theological Imperative,’ contains two chapters (of two total) on Augustine: Gillian Clark, “Can we talk? Augustine and the possibility of dialogue,” pp. 117–134, and Richard Miles, “‘Let’s (not) talk about it’: Augustine and the control of epistolary dialogue,” pp. 135–148. Part 4, entitled “Christianity and the Social Imperative,” contains one chapter (of two total) about Boethius: Kate Cooper and Matthew Dal Santo, “Boethius, Gregory the Great and the Christian ‘afterlife’ of classical dialogue,” pp. 173–189. The fifth and final part investigates dialogue in early Jewish literature.

⁸² Examples are numerous, but see the following. Thelma B. Degraff, “Plato in Cicero,” *Classical Philology*, vol. 35.2 (Apr., 1940): 143–153. Michael P. Foley, “Cicero, Augustine, and the Philosophical Roots of the Cassiciacum Dialogues,” *REAug* vol. 45 (1999): 51–77.

⁸³ Cf. “Sed nosti genus dialogorum meorum . . . sed feci idem quod in πολιτεία deus ille noster Plato,” Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* IV.16.2–3. See also Phillip Levine, “Cicero and the Literary Dialogue,” *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53 No. 4 (January 1958): 146–151.

students had just recently read Cicero's *Hortensius*.⁸⁴ Only the connection between Boethius' *Consolatio* and Augustine's dialogues is on less than firm ground, though this connection has still been made.⁸⁵

This narrative, although useful for speaking about the history of dialogue-writing in broad terms, is too narrow and linear for understanding the late antique Latin dialogues. First, it gives more credit than is due to Plato. Some Latin authors certainly had a meaningful conversation with Plato's original Greek texts—Macrobius and Boethius are the obvious examples, but even Jerome shows some familiarity with Plato⁸⁶—but for the majority of Latin authors, Cicero was their primary inspiration. Not only did Cicero represent the birth of Greek philosophy in Latin,⁸⁷ but the birth of the Latin dialogue. Cicero's offspring, however, did not have only one forefather in its lineage. As often as Plato's dialogues are mentioned by Cicero, so also are Aristotle's. In fact, Cicero often remarks that he follows the form of Aristotle's dialogues more closely than Plato's.⁸⁸

This Aristotelian influence can be seen in two main elements of Cicero's dialogues (and by extension in subsequent Latin literature): the inclusion of proems, often in the form of a epistolary address, before the “main text” or even individual books of the dialogue; and Cicero's

⁸⁴ Cf. “Uolui temptare pro aetate quid [Licentius et Trygetius] possent, praesertim cum Hortensius liber Ciceronis iam eos ex magna parte conciliasse philosophiae uideretur,” Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, I.4.

⁸⁵ Edmund T. Silk, “Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* as a Sequel to Augustine's Dialogues and *Soliloquia*,” *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 32 (1939): 19–39.

⁸⁶ For Boethius, cf. “Omnesque Platonis dialogos uertendo uel etiam commentando in Latinam redigam formam,” Boethius, *In librum Aristotelis 'Peri hermeneias' commentarii (editio secunda)*, II.3. For Macrobius, cf. “Nec mihi fraudi sit, si uni aut alteri ex his quos coetus coegit matura aetas posterior saeculo Praetextati fuit: quod licito fieri Platonis dialogi testimonio sunt,” *Saturnalia*, I.1.5. See my discussion of Jerome's *Contra Pelagionos* in Chapter 2.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Tusculan Disputations*, II.1.5, quoted in Lerer, *Boethius*, 32–3.

⁸⁸ Anton-Hermann Chroust was one of the leading voices in the discussion of Aristotle's dialogues in the middle of the twentieth century. See Anton-Hermann Chroust, “Aristotle's *Politicus*: a Lost Dialogue,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* vol. 108.4 (1965): 346–53, and “*Eudemus* or *On the soul*: A Lost Dialogue of Aristotle on the Immortality of the Soul. *Mnemosyne*. Fourth Series, vol. 19.1 (1966): 17–30. For the fragments of Aristotle's dialogues, see Ricardus Walzer, ed. *Aristotelis dialogorum fragmenta in usum scholarum*. Hildesheim : G. Olms, 1963.

inclusion of himself as an interlocutor in some of his dialogues. Cicero's letters are the richest source of information for understanding his state of mind in composing dialogues as he speaks explicitly about his thinking during the composition of these texts. In one of his letters to his friend Atticus, Cicero says that he composed his dialogue, *De re publica*, in the manner of Aristotle, that is, by including proems for each individual book, a point he makes more than once.⁸⁹ In evidence of the second point, Cicero recounts a rebuke that he received at the hands of Sallust at his villa in Tusculum during a private reading of the aforementioned *De re publica*. Cicero tells his brother Quintus that Sallust, although approving of his decision to distance himself from the discussion of rhetoric in the *De oratore*, criticized him for excluding himself from the discussion of state matters, which would have given "greater authority" to the dialogue.⁹⁰ Both of these two elements are ubiquitous in the extant Latin corpus,⁹¹ and these two examples serve as an important reminder that thinking of the history of dialogue as represented by only a few select individuals, in this case Plato, can be dangerous and misleading. This is particularly true for Latin dialogues because of their usually indirect connection to Plato (and Aristotle).

Moreover, this narrative that focuses on the four aforementioned figures inevitably pushes the "other" dialogues to the periphery. I make this point not to criticize previous scholarship nor to deny the importance of these four figures, four of the greatest authors from antiquity. It is important to realize, however, that a retrospective view of literary history can

⁸⁹ Itaque cogitabam, quoniam in singulis libris utor prohoemiis ut Aristoteles in iis quos ἐξωτερικοὺς uocat, aliquid efficere ut non sine causa istum [Scaevolam] appellarem. *Ad Atticum* IV.16.2. Cicero makes a similar comment about his *De Oratore* in *Ad familiares* 1.9.23.

⁹⁰ Hi libri cum in Tusculano mihi legerentur audiente Sallustio, admonitus sum ab illo, multo maiore auctoritate illis de rebus dici posse, si ipse loquerer de republica . . . Aristotelem denique, quae de republica et praestante uiro scribat, ipsum loqui. *Ad Quintum* III.5.1.

⁹¹ Though it must be noted that like Cicero it is far from guaranteed that the author inserts himself explicitly into the text.

sometimes be obfuscating. Literary genres, in this case dialogues, are not preexisting categories of production at which any given text can “succeed” or “fail,” be it zero-sum or by degree. Contra Bakhtin,⁹² it is my view that the literary genre of dialogue from its very inception did, does, and will always continue to develop. Each individual dialogue, therefore, is an answer or response to the ongoing discussion, invariably continuing, stretching, expanding, and experimenting with the status quo at its respective moment in time. That Augustine and Boethius are exemplars of dialogue from Late Antiquity, especially of the *meditatio* or interior dialogue, for the subsequent Christian literary tradition is historical fact.⁹³ One needs only to look to Anselm of Canterbury, Catherine of Siena, Terese of Ávila, and Thomas Merton to see this.⁹⁴ But this does not imply that we should forget that Augustine and Boethius were not de facto models of dialogue in their own time, much less the only writers of dialogues from their time. It is often said that history is written by the victors, but it might be more accurate to say that literary history is written about the victors.

To speak of texts and their authors in competitive terms is doubly appropriate for dialogues, and in a sense it is ironic that the texts less often read or “the losers” of this literary history actually represent the majority of Latin dialogues from late antiquity, namely the controversial dialogues or οἱ ἀγωνιστικοὶ διάλογοι to use Diogenes Laertius’ terms.⁹⁵ Like the first Christian dialogue, Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, and the first Christian dialogue composed in Latin, Minucius Felix’s *Octavius*, this group of dialogues sets a Christian against

⁹² “The novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is yet uncompleted.” p. 3. M. M. Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981.

⁹³ See Brian Stock, “Self, Soliloquy, and Spiritual Exercises in Augustine and Some Later Authors,” *The Journal of Religion* vol. 91, no. 1, The Augustinian Moment (January 2011): 5–23.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Monologion*, *Dialogues*, *Interior Castle*, and *The Seven Storey Mountain* respectively.

⁹⁵ Often called *disputationes*, *conflictus*, and *altercationes* in Latin.

some sort of philosophical opponent, usually a Jew, a pagan, or a member of a heretic Christian sect.⁹⁶ At the end of fourth century, Faustinus wrote a letter to the Empress Augusta Flacilla that contained a debate between himself and an Arian so that she could better understand the issues at stake in the heresy.⁹⁷ In the middle of the fifth century, Arnobius the Younger composed the *Conflictus Arnobii catholici cum Serapione*, which sets himself against his Egyptian Monophysite opponent Serapion.⁹⁸ In the early sixth century, the Scythian monk John Maxentius, who participated in the ongoing discussion after the Council of Chalcedon, composed a dialogue *Contra Nestorianos*, which pitches an “orthodox” Christian against a follower of Nestorius. There are many more dialogues like these, and they represent the majority of Latin dialogues from the period of late antiquity.⁹⁹ In terms of authority or literary models for these texts, the dialogues of Jerome, not Augustine, better represent the extant corpus of Latin dialogues from late antiquity,¹⁰⁰ and these texts will be the primary focus of the subsequent three chapters of this thesis. In summary then, the reader of dialogues must both embrace and be wary of the importance of authority figures associated with the tradition of dialogues. These figures have cast a long shadow on ancient literature, but at the same time, they do not necessarily represent the actual extant corpus of late antique Latin dialogues.

⁹⁶ Cf. Incipiamus ergo, oboedientes religiosissimis praeceptis tuis, collidere cum aduersario, non quidem de nostris uiribus praesumentes, sed habentes fiduciam de patrocínio Saluatoris, aduersus quem more gentilium et furore Iudaeorum bellum exagitat impietas haeticorum,” Faustinus, *De Trinitate*, 1.34–38. The aforementioned *Dialogue with Trypho* and *Octavius* are good examples of Jewish and pagan interlocutors respectively. Jerome’s *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* is one of the earliest heretical example. More will be said about this type of dialogue later.

⁹⁷ Faustinus, *De Trinitate* I, 2. For this passage see Chapter 2 below.

⁹⁸ Though the authorship is sometimes disputed. See Chapter 2 below.

⁹⁹ For a complete discussion of these texts see Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ Jerome wrote two dialogues: *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* (composed around 380), which personifies the subsequent reception of the disastrous Council of Ariminum, and *Dialogi aduersus Pelagianos* (composed in 415), which contains a debate about the relationship between free will and God’s grace.

My Definition of Dialogue

As has been shown throughout this chapter, there are a number of lenses with which to perceive the structure of the dialogue, and relatedly authors of these dialogues make use of these very structures in a variety of ways to facilitate meaning and advance their literary goals. For example, an author can use the form of the dialogue to distance or hide himself from the issues at stake within the text. This phenomenon is infamous in Plato's case and has created endless discussion about what doctrines can be associated with Plato himself.¹⁰¹ This distance was also found to be useful in many of the controversial dialogues. Jerome, for example, uses generic personae in his dialogue against the Pelagian heresy in order to portray objectivity in the debate *in utraque parte*.¹⁰² In a similar vein, a dialogue can be a clever way to tackle the prickly situation of an intellectual superior writing to a political superior. Exactly how one should advise a king or queen has had a long history among intellectuals. One of the answers to this question seems to have been the dialogue.¹⁰³

More of these strategies will be explored at length below, but now that the relevant parts of the dialogue have been discussed, it is time to proffer my own attempt at a definition. It is as follows: "A dialogue is a text, written in either mimetic or narrative form, whose intention is to relate the verbatim conversation of two or more interlocutors and shows an awareness of its place within the genre of dialogic texts, with respect to both its expected form and contents." Definitions are necessary and useful, and though mine is not significantly different from

¹⁰¹ The literature is endless on this topic and will continue to be so. See Ann N. Michelini, "Plato's Socratic Mask," (pp. 45–65) in Michelini (2003), and Eleanor Dickey, "Me autem nomine appellabat: Avoidance of Cicero's Name in his Dialogues." *Classical Quarterly*. Vol. 47.2 (1997): 584–588.

¹⁰² Cf. Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, Prologue.2.

¹⁰³ Faustinus, for example, utilizes the dialogue in order to educate the Empress Flaccilla about the intricacies of the Arian heresy. See the further discussion of this dialogue in Chapter 2.

Diogenes' definition,¹⁰⁴ the path that led to this definition is markedly different from Diogenes. What I have hoped to show is that the background behind the definition is more important than the definition itself. It is good to know that dialogues are "philosophical" and have "literary qualities," but it is better to know what this meant to ancient authors, and that it did not always have the same meaning. It is for this reason that I have spent some time unpacking these terms.

On a more mundane note, my definition will serve an important if basic function for the remainder of this thesis by determining which texts are included in and excluded from this study. As just two examples, Augustine's *Conlatio cum Maximino Arianorum episcopo*, which is a record of a public debate copied by notaries, and Endelechiuss' bucolic dialogue poem, *De morte boum* (as called, *De uirtute signi crucis Domini*), which is a Virgilian-inspired dialogue-poem dedicated to the emperor, are excluded, despite their textual forms, because their authors would not have recognized these texts as composed within the genre of literary dialogues.¹⁰⁵ The scope of this thesis is the topic with which this chapter will conclude.

The Scope of This Thesis, Why Latin Dialogues?

This decision to focus on only Latin dialogues needs some justification. One could inquire, for example, why there is no treatment given to the extensive corpora of Greek and Syriac dialogues from precisely this period. Late Antiquity, in addition to being a time of transition as it is commonly understood, was also a period of intense cultural dialogue. Why not investigate the entire literary genre that is especially self-conscious of the power and utility of

¹⁰⁴ "A dialogue is a discourse consisting of question and answer about philosophical and political topics with the appropriate personification of the characters involved and the choice of language." Quoted above.

¹⁰⁵ Such statement are problematic, but this issue as it pertains to the stenographic records of public debates will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2. For Endelechiuss, see Margaret Schatkin, "Endelechiuss' Eclogue and the Conversion of Constantine," *Andover Newton Quarterly* 15 (1975): 228–37.

acknowledging “the other side” (*ex utraque parte*)? There are two answers to this question, one practical and the other more theoretical, which will be treated in turn.

First, the choice of Latin dialogues is one of practicality and need. As mentioned above, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in Greek dialogues, most notably by Cameron and those who have answered her call to action.¹⁰⁶ The Greek texts, therefore, are currently generating an appropriate amount of interest, and their absence from this study is not a problem as far as coverage goes. Syriac literature, however, is a different story. Syriac dialogues are a favorite group of texts for Hellenists and even Latinists interested in dialogues to mention in passing.¹⁰⁷ Many of these Syriac dialogues, such as the majority of Ephrem the Syrian’s dialogic homilies or *memre*, to which Romanos the Melodist’s own homilies or *kontakia* can be compared,¹⁰⁸ are of a different category from the texts with which this work is concerned. A number of Syriac dispute poems and prose dialogues, however, are strikingly similar to the Latin (and Greek) material, adopting, for example, the same structure of the controversial dialogues that are the subject of the following three chapters. Furthermore, even the significantly later (12th century) Jacob Severus bar Shakko’s *Book of Dialogues* (*Ktobo d-Dialogu*), a series of dialogues containing instructions about the quadrivium and the other liberal arts, is an intriguing comparandum for late antique and medieval Latin dialogues.¹⁰⁹ Regrettably, many of these texts

¹⁰⁶ See notes above.

¹⁰⁷ The importance of Syriac to Latinists was recently shown by Columba Stewart during a symposium at the Institute for Advanced Study (24 February 2017). Over the course of his talk, he discussed Syriac manuscripts with extensive explanatory marginalia in Latin, indicating the linguistic exchange between speakers of Syriac and Latin. Egeria makes a similar connection while describing her experiences in Jerusalem. See *Travels*, 47.3–5.

¹⁰⁸ See P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis, eds. *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica: Cantica Genuina*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963; and Sebastian Brock, “From Ephrem to Romanos,” in *Studia Patristica* 20, E. A. Livingston, ed. Leuven: Peeters, 1989: pp. 139–152.

¹⁰⁹ For a brief overview of some of the literature on these Syriac dialogues, see R. Murray, “Aramaic and Syriac dispute poems and their connections,” in M.J.Geller, J.C.Greenfield, and M.P.Weitzman, eds. *Studia Aramaica* (Supplement 4, *Journal of Semitic Studies* (1995): 157–87, and Sebastian Brock, “The Syriac dispute poems: the various types,” in G.J.Reinink and H.L.J. Vanstiphout, eds. *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the ancient and Mediaeval Near East Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 42 Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1991: pp. 109–19.

must still be read in manuscript form, not to mention the fact that Syriac is uncommonly studied by classicists.¹¹⁰ Greek, therefore, is actively being worked on, and although Syriac dialogues remain a desideratum, especially with respect to their relationship with the Latin and Greek material, the same can be said for many of the Latin dialogues.

This leads to the next answer, which touches upon a historiographical and disciplinary problem concerning the study of Late Antiquity and even Classics more broadly. In this context, the question, “Why only Latin dialogues?,” can be understood to mean, “Is late antique Latin literature, Latin dialogues in particular, a meaningful and self-contained field of study that yields positive results for the scholar interested in the literary, intellectual, political, and social cultures of the Later Roman Empire?” “Is there not the possibility,” one might interject, “that important comparanda will be ignored merely because they were written in another language?” These questions can be partially answered by looking to the previous studies of the dialogue mentioned earlier. Peter Schmidt, for example, can write on the “Early Christian Latin Dialogue” without comment, and in her recent book on ancient dialogues, Averil Cameron, can “confine [herself] here to late antiquity, and mainly to Christian writing in Greek.”¹¹¹

These decisions are entirely justifiable, it seems, but sometimes these very decisions can have the negative consequences raised above, namely forcing a commentator into a myopic reading of a text whose network of influences and interests might span traditional linguistic and political boundaries. Cameron immediately follows the above quotation with words of caution, adding that she does not “mean to suggest an artificial divide” [between Greek and Latin

¹¹⁰ This traditional separation between Classics and Near Eastern Studies, for example, is beginning to evaporate as disciplinary lines are beginning to blur.

¹¹¹ Cameron, *Dialoguing*, x.

dialogues],¹¹² and she emphasizes the importance of contextualized readings.¹¹³ Yet in her subsequent discussion of Theodoret's *Eranistes*, which is one of the three dialogues that are discussed at length in her recent essay,¹¹⁴ she discusses only the earlier dialogues composed in Greek, most notably Cyril's *De Trinitate*, as comparanda, and there is no mention of the later Latin dialogues composed by John Maxentius and Rusticus the Deacon.¹¹⁵ Though it is hard to fault Cameron for omitting the immediate reception of Theodoret's dialogue, I shall argue in Chapter 4 that much can be gained by reading the Latin *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* alongside the Greek *Eranistes*; in fact, there might even be an intertextual relationship between them. Furthermore, Rusticus the Deacon, who was pro-Theodoret despite the condemnation of some of Theodoret's writings at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), composed a Latin dialogue, *Disputatio Contra Acephalos*, which seems to have much in common with the *Eranistes*, especially considering Rusticus' personal opinion of Theodoret.¹¹⁶ One answer to the question above is that a focus on Latin dialogues alone can sometimes prove to be problematic.

On the other hand, Latin literature in general and the Latin dialogues of Late Antiquity in particular merit attention and study as a united whole. Ever since Horace noted that *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*,¹¹⁷ a tendentious relationship, already felt, was explicitly articulated between Greek and Latin literature and cultures, and scholarship has endlessly traced this

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ And she criticizes others for failing to do so. "The *Symposium* is a strange text. Vittorio Hösle find in Methodius some fertile material for comparison, but he does not attempt to square the circle by putting the dialogue in its historical or theological context," Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 42.

¹¹⁴ The other two are Methodius' *Symposium* and an unnamed dialogue that takes place between Gregentius, the archbishop of Taphar and a Jew named Herban. See Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 39, 52.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 44–50. The closest someone has come to making such a connection, of which I am aware, is Patrick Gray. He writes, "The Scythian Monks were clearly thinking of Theodoret and his sort when they spoke of an "insufficient" exposition of Chalcedon," *Defending Chalcedon*, 64.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 4, under "Literary Precedents."

¹¹⁷ Horace, *Epistles* II.1.63.

tension.¹¹⁸ As described above, the person and authority of greatest importance for Latin dialogues is Cicero, whose numerous dialogues are the earliest examples of the genre in Latin. His importance as a unique and original philosophical thinker, however, has only gained traction since the 1990s.¹¹⁹ This significant contribution to how we read and understand Cicero can be attributed, in part, to a willingness of scholars to treat philosophical Latin literature on its own terms, not as a rehash of ancient Greek philosophy. Honorius' statement given at the beginning of this chapter once again is a helpful reminder for thinking about the continuity among writers of Latin dialogues. Recall that after Cicero, Honorius refers to *noster Augustinus et Boetius*. There is no mention of Gregory of Nyssa, Methodius, or Theodoret.¹²⁰ This fact is apparent from the Latin dialogues themselves. Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, for example, is modelled closely after Minucius Felix' *Octavius*, and the precedent set by the earlier dialogue is built upon and modified in order that Jerome can make a particular literary and political point with this text. Another answer to this question, then, is that there is much to be gained by focusing on Latin literature alone.

It will be my practice throughout the rest of this thesis to keep my focus on the large corpus of dialogues composed in Latin, though with an awareness of the limitations of this approach. In the next following chapters, I shall first narrow this focus to the subtype of Latin dialogues, which I shall call the "controversial dialogues," and then in the following two chapters, I shall take a closer look at two dialogues in particular, Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* (Chapter 3) and John Maxentius' *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* (Chapter 4). The

¹¹⁸ It is fruitless to list even a representative group. Because he discusses Horace's *Epistles* at length in his introduction, see Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

¹¹⁹ See J. G. F. Powell, ed. *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

¹²⁰ He does, however, refer to them in other contexts. Cf. "De Greca summi theologi Dionisius Ariopagita, Gregorius Nazanzenus et Gregorius Niseus eiusque frater Basilius, Iohannes Crisostomus nec non Maximus monachus precipuus philosophus et episcopus auctoritatem prebeant," *Clavis Physicae*, 3.7–10.

background given to dialogue in this chapter, however, will constantly move to the foreground as it provides the physical material with which individuals authors built their texts.

Chapter 2: The Controversial Dialogues

Qui non est mecum, contra me est; et qui non congregat mecum, spargit.
Matthew 12:30

Et ait ad illum Iesus: Nolite prohibere; qui enim non est aduersum uos, pro
uobis est.
Luke 9:50

Over the course of the history of Christianity there has been no shortage of disagreement. The fourth through the seventh centuries are no exception. Ecumenical councils, often called by the emperor himself, played an enormous role in shaping the ongoing theological debates, which in this period focused especially on the status of the second person of the trinity. The Council of Nicaea (325), the Council of Ephesus (431), the Council of Chalcedon (451), and the Second Council of Constantinople (553), for example, are the pillars upon which orthodox belief on these issues was built, and the proceedings of these councils were circulated and could be read throughout the empire.¹²¹ These moments, though greatly influential, did not arise spontaneously. Rather, the mixture of smaller synods, meetings, epistolary correspondence, homilies, public debates, and private conversations were a cauldron always at risk of boiling over. When they did, the councils were called to clean up the mess.

This chapter will focus on a subset of texts that were composed within this context, namely the controversial dialogues or “Kontroversialdialoge” as Schmidt called them.¹²² These dialogues can be further subdivided into three groups, determined by the status of the non-

¹²¹ Jerome, for example, states that any who doubts of his account of the Council of Ariminum (359) can read the *Acts* himself (cf. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 18). Good introductions and translations of some of these councils have recently been published in Liverpool’s Translated Texts for Historians Series. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*. 3 vols. Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, ed. and trans. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press: 2007 (revised edition). *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: with related texts on the Three Chapters Controversy*. Richard Price, ed. and trans. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012. See Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity: AD 395–700*. Second Edition. London: Routledge, 2012, p. 9.

¹²² See Schmidt, “Zur Typologie,” 109–114, 174.

Christian interlocutor: Pagan, Jew, or Heretic.¹²³ The majority of the controversial dialogues in Latin consists of the Christian-Heretic-type, and they will receive the most treatment in this thesis, especially Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* (composed 378–9)¹²⁴ in Chapter 3 and John Maxentius' *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* (composed c. 520)¹²⁵ in Chapter 4 because of the wealth of contextual material that allows for a rich and nuanced reading. One of the arguments of this thesis is that late antique authors found the form of the dialogue to be an essential tool for framing and presenting their arguments, that is, that form impacts content. Paradoxically, the so-called “controversial” dialogues often adopt a conciliatory tone, and argue for and conclude with mutual agreement between the interlocutors. The baptism of pagans and Jews, and the repentance of heretics are stock endings for some of the dialogues, for example.¹²⁶ Before these dialogues can be explored further in particular cases, the corpus of material must be defined.

The Controversial Dialogues

Schmidt begins his discussion of the controversial dialogues with the following comment, “In terms of number, here [sc. In the controversial dialogues] lies the focus of the production of dialogues in Latin.”¹²⁷ He is certainly correct. By my count, of the forty-five extant Latin

¹²³ The dialogues themselves often make reference to these three categories and blur their boundaries. Cf. “[Athanasius dixit:] Nam cum tres sint in mundo, Iudaeorum, paganorum et Christianorum religiones,” *Dialogus contra Arianos etc.*, PL 62.181. See also, Faustinus, *De Trinitate*, 1.19 and Jerome, *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 2.31–2.

¹²⁴ See A. Canellis, ed. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*. CCSL 79B Turnhout: Brepols, 2000, p. vi; and A. Canellis, “La composition du Dialogue contre les Lucifériens et du Dialogue contre les Pélagiens de saint Jérôme.” *REA* 43.2 (1997): 247–288, at 247–8.

¹²⁵ See Matthew Joseph Pereira, *Reception, Interpretation and Doctrine in the Sixth Century: John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks*. Columbia University Academic Commons, 2015, Dissertation, Columbia University, at 93–94.

¹²⁶ Careful attention must be paid to the conclusion of each individual dialogue. Aporetic and ambiguous endings of the dialogues are common as well, and they are far from insignificant.

¹²⁷ Schmidt, “Zur Typologie,” 109.

dialogues from Late Antiquity, twenty-one of them are of this type.¹²⁸ This figure becomes even more one-sided if Augustine's dialogues, which are less representative of the subsequent production of dialogues than might be expected,¹²⁹ are excluded from consideration: in that case about two-thirds of all Latin dialogues are of the controversial type. It remains to define what the controversial dialogues are; who wrote them; and their form.

For the purposes of this chapter, a controversial dialogue is "a literary text that takes the form (or claims to take the form) of a dialogue, either mimetic or narrative, and whose argument or topic (*quaestio*) can be understood in terms of negotiating orthodoxy and heresy loosely construed." As mentioned above, the extant Latin dialogues can be neatly divided into three general subtypes of this conflict: the Orthodox-Heretic, the Christian-Pagan, and the Christian-Jew subtypes respectively, each ostensibly consisting of a representative of Christian orthodoxy defending the catholic view against one of its three most notable opponents.¹³⁰ Despite this observation, it is important to note, however, that there is nothing inherently "Christian" qua orthodoxy or qua religion about the definition of the controversial dialogues per se, though the extant dialogues do represent orthodox Christian thinking almost without exception. This simply means that one should not forget that defining and creating orthodoxy against heresy is a process that consists of a number of individual acts whose success or failure may change over time and is rarely met with unanimous consensus. With regard to literary texts and dialogues in particular, this means that the dialogues articulating a position later understood to be orthodox were more likely to survive,¹³¹ though some of the extant Latin controversial dialogues, in fact, are of

¹²⁸ See Appendix A for a catalogue of all late antique Latin dialogues and below for a summary of each of the twenty controversial dialogues.

¹²⁹ See above in Chapter 1.

¹³⁰ For this subdivision see the note on the previous page.

¹³¹ A good example is Faustus' dialogue, parts of which survive only in Augustine's refutation of this text. See the discussion of Augustine's *Contra Faustum* below.

dubious or partial orthodoxy,¹³² and dialogues such as John Maxentius' *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* were only seen as orthodox in retrospect.¹³³ Furthermore, it is important to note that the separation between religious and philosophical orthodoxy is more relevant in a modern than an ancient context. Were Cicero's *De Finibus*, a dialogue that investigates the validity of three competing philosophies (Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Academic Platonism), composed in Late Antiquity, for example, it would also be included within the corpus of controversial dialogues by definition. Once again, Diogenes Laertius' subdivisions of the Platonic dialogues are useful. The Latin controversial dialogues are examples of ἀγωνιστικοὶ διάλογοι.¹³⁴ It is important, therefore, not to overemphasize the "Christianity" or the "orthodoxy" in the definition of the extant controversial dialogues as these are aspects pertaining more to the history of transmission and preservation rather than to the meaning of the texts themselves. This issue will be discussed in more detail below as the definition of the controversial dialogues is unpacked further.

Some of the elements of the definition given above for the controversial dialogues need further explanation. The first issue is the meaning of "literary text." Dialogues, perhaps more than any other genre of ancient literature, constantly play with the boundary between reality and the imaginary: did these conversations *really* happen? This is especially apparent in the frequent

¹³² One can look to the dialogue associated with the Luciferians, that is, the follows of Lucifer of Cagliari (d. 370 or 371), the *De Trinitate* of Faustinus Luciferianus, and the *Disputatio contra Acephalos* composed by Rusticus the Deacon. The classic study of Lucifer of Cagliari and the so-called Luciferians is Gustav Krüger, *Lucifer, Bischof von Calagaris und das Schisma der Luciferianer*. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1969 (originally published 1886), especially pp. 58–96 for the Luciferians. See also, Lester L. Field, Jr. *Liberty, Dominion, and the Two Swords: On the Origins of Western Political Theology (180–398)*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998, particularly Chapter 8, "Lucifer of Cagliari and the Luciferians." Rusticus the deacon composed a dialogue, *Contra Acephalos*, in Latin that defended a traditional interpretation Chalcedon against the Neo-Chalcedonian position advanced by the Scythian monks. See, Roberto Spataro, *Il diacono Rustico e il suo contributo nel dibattito teologico postcalcedonese*. Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 2007, and Sara Petri, *La Disputatio Contra Acephalos di Rustico*. Studi Sulla Tardoantichit, 5. Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010.

¹³³ For John Maxentius' *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, see Chapter 4.

¹³⁴ Diogenes Laertius gives the *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*, and the *Hippias I & II* as examples of this subtype. Jerome, for example, seems to be consciously responding to the *Euthydemus* in his *Dialogus Contra Pelagianos*. See the entry for this dialogue below.

claim that the texts are no more than stenographic records of an actual debate, even when they clearly are not.¹³⁵ The force of the word “literary” in this definition, then, serves to separate, ironically, the texts whose *personae* are the literary creations of a single author from the texts that record the polyvocal utterances of two or more parties from a historical debate (the stenographic records). Augustine’s *Conlatio cum Maximino Arianorum episcopo* and *Contra Felicem Libri Duo*, therefore, will be excluded from the controversial dialogues discussed below because they constitute unedited stenographic records of actual public debates (more on this below).¹³⁶ Some flexibility or at least uncertainty, however, is required because there are some dialogues whose origin or status is unknown. The *Altercatio Heracliniiani laici cum Germinio episcopo Sirmiensi* is a good example. This text purports to be the recorded minutes of a debate that took place in 366 at Sirmium between three laypersons (though only Heraclinius speaks) and three clerics, one of whom is Germinius.¹³⁷ Although it is likely true that the text is based upon the stenographic record of a real debate, there is evidence that the record was edited and modified afterwards by a Catholic redactor to portray Germinius and his companions as “more Arian,” thereby creating a literary dialogue from the framework of an actual one.¹³⁸ As a final point on the decision to separate the stenographic records from the rest of the dialogues, even though these two groups of texts probably circulated and were read in much the same way, the distinction between them is important because of the different intentions behind the text. For the

¹³⁵ Cf. “Domino fratri Valerio Euagrius salutem. Gratissimam tibi referam quaestionem factam nuper sub oculis nostris, quam tu quoque, cum cognoueris, gratanter accipies. Fuit igitur altercatio legis inter quendam Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum,” *Altercatio legis*, 1.1–5. In the middle of the twentieth century, this issue received much attention in Augustine’s early dialogues.

¹³⁶ For the *Conlatio*, see Roland J. Teske, S. J., ed. and trans. *The Works of Saint Augustine: Arianism and Other Heresies*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1995, pp. 175–187. For *Contra Felicem*, see Caroline Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 246f.

¹³⁷ See Daniel H. Williams. *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 66f.

¹³⁸ See M. Simonetti, “Osservazione sull’ *Altercatio Heracliniiani Cum Germano*.” *Vigiliae Christianae* vol. 21 (1967): 39–58, at 43.

stenographic records, the dialogic text is merely a structural necessity representing the reality of public dispute in late antiquity and practiced in Roman education, but for the authors of controversial dialogues, this literary form is a conscious choice. As I shall argue, the authors of the controversial dialogues made this choice in order to impact their argument and the reception of their argument by readers, and it is for this reason that the two related sets of texts should be distinguished, though this distinction is not meant to suggest that both sets of texts do not share similar strategies of exposition.

Next is the issue of “claiming to write a dialogue” in the definition given above. This concern pertains to only two dialogues: the *De Trinitate* of Faustinus Luciferianus and the *De Trinitate* of Eusebius of Vercelli.¹³⁹ In Faustinus’ *De Trinitate*, which is a text composed for and dedicated to the Empress Aelia Flaccilla (d. 386), the first wife of Theodosius I, he informs Flaccilla that she must be aware, as she reads the work, that he has not written her a treatise-like book but a dialogue (*Hoc autem non ut librum scribimus sed quasi cum praesente aduersario certis disputationibus dimicamus*).¹⁴⁰ Faustinus claims that he composed the letter as a dialogue so that she would not become bored by his uneducated writing (*squalido sermone*), but could focus on the merits of the arguments instead (*rerum uirtutibus*). Most importantly, he also implies that the dialogic form will provide Flaccilla with the opportunity to discover the truth of the matter for herself (*da calculum ueritati*), which is a pervasive theme in describing the power of the controversial dialogues within the dialogues themselves. The text of *De Trinitate* itself, however, can only be called a dialogue in a loose sense, as it wavers between literary dialogue proper and dialogue (or *sermocinatio*) as it is defined by Quintilian, that is, the occasional

¹³⁹ The authenticity of this text has been hotly contested, but I cautiously accept that it is authentic. For this debate, see Williams, *Ambrose*, 239–242, and Vincent Bulhart, ed. *Eusebius Vercellensis* et al. CCSL 9 Turnhout: Brepols, 1967, pp. xxx–xxxii.

¹⁴⁰ *De Trinitate*, 3.6–7.

conjuring of opposing viewpoints by using various interjections such as the following: *quidam dicat*, and *inquit*.¹⁴¹ Then there is Eusebius' *De Trinitate*, whose own modern editor judged it as a failed dialogue: "Eusebius wrote, or rather attempted to write, his work as a dialogue. His intention [to make the truth apparent and lay bare the falsity of the heretics], which he claimed burned like fire at [*De Trinitate*] 1.1, was stronger than his efforts for following through with his intention."¹⁴² In saying this, Bulhalt makes a similar observation to that made about Faustinus' homonymous text above, albeit in less charitable terms. In both of these cases, the decision between inclusion or exclusion of a text within a literary genre, which is by nature ill-defined, is at stake. It is my practice to accept a broader interpretation of dialogues in these cases, both because they are explicit in their intention to write dialogues, and because their reasons for composition are consistent with the majority of the other dialogues.

Finally, the presence of orthodoxy and heresy in the definition needs some elaboration. It must first be stated that the aims of this thesis and this chapter are not to reshape the methods of analyzing the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy in the world of Late Antiquity, though a close reading of the controversial dialogues, I think, will shed some light on a particular approach that ancient authors used, at specific and individual moments in time, in their personal negotiation of the boundaries of "orthodox" and "heretic," "us" and "them." A model that emphasizes the performative nature of constructing orthodoxy and heresy is especially useful when reading the controversial dialogues.¹⁴³ Labeling the discourse of the hegemonic orthodox machine as

¹⁴¹ Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX.2.30ff, and see the discussion of the interstecion between rhetorical theory and the composition of dialogues in Chapter 1.

¹⁴² "Eusebius opus suum in dialogo conscripsit uel potius conscribere conatus est; impetus enim ille animi, quem ipse 1.1 exarsisse uelut ignem dicit, fortior fuit quam cura propositi seruandi," Bulhart, ed. CCSL 9, p. xxix.

¹⁴³ See Humfress, *Orthodoxy*, 217–223; Virginia Burrus, "'In the Theater of This Life': The Performance of Orthodoxy in Late Antiquity." in *The Limits of Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, eds. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999: pp. 80–96; and Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 20–54.

“monologic” and the apparently subversive voices of resistance as “dialogic” is attractive but too simplistic. Such an understanding overemphasizes the final result of a multifaceted debate, when the process of this debate is much more important and dynamic. One must remember, as Karen King points out, that “constructing a heretical other simultaneously and reciprocally exposes the partial, mutable, and irregular character of orthodoxy.”¹⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that the so-called heretics were no less invested in the idea that their own interpretation of Christian doctrine represented the simple and artless truth, and that their “Orthodox” opponents were in fact the heretics. The rhetoric, therefore, cuts both ways. For Faustus, Augustine and his ilk were merely *semichristiani*, and for Augustine, Faustus and his contingent were *pseudochristiani*.¹⁴⁵ As another example, the Theopaschite formula proposed by John Maxentius and the other Scythian monks that “Christ our Lord, the Son of God, ‘one from the Trinity,’ was crucified in the flesh for our salvation” (*Christum filium Dei Dominum nostrum pro nostra salute carne crucifixum unum de trinitate*), was initially offensive to *both* sides of the Christological debate of the early sixth-century and was harshly attacked by both the pro-Chalcedonians and the anti-Chalcedonians.¹⁴⁶ One must remember that this position was formally confirmed to be orthodox only after a number of years and after it was initially rejected in both Constantinople and Rome. Had circumstances happened differently, the Scythian monks and the *Dialogue contra Nestorianos* would be ranked among the “heretics” and their blasphemous “literature.”

¹⁴⁴ King, *Gnosticism*, 25.

¹⁴⁵ Augustinus respondit: Tu semichristianos cauendos putas, quod nos esse dicis; nos autem pseudochristianos cauemus, quod uos esse ostendimus. *Contra Faustum*, 3.

¹⁴⁶ See Patrick T. R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451–553)*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought vol. 20 Leiden: Brill, 1979, pp. 48–50. The fullest treatment of this Theopaschite position is contained within the dialogue, *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. See Chapter 4 below.

The Corpus of Controversial Dialogues

Now that the Controversial dialogues have been defined, it remains to gather and summarize the texts that fit this definition. One will notice a few oddities in the list below, such as Augustine's *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, the *Acta Archelai*, and the *Adamantii Dialogus*. Augustine is usually understood to have abandoned the dialogic form with his *De Libero Arbitrio* (composed 387–396),¹⁴⁷ but this protracted work (a *grande opus* as he later called it) against Faustus the Manichaean meets all the criteria given above. It is a literary text in the form of a dialogue—the entire work is subdivided into Faustus' claims (*Faustus dixit*) and Augustine's responses (*Augustinus respondit*) that refute Manichaean claims. Augustine himself is ambiguous in referring to the form of this work. He initially calls them “thirty-three disputations” before settling on the more generic “thirty-three books.”¹⁴⁸ The *Adamantii Dialogus* and *Acta Archelai* are noted for being Latin translations of presumably Greek originals,¹⁴⁹ the former by Rufinus and the latter by an unknown translator. The fact that a text is a translation is no reason to exclude it from the corpus of the controversial dialogues. As Jerome attests about the Greek *Acta Archelai*, this dialogue was read widely (*habetur a multis*), and the fact that an effort was made to translate these two texts into Latin indicates that they were read and understood to be important by readers of Latin.

Below a synopsis of each dialogue will be given. The dialogues are arranged in chronological order, though both the uncertainty and scholarly debate surrounding some of the

¹⁴⁷ Simon Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. vi. See also, *Retractationes*, 1.8.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Contra Faustum Manicheum blasphemantem legem et prophetas et eorum Deum et incarnationem Christi, scripturas autem noui testamenti, quibus conuincitur, falsatas esse dicentem scripsi grande opus, uerbis eius propositis reddens responsiones meas. triginta et tres disputationes sunt, quos etiam libros cur non dixerim?* *Retractationes*, 2.33.

¹⁴⁹ Jerome wrongly believed that the *Acta Archelai* was originally composed in Syriac, “Syro sermone composuit, qui translatus in Graecum habetur a multis,” *De Uiris Illustribus*, 72. See also Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2, pp. 357f.

dialogues necessitates that this ordering can make no claim of authoritative chronology. Two related points deserve mention. The translated dialogues have been included according to the time of their translation, not their original composition, and finally, the pseudo-Augustinian *Contra Felicianum* has been included after the *De Trinitate* of Vigilius of Thapsus, both because of its occasional attribution to Vigilius himself and because the post-Chalcedonian discussion of Christ's natures fits Vigilius' late fifth-century context.

Octavius, Minucius Felix

Minucius Felix, about whom very little is actually known,¹⁵⁰ composed the earliest extant postclassical Latin dialogue sometime around 200.¹⁵¹ The dialogue, written from the narrative perspective of Minucius (*Cogitanti mihi et cum animo meo*) and the only controversial dialogue to take the narrative form (rather than the mimetic), recounts a conversation between Octavius, who had come to Rome to visit Minucius and Caecilius, one of Minucius' friends. After Octavius criticizes Caecilius' religious devotion to one of the statues that they encounter on a walk, the latter challenges the former to a debate. Minucius acts as arbiter as Caecilius and Octavius give speeches defending Paganism and Christianity respectively. At the conclusion of these two speeches and before Minucius can come to a final decision, Caecilius admits his own defeat, though he simultaneously claims victory because Octavius has conquered his error. In terms of the dialogue's frame and literary setting, the *Octavius* stands as an outlier among the other controversial dialogues. Unlike other controversial dialogues, Minucius Felix is greatly

¹⁵⁰ Jerome only records that he was a notable lawyer in Rome and that two texts, a *De Fato* and a *Contra Mathematicos*, circulated under his name but were significantly different in style from the *Octavius*. Cf. "Minucius Felix Romae insignis causidicus, scripsit dialogum Christiani et ethnici disputantis, qui Octavius inscribitur. sed et alius sub nomine eius fertur de fato uel contra mathematicos, qui, cum sit et ipse disertus hominis, non mihi uidetur cum superioris libri stilo conuenire," *De Uiris Illustribus*, 58.

¹⁵¹ See G. Quispel, "A Jewish Source of Minucius Felix," *Vigiliae Christianae*. vol. 3 (1949): 113–122; and Michael Von Albrecht, "Minucius Felix as a Christian Humanist," *Illinois Classical Studies*. vol. 12.1 (1987): 157–168, at 157f.

concerned with establishing the circumstances and locale in the dialogue's introduction. This scenery is more than poetic adornment though, as it is illustrative of how the argument should be read. This format, however, is unique among the Latin dialogues, as every other dialogue adopts the mimetic form, mostly eschewing this scene setting.

Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi, Jerome

Jerome's first dialogue, composed 378–379,¹⁵² contains a discussion between a so-called Luciferian and an Orthodox Christian. Purported to be the stenographic record of a debate that took place in a private portico,¹⁵³ the debate concerns the question of whether “Arian” bishops should be reaccepted into the fold and more importantly, whether their status as bishops should be preserved.¹⁵⁴ The dialogue can be divided into two parts. In the first part, the *Orthodoxus* and the *Luciferianus* spar, in eristic fashion, in order to overcome each other. Martial and agonistic language abound until the Luciferian agrees to become a student (*discipulus*) instead of an opponent (*aduersarius*).¹⁵⁵ The rest of the dialogue contains the Orthodox's rational arguments to the Luciferian's questions about the issues concerned. Like the *Octavius*, this dialogue concludes with the opponent's paradoxical claim of victorious defeat (*Non solum aestimes te uicisse: uicimus*).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² See A. Canellis, ed. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*. CCSL 79B Turnhout: Brepols, 2000, p. vi; and A. Canellis, “La composition” 247–8. Alternative dates have been suggested. R. P. C. Hanson has suggested 392. See R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1988 (reprinted 2005).

¹⁵³ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ Both are questions pertaining to the Luciferian Schism. See Chapter 3 for the historical background for this controversy.

¹⁵⁵ See *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 506–525 for the critical moment of reversal.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 1010.

Altercatio Heracliniiani laici cum Germinio episcopo Sirmiensi, Anonymous

This text purports to be the recorded minutes of a debate that took place in 366 at Sirmium between three laypersons, though only Heraclinianus speaks, and three clerics including Germinius.¹⁵⁷ As mentioned above, this text seems to have been modified by some redactor, who was motivated to portray Germinius and his companions as “more Arian.”¹⁵⁸ Heraclinianus debates with three clerics in succession: Girminius, Theodore, and Agrippinus.¹⁵⁹ At the end of the debate, after Heraclinianus has professed his faith, Girminius erupts in anger and demands his exile.¹⁶⁰ The crowd of listeners, however, rises in a violent frenzy and demands more serious punishment, namely that Heraclinianus and his companions be put to death on the spot. Germinius, somewhat surprisingly, prevents this bloodshed, which is where the text concludes.

De Trinitate, Eusebius of Vercelli

Nearly every aspect of this *De Trinitate*, a dialogue of which two recensions are extant, has been the subject of disagreement. Although it was traditionally attributed to Vigilius of Thapsus or Athanasius,¹⁶¹ Vincent Bulhart, in the middle of the twentieth century, reintroduced the possibility of Eusebian authorship and defended it in his critical edition of the text,¹⁶² and this position was independently supported by D. H. Williams.¹⁶³ Though many manuscripts and

¹⁵⁷ Carl Paul Caspari, ed. “Altercatio Heracliniiani laici cum Germinio, episcopo Sirmiensi, de fide Synodi Nicaenae et Ariminensis Arianorum. Quod gestum est in ciuitate Sirmiana coram omni populo, Idus Ianuariae, vi feria, Gratiano et Dagalaifo consulibus.” *Kirchenhistorische anecdota: nebst neuen Ausgaben patristischer und kirchlich-mittelalterlicher Schriften*. Vol. 1 Lateinische Schriften: die Texte und die Anmerkungen. Oslo, Christiania: Mallin (1883): 133–147. This edition is reprinted in A. Hamman, *Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum*, vol. 1, Paris, 1958, 345–350. Dagalaifus was consul in 366; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XXVII.2.1.

¹⁵⁸ See Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 66f, and M. Simonetti, “Osservazione,” 43.

¹⁵⁹ Neque presbyter sum, neque diaconus, sed tanquam minimus omnium Christianorum pro uita mea loquor, PL Supplementum I, 345.

¹⁶⁰ Et iureiurando iurabat, ut eum exilio deportaret. *ibid.*, 350.

¹⁶¹ In the *Patrologia Latina*, this text is included under the works of Vigilius; see PL 62.237–334. Both of these attributions have been convincingly shown to be impossible. See G. Morin, “Les Douze Livres sur la Trinité attribués à Vigile de Thapse,” *Revue Bénédictine* 15 (1898): 1–10.

¹⁶² Bulhart, *Eusebii Vercellensis*, vii–xxviii.

¹⁶³ Williams, *Ambrose*, 96–102, and 239–242.

compilations contain a text of twelve *libelli*, only the first seven are original and authentically Eusebian. Like Faustinus' *De Trinitate*, the dialogic form of this text is also loose but is certainly sufficient for inclusion within the corpus, especially because it activates language found in the prefaces of controversial dialogues used to justify the choice of using dialogue.¹⁶⁴ This text is exceptional evidence for the Homoian-Nicene debate prior to the 380s,¹⁶⁵ and like many of the dialogues, deserves greater attention.

***Adamantii Dialogus*, pseudo-Origen, (translated by Rufinus)**

The *Adamantii Dialogus*, originally composed in Greek around 330 (though this is controversial),¹⁶⁶ is a dialogue composed in five books, in which Adamantius defends the orthodox faith against the heresies of Marcion and Bardesanes. The arbiter Eutropius, of course, names Adamantius victorious.¹⁶⁷ Rufinus translated this dialogue into Latin in the late fourth century, and this translation has generated additional interest beyond the content of the dialogue because it was used by Rufinus, perhaps nefariously, to defend Origen during the Origenist controversy.¹⁶⁸ To accomplish this, Rufinus connects Origen with the persona of Adamantius in a way that is unsupported in the Greek, making Origen the mouthpiece of orthodox doctrine contained in the text.¹⁶⁹ Ironically, the original Greek dialogue is explicitly anti-Origen in nature, using Methodius' anti-Origen work, *On the Resurrection*, to refute his ideas.¹⁷⁰ Scholarship is

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Williams, *Ambrose*, 98.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 170 and Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 115.

¹⁶⁷ See Quasten, *Patrology* vol. 2, 146–7.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Alios quidem quam plurimos uideo, cum ad fontes ac flumina librorum uenerint, bibere quidem et sitim propriae cupiditatis explere, sed mutorum animalium more conculcare pedibus pocula, quibus fuerant delectati, et fluenta limpidissima ab imis commota uadis probrorum coeno temerare. *Prologus in Adamantii*, 1–4. Origen's writings are, of course, the *pocula*, and his teachings are the *fluenta limpidissima*.

¹⁶⁹ Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 168

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* 170, and Quasten, *Patrology* vol. 2, 146.

divided as to the extent that Rufinus was personally aware of the significance of his actions—inscribing Origen into anti-Origen literature in order to defend Origen.¹⁷¹ This move cuts against the grain of the usual preference for anonymous interlocutors in the Latin dialogues, a choice usually explained as made to create distance and prevent ad hominem invective.¹⁷²

***Acta Archelai*, attributed to Hegemonius**

The *Acta Archelai*, originally composed in Greek 330–348,¹⁷³ contains a legendary debate between Mani (or Manes) and Archelaus, the bishop of Carchar in Mesopotamia, before learned judges. The *Acta* is a unique document as it contains narrative (almost hagiographical), epistolary, and dialogic elements, though the dialogic part is by far the longest. At the beginning, Mani, who has learned of the Christian Marcellus' piety, travels to the Mesopotamian city of Carchar to convert him, but upon arriving, he realizes that Marcellus has arranged for him to debate with the local bishop Archelaus. This debate occupies the majority of the text. After the bishop soundly defeats Mani, the latter flees the city and is eventually thrown into prison. Later on, Mani and Archelaus' paths cross a final time before Mani meets a gruesome and terrible death.¹⁷⁴ Although originally composed in Greek, the *Acta* deserve a place among the Latin controversial dialogues for two reasons: the only complete version of the text exists in Latin, and

¹⁷¹ Vinzenz Buchheit has suggested that Rufinus' intentions were less than innocent. See V. Buchheit, *Tyranni Rufini librorum Adamantii Origenis aduersus haereticos interpretatio*. Munich: Fink, 1966, pp. xl et passim.

¹⁷² Cf. Unde ut omnibus approbarem me non odisse homines, sed errores, nec aliquorum infamiam quaerere, magisque dolere uicem eorum qui falsi nominis scientia supplantantur, Attici et Critobuli nomina posui, per quos et nostra pars et aduersariorum quid sentiret, expromerem. Jerome, *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, Prologue 2.22–26. As will be discussed below, Rusticus the Deacon's *Disputatio Contra Acephalos* is another example of a named interlocutor.

¹⁷³ Jerome states in his *De Viris Illustribus* (72) that it was originally composed in Syriac, but that has almost entirely dismissed by scholars. See *Acta Archelai* (*The Acts of Archelaus*). Mark Vermes, trans. Samuel N. C. Lieu, ed., with the assistance of Kevin Kaatz. Leuven: Brepols, 2001, pp. 13–16.

¹⁷⁴ For more thorough readings of the *Acta Archelai*, see Jason BeDuhn and Paul Mirecki, "Placing the *Acts of Archelaus*," in *Frontiers of Faith: The Christian Encounter with Manichaeism in the Acts of Archelaus*. Jason BeDuhn and Paul Mirecki, eds. Leiden: Brill, 2007, pp. 1–22, and Vermes and Lieu, *Acta*, 1–34.

Jerome, who may have been personally responsible for the fourth-century Latin translation,¹⁷⁵ comments that this text was read widely (*habetur a multis*). Furthermore, the conclusion of the text is of great interest to readers of Latin, as it was almost certainly composed by the translator, not the original author. In this conclusion, the author compares the rhetoric of the Manichaeans with that of other fourth-century heresies, most notably with the Luciferians, and one can see here the adaption of the original Greek text to fit within the ongoing theological debates as found in Latin literature.¹⁷⁶

***De Trinitate*, Faustinus (the Luciferian)**

As Simonetti writes in his introduction to this work, “we know very little about Faustinus,” and although Gennadius seems to add a few details about him in his *De Viris Illustribus*, they are certainly gleaned from Faustinus’ writings themselves.¹⁷⁷ Interest in Faustinus and the *De Trinitate* has been mostly concerned with the fact that he was a member of the Luciferian sect.¹⁷⁸ This dialogue, or dialogue contained within a letter, was written by Faustinus the Luciferian to the Empress Flaccilla, seemingly at her request,¹⁷⁹ sometime before 386 (the year of her death).¹⁸⁰ Faustinus’ follows Hilary, Athanasius, and Ambrose in his Trinitarian theology. As mentioned above and similar to Eusebius’ text, this letter is only loosely a dialogue, but Faustinus is explicit in denoting the form of his text—it is composed as a

¹⁷⁵ Vermes and Lieu, *Acta*, 33.

¹⁷⁶ Et quod faciunt Luciferiani eminentibus sacerdotibus, hoc illi [Manichaei] faciunt in omnibus ecclesiis. *Acta Archelai*, 68.14. (Reading “eminentibus” for “monentibus,” following Vermes’ suggestion ad loc.)

¹⁷⁷ M. Simonetti, *Faustini Opera*. CCSL 69 Turnhout: Brepols, 1967, pp. 287–8.

¹⁷⁸ See Michel Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968, pp. 33–4, and Simonetti, *De Trinitate*, 288.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Sed quia haec ipsa non studio librum scribentis exsequimur, sed ueluti in scida certas summas quasi properantes deliniamus, ut tuo qualitercumque uideamur oboedisce praecepto, ceterae uoces praetereundae sunt. *De Trinitate*, I.7.

¹⁸⁰ Gregory of Nyssa composed a beautiful funeral oration for Flaccilla. A. Spira, ed. *Gregorii Nysseni opera* vol. 9.1. Leiden: Brill, 1967, pp. 475–490.

dialogue.¹⁸¹ This dialogue, like the majority of the controversial dialogues, ends with a call to reconciliation, but it also, in the spirit of Lucifer of Cagliari's own writings, concludes with an expression of doubt whether heretics can ever return to orthodoxy.¹⁸² Finally, this text can be compared to other dialogues that were written to emperors, empresses, and other high ranking officials, such as *Consultationes Zacchei Christiani et Apollonii philosophi* and *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*. The dialogic form, it seems, was understood to be useful for instructing political superiors because it deflects the argumentation away from the addressee. Instead of being told what to think, Flaccilla can see the truth for herself by reading the dialogue (*da calculum ueritati*).¹⁸³

Consultationes Zacchei Christiani et Apollonii philosophi, Anonymous

The origin and chronology of the *Consultationes* were long in doubt. Originally thought to be composed by the same author as the *Altercatio legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum*,¹⁸⁴ it was later attributed to Firmicius Maternus.¹⁸⁵ M. A. Claussen, however, has written a convincing article situating the *Consultationes* in Rome in the late 380s or early 390s.¹⁸⁶ The dialogue is divided into three books, the first of which follows one of the normal patterns of the controversial dialogues, concluding with the common trope of Apollonius'

¹⁸¹ Hoc autem non ut librum scribimus, sed quasi cum praesente aduersario certis disputationibus dimicamus. *De Trinitate*, 3.6.

¹⁸² Faustinus quotes Titus 3:10, "*Haereticum hominem post unam correptionem deuota, sciens quoniam peruersus est huiusmodi, et peccat et est a semetipso damnatus*," which is one of the many biblical citations marshalled by Lucifer of Cagliari in his anti-heretical rhetoric. Cf. "*Haereticum hominem post unam correptionem deuota, sciens quoniam peruersus est et peccat, cum sit a semet ipso damnatus*." Cum haereticis a semet ipsis damnatis non potueramus congregari. Lucifer of Cagliari, *De non conueniendo cum haereticis*, 14.42–45.

¹⁸³ *De Trinitate*, 3.4.

¹⁸⁴ Adolf Harnack, *Die Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1883.

¹⁸⁵ Jean Louis Feiertag, *Les Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii: étude d'histoire et de sotériologie*. Fribourg: University Press, 1990, pp. 1–11.

¹⁸⁶ M. A. Claussen, "Pagan Rebellion and Christian Apologetics in Fourth-Century Rome: The *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apolloni*." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. 46.4 (1995): 589–614, see especially 606–613 for the date of composition.

baptism by his Christian interlocutor. The latter two books, however, recount further discussion after Apollonius' moment of conversion, and they can be seen as the inclusion of a discussion that is usually only suggested at the end of the controversial dialogues. This is the declaration by the newly converted that he is convinced of the general tenets of Christianity but still needs to discuss and understand a number of specific details in the days to come.¹⁸⁷ This is exactly the purpose that the final two books serve. In Book II, Zacchaeus answers various questions on the nature of the Holy Spirit and various contemporary heresies, while Book III is devoted to the Christian way of life, particularly monasticism. This "departure" from the basic structure of the other controversial dialogues is in fact reminiscent of another subset of the early Christian dialogues, namely those of John Cassian, Sulpicius Severus, and Gregory the Great. The *Consultationes*, therefore, contain a unique combination of philosophical argument and discourses on practical Christian living.

***Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, Augustine**

Though rarely recognized as one of Augustine's dialogues, the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* meets every stipulation in the definition given above. Faustus of Milevis (a town about one hundred miles west of Thagaste in western Numidia) is famously known from Augustine's *Confessions*, where he is characterized as a sophistic Manichaean, a man of seductive outward charm but little substance.¹⁸⁸ Shortly after the *Confessions* was circulated in the early fifth century, Faustus' own dialogue, the *Capitula*, seems to have been brought to

¹⁸⁷ The precedent for this is the conclusion of the first Latin dialogue, Minucius Felix' *Octavius*. Cf. Itaque quod pertineat ad summam quaestionis, et de providentia fateor et <de> Deo cedo et de sectae iam nostrae sinceritate consentio. Etiam nunc tamen aliqua consubsidunt non obstrepentia ueritati, sed perfectae institutioni necessaria, de quibus crastino, quod iam sol occasui declivis est, ut de toto congruentius promptius requiremus. *Octavius*, 40.2

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *Confessiones* 5.3.3 and 5.6.11. For the importance of dialogue in this passage, see Mark Vessey, "Conference and Confession: Literary Pragmatics in Augustine's *Apologia contra Hieronymum*." *J ECS* 1.2 (1993): 175–213, at 201–203.

Augustine's attention, and it became the basis for his composition of the *Contra Faustum*.¹⁸⁹

This text is of great interest because of its hybrid nature. Half of this dialogue is original material, mostly verbatim but to some extent adapted, from Faustus' earlier *Capitula*.¹⁹⁰ Faustus composed this work in the 380s, in order to provide his followers with the correct answers to refute their opponents (in this case Catholic Christians, whom he calls *semichristiani*).¹⁹¹

Augustine then took the liberty of inserting his own answers in place of those given in Faustus' original text, creating the current text of the *Contra Faustum*. This dialogue, therefore, provides a unique glimpse of the use of dialogue by the "other side" of orthodoxy, here Manichaeism, and provides an example of how works of dialogic literature could be put in dialogue, quite literally, with each other. One wonders if Augustine's own personal experience with Faustus influenced his decision to retain this literary form, since in the *Confessions* Augustine recounts that when he was finally allowed to converse with Faustus in face-to-face dialogue, he found his interlocutor's dialectical faculties lacking.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Jason David BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 C.E.* vol. 1 Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010, pp. 106–7. Dating the *Contra Faustum* to the 380s, which was formerly the *communis opinio*, is incorrect, as Augustine refers to the recently published *Confessiones* in the prologue of the *Contra Faustum*: *Noueram ipse hominem, quemadmodum eum commorauit in libris Confessionum mearum*.

¹⁹⁰ Johannes van Oort, "Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma in Context." *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011): 543–567, at 559–562, and BeDuhn, *Dilemma*, 110–1.

¹⁹¹ Faustus dixit: Satis superque in lucem iam traductis erroribus ac Iudaicae superstitionis simul et semichristianorum abunde detecta fallacia a doctissimo scilicet et solo nobis post beatum patrem nostrum Manichaeum studendo Adimanto non ab re uisum est, fratres carissimi, haec quoque breuia uobis et concinna responsa propter callidas et astutas conferentium nobiscum propositiones scribere, quo cum idem uos ex more parentis sui serpentis captiosis circumuenerit quaestiunculis uolerint, et ipsi ad respondendum uigilanter eis sitis instructi. [. . .] ac ne profusa confusae oratione legentium inundarentur ingenia, tam breuiter quam distincte ex aduerso sibi ipsorum atque nostrorum uerba constitui. *Contra Faustum*, I.2. Note Faustus' language, *semichristiani*, *callidae astutae propositiones*, and *captiosae quaestiunculae*, the very same rhetoric Catholics use against "heretics."

¹⁹² Sed moleste habebam quod in coetu audientium non sinerem ingerere illi [Fausto] et partiri cum eo curas quaestionum mearum conferendo familiariter et accipiendo ac reddendo sermonem. [. . .] expertus sum prius hominem expertem liberalium disciplinarum nisi grammaticae atque eius ipsius usitato modo. *Confessiones*, 5.6.11.

Dialogus Aduersus Pelagianos, Jerome

Jerome's second and final dialogue was composed after 415, near the end of his life.¹⁹³ As he says at the beginning of the dialogue, this text is the fulfillment of his promise to expound all of the issues contained in a letter he had previously sent to Ctesiphon.¹⁹⁴ The debate is staged between a certain Atticus and Critobulus ("doctrine-chooser")¹⁹⁵—Jerome explicitly states that he chose generic names so as not to slander anyone—and the major issues at stake in the Pelagian heresy are investigated. This dialogue concludes with a less than joyous departure, which is a rarer but not uncommon conclusion to the controversial dialogues. The Pelagian interlocutor remains steadfast in his belief and refuses to submit despite the weakness of his arguments. This text is of additional interest, as it contains excerpts from a number of Pelagius' lost works.

Altercatio legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum, Evagrius

The *Altercatio* is the oldest extant Jewish-Christian dialogue composed in Latin.¹⁹⁶ Very little is known about Evagrius, who has occasionally been associated with one of the followers of

¹⁹³ See A. Canellis, "La composition," 247–8.

¹⁹⁴ Scripta iam ad Ctesiphontem epistola, in qua interrogata respondi, crebra fratrum expostulatio fuit, cur promissum opus ultra differrem, in quo pollicitus sum me ad cunctas eorum, qui ἀπάθειαν praedicant, quaestiunculas responsurum. *Dialogus aduersus Pelagianos*, prologue 1.

¹⁹⁵ These "generic" names are reminiscent of the two of the characters found in Plato's *Euthydemus*: the Athenian (*Atticus*) Socrates and Critobolus, Crito's son. Cf. καὶ μάλα πολὺ, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἐπιδεδωκέναι μοι ἔδοξεν, καὶ τοῦ ἡμετέρου οὐ πολὺ τι τὴν ἡλικίαν διαφέρειν Κριτοβούλου. *Euthydemus*, 271B2–4. Raymond Kibansky's discovery of the third book of Apuleius' *De Platone*, a Latin summary of all of Plato's dialogues, might provide a potential context for Jerome's awareness of these details. See Justin A. Stover, *A New Work by Apuleius: The Lost Third Book of the 'De Platone.'* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ See William Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2004, p. 87; and Lawrence Lahey, "Evidence for Jewish Believers in Christian-Jewish Dialogues through the Sixth Century (excluding Justin)," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus*. Oskar Skarsaune & Reidar Hvalvik, eds. Peabody, MA: Henrickson Publishers, 2007, p. 596.

Martin of Tours.¹⁹⁷ The dialogue is usually dated to the early fifth century,¹⁹⁸ and the best evidence for this is the fact that Gennadius says, in his continuation of Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus*, that this dialogue was "known to nearly everyone."¹⁹⁹ The Latin text of the *Altercatio* is most probably based upon a Latin translation of the second-century *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*,²⁰⁰ which was a model for many of the later Jewish dialogues in both Latin and Greek. It has been debated in the scholarship on the *Altercatio* whether Simon's arguments represent sincere Jewish objections or stand simply as a rhetorical foil to Theophilus' anti-Jewish rhetoric.²⁰¹ Regardless, like many of the other Controversial dialogues, after an argument about a number of theological points between the two interlocutors, the Jew is converted to Christianity, and is baptized.

Conflictus Arnobii Catholici cum Serapion, Arnobius the Younger

The *Conflictus* is a dialogue, in two books, that recounts the fictional debate between Arnobius, a Roman, and Serapion, an Egyptian, which took place over the course of two days. Two judges, Constantius and Ammonius, presided over the debate and ultimately named Arnobius victorious. Probably composed in the mid- to late-fifth century,²⁰² the anti-Monophysite, Christological arguments found in this dialogue can be seen as precursors to the dialogues of the Scythian monks described below. Of interest in Arnobius' *Conflictus* are the

¹⁹⁷ Lahey, "Evidence," p. 596 n. 66. This association is supported by a single statement made in Severus Sulpicius' *Dialogue*, which is a sort of sequel to his *Life of Martin of Tours*. Cf. Haec me loquente, Gallo iam ad narrandum parato, inruit turba monachorum, Euagrius presbyter, Aper, Sabbatius, Agricola. Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogue*, 3.1.4.

¹⁹⁸ Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues*, 87.

¹⁹⁹ Euagrius alius scripsit Altercationem Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani, quae paene omnibus nota est. *De Viris Illustribus*, 51.

²⁰⁰ F. C. Conybeare, *Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and of Timothy and Aquila*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898, pp. li–lvii; and see Lahey, "Evidence," 594.

²⁰¹ Arnos B. Hulén, "The 'Dialogues with the Jews' as Sources for Early Jewish Argument against Christianity." *Journal of Biblical Literature*. vol. 51.1 (1932): 58–70.

²⁰² F. Gori, ed. and trans. *Disputa tra Arnobio e Serapione*. Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1992, pp. 1–3.

contents of Book II, which venture beyond the simple debate found in many of the other Controversial dialogues. Here, Arnobius quotes two African, patristic texts to prove to the Egyptian Serapion that their thinking is consistent with Pope Leo's *Tome*,²⁰³ namely an Easter homily of Cyril of Alexandria (translated into Latin)²⁰⁴ and a Christmas homily of Augustine.

***Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae*, Anonymous**

Unique among the Controversial dialogues, the anonymous *Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae* is the only dialogue to eschew human personae. The entire text is a continuous example of the rhetorical figure of *prosopopoeia*.²⁰⁵ Formerly believed to be the work of Bishop Severus of Minorca, who was infamously involved in a mass conversion of Jews on the island of Minorca in the early fifth century,²⁰⁶ this dialogue is currently understood to originate from fifth century North Africa, certainly after 438 and probably before 476.²⁰⁷ It is often said that the author is generally unaware of Jewish culture and thought,²⁰⁸ although the argumentation is consistent with other *adversus Iudaeos* dialogues. Because the two interlocutors are portrayed as personified speakers, the common trope of the Jewish interlocutor's conversion and baptism is omitted. Instead, the dialogue concludes more contentiously as the *Ecclesia* claims victory for herself (as opposed to *Synogoga*'s claim for double victory).

²⁰³ The orthodoxy of this work was non-negotiable to Christians in Italy in the fifth and sixth centuries. See Gray, *Chalcedon*, 9f.

²⁰⁴ The agreement between Cyril and Leo was an issue of great importance. Their agreement was confirmed in the second session of the Council of Chalcedon, "Leo et Cyrillus similiter docuerunt. Anathema sit qui sic credit. Haec uera fide," *ACO, Actiones II–IV* vol. 2, 23.

²⁰⁵ That is, giving voice to or personifying the dead or even inanimate objects. Cf. *Quin deducere deos in hoc genere dicendi* [προσωποποιῶν] et inferos excitare concessum est; urbes etiam populiue uocem accipiunt. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX.2.31. Quintilian then quotes ones of the most famous examples of this figure, when Cicero has the *Patria* speak to Catiline: Quae [patria] tecum, Catilina, sic agit et quodam modo tacita loquitur: "Nullum iam aliquot annis facinus exstitit nisi per te." Cicero, *In Catilinam I*, 18.

²⁰⁶ J. N. Hillgarth, *Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae*. CCSL 89A Turnhout: Brepols, 1999, pp. 5–6.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. 7–11; and A. Lukyn Williams. *Adversus Iudaeos: A Bird's-eye View of Christian 'Apologiae' Until the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937, p. 337.

²⁰⁸ Lahey, "Evidence," 598; Hillgarth, *Altercatio*, 6; and Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 336.

Dialogus Athanasio, Ario, Sabellio, Photino, et Probo iudice, interlocutoribus, Vigilii
of Thapsus

Very little is known about Vigilii of Thapsus and his dialogue.²⁰⁹ Vigilii was an important African bishop during the time of Vandal rule in the late fifth century and seems to have been exiled at some point.²¹⁰ His corpus includes a number of anti-heretical treatises, mostly against Eutyches and Nestorius. This dialogue attributed to him also exists, in which a famous cast of characters—Athanasius, Arius, Sabellius, and Photinus—meet together in one place, so that a winner might be crowned by the generically and appropriately named Probus. The author claims that he composed this dialogue so that he could refute the many and numerous objections of the heretics in a way that his readers could easily follow.²¹¹ The dialogue or debate takes place over three days, and on the fourth day (which corresponds to Book IV) Probus gives his final verdict (Athanasius wins obviously), which also serves as a summary of the positions of Arius, Sabellius, Photinus, and Athanasius discussed over the course of the work. Because of the obscurity of the circumstances of composition, it is difficult to create a context for this work, but it stands as a unique example of the Latin Dialogue because of its symposiastic nature.

²⁰⁹ The only study of which I am aware is G. Ficker, *Studien zu Vigilii von Thapsus*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897.

²¹⁰ See “Vigilius of Thapsus,” in *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature A Literary History*, vol. 2 *From the Council of Nicea to the Beginnings of the Medieval Period*. Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, eds. Matthew J. O’Connell, trans. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005, pp. 426–7.

²¹¹ Cf. Sabellium ergo, Photinum, Arium, atque ad nostras partes Athanasium introduxi, ut ueritas, summo confligentium certamine eliquata, ad omnium notitiam perueniret, et diuersitate personarum uel responsionum ac interlocutionum huius operis uariata digestio fastium legentibus amputaret. *Dialogus*, PL 62.180; and cf. Quod ut facilius cognoscere possem, singillatim eos fidei suae feci proferre sententias, easdemque documentis probabilibus roborare mea interlocutione flagitui; obuiantibus sibi scilicet et refellentibus his qui contrauenerint, ut aliis defendentibus, aliis obuiantibus, lucidissimae ueritatis agnitio panderetur. PL 62.229

Contra Felicianum Arium, pseudo-Augustine

Similar to the dialogue above, this dialogue, sometimes attributed to Vigilius of Thapsus,²¹² is another pseudo-Augustinian dialogue, first realized as such by Erasmus of Rotterdam.²¹³ The major theme of this debate is also the status of the term *homousius* (ὁμοούσιος in Greek),²¹⁴ but the issue discussed at the greatest length is the nature of Christ's soul with regard to his death, which also leads to the question of the nature of human souls in general since Christ died according to his human nature. The dialogue concludes with the discussion of two of Christ's statements prior to his death and how they pertain to this issue: his words to the penitent thief, "*Hodie mecum eris in paradiso*" ("Today you will be with me in Paradise," Luke 23:43), and his words in the garden, "*Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem*" ("Sorrowful is my soul, even to death,"²¹⁵ Matthew 26:38). The tone of the dialogue is also worth mentioning. Although Felicianus explicitly separates himself from Augustine,²¹⁶ the tone of the dialogue is polite, and like many of the Controversial dialogues, its conclusion emphasizes reconciliation and agreement, not refutation and alienation.

Collatio cum Pascentio Ariano, pseudo-Augustine

This fictional dialogue between Augustine and Pascentius is not without some semblance of historical reality. It was composed, probably at the end of the fifth century, by an anonymous author using Augustine's *Epistles* 238–241 and a reference from Possidius' *Vita Augustini* as material for his own work.²¹⁷ This short dialogue, set as a debate between Augustine and

²¹² See PL 42.1158 and Ficker, *Studien*, 77–9.

²¹³ See PL 42.1156. This dialogue was probably confused with *Contra Felicem Manicheum*; see *Retractationes*, 2.8.

²¹⁴ Ergo, inquit, quoniam otiosi sumus, ad homousii uestri quaestionem, de quo non inter nos tantum, sed etiam inter maiores nostros plerumque tractatum est, ueniamus. *Contra Felicianum*, PL 42.1158.

²¹⁵ The NRSV renders the verse as the following, "I am deeply grieved even to death."

²¹⁶ Cf. "ad homousii uestri quaestionem" vs. "rationem nostrae fidei." PL 42.1158.

²¹⁷ Uta Heil, "Augustin-Rezeption im Reich der Vandalen. Die *Altercatio sancti Augustini cum Pascentio Arriano*." *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11.1 (2007): 6–29, especially 12–18.

Pascentius with Laurentius as arbiter, is mostly concerned with the contested word ὁμοούσιος and its validity because of its absence in scripture, a basic problem in this Trinitarian controversy.²¹⁸ It is also of interest because of its discussion of issues pertaining to the translation of theological terms across languages, notably how various translations and languages represent *uerba*, which only make reference to what really exists (*res ipsa*). Included as justification is the argument that even Gothic prayers are spoken by both native Gothic and Latin speakers in Rome, the Gothic incipit of the “*Domine miserere*” even being cited as an example.²¹⁹

***Disputatio XII Capitulorum Cyrilli Alexandrini et sic Dictorum Nestorii Anti
Anathematismatorum, John Maxentius***

The *Disputatio* is a dialogue composed by John Maxentius (sometimes styled John of Tomis),²²⁰ who is associated with the so-called Scythian monks, though it was previously attributed to Marius Mercator, an attribution that still persists occasionally in scholarship today.²²¹ Its date of composition has the same uncertainty as the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* below, though the *Disputatio* has a different structure. Rather than two interlocutors, there are three, namely Cyril, Nestorius, and the “Catholic.” Each chapter has the following cyclical structure: Cyril makes a statement (*Cyrillus dixit*), Nestorius makes a counterclaim (*Nestorius dixit*), and finally the Catholic responds with a refutation (*Catholicus contradicit*).²²² The purpose of the dialogue is

²¹⁸ Cf. [Augustinus dixit] Ecce quid est ὁμοούσιον, quod exprobratur iniuste? Non enim uerbum solum, sed res in uerbo; nec solus sermo sonans auribus, sed substantia una est Dei credenda in mentibus. PL 33.1159–60.

²¹⁹ Si enim licet dicere, non solum Barbaris lingua sua, sed etiam Romanis, *Sihora armen*, quod interpretatur, Domine miserere; cur non liceret in conciliis Patrum in ipsa terra Graecorum, unde ubique destinata est fides, lingua propria ὁμοούσιον confiteri, quo est Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti una substantia? PL 33.1162. This very issue arises during Jerome’s *Altercatio*, which will be the subject of the following chapter.

²²⁰ The seminal article on this issue is William C. Bark, “John Maxentius and the *Collectio Palatina*.” *Harvard Theological Review*. vol. 63 (1943): 93–107.

²²¹ Bark, “John Maxentius,” 101ff. Pereira suggests that authorship may be attributed to Mercator, strangely, on linguistic grounds, Pereira, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 99–101.

²²² Note the tenses of the verbs of speaking. The Catholic speaks in the present, while Cyril and Nestorius speak in the past, creating a further dialogue between the present and the past.

twofold. First, it attempts to provide a translation of the positions of Cyril and Nestorius, two figures of great importance in the post-Chalcedonian controversy, into Latin.²²³ Second, the dialogue emphasizes the importance of the ongoing Christological debate by inserting the solutions to this problem into the mouth of the anonymous *Catholicus*. Within the context of the political careers of the Scythian monks and their literary corpus, the *Disputatio* serves as an earlier example of their efforts to promote a Theopaschite, Neo-Chalcedonian theology. Maxentius alludes to this and other texts at the conclusion of the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, and it can be gathered that the *Disputatio* did not achieve its intended effect.²²⁴

***Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, John Maxentius**

The *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* is the other of two dialogues composed by John Maxentius. It was presumably composed sometime between 518, when John and his fellow Scythian monks traveled to Constantinople to lobby on behalf of the Theopaschite formula, and 519, when some of them traveled to Rome to do the same.²²⁵ In the first of the the dialogue's two books, two generic interlocutors (*Catholicus* and *Nestorianus*) review the major theological statements of two Ecumenical council from the fifth century, the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451), discuss the validity of Mary's epithet *Theotokos* (Ephesus), and the meaning and applicability of the terms *natura* and *persona* to Christ, God the Word, and the Trinity (Chalcedon).²²⁶ Book 2 then develops the Theopaschite theology of the Scythian monks,

²²³ Cf. Nunc episcopi Cyrilli priora posuimus quae Romana ecclesia approbavit uero iudicio, et posteriora Nestorii; ex Graeco in Latinum utraque uersa. *Disputatio*, 1.1–3.

²²⁴ See Chapter 4, under “The Conclusion of the *Contra Nestorianos*.”

²²⁵ Cf. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon*, 48–50. To my knowledge, no scholar has made a definitive statement about the chronology of the literature associated with the Scythian monks in general, or the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* in particular.

²²⁶ Cf. Pereira, *Reception, Interpretation and Doctrine in the Sixth Century*, 93–4, but see my discussion of the contents of the dialogue in Chapter 4.

that is, that “one of the Trinity suffered according the flesh.”²²⁷ Like Jerome’s *Dialogus Aduersus Pelagianos*, this text concludes with the “Nestorian’s” refusal to accept the Catholic faith.²²⁸

Disputatio Contra Acephalos, Rusticus the Deacon

The *Disputatio Contra Acephalos* is another important dialogue for understanding the importance of Latin-speaking theologians in the Neo-Chalcedonian debates in the early sixth century through the Second Council of Constantinople (553).²²⁹ This dialogue, composed shortly after the aforementioned council when Rusticus was exiled by Justinian,²³⁰ represents the views of a vocal dissident of the theological formulae adopted by the council, specifically the Three Chapters. Rusticus, who is most famous for translating some of the Ecumenical *Acta* in Latin,²³¹ seems to have been partially motivated to compose this dialogue in order to explain to Western bishops the doctrines contained in the Monophysite writings to which they did not have linguistic access. This dialogue is the only extant Latin controversial dialogue in which the author has

²²⁷ Cf. Catholicus: Catholicos non latet, a quibusdam ita unam personam dici Christum, ut tamen non ille, qui pro nobis carne est crucifixus, una sit ex trinitate persona. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, 2.21.

²²⁸ This dialogue will be discussed at length in Chapter 4 and a full English translation, the first in any modern language, is included in Appendix B.

²²⁹ This dialogue only came to my attention very recently. For whatever reason it has been ignored in much previous scholarship, even in cases where the text would seem to be relevant.

²³⁰ Claudio Moreschini, *A Christian in Toga: Boethius: Interpreter of Antiquity and Christian Theologian*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014, 60f, and cf. Rusticus’ description of his circumstances of composition, “Ego quidem et peccata et necessitates et mensuram meam sciens, saepe proposui taciturnitatem praeponere dogmatismo, maxime quoniam nunquam sic perturbata fuerunt quae ad Christianos pertinent, sicut nostris temporibus.” *Contra Acephalos, Praefatio*.1–4.

²³¹ See note below.

explicitly included himself as the orthodox interlocutor.²³² Significant work remains to be done on this text.²³³

***Contra Philosophos*, Anonymous**

The *Contra Philosophos* is a unique dialogue. The longest extant Latin dialogue from Late Antiquity, it was composed by an anonymous author in Ostrogothic Italy in the sixth century.²³⁴ Though the intellectual climate in sixth-century Italy has been called the Hellenic renaissance,²³⁵ the author shows no awareness of this, nor does he, surprisingly, make use of Boethius either.²³⁶ Divided into five books, the dialogue covers natural, civic, and mythological theologies in the first three books respectively, and in the final two, its major concern is with Neoplatonism, specifically on its “religious” aspects such as theurgy.²³⁷ Augustine is the sole interlocutor representing Christian thought, while his opponents are numerous. They include Cicero, Plato, Apuleius, Sallust, Porphyry, and Seneca among others. Marcia Colish has pointed out the author’s misunderstanding of the thinking, mostly with regard to stoicism, of many of these figures, even Augustine who is the author’s most important source. But she has also stressed the author’s originality in his composition. The dialogue is no mere encyclopedia or florilegium: “He manages to combine a certain fidelity to his sources with a more up-to-date

²³² Cf. Rusticus: Ego a te alius quidem sum, sed non aliud: unum est enim secundum quod tu homo es et secundum quod ego sum homo; anima uero mea a corpore tuo alterum et anima tua a corpore meo; et mea anima in meo corpore et tua in tuo alterum quiddam intelligitur, quomodolibet haec ad inuicem comparentur. *Disputatio Contra Acephalos*, 16.376. In the short time that I have spent with this text, it is remarkable for taking a significantly different approach in its criticism of the Monophysites’ understanding of *persona* and *natura*.

²³³ There has been some recent work on him in Italian scholarship. See, Roberto Spataro, *Il diacono Rustico e il suo contributo nel dibattito teologico postcalcedonese*. Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 2007, and Sara Petri, *La Disputatio Contra Acephalos di Rustico*. Studi Sulla Tardoantichità, 5. Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010.

²³⁴ Diethard Aschoff, *Anonymi Contra Philosophos*. CCSL 58A Turnhout: Brepols, 1975, pp. v–vii, and Marcia L. Colish. *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, vol. 2 *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 1985, pp. 290–1.

²³⁵ Pierre Courcelle. *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*. Harry E. Wedeck, trans. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 273.

²³⁶ Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, 290.

²³⁷ Cf. *ibid.* 291f.

perspective that reflects his own contemporary knowledge and concerns.”²³⁸ Beyond Aschoff’s introduction and critical edition of the text, there is not a single study devoted to this lengthy dialogue.

***Contra Iudaeos*, Anonymous**

Even more obscure than the *Contra Philosophos* is the related *Contra Iudaeos*. Like the *Contra Philosophos*, this dialogue is also dated to the sixth or maybe seventh century, though Heinz Schreckenberg has suggested it could be as late as the twelfth century.²³⁹ The editor of the text, Diethard Aschoff, does still tentatively set it in Ostrogothic Italy, the same milieu as the *Contra Philosophos*.²⁴⁰ Divided into two books, the text takes a similar form to the other anonymous dialogue. Augustine once again represents Christian thought, but this time there is only one interlocutor, a sole “*Iudaeus*.” Much that has been said about the *Contra Philosophos* can be said of the *Contra Iudaeos*, and like this dialogue, it is certainly more than a repetition of contemporary *adversus-Iudaeos* literature. Its greatest influence is again Augustine. As one example, the persona of Augustine ventures the (in)famous Erythraean Sibyl, whose prophecy includes the acrostic IHΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ, which is also found in the *City of God*.²⁴¹ Such argumentation, however, is rarely found in other Christian-Jewish Latin dialogues of this time,²⁴² and more work needs to be done before the significance of this text can be fully understood.

²³⁸ *ibid.* 290.

²³⁹ Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte (11.–13. Jahrhundert)*, vol. 2 Frankfurt: veränderte Auflage, 1991, pp. 158–9.

²⁴⁰ Aschoff, *Contra Iudaeos*, viii–ix.

²⁴¹ *De Civitate Dei*, 18.23.

²⁴² *Contra Iudaeos*, II.1709, 1734–1744. The Latin incipit for this prophecy is “*Iudicii signum tellus sudore madescat.*”

Conclusions and Transitions

At this moment of transition between the first and second half of this study, it is good to pause and assess what has been discussed thus far and how it is intended to be read in light of what follows. In Chapter 1, the view of the dialogue was panoramic. A brief historiography of previous work on literary dialogue was sketched, and it was suggested that some approaches to this material overemphasized certain elements of dialogue with the result that some of the late antique dialogues were understood to constitute a break from its literary tradition. To counteract this view, much of Chapter 1 was then devoted to investigating the various approaches, histories, and literary structures often associated with dialogues, including those articulated by both ancient and modern readers of dialogues. In Chapter 2, the scope narrowed, concentrating more closely on a subset of the late antique dialogues, namely the controversial dialogues. Again, a definition was given for these texts, which are related to Diogenes Laertius' subset of dialogues known as the antagonistic dialogues (ἀγωνιστικοὶ διάλογοι).²⁴³ Using this definition, all of the Latin controversial dialogues from Late Antiquity were organized chronologically and summarized. This prose catalogue and summary, owing the greatest debt to Schmidt's list,²⁴⁴ is currently the most complete description of this material, and it can be used, I think, to guide some avenues of future study concerning controversial dialogues in Latin.

In the two following chapters, the focus will narrow again, this time looking closely at two controversial dialogues, Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* (Chapter 3) and John Maxentius' *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* (Chapter 4). On the one hand, one of the basic questions guiding both of these chapters is *what*: what philosophical arguments, literary figures,

²⁴³ Though this point is constantly challenged and negotiated in the late antique material, which will become clear in the following chapters.

²⁴⁴ See Schmidt, "Zur Typologie," 174–77.

and structural elements are contained within them. Neither of these texts has received significant scholarly attention—*Contra Nestorianos* almost none at all—and such attention is useful for its own sake. Yet this inquiry is secondary and serves more as a means of answering another more interesting question: why Jerome and John Maxentius made the conscious decision to compose these texts as dialogues. Answers to this question can be found, I shall suggest, when these dialogues are understood within their complex historical contexts, not least the personal circumstances experienced by the authors themselves. Through this exercise it becomes clearer that Jerome and Maxentius faced similar problems, and that both of them found the form of the dialogue to be an especially useful tool for solving these problems. A brief summary of these two historical readings is the following.

The Council of Nicea (325) created as many problems as it solved. Arius may have been condemned, but various forms of “Arianism” prevailed, and one can look to the philosophical language of *homoousios*, *homoiousios*, and the compromise *homoios* as symbols of how (ostensibly) small differences could create such animosity and discord among fourth-century Christians. Mistakes were made among believers about the correct language of orthodoxy, notably at the Council of Ariminum (359) when a number of bishops unwittingly supported what was understood to be an Arian formula, and there were different responses in how to treat these “lapsed” persons. One particularly intractable character was Lucifer of Cagliari, who wrote a series of invectives against Constantius II and was exiled by him. Known for his unwillingness to compromise on reintroducing Arian Christians back into the fold, he infamously consecrated Paulinus, the representative of the staunch anti-Arian party, as bishop of Antioch in defiance of Meletius, the current orthodox bishop of the city.²⁴⁵ Jerome’s personal involvement in this

²⁴⁵ There is some debate about this series of events. See Chapter 3 below.

controversy is well known—Jerome was ordained a presbyter by Paulinus himself.²⁴⁶ As I shall argue in Chapter 3, the *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* represents a conscious effort to accomplish compromise. By using the form of the dialogue, Jerome both counters the Luciferian positions and even the tone and format of Lucifer's literary output: invective-filled treatises prohibiting conversation with the heretical other (cf. the title of one of Lucifer's treatises, *De non conueniendo cum haereticis*).²⁴⁷

The career of John Maxentius and his companions during the early sixth century can be reconstructed fairly well. After the Council of Chalcedon called by Marcian in 451, a number of related controversies, both far-reaching and localized, plagued the political and theological stability of the Empire, including the Acacian Schism and the infamous addition to the Trisagion hymn. It is within this climate that the Scythian monks found themselves supporting their version of Neo-Chalcedonianism, their so-called Theopascite theology. This position was initially attacked and ridiculed from every side, and it is clear that sincere dialogue was lacking in reality. As I shall argue in Chapter 4, the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* represents a major shift in strategy for the Scythians, and the benefits often associated with the literary form of the dialogue were used with great effect to counteract this negative reception of their ideas.²⁴⁸

Throughout the close readings of these two controversial dialogues and their connection to the historical context in which they were written, the contents found in Chapters 1 and 2 will take on additional significance as they are applied to specific problems. In one of the most important Latin dialogues circulated in Late Antiquity, Calcidius' translation and commentary of Plato's *Timaeus*, Socrates compares his abstract discussion of the perfect state (contained in

²⁴⁶ This detail is of some significance to some of Jerome's arguments in his dialogue.

²⁴⁷ See the discussion of the historical background at the beginning of Chapter 3.

²⁴⁸ See the discussion of the historical background at the beginning of Chapter 4.

the *Republic*) to the experience of seeing painted animals or even real animals at rest (*animalibus pictis uel etiam uiuentibus quidem sed immobiliter quiescentibus*).²⁴⁹ In the two dialogues that follow the *Republic*, Timaeus' discussion of the cosmos and Critias' account of Atlantis sate Socrates' desire "to see these animals in motion and in conflict" (*motus actusque et certamen aliquod eorum spectare desideret*),²⁵⁰ that is, an individual state at work in the real world. In a sense, Socrates' observation illustrates the connection between the first two chapters and the latter two chapters of this thesis. The tools and approaches to dialogues discussed in the earlier chapters—the painted animals—will always remain at rest in the background, but they will come alive when the dialogues' interlocutors enter into conflict. Then will their full significance be made known. For example, Diogenes Laertius' subdivision of Plato's dialogues, particularly the "antagonistic dialogue," is first adopted and later rejected during a critical moment in Jerome's *Altercatio*—the genre-expectations of dialogic literature being manipulated by the author to make an important philosophical and political point. Furthermore, rhetorical prosopopoeia, as described by Quintilian, is used to good effect by John Maxentius. Often used by interlocutors within a dialogue to discuss ancient poetry, this rhetorical figure plays a similar role in *Contra Nestorianos* in counteracting a heretical interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews. These are just two examples, but they serve as reminders that a full toolbox for thinking about dialogue is essential for further work on this corpus of late antique Latin literature, particularly the controversial dialogues summarized in this chapter.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Ut si quis uisis eximiae pulchritudinis ac uenustatis animalibus pictis uel etiam uiuentibus quidem sed immobiliter quiescentibus motus actusque et certamen aliquod eorum spectare desideret, sic ego nunc informatae urbis adumbrataeque sermone populum agentem aliquid cum finitimis ciuitatibus in pace aut bello dignum tanta fama et educatione magna quadam expectatione depono. Calcidius, *Timaeus*, 19B–D.

²⁵⁰ See note above.

Chapter 3: Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, the Council of Ariminum, & the Luciferian Schism

Augustinus: Quid tibi uidemur efficere velle, cum loquimur?

Adeodatus: Quantum quidem mihi nunc occurrit, aut docere aut discere.

Augustinus: Unum horum uideo et assentior: nam loquendo nos docere
velle manifestum est; discere autem quomodo?

Adeodatus: Quo tandem censes, nisi cum interrogamus?

De Magistro, I.1

The first dialogue to which I shall turn is Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*²⁵¹ composed 378–379,²⁵² which contains a fictional discussion between a so-called Luciferian and an Orthodox Christian. In this dialogue, Jerome defends the decisions made at the Synod of Alexandria (362) against a vocal minority of dissidents who considered the entire orthodox church to be in a fallen state. These dissidents, known as the Luciferians (after their possible founder Lucifer of Cagliari), were so persistent that, despite their small numbers, they created problems in the decades to follow.

In order to give a full reading of this text, the theological and political background of the dialogue must first be sketched. The primary focus will first be on the career of Lucifer of Cagliari, especially his conduct in the city of Antioch while he was in exile by Constantius II, then on the Council of Ariminum (359) where “the whole world was amazed to find itself Arian,”²⁵³ and finally on what little is known about the sect of the Luciferians themselves.

²⁵¹ Throughout this chapter, I shall refer to this text as *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* and *Altercatio* interchangeably.

²⁵² See A. Canellis, ed. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*. CCSL 79B Turnhout: Brepols, 2000, p. vi; and A. Canellis, “La composition du Dialogue contre les Lucifériens et du Dialogue contre les Pélagiens de saint Jérôme.” *REAug* 43.2 (1997): 247–288, at 247–8.

²⁵³ See below.

Background to the *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*

Lucifer of Cagliari and the Synod of Alexandria (362)

No one seems to have liked Lucifer of Cagliari. Beginning his discussion of the bishop from Sardinia, R. P. C. Hanson makes the following bald remark about the man, “Almost everyone who writes about Lucifer finds him an intolerable bore and bigot.” On the same page, he adds, “His [Lucifer’s] talents lay in producing vituperation rather than constructive theology.”²⁵⁴ Prima facie, this may appear to be irrelevant to the matter and irreverent to the person at hand, but it is not. From what is known, Lucifer was an abrasive character in nearly every role that he played in the fourth century, and this fact should remain in the back of one’s mind in order to measure the full weight of Jerome’s dialogue and its rhetorical and literary strategies. The tone, method, and willingness to reconcile, found especially in the second half of the dialogue, will mark a stark contrast to the figure of Lucifer and what is known of the so-called Luciferians. Jerome’s tone, I shall argue, was chosen to counteract the belligerent temperament characterized by Lucifer and those with whom he was associated.

Lucifer, a friend and confidant of Pope Liberius (reigned 352–366), is first known to history in the 350s when he is sent to Milan by the aforementioned pope to petition Constantius II (reigned 337–361)²⁵⁵ that a council be called in Aquileia in order to discuss the condemnation of Athanasius of Alexandria.²⁵⁶ A synod was held in Milan instead in 355,²⁵⁷ which constitutes

²⁵⁴ Hanson, *The Search*, 508 n. 4 and 508.

²⁵⁵ Henceforth I shall refer to Constantius II as “Constantius” unless noted otherwise.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 332.

²⁵⁷ A letter from Lucifer exhorting Eusebius of Vercelli to attend Milan is extant; see CCL 8, *Epistula* 7. Its language is concordant with this temperament. The incipit reads, “Treading the devil’s neck and his depraved whisperings” (*calcato capite diaboli et suggestionibus prauis*), and he continues his invective by comparing the Emperor Valens to Simon Magus (cf. *sicut in aduentu beatissimorum apostolorum glorificatur Dei nomen in ruina Simonis, ita Valente expulso in aduentu tuo dissoluta blaphemantium Arrianorum machina penitus destruat*, *Ep.* 7. 9–12).

the first major event associated with Lucifer. As it is recounted, the eastern bishops first called for a unanimous condemnation of Athanasius,²⁵⁸ which was not viewed favorably by the pro-Nicene supporters of Athanasius in the West. Socrates reports that Paulinus the bishop of Treves, Dionysius the bishop of Alba in Italy, and Eusebius of Vercelli all refused to sign, shouting their angry dissent (ἐβόων μακρά) at the eastern bishops. Lucifer is not named by Socrates,²⁵⁹ but he was among those who refused to agree to the terms proposed by the council, and he was then sent into exile (*in exilio sumus*) for “desecrating Constantius’ council populated by his wicked cronies” (*quia concilium uestrum malignantium exsecremur*).²⁶⁰ This exile lasted from 355–361 (Constantius died in 361), and it was spent in three locations: Germanicia in Cilicia, Eleutheropolis in Palestine, and finally the Thebaid in Egypt.²⁶¹ It is during this exile that his career especially intersects with the concerns of this chapter.

For one, this was the period of Lucifer’s greatest literary activity. While in exile he composed a series of caustic treatises against Constantius, including *De Non Conueniendo cum Haereticis* (*That we should not negotiate with heretics*), *De Regibus Apostaticis* (*Concerning apostate rulers*), *De Athanasio, uel Quia absentem nemo debet iudicare nec damnare* (*Concerning Athanasius, or That no one should pass judgment or condemn anyone in absentia*), *De non Parcendo Delinquentibus in Deum* (*That mercy should not be shown to sinners before*

²⁵⁸ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.36. Cf. Καθ’ ἣν συνελθόντων [πάνων ἐπισκόπων] οἱ ἐκ τῆς ἀνατολῆς πρὸ πάντων ψῆφον κοινὴν κατὰ Ἀθανασίου ἐκφέρειν ἤξιουν, ὅπως ἂν τοῦτου γενομένου τελείως ἄβατος ἐκείνῳ ἡ Ἀλεξάνδρεια γένηται, *ibid.*, 2.36.2. See Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, 117f.

²⁵⁹ Theodoret, however, adds his name to this list. See Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.12.

²⁶⁰ Cf. “Propterea odis nos, quia concilium uestrum malignantium exsecremur, propterea in exilio sumus, propterea in carcere necamur, propterea nobis solis prohibetur conspectus; idcirco reclusi in tenebras custodimur ingenti custodia,” *De non conueniendo*, 5.37f.

²⁶¹ Hanson, *The Search*, 509. For the Thebaid, cf. “Ἀμφω [sc. Λούκιφερ καὶ Εὐσέβιος] οὖν τῶν ἄνω Θεβῶν τῆς ἐξορίας ἐπανιόντες συμβουλὴν ἐποιούντο, τίνα τρόπον τὸν τῆς ἐκκλησίας κανόνα διαφθειρόμενον μὴ παρίδωσιν,” Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5.

God), and *Moriundum esse pro Deo Filio* (*One must be willing to die for God the Son*).²⁶² As the titles suggest, Lucifer is less than friendly in his communication with the emperor. His fervor for a strict observance of Nicea had no patience for Constantius' Arian sympathies as he saw them. The virtues of his fervor, it must be noted, were not lost on some of his contemporaries, including Ambrose and Jerome. His sincere belief cannot be denied.²⁶³ At the same time, Lucifer's unwillingness to compromise, or even converse, was a noted problem. A passage from the *De non conueniendo* serves as a representative illustration of his brand of rhetoric:

How can we, who are servants of God, come to any agreement with you, who are servants of the Devil, especially when God wills that there be as much separation between us and you as there is between light and darkness, between life and death, between the sweet and the bitter, even between God's holy angels who eternally praise his mercy and those fallen [angels] among whom you will see yourself tortured forever unless you escape from their clutches?

Quomodo potueramus nos, cum simus serui Dei, uos uero serui diaboli, in unum conuenire, quando sic inter nos et uos separatum esse uoluerit Deus, quomodo inter lumen et tenebras, inter uitam et mortem, inter dulcem et amarum, quomodo inter sanctos angelos Dei, qui sunt semper clementiam eius magnificantes, et inter illos apostatas, quos in aeternum tecum uisurus eris torqueri, nisi temet eripueris ab eis?²⁶⁴

Passages such as this can be unpacked in two ways, each making an important contribution to the understanding of what is at stake. First, the doctrinal and philosophical position made by Lucifer here can be emphasized. Through this lens, Lucifer's position is not very different from nearly any Christian writer or thinker from Late Antiquity, no matter their creed: the orthodox believers and the heretics are in a state of meaningful difference from each other, and this difference has real (or at least metaphysically conceived) consequences. On this point, readers of Lucifer have

²⁶² Diercks notes the *communis opinio* of the chronology as the follow: *De non conueniendo* and *De regibus* (autum 358), *De Athanasio* (after August, 358), *De no parcendo* (359), and *Moriundum* (360 or 361), CCSL 8, xxiv. For a discussion of some of these texts see, Hanson, *The Search*, 510f, and Field, *Liberty*, 148f.

²⁶³ Cf. Hanson, *The Search*, 509f.

²⁶⁴ *De non conueniendo cum haereticis*, 4.22–25.

raised the issue that his theological sophistication was lacking and that this, therefore, distinguishes his writings from those of Ambrose, Hilary, and Athanasius, with the resulting view that their writings are philosophically significant and his constitute no more than a temper tantrum.²⁶⁵ This might be true, but it is less important here because it marks a difference of degree rather than a difference of kind. What matters is the conceptual consistency between Lucifer's and his contemporaries' views on heresy.

The other way to read the passage is how it illustrates Lucifer's general attitude and response to disagreement, and here is where a significant contrast lies. Lucifer's response is to hurl insults and ridicule his opponent (Constantius' mildness to Lucifer seems only to have angered him all the more),²⁶⁶ placing the onus of change on Constantius (*nisi temet eripueris ab eis*) and offering no common ground. To push this point too far for such a passage is unwise, but it serves of an example of Lucifer's active decision to thwart, not foster compromise and reconciliation. This is especially true because Jerome, as will be discussed below, is much more willing to give Constantius the benefit of the doubt in order to achieve concord.²⁶⁷

One of the most notable examples of Lucifer's active promotion of discord is the following. After the death of Constantius, which marked the end of Lucifer and Eusebius' exile, Julian published two edicts that reversed many of his predecessor's policies. Athanasius was able to return to Alexandria, and no time was wasted in calling a council in this city in 362, primarily for the purposes of discussing the fallout that had occurred in Ariminum and Seleucia (359),²⁶⁸ during which a number of bishops had agreed to what was considered an Arian creed. What to do

²⁶⁵ "This, apart from his attack on those whom he deems heretics, is all we can distil of Lucifer's doctrine. It is not much. Lucifer was a fighter, not a theologian," Hanson, *The Search*, 513.

²⁶⁶ Julian praises Constantius' inclination in his *Panegyric*. See *Panegyric*, (9)17.

²⁶⁷ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 605–609. See below.

²⁶⁸ More on the significance of these councils below.

with these lapsed bishops (and the persons whom they had later baptized) was the question that had to be answered. Lucifer and Eusebius were of course invited, and it is clear that they both favored a harsh treatment of these *personae non gratae*. Lucifer, however, chose not to attend the council, sending two delegates to represent him instead. He opted to travel immediately to Antioch, and it has been posited that he felt that his presence in Alexandria would not be necessary to achieve his desired result.²⁶⁹

The council, however, was decidedly lenient towards the lapsed, giving them conditional clemency, and it is clear that Eusebius and Lucifer's delegates were in agreement with this final decision.²⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Lucifer was in Antioch where he performed his most notorious act, taking the initiative to consecrate Paulinus as bishop of Antioch in defiance of the sitting bishop Meletius, whom Lucifer viewed as lapsed, thereby creating a palpable rift among those partisan to Meletius and those who supported Paulinus. Because of the significance of this event and Socrates' succinct description of it, it is worth quoting in full.

The bishop Eusebius of Vercelli set out for Antioch immediately after the synod in Alexandria, but when he found that Paulinus had been consecrated by Lucifer and that there was great strife among the people (for the followers of Meletius assembled separately from everyone else), he was distressed at the lack of harmony caused by the consecration. He privately disagreed with what had happened, but out of respect for Lucifer he remained silent and departed after proclaiming that matters should be set right by a gathering of bishops. Afterwards, he made great efforts to unite those in disagreement but he failed.

Εὐσέβιος δὲ ὁ Βερκέλλων ἐπίσκοπος εὐθὺς μετὰ τὴν σύνοδον ἐκ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν ὥρμησεν, εὐρών τε Παυλῖνον μὲν ὑπὸ Λουκίφερος χειροτονηθέντα, τὰ δὲ πλήθη διεστηκότα (οἱ γὰρ Μελετίῳ ἀκολουθήσαντες ἰδίᾳ συνήγοντο), ταραχθεὶς ὅτι τῇ γενομένῃ χειροτονίᾳ μὴ πάντες συνήγουν, κατέγνω μὲν καθ' ἑαυτὸν τοῦ γενομένου, τῇ δὲ πρὸς Λουκίφερα αἰδοῖ σιωπήσας ἀνεχώρησεν, ἐπαγγειλάμενος ἐν συνεδρίῳ

²⁶⁹ See Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5–6; Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.2; Williams, *Ambrose*, 62–68; and Hanson, *The Search*, 155f.

²⁷⁰ Williams, *Ambrose*, 65.

ἐπισκόπων τὰ γέγονενα διορθώσασθαι. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πολλὴν σπουδὴν
θέμενος ἐνῶσαι τοὺς διεστῶτας οὐκ ἴσχυεν.

Though the extent of collaboration between Eusebius and Lucifer after their departure from the Thebaid is unclear, Eusebius' reaction to Paulinus' consecration at the hands of Lucifer is clear: he was devastated at losing the opportunity of uniting the two anti-Nicene parties in Antioch (πολλὴν σπουδὴν θέμενος ἐνῶσαι τοὺς διεστῶτας). This is, at least, the view of some interpreters of these events, making the plausible assumption that Eusebius believed that Meletius could remain the sole (Nicean) bishop of Antioch in light of the synod in Alexandria.²⁷¹ Lucifer's reactions are known as well. According to Rufinus, he was in turn upset at Eusebius' disappointment at his initiative (*iniuriam dolens, quod episcopum a se ordinatum apud Antiochiam non recepisset Eusebius*); he was also put in a difficult political position because his delegates in Alexandria had acted under his authority (*constringebatur legati sui vinculo, qui in concilio ipsius auctoritate subscripserat*).²⁷² Dismayed at this situation, Lucifer returned to Sardinia where he died shortly thereafter, leaving a legacy of sincere devotion to the faith but also of creating strife everywhere he went. His tombstone, with a legible epitaph still intact, was discovered in July 1623.²⁷³

The Council of Ariminum (359)

To backtrack a bit, a brief sketch of the Council of Ariminum is necessary here because of its prevalence in the *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* and its role in the events concerning the synod at Alexandria just described above. As a preliminary caveat, there is not yet a clear consensus among scholars of church history about the relationship between the motivations that

²⁷¹ Barnes, *Athanasius*, 158.

²⁷² Rufinus, *Continuatio Rufini*, 10.38.

²⁷³ Dierks, CCSL 8, xxxv.

actually guided the actors to make their decisions at this council and how their motivations were portrayed by later Christian authors who had their own incentives for seeing things as they did. These competing interpretations can be summarized as the following: that the events of this council were the result of an Arian conspiracy, the Arian minority tricking the Nicean majority into agreeing to a heretical creed (the view of later fourth-century Christians as well as of some modern scholars), or that the subsequent distaste for the creed of Ariminum was a symptom of changing theological viewpoints later on (the view of some modern scholars).²⁷⁴ Answering this question is of importance for understanding the theological climate in the West in the 340s and 350s, but because Jerome's dialogue was composed in 387,²⁷⁵ it is of little consequence here. The Luciferians had little concern for *why* these bishops lapsed—all that matters is that they did, and Jerome, in fact, is one of the “later fourth-century Christians” who saw these events as a nefarious trick by the Arian party. A brief discussion of the facts will suffice.

In 358 Constantius called two councils, one in the east and one in the west, in order to bring unity to the church (ὁμοδόξους, a point important to Jerome below).²⁷⁶ The council in the east was held in September 359 in Seleucia, delayed because of an earthquake in Nicomedia (the originally proposed location).²⁷⁷ The western council was held in Ariminum in May, on schedule unlike its eastern counterpart.²⁷⁸ The council had two general parts, and I shall treat each in turn.

²⁷⁴ For a description of the former, see Y.-M. Duval, “La ‘Manoeuvre frauduleuse’ de Rimini à la recherche du *Liber adversus Ursacium et Valentem*,” (pp. 51–103) in *Hilaire et son temps: actes du colloque de Poitiers, 29 septembre–3 octobre 1968, à l’occasion du XVIe centenaire de la mort de saint Hilaire*. Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1969. For the latter, see *Williams*, 22–37, and *passim*.

²⁷⁵ See above in Chapter 2, under “*Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*.”

²⁷⁶ Cf. “Τνοὺς δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς [sc. Κωνσταντῖος] τοὺς μὲν [sc. ἐπισκόπους] ἐκποδῶν δι’ ἐξορίας ποιεῖ, οἰκουμένην δὲ σύνοδον συγκροτεῖν ἐβουλεύετο, ὅπως ἂν πάντας τοὺς τῆς ἀνατολῆς ἐπισκόπους εἰς τὴν δύσιν ἐλκύσας ὁμοδόξους, εἰ δύναιτο, τοὺς πάντας ποιήσειεν,” Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.37

²⁷⁷ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.39.

²⁷⁸ See *Williams*, *Ambrose*, 22.

During the first session, Valens and his supporters (understood by the orthodox to be Arian sympathizers) made the proposition that all previous creeds ought to be abandoned and that the so-called Dated Creed (a *homoian* creed, which uses the formula, “the Son is *like* the Father in all things”)²⁷⁹ should be authorized by the council.²⁸⁰ This was rejected by the majority, and the previous creeds were upheld, notably Nicea’s.²⁸¹ Then Valens, Ursacius, Germinius, and Gaius were excommunicated because of their unwillingness to compromise with the other bishops, Sozomen adding the uncorroborated detail that these four even refused to anathematize Arianism.²⁸² At the end of this session ten delegates representing the majority party were dispatched to Nike (in Thrace) to carry the council’s decisions to Constantius, though ten delegates from Valens’ party also accompanied them. The emperor, however, was off on campaign, and in his absence, it seems that the minority delegates badgered the other delegates to make some concessions, most importantly a slight modification of the creed, replacing the Nicene creed entirely.²⁸³ The latter development would initially be viewed as catastrophic by the bishops in Ariminum.

At the return of the delegates, which marks the second session of the council, the bishops were initially appalled at what had occurred in Nike. This second session is better documented than the first,²⁸⁴ though good explanations for what happened in this session are lacking. Somehow the sentiment among the bishops shifted and within a few months the majority agreed to the modified decisions of Nike. All evidence indicates that this was done without any explicit

²⁷⁹ Ὅμοιον δὲ λέγομεν τὸν υἱὸν τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ πάντα. For a detailed discussion of this creed, see R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search*, 360–80.

²⁸⁰ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.37. Socrates lists the creed in its entirety.

²⁸¹ This is preserved by Hilary of Poitiers. See CSEL 65, 95.

²⁸² Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.17.

²⁸³ Williams, *Ambrose*, 25f.

²⁸⁴ Jerome’s *Altercatio*, in fact, is a significant source for this part of the council.

coercion, thereby supporting the conclusion that the members of the council thought that these alterations were orthodox.²⁸⁵ Jerome famously describes this moment almost three decades later in his *Altercatio*, and because of its great influence on this less known council, it deserves quotation in full:

After that, the council was concluded. All returned joyfully to their provinces, for this was the desire of the emperor and all good people, that both the West and the East unite themselves with a bond of communion. Crimes, however, do not lie hidden very long; a wound poorly bandaged soon splits open with oozing pus. Afterwards, Valens and Ursacius, in addition to their partners in crime, notable priests of Christ, threw up their hands, claiming that they did not deny that Christ was a *creature*, only that he was a *creature similar to other creatures*. Next the word *ousia* was abolished followed by a condemnation of the Nicene faith. The whole world groaned, amazed that it was Arian.

His ita gestis, concilium soluitur. Laeti omnes ad prouincias reuertuntur. Id enim regi et bonis omnibus curae fuerat ut Oriens atque Occidens communionis sibi uinculo necterentur. Sed diu scelera non latent et cicatrix male obducta, incocto pure, dirumpitur. Coeperunt postea Ualens et Ursacius, ceterique nequitiae eorum socii, egregii uidelicet Christi sacerdotes, palmas suas iactitare, dicentes se non creaturam negasse Christum, sed similem ceteris creaturis. Tunc usiae nomen abolitum, tunc Nicaenae fidei damnatio conclamata est. Ingemuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est.²⁸⁶

As Jerome notes, the initial departure from Ariminum was cheerful, but soon thoughts of doubt were to creep into the minds of many as news of the council's decisions spread. Recalling the synod at Alexandria discussed above, the Council of Ariminum and its counterpart in the East were treated with suspicion almost immediately, so much so that a synod had to be called to determine how to treat the *lapsi*. In the following section, the loudest voice of dissent against the mercy shown in Alexandria will be discussed, that of the Luciferians. So great was their

²⁸⁵ Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon*, II.44.7, and see the quotation from Jerome below.

²⁸⁶ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 19.679–689.

opposition to the reintegration of the *lapsi* back into the fold of the church that members of this sect persisted until the late 380s.

The Luciferian Schism

Whether Lucifer himself actually founded the group known as the Luciferians, or whether they constitute a group of like-minded thinkers on the issue of lapsed bishops cannot be determined with certainty, though some commentators assume that the former is true.²⁸⁷ Regrettably not much can be said about the Luciferians because not much is known. The two best sources are Faustinus (the Luciferian's) *De Trinitate*²⁸⁸ and especially Jerome's *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*. One must of course proceed with caution in making assumption about the beliefs of a heretical other²⁸⁹ depicted in a controversial dialogue, but at the same time, the rhetorical stipulation that one's opponent must be characterized accurately (cf. Quintilian's claim: *qui tamen ita demum a fide non abhorreant, si ea locutos finxerimus, quae cogitasse eos non sit absurdum*)²⁹⁰ gives some credibility to how they are portrayed by Jerome. This portrait is mostly an intellectual one, but it is primarily the beliefs of the Luciferians that matter to this chapter.

The Luciferians' positions on the lapsed bishops and those baptized by the these bishops, as given by Jerome, can be summarized as follows. First, the bishops who have lapsed are like the salt described by Christ in Matthew 5:13; they are salt that has lost its flavor, only good for being thrown to the ground and trampled underfoot. This is not to say that Luciferians held that

²⁸⁷ See Field, *Two Swords*, 157f; Hanson, *The Search*, 510, 516; Barnes, *Athanasius*, 114f; and Diercks, CCSL 8, xxxi–xxxv.

²⁸⁸ Discussed in Chapter 2 above.

²⁸⁹ Heretic is a term that is difficult to apply to the Luciferians. One of the first questions raised in the *Altercatio* is whether heretics are no different from pagans. As the dialogue plays out, it becomes clear that the Luciferians are not heretics, only confused. See below.

²⁹⁰ See Chapter 1 above, under “Latin Rhetorical Definitions of Dialogue.”

these bishops were doomed to Gehenna. They did not hold this view. Instead, the lapsed bishops had lost any claim on their episcopal authority, desecrating the sacred duty to which they were entrusted.²⁹¹ Arian bishops, therefore, could be reconciled with the church, as they must laicize first.²⁹² The second tenet of the Luciferians concerns the laity. The laity, unlike its episcopal shepherds, could be reaccepted into the church, though only after (partial) rebaptism, that is, orthodox bishops must only lay hands upon them.²⁹³ Various arguments are given for this position, but this is not the place to dwell on them because there is a good possibility that Jerome frames them in order to make a philosophical point. The Luciferian interlocutor claims, for example, that the layperson can be received because he or she is baptized out of ignorance and therefore should not be faulted. Such a statement allows the Orthodox interlocutor (or rather Jerome himself) to retort that the same excuse can be given the bishops who signed at Ariminum, unaware of the grave mistake that they had made.²⁹⁴

This brief historical background suffices for understanding Jerome's dialogue. In the following sections, I shall attempt to show how Jerome used the dialogic form in order to counteract the disagreement and discord caused by Lucifer and his followers.

The Content of the *Altercatio*

The *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* is clearly divided into two parts. Unlike the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, whose two books contain arguments arranged by chronological period, this is not true for this dialogue. Instead, the two parts of the *Altercatio* contain arguments about the *same issues*. What differentiates them is *how* the two interlocutors interact

²⁹¹ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 13.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid., 6.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 12.

and therefore explicate their arguments. In the first half of the dialogue, the tone is caustic and hostile. Filled with battle and hunting imagery, the combatants attack each other aggressively, conforming closely to the antagonistic subtype of dialogue discussed by Diogenes Laertius above.²⁹⁵ In the second half of the dialogue, the tone shifts dramatically. The Luciferian submits to the Orthodox's authority, asking for clarification and evidence for his positions. For this half of the dialogue, Diogenes' "pedagogical" subtype is relevant.²⁹⁶

Because the very process of the dialogue is of interest for the discovery of how Jerome uses the form of the dialogue in light of the historical context of the Luciferian Schism, the following treatment will read the dialogue sequentially, dwelling especially on key moments that shed light on Jerome's choices as author. This dialogue is usually read for the historical information it can provide about third-century doctrinal controversy. I do not disagree. I would only add that a close reading of its literary elements can make the light shine a little brighter.

The First half of the *Altercatio* (ἀνταγωνιστικός)

Like the majority of the controversial dialogues, the text of the *Altercatio* begins with an Aristotelian prologue and presents the fiction that the text is a faithful record of an actual debate.²⁹⁷ On the previous day, the prologue states, a follower of the Luciferian sect and an orthodox Christian had met in a contentious debate. The dispositions of these two combatants are starkly contrasted. The former is portrayed as having argued violently and eristically like a savage dog (*odiosa loquacitate contendens, caninam facundiam exercuit*), while the latter, on the

²⁹⁵ See Chapter 1 above, under "What is a Dialogue? Diogenes' Definition of (Plato's) Dialogue."

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ The prologue of the *Altercatio* is terse, and this brevity can be contrasted with that of the later *Dialogus contra Pelagianos*, where Jerome is much more explicitly forthcoming with his reasoning for composing this dialogue. He states that he has chosen the form of the dialogue because the Socratic method (*ex utraque parte*) is the best way to discover the truth, and his reasons for using generic names for his interlocutors.

other hand, calmly and rationally responded to his adversary (*rationabiliter*). However, because the location (in the streets) and the time of the debate were unfit for bringing the contest to a satisfactory conclusion, the disputants, after nearly spitting in each other's faces (*conspitata paene inuicem facie*), agreed to meet the following day. From the very beginning, then, Jerome situates the Luciferian within the context that Lucifer and his followers were understood in the fourth century—they were intractible and adversarial. Just as important is how Jerome describes the Orthodox interlocutor. He is calm and rational, the opposite of his opponent. The importance of this dichotomy is signposted throughout the dialogue, and it is related to the call for reconciliation made throughout—the Orthodox always takes the initiative in fostering reconciliation. One compelling way to read this dialogue is as an argument for reconciliation through harmonious debate.

The beginning of this debate, however, is cacophonous. The first order of business for the disputants is to come to terms and find common ground of agreement so that they have a foundation from which to begin their argument.²⁹⁸ Most notably, they agree that all heretics have the same status as pagans.²⁹⁹ All subsequent argument in the first half of the dialogue proceeds from this simple point, creating the following general pattern: the Luciferian makes an objection or attack upon his opponent's position, and the Orthodox reveals how such an attack undermines itself through self-contradiction.³⁰⁰ This pattern demonstrates par excellence the ancient characterization of heresy where the "heretic" is portrayed as concerned more with winning the

²⁹⁸ A common theme and obvious prerequisite in dialogues. Cf. Nestorianus: Relinquentes, si placet, ista, ea proferamus discutienda in medium, quae unusquisque nostrum simplici mente catholicis iudicat conuenire dogmatibus, ne in his, quae ad rem non pertinent, tempus uideamur expendere. *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, 1. Introduction. 19–22.

²⁹⁹ Orthodoxus dixit: Igitur fixum inter nos habemus de haeretico sic loquendum quasi de gentili. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 2.28–9.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Ecce impleta est prophetia: parauit mihi foueam et ipse in eam incidit! *ibid.* 3.43–4.

argument than finding the truth, hence his willingness to modify his position in an attempt to gain the upper hand against his opponent.³⁰¹ What follows is an exposition of the Luciferians' positions.

First, the Luciferian condemns the Orthodox for receiving bishops because they are heretics (the most basic criticism of the Luciferian party), but the Orthodox retorts that the Luciferian receives the laity, who are also heretics, which is self-contradictory. If all heretics are equal, he argues, the Luciferian acts incorrectly in accepting some heretics (the laity) and refusing others (the bishops). Angered by the rebuttal, the Luciferian pivots, emphasizing the difference between the two classes (the laity and the clergy) to justify his position of accepting one and not the other, and he then enters into outright invective, which the Orthodox calmly deflects.³⁰²

Because the Luciferian is unwilling to concede the point that clergy and laity are on equal grounds here, the Orthodox agrees to indulge this line of argumentation.³⁰³ This is an important point and is another signpost pointing to the critical shift in the dialogue that is to come. The Luciferian may be unwilling to abandon arguments that do not hold water, but rather than end the dialogue before it can even begin, the Orthodox acquiesces in accepting this untenable (in his view) position to continue the discussion. This willingness to enter into dialogue or even “condescend,” especially by the figure of the dialogue associated with being the teacher, is a virtue commonly praised and seen as a necessary enterprise in dialogue, especially for

³⁰¹ John Maxentius lucidly articulates this in *Contra Nestorianos*. See Appendix B, Book I, Introduction.

³⁰² *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 2–3.

³⁰³ Orthodoxus dixit: Quoniam obstinate tenes aliam rationem esse episcopi, aliam laici, ad compendium concertationis, tribuo quod postulas, nec me pigebit, loco tecum faciente, manum conserere. (cf. Matthew 5:13) *ibid.* 4.81–84.

pedagogical purposes.³⁰⁴ With this strategy, there is hope that the Luciferian will eventually abandon his self-serving positions.

But in the meantime, the Luciferian continues by shifting his argument to make a utilitarian point against the Orthodox: the Luciferian sect receives the heretical laity because too many souls would be lost were they to turn them away and reject them.³⁰⁵ The Catholic turns this new claim on its head, by making a utilitarian argument of his own (since he has agreed to meet his interlocutor on his own terms). He claims that many more souls would be saved were the Luciferians to adopt the Orthodox position (receiving bishops), since each bishop received would also include every member of his congregation, though he also reminds his opponent in the same breath of the logical soundness of this position. For the Catholic, his own position is superior both in terms of its utilitarian net-gain *and* because of its truth—the Catholic position is sound (they accept both the laity and the bishops), while the Luciferian is self-contradictory (only one of the two).³⁰⁶

Undeterred, the Luciferian then makes an argument whose origin can be traced to Cyprian, that the bishops are like salt that has lost its seasoning and have, therefore, forfeited their episcopal office.³⁰⁷ A medley of other biblical quotations add spice to the Luciferian's

³⁰⁴ Gregory the Great makes this very point to his interlocutor Peter the Deacon as discussed in Chapter 1. Cf. *Cur condescendentem te infirmitati proximorum aequanimiter non feram, cum Paulus dicat: omnibus omnia factus sum, ut omnes facerem saluos?* IV.4.89–91. Here Gregory praises his friend for “condescending” to meet his students on their own terms. This trope can also be found in homilies and is even applied to the actions of biblical characters and most notably God himself. Συγκατάβασις (literally, “a coming down to”) is John Chrysostom's favorite word for articulating this concept in his homilies, for example.

³⁰⁵ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 4.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ Cyprian begins his work *De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* with a reference to salt: *Cum moneat Dominus et dicat: 'Uos estis sal terrae.'* M. Bévenot, *Sancti Cypriani Opera*. CCL 3 Turnhout: Brepols, 1977, p. 249. Cyprian's thought and writings played a complicated role in the subsequent history of the Church, often cited as supporting patristic authority on both sides of any given issue. See Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 328–9, for his thoughts on rebaptism 17–8. In general, the theme of childishness is pervasively used to describe inappropriate behavior in dialogues.

biting diatribe, which is his longest speech in the dialogue,³⁰⁸ but again the Orthodox brings the boiling pot back down to a simmer.

Luciferian: I ask you, have you not read what is said about bishops? “*You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its flavor be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot*” [Matt 5:13]. And also, “*If someone sins against another, a priest can intercede with the Lord; but if a priest sins, there is no one else to make intercession for him*” [1 Sam 2:25]? These two passages from scripture are in agreement. For just as salt seasons all food and there is nothing so intrinsically flavorful that improves taste without it, so also is the bishop the condiment of the whole world and his own church in particular.

Luciferianus dixit: Oro te, non legisti de episcopis dictum: *Uos estis sal terrae. Si autem sal infatuatum fuerit, in quo salietur? Ad nihil ualet, nisi ut proiciatur foras et ab hominibus conculcetur. Sed et illud quod, pro populo peccatore, sacerdos Dominum exoret, pro sacerdote uero nullus sit alius qui deprecetur. Quae quidem duo Scripturarum capitula in unam sententiam concurrunt. Nam, ut sal omnem cibum condit nec est aliquid per se tam suaue quod absque eo gustum demulceat, ita mundi totius et propriae Ecclesiae condimentum episcopus est.*³⁰⁹

With the introduction of the argument about the salt—that the bishop has lost his power to function as a bishop—baptism finally comes to the fore, the issue in which the Orthodox will ultimately succeed in catching his opponent in an inescapable contradiction. Here he stands his ground and again repeats that this position is incompatible with what was originally agreed upon (heretics are no different from pagans). Those baptized by Arian bishops should not be received, argues the Catholic, if that bishop has lost his episcopal powers, but this is precisely the Luciferian’s practice.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ For the whole speech, see *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 5.121–192.

³⁰⁹ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 121–130; I have modified the NRSV translation of 1 Samuel significantly.

³¹⁰ Neque enim fieri potest ut qui in baptisterio sanctus est sit apud altare peccator. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 6.205–6.

It is with untangling this problem that the rest of the first half of the dialogue is concerned. The Luciferian commences by quoting Acts 19:1–6,³¹¹ attempting to separate baptism into two distinct parts—the act of pouring water and the laying on of hands—citing Church custom as authority here for the first time,³¹² the point being that the Luciferians “complete” the baptism through the laying on of hands. The Orthodox again counters with his usual answer, that this line of argumentation is inconsistent with what they have already agreed upon. Again, the Luciferian replies by resorting to the stereotypical eristic mode of debate; he changes his original position, claiming that his sect should then accept neither the lay nor the bishops and thereby claiming victory for himself. The Orthodox censures him for his sophistic tactics,³¹³ condemning, in general, every Christian writer who, like Aristotle, prefers delighting the ears of his listeners over drinking the sweet draughts of Scripture.³¹⁴ “Christians,” he says, echoing imagery from Minucius Felix’ *Octavius*, “who participate in this sort of dialogue are like small children who mimic their opponents when they fight, repeating every word that they say.”³¹⁵

There is yet one final argument to be made before the Luciferian experiences his epiphany, and surrender is conceded, an argument about intentionality. The lay person who receives baptism from the Arian, the Luciferian argues, *believes* that the baptism received is

³¹¹ In this passage a number of persons previously baptized by John the Baptist are rebaptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” and Paul lays hands upon them.

³¹² Nam multa et alia quae per traditionem in Ecclesiis observantur, auctoritatem sibi scriptae legis usurpauerunt. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 8.335–37.

³¹³ Sed dum amorem contradicendi sequeris, a quaestionum lineis excidisti, more quorundam loquacium potius quam facundorum, qui cum disputare nesciant, tamen litigare non desinunt. *ibid.* 11.411–15.

³¹⁴ Cf. [Orthodoxus dixit:] Accedit ad hoc quod Ariana haeresis magis cum saeculi sapientia facit et argumentationum riuos de Aristotelicis fontibus mutuatur. *ibid.* 11.429–431.

³¹⁵ Igitur, paruulorum inter se certantium ritu, quicquid dixeris, dicam: affirmabis, affirmabo, negabis, negabo! *ibid.* 431–33. This statement might be a subtle allusion to the frame of Minucius Felix’ *Octavius*, where Caecilius, Octavius, and Minucius witness a number of young boys on the beach skipping stones into the sea as a competitive game (cf. *Octavius*, 3.5–6). This game serves as a symbol of the debate between Octavius and Caecilius that will also take place next to the sea later in the text. Jerome clearly alludes to the *Octavius* at the conclusion of the *Altercatio* (cf. *Altercatio*, 28.1010–11, and *Octavius*, 40.1).

correct and therefore can be forgiven for his fault.³¹⁶ He or she is the unwilling victim of the nefarious state that the Arian bishops occupy. This critical move in the Luciferian's argumentation is the catalyst that causes the superstructure of the dialogue to transform, and its connection to the historical background of the Luciferian Schism, particularly the Council of Ariminum, is certainly intentional.

The Second half of the *Altercatio* (γυμναστικός)

The irony (or hypocrisy as Jerome would have it) in the Luciferian's statement that the unwitting ignorance of the laity is sufficient for treating them mercifully is great. As the Orthodox points out, or perhaps *Jerome* points out, in his criticism of this position, the erroneous arguments contained in this statement have both historical and rhetorical implications. First, the Luciferian's claim that the lay should be forgiven because of their ignorance should also be applied to the bishops at Ariminum who ignorantly support a creed that they *believed* was orthodox. In fact, Jerome will emphasize the bishops' ignorance and their repentance at their mistake later in the dialogue.³¹⁷ Second, the logical error in believing that even an ignorant layperson can receive baptism from a pagan bishop (since a heretic is none other than a pagan) betrays the Luciferian's inability to converse with the Orthodox as an equal. The manifestation of this inequality is then represented *rhetorically* in the dialogue coinciding with the shift from the antagonistic form of the dialogue to the pedagogical, the Orthodox becoming the *magister*, the Luciferian the *discipulus*.³¹⁸ Because of the profound importance of this moment for the dialogue as a whole, it merits quotation in full.

³¹⁶ Luciferianus dixit: Sed laico ideo ignoscendum est, quia Ecclesiam Dei putans, simpliciter accessit et iuxta fidem suam credens baptizatus est. *ibid.* 12.437–39.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

³¹⁸ Uerum hoc penitus absurdum est, ut discipulus ad magistrum uadens ante sit artifex quam doceatur, ut modo ab idolorum ueneratione conuersus, melius nouerit Christum quam ille qui doceat...Ridicula penitus assertio, ante

Luciferian: Just before I asked you not to speak cleverly (philosophically) but simply (Christianly) with me.

Orthodox: Do you want to learn, or are you disputing with me?

Luciferian: Certainly I am disputing with you because I am asking you for the reason for your action.

Orthodox: If you dispute, then I have already given you my response, "I accept bishops from the Arians for the same reason that you accept the baptized." If you want to learn, join my ranks! An opponent is defeated; a student is instructed!

Luciferian: I cannot become a student before I hear what the teacher teaches!

Orthodox: Because you turn your back in retreat, and you want to be "taught" by me so as to have a fresh opponent, I shall "teach" you in the same spirit. We agree in our faith; we agree that heretics should be received. Might we also agree in agreement?

Luciferian: This isn't teaching; this is making an argument!

Orthodox: Because you seek peace with a shield, I hide my sword in a branch of olive.

Luciferian: I give up. I raise my hands in defeat. I yield. You've won. But because I have surrendered, I ask the reason for the oath you compelled me to swear.

Luciferian: Iam et superius rogavi ut non philosophice mecum sed Christiane loquaris.

Orthodox: Discere uis an contendis?

Luciferian: Utique contendo, qui facti tui a te quaero rationem!

Orthodox: Si contendis, iam tibi responsum est. Eadem enim ratione ab Arianis recipio episcopum qua tu recipis baptizatum. Si discere cupis, in meam aciem transgredere! Aduersarius enim uincitur, discipulus docetur!

Luciferian: Non possum ante esse discipulus quam magistrum audiam praedicantem!

Orthodox: Quoniam tergiuersaris, et sic a me uis doceri ut aduersarium in integro habeas, tuo animo te docebo. Consentimus in fide, consentimus in haereticis recipiendis, consentiamus et in conuentu!

Luciferian: Hoc non est docere, sed argumentari!

Orthodox: Quia tu pacem cum scuto petis, et nos oliuae ramum gladio inserimus.

Luciferian: En tollo manus, cedo, uicisti. Uerum cum arma deponam, sacramenti, in quo me iurare compellis, quaero rationem.³¹⁹

quemquam de fide disputare quam credere, ante mysterium scire quam initiatus sit, aliter de Deo sentire baptizantem et aliter baptizatum! bid. 445–48, 461–464.

³¹⁹ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 14.501–521.

This remarkable exchange, perhaps responding directly to the writings of Lucifer himself,³²⁰ immediately begs the question of the plausibility that the intractable Luciferian would willingly submit and accept defeat. This is a useful question for thinking about the controversial dialogue as a whole, the *Altercatio* included. The simple answer is that it is implausible, but this departure from the reality of debate shows what the literary form of the dialogue can accomplish (and what real debate sometimes cannot).³²¹ On the other hand, the adoption of a pedagogical mode of dialogue is not unusual. In fact, the movement made by the two interlocutors in this passage to adopt the roles of master and disciple and abandon those of combative adversaries is a trope found in other extant dialogues, rhetorical treatises, and even transcripts of recorded debates. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these two modes are subdivisions of Plato's dialogues found in Diogenes Laertius.³²² Similar subdivisions can also be found in Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations*, which was translated by Boethius. In this treatise, Boethius claims, via Aristotle, that there are four types of disputations, the didactic (*doctrinales*), the dialectical (*dialecticae*), the experimental (*temptativuae*), and the eristic (*litigiosae*).³²³ Of greatest interest is how Boethius describes the didactic arguments, especially the student's state of mind, "Didactic arguments are those that reason from the principles appropriate to each branch of learning and not from the opinions of the respondent—for the learner must believe (*oportet enim credere eum qui discit*)."³²⁴ This is precisely what the Orthodox interlocutor presses his opponent to do: to throw

³²⁰ Language such as "Consentimus in fide, consentimus in haereticis recipiendis, consentiamus et in conuentu!" of Lucifer of Cagliari's extant works, especially *De non conueniendo cum haereticis*. See also below.

³²¹ This will be explored further below in the context of Augustine's *Collatio cum Maximino*.

³²² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 3.48–51.

³²³ Sunt ergo disputationum genera quatuor, doctrinales, dialecticae, temptativuae, litigiosae. *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, 165a38–165b1. Ἔστι δὴ τῶν ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι λόγων τέτταρα γένη, διδασκαλικοὶ καὶ διαλεκτικοὶ καὶ πειραστικοὶ καὶ ἐριστικοί. *On Sophistical Refutations*, 165a39–165b1.

³²⁴ Doctrinales quidam quae ex propriis principiis cuiusque disciplinae et non ex his quae respondentis uidentur syllogizant (oportet enim credere eum qui discit). *ibid.* διδασκαλικοὶ μὲν οἱ ἐκ τῶν οἰκείων ἀρχῶν ἐκάστου μαθήματος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἀποκρινομένου δοξῶν συλλογιζόμενοι (δεῖ γὰρ πιστεῦειν τὸν μανθάνοντα). *ibid.*

up his hands and surrender so that true learning might take place. Opponents are conquered, but disciples are instructed (*Aduersarius enim uincitur, discipulus docetur*). Just as it was absurd to believe that the uninitiated layperson was more knowledgeable than the bishop baptizing him or her, the same is true for the student to claim superiority over his teacher. The Luciferian's argument, "*non possum ante esse discipulus quam magistrum audiam praedicantem*," is therefore nonsensical. He must submit and put his faith, as Aristotle and Boethius claim, in his teacher before he can begin to understand. This is not to say, of course, that Jerome was aware of Boethius' translation, which postdated his own death, but only that he is positioning himself within a long-established rhetorical mode, namely didactic discourse where there are clearly defined "teachers" and students," which is succinctly expressed in Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations*.

Furthermore, other contemporary controversial dialogues and even actual recorded debates also laud the value of the pedagogical method of discourse (if only sarcastically in the recorded debates), and what is more, they find evidence for this strategy in scripture itself, *Nisi credideritis, non intellegitis* (Isaiah 7:9; cf. Boethius' *oportet enim credere eum qui discit*). In fact, this verse becomes almost a motto in the dialogues. When explaining the reasoning behind Christ's incarnation to the philosopher Apollonius, Zacchaeus exhorts him,

[Zacchaeus the Christian said:] "*If you do not believe, neither will you understand*" [Is 7:9]. Only then, if you raise your mind, which is wandering in the shadows, to the light of higher understanding so that you believe that whatever God wills is also possible, you will discover that He is not forced through necessity—insofar as there is necessity in Him—of coming to earth, or rather because He is omnipresent, of appearing visibly in a man; instead you will understand with your reason that [the incarnation] was His will."

[Zaccheus Christianus:] *Nisi credideritis, nec intellegitis*. Proinde, si animum in tenebris oberrantem ad superni intellectus lumen erexeris, ut Deum quaecumque uelit credas et posse, ueniendi eidem ad terras, immo

quia ubique semper est, in homine ut uisibiliter appareret, necessitatem quidem, quantum in ipso est, non deprehendes, sed cum ratione fuisse intelleges uoluntatem.³²⁵

Evagrius makes the same claim, when Theophilus begins his debate with Simon, his Jewish interlocutor; otherwise, he says, their dialogue will never achieve anything.

Theophilus: Christ's saying is sacrosanct, and if you desire to understand it, you should first believe and only then can you understand. Isaiah, in fact, refutes you when he says, "*If you do not believe, neither will you understand*" [Is 7:9]. Beyond any doubt, the God whom we know and worship is omnipotent, invisible, immeasurable, and incomprehensible. And knowing this, we profess Christ God, the Son of God.

Theophilus: Sacratissima Christi uox est, quam si tu uolueris cognoscere, oportet te primum credere et tunc demum poteris intellegere. Esaias enim redarguit te dicens: *Nisi credideritis, non intellegetis*. Indubitanter igitur Deum omnipotentem, inuisibilem, immensum, inconprehensibilem nouimus et scimus et colimus, deinceps Christum Deum et Dei Filium profiteamur.³²⁶

Adamantius also states that it is *fides* upon which every honest discussion should be based,³²⁷ and Augustine often makes this point in his dialogues, both in the Cassiciacum dialogues and in the later dialogues.³²⁸ This reasoning even persists into the Latin dialogue of the Middle Ages. Anselm of Canterbury frames the methodology of his dialogue and magnum opus, *Cur Deus Homo*, in similar terms in the dedication of this work to Pope Urban II.³²⁹

Such statements are also found within the transcripts of actual debates recorded by notaries. One example comes from the public debate between the aged Augustine and the wily

³²⁵ *Consultationes Zacchei christiani et Apollonii philosophi*, 1.7.

³²⁶ Evagrius, *Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani*, 1.25.

³²⁷ Adamantius dixit: Quicunque amatores sunt ueritatis et honestati morum student omneque aeuum, quo in huius mundi luce uersantur, emendationis uitae firmare cupiunt institutis, non aliter poterunt, quae proba et perfecta, obtinere, nisi firma et stabili fide in deum semper intenti sint, seque ab eo indesinenter non ambigant intueri. *Dialogus Adamantii*, 1.1.

³²⁸ Cf. *Contra Academicos*, 3.20.43; *De Magistro*, 11; and *De Libero Arbitrio*, 1.2.11.

³²⁹ Et ut alia taceam quibus sacra pagina nos ad investigandam rationem inuitat: ubi dicit: "*nisi credideritis, non intellegetis*," aperte nos monet intentionem ad intellectum extendere, cum docet qualiter ad illum debeamus proficere. *Cur Deus Homo*, commendatio.

adherent to Homoian Arianism, Maximinus, which took place in Hippo in 427 or 428.³³⁰ As we are told by Possidius, Augustine's biographer, a certain Maximinus of Carthage arrived in Hippo with a number of Gauls, and because of public demand and the presence of a number of important persons, Maximinus and Augustine debated publicly while a notary recorded what each party said (*quid singulae adseruerint partes scriptum est*).³³¹ This lengthy debate is unusual because of the overall negative performance by Augustine. When the North African bishop was bested by Maximinus, Possidius reports that news (or the "rumor" as he would have it) of this victory quickly spread around Carthage upon Maximinus' return there.³³² Partially responsible for this "defeat" was the filibuster-like tactic of Maximinus (*de sua multa in conlatione loquacitate*). About halfway through the debate, which probably lasted for about two hours, Maximinus embarked on a nearly hour-long rhetorical answer to Augustine's previous question, only finishing speaking when daylight began to wane and therefore preventing Augustine from making any response.

Augustine's frustration at this can be seen in the subscription of the text, where the notary includes a dictation given to him by Augustine at the debate's conclusion, "Your (i.e. Maximinus') extreme prolixity exhausted the time during which I could give a response, and now so little daylight remains that what you said cannot be reread to me."³³³ This text certainly deserves much more attention than the scanty discussion it has received in scholarship at present,³³⁴ but only the inclusion, albeit sarcastic and caustic, of the didactic method of

³³⁰ Roland Teske, *Arianism and Other Heresies*, 175.

³³¹ *Vita Augustini*, 17.7.

³³² Cf. Sed quoniam ille haereticus, de Hippone rediens ad Carthaginem, de sua multa in conlatione loquacitate victorem se de ipsa conlatione recessisse iactavit. *ibid.*

³³³ Scis autem sermonem tuum prolixissimum occupasse nobis tempora quibus respondere possemus, et tantum diei remanisse, quantum omnino non sufficeret, ut ea quae dixisti, saltem nobis relegerentur.

³³⁴ It has recently come to my attention that Roland J. Teske, S.J. has provided a short introduction as well as a translation of this text in *The Works of Saint Augustine: Arianism and Other Heresies*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1995, pp. 175–227.

argumentation is relevant here. Over the course of the debate, Maximinus taunts Augustine to explain the logic of his Trinitarian theology:

[Maximinus:] Go on, I beg you, have me as your student. Profess about the Son, that the Son is unborn, that he is without origin. If he is equal [to the Father], he is certainly just [as the Father is]. If this is so, he is certainly unborn. If unborn, certainly no human even saw him. Give testimony; go on. Teach me; I shall be your student.”

[Maximinus dixit:] Dic, rogo, habe me discipulum. prosequere de filio, quod filius sit innatus, quod sit sine origine. si aequalis, utique talis: si talis, utique innatus: si innatus, utique nec uidit eum quisquam hominum. da testimonia, et instrue, et doce, et habebis me discipulum.³³⁵

In response to his suggestion, Augustine criticizes Maximinus’ prolixity, which, he says, is inconsistent with his desire to be a student (*sed si uis discipulus, noli esse multiloquens*).³³⁶ That Augustine and his opponents are disingenuous in adopting the *personae* of master and disciple is of little importance. This fact simply highlights the differences between the reality of actual debates, which were often hostile in nature,³³⁷ and the idealistic cordiality found in many of the dialogues. This disparity also highlights one of the benefits that the literary dialogue has over the public debate: literary dialogue, because it is composed by a single author, facilitates the uninterrupted exposition of the teachings or doctrine of a given position. Augustine himself lucidly makes this point in the *Soliloquia*. Literary dialogues (or in this case, literary monologues), he claims, fortuitously combine two usually contradictory realities: question and answer, which is the best way to arrive at the truth (*cum enim neque melius quaeri ueritas possit, quam interrogando et respondendo*), and the freedom from shame and anger, which almost always occurs when someone is refuted (*quem non pudeat conuinci disputantem*).³³⁸ The

³³⁵ Scis autem sermonem tuum prolixissimum occupasse nobis tempora quibus respondere possemus, et tantum diei remansisse, quantum omnino non sufficeret, ut ea quae dixisti, saltem nobis relegerentur. PL 42:719.13.

³³⁶ Puto me tibi ad omnia respondisse. Sed si uis discipulus, noli esse multiloquens. PL 42:724.6–8.

³³⁷ Cf. Tertullian’s description of a public debate between himself and a Jew, *Aduersus Iudaeos*, 1.1.

³³⁸ Cf. *Soliloquia*, 2.14.

controversial dialogues, according to Augustine, *can* have their cake and eat it too, since they simulate the “best way of discourse” and avoid the major pitfall of this mode of discourse simultaneously.

The shift in argumentation, therefore, halfway through the *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* fits well within the context of fourth century literature, rhetorical theory, and extant records of actual public debates, and the rest of the dialogue proceeds according to the rules delineated by Boethius above: “didactic arguments are those that reason from the principles appropriate of each branch of learning and not from the opinions of the respondent—for the learner must believe.”³³⁹ Rather than being coerced to respond to the Luciferian’s eristic attacks as before, the Orthodox interlocutor can expound his own position, while the Luciferian asks relevant questions to clarify it. Reason and concord, it seems, enter the stage as the contentious language of hunting, athletics, and warfare makes its exit. “I request,” says the Luciferian, “that you explain to me—not as an opponent (*aduersario*) but as a student (*discipulo*)—why the Church receives those coming from the Arians.”³⁴⁰ He only seeks the reason (*quaero rationem*).³⁴¹ The rhetorical and literary background concerning this mode of discourse is useful for understanding why Jerome composed the *Altercatio* as a dialogue and chose to structure it in this way. As I shall suggest, it was to promote reconciliation, understanding, and inclusion. This will become clearer after a brief discussion of the dialogue’s conclusion.

The lion’s share of the dialogue’s second half considers the circumstances of the Council of Ariminum (359). Constantius’ role in calling this council is highlighted. As discussed above, Constantius was viewed mostly negatively in his efforts to guide the theological debates of his

³³⁹ See quotation above for the Latin.

³⁴⁰ Sed quaeso te ut mihi omnem causam quare ab Arianis uenientes Ecclesia recipiat, non quasi aduersario, sed quasi discipulo explices. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 16.599–601.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 14.504–5.

times because he was understood to be an Arian-sympathizer. This perspective is particularly true for Lucifer himself, who composed a number of caustic works against Constantius.³⁴² Such an attitude must be true for Jerome as well, so it is significant that Jerome explicitly downplays Constantius' heretical leanings, emphasizing instead his desire *for reconciliation* among all Christians (cf. *unitatem* and *totius mundi communione* below). The most explicit example of this generous characterization of the emperor is the following:

For at that time, nothing seemed to God's servant to be so pious and correct as to pursue unity and not to be separated from communion with the whole world. This was especially the case because the exposition [of the creed] ostensibly did not offer anything blasphemous.

Nam, illo tempore, nihil tam pium, nihil tam conueniens³⁴³ seruo Dei uidebatur, quam unitatem sequi et a totius mundi communione non scindi, praesertim cum superficies expositionis nihil sacrilegum praeferret.³⁴⁴

After this brief reference to Constantius, the emperor is removed from the scene (probably for reasons just decribed). The Orthodox's attentions are then drawn to making two points: first, he argues for the reacceptance of the bishops through patristic writings, using the acta of the Council of Nicea, and a description of the events of the Council of Ariminum as examples; and second, he lays the blame of the Luciferian view on only a few individuals, namely Lucifer of Cagliari and Hilary the Deacon (not to be confused with Hilary of Poitiers), both of whom were dead by the time the *Altercatio* was composed.³⁴⁵ This accomplishes two goals at once. He opens the door to his living opponents for rejoining the church through his focus on the two deceased

³⁴² This will be discussed more below, but cf. *Superatum te, imperator, a dei seruis ex omni cum conspexisses parte, dixisti passum te ac pati a nobis contra monita sacrarum scripturarum contumeliam; dicis nos insolentes extitisse circa te quem honorari decuerit. De non parcendo in deum delinquentibus*, incipit.

³⁴³ The frequency with which Jerome uses forms of *conuenio* (which can mean both "to gather/meet with" and "to be proper/correct") should probably be read as a response to the title of one of Lucifer's most caustic works, *De non conueniendo cum haeticis*.

³⁴⁴ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 605–609.

³⁴⁵ For Lucifer, see Krüger, *Lucifer*, 55–7. For Hilary, see *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 21.793–801.

persons, and he provides rational arguments that emphasize the mistake made at Ariminum and the church's tradition of showing mercy on the lapsed.

Using the Luciferian's (or rather, the "former Luciferian's")³⁴⁶ questions as a guide, the Orthodox first relates the proceedings of the Councils of Nicea and Ariminum. First, he claims that the insertion of the *homoian* formula, "*Si quis dixerit creaturam Filium Dei ut sunt ceterae creaturae, anathema sit*,"³⁴⁷ was generally misunderstood by the majority at the council and was the nefarious *uenenum*, he claims, injected by only a few.³⁴⁸ Moreover, after this problem was realized, many of those at this aforementioned council publicly repented and reaffirmed their belief in the Catholic faith, which is what they thought the Ariminum formula represented.³⁴⁹ Because of this misunderstanding, those who signed at Ariminum, the Orthodox claims, were not "really" Arians, and the Luciferians are not justified in shunning them, destroying the union (*concordia*) of the church unnecessarily.³⁵⁰ To bolster the adoption of such a policy of reacceptance, the Orthodox turns to the proceedings of the Council of Nicea, where eight bishops were reaccepted into the church under similar circumstances.³⁵¹ Jerome therefore mitigates the culpability of the lapsed and emphasizes the church's history of treating them leniently for the sake of concord. The Orthodox finally turns to the authority of the patristic fathers, particularly the works of Cyprian. As mentioned above, Cyprian's position was complicated, but the

³⁴⁶ Cf. Luciferianus dixit: Et fere omnes *nostri*, immo *iam non mei*, hoc quasi ariete in disceptationibus utuntur. *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 16.596–7. The language "of my former sect" is common post-conversion language in the Controversial dialogues.

³⁴⁷ See above, under "the Council of Ariminum (359)."

³⁴⁸ *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi*, 17–8.

³⁴⁹ *ibid.* 19.

³⁵⁰ Cf. Cur [Luciferiani] damnarent eos qui Ariani non erant? Cur Ecclesiam scinderent in concordia fidei? Cur denique bene credentes obstinatione sua facerent Arianos? *ibid.* 19.723–5.

³⁵¹ Nam, cum in synodo Nicaena, quae propter Arii perfidiam congregata est, octo episcopos Arianos susceptos sciamus. *ibid.* 726–7.

Orthodox argues that a close reading of Cyprian's works, specifically *Epistles* 72 and 73, reveals that his position on the lapsed was consistent with his own.³⁵²

After this, the Orthodox concludes the dialogue with a powerful image, an image that is both effective for underscoring Hilary the Deacon's personal hypocrisy but for fostering for forgiveness and reconciliation. Hilary, Jerome relates, was guilty of the very crimes for which he censured the church, namely accepting those who had been baptized by Manichaeans and by Ebionites. What is more, Hilary himself was ordained by those whom he then rejected, meaning that he should ostracize and condemn himself. In order to articulate this hypocrisy in a powerful way, the Orthodox uses prosopopoeia, assuming the voice of the church herself. Responding to the Luciferian's claim at the beginning of the dialogue that the church has become a brothel (*lupanar*),³⁵³ she says:

But if you, who were born from my womb, if you, who were nourished from the milk of my breasts, now raise your sword against me, then return to me what I gave you and be, if you can, a Christian in some other way. I may be a courtesan, but I am still your mother. Do I not preserve the chastity of a single bed? Such was I when you were conceived. Do I now commit adultery with Arius? Did I before with Praxias, with Ebio, and with Novatus? Now that you are an adult you embrace them and receive them into your mother's house. I don't know why only one adulterer offends you.

Si uero in sinu meo natus, si uberum meorum lacte nutritus, aduersum me gladium leuas, redde quod dedi et esto, si potes, aliter Christianus. Meretrix sum, sed tamen mater tua sum. Non seruo unius tori castitatem? Talis eram quando conceptus es. Cum Ario adulterium committo? Feci et ante cum Praxeas, cum Ebione, cum Nouato! Hos amplexaris, hos in matris tuae domum iam adultus recipis. Nescio quid te unus adulter offendit!³⁵⁴

Cicero is correct in his judgment about prosopopoeia—it does add excitement and diversity to oratory. The speech is also successful in articulating the hypocrisy of the deceased Luciferian

³⁵² *ibid.*, 23–27.

³⁵³ *ibid.*, 1.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 26.968–975.

Hilary and his ilk more generally, but it is more than that. By personifying the church as a woman, a mother, and a courtesan, Jerome is able to inscribe his argument within the context of the gospels, namely the “Woman Caught in Adultery” (John 7:53–8:11). By using this rhetorical device, Jerome is able to criticize the Luciferians with the same words that Christ criticized the scribes and the Pharisees, “*Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her*” [John 8:7]. The conclusion of the dialogue, therefore, contains a message of censure but also a call for reconciliation. Instead of the hardline attitudes exhibited by the Luciferians, Jerome (surprisingly) is the voice of compromise and reason.

To conclude, it is useful to summarize what has been discussed in this chapter and how it advances our understanding of the question, “Why Dialogue?” I observed at the conclusion of the previous chapter that close readings of Jerome’s *Altercatio* and Maxentius’ *Contra Nestorianos* would be useful for showing how the elements of the literary dialogue discussed in Chapter 1 can be mobilized by individual authors of controversial dialogues to make specific doctrinal claims. This is certainly true, but more interesting is the contextualization of these arguments within the historical discourse of the heresy itself. In the case of the Luciferian Schism, the semi-heretical other was an opponent of dialogue, infamous for his intractable intolerance and unwillingness to forgive. In response to this situation, I argue that we can read Jerome’s *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* as a conscious response to solve the problems posed by this vocal group of schismatics. In addition to the philosophical content contained within the dialogue, the very form of the dialogue makes an essential contribution towards its argument. Jerome combines two well established modes of dialogue in a historically significant way, emphasizing in his Orthodox’s pedagogical demeanor not only *what arguments* Orthodox Christians should use against their Luciferian opponents, but also *how* they should make their

arguments. This is not an insignificant point. The literary form of the dialogue successfully makes Jerome's argument in a way that other literary forms cannot.

Chapter 4: John Maxentius, *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*

Omnes, qui Catholicam sectamur fidem, optamus et cupimus damnari
haeresim, homines emendari, aut certe, si in errore uoluerint permanere,
non nostram culpam esse qui scripsimus, sed eorum qui mendacium
praetulerint ueritati.

Jerome, *Dialogi Contra Pelagianos*, Prologue, 22–7

τὸ γὰρ ἀληθὲς οὐδέποτε ἐλέγχεται.

Plato, *Gorgias*, 473b10

The next dialogue to which I shall turn is the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*³⁵⁵ composed by the Scythian monk named John Maxentius, who is also sometimes known as John of Tomis (Tomis is the seat of the episcopal see of Scythia Minor). Like Jerome's *Altercatio* discussed in the previous chapter, this dialogue also contains a fictional discussion that negotiates and defends an orthodox position against a heretical position.³⁵⁶ In this case, John Maxentius ostensibly defends the Chalcedonian position, along with the theologies expressed in Pope Leo I's *Tome* and the infamous *Twelve Anathemas* of Cyril of Alexandria, against Nestorius, who was anathematized at the Council of Ephesus (431), and against the groups in the East associated with Nestorianism such as the so-called Monophysites.

This is the position defended, as John Maxentius and his Scythian companions understand it, but it is far from how this theological position was received among their contemporaries. In fact, neither of the two sides of the ongoing Christological debate—the pro-Leo I and pro-Chalcedonian West, and the anti-Chalcedonian and pro-Cyrrillian East—accepted

³⁵⁵ Throughout this chapter, I shall refer to this text as *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, *Dialogus*, and *Contra Nestorianos* interchangeably.

³⁵⁶ Again, I avoid Orthodox with a capital O. As will be seen, the orthodoxy of the *Contra Nestorianos* fluctuated.

the arguments found in the *Dialogus* as orthodox. For example, Emperor Justin I (reigned 518–27) even warns Pope Hormisdas (reigned 514–523) about these unruly Scythian monks (*inquieti homines*) as they were departing from Constantinople to Rome seek support for their theological doctrine.³⁵⁷ Such reception of the Scythian monks is mostly representative, though there are exceptions, notably with the North African bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe who was then in exile in Sardinia.³⁵⁸ In retrospect, this was not unexpected, as the paradoxical concept of divine suffering was perhaps the thorniest theological issue of the fifth and early sixth centuries, and the unapologetic Theopaschite Theology (as it is now called) of the Scythians was deeply unsettling to many. Although in their own time John Maxentius and his companions were mostly unsuccessful in their bold endeavors to lobby for this position before the Constantinopolitan court and the Pope in Rome, their position was ultimately adopted in modified form at the Second Council of Constantinople (553) a few decades later.³⁵⁹

The pivotal role that John Maxentius and his cohort played in this debate has only recently been the focus of study,³⁶⁰ as most previous scholarship has seen the Scythian monks as not more than a curiosity of the early sixth century. Pereira's dissertation is notable for its discussion of the fairly large literary output of John Maxentius, though absent from his thesis is a

³⁵⁷ Cf. *Sunt autem nomina eorum* [sc. Scythian monks] Achilles, Iohannes, Leontius et Mauritius. haec nostra est maxima sollicitudinis causa, ne unitas, quam uester labor oratioque perfecit, per inquietos homines dissipetur, sperantes in deo, quia, si quid est quod adhuc a totius orbis pace dissentiat, hoc quoque orationibus uestris apostolicae sedis comunioni societur. *Epistula* 187.3–4, CSEL 35.2: 644–5.

³⁵⁸ For reasons still unknown, Justin I composed another letter shortly after the aforementioned one in which he reverses his position on the Scythian monks, advising Pope Hormisdas to accept the Scythians warmly. Cf. *unde petimus ut, si est possibile, celerrimo dato responso et satisfactis religiosis monachis Iohannem et Leontium ad nos remittatis. nisi enim precibus et diligentia uestra ista quaestio soluta fuerit, ueremur, ne non possit pax sanctorum ecclesiarum prouenire.* *Epistula* 191.3, CSEL 35.2:648. The Scythian monks, however, were placed under house arrest in Rome until the matter could be further discussed.

³⁵⁹ See the discussion of this below.

³⁶⁰ Two dissertations have been written about the Scythian monks and their Theopaschite theology. Matthew Joseph Pereira, "Reception, Interpretation, and Doctrine in the Sixth Century: John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks." Dissertation, Columbia University, 2015; and David R. Maxwell, "Christology and Grace in the Sixth-Century Latin West: The Theopaschite Controversy." PhD Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2003.

detailed analysis of the longest and, as I would contend, most interesting text from this corpus, the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. Dialogues, in fact, represent a significant portion of his literary output,³⁶¹ and the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* is of great interest for two reasons. First, it is the longest and most complete discussion of the complex theological positions of the Scythian monks. It is, therefore, a unique and historically significant philosophical document that demands attention, which it has not yet received. Second, and almost completely overlooked in previous scholarship, it adopts a method of argumentation markedly different from the rest of the Scythians' rhetoric. It almost completely eschews citations from the Church Fathers—Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo I, and Proclus of Constantinople are of greatest importance to the Scythians—and the authority of previous Church Councils. Instead, its focus rests on syllogistic, logical argument, and like Jerome's *Altercatio*, what few references to authority that it contains are reserved for the end of the dialogue.

The circumstances and location of the composition of the dialogue are still unclear (a good argument can be made for both Constantinople and Rome),³⁶² but as I shall suggest, the purpose of the dialogue within the Christological controversy of the early sixth century is clear. In a controversy that was as much philosophical as political, that is, both *what* was said and *who* said it mattered, the dialogic form and the mode of argumentation associated with it served the Scythian program well. The dialogue deftly dodges partisan politics by simply avoiding them. Its focus is reserved for logical argument and interpretation of important biblical passages associated with the status of Christ. Furthermore, the insertion of the voice of the opposition, which is one of the greatest benefits of the dialogic form, is significant. Not only does it provide

³⁶¹ For a brief discussion of each, see my catalogue in the previous chapter.

³⁶² The reason for this is that it is unclear whether John Maxentius remained in Constantinople while his companions travelled to Rome or remained behind in Constantinople.

the opportunity for conversation and clarification between the interlocutors, but it also includes, surprisingly, a show of respect (though qualified) to the viewpoint of the so-called Nestorian. Like Jerome's *Altercatio* and Minucius Felix' *Octavius*, reconciliation, truth, and mutual respect are idealized if not consistently practiced throughout the dialogue.

In order to give a full reading of this text, the theological and political background of the dialogue must first be briefly sketched. I shall focus on the theological decisions of two councils, namely the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451), giving a slightly extended treatment for the former council because it includes the person of Nestorius himself—the namesake of the dialogue in question. Finally, I will briefly discuss two later theological problems that were both significant to the Scythians' philosophical program but also had a detrimental political impact on their reception by the imperial and papal authorities. These comprise the Acacian Schism and the controversy surrounding an addition to the Trisagion hymn.

The Historical Background for *Contra Nestorianos*

The Council of Ephesus (431)

As with all Church controversy, the Christological debates that occurred across the Mediterranean world (and even into the Sassanian Empire) of the fifth and sixth centuries cannot be attributed to any single isolated factor. Real and imagined philosophical discrepancies, large-scale political partisanship, individual friendships and enmities, linguistic barriers, and plain ignorance all had a role to play. For the Theopaschite theological controversy and its authors, the first relevant historical event is the Council of Ephesus (431). This story begins with the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Constantinople, Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Antioch, the

latter of whom is ostensibly the unfortunate namesake of John Maxentius' dialogue.³⁶³ Cyril, who was vetted for the patriarchate (or papacy as the patriarchate of Alexandria was often called) from early in his career by his infamous uncle Theophilus, was named patriarch in 412,³⁶⁴ and Nestorius was consecrated as patriarch of Constantinople in 428.

Following in the footsteps of some of his predecessors, notably John Chrysostom,³⁶⁵ the transition from Antioch to Constantinople proved to be difficult for Nestorius, particularly with regard to the complexity of political sensitivities in the capital city. His destruction of the only remaining Arian church early in his episcopate is indicative of his inability or unwillingness to compromise theology with politics—the destruction of this building had significant ramifications, angering the “barbarians” campaigning in the western empire, and souring Constantinople's relations with German mercenaries.³⁶⁶ Most notably, Nestorius created a powerful enemy in the greatly influential Augusta Pulcheria, who was partially responsible for his eventual downfall at Ephesus. Their disagreement originated from Nestorius' practice of the liturgy. The *Augusta Imperatrix* had been in the practice of receiving the sacrament in the sanctuary from the patriarch himself, a privilege usually granted only to the emperor. Whether from ignorance or by design, Nestorius refused to administer the sacrament to Pulcheria, and when confronted about this, he further roused her ire by publicly questioning her professed virginity. He accused her of having numerous lovers and even removed her robe, which had been

³⁶³ This problem with the appellation “Nestorian” is well-known from antiquity onwards and will be discussed in more detail below. For a succinct and helpful discussion of this problem, see Sebastian Brock, “The ‘Nestorian’ Church: A Lamentable Misnomer,” in *The Church of the East: Life and Thought*. J. F. Coakley and K. Parry (=*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78:3): 23–35.

³⁶⁴ For a thorough discussion of Cyril's early career and his literary output, see John Anthony McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1–125.

³⁶⁵ Cyril and his uncle Theophilus were both present at the Synod of the Oak (403), where Chrysostom was deposed as patriarch of Constantinople. Cyril's position on Chrysostom's exile and his subsequent reputation, which was positive, was a complicated issue.

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 24.

used as an altar covering, from the sanctuary.³⁶⁷ His implication was clear—the Virgin Mary should not be honored with the robe of a promiscuous empress. Pulcheria, as will become clear, would not forget the slanders of Nestorius.

Given this political background, a theological problem arose among the monastic factions in Constantinople: what was the orthodox position for the epithets “Theotokos” (God-bearer) and “Anthropotokos” (human-bearer) for the Virgin Mary? The arena was set for what would ultimately become the major struggle between Cyril and Nestorius, which would only be settled at the Council of Ephesus. Nestorius, indicative of his Antiochene theology and his connection with Theodore of Mopsuestia, supported the term “Anthropotokos” and condemned the usage of “Theotokos.” This was, of course, met with strong resistance. Bishop Proclus, some of whose writings are preserved only via quotation in the corpus of the later writings of the Scythian monks, boldly repudiated Nestorius’ position during a homily just before Christmas in December 428, Nestorius himself being present. Proclus’ homily received great acclaim and embarrassed the patriarch. In response, Nestorius gave a series of homilies in support of his own position.³⁶⁸

What began as a local disagreement had now become a public issue across the entire Roman world. Marius Mercator, it seems, translated five of Nestorius’ sermons into Latin and sent them to the Archdeacon Leo, who would become Pope Leo the Great and whose *Tome* would become one of the most important Christological documents for the Council of Chalcedon and later for the Scythian monks. As the matter progressed, Pope Celestine, informed by the theological opinions of Leo and John Cassian, called a synod in Rome in 430 and anathematized Nestorius.

³⁶⁷ See Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 53–61, and McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 24–27.

³⁶⁸ McGuckin, *Cyril*, 25–33.

Turning to Egypt, Cyril's agents in Constantinople informed him of the proceedings of this synod, and the Alexandrian patriarch immediately began to publish and disseminate a number of writings against Nestorius and his teachings. The topic of contention was mostly the term "Theotokos," but in one of his three letters, Cyril introduced the infamous Twelve Chapters, which contained twelve anathemas, and to which he demanded Nestorius' assent. The most historically important and contentious was the twelfth and final anathema, which explicitly stated a novel position on divine suffering. What it meant for God to suffer had been a thorny theological issue that had been mostly bypassed in previous theological debates, but Cyril's public discussion of it brought it to the fore. It would not be wholly settled until the Second Council of Constantinople (553).³⁶⁹

Whoever does not confess that God the Word suffered according to the flesh, was crucified according to the flesh, tasted death according to the flesh, and became the first-born from the dead according to the fact that He is Life and the Giver of Life since He is God, let him be anathema.

Si quis non confitetur Deum Uerbum carne passum esse et carne crucifixum et mortem carne gustasse factumque primogenitum ex mortuis, secundum quod est et uita et uiuificator ut Deus, a[nathema] s[it].

Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον παθόντα σαρκὶ καὶ ἐσταυρωμένον σαρκὶ καὶ θανάτου γευσάμενον σαρκί, γεγονότα τε πρωτότοκον ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καθὼς ζωὴ τέ ἐστι καὶ ζωοποιὸς ὡς θεός, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.³⁷⁰

The negative reactions to this document encouraged Nestorius to think that he would be successful in any council called to discuss his reinstatement, shifting the negative attention of the hearing to Cyril's own orthodoxy. A council was called, but against Nestorius' wishes, the location of the council was changed from Constantinople to Ephesus. This ostensibly minor

³⁶⁹ *ibid.* 45–50.

³⁷⁰ *Epistula tertia Cyrilli ad Nestorium*, Anathema 12. This letter is preserved in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus. Giuseppe Alberigo et al., eds., *Conciliorum oecumenicorum Decreta*. Bologna: Instituto per le scienze religiose, 1973, third edition, pp. 59–61.

detail became a huge disadvantage to Nestorius. The change of venue was attributed to practical necessity: the abundance of grain in the hinterland of Ephesus would more easily feed the visitors than the already crowded city of Constantinople. But Pulcheria, it seems, finally found the opportunity for her revenge. Her influence seems to have been a significant factor in moving the council to Ephesus. For one, this city contained the most important Marian shrine in the empire at the time, which served to highlight the importance of “the Mother of God” in a debate about the terms “Theotokos” and “Anthropotokos.” Furthermore, this location neutralized Nestorius’ “home field advantage” in the capital city. From the beginning of the council, Nestorius was poorly received by the attendees, and Cyril was treated like a king. Nestorius was condemned, living the rest of his life in unhappy exile in monasteries in the east. The term “Theotokos” was upheld, which is recounted in the first half of Book I of the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*.³⁷¹

The Council of Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon was the humpty-dumpty moment for Christian theology in the Roman Empire: a fairly unified theological *concordia* was broken into pieces that could not be reassembled despite the efforts of many philosophers, bishops, and emperors.³⁷² John Maxentius’ *Contra Nestorianos* can be seen as one of these efforts, even one of the most successful of them.³⁷³ Because the significance of this council was monumental and has merited many book-length treatments, I shall restrict my focus here to two key points: the impact that the previous

³⁷¹ Cf. the reference to this in the *Contra Nestorianos*. Catholicus: Sed deum natum ex uirgine, etiam ille [sc. Nestorius] dixit, qui apud Ephesum condemnatus est, non quo uere et proprie natum confiteretur deum ex femina, sed propter unionem dei uerbi ad hominem factum, quem uirgo enixa est.

³⁷² I take this observation from Jack Tannous.

³⁷³ The Emperor Justinian, who corresponded with the Scythian monks before becoming emperor, successfully adopted their formula in the 530s to appease many of the anti-Chalcedonians. See Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 57f.

condemnation of Eutyches and Theodoret had on the Council of Chalcedon and the content of this statement of faith as promulgated by the council.³⁷⁴

After the Council of Ephesus in 431 where Nestorius was anathematized and ultimately sent into exile, there are two other important (and controversial) figures and two corresponding events of importance for the proceedings at Chalcedon: the trial of Eutyches at a synod in Constantinople in 448 and the so-called Latrocinium Council of 449. Eutyches was a priest from Constantinople who first distinguished himself at the First Council of Ephesus as a fervent opponent of Nestorius and his doctrinal position. However, over time Eutyches, as he was perceived both by his contemporaries and modern historians,³⁷⁵ overcompensated for his opponent's position of two natures by postulating the equally schismatic position that Christ had a single, fused nature after the incarnation, often called monophysitism.³⁷⁶ Eutyches was called to a synod in Constantinople to defend his position, and when his answers were not satisfactory, he was deposed and removed from the priesthood.

One year later, Theodosius II convened the Second Council of Ephesus, better known as the Latrocinium or Robber Council, over which Dioscurus of Alexandria presided. Two decisions that occurred at this meeting shaped the thinking at Chalcedon. First, Eutyches was surprisingly reinstated and absolved of wrongdoing while some of his opponents were condemned instead. Furthermore, Theodoret, who was dissuaded from attending the council, was

³⁷⁴ For a translation and commentary of the documents associated with the council, see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, trans. and eds. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*. Liverpool : Liverpool University Press, 2005–7. The bibliography on Chalcedon is vast. The classic is Aloys Gillmeier, S. J., *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume Two, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*. Pauline Allen & John Cawte, trans. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973. See also R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. London:SPCK, 1953.

³⁷⁵ A good example of this conceptualization of Nestorius and Eutyches found in Latin literature is Boethius' theological tractate, *Liber contra Eutychen et Nestorium*. E. K. Rand, *Der dem Boethius zugeschriebene Traktat de fide catholica. Jahrb. f. klass. Philol., Suppl.* xxvi (1901): 405–461.

³⁷⁶ See note above for Brock's article on "The Nestorian Church," for a discussion of terminology for monophysitism.

condemned *in absentia* by Dioscurus because of Theodoret's connections with Theodore of Mopsuestia (Nestorius' mentor) and Diodorus of Tarsus (Theodore's mentor).

Therefore, when the emperor Marcian convened the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the events of previous years were still fresh in mind, especially the alarming reversal that constituted the reinstatement of Eutyches, and the wording of the statement of faith can be read as most directly responding to the Eutychean position.³⁷⁷ Furthermore, despite Theodoret's presence at the Council of Chalcedon, the general attitude towards him was negative. The result of this apprehension about Theodoret meant a weakening of the importance of Antiochene theology (Theodoret was from Antioch) and an emphasis on Alexandrian (that is, Cyrillian) and Roman theology when forming the statement of faith.³⁷⁸ The portion of the statement pertaining to Christological concerns is the following:

All of us agree that we confess . . . one and the same Christ, the Son, Lord, only begotten, in two natures but understood to be unmingled, unchanged, indivisible, and inseparable—the respective differences of the natures are never absent because of the union but rather their individual properties remain intact, coexisting in one person and substance. We do not confess one who is partitioned and divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, unbegotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ just as the prophets taught about Him before, and Jesus Christ taught us, handing down to us the teaching of the Fathers.

. . . confiteri consonanter omnes docemus . . . unum eundemque Christum Filium Dominum unigenitum, in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter agnoscendum, nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unionem magisque salva proprietate utriusque naturae et in unam personam atque subsistentiam concurrente, non in duas personas partitum sive divisum, sed unum et eundem Filium unigenitum Deum Uerbum Dominum Iesum Christum, sicut ante prophetae de eo et ipse nos Iesus Christus erudiuit et patrum nobis symbolum tradidit.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Gray has an excellent summary of this, 7–16.

³⁷⁸ H. M. Diepen, *Les Trois Chapitres au Concile de Chalcédoine. Une étude de la christologie de l'Anatolie ancienne*. Oosterhout: Éditions de Saint-Michael, 1953, pp. 84–7.

³⁷⁹ Giuseppe Alberigo, *Concilia oecumenica et generalia Ecclesiae catholicae - Concilium Chalcedonense*. Bologna: Istituto per le scienze religiose, 1973. Editio tertia. It is worth noting that the Latin translation of the

This portion of the definition of faith, specifically the words *in duabus naturis* (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν), was the source of much disagreement to follow. The explicit claim about Christ's two natures was essential to refute the Eutychian claim of a single, mixed nature, but this claim was also un-Cyrrillian in form. Cyril's famous Christological statement even spoke of "one nature of God the Word incarnate" (μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη).³⁸⁰ The members of the council, however, agreed that "in two natures" was Cyrrillian in meaning, though this was not the case for many of the recipients of the statement, who interpreted it as Nestorian. For them, the claim that Christ was "in two natures" contradicted Cyrrillian orthodoxy and promoted the Nestorian duplicity of Christ as separate from God the Word.³⁸¹ Below the two most important examples of this interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon will be discussed briefly: the Acacian Schism, during which Pope Felix excommunicated the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria, and the Trisagion controversy, when the Patriarch of Antioch composed an anti-Chalcedonian addition to the Trisagion hymn. Both of these events had recently concluded shortly before the composition of the *Contra Nestorianos* and directly contributed to the hostility with which the Theopaschite position of the Scythian monks contained in the dialogue was received in the early sixth century. This is recounted in the second half of Book I of *Contra Nestorianos*.

Definitio fidei comes from Rusticus, a deacon who also wrote a dialogue similar to *Contra Nestorianos* later in the sixth century, but the phrasing of this translation is consistent with Chalcedonian doctrine as expressed in the fifth and early sixth centuries. Cf. . . . ὁμολογεῖν . . . συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν . . . ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν, υἱόν, κύριον, μονογενῆ, ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως γνωριζόμενον· οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἑνωσιν, σωζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ιδιότητος ἑκατέρας φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον, ἀλλ' ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν καὶ μονογενῆ, θεὸν λόγον, κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν· καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ προφηταὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐξεπαίδευσε καὶ τὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν παραδέδωκε σύμβολον.

³⁸⁰ ACO, 10, 372.3.

³⁸¹ The first book of the *Contra Nestorianos* contains many examples of this argument. See Appendix B.

The Acacian Schism

In 484 the Emperor Zeno attempted to heal the theological controversies that had plagued the empire after the Council of Chalcedon. He commissioned Acacius, the patriarch of Constantinople, to compose and publish a statement of faith that became known as the *Henoticon*. With this effort, Zeno attempted to reconcile the anti-Chalcedonians in the East with the Chalcedonians in Constantinople by creating a document that completely avoided mention of this controversial council, the logic being to ignore the source of contention rather than attempt to come to a compromise. To achieve this, the authority of the precedents of Chalcedon was emphasized. The creed of Nicaea was to be adopted. The *Twelve Chapters* of Cyril were upheld. Nestorius and Eutyches were, of course, still understood to be condemned as they had been at Ephesus. In short, every doctrinal decision of the fifth century was reaffirmed, and it was pretended that the Council of Chalcedon never occurred. This attempt was initially successful in the East, but one problem remained, Rome.³⁸²

As Devreesse pointed out in the middle of the last century, “Zénon et Acace pensèrent que le temps était venu de donner quelque satisfaction aux Égyptiens et à leurs amis d’Antioche, de grouper l’église d’Orient autour d’un *Credo* commun, sans se préoccuper de Rome.”³⁸³ This oversight, or rather necessary choice—because to placate Rome would only mean alienating the East in turn—would mark the chief reason for the failure of the *Henoticon*. While downplaying the overall importance of Chalcedon is not obviously a slight to Rome and the Italian theological politics, the result of this action was perceived as such because Pope Leo’s *Tome*, a document explaining the papacy’s position on Christology was read at the council. For Rome then, the

³⁸² Gillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 247–252; and Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 28f.

³⁸³ Robert Devreesse, *Le patriarcat d'Antioche: Depuis la paix de l'église jusqu'à la conquête arabe*. Paris: J. Gabalda, 1945, 66, cited in Gray, 28.

Council of Chalcedon and Leo's *Tome* had to be proclaimed orthodox, as to do otherwise was seen as a diminishment of its ecclesiastical power.

When Pope Felix finally learned of the contents of the patriarch's *Henoticon*, he excommunicated Acacius and Peter Mongus (the patriarch/pope of Alexandria), and in response Acacius retaliated by striking Felix' name from the diptychs in Constantinople and imprisoning the head of the so-called Acoimetæ monks, who remained the only knot of steadfast supporters for Rome in Constantinople. Moreover, despite the initially positive reception of the *Henoticon* in the East, it quickly became clear that there were severe problems. For many in the East, Acacius had not gone far enough. Passing over Chalcedon was not sufficient; only outright, explicit condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon and specifically Leo's *Tome* would appease them. Although Zeno intended to achieve a sincere reconciliation throughout the empire, the *Henoticon* failed because it was still viewed to be too Chalcedonian to many in the East and too anti-Chalcedonian to Rome and the West, and this schism would persist until March of 519 when Justin I formally made peace between Rome and Constantinople.³⁸⁴

Trisagion Controversy

Overlapping with much of the empire-wide Acacian Schism was a related, but more localized controversy, the infamous "Nestorian" addition to the Trisagion hymn. This controversy begins with Peter the Fuller, an ambitious monk favored by the emperor Zeno (reigned 474–475, 476–491). He became patriarch of Antioch in 471 and was a staunch anti-Chalcedonian. Eager to promote his theological position and gain popular support for it, Peter

³⁸⁴ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 322–25, and cf. the conclusion of Justin's letter to Pope Hormisdas two months later, "*Oret igitur uestrae religionis sancitas, ut quod pervigili studio pro concordia ecclesiarum catholicae fidei procuratur, diuini muneris opitulatio iugi perpetuitate seruari annuat. Dat. X. Kal. Maias Constantinopoli, AVO, 160.*"

made an infamous addition to the Trisagion hymn,³⁸⁵ by adding the phrase “crucified for us” (ὁ σταυρωθεὶς δι’ ἡμᾶς)³⁸⁶ to this hymn. How this created such a controversy stems from the traditional understanding of the addressee of the Trisagion, that is, to the entire Trinity. This inclusion, therefore, insinuates that the entire Trinity was crucified, which was one of the common objections to the theological doctrine promulgated by Chalcedon.³⁸⁷ The significance of this event can be seen in the violent riots that ensued in Antioch when Peter insisted that this formula be followed in the liturgy. It is even recounted that a sympathizer to Peter’s position taught a parrot to recite the Trisagion with the addition and kept it on the street to antagonize passersby. The contemporary Syrian poet, Isaac of Antioch, even wrote a two thousand line Syriac poem on the topic of this infamous bird.³⁸⁸

The most important facet of this controversy for the discussion at hand is what comes forty years later. This modified Trisagion persisted in the Empire and was notably introduced into the liturgy in parts of Constantinople in 511, much to the chagrin of the Emperor Anastasius. As in Antioch, this formula was intended to be anti-Chalcedonian in tenor and provoke the Chalcedonian city of Constantinople. Therefore, when John Maxentius and the Scythian monks arrived in the capital city seven years later, using the formula remarkably similar to the Trisagion

³⁸⁵ The hymn is as follows: Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς. (3x) Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι. Καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, Ἀμήν. See J. Mateos, *La Célébration de la Parole dans la Liturgie Byzantine, Étude historique*. Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1971, 98f.

³⁸⁶ A punning joke was created, calling it “ὁ σταυρωθεὶς Δημῆς.” Demas was one of the legendary names attributed to the good thief. See Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 23.

³⁸⁷ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, 484–488; Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 23. For an example, *Contra Nestorianos* II.4ff in Appendix B.

³⁸⁸ “Memra about the Bird that Sang the ‘Hagios Ho Theos’ in the City of Antioch” ($\text{ܡܥܪܐ ܕܠܗܘܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܐܢܬܝܟܐ}$), Isaac of Antioch, *Carmen* 7. G. Bickell, *S. Isaaci Antiocheni, Doctoris Syrorum opera omnia: ex omnibus, quotquot exstant, codicibus manuscriptis cum varia lectione Syriae Arabiceque primus edidit, Latine vertit, prolegomenis et glossario auxit.* Gissae: Sumptibus J. Ricker, 1873–1877, pp. 84–174.

addition, *unus de Trinitate crucifixus* (one from the Trinity crucified), and what is more, using it to make a *pro*-Chalcedonian argument, the reaction was strongly negative from both sides.³⁸⁹

Background to *Contra Nestorianos*

Composition of *Contra Nestorianos*

The location of the composition of the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* and its contemporary reception and impact are issues that are currently unclear. As mentioned above in the catalogue of controversial dialogues, 520 or the years that immediately follow is the most likely period for the date of composition. In 520, most of the Scythian monks departed from Constantinople in order to plead their case before Pope Hormisdas in Rome. It is known from a letter from the *Avella Collectio* that a certain John was numbered among the Scythian monks who traveled to Italy,³⁹⁰ but it is unclear whether this John is identical with John Maxentius, whose appellation is not always consistent in the references to the members of the circle of Scythian monks in the literature.³⁹¹

Recently, Donald Fairbairn has argued that John Maxentius remained behind in Constantinople at this time, and Matthew Pereira, whose recent dissertation analyzes the theological position of the Scythian monks, seems to agree with him.³⁹² In the early twentieth

³⁸⁹ Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 49; and Volker L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 165–175; Volker discusses the importance of *Unus de Trinitate crucifixus* in the East, but does not mention its importance in the West.

³⁹⁰ Sunt autem nomina eorum [sc. Scythian monks] Achilles, Iohannes, Leontius et Mauritius. See note 1 above.

³⁹¹ See Glorie, (CCSL 85A) xl–xli, and Bark, “John Maxentius,” 93–107. A letter dated to 519 and composed by the Scythian monks to Fulgentius of Ruspe and other North African and Italian bishops complicates matters further, as the letter refers to “another John.” Cf. Dominis sanctissimis, et cum omni ueneratione nominandis, Datiano, Fortunato, Ianuario, Albano, Orontio, Boetho, Fulgentio et ceteris episcopis et in Christi confessione decoratis, exigui Petrus diaconus, Iohannes, Leontius, alius Iohannes, et ceteri fratres in causa fidei Roman directi. *Epistula Scytharum Monachorum ad episcopos*.

³⁹² Rob Boy McGregor & Donald Fairbairn, trans. with Introduction and Notes by Donald Fairbairn. *Fulgentius of Ruspe and The Scythian Monks: Correspondence on Christology and Grace*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013, pp. 18–9.

century, during which there was the last spike in interest in the Scythians, the two German scholars V. Schurr and Eduard Schwarz disagreed on this issue. The former, like Fairbairn and Pereira, understands Maxentius to have remained behind in Constantinople, but Schwarz, who edited the first critical edition of the *Contra Nestorianos*, finds it implausible that the leader of the Scythian monks, John Maxentius, would not accompany his comrades before the pope, which was presumed, and probably rightly, to be more important than their failing embassy to Constantinople.³⁹³ That their business in Rome was more important than their failed effort in Constantinople, however, does not necessarily prove John's location one way or the other. This issue needs to be pursued further in the future in order to understand more fully the immediate reception of this dialogue.

I shall only add that most scholars take for granted that John Maxentius is the author of the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. There is no doubt that this dialogue originates from the Scythian monks, but the attribution of Maxentius as its author comes from the only manuscript that preserves the text, a ninth century codex currently housed at Oxford. Migne, Schwartz, and Glorie, all of whom edited this text, simply continue this attribution. Further work still needs to be done to establish more fully, if possible, the details of each individual Scythian monk. For the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* in particular, the most important and recent study of the texts associated with John Maxentius and the Scythian monks spends regrettably little time discussing this dialogue. In fact, it receives the least treatment of the entire corpus, despite its being the longest and arguably the most important of them. Instead, Pereira simply states that the lack of a translation of the text "remains" a lacuna in the scholarship on the Scythian monks.

³⁹³ See Pereira, 203–4.

Structure of the Dialogue

The structure and format of the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* first deserve comment, since form is intricately related to meaning, especially in dialogues. As has been discussed in Chapter 1,³⁹⁴ this dialogue begins with the typical prologue written by the author. Included within it is a dedication to the probably generic Theophilus. The opening words of the dialogue immediately disclose the anti-heretical project of the work, specifically by providing a methodology for refuting heresy that serves as the underlying structure of the argument of the dialogue.

If it were possible for there to be an end of deceit in this age, Christ's church would rest easily everywhere. But because an inexplicable evil somehow never ceases from attacking human hearts and from disturbing the Catholic faith with unforeseen arguments, followers of the Truth must first diagnose their sophistical arguments with care, then expose [their flaws] correctly, and when the issue is raised publicly, destroy them with the hammer of Truth, fighting for the Truth against them, even to the point of bloodshed.

Si in hoc saeculo posset finis esse mendacii, maneret utique quieta Christi ecclesia. Sed quia inextricabile quodammodo malum numquam desinit humana corda pulsare, atque inopinatis argumentis fidem inquietare catholicam: necesse est sectatoribus ueritatis, prudenter captiosas eius sententias praeuidere, sapienterque detegere, prolatasque in medium malleo ueritatis conterere, et usque ad effusionem sanguinis contra eas pro ueritate certare.³⁹⁵

As will be discussed in further detail below, this is exactly how the dialogue proceeds—the philosophical or theological stumblings of the “Nestorian” are diagnosed, and their faulty logic is exposed over the course of the conversation of which the dialogue consists. For

³⁹⁴ See the discussion of the Aristotelian and Ciceronian style of prologues in Chapter 1, under “The Importance of Plato.”

³⁹⁵ *Dialogus contra Nestorianos, Praefatio*, 1.2–8. All translations of this text within this chapter are from my complete translation found in Appendix B. The rally to fight “even to the point of bloodshed” is more than mere melodrama. The controversy stemming from the Council of Chalcedon was not without events of extreme violence among various factions. On Good Friday, 457, Proterius, who was named Patriarch of Alexandria by the aforementioned council, was murdered before the baptistery of his church by an anti-Chalcedonian mob. Cf. Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.8.

Maxentius,³⁹⁶ one of his greatest concerns is maintaining a precision and clarity in the language that is used in the Christological debate post-Chalcedon. According to him, the heretics abuse (*abuti*) language associated with orthodoxy, by nefariously injecting the poison of deceit within it. This is what is most dangerous in the minds of the Scythian monks, that the anti-Chalcedonians *seem* to be Catholic but actually *are* heretical. This illusion of truth is what makes their argument so compelling to the “more simple-minded” because of their inherent disingenuousness.³⁹⁷ The presence of the two interlocutors, then, allows for a prolonged exchange where clarification is often called for and given. Difficult theological terms are carefully defined and supported by examples.³⁹⁸ This phenomenon is not isolated to single, topical issues but is construed as an ongoing process that progresses throughout the two books of the dialogue. The dialogic exchange, therefore, with its constant back-and-forth, allows the two interlocutors to discover that they actually agree on matters about which they previously believed that they had disagreed.³⁹⁹ At the conclusion of the preface, the author highlights the importance of the dialogue for achieving this aim. The very form of the dialogue, he claims, allows for a more efficient (*quo facilius*) refutation of the heretic’s objections (*obiectionum absolutio*) in a

³⁹⁶ For the sake of convenience, I refer to the author of this text as John Maxentius, as the current *status quaestionis* makes this the most likely.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Catholicus: quamvis callide, ad decipiendos simplices, unum eos esse argumenteris. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.17.812–13. The theme of insincerity or εἰρωνεία, as it is famously known, is pervasive in the dialogue, as the Introduction of this dialogue contains a scene where the Catholicus questions the Nestorian’s sincerity in believing in his own views. Dissimulation, though, is not automatically understood to be a breach of the etiquette of dialogue. It is always a matter of context and the rules adopted for any given conversation. In the *De Magistro*, Adeodatus suggests that his father is feigning ignorance for pedagogical reasons: Ad. Miror te [sc. Augustinum] nescire uel potius simulare nescientem. *De Magistro*, III.5.1–2. Such pedagogical examples are usually viewed favorably.

³⁹⁸ E.g., Catholicus: Proprietas multis intellegitur modis. . . . quapropter: quomodo deum corporis sui proprias fecisse asseris passiones, exemplis te planum facere conuenit. *Contra Nestorianos*, II.13.589, 596–8.

³⁹⁹ Cf. Catholicus: Deus uerbum, qui incarnatus est, ipse et passus est? an alius incarnatus, alius uero passus est? Nestorianus: Incarnatus quidem deus est; passus autem deus non est, sed caro dei. Catholicus: Magnam nobis spem de teipso dedisti. Nam qui hactenus carnem non dei, sed assumpti hominis asserebas, nunc dei eam confessus es.

Reconciliation and agreement, not refutation, are always in the foreground in this dialogue.

format that will be clear to his readers (*legentibus elucescat*).⁴⁰⁰ Of course, none of these claims about the dialogue is novel. Augustine remarks that dialogue is the most efficient form for the discovery of the truth.⁴⁰¹ Jerome likewise decides to compose a dialogue against the Pelagians in order to give a fuller account than his responses from an earlier letter about this heresy.⁴⁰² The author of the *Dialogi* attributed to Gregory the Great also points out the ability of dialogue to subdivide and clarify complex positions.⁴⁰³ Similar claims are found in the Greek dialogues of late antiquity as well.⁴⁰⁴

More remarkable about the structure of the dialogue is what precedes both of the books of the dialogue, namely extensive tables of contents (*capitula*) summarizing the topic of the debate and often the scriptural verses discussed in each individual section. As far as I am aware, this is the earliest example of a table of contents being included in a Latin controversial dialogue. Within the corpus that is the subject of this thesis only the *Dialogi* attributed to Gregory the Great contain this feature, but this text may have been composed as late as the end of the seventh century.⁴⁰⁵ The only other Latin dialogue that exhibits a similar organization is also associated

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Placuit igitur, sub persona interrogantis haeretici et catholici respondentis, explicare huius nostrae disputationis opusculum, quo facilius obiectionum absolutio legentibus elucescat. *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, *Praefatio*, 4.39–42.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. *Soliloquia*, 2.14.

⁴⁰² Cf. *Dialogus Aduersus Pelagianos*, *Prologue*, 1.

⁴⁰³ I have argued recently that an understanding of Gregory's use of prosopopoeia in Book IV of his *Dialogues* is essential to understanding his literary and philosophical program. For a discussion of prosopopoeia in dialogues, see Chapter 1, and see, Charles N. Kuper, (unpublished) "Book IV of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* as a Commentary on Ecclesiastes," paper delivered at the One Hundred Forty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, January 5–8, Toronto, Canada.

⁴⁰⁴ See the discussion of Theodoret's *Eranistes* below.

⁴⁰⁵ The date and authenticity of the *Dialogues* has garnered much attention. Francis Clark energetically argued that the *Dialogues* were composed at the end of the seventh century by a clever imitator who had access to Gregory's writings among other documents, but there has been strong resistance to his thesis. See Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*. Leiden: Brill, and *The 'Gregorian' Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism*. Leiden: Brill, 2003; and Paul Meyvaert, "The Enigma of Gregory the Great's Dialogues: a response to Francis Clark." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (1988): 335–81, and "The Authentic Dialogues of Gregory the Great." *Sacris Erudiri* 43 (2004): 55–130. See also, Adalbert de Vogüé, "Les Dialogues, oeuvre authentique et publiée par Grégoire lui-même," in *Gregorio Magno et il suo tempo*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1991): 27–40.

with the Scythian monks, the *Disputatio XII Capitulorum*.⁴⁰⁶ As the title suggests, this text is a rereading of Cyril of Alexandria's infamous "Twelve Anathemas,"⁴⁰⁷ whose content and impact was discussed at length above. The similarities between these two dialogues, however, are merely superficial and only serve to highlight the uniqueness of the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*. In a sense, the table of contents found here looks forward to the much later dialogues of Anselm of Canterbury such as the *Cur Deus Homo*, in which he directs later copyists to include his table of contents so that readers may peruse what parts of the dialogue "are not useless."⁴⁰⁸ Beneath the surface of Anselm's authorial humility is a very simple point: the chapters allow the reader to find what is most important before reading, or even more likely, to locate a particular passage for rereading or consultation for a particular theological issue. By doing this, Anselm has created not only a cogent, unified argument for discussing the Christian mystery of the Incarnation, but has also effectively made the *Cur Deus Homo* a reference text that a curious reader may consult to clarify a specific theological point such as, "Why was the number of fallen angels necessarily made up by humans?"⁴⁰⁹

Regrettably, Maxentius does not include an explicit discussion of his own table of contents as Anselm does, but his intentions must be similar. How the chapters might be related to the reception and reading of the dialogue in its own controversial climate will be further

⁴⁰⁶ Or more fully, *Disputatio XII Capitulorum Cyrilli Alexandrini et sic Dictorum Nestorii Anti Anathematismatorum*.

⁴⁰⁷ Contained within Cyril's third letter to Nestorius, which was read during the Council of Ephesus (431), the interpretation of the "Twelve Anathemas" was a major point of contention in the post-Chalcedonian debates. For the Latin and Greek texts of this work, see Giuseppe Alberigo et al., eds., *Conciliorum oecumenicorum Decreta*. Bologna: Instituto per le scienze religiose, 1973, third edition, pp. 59–61.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Hanc praefatiunculam cum capitulis totius operis omnes qui librum hunc transcribere volent, ante eius principium ut praefigant postulo; quatenus in cuiuscumque manus venerit, quasi in eius fronte aspiciat, si quid in toto corpore sit quod non despiciat. *Cur Deus Homo*, Praefatio, II (Schmitt, II.43).

⁴⁰⁹ Capitulum XVI. Ratio quod numerus angelorum qui ceciderunt restituendus sit de hominibus. *Cur Deus Homo*, 1.16 (Schmitt, II.74). On the importance of this remarkable passage for the overall unity of the dialogue, see Charles N. Kuper, "An Angelic Digression: The Significance of 1.16–18 in the *Cur Deus Homo*." MA Thesis, Bryn Mawr College (2012): 1–49.

discussed below. But another point of interest arises when the content of the chapters is compared to the main text of the dialogue—one quickly notices that the tone of the chapters is significantly harsher and more contentious than the tone of the dialogue itself. For example, in a passage noted above, the Catholicus exclaims that he has great hope for his interlocutor’s progress when the Nestorianus concedes a point that he had previously denied.⁴¹⁰ The progress of the Nestorianus is emphasized, and the very purpose of the dialogue plays out before the eyes of the reader—their discussion has effected a change in the interlocutor’s thinking. This description of this section of the dialogue, however, is much different in the table of contents: “About the following *sophistic* claim: ‘God’s flesh suffered, but God did not suffer according to the flesh.’”⁴¹¹ Progress and mutual respect are forgotten. Instead, the focus is doctrinal and dismissive—“this is how to deal with this position.”

Such a simple dichotomy—polite main text and more caustic descriptive headings—is not without exception, most notably with the occasional presence of sarcasm in the main text, but the general distinction is certainly meaningful. Maxentius the author, through the personae of the two interlocutors, constantly brings the issue of mutual respect and tolerance to the foreground of the debate, and not, as one might expect, only in the voice of the Catholicus. At the very beginning of the dialogue, Nestorius asks the Catholicus to be more charitable, “Please do not attack me with misunderstood accusations before you consider my words carefully” (*Noli, quaeso, te, antequam meorum dictorum rationem diligenter discutias, calumniosis me impetere uocibus*).⁴¹² As I shall contend, John Maxentius uses the form of the dialogue, not only to

⁴¹⁰ Catholicus: Magnam nobis spem de teipso dedisti. Nam qui hactenus carnem non dei, sed assumpti hominis – asserebas, nunc dei eam confessus es. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.12.570–2.

⁴¹¹ XII. De eo, quod callide dicitur ab eis: caro dei passa est, deus autem carne passus non est. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos, eiusdem Capitula Libri Secundi*.

⁴¹² *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.1.45–6.

instruct his readers in *what* to say or *what arguments* to make for his position, but also *how* to debate with their opponents, namely by giving them the benefit of the doubt and treating them as charitably as possible. This will become apparent in the discussion of the dialogue below.

Literary Precedents to *Contra Nestorianos*

There do not seem to be any clear Latin parallels in structure or content to *Contra Nestorianos*, though, of course, the earlier Latin controversial dialogues such as Jerome's two dialogues and the *Octavius* are important predecessors of this type of dialogue. In the case of this dialogue, however, it is not Latin literature alone to which readers should look. The body of Greek literature is especially important here. In this section, I want to make two suggestions for thinking about the literary background for the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*: first, that the structure and explicit methodology of Maxentius' dialogue is closely parallel to two Greek dialogues composed by important figures associated with the Nestorian controversy, Cyril of Alexandria's *Dialogus De Trinitate* and Theodoret of Cyr's *Eranistes*, and second, that John Maxentius might be responding directly to the text of the *Eranistes*.

The first obstacle to making such a claim is establishing how the Scythian monks might have had access to Greek literature. The level of comfort, for example, with reading and understanding Greek possessed by the Scythian monks and John Maxentius in particular is debated in the scholarly literature. The majority of scholars conclude that they could not read Greek well enough to work significantly with the text.⁴¹³ However, despite their apparent ignorance of the Greek language, the following can be said, almost in the same breath, about their cultural and linguistic sensitivities, "The Scythian monks, more so than those Christian

⁴¹³ Fairbairn, *Fulgentius & the Scythian Monks*, 16–7; Pereira, *John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks*, 130–132. Rarely is evidence given to support this position; Pereira, for example, cites no source.

theologians steeped exclusively in either the Greek or Latin theological worldview, were open to gaining insights from a range of sources and thereafter coalescing them together into a singular framework.”⁴¹⁴ How this complex process occurred is usually ignored, but one fact is generally agreed upon. Dionysius Exiguus, who is most famous for the invention of *Anno Domini* and other innovations related to the calendar, is known to have translated some of the works of Cyril into Latin for his friends the Scythian monks. This can be seen most clearly in the explicit Latin quotations of Cyril found in the writings of the monks.⁴¹⁵

The Scythians’ competency in Greek needs to be investigated further, and caution should prevail until the foundations are more firmly established. At the same time, the close reading of the texts is a good place to start for bringing obscure matters to light. The similarities, in my view, both in form and content between the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* and the two earlier Greek dialogues demand attention. The very fact that both Cyril and Theodoret composed dialogues is worthy of note. Cyril was, obviously, the greatest opponent of Nestorius and one of the interlocutors of the first dialogue of the Scythian monks. Theodoret, on the other hand, was viewed as a Nestorian sympathizer, which is seen most publicly at the Council of Chalcedon where he was forced to condemn Nestorius. It is too significant a coincidence that two of the most important figures in the theological controversies of the fifth century, to which the Scythians monks are responding, wrote dialogues. What is more, Theodoret composed his *Eranistes* in order to defend himself against accusations of teaching “Nestorian” doctrines,⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ Pereira, *John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks*, 131.

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.* 132. For the Latin texts of these translations, see PL 67.9–454.

⁴¹⁶ See Gerard H. Ettlinger, S. J., trans. *Theodoret of Cyrus: Eranistes*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003, pp. 3–5. Ettlinger apparently changed his mind on this fact, as he states in his earlier critical edition of the text that Theodoret’s purpose of composition of this dialogue was unclear. See Gerard H. Ettlinger, S. J., ed. *Theodoret of Cyrus: Eranistes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 3–5.

which was also a motivating factor for Maxentius' composition of his own dialogue.⁴¹⁷ In a way, then, the *Eranistes* is Theodoret's own *Contra Nestorianos*.

Similarities in Structure

Contra Nestorianos shares three structural similarities with *De Trinitate* and *Eranistes*: first, a programmatic statement that the mimetic form of the dialogue was used to make the arguments clear to the reader; second, the identities of the interlocutors in the dialogue are generically named; and third, some version of summary chapters is included in the dialogues for the reader to review the contents of the work.

To turn to the programmatic statements first, Cyril and Theodoret both make similar statements about the dialogue's ability to make their complex arguments clear to the reader. The former writes:

The text is so arranged that it progresses in question and answer through two interlocutors. Before the first interlocutor the letter Alpha has been written, and the letter Beta before the second. For because there is a certain great complexity to the matters under discussion, the introduction of two interlocutors was necessary in order that the issue under scrutiny might be constantly constructed and deconstructed through questions and answers. Great care must be taken with the letters [written] in the margins.

Καὶ ἔστι μὲν ἀνειμένος ὁ λόγος, ὥς πρὸς πεῦσιν δὲ καὶ ἀπόκρισιν διὰ δυοῖν προσώπων ἔρχεται· καὶ τοῦ μὲν πρώτου τὸ Α προτέτακται στοιχεῖον, τοῦ δὲ δευτέρου τὸ Β. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πολλή τις ἄγαν ἐν τοῖς ζητούμενοις ἐστὶν ἡ λεπτότης, ἵνα ταῖς ἐρωτήσεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν ἀεὶ τὸ βασανιζόμενον κατασκευάζεται τε καὶ ἀνασκευάζεται πικρῶς, ἀναγκαία γέγονεν ἡ τῶν προσώπων εἰσκομιδή. Παραφυλακτέον οὖν ἀκριβῶς τὰ προτεταγμένα αὐτῶν στοιχεῖα.⁴¹⁸

And the corresponding passage in the prologue of Theodoret's *Eranistes*:

The text will proceed in the manner of dialogue, having questions and answers, refutations and counter-positions, and everything else associated with the dialogic form. I shall not insert the names of the interlocutors into

⁴¹⁷ See "The Conclusion of the Dialogue" below.

⁴¹⁸ *De Trinitate*, 384.3–11.

the body of the text as the wise men from Greece did of old; instead I shall write them in the margins. They composed their writings for those who received a thorough education and for whom literature was their life. I want the reading [of this dialogue] and the discovery of its benefit to be clear, even to the uninitiated in literature. This [clarity] will be achieved because the conversing interlocutors are marked by their names, which have been written in the margin. The name “Orthodoxus” is given to the proponent of apostolic teaching. The other is called “Eranistes.”

Διαλογικῶς μέντοι ὁ λόγος προβήσεται, ἐρωτήσεις ἔχων καὶ ἀποκρίσεις καὶ προτάσεις καὶ λύσεις καὶ ἀντιθέσεις, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα τοῦ διαλογικοῦ ἴδια χαρακτηῖρος. Τὰ δέ γε τῶν ἐρωτῶντων καὶ ἀποκρινομένων ὀνόματα οὐ τῷ σώματι τοῦ λόγου συντάξω, καθάπερ οἱ πάλοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφοί, ἀλλ’ ἐξωθεν παραγράψω ταῖς τῶν στίχων ἀρχαῖς. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ τοῖς διὰ παντοδαπῆς ἡγμένοις παιδείας καὶ οἷς βίος ὁ λόγος προσέφερον τὰ συγγράμματα· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τοῖς λόγων ἀμυήτοις εὐσύνοπτον εἶναι βούλομαι τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν καὶ τῆς ὠφελείας τὴν εὕρεσιν. Ἔσται δὲ τοῦτο, δήλων γινομένων τῶν διαλεγομένων προσώπων ἐκ τῶν παραγεγραμμένων ἐξωθεν ὀνομάτων. Καὶ τῷ μὲν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ἀγωνιζομένῳ δογμάτων Ὁρθόδοξος ὄνομα, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος Ἐρανιστὴς ὀνομάζεται.⁴¹⁹

Finally, Maxentius’ statement is shorter but makes the same point:

I decided to compose this work of our disputation through the characters of a heretic, who asks the questions, and an orthodox believer, who responds to them, in order that the refutation of the heretic’s objections might be clearer to my readers.

Placuit igitur, sub persona interrogantis haeretici et catholici respondentis, explicare huius nostrae disputationis opusculum, quo facilius obiectionum absolutio legentibus elucescat.⁴²⁰

Like Maxentius then, Cyril and Theodoret both claim to use the mimetic form of the dialogue in order to facilitate the reading and understanding of their doctrine. This is, no doubt, a benefit of the mimetic form of the dialogue as readers of Plato’s *Symposium* or Augustine’s *Cassiciacum* dialogues know well; such texts can be difficult reading because it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the identity of the speaker. But this observation is so ubiquitous in ancient dialogues that it is almost banal to remark upon it. More interesting is how this decision in favor

⁴¹⁹ *Eranistes*, Prologue.29.8–19.

⁴²⁰ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, Prologue.4.39–42.

of the mimetic form benefits not only the reader but the author as well. These two bishops understood the high stakes of theological partisanship in the fifth century and the peril of being misunderstood in one's own position, Theodoret especially. The disambiguation, therefore, between the orthodox and heterodox perspectives provided by the mimetic dialogue acts as a shield against misinterpretation. Nothing marks the boundary between *us* and *them* like the physical separation of the speakers on the page—"we" the orthodox say this; "they" the heretics blaspheme that. And the continuous discussion between the two interlocutors brings the finer points into focus, leaving nothing to doubt or speculation.⁴²¹ Cyril's command, then, to future copyists that they practice extreme caution (παραφυλακτέον ἀκριβῶς) in retaining the alphas and the betas of the two interlocutors in their correct positions is more than a reminder to practice scribal diligence. It is defense against the misattribution of a heretical theological position that could be disastrous for the author. In the volatile environment of fifth century theological politics, even the reputation of the eminent Cyril of Alexandria and his ecclesiastical rank as patriarch are possibly at risk. In fact, it was only at the Council of Chalcedon, after Cyril's death, that his orthodoxy was enshrined, and he became a second Athanasius or Hilary. Some of Theodoret's writings were posthumously condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople, where, in contrast, the general positions of the Scythian monks were upheld.⁴²²

Also apparent in the above quotations is the decision by the three authors to mark the identities of the interlocutors with generic or thematic names rather than with the names of living or deceased individuals. For the author of a controversial dialogue, it is almost a rhetorical necessity to exclude oneself from the text, since anonymity qua absence of personal opinion is

⁴²¹ John Maxentius often makes this point throughout the *Contra Nestorianos*. Cf. [Catholicus]: Quomodo Deum corporis sui proprias fecisse asseris passiones, exemplis te planum facere conuenit. II.13.596–598

⁴²² Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon in the East*, 57f, 61–73.

the required philosophical high ground in combatting heresy. According to Cyril, Theodoret, and John Maxentius, their respective dialogues merely transmit and clarify the Truth, never their own opinions.⁴²³ To have one's name associated with a position is the token of heresy. They are Nestorians, Apollinarians, Pelagians, and Arians, not orthodox. Hence there is the "Nestorianus" for Maxentius and the "Eranistes" for Theodoret—ἐρανιστής means "beggar," with the implication that he stitches together scraps of false teaching to fashion his ragged cloak of heresy.⁴²⁴ Cyril's unique decision in using letters to denote the interlocutors and his overall lack of naming his antagonists throughout the dialogue have puzzled readers,⁴²⁵ and I know of no clear parallel to this method of marking interlocutors.

The presence of chapter headings or summaries is the third and final structural similarity between the *Contra Nestorianos* and the two Greek dialogues. In Cyril's *De Trinitate*, he includes a brief summary of the argument of each of the seven books at the beginning of the dialogue. More interesting is what follows the three books of the *Eranistes*. Theodoret adds short syllogistic statements to summarize the points made in each of three books of the dialogue,⁴²⁶ and though this epilogue is not of exactly the same type as the descriptive chapters found in the

⁴²³ Another way to achieve this is claiming that one is merely repeating the words of a biblical author. Cf. [Catholicus:] Uerum, quia crucifixus est et mortuus is, qui est uita, *non me*, sed *beatum Paulum* ad Iudaeos audi clamantem. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.6.315–317.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Furthermore, they have also stolen from the blasphemies of Arius and Eunomius the belief that suffering touched the divinity of Christ the Lord with the result that this heresy is, quite simply, similar to garments stitched together with various rags by beggars. For this reason I have named this text *Eranistes* or *Polymorphos*. Πάλιν δ' αὖ τὸ τῇ θεότητι τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ προσάπτειν τὸ πάθος ἐκ τῆς Ἀρείου καὶ Εὐνομίου βλασφημίας κεκλόφασιν, ὡς εἰκέναι τήνδε τὴν αἵρεσιν ἀτεχνῶς τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν προσαϊτῶν ἐκ διαφόρων ρακίων συρραπτομένοις ἐσθήμασιν. Οὗ δὲ χάριν Ἐρανιστὴν ἢ Πολύμορφον τόδε προσαγορεύω τὸ σύγγραμμα. *Eranistes*, Prologue.29.4–7.

⁴²⁵ G. M. de Durand writes, "Or c'est justement l'absence de tout effort pour se coller avec un antagoniste à la personnalité nettement dessinée qui nous déconcerte dans les *Dialogues*." See G. M. de Durand, *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, (3 volumes) SC 231, 237, 246 Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1976–78, at vol. 1, 32. Cf. Cameron, *Dialoguing*, 49.

⁴²⁶ "After the three discussions I shall add something else, a number of 'post-discussions' (*epagonismata* is a hapax legomenon in the entire Greek corpus), joining a syllogism to each main point and showing openly that we preserve the teachings of the apostles." Μετὰ μέντοι τοὺς τρεῖς ἀγῶνας, οἷον ἐπαγωνίσματα, ἀλλ' ἅττα προσθήσομεν, ἐκάστῳ κεφαλαίῳ συλλογισμὸν προσαρμόζοντες, καὶ δεικνύντες ἀντικρυς παρ' ἡμῖν φυλαττόμενον τῶν ἀποστόλων τὸ κήρυγμα. *Eranistes*, Prologue.29.29–32.

Contra Nestorianos discussed above, the content is much the same. Of the three similarities in structure, the presence of summaries is the most significant connection between the three dialogues because there are no parallels for this phenomenon found in earlier Latin literature.

That said, it can certainly be argued that these similarities between the Latin dialogue of John Maxentius and the earlier Greek dialogues of Cyril and Theodoret discussed here are accidental and generic. In fact, the assessment of the mimetic form of the dialogue and need for anonymity found in the prologues of the three authors were described as ubiquitous in controversial dialogues, though the presence of the summaries is certainly a unique exception. I shall address this objection more fully at the conclusion of this section, but first I shall turn to the possible intertextual relationship between *Contra Nestorianos* and *Eranistes*.

***Eranistes* as model for *Contra Nestorianos*?**

The more closely one reads the *Eranistes* alongside *Contra Nestorianos* the more the similarities between them become apparent. Many of the arguments are similar between the two dialogues, as the theological positions of Theodoret and John Maxentius are similar. Even the trajectory of the argument and the biblical citations utilized are parallel. Most remarkable, though, are the places where the texts differ, and it is on one of these examples that I want to focus. Examples of theological difference are interesting in dialogues composed about the same issue because of the polyvocal nature of the texts. What this means is that the two competing positions are not respectively present and omitted between the two dialogues; instead, both positions are present in each text, though the attributions are reversed. The result, then, is a surprising and powerful contrast between what is “orthodox” in the two dialogues. In the following example, the position that the “heretic” Eranistes “blasphemes” and Orthodoxus condemns in *Eranistes* is what Catholicus champions and the “heretic” Nestorianus denies in

Contra Nestorianos. What Cyril fears might happen to the text of his dialogue, that the letters A and B become confused and their corresponding positions become misattributed, surprisingly happens by design in Maxentius' *Contra Nestorianos* when articulating his novel position on divine suffering.

Eranistes: How do you deny that God the Word suffered according to the flesh?

Orthodox: Because this statement is not found in sacred scripture.

EPAN. Πῶς τοίνυν οὐ φατε τὸν θεὸν λόγον πεπονθέναι σαρκί;
ΟΡΘ. Ὅτι παρὰ τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ ταύτην οὐχ εὐρήκαμεν τὴν φωνήν.⁴²⁷

Catholic: In no way do I proclaim that the Divinity is passible; however, I strongly confess that God suffered according to the flesh, because I recognize that Jesus Christ is truly God.

Nestorian: I completely deny that God suffered according to the flesh because this is never read in the holy scriptures, but I profess, following Peter the apostle, that Christ suffered according to the flesh.

Catholicus: Diuinitatem quidem passibilem nullatenus praedico, Deum autem carne passum omnino confiteor, quia Iesum Christum Deum uerum agnosco.

Nestorianus: Nullo modo ego Deum passum carne profiteor, quod in scripturis sanctis nullatenus legitur, sed Christum passum carne, sequens Petrum apostolum, fateor.⁴²⁸

These two passages are not true opposites,⁴²⁹ but they suffice as representatives of a fundamental difference in argumentation about divine suffering between the two texts.⁴³⁰ Despite this negligible difference, these two passages constitute a remarkable example of two dialogic

⁴²⁷ *Eranistes*, III.264.18–19. Cf. the final chapter of Cyril's Twelve Chapters.

⁴²⁸ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.9.447–452.

⁴²⁹ The claim made in *Eranistes* is whether *God the Word* (ὁ Θεὸς λόγος) suffered according to the flesh (πεπονθέναι σαρκί), and in *Contra Nestorianos*, it is whether *God (Deus)* suffered according to the flesh (*carne passum*). I have chosen these passages because of their convenient brevity, which is conducive for juxtaposing them.

⁴³⁰ For the most explicit statement of Catholicus' support of "God the Word suffered according to the flesh," cf. Nestorianus: Faciam quantum potuero, modo ut te ab hac intentione deuertam, quo[d] ulterius desinas, *deum uerbum passum carne*, asserere, quamuis caro dei sit passa. *ibid.*, III.13.599–601. I am aware of the slight difference in the two passages quoted above, but neither space nor my present purpose allows for a more thorough investigation of the possible intertextual relationship between the two dialogues.

texts whose theological theme is nearly identical but which have come to opposite conclusions concerning a single issue, in this case the prospect of divine suffering. Not only is the theological position reversed between the orthodox and heretical interlocutors but the justification for denying this position is also reversed. Theodoret's *Orthodoxus* does not accept his opponent's *heretical* position because it has no precedent in scripture, while Maxentius' *Nestorianus*, in contrast, will not accept the *orthodox* position for the very same reason.⁴³¹ This very fact is of interest on its own, as it is very rare to find such examples in extant Christian literature because of the tendency to suppress the heretical viewpoint. But how much further can this be developed?

A question ought to be raised at this point. Is there a direct intertextual relationship between Theodoret's *Eranistes* and Maxentius' *Contra Nestorianos*? In my view, it is still too early to claim a direct connection between these two dialogues as the matter currently stands. Furthermore, if a true connection is shown to exist, it remains to be seen how significant it is. A number of other factors, for example, can account for the similarities between the texts, not least Cyril's Twelve Chapters and Leo's *Tome* to which both Theodoret and Maxentius are responding. Any two texts grappling with Chalcedonian theology will of course contain arguments framed in the formulaic idiom that is associated with the Council. That said, I think that there is a strong possibility of a significant connection between *Contra Nestorianos* and *Eranistes*. The choice of using dialogue by the Scythians, the rhetorical and structural connections between the two texts, and the historical relationship between these figures makes the likelihood of a profound exchange in thought between the two texts compelling, or at least

⁴³¹ The significance of this important reversal in *Contra Nestorianos* will be discussed at length in the section "The Conclusion of the Dialogue" below.

suspiciously coincidental. A study of the possible Greek influences on the corpus of the Scythian monks remains a desideratum.

Even though this issue is unsettled, the reader of this Latin dialogue gains insight about the content and arguments found in *Contra Nestorianos* by reading the Greek *Eranistes* alongside. The structure of the arguments is similar. The same scriptural battlegrounds for important positions are the same. Also, as mentioned before, the differences between them might be just as illuminating, perhaps more. Furthermore, the very fact that Greek and Latin authors are making the same arguments, in the same way, in the same literary genre, about the same theological controversy, and at roughly the same time demands attention; it also raises fears that many other examples like this have been overlooked.⁴³²

The Content of *Contra Nestorianos*

The *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* is divided into two books.⁴³³ The first book is concerned with the two major theological problems associated with the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451), namely the validity of the appellation *Theotokos* (Ephesus), and the doctrine that Christ is one person from (or “in”) two natures (Chalcedon).⁴³⁴ The second book, which is roughly twice as long as the first book, focuses on the human nature of Christ,

⁴³² Rusticus the Deacon, who, as mentioned before, was responsible for translating some the *Acta* of the Ecumenical Councils into Latin, should also be mentioned in the context. He composed a dialogue, *Contra Acephalos*, in Latin that defended a position closer to Theodoret’s understanding of Chalcedon and was adamantly opposed to the position advanced by the Scythian monks. There has been some recent work on him in Italian scholarship but much remains to be done to incorporate him into this discussion. See, Roberto Spataro, *Il diacono Rustico e il suo contributo nel dibattito teologico postcalcedonese*. Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 2007, and Sara Petri, *La Disputatio Contra Acephalos di Rustico*. Studi Sulla Tardoantichit, 5. Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010.

⁴³³ Pereira, who provides one of the few summaries of this text, states that “the first book is concerned with the status of the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos*. The second book deals with key issues related to Jesus Christ.” Pereira, *The Scythian Monks*, 93f. This is true in a general sense, but more specific divisions can be understood between the two books.

⁴³⁴ Although this is some overlap, in Book I sections 1–10 concern *Theotokos*, and sections 11–15 concern nature and person.

particularly the theological problems that arise from this. The relationship between Christ and his flesh, whether the divinity suffered, and Christ's place in the Trinity are all important questions. These two subdivisions of *Contra Nestorianos*, then, fit well into the chronological progression of theological thought over the course of the fifth century and into the early sixth century. Viewed from the time of composition of the text, Book I is retrospective in its thought, as it discusses the major positions upheld during the councils of the previous century, and Book II contains a discussion of ongoing and contemporary theological problems of the early sixth century.⁴³⁵ This is, of course, a generalization, but it is a useful way for understanding the trajectory of the arguments found within the dialogue. This model also fits the Scythians' understanding of their own theological program, a clarification of the doctrines approved by the ecumenical councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Despite a modern, etic appreciation of the "progress" and "novelty" of the Scythians' theological speculation, these are never the terms used by ancient authors to describe their own thought. "Innovation" and "novelty" are anathema. Instead, it is always imperative to situate one's own thought within orthodox doctrine,⁴³⁶ and it is to this end that the *Contra Nestorianos* has been organized and divided.

Unlike the discussion of the *Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi* given above, the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* is too long for a summary-like analysis. Extended Christological argument also has a tendency to be less than engrossing for many readers. Therefore, my

⁴³⁵ At the conclusion of the dialogue, the two interlocutors discuss the validity of any statement if it has not been approved by a synod. In so doing, they summarize the two parts of the dialogues, "*Sed et duas naturas et theotocon dicere synodus definiuit, hoc autem nulla synodus statuit*" (*Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.25.1144–45). The *duae naturae* and *theotokos*, positions which were confirmed at Ephesus and Chalcedon, were the topic of Book I, while *hoc* refers to the Theopaschite Theology position advanced in Book II.

⁴³⁶ Cf. the beginning of the Scythian monks' *Libellus Fidei*, composed in 519, Quoniam nonnulli—uidentes nos contra eos, qui inimico proposito uenerabilis Chalcedonensis concilii fidem nituntur euertere, patrum proferre sententias, et nouis prauorum argumentationibus uerbis catholicis obuiare—augmentum aliquod nos in fide facere iudicant aut certe contra statuta uenire concilii, necessario credidimus probabilibus documentis hanc inconuenientem ab eorum animis expargare opinionem. *Libellus Fidei*, 1.1.5–12.

treatment will instead highlight the major themes, rhetorical strategies, and other passages of interest such as how the dialogue concludes. If the reader is interested in a more exhaustive understanding of the contents of the dialogue, there is a full translation of the text with its summary-chapters available in Appendix B. As the current state of literature on the *Contra Nestorianos* stands, there have been regrettably few attempts to read this dialogue closely and comment upon it, and the following discussion is intended to begin to fill this lacuna for such an interesting text.

Tone of the Dialogue

The first place to begin is with the tone and conduct between the two interlocutors, as it is also the first topic that they discuss. This inclination toward explicit statement of method is nothing new for dialogues—a discussion of *how* to converse is just as important as the subject matter of the conversation—but the constant appeal to civility is surprising in this particular dialogue.

Catholic: In my opinion, it is always best and most acceptable to pursue the Truth without mockery and insults.

Nestorian: Whoever desires not Truth but the glory of personal victory usually prefers mockery to rational judgment. But there is no place at all for mockery among those whose sole intention is the joy of discovering the Truth.

Catholic: Truth herself is accustomed, as scripture says,⁴³⁷ to appear graciously before disputants on the path when she observes them sincerely striving to find her. Our disputation, therefore, will doubtless reach a fruitful conclusion, if belligerent contentiousness is absent from it.

Nestorian: I am completely of the same opinion, provided that you also agree to respond to my questions with gentle spirit.

Catholic: Proceed as you wish, so that I can see what you want me to know.

⁴³⁷ Cf. Wisdom 6:17. This observation is also remarkably similar to a famous biblical scene, the so-called “Walk to Emmaus” (Lk 24:13–32). Found only in the Gospel of Luke, Christ appears, after the resurrection, on the road to Cleopas and a nameless disciple as they are walking to the town of Emmaus. Over the course of their discussion he reveals the truth of scripture to them. This is an important thematic antecedent to Christian dialogues. Minucius Felix’ *Octavius* begins, for example, after a conversation that began during a walk.

Catholicus: optimum quidem mihi et nimis gratum est, semotis conuiciis, semper de ueritate conquirere.

Nestorianus: Solent iniuriae illis praestare suffragium, quibus studium est non de ueritate, sed de propria gloriari uictoria; in his autem, qui tota intentione cupiunt de comperta ueritate gaudere, locum haec penitus non habent.

Catholicus: Facile solet in disputationum semitis, se—sicut scriptum est—hilariter ipsa ueritas intimare, cum ad inuestigationem sui disputantium mentes simplici uiderit intentione pertendere. Erit igitur, procul dubio, nostrae disputationis fructuosus finis, si modo furiosa contentio submoueatur e medio.

Nestorianus: Mea certe haec est omnino intentio, si tamen et tu placido animo meis interrogationibus dignum duxeris respondere.

Catholicus: Moue quod uis, ut iam uideamus ea, quae a me scire desideras.⁴³⁸

The commencement of this dialogue is radically different from that of Jerome's *Altercatio*. First, there is not the slightest attempt at creating even a fictitious mise-en-scène. Second and more importantly, where the disputants were “nearly spitting in each other's face” (*conspitata paene inuicem facie*) in Jerome's dialogue, here the reverse is true for Maxentius. Though this meeting does begin with some tension,⁴³⁹ it is agreed upon immediately by Catholicus and Nestorianus that mutual respect and goodwill must be present for the dialogue to be productive (*nostrae disputationis fructuosus finis*). Assuming an almost Stoic ethos, the success of the argument, according to the interlocutors, will suffer to the degree that anger is present in their conversation.⁴⁴⁰ Also in contrast to the *Altercatio*, the style of argumentation of *Contra Nestorianos* is neither the caustic anger of the first half of Jerome's dialogue nor the Luciferian's subservient obedience to the Orthodox authority like the second half of that

⁴³⁸ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.Intro.23–39.

⁴³⁹ Before the passage quoted above, the Nestorian notes that he is happy to meet his opponent, who has been slandering him, in a face-to-face discussion. The Catholic responds with a generalizing statement about disagreement, with the implication that the Nestorian is consciously teaching false doctrine. This comment will receive further comment during the discussion of the dialogue's conclusion.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Quo quid est mitius, dum in recto animi habitus est? Quid autem ira crudelius est? Quid homine aliorum amantius? Quid ira infestius? Homo in adiutorium mutuum genitus est, ira in exitium. Seneca, *De Ira*, I.5.2.

dialogue. Instead, the entirety of the *Contra Nestorianos* maintains a middle ground, a civil but frank communication of competing interpretations. There is a moment of rhetorical shift in Maxentius' dialogue, which will be discussed more fully below, but there is nothing that constitutes the radical reversal of the *Altercatio*, where Luciferianus surrenders to his opponent and agrees to be his student. The entirety of the dialogue is constant philosophical debate initiated by both sides who are allegedly polite and civil.

Outbursts that break this agreement, however, are frequent, though efforts to quell them are swift to follow. In fact, the first words that Catholicus speaks after the introduction are an attack against Nestorianus, who, in return, asks him to consider his words closely before attacking him with misunderstood accusations.⁴⁴¹ Such encroachments on decorum are constant and perpetrated by each side, though more often by Catholicus, which is surprising. Sometimes such indiscretions are preemptively avoided. Nestorianus asks Catholicus to be patient in his responses, and not to be provoked by what might seem to be contradictory before it is understood.⁴⁴² More often, the fire can be put out only after it has been kindled. After Nestorianus' appeal to patience, for example, the dialogue devolves into a series of mutual accusations of the other's syllogistic sophistry and defenses of their own *sermo humilis* inspired by the truth.⁴⁴³ This continues for the rest of Book I until Nestorianus finally gives ground and restores civility to the colloquy. He asks for clarification from Catholicus, asking him to teach him (*doce me*) about the subtleties between person and nature and what the appropriate

⁴⁴¹ Nestorianus: Noli, quaeso te, antequam meorum dictorum rationem diligenter discutias, calumniosis me impetere uocibus. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.1.45–46.

⁴⁴² [Nestorianus]: quaeso ut patienter de his, quae a te quaeruntur, respondeas; nec te moueant ea, quae tibi fortassis, antequam intellagas, uidentur esse contraria. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.5.133–35.

⁴⁴³ For example, "Catholicus: Uersuta quidem fraude argumentaris, sed nullatenus a duorum filiorum praedicatione discedis." *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.9.370–1

terminology is for discussing them.⁴⁴⁴ Catholicus is then allowed to expound on his position, and Nestorianus agrees with all of his points except for one, how nature can exist independent of person. The first book concludes amicably under the agreement that further matters will be discussed in the following book.

This nicety is quickly forgotten a few pages later when Catholicus claims that he could not expound his position sufficiently in the previous discussion because Nestorius preferred personal victory (*uincere cupiens*) rather than being cured (*sanari*) of his false beliefs,⁴⁴⁵ a statement that is directly opposed to what Nestorianus said at the beginning of Book I.⁴⁴⁶ This rhetorical jab is indicative of an underlying problem with Nestorianus' argumentation that will only become apparent at the very end of the dialogue, but despite this bumpy start, the dialogue continues in much the same vein as the previous book. Tension percolates to the surface but usually cools before it can boil over.⁴⁴⁷ One such episode is notable. Catholicus questions Nestorianus' sincerity in seeking the truth, but Nestorianus responds forcefully.

[Catholic]: ...even if I teach from the scriptures that He, who is "Life," died and was crucified, you will still turn to other matters because you do not yield to the truth, as you never cease from asking pointless questions.

⁴⁴⁴ Nestorianus: Quia nos inuálidos arguis ad discernendum, quid inter naturam sit et personam: doce tu naturam esse sine persona, aut quae possint naturis proprie siue personae uocabula coaptari. *Contra Nestorianos*, I.13.495–6.

⁴⁴⁵ Catholicus: Multa quidem in superiore sermone disserentes, nullum apud te prouectum habere potuimus, quia mens, non sanari sed uincere cupiens, auersa ab his, quae dicuntur, ad nihil aliud intenta est, nisi ut inueniat, quod pro suis partibus eloquatur. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.1.10–14. Maxentius' use of language of healing (*sanari*) is of interest because Theodoret does the same in the *Eranistes*. Cf. "I shall attempt to speak briefly with them [sc. heretics], both in order to heal them and to show concern for those who are still healthy. The name of the text is *Eransistes* or *Polymorphus*, because the heretics have collected terrible doctrines from many sick men." Ἐγὼ δὲ αὐτοῖς βραχέα διαλεχθῆναι πειράσομαι, καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν χάριν θεραπείας καὶ τῆς τῶν ὑγιαίνοντων ἕνεκα προμηθείας. Ὄνομα δὲ τῷ συγγράμματι Ἐρανιστῆς ἢ Πολύμορφος. Ἐκ πολλῶν γὰρ ἀνοσίων ἀνθρώπων ἐρανισάμενοι τὰ δύστηνα δόγματα. *Eranistes*, Prologue, 28.19–23. This connection should not be overemphasized, however, as question and answer was often used in medical texts, making such a statement a pervasive rhetorical trope. See Yannis Papadoyannakis, "Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine *Erotapokriseis*," in *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism*. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, ed. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, pp. 91–103, at 91–2.

⁴⁴⁶ More on this point below.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. Nestorianus: Docuisti certe, quod multis hactenus uerborum ambagibus tegere uidebaris: compositionem nullatenus naturarum seruare proprietatem. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.3.227–229

Nestorian: If I refused to yield to the truth, I would have never brought forth those matters that trouble me before us for discussion. But you, because you cannot respond to my objections, accuse me of asking pointless questions.

[Catholicus]: ...etsi eum, qui est uita, mortuum et crucifixum ex scripturis docuero, rursus, ad alia te conuertens, dum non uis cedere ueritati, superfluas quaestiones mouere non desinis.

Nestorianus: Si nollem cedere ueritati, numquam ea, quae me mouent, in medium discutienda proferrem; tu uero, dum non uales respondere obiectis, nobis quasi superflua quaerentibus insultas.

If there is a moment of transition in the second book of the dialogue, this is it. Catholicus thereafter abandons his more overt criticism of his opponent's questions and ostensibly assumes that Nestorianus is in earnest in his desire for the truth. Nestorianus, on the other hand, becomes more adversarial. This moment of role-reversal also coincides with the beginning of the most important theological discussion within the entire dialogue—the introduction of Catholicus' "novel" Theopaschitism—what it means for God the Word to suffer—the greatest theological innovation, from a modern perspective, of the Scythian monks. The significance of this moment is not lost on Nestorianus or on Maxentius, who created the literary persona of his opponent. "This teaching of yours," Nestorianus complains, "is novel and intolerable" (*noua quaedam et intolerabilis*).⁴⁴⁸

This shift between the two interlocutors, therefore, does not happen by chance. John Maxentius, it seems, sees the need for both the philosophical soundness *and* the respectful civility of the proponent of his main position. That the fair and unbiased discussion of these thorny issues was seen as important can be determined by the discourse that follows. Catholicus coolly explicates his own position, while Nestorianus makes every possible attack against him. A large portion of this debate concerns biblical interpretation, and many of the subsequent

⁴⁴⁸ Nestorianus: Noua quaedam et intolerabilis doctrina haec uestra est. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.9.360–61.

exchanges take the following form: Nestorianus raises a biblical objection, and Catholicus reinterprets or contextualizes Nestorianus' citation.

Before some examples of this type of argumentation are discussed, especially insofar as the form of the dialogue directly impacts it, it is appropriate to pause and consider the reasons for the tone of the dialogue. Why is Catholicus initially cast as the villain and Nestorianus the one who extends the olive branch? Why does Nestorianus persist in his theological resistance, leveling powerful objections at Catholicus' arguments? And, why is an atmosphere of civility maintained, even if only barely? All of these questions, I think, can be answered by the political and theological climate in which the Scythian monks found themselves. As discussed above, the Scythians found themselves in a hostile environment in both Constantinople and Rome. After the Acacian Schism, which began in 484 but concluded in 519 as the Scythian monks arrived in Constantinople, and the controversy surrounding the Theopaschite addition to the Trisagion in 511, John Maxentius and his companions were viewed as disturbers of a peace that had only recently been reinstated.⁴⁴⁹ In response to this, their views were intentionally misrepresented by their adversaries,⁴⁵⁰ and, in fact, they initially found favor from no party at all. Even after they were received more warmly by Justinian in Constantinople, Pope Hormisdas forcibly kept them under house-arrest in Rome as punishment for their failed escape attempt.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. "Insidiator antiquus excitauit monachos de Scythia, qui de domo magistri militum Uitaliani sunt, omnium Christianorum uotis aduersarios, *quorum inquietudo non paruas moras generauit unitati ecclesiarum* et magnopere de praedictae ecclesiae Antiochenae ordinatione," (AC.216.5), and "Harum tamen tribulationum prouisoires et socii et *unitatis ecclesiarum impedimenta monachi de Scythia fuerunt*, qui posteaquam hic [sc. Constantinople] defecerunt *adsignati ab omnibus nihil pacificum cogitare*, ad beatitudinem uestram [sc. Pope Hormisdas] cucurrerunt sperantes subripere et per litteras uestrae sedis suas intentiones confirmare. (AC.217.5) Both of these letters are dated to July 519, the first by Dioscurus the Deacon, and the second to Disocurus and some of his companions.

⁴⁵⁰ Maxwell, "Christology and Grace," 80f.

⁴⁵¹ A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950, 194–5, Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 48–50, & Maxwell, *Latin West*, 90.

At best, the theological views of the Scythian monks were misunderstood. In a letter written to Pope Hormisdas, Dioscurus the Deacon characterized their teaching as the following, “May your blessedness know that these Scythians call everyone who accepts Chalcedon ‘Nestorians,’ claiming that ‘[the teaching of] the council is not strong enough against Nestorius,’ and claiming that we should understand the council as they explain it.”⁴⁵² In sum, the Scythians met resistance from all sides, much of it explicitly hostile and uncharitable. These circumstances, then, bring the tone of *Contra Nestorianos* into sharper focus. From the evidence that can be gathered, the dialogue represents a communicative space that was missing in reality. In contrast to the minor disagreements found in the literary dialogue, the actual conversations held in Constantinople and Rome seem to have been derailed before they could even begin. This fact can account for the initial tone and characterization of the two interlocutors, especially the unexpectedly negative portrayal of the protagonist, not the antagonist, of the dialogue. It is impossible, of course, to know with certainty, but this aspect of the dialogue can be seen as calculated self-deprecation intended as a gesture of respect.⁴⁵³ Although John Maxentius and his companions received unfair treatment from their opponents, the tone of this dialogue can be read, I suggest, as a conscious effort to provide a space of civility and level-headed argument to the fracas. I shall develop this more fully below, but only after a discussion of the content and conclusion of the dialogue. It is to the former that I shall turn next.

⁴⁵² Isti tamen Scythae sciat beatitudo uestra quia omnes accipientes synodum Calcedonensem Nestorianos dicunt dicentes ‘non sufficit synodus contra Nestorium’ et sic debere synodum suscipere, quomodo ipsi exposuerint. CA 224.7.

⁴⁵³ This sentiment is not related to the Latin rhetorical strategy of *deprecatio*, which is a strategy, criticized by Cicero and Quintilian (*De Inventione* 1.15, and *Institutio Oratoria* 7.4.17), that acknowledges willful crime but nonetheless requests pardon. For further discussion see, David Konstan, *Before Forgiveness: The Origins of a Moral Idea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 38f.

Method of Interpretation: *quo facilius obiectionum absolutio legentibus elucescat*

The argumentation found in the *Contra Nestorianos* is notable both for its interpretive content (both what *is* discussed and what *is absent* from the discussion) and the style of the argumentation. First of all, there is a notable omission of argumentation from authority, specifically the explicit discussion of previous claims made by acknowledged patristic authorities such as Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, and the Emperor Zeno. Quotations from the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils are eschewed as well.⁴⁵⁴ This stance is in direct contrast with the rest of the Scythian corpus where this sort of argumentation is abundant. One of their works, for example, is a florilegium of Augustine's writings, and with regard to Theopaschite Theology, Augustine is, in fact, Maxentius' chief authority for using the phrase "*unum de Trinitate*," as stated in *Libellus Fidei*.⁴⁵⁵ However, in the discussion of this phrase in *Contra Nestorianos*, which is an essential point for the conclusion of the argument in the dialogue,⁴⁵⁶ Maxentius completely avoids this former argument from patristic authority, using reason and biblical exegesis instead.⁴⁵⁷ Likewise, there is no discussion of Cyril's Twelve Chapters in the *Dialogus*, although the other dialogue composed by the Scythian monks, the aptly titled *Disputatio XII Capitulorum Cyrilli Alexandrini*, includes the *personae* of Cyril and Nestorius as the only two named interlocutors. In fact, the very structure of the dialogue is based upon a patristic text: the text is subdivided into twelve parts, each corresponding to one of Cyril's Twelve Chapters. Furthermore, there is also no mention of Zeno's *Henotikon*, another key document supporting the

⁴⁵⁴ The final section of *Contra Nestorianos* argues *against* the need for synodal authority for any given position.

⁴⁵⁵ Nec enim uerendi sunt hi, qui nos reprehendere tentant—dicentes: eo quod Trinitatem diuidere est, Christum dicere 'unum de trinitate' —cum et 'ex trinitate,' et, quod amplius est, 'unus trium' a beato dictum sit Augustino. *Libellus Fidei*, 9.188; cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, II.9.16 et passim.

⁴⁵⁶ See *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.19–21.

⁴⁵⁷ This is not just my observation, but it comes from Maxentius' own words. Cf. [Catholicus]: Quapropter, *tam ratione quam his diuinis testimoniis*, uana et inanis docetur illa tua, multis syllogismis collecta, conclusio, quae dicit non conuenire ueritati, Christum unum ex trinitate dicere, quia unum numeri proprium est, numerus autem omnis in diuisione est. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.19.943–47.

Chalcedonian position, in the *Contra Nestorianos*. Instead, the argumentation of *Contra Nestorianos* is consistently anonymous and biblical. Authority figures are referred to obscurely, and only by Nestorianus.⁴⁵⁸ Synodal authority is raised only to be discounted,⁴⁵⁹ the sole exception being a reference to Nestorius' condemnation at the Council of Ephesus, though this is mentioned in passing and his name is omitted (*ille*).⁴⁶⁰ The impact of structuring the *Contra Nestorianos* in this way will become clearer below, after some of the arguments found within this dialogue are discussed in more detail.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of the dialogue's argumentation comes from one of its longer sections, which investigates the relationship between the second person of the Trinity and Christ. After a discussion about the nature of Christ's suffering on the cross, Nestorianus appears, or at least claims, to have gained the upper hand. Using a metaphor of pursuit, he boasts that he has his opponent cornered with no avenue of escape. A verse from the Letter to the Hebrews, he asserts, will be the final snare that will trap Catholicus: *Decebat enim eum, propter quem omnia et per quem omnia, qui multos filios in gloriam adduxerat, auctorem salutis eorum per passiones consummare* [Heb 2:10].⁴⁶¹ For Nestorianus, this ambiguous verse provides clear testimony that God the Word perfected Christ through his suffering. Interpretation, here, is obviously a requirement. In order to arrive at this reading, the various pronouns in the verse are parsed and their relationship to the Trinity illuminated. According to Nestorianus, "*eum propter*

⁴⁵⁸ Nestorianus: Haec de patrum possum scriptis ostendere. Catholicus: Sed et nos, quod unus ex trinitate Christus sit, ex patrum scriptis ostendimus. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.25.1163–1165. *Ostendimus* is certainly perfect tense, possibly referring directly to the passage from *Libellus Fidei*.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. *Contra Nestorianos*, II.25.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. Catholicus: Sed Deum natum ex uirgine, etiam ille dixit, qui apud Ephesum condemnatus est, non quo uere et proprie natum confiteretur Deum ex femina, sed propter unionem Dei uerbi ad hominem factum, quem uirgo enixa est. *Contra Nestorianos*, II.22.1061–64.

⁴⁶¹ The NRSV renders this verse as, "It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bring many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings," translating *eum* as "God," but it is the very ambiguity of *eum* (original Greek, αὐτῷ) that is the subject of discussion in this passage.

quem . . . adduxerat” indicates God the Word, who perfected (*consummare*) “*auctorem salutis eorum*,” who is Christ, through his sufferings (*per passiones*). Following this reading, therefore, Nestorianus claims that Christ is different from God the Word, because the latter purified the former through the passion of the crucifixion. Framed another way, the suffering in Christ is completely absent from the Godhead, because Christ and the Godhead are different.⁴⁶²

Continuing the metaphor begun by Nestorianus, Catholicus retorts that his opponent has left the door wide open for his escape because the quotation from Hebrews actually supports his own position. The knife, it seems, cuts both ways. What follows is Catholicus’ counter-interpretation of the previous verse as well as other excerpts from Hebrews. It is important to note that the truth of the verse from Hebrews is never in question nor is the validity of the Latin translation an issue for the two interlocutors,⁴⁶³ as the Bible is one of the many things upon which the two interlocutors agree.⁴⁶⁴ The source of disagreement is their interpretations, not the

⁴⁶² [Nestorianus]: Quando ergo unius eiusdemque mirabilia et passiones credendae sunt, cum per passiones alter ab altero consummetur? *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.11.511–513.

⁴⁶³ There is one exception to this, which merits further investigation elsewhere. Earlier in Book II, Nestorianus contests not Catholicus’ interpretation but rather his translation of Malachi 3:8, “*Si affigit homo Deum, quia uos configitis me? gens tota*.” He claims instead that the correct reading is the following, “*Si supplantat homo Deum, quia supplantatis me uos? gens tota*.” Catholicus responds that Nestorius’ reading corresponds to what is known as the Vetus Latina version of the Bible, but that his own reading is found in the Vulgate (*in nouella [editione]*). This problem of translation is pursued no further here by the two interlocutors, but this discrepancy in competing translations can be further explored because Jerome’s justification for his translation of this very verse is preserved in his commentary on the prophet Malachi. Part of Jerome’s reasoning for his choice of “*affiget*” rests on how the Syriac and “Chaldean” translators treat the original Hebrew, “The language of the Syrians and Chaldeans translate the Hebrew word *haiecha* (הִיָּעָחָ) as ‘*affiget*’” (*Hoc quod diximus haiecha, lingua Syrorum et Chaldeorum interpretatur, “si affiget”*), *In Malachiam*, 3.269–285. Contrary to what Jerome claims, however, the reading of the Old Testament Syriac Peshitta, which is generally understood to have been translated from the Hebrew in the second century, reads *telam* (ܬܠܡ) “to defraud, cheat” for *haiecha*, supporting the reading *against which* Jerome is arguing, namely “*Si fraudat homo Deum, quia uos fraudatis me?*” (ibid.) There are a number of factors that can account for this discrepancy, some more interesting than others, but this passage from the *Contra Nestorianos* is a good reminder that variant Latin translations of the Bible still had a significant impact on later theological discussion.

⁴⁶⁴ This is not always true for late antique Latin dialogues, especially those that include “pagan” or Jewish interlocutors. Theophilus limits his arguments against Simon to the Hebrew Bible, and when he uses the New Testament, it is almost apologetically. Cf. Et si uolueris plenitudinem euangeliorum cognoscere, inuenies apud Iohannem nostrum euntem ad passionem Christum crucem in humeris sibi portasse, pro quo dicit Esaias: Cuius imperium factum est super humeros eius. *Altercatio legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum*, 6.241–43. Surrounding this quotation are two testimonies from the Psalms and one from Isaiah.

validity of the interpreted object. Catholicus' counterargument, then, is founded upon two principles: the importance of the context of any individual verse's meaning (hence his tendency to use proximal passages in framing his reading),⁴⁶⁵ and the correct identification of each individual speaking or being spoken about in the passage.

[Catholic]: Because you do not understand the apostle's meaning, you are convicted of proclaiming that one "Son of God" is passible and another "Son of God" is impassible. For God the Word did not—as you ignorantly claim—perfect the author of our salvation through his passion, but God the Father perfected God the Son, Jesus Christ, "for whom and through whom all things [exist], the author of His children's salvation" [cf. Heb 2:10], through His passion. Who, in fact, should understand "the author of His children's salvation, perfected through His passion" is someone different from Him, "for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory?" Especially since [the apostle] before this passage said, "But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" [Heb 2:9]. Then the apostle immediately follows this by saying, "It was fitting that He"—that is, God the Father "for whom and through whom all things [exist]"—"perfected 'the author of the salvation' for 'those'"—namely, 'those children' "whom He brought to glory," and, 'He' who, "although He was equal to the Father, was made a little lower than the angels, so that by the grace of God"—that is God the Father—"might taste death for everyone." But we learn this much more clearly and lucidly at the beginning of the letter. . .

[Catholicus]: Nam, cum apostoli sententiam non intellegas, alterum passibilem, alterum impassibilem Dei filium praedicare conuinceris. Nec enim—ut imperite asseris—Deus uerbum, salutis nostrae auctorem consummat per passiones: sed Deus pater, Deum filium Iesum Christum, *propter quem omnia et per quem omnia, auctorem salutis filiorum*, consummat per passiones. Quis enim hic, *auctorem salutis filiorum* per passiones consummatum, alium permittitur intellegere, nisi eum, *qui multos filios in gloriam adduxerat: propter quem omnia et per quem omnia?* nam, cum superius dixisset: *eum qui modicum quam angeli minoratus est, uidemus iesum propter passionem mortis gloria et honore coronatum, ut gratia dei pro omnibus gustaret mortem*, secutus mox intulit, dicens: *decebat enim eum*—hoc est, Deum patrem, *propter quem omnia et per quem omnia*—*auctorem salutis eorum*—uidelicet, quos in

⁴⁶⁵ Catholicus often criticizes Nestorianus for disregarding other passages from scripture. Cf. Catholicus: Dum nimis intentus es in his scripturae diuinae uocibus, quas tuis putas competere partibus, ceteras penitus despicias. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.6.219–221. See also, *ibid.* II.4 and II.15.

*gloriam adduxerat filiorum; qui etiam, cum esset aequalis Deo, paulo minus quam angeli minoratus: gratia Dei patris pro omnibus gustavit mortem—per passiones consummare. Sed manifestius hoc et lucidius, in ipsius epistolae principio, perdocemur. . .*⁴⁶⁶

This tortuous, dense passage is a perfect example of the sort of biblical interpretation described above. First, Catholicus pinpoints the crux of Nestorianus' interpretative error and demonstrates the unsavory implications of his reading—two “God the Word”-s are created. Then, by using his opponent's misreading as a foil, he can break the scriptural text into small pieces, inserting explanatory comments at every moment of ambiguity. An almost staccato effect is created between passages from the biblical text and notes of clarification such as in the following: “He”—not God the Word, but God the Father—“perfected him, for whom and through whom all things exist”—that is, God the Father to God the Word, not God the Word to Christ. The result is a running commentary, wherein verses, clauses, and even individual words are interrupted with glosses and clarification, creating almost a dialogue between biblical text and interpreter.

This particular literary critical method of interpretation is nothing new. It has its origins in Alexandrian commentaries on the epic poems attributed to Homer and later for Virgil's *Aeneid*. Called λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου (solution via persona), this method asks very simple questions about the text—who is speaking or spoken about in any given passage—but it can play a vital role in solving (λύσις) ostensible contradictions within a text. Most commonly, this takes the form of “explaining” various contradictory statements found in the poems by attributing them to the fallible personae contained within the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*, thereby acquitting Homer and Virgil of speaking falsely.⁴⁶⁷ It is not Virgil who lies, according to this logic, only the characters

⁴⁶⁶ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.11.518–537.

⁴⁶⁷ Narratology is far from a modern method of reading literature. Aristarchus and his contemporaries believed that many of the inconsistencies found within Homer could be understood by the fact that different people give different,

in his poems. This method is also found in dialogues. An early example found in a Latin dialogue comes from Cicero's *De Amicitia*. Within this text, an amusing problem arises when it is realized that Terence, with whom both Laelius and the late Scipio were friends, includes statements in his plays that are inconsistent with those explicated by Laelius. Furthermore, because friendship is "nothing other than the agreement of all matters, both human and divine, combined with goodwill and love" (*nihil aliud nisi omnium diuinarum humanarumque rerum cum beniuolentia et caritate consensio*),⁴⁶⁸ it follows that Terence cannot be the friend of either of these famous Romans. Laelius (or Cicero through the *persona* of Laelius) playfully solves the problem (*sed nescio quo modo uerum est, quod in Andria familiaris meus [sc. Terentius] dicit*) by λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου. Like the case of earlier interpreters of Homer, the discrepancy in "Terence's" account of friendship is allayed when the views are attributed properly—they are the opinions of the characters of his play, not necessarily his own (*ut ait idem Terentius, sed ille in Gnathonis persona*).⁴⁶⁹

In Christian literature, especially Christian literature concerned with the language of *persona* and πρόσωπον found in Trinitarian theology, this tool can have significant implications for reading and interpreting the biblical text. The most common example of this reading strategy is found in the exegesis of the Psalms. The question of *persona*, for example, is ubiquitous in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* where the poem-hymns of David must be attributed to the

sometimes deceitful, accounts about the same event. The "discrepancies," therefore, are not Homer's, but of the characters within his poems. Augustine himself uses a version of this method in his discussion of the sack of Rome in 410 in light of the prophecy found in the first book of Virgil's epic, "*His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono / imperium sine fine dedi*," *Aeneid* 1.278–9. Imagining the poet's response to the sack, Augustine suggests that Virgil could give the following defense, "*Non ex persona mea dixi rem falsam, sed Ioui imposui falsitatis personam. Sicut deus falsus erat, ita mendax uates erat*," *Serm.* 105.7.10. For an excellent and succinct discussion of this, in which this quotation from Augustine is also cited, see James J. O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's Aeneid*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 123–27.

⁴⁶⁸ *De Amicitia*, XX.53.23.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. *De Amicitia*, XXIV.89 and XXV.93.

correct *persona*.⁴⁷⁰ Oftentimes, as in the psalms, the concern is *who* is speaking, but just as often the question is *about whom* the text speaks. Such was the case in the controversy, as mentioned above, surrounding the Trisagion hymn in the early sixth century—is the phrase, “ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς,” addressed to the Trinity or only to Christ?⁴⁷¹ As might be expected, then, this method becomes a vital tool for defending one’s position against heresies concerning the Trinity and Christology, and it is especially effective in the dialogic form.

Like Cicero’s dialogue, where Cicero discusses *amicitia* with his friend Atticus through the *personae* of the dialogue, who in turn use this method of reading to interpret the *personae* contained in other texts, namely Terence’s plays, the controversial dialogues also create a Russian doll-like structure, each subordinate layer nested within that which precedes it. The author constitutes the primary *uox*, which is first subdivided into the two interlocutors, who in turn create another layer by their interaction with the authors of the biblical text and, even further, the *personae* created by these authors. In the following passage, Catholicus and Nestorianus participate in an exchange that, *mutatis mutandis*, could be found in a discussion of ancient poetry such as that found in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* or that described in Cicero’s *De Amicitia* above.

Nestorian: Then does the Lord lie when he says, “*No one has ever seen God*” [Jn 1:18, 1 Jn 4:12]? The apostle [Paul] also says the following about God, “*Whom no one has ever seen or can see*” [1 Tim 6:16], and God says to Moses, “*No one shall see my face and live*” [Ex 33:20].

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. “Ego autem constitutus sum rex ab eo super Sion, montem sanctum eius, praedicans praeceptum Domini” [Ps 2:6]. Ex persona ipsius Domini nostri Iesu Christi ista manifesta sunt. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 2.5.1. Forms of *persona* occur 189 times in this text, more than one occurrence per psalm on average.

⁴⁷¹ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 254–6; Maxwell, *Latin West*, 71–2; and Gray, *Chalcedon in the East*, 49.

Catholic: If it is not God who was seen, how does He say, “Behold, I who am speaking am present” [Is 52:6], and the prophet [says], “Our God comes and does not keep silence” [Ps 49:3]?⁴⁷²

Nestorian: Must it be believed, therefore, that Divine Scripture contradicts itself?

Catholic: Divine Scripture does not contradict itself in the eyes of those who understand it piously. But it seems contradictory to those who are deceived by the spirit of heresy and cannot grasp what its truths are. For the following is said, “No one has ever seen God,” and “No one shall see my face and live,” because no one can see, with their earthly eyes, the nature of the divinity, which is obviously not matter but spirit. Furthermore, the prefiguring that happened to Jacob teaches that God was to be seen by humans in His assumed flesh—when in fact this very patriarch wrestles with someone ostensibly human and when blessed by “this man,” he says, “I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved” [Gen 32:30]. Thomas also, after the resurrection of the Lord, felt and touched the Lord’s pierced side, exclaiming, “My Lord and my God” [Jn 20:28].

Nestorianus: Mentitur ergo ipse Dominus, dicens: *Deum nemo uidit umquam?* et apostolus, loquens de Deo: *quem nemo*, inquit, *hominum uidit, sed nec uidere potest*; et ad Moysen dicit Deus: *nemo potest faciem meam uidere et uiuere*.

Catholicus: Si non est Deus, qui uisus est: quomodo ipse dicit: *ecce, qui loquebar, adsum*, et propheta: *Deus manifeste ueniet, Deus noster et non silebit?*

Nestorianus: Contraria ergo sibimetipsi loqui credenda est scriptura diuina?

Catholicus: Non est scriptura diuina sibimetipsi contraria apud eos, qui eam pie intellegunt; sed illis uidetur contraria, qui, haeretico decepti spiritu, non possunt, quae uera sunt, sapere. Nam, quia nemo corporeis oculis potest uidere naturam diuinitatis, quae utique non est corpus, sed spiritus, dictum est: *Deum nemo uidit umquam*, et: *nemo uidet faciem meam et uiuet*. Rursus, quia uidendus est ab hominibus Deus in assumpta carne, docet praefiguratio illa, facta ad Iacob; denique cum homine colluctatur in uisione idem beatissimus patriarcha, et, benedictus ab eo, dicit: *uidi deum facie ad faciem, et salua facta est anima mea*. Hinc et Thomas, post resurrectionem Domini, palpans et contrectans perfossum dominicum latus, exclamat: *Dominus meus, et Deus meus!*⁴⁷³

This phenomenon, which is frequent in *Contra Nestorianos*, especially in this reading of Hebrews, is not limited to one interlocutor’s conversation with and interpretation of the biblical

⁴⁷² Maxentius seems to have reversed the attributions of these two scriptural passages.

⁴⁷³ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.15.

text. A similar phenomenon occurs in the dialogic back-and-forth between Catholicus and Nestorianus themselves. As the dialogue progresses, the two speakers often resort to interpreting or rephrasing their opponent's position, often marked by the phrase *iuxta uos/te*.⁴⁷⁴ But in order to see the impact of this style of argumentation, it is necessary to understand how the dialogue concludes.

The Conclusion of the Contra Nestorianos

The conclusion of the *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos* is remarkable because, unlike nearly all of its Latin dialogue predecessors, it pointedly ends with Nestorianus' stubborn refusal to reconcile with Catholicus despite the fact that they have come to an agreement on every issue. Real progress toward agreement has certainly been made over the course of the dialogue, and this is what makes the conclusion even more jarring. In fact, after all of Nestorianus' objections have been answered, Catholicus finally exclaims in a moment of joyful triumph, "What is this! You agree that it is Catholic and consistent with the Truth to say that Christ is 'one from the Trinity?'"⁴⁷⁵ All seems to have come to a happy conclusion. Just as the Luciferian in Jerome's *Altercatio* and Caecilius in Minucius Felix' *Octavius* are convinced by their respective interlocutors, so also is Nestorianus by Catholicus. But Nestorianus' reaction is far different from those from these two earlier dialogues. Rather than accepting his "victorious defeat" at the hands of his interlocutor, which is the usual trope,⁴⁷⁶ his response is to excuse himself, to quit the discussion. "I do not want to pursue this matter with you any further,"⁴⁷⁷ Nestorianus lamely replies. From this climactic moment, the final two sections of the dialogue radically shift gears in

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, I.2, I.3, I.5, I.6, I.8, I.10, II.1, II.2, II.9, II.13, II.16, II.19.

⁴⁷⁵ Catholicus: Quid ergo? Catholicum esse dicis, et ueritati congruum, unum dicere Christum ex trinitate? *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.23.1092f.

⁴⁷⁶ That is, the fact that one's personal defeat in a dialogue gains the victory of learning the truth.

⁴⁷⁷ Nestorianus: Nihil uolo de hac re ulterius tecum conquirere. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.23.1094.

tone and contain an indictment of Nestorianus' character, epitomized by his very refusal to acquiesce to positions he has himself endorsed. For rhetorical and philosophical effect, this (self)-indictment is spoken by Nestorianus himself.

He first presses Catholicus, demanding why he deserves to be labeled a heretic if he only refuses to use Catholicus' words (*tuis sermonibus uti*), though agreeing with Catholicus in substance. Catholicus retorts by asking him how he would react to someone confessing that "Christ is one nature of God the Word, namely incarnate and animate, but of rational and intellectual quality" (*incarnatam et animatam rationali et intellectuali*).⁴⁷⁸ Nestorianus responds to this query with the strong assertion that this sort of person deserves nothing short of anathematization (*tales . . . anathematizo*) because this position has been clearly defined at a synod, namely Chalcedon—Christ is one person in two natures, one human and incarnate, the other divine and incorporeal. To say otherwise, he states, is heresy.

Second and finally, Catholicus again presses Nestorianus about certain ubiquitous Christian concepts such as the "Trinity," which were never explicitly defined by a synod (*quod in uerbis non continetur conciliorum*) but are unanimously understood to be orthodox. To the reader well-versed in the writing of Maxentius and the Scythian monks, the following response given by Nestorianus is full of irony. He claims that he would use the writings of the church fathers to defend his position (*haec de patrum scriptis doceri facile*). Catholicus, who for the first time in the text, can be clearly identified with John Maxentius himself, responds that he has already argued for his position from the church fathers, "But we have also proved that Christ is

⁴⁷⁸ This labored Latin is an obvious stab at Nestorianus' previous linguistic gymnastics. "*Incarnatam et animatam rationali et intellectuali*" suggests a Chalcedonian position—two natures, one divine and one human—but is expressed in strange, un-Chalcedonian language. The label Monophysite, though, is also applicable to "*incarnatam et animatam rationali et intellectuali*."

‘one from the Trinity’ by the Fathers’ writings.”⁴⁷⁹ As mentioned above, the *persona* of Catholicus *does not* use explicit argument from patristic authority in the dialogue, which makes the connection of this statement with John Maxentius himself certain, because he had, in fact, previously argued for this position in the *Libellus Fidei* from patristic authority, specifically from Augustine’s *De Trinitate*.⁴⁸⁰

This is not the only connection between the conclusion of the dialogue and the historical reality of the Scythian theological project of the early sixth century. The final episode in the dialogue is clearly reminiscent of actual events and arguments used previously against the Scythian monks in their attempts to find allies in Constantinople and Rome. For example, in a letter dated to July 519 and sent by the papal legates in Constantinople to Rome, the legates warn Hormisdas about the Scythian monks (*praedicti monachi*) who were setting out for Italy in order to disseminate their theses (*aliquanta capitula*) among which was the doctrine that Christ is the “one from the Trinity who was crucified” (*inter quae et “unum de trinitate crucifixum” continetur*). As justification for their condemnation of the Scythians’ position, the legates reiterate that they will not accept any doctrine that is not contained within the four ecumenical councils or the writings of Leo (*extra synodos quattuor, extra epistolas papae Leonis nec dicimus nec admittimus*).⁴⁸¹ Because this doctrine is not found in either of these sources, it is rejected by the legates. The distinction between literature and reality, therefore, is destabilized at the conclusion of the dialogue, as the arguments proffered by Nestorianus against Catholicus in

⁴⁷⁹ Catholicus: Sed et nos, quod unus ex trinitate Christus sit, ex patrum scriptis ostendimus.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. *Libellus Fidei*, 9.188; and Augustine, *De Trinitate*, II.9.16 et passim.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. Magnopere praedicti monachi [sc. monachi de Scythia] ad Italiam uenientes aliqua capitula proponere habent, inter quae et ‘unum de trinitate crucifixum’ continetur, sperantes ita confirmari ex auctoritate beatitudinis uestrae. Sicut et in aliis litteris significauimus, et modo hoc dicimus, ut nulla nouitas a sede apostolica scribatur, quia et nos ante imperatorem et ante senatum hoc indicauimus dicentes: ‘extra synodos quattuor, extra epistolas papae Leonis nec dicimus nec admittimus.’ AC 217.8–9.

the dialogue have nearly verbatim analogues in the extant records of the arguments leveled against Maxentius and his followers. At the end of the dialogue, Catholicus coalesces with John, and Nestorianus represents the myriad of actors who opposed the Scythians.

The conclusion of the dialogue, then, is not subtle in its argument—hypocrite is ultimately no different from heretic.⁴⁸² In the final paragraphs of the text, Nestorianus (read: Maxentius’ adversaries) condemns, in the strongest terms, his own hypocritical behavior. He upholds the following system: doctrinal points agreed upon in the ecumenical councils must be embraced as orthodox truth, both in substance and in the approved terminology, and when there is no precedent in these councils, the authority of the church fathers is a reliable foundation upon which to set one’s argument. The hypocrisy arises when he refuses to follow his own advice on the Theopaschite position explicated by the Scythians. The sick patient Nestorianus refuses to take his medicine, to use the medical analogy often used in Late Antiquity,⁴⁸³ and what is worse, it is medicine that he has prescribed to others and himself. Instead, with his final words in the dialogue, Nestorianus refuses to accept his and Catholicus’ arguments and breaks the conversation.

Nestorian: Although I believe that even this [sc. that “Christ is one from the Trinity”] is easily taught from the writings of the Fathers, I still refuse to say this, and I shall not continue the discussion further with you, clinging steadfast to my position instead.

Catholic: I was truly amazed that you could conquer human glory⁴⁸⁴ so that you suffer no misunderstanding, insofar as you accept, through the censure of divine scripture, the position against which you have just

⁴⁸² A version of a criticism made by Galen, who cleverly puns on the words “Ἱπποκράτης” and “ὑποκριτής” in his treatise, *That the Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*. According to Galen, the so-called doctors claim to follow Hippocrates but are hypocrites because they actively practice the opposite of what Hippocrates taught. Cf. *That the Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*, I.7.

⁴⁸³ Which is also found in this very dialogue: Catholicus: Multa quidem in superiore sermone disserentes, nullum apud te proeuertum habere potuimus, *quia mens, non sanari sed uincere cupiens*, auersa ab his, quae dicuntur, ad nihil aliud intenta est, nisi ut inueniat, quod pro suis partibus eloquatur. *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.1.10–14.

⁴⁸⁴ The Latin words “*uincere te posse humanam gloriam*” are probably meant to be pointedly ambiguous. I have translated them so as to make the meaning of the sentence clear, but the implication, as the following sentence shows, is that human glory has, in fact, conquered Nestorianus.

recently fought as consistent with the Truth. Yet because you are determined to enclose yourself within your own position rather than endorse a true confession with a love of eternal blessedness, I can never consider you anything but a heretic, since you deny that God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered in the flesh for our salvation, is one from the holy and indivisible Trinity, to whom is honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Nestorianus: Quamquam et hoc ex patrum scriptis doceri facile credo, sed ego dicere nullatenus acquiesco, nec tecum ulterius sermonem conseram, sed meam tenaciter fouebo sententiam.

Catholicus: Mirabar equidem uincere te posse humanam gloriam, ut nulla te confusio superaret, quatenus congruam ueritati sententiam, quam hactenus impugnaueras, diuina correptus auctoritate, reciperes. Uerum, quia apud te definitum est, in tua te continere sententia,⁴⁸⁵ quam ueram confessionem, amore aeternae beatitudinis, approbare: nec ego te umquam aliud aliquid, quam haereticum, iudicabo, qui, Deum Uerbum Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui pro nostra salute passus est carne, unum esse ex sancta et indiuidua trinitate, non approbas; cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.⁴⁸⁶

It is clear that the conclusion of the dialogue is a condemnation of the hypocritical attitudes of those with whom John Maxentius and his comrades had debated, but this is far from the primary motive of the dialogue. By no means did Maxentius compose this dialogue to taunt his opponents, or at least, *primarily* to taunt his opponents. Rather, I contend that this unusual closure to the dialogue, when read in light of the historical context, the tone, and method of argumentation of the dialogue described above, points to a calculated evolution of the Scythian strategy of self-promotion that adeptly utilizes the dialogic form. In order to describe this shift in strategy, it is useful to summarize briefly here the problems and rhetoric that the monks had previously faced.

⁴⁸⁵ A superb example of what is variously known as “Metaphorical Word Order,” “Mimetic Syntax,” and “Logotactic Iconicity.” “*Te continere*” is syntactically “contained” within “*in tua . . . sententia*,” the order of the words imitating their own meaning. Some scholarship has discussed this phenomenon in Augustan poetry, but its presence in prose, especially in Late Antiquity, has been all but completely neglected. See Luca D’Anselmi (forthcoming), “Metaphorical Word Order in Latin.” D’Anselmi discusses prose examples from Livy, Tacitus, and Jerome.

⁴⁸⁶ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.25.1166–1179.

First, the post-Chalcedonian theological controversies that constitute the political landscape of the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries are rife with partisan politics. What this means is that patristic authority has become an ineffective platform for compromise because of partisan leanings for various figures and councils. Pope Leo, for example, and his thinking are essential to the West, but problematic or even heretical to some in the East. Quoted authority, therefore, often appeases one side, but angers and alienates the other. Second, the Scythians' position was purposely misconstrued by many in the Constantinopolitan court, who forwarded this skewed interpretation to Rome through epistles.⁴⁸⁷ The political deck was stacked, in a sense, against the Scythian position, and one can infer that moments of sincere debate about their position were rarer than the monks might have wished. Third and related to this, the evidence also suggests that there was a real atmosphere of hostility directed at these monks. Regrettably, our knowledge of this is limited mostly to the letters found in the *Avella Collectio*, but the evidence is consistently negative.⁴⁸⁸

Given these difficulties faced by the Scythian monks, the purpose and force of the dialogue becomes clear—it was composed to counteract them. Most importantly, the argumentation of the dialogue marks a shift in *how* the Scythian monks justified their Theopaschite theology. That the dialogue's conclusion includes complaints against Nestorianus about his inability to utilize the ecumenical councils and especially patristic authority only highlights the difference between the dialogue and the previous works of the Scythian monks. Because his opponents disavow the legitimacy of arguments from authority, John Maxentius abandons such an argument and turns to a higher authority, scripture and logic (*tam ratione*

⁴⁸⁷ David R. Maxwell, "Christology and Grace in the Sixth-Century Latin West," 80f.

⁴⁸⁸ See above *passim*.

quam his diuinis testimoniis).⁴⁸⁹ Such a move is clever and powerful because it avoids a number of pitfalls that troubled the Scythian monks' earlier efforts. By passing over writings associated with controversial figures, the dialogue does not automatically alienate certain factions. By eschewing mention of Chalcedon, the dialogue avoids, as far as possible, the circular argument of validating Chalcedon with Chalcedonian teachings. By leaning almost entirely on scriptural exegesis, the text forces its contemporary readers to take its content seriously. Like the rhetorical strategy of many earlier Latin dialogues, *Contra Nestorianos* seeks to prove its validity by making its argument from uncontested common ground, in this case the Bible.

Furthermore, the dialogic form itself includes elements that are advantageous, or even essential, to this program. Most obviously, the back-and-forth, polyvocal discourse of the dialogue allows for the careful juxtaposition of the views of each side. This view—that dialogue was the most effective method for comparing philosophical views and arriving at the truth—was ubiquitous in antiquity.⁴⁹⁰ By progressing through the problems and objections of Nestorianus in order, the reader is able to see and judge the merits of the argument for him- or herself. Without this thoughtful expression of the views from each side, the argument of *Contra Nestorianos* would only be half-baked polemic. Furthermore, the dialogue also adds a level of politeness to the content, the importance of which should not be discounted. Politeness and respect matter in public discourse, and as has been noted above, the ancient texts consistently make this point explicitly. Therefore, by distancing himself and his opponents from the work through the usage of generically-named interlocutors,⁴⁹¹ coupled with the overall positive tone of the dialogue

⁴⁸⁹ *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, II.19.943f.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. “Cum enim neque melius quaeri ueritas possit, quam interrogando et respondendo.” Augustine, *Soliloquia*, 2.14 and passim throughout this thesis.

⁴⁹¹ For the importance of generic interlocutors for avoiding ad hominem attacks on specific individuals, compare the following passage from Jerome's second dialogue against the Pelagians . Cf. Unde ut omnibus approbarem me non odisse homines, sed errores, nec aliquorum infamiam quaerere, magisque dolere uicem eorum qui falsi nominis

described above, John Maxentius is able fashion both a convincing and powerful argument from biblical authority that acts as a polite but firm anatreptic for his readers—“do not be like this fictional Nestorianus who foolishly contradicts himself.”

scientia supplantantur, Attici et Critobuli nomina posui, per quos et nostra pars et aduersariorum quid sentiret, expromerem. quin potius omnes, qui Catholicam sectamur fidem, optamus et cupimus damnari haeresim, homines emendari, aut certe, si in errore uoluerint permanere, non nostram culpam esse qui scripsimus, sed eorum qui mendacium praetulerint ueritati. Jerome, *Dialogi Contra Pelagianos*, Prologue, 22–7.

Conclusions

Why did Latin authors from Late Antiquity write dialogues? It would be foolish to suggest that this study provides a definitive or an exhaustive answer to this question. There is much more work to do and many texts that still need attention before a more complete picture can be drawn. At the same, there is intrinsic value in even asking this question about the dialogues from Late Antiquity. As discussed in Chapter 1, recent work on the dialogue has questioned whether dialogues even existed among the people of Late Antiquity, especially Christians, and much of the backlash to this provocative suggestion has focused on negating it: there *are* many dialogues from Late Antiquity! This thesis certainly falls within this category to some extent (see Chapter 2), but it was my aim to attempt to take this a step further. Yes there are many diverse dialogues from this period, now what do we do with them?

My answer was to read them carefully, believing that the historical circumstances might be especially useful in beginning to answer the question *why*. In Chapters 3 and 4, I suggested that both Jerome and John Maxentius decided to compose dialogues as a vehicle for their philosophical arguments because they realized that the mode of transmission can be just as important as the content itself. Jerome, for example, counters the alienating rhetoric of the Luciferians with a dialogue that both refutes their position but also instructs his readers *how* to debate with the Luciferians, using strategies unique to dialogue to make this point. John Maxentius also responds to his inability to find dialogue in Constantinople and Rome, by shifting his strategy and using his dialogue to foster a mutual debate that could not happen in reality.

There is much still to be done, and the first priority, in my view, should be those Latin dialogues that also have well defined historical contexts. Jerome's *Dialogus Contra Pelagianos* and Rusticus the Deacon's *Disputatio Contra Acephalos* are notable examples. By culling more

comparanda, a more defined picture might develop and more significant patterns might emerge. The greatest obstacle to this endeavor, however, is the fact that many dialogues do not appear to have significant contexts, historical or even geographical. This might ultimately turn out to be true, but it has been my experience that this cannot be determined until the text has been closely read (John Maxentius' *Contra Nestorianos*, for example). On a related and final note, it is also my view that classicists and historians who focus on Late Antiquity should be quicker to read dialogues composed in the various languages spoken in this period. In order for a clearer picture to emerge, the Latin, Greek, Syriac, and Coptic (among others) need to be read and read in conjunction. It is of course very difficult for a single person to possess the linguistic and historical competencies required to address all of these texts. Collaboration, therefore, is a *sine qua non* for this endeavor. Sincere dialogue fosters more dialogue, and it is with this in mind that we should move forward.

Appendix A: Latin Dialogues of Late Antiquity

	Author	Title	Latin edition(s)	Translation
1	Augustine	<i>Contra Academicos</i>	Green, CCSL 29:89–137	WSA I.3
2	—	<i>De Beata Vita</i>	Green, CCSL 29:65–85	WSA I.3
3	—	<i>De Ordine</i>	Green, CCSL, 29: 89–137	WSA I.3
4	—	<i>Soliloquia</i>	Hörmann, CSEL 89:3–98	WSA I.3
5	—	<i>De Magistro</i>	Green, CCSL 29:157–203	WSA I.3
6	—	<i>De Libero Arbitrio</i>	Hörmann, CSEL 89:211–321	WSA I.3
7	—	<i>De Animae Quantitate</i>	Hörmann, CSEL 89:131–231	WSA I.4
8	—	<i>De Musica</i>	PL 42:709–42	WSA I.3
9	—	<i>Contra Faustum Manichaeum</i>	Zycha, CSEL 25.1:249–797	WSA I.20
10	—	<i>Contra Felicem Manichaeum*</i>	Zycha CSEL 25.2:801–852	WSA I.20
11	—	<i>Collatio cum Maximino Arianorum Episcopo*</i>	PL 42:709–742	WSA I.18
12	—	<i>De Grammatica</i> †	Bonnet, Budé (2013)	(FR) Bonnet, Budé (2013)
13	—	<i>De Dialectica</i> †	Pinborg, Reidel (1975)	Jackson, Reidel (1975)
14	Arnobius Iunior	<i>Conflictus Arnobii Catholi cum Serapione</i>	Daur, CCSL 25A:43–173	(ITL) F. Gori, Società Editrice Internazionale (1992)
15	Boethius	<i>In Porphyrii Isagogen commentorum editio prima</i>	Brandt, CSEL 48:3–132	n/a

16	—	<i>Consolatio Philosophiae</i>	Bieler CCSL 94	Stewart et al. LCL 74
17	Eusebius of Vercelli	<i>De Trinitate</i>	Bulhart et al. CCSL 9:3–99	n/a
18	Evagrius	<i>Altercatio legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum</i>	Demeulenare CCSL 64: 255–302	Varner, E. Mellen Press (2004)
19	Faustinus	<i>De Trinitate</i>	Simonetti, CCSL 69:295–353	(FR) Mardoyan & Mattei, University of Lyon (2005)
20	Fulgentius the Mythographer	<i>Expositio Vergilianae Continentiae</i>	Helm, Teubner (1898)	Whitbread, Ohio State University Press (1971)
21	Gregory the Great	<i>Dialogi</i>	Vogüé, SC 251, 260, 265	Zimmerman, FCNT 39
22	Isidore of Seville	<i>Synonyma</i>	Elfassi, CCSL 111B:5–147	Throop, MedievalMS (2012)
23	Jerome	<i>Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi</i>	Canellis, CCSL 79B:5–61.	Fremantle & Martley, NPNF(2nd) 6
24	—	<i>Dialogus Contra Pelagianos</i>	Moreschini, CCSL 80:3–124	Hritz, FCNT 53
25	John Cassian	<i>Collationes</i>	Petschenig CSEL 13	Luibheid, Paulist Press (1985)
26	John Maxentius	<i>Disputatio XII Capitulorum Cyrilli Alexandrini et sic Dictorum Nestorii Anti Anathematismatorum</i>	Glorie, CCSL 85A: 195–213	Pereira (2015)
27	—	<i>Dialogus Contra Nestorianos</i>	Glorie, CCSL 85A: 51–110	Kuper (2017)
28	Macrobius	<i>Saturnalia</i>	Kaster, OCT (2011)	Kaster, LCL 510, 511, 512
29	Minucius Felix	<i>Octavius</i>	Kytzler, Teubner 1981	Freese, Macmillan (?)

30	Rusticus the Deacon	<i>Disputatio Contra Acephalos</i>	Petri, CCSL 100	n/a
31	Sulpicius Severus	<i>Dialogi</i>	Halm, CSEL 1:152–216	NPNF, 11.
32	Vigil of Thapsus	<i>Dialogus Athanasio, Ario, Sabellio, Photino, et Probo iudice, interlocutoribus</i>	PL 62:179–238	n/a
33	Anonymous	<i>Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae</i>	CCSL, 69A: 25–47	n/a
34	—	<i>Contra Philosophos</i>	CCSL 89A:1-352	n/a
35	—	<i>Contra Iudaeos</i>	CCSL 58B:3-271	n/a
36	—	<i>Consultationes Zacchei christiani et Apollonii philosophi</i>	Feiertag, SC 401–2, Feiertag	(FR) Feiertag, SC 401–2 (1994)
37	—	<i>Life of Saint Helia</i>	Burrus & Conti, Oxford University Press (2013)	Burrus & Conti, Oxford University Press (2013)
38	Pseudo-Augustine	<i>Collatio cum Pascentio Ariano</i>	PL 33:1153–62	n/a
40	Pseudo-Augustine	<i>Contra Felicianum Arianum</i>	PL 42:1152–72	n/a
41	Pseudo-Augustine	<i>De Unitate S. Trinitatis Dialogus</i>	PL 42:1207–1212	n/a
42	Pseudo-Hegemonius	<i>Acta Archelai</i>	Beeson, De Gruyter (1906)	Vermes, Brepols (2004)
43	Pseudo-Origen	<i>Adamantii Dialogus</i>	Buchheit, Wilhelm Fink Verlag Munchen (1966)	Pretty, Peeters (1997)

Appendix B: John Maxentius, *Dialogue against the Nestorians in Two Books*

Translator's note

The task of a translator is a difficult one and has been recognized as such since the time of Cicero if not earlier. Each language has its own unique character, as does every individual user of that language. Necessarily then something is lost or at least a difference is created when a text is translated into another language. Recognizing this distance or difference, translators both ancient and modern have noted two competing interests in translation, usually understood to be proportionally exclusive of the other, that attempt to mitigate this problem. These two interests are that the translation accurately capture the true meaning of the original though not necessarily representing the individual words and constructions found in the original language, often called *sensus de sensu* in Latin, and that the translation accurately represent the words, constructions, and syntax of the original language, though not necessarily expressing its meaning in the idiom of the target language, often called *uerbum e uerbo* in Latin.⁴⁹² Every translator must position his or her work somewhere on this continuum, usually somewhere in the middle. Influencing this decision will be a number of factors such as what sort of text is being translated, who will be reading it, for what reason, and so forth.

For this translation of John Maxentius' *Dialogus Contra Nestorianos*, the first, of which I am aware, into any modern language, I have chosen to follow the Latin closely in rendering it into English, though I have of course allowed myself some freedoms. My reasoning for this is

⁴⁹² For a good discussion of ancient thinking on translation and these two competing goals, see Sebastian Brock, "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*. 20.1 (1979): 69–87.

twofold. First, the nature of the dialogue and the theological issues at stake demand an accurate portrayal of the language because part of John Maxentius' program for composing this text was to articulate his position clearly in standard theological terminology against learned, scrupulous objectors. For Maxentius, words mattered. Second, many modern readers of this dialogue, I suspect, would also be interested (if not primarily interested) in the construction of theological positions as they are expressed over the course of the dialogue, an interest which also places great value in an accurate representation of the original Latin. It was with these two reasons in mind that this translation was created. It is my personal view that if and when this translation is published elsewhere, it should be printed with the original Latin on the facing page in order that the reader, whatever his or her facility with the original language, can quickly compare the translation with the Latin. Because this format is not possible here, I have inserted the original Latin in parentheses in some cases where I found it useful, though these judgments are subjective. The sparse explanatory notes are far from exhaustive and should also be expanded significantly in subsequent iterations.

A few miscellaneous notes. I have used the NRSV (or a slightly modified version) for biblical quotations and close allusions to it. I have opted to capitalize the masculine pronoun when referring to God (e.g., "His," "Him) because it often adds clarity to passages and prevents inserting words that are not present in the Latin. All and any errors in this preliminary version of the English text are mine and mine alone.

Dialogus Contra Nestorianos, John Maxentius

Preface

1. If it were possible for there to be an end of deceit in this age, Christ's church would rest easily everywhere.⁴⁹³ But because an inexplicable evil somehow never ceases from attacking human hearts and from disturbing the Catholic faith with unforeseen arguments, followers of the Truth must first diagnose their sophistical arguments with care, then expose [their flaws] correctly, and when the issue is raised publicly, destroy them with the hammer of Truth, fighting for the Truth against them, even to the point of bloodshed—since this is what holy scripture commands when it says, “*Fight to the death for the Truth*” [cf. Sirach 4:24], and “*certain in the Truth even unto death*” [cf. *ibid.* 4:33]. Similarly Paul, when he censures the fearfulness of some, saying, “*In your struggle against sin not yet have you resisted to the point of shedding blood*” [Hebrews 12:4].

2. Therefore, we must resist and hold nothing back against the heretics, confident that there will hardly be a lack of discussion in a matter such as this. For if “*the Lord opened the mouth of a donkey*” [Numbers 22:28] to refute the foolishness of a prophet, how much more will he open the heart of the faithful to refute the insanity of the wicked. Moreover, although the Nestorian depravity was already condemned to its roots, it somehow arises again more strongly, attacking the very foundations of the Catholic faith with clever, syllogistic arguments, allegedly under the proclamation of religion but actually trying to desecrate religion. I expect that I, aided by your prayers, my dear Theophilus, must bring to light their impious beliefs, which are secretly hidden in their Catholic language, so that when they are exposed and denounced they might be apparent to all. At the same time, I shall do this to those who, although they admit that Christ is God, driven by what perversity I not know, refuse to confess that [Christ is] “one from the holy and indivisible Trinity” (*unum ex sancta et indiuidua trinitate*).

3. Because they refuse to affirm this belief, who would not understand that they deny, in different words, the very thing that they affirm, and believe that Christ is separate from the Trinity and—like the Arians—impiously believe that Christ is a creature? For if Christ is true God—which He is—he is either the Trinity or one from the Trinity. But because it is sacrilege to believe that Christ is the entire Trinity, it follows that Christ God is one from the Trinity, unless they contend perhaps that he is some other god apart from the Trinity. But this argument is not Catholic but Manichaean, as they fabricate two gods that are opposed to each other.

4. I decided to compose this work of our disputation under the personae of a heretic questioning an orthodox believer who responds to his questions, in order that his refutation of the heretic's objections might be clearer to my readers.

⁴⁹³ CCSL 85A (1978): 51–110.

Chapters of Book I

1. On the usage of the term *Theotokos*, that is, *Genetrix* of God.
2. That the heretics claim that the blessed virgin is *Theotokos*, not because she gave birth to God according to the flesh, but a man united to God.
3. That they do not call the blessed virgin "*Theotokos*" correctly or appropriately.
4. That they falsely accuse those who correctly and appropriately confess that God was born according to the flesh from a woman of [confessing] that a beginning was given to God the Word from the woman.
5. That they sophistically and perversely claim that she was the mother of [His] humanity.
6. That from those words from the Gospel that we read were addressed to Joseph, the holy virgin's husband (namely, "*Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him*" [cf. Matt 2:13], and "*For those who were seeking the child's soul are dead*" [Matt 2:20]) not [containing] the words "Mighty God" as the prophet says [cf. Is 9:6], but only the word "child," they attempt to claim that Christ is called "Mighty God" on account of Him to whom he will be joined because he was born from a woman.
7. About this scripture passage, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" [Jn 3:6].
8. About the fact that they sophistically claim not that God was made Christ, but that Christ was made God.
9. That they foolishly claim that Christ is not God by nature, but by merit and union—and this because of that passage from Acts of the Apostles where Peter says to Cornelius, "*For God was with him*" [Acts 10:38].
10. That they impiously claim that Christ is only different from the prophets because he was born without the seed of a man, and, although they do not use the terms "after the makeup" (*post conformationem*) but "in the very makeup" (*in ipsa conformatione*) they contend that God the Word was joined to Christ.⁴⁹⁴
11. That they claim that just as there are two natures (*naturae*) in Christ, so also are there two substances (*subsistentiae*) or persons (*personae*) in him.
12. That they perversely assert that man was assumed by God, not that God was made man, and that they define nature and person as the same thing.
13. That there are some terms appropriate to either natures or persons, which are not ambiguous, but other words common to both, which are ambiguous.
14. That there is a difference between nature and person, and that not every nature is a person.
15. That heretics refuse to believe that God was made man, and that [this happened] according to the birth of God the Word in the flesh.

⁴⁹⁴ For the decision to translate *conformatio* as "makeup," see the note ad loc.

Book I

Introduction

Nestorian: When I heard that you defamed my spoken claims, my soul was often stirred to investigate the holy matter of divine dispensation with you. But now that we have the opportunity of time and place—God has granted me your presence—I greatly desire that you debate with me present before you, since you never ceased from disparaging me when I was absent.

Catholic: Whoever shows himself to adhere, not to deceit, but to the Truth, is never bothered by querulous whispers. As to the one who is self-aware of his own falsity, no one should complain about him, though he certainly is distressed with stabs of suspicion. But the slanders of the malicious subtract nothing from the sensible; on the contrary it improves them. For if they are in any way censured truly, they will be corrected so that they are censured no more, but if they are falsely accused, [their attackers] must be condemned and suffer penalty. Therefore, if—as you believe—I have slandered your assertions, come as you like and show yourself to be an adherent of the Truth and me to be your false accuser.

Nestorian: Setting aside this matter, if you please, let us discuss openly what both of us judge, with simple mind, to be catholic teaching, so that we might not seem to waste time in what does not pertain to the matter at hand.

Catholic: In my opinion, it is always best and most acceptable to pursue the Truth without mockery and insults.

Nestorian: Whoever desires not Truth but the glory of personal victory usually prefers mockery to rational judgment. But there is no place at all for mockery among those whose sole intention is the joy of discovering the Truth.

Catholic: Truth herself is accustomed, as scripture says,⁴⁹⁵ to appear graciously before disputants on the path when she observes them sincerely striving to find her. Our disputation, therefore, will doubtless reach a fruitful conclusion, if belligerent contentiousness is absent from it.

Nestorian: I am completely of the same opinion, provided that you also agree to respond to my questions with gentle spirit.

Catholic: Proceed as you wish, so that I can see what you want me to know.

1.

Nestorian: I would like you to explain to me how you call the blessed virgin *Theotokos*, that is, *Genetrix* of God, who, we agree, gave birth to Emmanuel.

Catholic: The very beginning of your questioning reveals that you believe that there are two sons!

Nestorian: Please do not attack me with misunderstood accusations before you consider my words carefully.

Catholic: Whoever is not contradicted by someone else but contradicts himself cannot complain rightly of “false accusations.” But if I have not understand the meaning of your question entirely, attribute this to my ignorance until you explain it more clearly why you added, “who, we agree, gave birth to Emmanuel,” when you required me to explain the meaning of the term *theotokos*. For if, when you inquire about the meaning of the term *Theotokos*, you believed

⁴⁹⁵ Cf. Wisdom 6:16.

that Emmanuel, who you say was born of the virgin, was also the Son of God, it would have been enough to say only that—for this is the way we call the blessed virgin *Theotokos*. But by adding, “who, we agree, gave birth to Emmanuel,” you indicate and therefore I can understand that you believe that Emmanuel is *not* the Son of God.

Nestorian: Never—as you assert—have I believed Emmanuel to be other than the Son of God, but I want to know the way in which the blessed virgin is called *Theotokos* by you.

Catholic: If Emmanuel, who, you confess, was born of the blessed virgin, has always been believed to be the Son of God by you—and he is not “Son of God” unless he is God—then we are completely right in calling the blessed virgin *Theotokos*.

Nestorian: So quickly do you think that you have explained the rationale behind the question that we have proposed as if there is nothing more to be asked about this question.

Catholic: Please continue as you like without any delay.

2.

Nestorian: Although I do not hesitate from confessing that the blessed virgin is *Theotokos*, I confess that she is *Theotokos*, not because she gave birth to God, but because she gave birth to a man united to God.

Catholic: What was previously hidden is now revealed! For if the blessed virgin Mary did not give birth to God, but a man united to God, without any doubt she is—according to you—*anthropotokos*, that is, *genetrix* of a human. Therefore, how can you profess that the same virgin is *Theotokos*, when you claim that she did not give birth to God but only a human?

Nestorian: It happened by a union that he who was born of the virgin is called “God.” It is on account of God to whom he earned the right to be united and with whom he earned the right to have one dignity and honor.

Catholic: Therefore, the blessed virgin—according to you—is *Theotokos* in name only, through dignity and honor, not truly and rightly, since she did not truly and rightly give birth to God the Word according to the flesh, but a man whom God granted [the right] to be joined with Himself so that he might be called God—none of which is true.

3.

Nestorian: Because it is precisely this that troubles us so much, namely that you claim that God was truly and rightly born from a woman and for this reason you assert that the blessed virgin is *Genetrix* of God, I ask you, “Does he who begets truly and rightly beget [offspring] of the same substance as himself, or of a different substance?”

Catholic: Your question is foolish and silly. For who is believed to beget [offspring] of a different substance?

Nestorian: If you judge it foolish and silly to believe that someone begets [offspring] of a different substance, it follows, therefore, that God the Word was truly and rightly born not from his mother but the Father, since they share one and the same substance. Otherwise, the mother of the Lord will doubtless be consubstantial not only with God the Word, to whom—according to you—she is believed to give birth, but also with God the Father, with whom God the Word is also consubstantial.

Catholic: The virgin is consubstantial with God the Word, not according to the divinity that He shares as one and the same with the Father, but according to the flesh. Whoever does not believe this is apart from the faith. Clearly, because [the blessed virgin] gave birth, not to some man, who is *not* God by nature, but to God the Word incarnate who became man through Himself, this is why she is truly and rightly believed to be the *Theotokos*.

Nestorian: If the blessed virgin Mary gave birth to what is God by nature, she is then not *genetrix* of flesh but *genetrix* of divinity. How it is that you claim that God the Word was born of a virgin, not according to the divinity that he shares with the Father, but according to the flesh?

Catholic: She is not *genetrix* of divinity, as you claim that we believe, although she is truly and rightly *Genetrix* of God, because she gave birth, not to the divinity of God the Word, but to God the Word incarnate who became man through Himself, just as I said above.

4.

Nestorian: If we grant that God was truly and rightly born of a woman, I fear lest God the Word, who is without a beginning, is understood to receive a beginning from the woman.

Catholic: And why should we not grant Him a beginning according to the flesh from the woman, although He is without a beginning according to His divinity from the Father?

Nestorian: I do not understand how he, who is without beginning from the Father, is said by you to have a beginning according to the flesh. Is it because he, who is without beginning from the Father, is said to have received a beginning when he was changed from his divinity into the flesh? Or is it because he, who is without beginning, is said to have a beginning when he took on the flesh?

Catholic: It is in no way possible for God, who is without change, to *be changed* into flesh. Instead, remaining God perfect in His own divinity but uniting Himself to flesh and the rational soul, He began to exist as a human, which he was not before.⁴⁹⁶ By this reason, He, who is without any beginning from the Father, is said to receive a beginning according to the flesh.

5.

Nestorian: Since our inquiry is engaged with the most important and intricate matters, I ask that you patiently respond to what you are asked. And do not be provoked by what might perhaps seem to be contradictory to you before you understand.

Catholic: You ask me to be patient as if I have been impatient so far in answering your questions.

Nestorian: Not at all, but I ask that you continue on with the gentleness with which you began.

Catholic: "*It is a gift of God*" [Ephesians 2:6].

Nestorian: Do you confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in one or in two substances?

Catholic: In two, without any doubt. But they are united in an agreement regarding nature, not regarding persons (*naturali, non personali conuentione*).

Nestorian: Before the question about which the matter at hand is concerned is finished, you rush forward to another matter. Leaving aside the matter about the union of natures for now, please respond absolutely to this question: do you assert that Christ, who you confess is in two natures, is born only from the Father, or from his mother as well?

Catholic: I confess that one and the same Christ is born from the Father and his mother.

Nestorian: In different ways? Or, from the Father and his mother in one and the same way?

Catholic: Without any doubt, in one way from the Father, and in another way from his mother.

Nestorian: According to which way do you assert that he is born from the Father, that he is born from his mother?

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Ecclesiastes 3:13, 5:18; and Ephesians 2:8.

Catholic: According to divinity he is born from the Father, but he also, one and the same, is born from his mother according to humanity.

Nestorian: Why, therefore, do you truly and rightly call his mother “*genetrix* of God” and not [*genetrix*] of that nature of which she is the mother, and to which the union of God the Word has conferred the name and dignity of his own divinity?

Catholic: Whose nature of humanity do you believe this to be, which you want truly and rightly to be from the virgin?

Nestorian: Christ the Lord obviously.

Catholic: How do you define “Christ?”

Nestorian: Christ is God and man.

Catholic: Was that nature of humanity, which you claim is truly and rightly from the virgin, “made of God and a human” (*Dei ergo et hominis facta est*)?

Nestorian: Who could doubt this?

Catholic: Then how is it not absurd to believe that God and man assumed human nature from the virgin? But if God and man are believed—according to you—to have assumed human nature from the virgin, where, before God assumed human nature from the virgin, must the man be believed to have been made so that God and a man can be believed to have assumed human nature from the virgin?

Nestorian: I am amazed that you ridicule the Truth so recklessly.

Catholic: Never do I ridicule the Truth. I only refute your absurd answer with truest reason.

Nestorian: You take offense, I think, when you hear that Christ is God and man.

Catholic: Hearing that Christ is God and man does not offend me, but it offends you, who do not believe that Christ is God made man. For when I plainly reply to your questions that one and the same [Christ] is begotten from the Father according to divinity and born from His mother according to humanity, you, trying to show that God [was born] from the Father, and a man from his mother, conclude from the following argument and take it upon yourself to teach that one should not believe that the blessed virgin is truly and rightly *genetrix* of God, but of the human nature of which she is the mother. If, therefore, God the Word formed himself as man when he took on the flesh in his mother’s womb, it is without any doubt that the nature of humanity assumed from the virgin [belonged] to no one else but Him who formed Himself a man from it. Therefore, truly and rightly the blessed virgin is believed to be *Genetrix* of God according to the flesh, since God was not changed into the nature of the flesh with the result that He who was born was not God. Instead, He remained God and became man when He was born.

6.

Nestorian: Although [making arguments] up and down, you do nothing, as I see it, but teach that he to whom the virgin gave birth is God by nature. But let me tell you, there are those verses from the Gospel that never permit me to call him who was born from the virgin “God.”

Catholic: And what are these scriptural verses that prevent me from calling Him “God?”

Nestorian: Certainly those that we read were said to Joseph in a dream.

Catholic: Exactly what do we read was said to him?

Nestorian: “Take,” Matthew says, “*the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him*” [cf. Matt 2:13]. And he also says, “*For those who were seeking the child’s soul (animam pueri) are dead*” [Matt 2:20]. Why was not the following said instead, “For those who were seeking *God’s* soul (*animam Dei*) are dead?” Or, “Take *God* and flee to Egypt,” or even, “Herod is about to destroy *God*.” Is there anything more

impious than this—to believe that God fled to Egypt for fear of a man? It is clear, therefore, that you struggle with your arguments against the meaning of divine scripture, which teaches that he is a “child,” that is, a human, although you try to assert that he is God by nature.

Catholic: While you are excessively fixated on these verses from divine scripture, which you believe support your position, you profoundly disregard other passages. Or perhaps you think the authority of the Old Testament, which says that the “child,” whom you deny to be God, is “Mighty God and Lord” [cf. Is 9:6], is worthless and should be ignored? Does not Isaiah, that most famous of prophets, proclaim, saying, “For a child has been born to us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Admirable, Mighty God, Lord, Prince of Peace, and Everlasting Father” [cf. Is 9:6]? How can you not believe these words—unless perhaps you think that this prophetic statement contradicts the Gospel passages that you quoted?

Nestorian: I do not think that this prophetic statement is inconsistent with the Gospel passage, though this seems to be the case for you, who cannot yet understand their meaning. So pay attention if you want to learn the clearest meaning of the prophetic statement quoted to you, and see how it is not incompatible with our assertions. In fact, the prophet attests that “a child has been born” and “a son given” is called “God,” not that he is God. And *he is called*, Isaiah says, “Wonderful Conselor, Admirable, and Mighty God.” For everything that is signified does not always exist as the meaning of the terms used to describe it (*uocationis suae obtinent proprietatem*). Moses is obviously called “God,” but this appellation is never believed to be true.⁴⁹⁷ From this we learn that the “child” is not God by nature, but is called “God” by the prophet because of God to whom he is united.

Catholic: Your impiety is clear to all. For according to the meaning of your proposition: though the same “child” is called Mighty God by the prophet, He is not—according to you—God in substance. Moreover, although Moses is called “God,” as you say, He is not God in substance. Therefore, although He is called “a child born,” He is not born in substance, since many are said to be born who are not actually born in substance. For example, “*A people will be born whom the Lord made*” [Ps 21:32]. Paul also [speaks this way] to those who already exist in substance, “*For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father*” [1 Cor 2:15]. Finally, your interpretation even contradicts what every catholic church confesses, that the Son of God is God born from the Father in substance, and that it is false to teach, as the Arians do, that the Son is born from the Father but not born from him in substance. Then, from where should the child who is God believed to be born in substance, if he is understood—according to you—to be born in substance from neither his mother nor the Father?

Nestorian: Please, I ask you, do not waste time in worthless matters. Finding the impiety of the Arians abhorrent, we believe and profess that God the Son was born in the substance of God the Father. We also confess plainly that the child was born in substance from the virgin. We also—following the prophet—*call* him “God” on account of him to whom he is united.

Catholic: So the child is not God by nature, only in name like Moses?

Nestorian: If the child is God, not in name and dignity, but in nature, you either believe that the flesh is consubstantial with God the Father, or you confess that an incorporeal child was born from the virgin.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Exodus 7:1.

Catholic: You claim that we believe the Son is incorporeal; on the contrary, we proclaim—following the Gospel—that he is God “*made flesh*” [Jn 1:14]. We believe that His flesh is consubstantial not with the God the Father, but His mother. His divinity is consubstantial, not with His mother, but with God the Father.

Nestorian: I cannot immediately understand the murky and ambiguous meaning of your claim, which sometimes confuses the [two] natures, other times clearly distinguishes them. Therefore, if you proclaim his divinity’s consubstantiality with the Father and his flesh’s with his mother, how do you, confusing the clear distinction of natures, again assert that he is God *made flesh*, when God is not flesh, but spirit, as the Lord says, “*God is spirit*” [Jn 4:24]?

Catholic: Proclaiming the true union of natures, that of God the Word and flesh, we do not confuse them; we unite them.

7.

Nestorian: When the Lord says, “*What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit*” [Jn 3:6], how do you assert that the child born from the woman is God, not by union, but by nature?

Catholic: Since He, that is, the flesh born of the flesh in the flesh is no different from Him, the spirit born of the spirit in the spirit, we, therefore, proclaim that God, the Son of God, is from two natures and in two natures united yet unmixed (*ex duabus et in duabus naturis unitis et inconfusis*).

8.

Nestorian: But you confuse the difference between these two natures when you proclaim him, who is called God through his union with God the Word, as God by nature. For if he who is born of the virgin is God, not through union, but by nature, it is without any doubt that it is God, not the child Jesus Christ, who was anointed. Since Christ is not believed to have been made God but God is understood—according to you—to have been made Christ, the disciples then speak falsely in the Acts of the Apostles when they give testimony that the child Jesus, not God, was anointed, saying, “*For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate gathered together against your holy child Jesus, whom you anointed*” [cf. Acts 4:27].

Catholic: We do not confuse the difference of natures, as you said above, because we do not believe that the divinity of the Word was changed into human nature, nor do we proclaim that the human essence was intermingled with the divine essence.⁴⁹⁸ Instead, we confess, not that Christ—as you assert—was made God, but that God was made Christ, with which you disagree. [We believe this] because [scripture does] not say, “*Although he was poor, he became rich,*” but “*Although he was rich, he became poor, so that you might become rich*” [cf. 2 Cor 8:9]. Nor [does scripture say], “*Although he was in the form of a slave, he took the form of God,*” but, “*Although he was in the form of God, he took the form of a slave*” [cf. Phil 2:7]. Likewise, [scripture] does not say, “*Although he was flesh, he became the Word,*” but, “*Although he was Word, he became flesh*” [cf. Jn 1:14]. As for what you say—if the child born of a virgin is God by nature, then the disciples speak falsely in the Acts of the Apostles, giving testimony that not God but the child Jesus was anointed—the disciples do not speak falsely, but rather you are led astray, since you do not understand that God was anointed according to the flesh. For if you believe that the disciples and the prophet spoke, not incompatibly, but in one spirit, hear the prophet clearly teaching that God was anointed when he says, “*Your throne, O God, endures*

⁴⁹⁸ The order of the words imitates their own meaning: nec rursus *humanam* in deitatis *transfusam* essentiam praedicamus.

forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” [Ps 44:7–8]. It is clear from this that the child Jesus who was anointed is no other than God, and that God who was anointed is no other than the child Jesus. So if there are not two but only one Christ, do not doubt what the prophet and apostles proclaim.

9.

Nestorian: I completely deny claiming that there are two Christs, since I do not doubt that the prophet and the disciples spoke in one spirit. But I refute your contradictory beliefs, since you, allegedly from the prophet’s teaching, try to make him, who the prophet proclaims was anointed, to be God by nature. For, although the prophet proclaims him as God anointed by God, and teaches that he had companions, you teach the opposite, that the anointed one is God by nature, although God has no companion according to his nature—God has no companions just as he has no brothers. But we are taught that this [anointed one] has companions. About this the apostle says, “*Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things*” [Heb 2:14], and he says, “*I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you*” [Ps 21:23]. It is clear from this that he, who the prophet testifies was anointed *beyond your companions*, is God, not by nature, but by union.

Catholic: How can you assert that you deny those who proclaim two Christs, when you are clearly forced into proclaiming that there are two sons?

Nestorian: And when did you hear me proclaim that there are two sons?

Catholic: When you said that the anointed one is not he who is God by nature, but he who the prophet taught us had companions, who is called God by union to God.

Nestorian: Not two, as you say, but I proclaim one son, since I profess that he who is God by nature and he who is God by union to God have the single name of “Son” and have one dignity. As to the fact that he who was anointed is God, not by nature, but by union with God, hear blessed Peter’s words to Cornelius, “*You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him*” [Acts 10:36–8]. Without any doubt, God is understood to be, not with God, but with *Jesus of Nazareth [anointed] with the Holy Spirit and power*. For how is it not impious to believe that the anointed one is God by nature, since without any doubt no nature can oppose God? But [Christ] was anointed because he was to wage battle against the devil.

Catholic: You argue with cunning trickery, but still you do not cease from proclaiming two sons. For if *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom *God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power*, is not God—as you claim—what God did the prophet proclaim would come from Lebanon, saying, “*God will come from Lebanon, the holy one from the densely clouded mountain*” [cf. Hab 3:3]? Even today Nazareth is shown to be in that part of Galilee which is at the foot of that mountain. This is where Jesus Christ God, who the prophet proclaimed would come from Lebanon, deigned to be reared according to the flesh. I am amazed that you endeavor to prove that Jesus Christ is not God by nature, but by union with God and honor, [following] the scripture passage, “*for God was with him,*” but you do not listen to the same Lord when he says, “*Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me*” [Jn 16:32]. Jesus Christ from Nazareth, therefore, is God by nature—as we have learned from the prophet—and *God was with him*, namely the Father, and this is certain because he is revealed to be *Lord of all* as the apostle’s voice tells us. Otherwise, if God the Son

must be understood to be with Jesus Christ and not the Father to be with the Son because scripture says, “*God was with him,*” Jesus will, without any doubt, be equal to all the prophets or certainly to Joseph the son of Jacob, since this is written about Joseph, “*Because the Lord was with him*” [Gen 39:23]; God also says the following to Jacob when he sets out to Haran, “*I will be with you just as I was with your father*” [cf. Gen 28:15]. Clearly it is impious to equate the savior of all with the saved.

10.

Nestorian: We believe that the savior of all is not equal to the prophets, or to Jacob and Joseph; he is incomparably superior, because, although God was with them, they were born, not without the seed of a man, but according to the law of nature. Christ the Lord, however, was born in a new form of birth, from the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and in his very formation (*in ipsa prorsus formatione*) [in the womb] he was made Christ.

Catholic: If Christ is not equal to the prophets, or to Joseph and the rest of the saints, he will certainly—according to you—be equal to John the Baptist and Jeremiah, who were both consecrated in their very formation (*in ipsa formatione*), just as God said to Jeremiah, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you*” [Jer 1:5].⁴⁹⁹

Nestorian: Christ is not equal to those consecrated in the womb, since they were consecrated in the womb, but he became Christ by his very makeup (*in ipsa conformatione*).⁵⁰⁰ They received a partial grace, but he was full of grace insofar as he was the only-begotten Son of God.

Catholic: I do not understand how you say that he became Christ in His very makeup (*Christum in ipsa conformatione factum*). Therefore, show clearly that he who is Christ is also the one who in his very makeup became Christ.

Nestorian: Christ is, without any doubt, the only-begotten Son of the Father—

Catholic: Finally, you are coerced, though unwilling, by the Truth and have confessed what you have so far fought against! For although you refused to say so far in our conversation that God was made Christ, you have now, despite your avowal that he was not formed according to the flesh by himself, confessed that God was made Christ in his very makeup.

Nestorian: Do not think that I am defeated by your sophistical arguments. I said, therefore, that the only-begotten [Son] became Christ *in his very makeup*, because I believe that God the Word was joined to the very makeup of the flesh.

Catholic: Whoever says the God the Word was joined to the makeup of the flesh teaches that God the Word, did not adopt, in his own substance or person (*substitentia siue persona*), human nature, but instead suggests that the substance of God the Word, while “it was stretched throughout the lines of limbs,”⁵⁰¹ was intermingled with the substance of the flesh. From this it follows that you believe that is not one, but two substances or persons—one of God the Word incarnate and one of the created man. However, the Catholic faith confesses, not [that he was joined] in its very makeup—as you assert—but that God the Word himself was formed and was made man according to the flesh by Himself, while the substance of His divinity remained intact.

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. Luke 1:14–5 for John the Baptist.

⁵⁰⁰ Here the “Nestorian” makes a distinction between *formatio* (translated “formation”) and *conformatio* (translated with the generic “makeup”), as Catholicus states that he does not understand the distinction immediately after this claim.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1.18.47.

11.

Nestorian: How do you mean? Do you deny that God the Word exists as a substance (*subsistere*)? This conclusion follows from what you said, namely “God the Word himself was formed and was made man by himself”—although you sophistically claim that this same thing happens without any diminishment of his divinity.

Catholic: In no way at all have I denied that God the Word exists as a substance.

Nestorian: What do you think about his flesh, or his humanity as a whole?

Catholic: I profess, without any doubt, that it also persists.

Nestorian: Because you say that God the Word *and* a man existed as substances, why do you profess one and not two substances?

Catholic: Because I believe that God the Word was not united to a man who was already persisting in his own substance, much less to flesh already formed and ensouled, through which the person (*persona*) of any human is understood to exist. Instead, I believe that the substance or person (*subsistentiam siue personam*) of God the Word took on human nature, which never existed as a substance apart from the Word of God. Arising through Him and taken up by Him, human nature belonging (*proprie*) to Him was made. And [His human nature] did not persist in its own substance but in that by which it was taken up, namely the substance or person of God the Word. Therefore, there are not two substances, but there is one substance or person with two natures—the nature of the Word and the nature of flesh.

Nestorian: So human nature was made divinity?

Catholic: To think this at all is proof of extreme irrationality.

Nestorian: How, therefore, do you say that the nature belonging to (*propriam*) the Word of God became human?

Catholic: Because [the human nature belonged] to no one else except God the Word made man.

12.

Nestorian: How do you assert that God *was made* man? Do you claim that he is man because he was changed (*conuersum*) into a man, or because he took on (*susceptum*) a human made God?

Catholic: I have never dared to say that a man was taken up by God, but I say that God is made man without any diminishment of His divinity. I do this so that I might not seem to proclaim two persons in God the Son if I should say a man was taken up by God. Now God is called the supporter of the saints and the faithful according to what is said in the song in Exodus when it is said, “*The Lord is my supporter (susceptor) and champion for my salvation*” [Exodus 15:2], but it is better to say that human nature was taken up (*susceptam*) by God than a human was taken up by God.

Nestorian: Certain ridiculous claims of yours have reached my ears: that a human and human nature are different and not the same thing, when a human is nothing else but human nature (*cum homo non sit aliud nisi humana natura*).

Catholic: This and nothing else is certainly the cause of your error. For because you cannot discern the difference between person and nature, you think that a nature is exactly what a person is—rather you believe that a nature cannot exist without a person. You confuse the terms of “person” and “natures;” then you claim that there are certainly two persons just as there are two natures of God’s only Son. For when we say that God the Word was born of the virgin according to the flesh, you assume that we claim that the nature of His divinity was born of the virgin. But if we were to believe this—and God forbid that we do—we would not claim that he

was born of the virgin according to the flesh. Furthermore, when you hear [us say] that human nature was taken up by God the Word, you believe that the person, that is, a human, was taken up by Him, not that it is He Himself made human. Because of this you believe not that God the Word was truly and rightly made, without any change (*inconuertibiliter*), human from her womb (*ex eius uisceribus*), but that a human united to God was born of her.

13.

Nestorian: Because you charge us as incapable of differentiating nature and person, teach us how nature can exist without a person, or teach us what terms can be linked specifically with natures or with persons.

Catholic: There are terms that are both specific to natures and persons but also terms that can refer to both. Those that are specific create no controversy, but the shared terms, which are sophistically used by the falsely learned, cast a cloud of doubt upon the more simply minded.

Nestorian: What are these terms that cause and do not cause controversy?

Catholic: Divinity (*divinitas*), obviously and humanity (*humanitas*), flesh (*caro*) and divine nature (*deitas*) are terms specific to natures. But Word (*uerbum*) and Jesus Christ (*Iesus Christus*) and other terms like these are specific to the person, just as Paul and Peter are apostles. But the terms “God” (*Deus*) and “human” (*homo*) can refer to both natures and persons. For example, just as “God” signifies the whole divine nature of the Trinity, it also refers to each person of the Trinity, for example, “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” And at the same time, the entire Trinity is One God. Moreover, “human” can signify both person and nature. This is why some of the holy fathers are justified in saying that human [nature] (*hominem*) was taken on by God, because they are referring, not to person—just like you—but rather to nature.

14.

Nestorian: I agree with what you said, but please teach how there can be nature without person.

Catholic: Although human nature is completely present in individual persons, no single person or single human, that is, individual, is demonstrated to be humanity in its entirety. Otherwise, innumerable persons and humans from this general humanity would never have existed. Person, therefore, is differentiated from nature in that person signifies one individual instantiation (*res*) of nature. Nature, on the other hand, is understood to indicate the common material (*communem materiem*) from which many personae can exist as substances. Every person, therefore, always contains nature, but every nature, however, does not necessarily include a person. Otherwise, Catholics would claim that the Trinity, just as it has three persons, would also have three natures.

Nestorian: You seem to me to assert a certain insubstantial and empty nature, since you claim that it has no person.

Catholic: Does the nature of the supreme and incomprehensible Trinity seem to you to be insubstantial? No Catholic doubts that this nature, though it is one and singular, exists in three persons. However, because any creature runs a great risk in disputing about his own creator, let us, with your permission, move to our, that is, human nature. If we should accidentally say anything offensive about human nature, it would be accounted less serious, especially since this very question lies before us so that, as far as possible, what is investigated might be made clear, namely that the nature, which we say never exists as a substance in a person, might not seem to you to be insubstantial.

Nestorian: So be it, as long as what is investigated is explicated.

Catholic: The quality of nature (*naturae qualitas*), which is spread through many persons and individual humans, should not seem to you to be insubstantial with the result that it is nothing. Otherwise, how should the creator of natures be believed to have made all good things, even very good things? Nature, therefore, which contains the strength and reason of common material, is understood by slower minds to be insubstantial because they do not carefully differentiate between the material of a person not yet visible and the person itself—the power of nature reveals, as I said above, that this person, though it is not yet brought forth into the light, is complete in all of the features of its parts, so to speak. So you incorrectly regard nature as insubstantial, since no person can exist as a substance without nature. By this reasoning, when we appraise damaged bodies, we say that they are “deficient in nature.” For nature must not be believed to be either nothing or imperfect, because it lies hidden. Rather this strength is completely in our parts, but it lies hidden, though complete and whole, according to the reason of material in seed. For who will correctly judge an infant, who does not yet utilize reason, to possess incomplete human nature? Because it is impossible to utilize reason before due time, it will not be determined that the infant lacks anything with regard to the definition of human nature, since a human, according to the ancient definition, is nothing else but “a rational, mortal animal” (*animal rationale mortale*). Or perhaps someone, because infants do not utilize reason, will endeavor to claim that they are irrational animals? Reason, certainly, arrives—not externally but from within—at the appropriate time and enriches these children with the help of nature. Human nature, therefore, which lies hidden in the material of seed, is neither nothing nor imperfect before it is formed into its substance by God who creates from it, but it is perfect—by this same reason Levi, long before he was planted in the womb and conceived, is said to have paid tithes, though still in the loins of Abraham.⁵⁰² No entity that does not exist can pay tithes. This entity or nature, therefore, which is hidden, is understood by the less intelligent to be insubstantial until it is brought to the light. When, however, the power of the seed through a series of generation by God’s grace expands in a woman’s womb, what lay hidden expands into parts and is revealed in its own person. God, therefore, condescended to unite Himself with this human nature, which is the common, general nature for all humans, and without which, as I said before, no person can exist as a substance. Moreover, He did this in a womb of a blessed virgin, who deserved to conceive God because she was full of grace. So from the material of her womb and without any seed of man, with appropriate power and strength, and without any diminishing of His status, created Himself according to the flesh, proceeded into its limbs, became human, endured a second nativity for our salvation, and finally advanced in the growth of age. Therefore, Catholics proclaim that He was truly and rightly born of the blessed virgin according to the flesh. Moreover, this same blessed virgin is truly and rightly believed to be the *genetrix* of God.

15.

Nestorian: Everything that you said above seemed to have been argued rationally, albeit opaquely. This final conclusion bewilders, since it claims that God was made human and, what is even more intolerable, it claims that God the Word had a second nativity, since no entity can be born as a substance a second time. Therefore, how can you proclaim that God *was made* (*factus*) human. Surely what is said “to come into being” (*fieri*) is that which does not seem to exist yet? Or, is something transformed into something else from that which already exists, so that it ceases to be what it once was?

⁵⁰² Cf. Hebrews 7:9–10.

Catholic: Certainly, therefore, the second nativity according to the flesh of our God requires wonder and awe, and a great mystery of piety is proven beyond doubt, though it is denied by the impious—it is not the case that he-who-was-not (*qui non erat*) was born, rather He-who-was (*qui erat*) was born. Moreover, it was not the case that according to what-He-was (*quod erat*), but rather according to what-He-was-not (*quod non erat*) was He formed by His own power. For He who was born according to nature from the Father without a beginning was also, the very same, born according to nature in time for us from His mother: the former according to divinity, the latter according to humanity; the former God from God, the latter human from human. Likewise, it was not according to what-He-was but according to what-He-was-not, since God, who was, became human, which He was not, without any alteration of Himself. Your argument is the following: you contend that He became or was born into him who was something-that-He-was according to what-He-was. This has no relevance to us: we proclaim that He, not according to what-He-was but according to what-He-was-not, was born a second time and God became human. But if you agree, let this be the end of our discussion for now. If there remain matters to be discussed, let them be examined at the beginning of another conversation.

Chapters of Book II

1. Concerning the natural union of God the Word, a union that was made in “His own flesh.”
2. That Christ is taught to be composed of divinity and humanity.
3. About the following claim: “That one in another” (*alterum in altero*), that is, “that God the Word dwells in a human.”
4. About the following verse from scripture: “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” [John 2:19].
5. That they read the following verse from scripture with a perverse sense of understanding: “*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you*” [John 6:54].
6. That they do not believe that He who was crucified by the Jews is Life.
7. That they claim that a human only and not God was crucified according to the flesh.
8. About the following verse from scripture: “*The Lord of Glory was crucified*” [cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8].
9. About the following claim: “One should confess that Christ, not God, suffered according to the flesh. And about the following verse from scripture: “*God made him both Lord and Messiah*” [Acts 2:36].
10. Concerning the testimonies on which they depend to demonstrate that he who suffered for our salvation was only a human (*purum hominem*).
11. That they claim that the miracles and the passion are in no way of one and the same person. And about the following verse from scripture: “*It was fitting that he,⁵⁰³ for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering*” [Hebrews 2:10].
12. About the following sophistic claim: “God’s flesh suffered, but God did not suffer according to the flesh.”
13. How they claim that God caused the sufferings “belonging to His flesh” (*proprias carnis suae*).
14. That they assert that God suffered according to the flesh through some artifice, but that God the Word did not suffer according to the flesh in any way.
15. That they deny that it was God who was seen, was touched, and suffered according to the flesh on the authority of the following verse from scripture: “*No one has ever seen God*” [John 1:18].
16. That they impiously assert that the Trinity dwells in Christ on the authority of the following verse from scripture: “*For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*” [Colossians 2:9].
17. That they perversely assert that God the Son, not God the Father, dwells in Christ, because of the following verse from scripture: “*In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself*” [2 Corinthians 5:19].
18. That they assert that Christ, not Christ’s flesh, was created by the Holy Trinity and was resurrected. Furthermore, that when they attempt to make this teaching they are found to believe, like the Arians, that Christ is a creature.

⁵⁰³ I have slightly modified the NRSV translation to reflect the ambiguity of this verse in question.

19. About the following claim: "Saying that Christ is "one from the Trinity" (*unum ex trinitate*) divides *homousion*."
20. About the following claim: "Whatever is said to be *from* something (*ex aliquo*) is proof that it is different from that something; therefore, one should not say that Christ is 'one from the Trinity' (*unum ex trinitate*) but 'one in the Trinity' (*unum in trinitate*)." By this perversity, the heretics themselves make the very same claim.
21. That they claim that Christ is one person (*unam personam*) from the Trinity (*ex trinitate*), but that they foolishly deny that Christ is one from the trinity (*unum ex trinitate*). And that they impiously plot that Christ, because he is not from two natures but from two persons, is one person, and is one dignity and honor.
22. About the following claim: "We should not assert anything that is not contained in the canonical scriptures." And that they deceitfully claim that the Trinity does not exist without Christ. Furthermore, that the following verse from scripture convincingly contradicts nearly all of their crafty sophistries: "*Behold, the man has become like one of us (unus ex nobis)*" [Genesis 3:22].
23. About the following, that they seem to say that God himself was born from a woman through some artifice, yet they assert that Christ is in no way one from the Trinity (*unum ex trinitate*). And about the following claim: "It is enough for us to make this confession, but we refuse to use your terminology."
24. That they sophistically say, "If you judge what both you and we say to be the same, how can you consider us heretics, since we refuse to use your terminology so that we do not give rise to other heretics?"
25. About the following claim: "We should assert nothing more than what is contained in the words of the synod." And that they consider heretics those who give the same response they give: "We claim two natures but in different words, since we refuse to use your terminology lest we seem to give rise to other heretics."

Book II

1.

Nestorian: I recall that, when you were asked in our previous discussion whether you believed that Christ was in two natures, you answered that he was in two [natures], but they were united in an agreement regarding natures (*naturali conuentione*).⁵⁰⁴ Because we suddenly rushed forward to investigate another matter and say something about it, this issue was set aside there. But now, since I believe that it is impious to and inconsistent with Catholic teaching—insofar as I understand Catholic teaching—to believe that God the Word was naturally (*naturaliter*) united to human nature, let us first investigate, if you are willing, how this can rightly be understood.

Catholic: In the previous discussion I examined many issues but could make no headway with you, because your mind, desiring not to be corrected but to conquer, was opposed to everything that was said. Instead it was intent on only one thing, how it could prattle on behalf of its own position. There was no reason, therefore, to discuss the matter of most importance with you any further. But lest you think that I do this because of lack of intelligence rather than out of modesty, I am forced, against my better judgment, to respond to your objections. Unless I am mistaken, your position is the following: it is sacrilegious and contrary to Catholic teaching to believe that God the Word was united naturally (*naturaliter*) to human nature. Now it is pertinent for you to explain more clearly why you think this.

Nestorian: Whatever happens naturally (*naturaliter*), is understood to occur not through the will, but by necessity. Therefore, if God the Word was united (*naturaliter*) to the flesh belonging to him (*propriae carni*), it must be believed that He did not do this out of compassion, but because of a force of nature.

Catholic: According to your definition [of “naturally”], does everything that is said to happen (*fieri*) naturally (*naturaliter*) happen through necessity, not through the will?

Nestorian: That is my definition. Certainly we experience (*patimur*) hunger, thirst, and the need for sleep through necessity, not through the will. What does not happen (*non fit*) voluntarily (*uoluntarie*), obviously happens through necessity of nature.

Catholic: What you say is appropriate to a composite and passible (*passibilis*) nature. For an impassible and incomposite nature, however, doing (*facere*) something naturally (*naturaliter*) is no other than doing something voluntarily (*uoluntarie*). Moreover, they are one and the same thing, because in this case nature is not different from the will. Here, its nature is the will, and the will is its nature (*sed natura uoluntas est, et uoluntas natura*). Were this not true, I ask you, “Would you believe that God exists naturally or voluntarily?” If you say “voluntarily,” it follows that God does not exist naturally. However, if you proceed to say “naturally,” God will exist—according to you—through necessity, not by His will, and it is a great absurdity to believe this about God. Furthermore, it is neither sacrilegious nor contrary to Catholic teaching to believe that God the Word was united naturally to flesh belonging to Him, since it excludes those who do not believe that an inviolable nature (*inuiolabilem naturam*) was naturally united with a passible nature (*naturae passibili*), but rather claim that God was united—according to grace, illumination, or certainly love—to a person (*personae*) of some unknown human (*nescio cuius...hominis*) formed in [Mary’s] womb.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. *Contra Nestorianos*, 1.5.

2.

Nestorian: You seem to me to introduce a certain mixture and confusion (*compositionem quandam et confusionem*) of natures, when you say that the natures were naturally united.

Catholic: Although we claim that our God Jesus Christ was composed (*compositum*) or united (*unitum*) from divinity and humanity, we profoundly avoid, however, a confusion of natures, because we believe that both natures remained perfect (*manere perfectas*).

Nestorian: “Composition” is understood to be contrary to “unity,” because [something] either creates confusion, or it lacks division. Certainly everything put together through construction (*aedificia*), which consists of composition, is obviously dismantled. Moreover, whatever is composed by painters from different elements of nature is internally confused. Nothing among them retains its own quality (*proprietaem*). How, therefore, can you say that the natures in Christ are indivisible or unconfused (*indivisas aut inconfusas*), when you claimed earlier that Christ is composite (*compositum*)?

Catholic: What do you assert—that everything composite is passible or impassible?

Nestorian: Passible, certainly.

Catholic: What do you think about the incomposite?

Nestorian: Certainly it remains in a state of impassibility.

Catholic: What do you assert—that Christ is passible or impassible?

Nestorian: After the incarnation, certainly passible.

Catholic: Why, therefore, do you refuse to confess that “*Christ the Son of the Living God*” [cf. Matt 16:16 & Jn 11:27] is composite?

Nestorian: According to His humanity, I obviously confess that Christ is composite, since I believe that He is also passible because of His humanity.

Catholic: What is this? Do you claim that one and the same [Christ] was composed of divinity and humanity after the incarnation but had been incomposite before the incarnation?

Nestorian: No. I say that the human that was assumed was composite, but that he, by whom the human was assumed, is incomposite.

Catholic: It is revealed, without any doubt, that you believe in two sons: one composite, the other incomposite.

Nestorian: Do you deny, therefore, that the nature of divinity is simple (*simplicem*) and incomposite?

Catholic: I do not deny it.

Nestorian: Do you say that a human is composite or incomposite?

Catholic: Composite, obviously.

Nestorian: How, therefore, do you deny that Christ was composite, and also incomposite, since you obviously confess that he is God and human?

Catholic: I confess that the Son of God is certainly God and human. I strongly oppose those who confess that the Son of God was not one and the same Christ, who was incomposite before the incarnation but composite after the incarnation.

Nestorian: You appear to declare a certain contradiction of the divine nature when you say that the same [Christ] was incomposite before the incarnation and composite after the incarnation. How can that uncircumscribed nature that is diffused everywhere be united, according to composition (*secundum compositionem*), to a nature that is circumscribed and constituted in a small area? Or perhaps, as I said, you impiously claim that either a limiting of divinity (*deitatis contractionem*) or an expansion of flesh (*carnis extensionem*) occurred.

Catholic: I think you believe that the divine essence (*essentiam*) is corporeal: you think that it is gathered, on the one hand, in the flesh, and it is stretched out with the flesh.

Nestorian: Let no Christian soul believe this!

Catholic: What, then, do you think the divine nature is?

Nestorian: A great power (*uirtutem*), obviously, that is complete everywhere (*ubique totam*).

Catholic: “Complete everywhere,” do you say that this [power] exists [everywhere] according to its totality (*secundum totum*)?

Nestorian: It is certainly not everywhere according to its totality, but rational beings are contained (*continentur*) by it in one way, irrational beings in another way, and completely inanimate entities in still another way.

Catholic: Is the whole power understood to be in each individual rational animal according to its totality or partially (*particulariter*)?

Nestorian: Certainly partially, not according to its totality, because individual beings receive “from its fullness” [Jn 1:16].

Catholic: How, therefore, is it complete everywhere if it is not complete in each individual rational animal, but only there partially? Moreover, how can what is not matter (*corpus*) but spirit (*spiritus*) be [anywhere] partially?

Nestorian: Indeed, it is complete in itself and is everywhere according to its totality. However, insofar as it extends to its creation, it does not cause the rational animal to realize that the power is present to it or within it, except insofar as the power judges [it should].

Catholic: I think you believe that God the Word is dissimilar to the Father in no way.

Nestorian: Arians and Eunomians, not Catholics, follow this teaching. Believing that the Son is dissimilar to the Father in some part [is Catholic].

Catholic: You say, then, that [the Son] is completely, just as He is equal to the Father, united to His own flesh? Or united in part, but not united in another?

Nestorian: Paul has taught the following: “In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden” [Col. 2:3].

Catholic: The whole power according to its totality, therefore, is united to the flesh, just as the complete divinity of God the Word is equal to the Father?

Nestorian: No Christian doubts this.

Catholic: What is this? You assert either a lessening of divinity or an expansion of the flesh has occurred—because it is not possible, as you say, for an uncircumscribed nature that is diffused everywhere to be united, according to composition, to a nature that is circumscribed and constituted in a small area?

Nestorian: I assert that neither a lessening of divinity nor an expansion of the flesh has occurred, because this is appropriate for matter, not for spirit or power, which cannot be united to the flesh according to composition. Obviously the divinity of the Word, as I said, is uncircumscribed and contains everything.

Catholic: You say that a human exists as a composite or incomposite entity?

Nestorian: Composite.

Catholic: Composed of what entities?

Nestorian: Of soul and flesh obviously.

Catholic: Do you assert that the soul (*anima*) is consubstantial with the flesh, or of a different nature?

Nestorian: Of a different nature.

Catholic: Though it is not flesh, is it matter (*corpus*) or not? [I say this] because although all flesh is matter, not all matter is flesh.

Nestorian: In no way do I claim that the soul is corporeal.

Catholic: What do you say it is then?

Nestorian: Spirit, obviously, but not uncircumscribed.

Catholic: Do you claim that the soul is completely diffused throughout every individual part, or that a greater part of it is in a greater part, a lesser part of it in a lesser part?

Nestorian: I believe that it is complete in each part of its body. Though it is circumscribed, I nevertheless think that it does not consist of parts, since, if parts of its body are removed, it still persists without harm.

Catholic: If, therefore, the soul, which is not matter but spirit, is united to the flesh according to composition, it experiences no limiting in a lesser part, no expansion in a greater part, but without any confusion of itself it is believed to be complete in a greater part and complete in a lesser part. How must the divinity of God the Word, which is united to its own flesh according to composition, be believed to receive any lessening, expansion, or confusion? For by analogy of the union of the soul with the flesh, a union that you do not deny happens according to composition, all of the learned and famous fathers of the Church are shown to teach that a union was made of God the Word with His own flesh.

Nestorian: No one doubts that everything composite consists of parts. A part, however, is less than its whole. God the Word, therefore, is a part of Christ, who you assert is composed of divinity and humanity. Furthermore, if God the Word is a part of Christ, God the Word is—according to you—less than Christ, of whom he is a part. But if God is a part of Christ, how is he God since he is incomplete?

Catholic: God the Word is not incomplete, because He did not need to assume the flesh in order to be completed. Rather, in order that the flesh might be changed for the better and perfected, He united Himself to the flesh and became composite, though He was previously supremely simple, incomposite, and complete in every regard, obviously, insofar as He is God—for it is written about Him, “*He did not lack our goods*” [Ps 15:2]. For assuming human nature for our salvation neither added anything to nor subtracted anything from Him. Instead, He ineffably glorified this nature through His union [with it]. Nor is God the Word less than Christ, because He *is* Christ. Nor is He less than Himself, because He remained the same God when he assumed the flesh, obviously remaining complete. Otherwise, if Christ is denied to be composite after the incarnation, He remained, therefore, as He was before, namely simple and incomposite. Moreover, because a supremely simple and incomposite entity accepts no passion (*passionem*) at all within itself, just as you claimed before, Christ, therefore, did not—according to you—suffer (*perpassus*) for human salvation. If, however, he suffered, although remaining simple and incomposite, it is not true that a simple and incomposite nature is impassible (*impassibilis*). But if a simple and incomposite nature is not impassible, then Christ’s divinity is passible (*passibilis*). If, however, Christ’s divinity remains impassible—which it certainly does—it follows that a simple and incomposite nature is not passible, because, although Christ preserves the simplicity and impassibility of His divinity even after the union and composition, it must nevertheless be believed—and rightly—according to the flesh united to Him that He was composed with it. For this reason, when you refuse to assert that Christ was composed after the incarnation, either you are forced to believe that the nature of Christ’s divinity is composite and passible, or you insinuate that Christ, who you assert was simple and incomposite after the incarnation as He was before it, did in no way suffer on behalf of human salvation.

Nestorian: I do not believe that the divine nature is passible, since I said that it is supremely simple and incomposite. I also confess that Christ suffered on behalf of human salvation, because I understand Him to be not only God but also human. But I ask you, “Do you assert that this composition was made in the womb of the virgin, or after ‘*she had borne her firstborn son*’ [Matt 1:25]?”

Catholic: In the womb, obviously. For how could I believe that He, who I claim was united to the flesh according to composition, is God by nature if I were to assert that the composition of natures occurred after His birth? For this belief is not belief in a composition or union, but in the habitation of something in something else.

3.

Nestorian: You have clearly taught, though previously you seemed to have hidden it in your ambiguous language, that the composition of natures in no way preserves their respective qualities (*proprietas*).

Catholic: How did I teach that the composition of natures does not preserve their respective qualities?

Nestorian: By saying that you consider composition to be contrary to inhabitation.

Catholic: Just as union does not confuse natures, neither does composition, since the natures of the soul and flesh, which are united according to composition, are not confused in themselves. The habitation of something within something (*alterius in altero*) certainly [pertains] to two entities. As for God and human, it is not one within another (*alter in altero*), but the same one is both God and human (*idem Deus, idem homo est*).

4.

Nestorian: Although according to union one and the same is both God and human, according to their natures, however, one is God, and the other is human. For if God Himself is also human according to nature, how does He not say, “Destroy me,” instead of “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” [Jn 2:19]?

Catholic: I’m surprised that you remember Gospel passages that you believe support your position, but pass over those that you realize are contrary as if you have never even heard of them. But is He who says, “*Destroy this temple,*” not also the one who, after the woman pours perfume over His head, is recounted as saying, “*Let her be. She has performed a good service for me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial*” [cf. Matt 26:10, 12]. Do you realize that the one who is buried is no other than he whose temple it was?

Nestorian: If he, whose temple it was, was buried, it follows that the temple is neither “destroyed” nor “buried.”

Catholic: Because you seem to assert that one is buried and another is unburied with relation to the term “temple,” please make clearer what you mean by “temple.”

Nestorian: There is no need for my own interpretation as the evangelist gives testimony—after he records that the Lord says, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,*” he adds soon thereafter, “*But he was speaking of the temple of his body*” [Jn 2:21].

Catholic: This body, do you say that it is God’s or a human’s?

Nestorian: Obviously a human’s, but the human that was assumed.

Catholic: If it is true that this body belongs to the assumed human, this body of the assumed human, therefore, is the “temple.”

Nestorian: It is not the temple of the assumed human, but of him who dwells invisibly in the human.

Catholic: And who dwells invisibly in the temple?

Nestorian: God obviously.

Catholic: So the body is not of the assumed human—as you claim—but it is God’s whose temple it also is?

Nestorian: Were the body in which the invisible God dwells lifeless (*exanime*), the body would certainly be God’s, not the assumed human’s. But because the body in which God dwells is animated (*animatum est*), the body is not God’s but the assumed human’s.

Catholic: Therefore, it is not the body but the human that is God’s “temple?”

Nestorian: Does it not seem so to you?

Catholic: God forbid! For this is completely contrary to the testimony of the evangelist who did not say, “He was speaking about the temple ‘of his human,’” but rather, “*He was speaking about the temple ‘of his body.’*”

Nestorian: As it seems to me—you do not believe that Christ had a soul?

Catholic: May this slanderous charge be far removed from me!

Nestorian: How, therefore, do you reject, as if it is contrary, that we say that God dwells in a human, if you agree that Christ has body and soul—?

Catholic: Because I confess, not that the body is belongs to the assumed human—as you claim—but that the body is God’s, and I believe that the soul is His as well. Moreover, I proclaim, not that God is “in a human” (*in homine*) but that God is “in a body” (*in corpore*). Otherwise, saying that God is “in a human” is no different from saying [he is] a human belonging to God (*hominem Dei*). In this understanding then, God is not a human, but Christ is understood to be a human belonging to God (*homo Dei*), but this can be said about all who faithfully serve God.

5.

Nestorian: If the body belongs to God, not to the assumed human, why is the verse not the following, “Unless you eat the flesh of God,” instead of, “*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you have no life in you*” [Jn 10:53]?

Catholic: Though the flesh is “of the Son of Man,” the flesh of the Son of Man is nevertheless the flesh of God. For if the flesh is not God’s, how is it able to bestow eternal life upon the faithful?

Nestorian: Because this was granted to the flesh by God, as the flesh is united to God (*sibi unito*).

Catholic: If the flesh is united to God, how is the flesh not God’s?

Nestorian: Because you contend, undeniably, against what is manifestly said in the Gospel, I ask you, “Who is it said the following to his disciples just before his passion, ‘*Take and eat from this all of you. This is my body, which will be broken for you for the remission of sins*’ [cf. Matt 26:26]?”

Catholic: The same one, certainly, who said, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*” [Jn 14:6].

6.

Nestorian: “The Life,” therefore, is touched by impious hands, “the Life” is crucified, “the Life,” finally, dies? Furthermore, if “the Life” died, who must be believed to have bestowed life on the dead?

Catholic: If He, who is “the Life,” was not crucified and died, the dead should have no hope at all for life. But that He, who is “the Life,” was crucified and died, listen not to me but to blessed Peter as he proclaimed to the Jews, “*You asked to have a murderer given to you and you killed the author of life*” [Acts 3:14–5].

Nestorian: Although God is rightly believed to be the “author of life,” we can, nevertheless, also call humans “authors of life,” when we pass down how to live well. Teach more clearly, if you can, that “the Life” was crucified and died.

Catholic: Although it is not humans who pass down how to live well but God alone who is rightly believed to be the Author of Life, even if I teach from the scriptures that He, who is “Life,” died and was crucified, you will still turn to other matters because you do not yield to the truth, as you never cease from asking pointless questions.

Nestorian: If I refused to yield to the truth, I would have never brought forth those matters that trouble me before us for discussion. But you, because you cannot respond to my objections, accuse me of asking pointless questions.

Catholic: But the following is the case: It is not I but He—about whom the matter is concerned—who responds to your objections for me. He marks you as His own adversary when He says in Deuteronomy to His people Israel, “*You will see your life hanging on the wood, and you will not believe in it*” [cf. Deut 28:66].

7.

Nestorian: Then how is “the Life” in itself (*uita per se*) able to hang on the wood on its own?

Catholic: In the same way that God, who is True Life, is believed to have become human.

Nestorian: So God was crucified by the Jews?

Catholic: Do not place your trust in me, but in the prophet who says, “*Will anyone pierce God? Yet your entire people is piercing me*” [cf. Malac 3:8].⁵⁰⁵

Nestorian: That is entirely wrong. This reading is not found in the books approved by the Church (*in ecclesiasticis libris legitur*), but the following is what is written in the prophet Malachi, “*Will anyone rob God? Yet your entire people is robbing me*” [Malac 3:8].⁵⁰⁶

Catholic: Without any doubt, this verse, as you say, is contained in the ancient edition, but in the new version, what I quote is found. But if you think the authority of the recent edition should be questioned, listen to the apostle, who declares, “[*They*] *crucified the Lord of Glory*” (*Dominum gloriae crucifixum*) [1 Cor 2:8].⁵⁰⁷

8.

Nestorian: If “the Lord of Glory” was crucified, should God also be believed to have been crucified? Is James, therefore, the brother of God, because he is called “the brother of the Lord?”

Catholic: God is no different from the Lord, but the Lord Himself *is* God, as the prophet attests, “*Know that the Lord himself is God*” [Ps 99:3]. Indeed, with complete correctness the Lord of Glory is believed to be crucified by the Jews. Moreover, according to this saying of the prophet, “*James the Lord’s brother*” [Gal 1:19], it is not contrary to the Truth to say that he is the brother of God according to the flesh (*secundum carnem*).

9.

Nestorian: This teaching of yours is novel and intolerable. It preaches that God is passible, despite what Peter the apostle manifestly says in the Acts of the Apostles about him who was crucified by the Jews, namely, “*Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead*” [Acts 4:10], and also, “*Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you*

⁵⁰⁵ *Si affigit homo deum, quia uos configitis me? tota gens.* The Vulgate reads, “*Si affliget homo Deum, quia uos configitis me?*” Contrast *affigit* with *affliget*. For a discussion of this discrepancy, see Chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁶ *Si supplantat homo deum, quia supplantatis me uos? tota gens.*

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. the reading of the Vulgate, *Dominum gloriae crucifixissent*.

crucified” [Acts 2:36]. Therefore, because the apostle gives testimony that he, whom the Jews crucified, was made Lord and Christ by God, it is clear who the “Lord of Glory” should be understood to be, or certainly, who the “one crucified by the Jews” should be believed to be. For I do not believe that you have wandered into error so severe that you believe that the Son of God, who was made the Lord by God, *is* God (*filium Dei Deum a Deo factum dominum esse*).⁵⁰⁸ We have learned from the aforementioned quotation from the apostle and from the passage from the prophet that you quoted that the word “lord” (*dominus*) does not always signify God. Sometimes it only signifies God, sometimes it only signifies a human, but sometimes it signifies both God and a human. By no means are we required to understand that God was crucified because the apostle says “the Lord of Glory was crucified,” nor because he says “James the Lord’s brother,” do we believe that [James] is God’s brother.

Catholic: As for the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is God, I think that I have sufficiently taught this through reason (*ratione*) and [biblical] testimonies (*testimoniis*) in what I said above, but everything is nothing to nonbelievers. As for what you think is a great error—that God was made the Lord by God (*Deum factum dominum a Deo credere*)—thinking this because Peter said the following about the crucified Jesus, “*God has made him both Lord and Christ*,” I ask you, was he, who was Jesus but nevertheless not the Lord, made the Lord by God? Or, was he, who was both Jesus and Lord, made the Lord by God?

Nestorian: How, if he were already Lord, would he become the Lord, since no one *becomes* what he already is? But because he was not the Lord, he is said to become the Lord by God.

Catholic: So, was Jesus Lord before he was [Lord]?

Nestorian: He was not Lord before he became Lord.

Catholic: How have you said the following, “If he were Lord he would not become Lord by God, but because he was not the Lord, then he was made Lord by God?”

Nestorian: I have said this because he who became the Lord was not the Lord before he was born. Nor did he become the Lord after he was born. Instead, while in the womb itself, by union with the Son of God, he became the Lord.

Catholic: Therefore, the Son of God and Jesus are different, and Jesus became Lord by union with the Son of God?

Nestorian: He is one and the same, just as I said above, in dignity and authority, but they are not the same according to natures.

Catholic: They are, therefore, two according to natures, but in dignity and power he is one Son? Then, which of them, must it be believed, “*took on the form of a slave*” [Phil 2:7]?

Nestorian: There are not two sons—you are dreaming [if you think I said that]—but one Son of God, who we nevertheless believe is in two united natures, and who also, “*although he was in the form of God, took on the form a slave*” [Phil 2:6–7].

Catholic: The Son of God, therefore, although he was both God and Lord, took on the form of a slave, and became a slave in the form of a slave? Or, do you claim that believing this is erroneous?

Nestorian: Whoever does not believe this is certainly a pagan.

Catholic: If this is not incorrect, believing that the Son of God, though he was already God and Lord insofar as he is equal to God the Father, became a slave in the form of a slave, since he also gives the following testimony about himself, when he says to the Father, “*I am your servant*

⁵⁰⁸ The more natural rendering of the Latin would be “that the Son of God, who was made God by God, *is* the Lord,” but this cannot be the case.

and the son of your maidservant" [Ps 115:16], then it is in no way erroneous to believe that God the Son of God, because he became a slave, became Lord by God the Father. Moreover, not as you say does [Lord (*dominus*) sometimes signify] God only, sometimes a human only, but sometimes both God and a human. Instead "Lord" (*dominus*) must always be understood to indicate God and likewise "God" the Lord, because no one else is proclaimed to be made the Lord by God except him who taking up the form of a slave became a slave—since the Lord of Glory, whom Paul proclaims was crucified by the Jews, existed before the ages (*esset ante saecula*). Furthermore, there is what he cries to the Father, "*Father, glorify your Son with the same glory that He has had with you before the world was created*" [Jn 17:5]. Is this not His voice when He says, "*Learn from me, since I am mild and humble of heart*" [Matt 11:29]? For never would God the Son of God become the Lord by God the Father unless, though He was God, He became a slave by taking up the form of a slave. Nor would He have prayed to be glorified by the Father unless, though He was glorious with the Father before the world was created, He humbled Himself through His own will (*sponte*) for our salvation. Jesus God the Son of God became the Lord and is gloried by the Father, not with the glory that He did not have, but "with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was created." Without any doubt, it follows that Jesus is God by nature. Jesus, just as He became Lord by the Father, is also glorified by God, as Peter the apostle proclaims when he says, "*The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob glorified his Son Jesus, whom you denied before Pilate, though he wanted to acquit him*" [Acts 3:13].

Nestorian: Unless you believe all of this on account of the union that was made between God and the human, you are doubtlessly convicted of proclaiming that the Divinity is passible.

Catholic: In no way do I proclaim that the Divinity is passible; however, I strongly confess that God suffered according to the flesh, because I recognize that Jesus Christ is truly God.

Nestorian: I completely deny that God suffered according to the flesh because this is never read in the holy scriptures, but I profess, following Peter the apostle, that Christ suffered according to the flesh.

Catholic: I confess both to be true—God *and* Christ suffered according to the flesh—since "*Christ, who is over all, God*" [Rom 9:5]. You, however, hesitate to say that God suffered according to the flesh because you do not believe that Christ is God. But if you do not deny that Christ is God, saying that Christ suffered according to the flesh is exactly the same as saying that God suffered according to the flesh, because Christ who suffered is, without any doubt, God.

Nestorian: If saying that God suffered according to the flesh is the very same thing as saying that Christ suffered according to the flesh, then Christ—according to you—is not only the Son but even the Father, because he is obviously God.

Catholic: Christ is not the Father, though He is God; nor is God identical to Christ. The Son, however, is Christ, because [the Son] is not identical to [God]; but the Son *is* Christ God. This is why Catholics confess both to be true—God *and* Christ suffered according to the flesh.

10.

Nestorian: If God is Christ, who is it who says to the Jews, "*Why are you trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God*" [Jn 7:40]?

Catholic: Certainly He about whom it is written, "*For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God*" [Jn 5:18]. Does any fraction of ambiguity still remain for us to believe that Jesus Christ is God by nature? Since, if He were God by grace and not by nature, He would never have made Himself equal to God.

Nestorian: Is Paul mistaken, therefore, in saying, “*Death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being*” [1 Cor 15:21]?

Catholic: Then how can “the resurrection of the dead” occur “through a human being” unless the resurrection is that very human who proclaims in the gospel, “*I am the resurrection and the life*” [Jn 11:25]? Furthermore, because the resurrection and life of all is nothing except God, it is beyond any doubt that God and the human are an identical person (*idem homo deus est*), through whom the apostle proclaims that there is resurrection.

Nestorian: Is the very same apostle found to be ignorant of this sacred matter when he says, “[*There is also one*] mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human” [1 Tim 2:5]?

Catholic: Just as the apostle is not in ignorant of this sacred matter, so also does he not contradict himself, saying, “[*While we*] wait for the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for our sins” [cf. Tit 2:13–4]. Therefore, because the human Jesus Christ, “the mediator between God and humankind,” is “our great God, who gave himself for our sins,” it is not at all contradictory but one and the same thing to confess, in any way, that both God *and* Christ suffered according to the flesh. This is why the church recognizes that the miracles and the passion were of one and the same God. Moreover, if anyone does not confess both to be true, he must either be avoided like a Jew or feared like a Manichaean.

11.

Nestorian: You have advanced thus far with a sophistic and refined method of deception, but now there can be no place for you to hide, since you have proclaimed that the miracles and passion are of one and the same Son of God, since the apostle clearly teaches [in his letter] to the Hebrews that the Lord Jesus Christ was brought to perfection through his passion by God the Word, saying, “*It was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering*” [Hebrews 2:10].⁵⁰⁹ Do you realize that Jesus Christ, “for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, the author of their salvation” [cf. Heb 2:10], was without any doubt perfected by God the Word through his suffering? How, therefore, should the miracles and passion be believed to be of one and the same person when one is perfected by the other through his passion?

Catholic: You have given me an easy path of escape, and the door lies wide open through which I enter by the lead of Him who said, “*I am the gate*” [Jn 10:9]. And entering, I shall refute you, not to deceive your ignorance and lack of faith with sophistries, as you claim, but rather with the truest evidence from scripture (*uerissimis documentis*). Because you do not understand the apostle’s meaning, you are convicted of proclaiming that one “Son of God” is passible and another “Son of God” is impassible. For God the Word did not—as you claim—perfect the author of our salvation through his passion, but God the Father perfected God the Son, Jesus Christ, “for whom and through whom all things [exist], the author of His children’s salvation” [cf. Heb 2:10], through His passion. Who, in fact, should understand “the author of His children’s salvation, perfected through His passion” to be someone different from Him, “for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory?” Especially since [the apostle] before this passage said, “*But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so*

⁵⁰⁹ For the modified translation of this verse, see Chapter 4.

that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone” [Heb 2:9]. Then the apostle immediately follows this by saying, “It was fitting that He”—that is, God the Father “for whom and through whom all things [exist]”—“perfected ‘the author of the salvation for those’”—namely, “He who brought those of His children to glory,” and, He who, “although He was equal to the Father, was made a little lower than the angels, so that by the grace of God”—that is God the Father—“might taste death for everyone.” But we learn this much more clearly and lucidly at the beginning of the letter, “*Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs*” [Heb 1:1–4]. Behold the “author of salvation,” “who brought many of his children to glory,” “who made purification for sins,” which could not have happened “*without the shedding of blood*” [Heb 9:22]. The apostle makes the same teaching in another place, “[He is] *the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by the power of his powerful word*” [cf. Heb 1:3]. For he is “superior to the angels,” and “he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty,” though whom the worlds are proclaimed to be created. He, “who for a little while was made a little lower than the angels,” “by the grace of God the Father,” as it is said, “he tasted death for everyone.” About Him it is also said, “[He], *for whom and through whom all things [exist], brought many children to glory*” [cf. Heb 2:10]. God the Word, “for whom and through whom all things [exist],” is no other than the “author of salvation,” Jesus, “who made purification for sins, who brought many children to glory, and who was made perfect by the Father through His suffering.” The apostle also makes the same teaching about him in this verse, “*He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us*” [Rom 8:32].

12.

Nestorian: Your argument accomplishes nothing except for teaching that God, who is impassible and immortal, is passible and mortal insofar as He is in Himself.

Catholic: Since you deny that it is God who was crucified on behalf of human salvation, I ask you, “Who do you claim was incarnate?”

Nestorian: The Word, obviously, just as the evangelist gives testimony, saying, “*And the Word became flesh and lived among us*” [Jn 1:14].

Catholic: Did God the Word, who was incarnate, also suffer? Or, was the one who was incarnate different from the one who suffered?

Nestorian: God, certainly, was incarnate. However, not God, but God’s flesh (*caro Dei*) suffered.

Catholic: You have given me great hope for you. For thus far you claimed not that God’s flesh, but the flesh of the assumed human suffered. Now you have confessed that it is God’s flesh. But because it is not sufficiently clear what you are saying—that not God but His flesh suffered—please explain this more clearly. For what you say seems very absurd. If God’s flesh suffered, how did God not suffer according to the flesh? And, if God did not suffer according to the flesh, how did God’s flesh suffer? Unless perhaps [you mean that] the Jews should be understood to have crucified an inanimate flesh (*carnem exanimem*), divorced from God. But because it is very foolish to believe that flesh without a soul was crucified by the Jews, it follows that God’s animated flesh (*caro animata Dei*), which is obviously a human, is believed to be crucified by the Jews. So if credibility is granted to your assertion—not God, but God’s flesh

suffered—what else is believed than that a human belonging to God (*homo dei*) suffered? It is even permitted to say this about Peter and Paul, since they also are called men of God (*homines Dei*), and they suffered on His behalf.

13.

Nestorian: God certainly did not suffer, because proclaiming that God is passible is blasphemy. Instead, God “caused the sufferings appropriate to His flesh” (*sui corporis fecit proprias passiones*).⁵¹⁰

Catholic: The word “*proprietas*”⁵¹¹ is understood in a number of ways (*proprietas multis intellegitur modis*). For the Church is called His body (*ecclesia corpus eius*), and God caused sufferings belonging to this same Church (*eiusdem ecclesiae . . . proprias passiones*), on behalf of which He also speaks while He is positioned in heaven, “*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*” [Acts 9:4] Moreover, each of the faithful is a member of Him (*unusquisque fidelium membrum eius est*), just as this same apostle teaches, saying, “*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it*” [1 Cor 12:27]. But still further, that bread, in which the universal Church participates in commemoration of the Lord’s passion, is His body (*panis ille . . . corpus eius est*). How, therefore, do you claim that God “caused the sufferings belonging (*proprias*) to His flesh?” You must make [your position] clear with examples.

Nestorian: I shall do so, as far as I can, in order to dissuade you from this position and that you hereafter refrain from claiming that God the Word suffered according to the flesh, though God’s flesh did suffer. God’s flesh is not called “God’s body” as the Church is, nor is it so called like that bread, in which the universal Church participates in commemoration of *Christ’s* passion.⁵¹² Instead, [God’s flesh] is called “God’s body,” as a garment is said to belong to any human who wears it (*alicuius hominis proprium, quod indutus est, uestimentum*). When this garment is torn by someone, the injury is related (*refertur*) to whoever is wearing the garment. According to this reasoning, God “caused the sufferings belonging to His body.”

Catholic: God, therefore, causes the suffering belonging to His flesh through a relation (*secundum relationem*), not through a true and intimate ownership (*secundum ueram et intimam proprietatem*)? How, then, do you proclaim that God caused the suffering belonging to His *flesh* if He causes suffering belonging to His flesh through a relation, not through ownership? What ownership can a garment have for him who puts it on, when the garment in no way pertains to his substance? For when we define “human” (*homo*), we do not include his garment because it has no share in the same substance. Therefore, God causes—according to you—sufferings belonging to His own Church rather than sufferings belonging to His body. For the Church is called “God’s body,” since “*God shared flesh and blood*” [cf. Heb 2:14] and “*was made the head of the Church*” [cf. Eph 5:23]. But the Church becomes a sharer in Him through faith, by accepting the Holy Spirit. But you believe that God’s body is like a garment (*instar uestimenti*), which seems to pertain in no way to the nature of His divinity or the nature of His flesh. Furthermore, Isaiah proclaims that God’s garment is nothing other than God’s flesh, when he

⁵¹⁰ I have translated *proprias* as “appropriate to” rather than “belonging to” (the usual translation thus far) because Catholicus questions the very meaning of the word “*proprietas*” below.

⁵¹¹ This Latin sentence is clunky because of the combination of a form of *facio* (“to do, make, cause,” a verb denoting the active) with a noun related to the verb *patio* (“to suffer, experience,” a verb denoting the passive). Since Nestorianus is unwilling to acknowledge that God is passible in any way, he has used language that attempts to circumvent this issue. For him, God literally “caused His body to experience suffering,” a nonsensical or at least circuitous mixture of active and passive. This intentional awkwardness is attacked and utilized by Catholicus to refute his opponent’s position, but it is very difficult to translate into understandable English.

⁵¹² Cf. the Catholic’s words above, “in commemoration of the *Lord’s* passion.”

says, “*Who is it that comes from Edom, from Bozrah in garments stained crimson?*” [Is 63:1] But if you also understand God’s garment to be nothing other than God’s flesh, it follows that you should relate the tearing of the garment, that is, the suffering of His flesh to Him, whose garment, that is, flesh, it is. Without any doubt, the injury and suffering should be believed to be *His*, whose flesh and garment it is.

14.

Nestorian: Where in Holy Scripture did you read that the body of God the Word and not rather the body of Christ is the Church?

Catholic: By this claim of yours, you make Christ different from God the Word. But if Christ is not different from God the Word, and Christ in fact *is* God the Word, then just as Christ’s body is the Church so also is the body of God the Word the Church. But if Christ’s body is not the body of God the Word, how did you concede earlier that God’s flesh suffered?

Nestorian: I said that God’s flesh suffered, not God the Word. In dignity and honor Christ is God—whose flesh, as I said, suffered—because God the Word dwelt in Christ. This is why I denied that God also suffered but nevertheless confessed that God’s flesh suffered.

Catholic: Christ, therefore, is not “*true God*” [cf. 1 Jn 5:20], but because God the Word dwelt in him, in honor and dignity, rather, in name only—according to you—is Christ called “*God*.” How is this not contradictory to the meaning of John the Apostle, when he says, “*We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true God; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is true God and eternal life*” [1 Jn 5:20]?

15.

Nestorian: If you do not call Christ “*God*” because of the honor and dignity of God’s dwelling in him, you certainly represent God as seen and touched by humans.

Catholic: If God was not seen or touched by humans, how did that same John say,⁵¹³ “*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us*” [1 Jn 1:1–2]? Read the individual passages closely, and see that God was seen and touched by humans. This important apostle gives testimony that the Word of Life, who was with the Father from the beginning, about whom they heard from the law and the prophets, was ultimately seen and perceived with their own eyes, touched with their own hands. And to prevent anyone from trying to claim that the “*Word was with God*” [in the sense that the Word] is something outside of what God is, he adds, “*this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us.*”

Nestorian: Then does the Lord lie when he says, “*No one has ever seen God*” [Jn 1:18, 1 Jn 4:12]? The apostle [Paul] also says the following about God, “*Whom no one has ever seen or can see*” [1 Tim 6:16], and God says to Moses, “*No one shall see my face and live*” [Ex 33:20].

Catholic: If it is not God who was seen, how does He say, “*Behold, I who am speaking am present*” [Is 52:6], and the prophet,⁵¹⁴ “*Our God comes and does not keep silence*” [Ps 49:3]?

Nestorian: Should it be believed, therefore, that Divine Scripture contradicts itself?

⁵¹³ This is a reference to “*No one has ever seen God*” [Jn 1:18, 1 Jn 4:12]. See below and the chapters for Book II.

⁵¹⁴ It seems that John Maxentius has reversed the attributions of these two scriptural passages.

Catholic: Divine Scripture does not contradict itself in the eyes of those who understand it piously. But it seems contradictory to those who are deceived by the spirit of heresy and cannot grasp what its truths are. For the following is said, “No one has ever seen God,” and “No one shall see my face and live,” because no one can see with their earthly eyes (*corporeis oculis*) the nature of the divinity, which is obviously not matter (*corpus*) but spirit (*spiritus*). Furthermore, the prefiguring that happened to Jacob teaches that God was to be seen by humans in His assumed flesh—when in fact this very patriarch wrestles with someone ostensibly human and when blessed by “this man,” he says, “*I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved*” [Gen 32:30]. Thomas also, after the resurrection of the Lord, felt and touched the Lord’s pierced side, exclaiming, “*My Lord and my God*” [Jn 20:28].

Nestorian: You have unwittingly supported my position strongly. For because the divine nature is not material, but spirit, as you have just professed, there is no doubt about what nature is seen or pierced. When his disciples were in doubt about him, this same Lord said, “*Touch me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have*” [Lk 24:39]. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was pierced, was seen and touched. When the apostle recognized him after the resurrection, he exclaims and says, “My Lord and my God.” It is clear from this that Jesus Christ is not God, though Thomas saw and touched [Jesus Christ] risen from the dead. It is also clear that Christ is God only insofar as God, “whom no one will see and live,” dwells in him.

Catholic: In no way did Thomas call Him, whom he saw and touched, God on account of [God] dwelling in Him! This is removed from the apostolic faith; this is believing in two sons. Instead, [the apostle] gives testimony that He, whose wounds he touched, is his Lord and God. For the apostles, [Jesus Christ] is not God by dignity, but God by nature. Jeremiah clearly gives testimony about Him, who was seen and touched, saying, “*This is our God; no other can be compared to him. He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel, whom he loved. Afterward she appeared on earth and lived with humankind*” [Bar 3:36–9].⁵¹⁵ Jesus Christ, the God-man, appeared and lived with humankind, and to Him no other can be compared.

Nestorian: If no other “God” can be compared to him, who was pierced and crucified by the Jews, who is the “God” who resurrected the “God” when there is no other “God” who can be compared with the crucified [“God”]?

Catholic: Still you do not abandon your idiosyncratic position (*a propria intentione*) by which you believe that Christ is no other than one of those about whom God says, “*I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*” [2 Cor 6:16].

16.

Nestorian: But about none of them does the apostle give the testimony that he gives about Christ, saying, “*For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*” [Col 2:9].

Catholic: How do you understand the phrase, “the whole fullness of deity dwelling in Christ?”

Nestorian: The entire Trinity, obviously.

Catholic: Christ, therefore, is a fourth, and in him the entire Trinity dwells.

Nestorian: Is Paul a liar, then, when he makes his claim?

Catholic: Paul is no liar, because he does not say that the Trinity dwells in Christ. He does not think that Christ is separate from the Trinity.

⁵¹⁵ John Maxentius has misattributed this quotation to Jeremiah.

Nestorian: If the Trinity does not dwell in Christ, how does “the whole fullness of deity dwell” in Christ? Either the whole fullness of deity does not dwell in Christ if the Trinity does not dwell in Christ; or, if the whole fullness of deity *does* dwell in Christ, the Trinity obviously dwells in Christ.

Catholic: The whole fullness of deity does dwell in Christ, yet the Trinity does not dwell in Christ. Otherwise, this would not be a Trinity, but a “Quarternity” (*quarternitas*). Though no one doubts that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the Trinity, Christ is certainly understood to be a fourth [person] if the Trinity dwells in him. Paul, therefore, does not teach that the Trinity dwells in Christ when he says, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Instead, he teaches that the Father dwells in Christ.

Nestorian: If the whole fullness of deity dwelling in Christ should be understood as the Father alone, then there is no room for the Son and the Holy Spirit to be God.

Catholic: Do you assert that the Father is completely and perfectly God (*plenum et perfectum Deum*)? Or, do you testify that His perfection and completeness is the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Nestorian: [The Father] is obviously completely and perfectly [God].

Catholic: But the Father being completely and perfectly God prevents the Son and the Holy Spirit from being God? But if it is impious to believe such a thing, it follows that it is not contradictory—in fact, it is completely congruent with the Truth to understand the whole fullness of deity as the Father, since, just as He is His own fullness, the Son is His own fullness and the Holy Spirit likewise. And at the same time, all of them, that is, the whole Trinity, are not three, but one fullness of deity, since the Father is perfect, the Son is perfect, and the Holy Spirit is perfect, yet they are not three perfections but a single perfection. For if the Son, as John gives testimony about Him, is called a “fullness”—“*From his fullness we have all received*” [Jn 1:16]—how should it be denied that the Father is a fullness?

Nestorian: Is the deity of the Trinity singular, and the Trinity one God? Or are there three gods and three deities?

Catholic: Beyond any doubt the deity of the Trinity is singular, and the Trinity is one God.

Nestorian: If, therefore, the deity of the Trinity is singular, and the Trinity is one God, how does the Trinity not dwell in Christ since the fullness of deity, which is one and singular, dwells in Christ?

Catholic: There is no doubt—according to my position (*apud nos*)—that Christ exists as a substance in two natures, namely one of divinity and one of humanity. Moreover, because the deity of the whole Trinity is one and singular, Christ is therefore—according to you—the Trinity and a humanity, because he exists as a substance both from the deity of the whole Trinity, which is one and singular, and from humanity. But if Christ is the Trinity and a humanity, then the Trinity does not dwell in Christ; the Trinity *is* Christ.

17.

Nestorian: Christ is not the Trinity nor a humanity, but Christ nevertheless is from a perfect deity and perfect humanity. The Trinity dwells in him, but Christ is not a fourth [person], as you reckon. For no one doubts that the Father dwells in the Son and the Son in the Father, from both of whom the Holy Spirit is not separated. But God the Son, in whom the Father dwells, is “*in Christ reconciling the world to himself*” [cf. 2 Cor 5:19] in the sense that, because the Son is joined to him [sc. Christ], the Son and Christ are one and the same. By this reasoning, the Trinity dwells in Christ, but Christ is not a fourth [person].

Catholic: This is not reason; this is a great absurdity! Thus far you have contended that the Trinity dwells in Christ through the following verse, “*For in him the whole fullness of deity*

dwells bodily” [Col 2:9], but now you claim not that the entire Trinity but that only God the Son dwells in Christ on the authority of the following verse, *In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself*” [2 Cor 5:19]. Nevertheless, because the Father dwells in the Son, the Son dwells in the Father, and the Holy Spirit is not separated from them, you still, according to this “logic,” claim that the entire Trinity dwells in Christ, yet you say this is not a “Quarternity,” though the Trinity dwells in Christ, because God the Word is within Christ so that, because of the Son’s union [with him], the Son and Christ are one. But whether you claim that the Trinity or God the Word dwells in Christ, you are convicted of proclaiming a “Quarternity,” not the Trinity.

Nestorian: In what way am I convicted of proclaiming a “Quarternity” and not the Trinity, whether I say the Trinity or God the Son dwells in Christ?

Catholic: For the following reason: if the Trinity, which is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as we said above, dwells in Christ, then Christ is understood beyond any doubt to be a fourth [person] in whom the Trinity dwells. Furthermore, if God the Son dwells in Christ, Christ is not he, and if Christ is not he, they are certainly two, namely God the Son and Christ, in whom [the Son] dwells—though you sophistically argue that they are one in order to deceive those of simpler mind. For the apostle taught in the above passage that God the Father, not God the Son, dwells in Christ and reconciles the world to Himself. After this he says, “*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ*” [2 Cor 5:17–8]. But if there is some doubt about what God he means [when he says “God”] reconciled the world to Himself through Christ—whether the Father or the Son is meant—let us learn [the answer] from the Lord Himself, “*The Father who dwells in me does his works*” [Jn 14:10].

18.

Nestorian: Is the power and activity (*uirtus et operatio*) of the Trinity one and equal, or diverse?

Catholic: Entirely one.

Nestorian: Was everything that was created created by the entire Trinity, or does this seem to you not to be the case?

Catholic: “*Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise*” [Jn 5:19]. Furthermore, the Father and the Son do nothing without the Holy Spirit.

Nestorian: Do you say that every mortal being (*mortale*) is created or uncreated?

Catholic: Certainly created.

Nestorian: If therefore everything that dies is a creature, Christ, who died on behalf of our sins, is also a creature. Moreover, because there is no creature that the Trinity did not create, certainly Christ, who we believe died for our sins, was created by the entire Trinity and was resurrected from the dead, because the power and activity of the Trinity is one. But if it is not contrary to the Truth to believe that Christ was created and was resurrected, just as reason has taught, by the entire Trinity, then this will also be consistent with the Truth, to confess that the entire Trinity dwells in Christ, who beyond any doubt was resurrected from the dead by it.

Catholic: This position is completely impious and sacrilegious; it can only be compared to the blasphemies of the Arians, who deny that Christ is God but claim that He is a creature. For the entire Trinity, as you impiously argue, did not create and resurrect Christ, who died on behalf of our sins, since Christ, who died on behalf of our sins, is separate from or alien to [the Trinity], but is instead one from the Trinity (*unus ex ipsa trinitate*). Christ, then, was not created or resurrected by the entire Trinity, but it was clearly the flesh of Christ. And because the flesh does not belong to someone else (*alterius*) but belongs to Christ Himself, Christ created and

resurrected Himself according to the flesh with the Father and the Holy Spirit. For even the apostle gives testimony that Christ was resurrected by the Father, not by the entire Trinity, when he says, “*Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead*” [Gal 1:1]. Although he said, “Neither by human commission nor from human authorities,” he does not proclaim Christ to be God alone and not human. Because [Paul] was writing to the Galatians, who were nearly led astray by the Jewish pseudo-prophets, he tempers his language so that, when they hear that God died and was resurrected by God, they are not scandalized, believing that two gods are proclaimed by him. He also does this so that they do not believe that Christ was only a man, resurrected from the dead.

19.

Nestorian: Although you condemn my assertion as impious and comparable to the Arian blasphemies because I have said that Christ, who died on behalf of our sins, is a creature—since obviously every creature is mortal and whatever is uncreated is immortal⁵¹⁶—you reckon that I have proclaimed a “Quarternity,” because I said the same Christ was both created by the entire Trinity and resurrected from the dead. Instead, it is *you* who are clearly proven—like the Arians—to divide *homousion* and proclaim a “Quarternity,” not the Trinity.

Catholic: Though your claim that every creature is mortal is made very ignorantly, nevertheless where do you prove that I divide *homousion* and proclaim a “Quarternity,” not the Trinity?

Nestorian: In saying that [Christ] is one from the Trinity (*unum ex trinitate*).

Catholic: Teach me, please, how I bring division to the Trinity or how I introduce a “Quarternity” instead of the Trinity when I speak these words.

Nestorian: Everything that exists in created things (*factis*) cannot exist in uncreated entities (*infectis*). The Trinity is certainly uncreated (*infecta*). Among other things, number (*numerus*) exists in created things. In number there is the order (*ordo*) of first and second. In order there is a gradation (*gradatio*) of greater and lesser. But the Trinity has neither order nor gradation. And by the reasoning that what is in number is not in the Trinity, then there is no number in the Trinity. It is therefore inconsistent with the Truth to say that Christ is *one* (*unum*) from the Trinity, because *one* is a word pertaining to number. And because number is inherently divisible (*quia omnis numerus in diuisione est*), saying that [Christ] subsists (*subsistere*) as one from the Trinity, which consists (*constat*) in unity, not division, effectively divides *homousion*.

Catholic: With your numerous and excessive arguments you have accomplished nothing but to reveal that you, after all this labor, are Sabellian in your thought—Sabellius claimed that just as there is one nature of the Trinity, so also is there one substance or person of the Trinity. If number does not—as you attempt [to claim]—pertain to the Trinity in any way, there is no Trinity, only a complete union (*unio tota*) according to its totality. And if the union is complete in its totality, how is there a Trinity? Or perhaps you contend [that it is a Trinity] in name alone, [claiming] like Sabellius, as I said above, and like Paul of Samosata that it is not a Trinity in substances and persons. But if you claim that the Trinity exists in reality and substances (*in rebus et subsistentiis*), and you say that the Father is one, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another, how is the Trinity not enumerated (*numeratur*)? The very fact that it is called “Trinity” signifies nothing but number. The Trinity, therefore, is enumerated, yet it is not enumerated. It is not enumerated according to nature, as it is written, “*His wisdom is beyond number*” [Ps 146:5].

⁵¹⁶ Note the flawed logic of this statement within the context of the argument. See the Catholic’s response below.

However it is enumerated according to persons, since the Trinity is three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not only, therefore, is there a numerical singularity (*singularis numerus*) in the Trinity, but a plurality (*pluralis*) is admitted as well—but not everything that is in number can be conferred to the Trinity. According to the plurality of number, the following is said, “*Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness*” [Gen 1:26], “*We—that is, the Father and I—will come to them and make our home with them*” [Jn 14:23], and “*I and the Father are one*” [Jn 10:30]—one (*unum*) according to nature, we (*sumus*) according to persons. From this we learn that “one” is not a number, though it is the origin or beginning of number, and it always exists as whole and indivisible. Otherwise, if you consider “one” to be number, then the Trinity will be enumerated not only according to persons but also according to nature. And because—as you say—number is inherently divisible, *homousion* is divided by you, not us, since you believe that “one” can be enumerated or divided. But if “one,” which is complete and indivisible, cannot be divisible in any way, we have not divided *homousion*, since we confess that Christ is truly one from the Trinity. For not everything that is enumerated is likewise divided in actuality, though everything that is divided in actuality is also at the same time enumerated. We make a statement about number (*numeramus*) when we say that the sun has two powers—namely light and heat—but we do not, nevertheless, divide them in reality, because we perceive them in thought alone. Likewise we also make a statement about number when we say that Christ our Lord [is] in two united natures, but we do not divide these very natures in reality, because we separate them in thought alone. We enumerate and separate the Trinity, as was said above, according to persons, but we do not separate or enumerate it according to nature, which is singular and unified because [the Trinity] is a “unity” (*unitas*), a “singularity” (*singularitas*), or what I think it is best called, a “union” of deity (*unio deitatis*)—it is neither separated nor enumerated. Christ, therefore, is said to be one from the Trinity, yet *homousion* is not divided, since according to what is not enumerated in the Trinity is Christ asserted to be one from the Trinity especially because “one” is never, as was said above, considered number, and everything that is enumerated in thought (*intellectu*) is not also divided in reality. With regard to this Paul says, “*There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things*” [cf. 1 Cor 8:6]. So by reason and by divine testimonies your conclusion, held together by many syllogisms, is taught to be empty and foolish because it claims that saying that Christ is one from the Trinity is inconsistent with the Truth, as [it claims that] “one” pertains to number and number is inherently divisible.

20.

Nestorian: Whatever is said to be *from* something (*ex aliquo*), either through generation (*generationem*) or through procession (*processionem*), reveals that it is different from whatever it comes (*alterum ostendit ex aliquo*). For God is said to be *from* God through generation such as the Son from the Father. Likewise, the Holy Spirit [is said to be *from* God] through procession, as it is written, “*We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God*” [1 Cor 2:12]. But if Christ is *from* the Trinity, he is either different through generation and is the son of the Trinity, or he is different through procession by proceeding from the Trinity. And what you think that you say about us, that [we say that] Christ is a fourth and separate from Trinity, it is you who are instead guilty of proclaiming this when you say that Christ is *from* the Trinity. It is my conclusion, therefore, that it is Catholic to make this assertion: Christ is one *in* the Trinity (*in trinitate*), not one *from* the Trinity.

Catholic: Just as the one is revealed to be different *from* the other through generation and procession, so also through creation doubtlessly is the one taught to be different *from* the other,

since the following is also said about a creature, “*All things come from God*” [1 Cor 11:12]. Therefore, those who assert that Christ was created and resurrected by the Trinity clearly make Christ a fourth [person] and separate from the Trinity. Because you tried to make this claim earlier, you now teach that one is different from another through generation and procession and refuse to say “through creation,” lest you appear to contradict yourself. We, however, confess that Christ is “one” from Trinity, not through generation, procession, or creation, but according to number just as we are accustomed to indicate any specific person as “one” of two, or three, or even many people. In this way there is no decrease or increase of that number from which some one person is specifically indicated. For neither is the number of apostles decreased or increased when the following is said, “*One of you will betray me*” [Mk 14:18]. John does not separate himself from the twelve or prove that he is a thirteenth [apostle] when he says the following about himself, “*One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him*” [Jn 13:23]. Or obviously some increase or decrease happened among the two disciples walking to Emmaus when the following is said, “*One of them, whose name was Cleopas*” [Lk 24:18]. Therefore, neither an increase nor a decrease happens to the Trinity by saying that Christ is one from the Trinity. Instead, by showing that He is one from the Trinity by specific signification, we reject those who proclaim that there is a confusion of substances, and we declare that those who believe that He is separate from the Trinity are actually strangers from the Catholic Truth. But because you judge this to be contrary to the Truth, you are either caught in believing that there is a confusion of substances, or you understand Christ to be entirely separate from the Trinity. Saying that Christ is one *in* the Trinity but denying that He is one *from* the Trinity is not consistent with Catholics—as you claim—but consistent with those who claim that, because Christ was created by the Trinity, He is one *in* the Trinity, thereby preventing Him from being one *from* the Trinity (*unum de trinitate*), that is, they understand that He [is associated with the Trinity in the sense] not of being (*esse*), but of being occupied (*inesse*). Just as each of us is “*in* the Trinity,” because God is one and “*in him we live and move and have our being*” [Acts 17:28], or certainly just as when it is said that “the Father is *in* the Son,” the one is taught to be different from the other, so also when it is said that “Christ is *in* the Trinity, someone removed from the Trinity is understood to be *in* the Trinity—but beyond any doubt [this argument] is nothing but professing a Quarterinity.”⁵¹⁷

21.

Nestorian: I make no objection to you except that I think it is better to confess that Christ is not one from the Trinity but one *person* from the Trinity (*unam personam ex trinitate*), especially because the Trinity has three persons.

Catholic: Catholics are not unaware that some say that Christ is “one person from the Trinity” in such a way that he who was crucified according to the flesh on our behalf is not one person from the Trinity. For they do not believe that Christ’s person is one from two natures united naturally, but they suggest that Christ’s person is one from two persons joined through association and grace. So they say that Christ is one person from the Trinity, but they still refuse to confess that Christ is one from the Trinity. You prove that you are one of them (*ex quibus te unum*)⁵¹⁸ because you say that Christ is one person from the Trinity but refuse to say that He is one from the Trinity. For who is foolish and crazy enough to say that “Peter is one person from humanity (*ex hominibus una persona*) but is not one of humanity (*unus ex hominibus*)?” This is

⁵¹⁷ The sarcasm expressed in this final sentence is a rarity for this dialogue.

⁵¹⁸ The Catholic cleverly uses the philosophical language under discussion to make a subtle joke at his opponent’s expense.

the Catholic definition: we confess that God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, with His own flesh, is one from the Trinity (*unum ex trinitate*), though He is not of the substance of the Trinity according to the flesh.

22.

Nestorian: Never will I confess that Christ is one from the Trinity because this is never found in canonical scripture. This example that you want to give about Peter has nothing to do with the matter at hand because every individual can be separated from one another, but believing this about the indivisible and inseparable Trinity is proven to be completely impious. This, however, should be confessed—without Christ there is no Trinity.

Catholic: If you protest that you say only what is contained in canonical scripture, then where did you read in it that “Christ is one in the Trinity,” or “one person from the Trinity,” or certainly that “there is no Trinity without Christ?” And when this is said, who does not understand that those who make this assertion proclaim a “Quarternity?” For if there is no Trinity without Christ, the Trinity, therefore, is with Christ. For God the Trinity is also with each of us, since we are not from it, but in it just as I have given proof above following the apostle’s testimony. Christ, therefore, is a fourth [person], with whom the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is. But because you believe that saying that Christ is one from the Trinity is contrary to the Truth, whose voice do you say it is in the following verse, “Behold, the man has become like one of us” [Gen 3:22]?

Nestorian: God’s, no doubt.

Catholic: Then God is not one, but many from whom one says to the others, “The man has become like one of us?”

Nestorian: There are not many gods, but one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Catholic: So you assert that this voice belongs to that God, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? And if this voice belongs to that God, to whom does He say, “Behold the man has become like one of us?”

Nestorian: God, obviously, the Father to the Son.

Catholic: Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are doubtless one God, the Trinity, when the Father says the following to the Son, “Behold the man has become like one of us,” does the phrase “like one of us” mean the same thing as “we who are the Trinity?”

Nestorian: Although it is permissible for the Father to speak to the Son this way, I nevertheless confess what is said in scripture, even if I do not want to. I do not, however, dare to say what scripture does not express in its very words. But it is enough for me, in order to avoid the charge of sophistry, to say only this about the Son, what is contained in the [Nicene] creed—God, the only begotten Son of the Father, born from (*de*) the Holy Spirit of (*ex*) the virgin Mary.

Catholic: But even he who was condemned at Ephesus [sc. Nestorius] said that God was born of a virgin, not because he confesses that God was truly and rightly born of a virgin, but on account of a union made between God the Word and the man whom the virgin bore.

23.

Nestorian: I say that God the Word was born according to the flesh of a woman.

Catholic: Do you profess that God the Word, who you say was born of a woman, is outside the Trinity, is the Trinity, or is one from the Trinity?

Nestorian: I confess that God the Word is not the Trinity, is not outside the Trinity, and is not one from the Trinity. Instead, I confess that God the Son of God for our salvation was born of a woman according to the flesh and suffered. I refuse, however, to use your language (*tuis . . . uti sermonibus*), nor do I confess that he is one from the Trinity.

Catholic: It is not, as it seems to me, that you do not want to use *my* language because these words are not mine, but the words of Truth. Rather, you want to misuse your own language (*tuis . . . abuti*) like a heretic by denying the very thing that you are saying. For even the Arians agree with us that there are three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—but they are condemned because they refuse to say “*homousion*.” Likewise, the followers of Paul of Samosata agree with us about *homousion* but are convicted heretics because they deny that the Trinity has three persons. Furthermore, as for those who agree that God the Word was born according to the flesh of a virgin but refuse to say that He is one from the Trinity—either they, like Sabellius, are understood to assert that the entire Trinity only has one person, or they are convicted of proclaiming that God the Word is someone other—I do not know who—than He who is from the Trinity.

Nestorian: It is one thing to proclaim three persons and deny that the Trinity has one essence, and confess *homousion* and in no way accept that there are three persons—since [both of these double statements] are substantially (*rebus ipsis*) different from the Truth. It is another matter to agree in concepts (*rebus*) and disagree only in words (*uerbis*).

Catholic: What is this! You agree that it is Catholic and consistent with the Truth to say that Christ is from the Trinity?

Nestorian: I do not want to pursue this matter with you any longer.

Catholic: No other reason prevents you from pursuing the matter further with me than because you are convicted of proclaiming, like a heretic, [some other] God the Word—I do not know who—but not Him, who is one from the Trinity just as the Manicheans do. For if you were in disagreement, not in sense, but only in words, you would certainly agree that proclaiming Christ as one from the Trinity would be entirely Catholic.

24.

Nestorian: Does what I say and what you say not seem to you to be the same thing? Or do you say that someone else—I do not know who—and not God the Word Jesus Christ is one from the Trinity?

Catholic: It is always He, and I never recognize anyone else.

Nestorian: So if we are in agreement, do you dare name me a heretic if I refuse to use your language so that, though I would appease you, I do not seem to provide other heretics with an opportunity for their own error?

Catholic: If Christ should not be proclaimed “one from the Trinity” so that we do not seem to grant heretics an opportunity, then we should not confess three persons and the Trinity lest we give the Arians an opportunity. Or, we should not confess *homousion* lest we seem like the followers of Paul of Samosata. Finally, we should deny two natures, since Nestorius always and everywhere professed them. I do not know if there is anything that we should confess then. But even so, if someone should say to you, “I confess that the blessed virgin is *Christotokos*, but I still refuse to agree that she is also *Theotokos*,” do you pronounce him a Catholic or a heretic?

Nestorian: Obviously I pronounce him a heretic, because a synod has already made a statement about this just like all of those examples that you gave above.⁵¹⁹

Catholic: Again, if someone says, “I confess that Christ is one nature of God the Word, namely incarnate and animate, but of rational and intellectual quality (*incarnatam et animatam rationali et intellectuali*),⁵²⁰ but I do not dare proclaim that he has two natures,” or again if

⁵¹⁹ Cf. Book I.2–4.

⁵²⁰ Such grammatical gymnastics are similar to those found in II.13.

someone says, “I believe that Christ is *from (de)* two natures, but I cannot believe that he is *in (in)* two natures lest I give an opportunity to the heretics,” how do you judge about such persons? Do you dare name them heretics, though they are understood to confess in different language that there are two natures in Christ, but so that they do not seem to give an opportunity to heretics they refuse to express two [natures] explicitly (*uerbis ipsis*)?

25.

Nestorian: Not only do I consider such people contrary to the Truth, but I also anathematize them. For this and no other reason do we not communicate with the Egyptians.

Catholic: If you not only censure as heretics but even anathematize those who proclaim two natures in different language but refuse to express this same idea explicitly, and if you likewise condemn those who say that blessed Mary is *Christotokos* but refuse to proclaim her *Theotokos*, though it is true that Christ is God and God is Christ, then how will we judge them Catholics and not heretics when they say that God the Word was born according to the flesh from a virgin and suffered in the flesh on our behalf but deny that He is one from the holy and indivisible Trinity—especially because they claim that this statement is in no way consistent with the Catholic faith?

Nestorian: But a synod has made explicit statements about the two natures and the term “*Theotokos*.” No synod has made a statement about the latter issue.

Catholic: Do you think, then, that we should say nothing except what is contained in synodal documents?

Nestorian: Nothing at all.

Catholic: If someone pressed you whether God the Father was begotten or unbegotten, what would you respond to him?

Nestorian: Unbegotten, obviously.

Catholic: But if he should say to you, “I do not accept this because no synod has made a statement about this.”

Nestorian: I respond, “Because it has not forbidden saying this.”

Catholic: But if he presses you that the word “Trinity” should not be used because no synod has made a statement about this?

Nestorian: I make the same response and nothing else, “Just as it did not state that it must be said, so also did it in no way prohibit it.”

Catholic: But if he should say the opposite, “Just as it did not prohibit it, it is no way right to say what is not contained in council documents,” what will you respond to this?

Nestorian: I can prove this from the writing of the Fathers.

Catholic: But even we proved that Christ is one from the Trinity by the Fathers’ writings.

Nestorian: Although I believe even this is easily taught from the writings of the Fathers, I still refuse to say this, and I will not continue the discussion further with you. Instead I will cling steadfast to my position.

Catholic: I was truly amazed that you could conquer human glory so that you suffer no misunderstanding, insofar as you accept, through the censure of divine scripture, the position against which you have just recently fought as consistent with the Truth. Yet because you are determined to enclose yourself within your own position rather than endorse a true confession with a love of eternal blessedness, I can never consider you anything but a heretic, since you deny that God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered in the flesh for our salvation, is one from the holy and indivisible Trinity, to whom is honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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For editions of Latin dialogues from Late Antiquity, see Appendix A.

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<i>Retractationes</i>	Mutzenbecher, ed. CCSL 57 (1984)

Calcidius

<i>On Plato's Timeaus</i>	John Magee, ed. DOML 41
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