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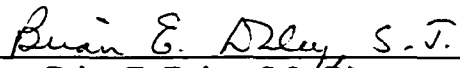
THE THEOPASCHITE CONTROVERSY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School

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Doctor of Philosophy

by

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CHRISTOLOGY AND GRACE IN THE SIXTH-CENTURY LATIN WEST:

THE THEOPASCHITE CONTROVERSY

Abstract

by

David Russell Maxwell

The Theopaschite controversy was initiated by a group of monks from Scythia who arrived in Constantinople in 519 advocating the formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh." They were rebuffed in Constantinople and in Rome, but they eventually found support in the person of Fulgentius of Ruspe, a North African bishop exiled by the Arian Vandals on the island of Sardinia.

This controversy concerned not only Christology, however, but also the doctrine of grace. Most studies on this subject pay little attention to the connection between these two aspects of the dispute because they tend to view the affair in the categories of later dogmatic theology. Thus, they construe the Theopaschite controversy either as an episode in the history of post-Chalcedonian Christology or as an episode in the Semi-Pelagian controversy.

By looking at the controversy on its own terms, however, one sees that both the Scythian monks and Fulgentius advocated a unitive Cyrillian Christology together with an

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Augustinian doctrine of grace. These two theological positions evinced the same conception of the relation between God and humanity. They rejected the idea that God and humanity relate to each other on the same level, in such a way that the more one attributes to God, the less one attributes to humanity, and vice versa. Instead, the Scythian monks and Fulgentius held that an action can be attributed to God without diminishing its human character. In theopaschite Christology, this means that God the Word is the subject of all Christ's human experiences, even his most degrading human experience, death on the cross. There is no independent human subject in Christ. In the Augustinian doctrine of grace, a similar conception manifests itself in the claim that God is the sole originator of all human good works. There is no independent human contribution to salvation. Thus, the advocates of theopaschite Christology presented a view of the world in which human activity, except for sin, does not take place independently from God, but God works through human actions and human experiences.

To my mother and father

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
CA	Collectio Avellana = CSEL 35.1-2
CCL	Corpus Christianorum, series latina
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
DTC	*Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*
FCC	Fathers of the Church
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PS	*Publizistische Sammlungen zum Acacianischen Schisma*
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The sixth century saw a decisive struggle over the interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon (451) as well as the outcome of the Semi-Pelagian controversy. Many of the classic formulations which would be determinative for later orthodoxy in both the East and the West were crystallized in that century. The Theopaschite controversy, also known as the Scythian controversy, played an important role in shaping this common heritage. The legacies of both Chalcedon and Augustine were refracted through the prism of the debate initiated by a group of monks from Scythia.

Early in 519, this group of Latin-speaking monks, led by a certain John Maxentius, arrived in Constantinople to appeal to the Emperor concerning a dispute they were having with their bishop. They came from the town of Tomi, of Ovid's fame, which was located in Scythia, a region on the shores of the Black Sea, just south of the mouth of the Danube. In the course of their mission, they triggered a controversy in Constantinople by suggesting that the council of Chalcedon was susceptible to a Nestorianizing misinterpretation which would seek to ascribe Christ's human actions to his human nature and his divine actions to his divine nature, as if the two natures acted independently. In order to safeguard the unity of Christ against such a misinterpretation, they advocated the

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formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh." With this theopaschite formula, they intended to confess clearly that the Logos himself was the subject of all of Christ's experiences, both human and divine. Failing to gain support from the emperor Justin I, they appealed to Rome. Pope Hormisdas, however, was unwilling to concede that Chalcedon needed any further clarification. Finally, the Scythian monks found support in the 520's from Fulgentius of Ruspe, a North African bishop exiled in Sardinia.

The Scythian controversy, however, was not only about Christology. The Scythian monks also advocated an Augustinian doctrine of grace. They held that conversion was entirely the work of the Holy Spirit and denied that the human will had any independent role to play. They drew especially on the mature anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine to support their position. Most of the writings of the Scythian monks treat both Christology and grace, in that order.

The interconnection between Christology and grace in the Scythian controversy has not been treated in any detail in the secondary literature. Indeed, it has often been dismissed as odd or accidental. However, the consistent pairing of the two doctrines by the Scythian monks and Fulgentius of Ruspe strongly suggests that these sixth-century authors themselves saw a connection between Christology and grace. The purpose of this study is to explore what they thought the connection was. In short, the Scythian monks and Fulgentius of Ruspe wanted to affirm both in the case of Christ and in the case of Christians that God is the sole originator of human salvation. At the same time, however, they wished to affirm that God's action does not circumvent or destroy human faculties but fully engages them.

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This question is important for four reasons. First, very little has been written on the Scythian controversy. In fact, there are no monographs which consider this controversy in its own right. Thus, the present study will help to fill in some gaps in our knowledge of the theology of the Scythian monks and Fulgentius of Ruspe in general, as well as of their connection between Christology and grace in particular.

Second, this study seeks to supplement the work of John O'Keefe and others who argue that the Nestorian controversy has been wrongly characterized in text books as a debate between Antiochenes who wanted to defend the human nature of Christ and Alexandrians who stressed the divine nature of Christ at the expense of the human.[1] Instead, O'Keefe argues, the Antiochenes were above all concerned to protect God's immutability, while Cyril of Alexandria wanted most of all to stress the fullness of God's presence in the world even though it meant predicating suffering of God. The present study offers indirect support for O'Keefe's thesis by showing that the concerns he claims for Cyril in the fifth century became even more explicit in the Christology of the sixth century where the locus of controversy shifted from the theotokos to the question of divine suffering itself. There is no denying that divine impassibility was the chief point of contention in the Theopaschite controversy.

Third, this study attempts to identify what was at stake in the Christological formulas of the sixth century. The authors of this period were not concerned with terminological precision for its own sake. Christological dogma was seen as part of a

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[1]See John J. O'Keefe, "Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion in Fifth Century Christology," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 39-60.

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whole in such a way that one's Christology had a profound effect on one's view of human salvation and vice versa. The arguments about terms and slogans were ultimately arguments about views of God and humanity. The opponents of the Scythian monks, like the Antiochene theologians a century earlier, felt that human action must take place to some extent independently from God in order to maintain human integrity, as they saw it, and divine impassibility. The Scythian monks and Fulgentius, on the other hand, understood God to act in and through human actions, human decisions, and most especially the suffering and death of Christ, without violating the integrity of humanity or the transcendence of God. This presence and activity of God in the world is crucial to the message of salvation in Christ. The Theopaschite controversy has enduring significance because the issues with which it grapples must be addressed by any incarnational theology.

Fourth, the Theopaschite controversy provided answers which helped shape later orthodoxy. It exercised a direct influence on the Second Council of Orange in 529 and, more importantly, on the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, where the Scythian monks' theopaschite formula was approved. Furthermore, the concerns and, to a large extent, the solutions of the parties to the Scythian controversy find echoes in later theologians like Thomas Aquinas and the sixteenth-century reformers.

1.1 Overview

Methodologically, the present study attempts to provide both a synthetic overview of the theologies of the Scythian monks and Fulgentius as well as a more analytical

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treatment of the connection between Christology and grace. In order to address these two concerns, the following structure has been employed.

Chapter 2 provides a theological context for the Scythian controversy by exploring various connections between Christology and grace which were drawn by fifth-century authors. This chapter shows first of all that such connections were commonly made. Therefore, it is necessary to look for such connections in the sixth century as well. Second, the chapter lays out the range of various possible connections. By comparing the connections drawn in the sixth century with the options provided by earlier authors, one can gain a clearer sense of what concerns and trajectories the sixth-century authors were following.

Chapter 3 provides the historical context for the Scythian controversy by giving a chronological narration of the events of the controversy that introduces the reader to the people, events, and documents which are important in the remainder of the dissertation. In addition, chapter 3 deals with the background of the Scythian monks themselves. They came from a group of Goths who adhered to the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition. These Goths may have originally been converted to Christianity through the work of John Chrysostom or perhaps through the work of Theotimos, the bishop of Tomi in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.[2]

Chapters 4 and 5 establish the link between Christology and grace in the writings of the Scythian monks. Chapter 4 deals with the Scythian monks' Christology and lays the

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[2]J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire Romain* (Paris, 1918), 547.

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ground work for comparison with their doctrine of grace. Chapter 5 deals with their

doctrine of grace. It first provides an overview of the Scythian monk's doctrine of grace

and then proceeds to argue that the Scythian monks understood their doctrine of grace to

be a consequence of their Christology. Most of the connections between Christology and

grace are drawn in chapter 5.

Chapters 6 and 7 draw connections between Christology and grace in the writings

of Fulgentius of Ruspe. Both chapters follow the same pattern as chapter 5, moving from

a general overview to particular issues of concern. Chapter 6 gives an account of

Fulgentius's Christology including a discussion of the development of his Christology.

Chapter 7 examines Fulgentius's doctrine of grace, arguing for a theological development

which corresponds to, but is more subtle than, his Christological development. Most of

the connections between Christology and grace are drawn in chapter 7.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the study's finding and traces the influence of the

Scythian controversy to the Second Council of Orange (529) and the Second Council of

Constantinople (553). The lasting relevance of the issues which engage this study is

further demonstrated by briefly comparing the theologians of the Scythian controversy

with Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard.

1.2 Review of Secondary Literature

A striking feature of the secondary literature on the Scythian controversy is that

Christology and grace are never treated together in the same work. This characteristic of

the secondary literature stands in stark contrast to the primary texts themselves which

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frequently discuss both doctrines together. The reason for this disconnect is that there are no studies of the Scythian controversy in its own right except for an article by John McGuckin in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, discussed below. The Scythian controversy is viewed through the lense of *Dogmengeschichte* which tends to treat Christology and grace separately. The sixth-century issues are ordinarily discussed in studies of history or Christology whose scope extends far beyond the Scythian controversy. These works can devote only a few pages to the Scythian controversy, and they understandably focus only on those elements of the controversy which are relevant to their larger themes.

Another disconnect in the secondary literature is that the Scythian monks and Fulgentius are normally treated separately. Again, the reason is the scope of the studies that exist. The Scythian monks are usually treated as a small part of a larger picture. Even when their correspondence with Fulgentius is mentioned, the discussion lasts for only a page or two. There are a number of works devoted exclusively to Fulgentius. However, these works too are rather broad in scope dealing not only with doctrinal issues, but with historical, cultural, and political issues as well.[3] Therefore, Fulgentius's correspondence with the Scythian monks usually receives a very cursory treatment if it is mentioned at all. In the review of literature which follows, the secondary studies are divided into three main groups: those concerning the Scythian monks, those dealing with the term "Neo-Chalcedoniansm," and those covering Fulgentius.

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[3]The exceptions are the works of Bernhard Nisters, Friedrich Wörter, and Francesco Di Sciascio, discussed below.

1.2.1 Studies Concerning the Scythian Monks

The writings of the Scythian monks are found in Eduard Schwartz's collection of documents related to the Second Council of Constantinople.[4] A more recent critical edition has been prepared by Fr. Glorie.[5] Both Schwartz and Glorie provide very helpful chronological accounts of the Scythian controversy. Neither discusses Christology or grace at any length. The main disagreement between Schwartz and Glorie is that Schwartz thinks John Maxentius is one person, while Glorie suggests that John and Maxentius might be two different people. Glorie presents his suggestion as tentative. The present study follows Schwartz and most other scholars who view John Maxentius as one person.

The study that seems to have sown the seed for dissociating grace from Christology is Friedrich Loofs's groundbreaking investigation of Leontius of Byzantium of 1887.[6] Since Loofs is the only scholar who has explicitly made a case that the doctrine of grace is a peripheral issue in the Scythian controversy, unrelated to Christology, his work will be considered in some detail. In his study, Loofs argues that Leontius of Byzantium

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[4]Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano Habitum*, Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (hereafter, ACO) 4.2 (Strasbourg, Leipzig, Berlin: Trübner, 1914).

[5]Fr. Glorie, ed., *Maxentii aliorumque Scytharum monachorum necnon Ioannis Tomitanae urbis episcopi opuscula*, Corpus Christianorum series latina (hereafter, CCL) 85A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1978).

[6]Friedrich Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der Griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen (hereafter, TU) 3.1 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1887).

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was the same as a certain Leontius who was one of the Scythian monks. In order to establish this identity, Loofs has to account for the fact that the Scythian monks engaged in a lively debate against the Semi-Pelagians, while Leontius of Byzantium showed no such anti-Pelagian interest. Loofs attempts to overcome this difficulty by asserting that the Scythian monks were not as concerned about the Semi-Pelagians as their letters appear to indicate.[7] He bases his argument in part on the assumption that no one in the East would be interested in Augustine: ". . . ein tiefgehendes antipelagianisches Interesse im Orient ist schwer begreiflich, zufällige Gründe–so möchte man vermuten–müssen es veranlasst haben, wenn Orientalen sich für Augustin's Sündenlehre interessiert zeigen."[8]

Loofs's identification of the Scythian monk Leontius with Leontius of Byzantium has been rejected by subsequent scholarship.[9] Berthold Altaner has written the definitive refutation of his position. He shows that Eduard Schwartz is correct when he argues that Leontius of Byzantium could not be a Scythian monk because the Scythian monks were not fluent in Greek.[10] Furthermore, Altaner demonstrates that Loofs assumes too sharp a separation between East and West in terms of culture and theology. The Balkans in the

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[7]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 231.

[8]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 231. Cf. 253.

[9]See Eduard Schwartz, ACO 4.2.xii and Loofs's response, *Paulus von Samosata: Eine Untersuchung zur altkirchlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte*, TU 44.5, eds., Adolf von Harnack & Carl Schmidt (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), 74-5, n.4.

[10]Berthold Altaner, "Der griechische Theologe Leontius und Leontius der skythische Mönch," in *Kleine patristische Schriften*, TU 83, ed. Günter Glockmann (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967), 381-2. The Scythian monks asked Dionysius Exiguus to translate letters of Cyril of Alexandria into Latin for them.

sixth century were Latinized, and John Maxentius relied heavily on Augustine not just for anti-Pelagian discussions but in the Christological *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* as well.[11]

Despite the rejection of Loofs's thesis, however, the secondary literature has never re-examined Loofs's contention that "zufällige Gründe" occasioned the Scythian monks' interest in Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace. On the contrary, Loofs's contention seems to have become part of the *Gemeingut* of research that touches on the Scythian controversy. For example, Rebecca Weaver characterizes the inclusion of anti-Pelagian polemic in the Scythian controversy as odd, and Henri Rondet claims that the Christological debate was joined to the debate on grace "quite accidentally."[12] Those who do not view the link as capricious tend to attribute the connection to polemical expediency. Thomas Smith thinks the Scythian monks were demonstrating a "show of anti-Pelagian fervor" in order to gain credibility for their Christological position.[13] John McGuckin also appeals to political motivations as will be seen below.[14]

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[11]Altaner, "Der griechische Theologe Leontius," 383-7.

[12]Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy*, North American Patristic Society Patristic Monograph Series 15 (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 181; Henri Rondet, S.J., *The Grace of Christ: A Brief History of the Theology of Grace*, ed. & trans. Tad W. Guzie, S.J (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1966), 156.

[13]Thomas A. Smith, *De Gratia: Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and Its Place in the History of Theology*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, no. 4 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 3.

[14]With the exception of McGuckin, none of the authors cited in this paragraph will be discussed below since the Scythian monks are only tangentially mentioned in their works. These authors are adduced here, however, to provide examples of a presupposition, seemingly self-evident to many scholars, that there is no connection between Christology and grace. It is this presupposition which the present study wishes to

Loofs's contention needs to be re-examined, however. His argument that the Scythian monks were not genuinely concerned about defending Augustine's doctrine of grace is based on his assumed separation of East and West and his account of how the Pelagian question came to be included in the Scythian controversy. Neither foundation of his argument, however, is convincing.

Loofs asserts a number of times that people from the East were for the most part unaware of the issues of the West. Altaner, however, amasses a list of Latin authors from the Balkans in order to demonstrate that the Latin language and culture thrived in the region.[15] Furthermore, as Loofs himself notes, Scythia was in communion with Rome during the Acacian schism.[16] This suggests that there was some contact between Scythia and the theology of the West. Given the cultural diversity of Scythia and the clear presence of the Latin language and culture there, one ought not make the assumption that a native of Scythia in the sixth century was unaware of issues and events in the West.

The other component of Loofs's argument is that the chronology of the Scythian controversy shows that the anti-Pelagian interest was not originally part of the Scythian monks' concerns. Although Loofs concedes that the anti-Pelagian section of the *Libellus*

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challenge.

[15]Altaner, "Der griechische Theologe Leontius," 383-4. Further evidence for the cosmopolitan character of sixth-century Scythia may be found in Jean Coman, "Le patrimoine de l'oecumenisme chrétien du IVe au VIe siècles en Scythie-Mineure (Dobroudja)," *Contacts: Revue Française de l'Orthodoxie* 22 (1970).

[16]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 250. This is reported in a letter from Pope Hormisdas to Caesarius of Arles in 515 (A. Thiel, ed., *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scripta sunt a. S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II*, [Brunsberg: E. Peter, 1869], 758).

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fidei, presented to the papal legates, attests the Scythian monks' interest in the doctrine of grace from their first contact with the legates in March, 519,[17] he insists that the grace question was injected into the controversy not by the Scythian monks, but by Possessor, a bishop from North Africa living in exile in Constantinople.[18] Loofs argues that far from addressing a concern of their own, the Scythian monks were provoked to argue about grace when the bishop Possessor cited Faustus of Riez against their theopaschite formula. Further evidence in support of Loofs's marginalization of the grace issue is the fact that neither the correspondence of the papal legates, nor the correspondence of Justin and Justinian mention the Pelagian question.[19]

There are a number of problems with this line of argumentation. First, silence of the papal legates can be explained by the polemical context of the discussion in early 519. The letters of the legates to the pope consistently portray the Scythian monks as heretical innovators seeking to overturn Chalcedon. The papal legates were no doubt aware that, on the question of sin and grace, Augustine was the authority for Rome. Pope Hormisdas later made this clear in his response to Possessor.[20] If the papal legates had reported the discussion of sin and grace, they would have made the pope aware that the Scythian

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[17]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 234. Loofs uses the titles of the documents printed in Migne. Migne's *Professio de Christo* corresponds to the grace section of the document Glorie labels *Libellus fidei* in CCL 85A.

[18]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 235.

[19]Loofs, 233, 235.

[20]Collectio Avellana (hereafter, CA) 231.14.15-18 in Otto Guenther, ed., *Epistulae Imperatorum Pontificum Aliorum inde ab A. CCCLXVII ad A. DLIII Datae Avellana Quae Dicitur Collectio*, CSEL 35.2 (Vindobonae: Tempsky, 1898).

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monks agreed with Rome's position on sin and grace. Such a disclosure would have run counter to the policy they so zealously pursued of making the Scythian monks out to be heretics.

On the question of when grace became an issue, there are two possibilities to consider. First, it is not clear that Possessor initiated the argument about grace. Second, even if Possessor did initiate the argument, it does not follow that grace became a point of contention for accidental reasons.

There are indications that the Pelagian question may have pre-dated Possessor's involvement in the controversy. The papal legates reported that even before they arrived on March 25, 519, the Scythian monks were in Constantinople discussing "one of the Trinity was crucified, the composite Christ, and other theses."[21] The theses dealing with the person of Christ, which the legates mention, correspond with theses 4 and 9 of the *Twelve capitula* of John *Maxentius*.[22] This correspondence raises the possibility that the *Twelve capitula* were written before the arrival of the legates on March 25, 519. Since the *Twelve capitula* also contain three theses related to the Pelagian controversy, this would indicate that the controversy included the Pelagian question even before the papal legates arrived. In that case, grace would have been part of the Scythian controversy from the very beginning.

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[21]CA 224.3.14-16: "...de uno de trinitate crucifixo et de Christo composito et de aliis capitulis."

[22]John Maxentius *Cap.* 4: "Si quis non acquiescit confiteri Christum 'unum de trinitate' etiam cum carne propria,... anathema sit." Maxent. *Cap.* 9: "Si quia non confitetur compositum Christum post incarnationem, anathema sit."

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The earliest attestation of Possessor's involvement, on the other hand, comes from his letter to Pope Hormisdas, which Hormisdas receives on July 18, 520.[23] It is not unthinkable that Possessor's involvement in the debate began over a year before he wrote that letter, but there is no solid evidence either way. The letter itself, however, suggests that Possessor may not have initiated the argument about grace. Possessor gives the impression that the debate about Faustus of Riez was raging before he entered the fray.[24]

The *Twelve capitula* and Possessor's own report both raise the possibility that Loofs is wrong to suggest that Possessor provoked the Scythian monks to argue about Pelagianism. However, it must be conceded that the above considerations are not definitive. It is possible that Christological theses were under debate before the arrival of the papal legates and that these theses were not written down as the *Twelve capitula* until after the Pelagian question was inserted into the controversy. It is also possible that Possessor cited Faustus on a Christological point, as Loofs suggests, which then provoked Scythian monks to attack Faustus's view of sin and grace in order to neutralize his authority to support what the Scythian monks saw as a Nestorianizing Christology. In that case, Possessor's account in his letter to Pope Hormisdas simply omits the detail that the debate about Faustus started when he cited Faustus against the Scythian monks' Christology.

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[23]CA 230.

[24]CA 230.3.15-20: "unde cum quorundam fratrum animus de codice Fausti cuiusdam natione Galli Reginae civitatis episcopi, qui de diversis rebus et frequentius de gratia dei diserte visus est disputare, in scandalum moveretur aliis, ut se habent humana studia, in contrarium renitentibus, me crediderunt de hoc ambiguo consulendum."

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Even if Possessor occasioned the introduction of the Pelagian question into the controversy, however, it does not follow from this that Possessor's involvement constitutes "accidental grounds" for the inclusion of the doctrine of grace or that the Scythian monks were not really concerned about grace. As will be seen in chapter 2, it was commonly asserted in the fifth century that Pelagianism and Nestorianism were twin heresies. Thus, there was abundant precedent for a controversy to move freely from Christology to grace. Second, in chapter 5 the argument will be made that Possessor may well have cited a passage from Faustus's *De gratia* which correlates the Augustinian position on grace with Monophysite Christology. If this is the case, then the grace question entered the Scythian controversy not accidentally, but precisely because it was connected to Christology. Third, whatever the origins of the Pelagian question in the Scythian controversy may have been, once it came up, the Scythian monks treated it as a question of a piece with the Christological controversy. Fulgentius did the same. The link between Christology and grace manifested in the documents themselves is not annulled even if Loofs is correct that the Pelagian question was raised somewhat later than the Christological one. Fourth, Fulgentius's correspondence with the Scythian monks John and Venerius shows unequivocally that the Scythian monks were vitally interested in the doctrine of grace. Loofs dismisses the idea that the John and Venerius to whom Fulgentius's *De veritate praedestinatione* is addressed are Scythian monks.[25] Glorie, however, gives a plausible account, based on the chronology of the documents, that John, the Scythian monk, is the same as John, presbyter and archimandrite, to whom Fulgentius

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[25]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 260-1.

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addressed his *Ep. 15* and his *De veritate praedestinatione*, and who later became bishop of Tomi.[26] Finally, the *Collectio Palatina*, compiled by a Scythian monk, continues to evince a concern both for Christology and grace. Whether the collection was assembled during the controversy, as William Bark claims,[27] or slightly later between 530-550 as Grillmeier claims,[28] it constitutes evidence that the concern for grace remained central to the Scythian controversy.

The remaining scholarship on the Scythian controversy may be divided into historical studies, general Christological studies, and works which deal with the Scythian controversy itself. L. Duchesne's study of the sixth-century church provides valuable background information as well as a narration of the events of the Scythian controversy.[29] Like Loofs, Duchesne assumes that the Pelagian controversy was unknown in the East and that the Pelagian question was prompted by Possessor.[30] As noted above, the assumption of a strict separation between East and West, especially in the case of Scythia, is questionable even though it is possible that Possessor occasioned the inclusion of the grace issue.

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[26]Glorie, CCL 85A, xxxvii-xxxviii.

[27]William C. Bark, "John Maxentius and the Collectio Palatina," *Harvard Theological Review* 36 (1943): 107.

[28]Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2.2, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*, trans., Jahn Cawte & Pauline Allen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 27.

[29]L. Duchesne, *L'Église au VIe siècle* (Paris: Fontemoing & Cie, E. de Boccard, successeur, 1925), esp. 54-65.

[30]Duchesne, *L'Église au VIe siècle*, 62.

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W.H.C. Frend's, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* is another historical study which devotes a few pages to the Scythian monks. Frend provides a historical account, oriented towards the political facets of the Scythian controversy. He recognizes in passing that soteriological issues are connected with the question of divine suffering,[31] but Frend does not set out to explore the theology of the Scythian controversy.

Besides historical works, there are some large-scale studies of Christology which touch on the Scythian controversy. Werner Elert, in his investigation of Theodore of Pharan, *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie* (published posthumously in 1957), argues that Platonism introduced an *Apathieaxiom* into Christianity.[32] Different authors at different periods stressed God's impassibility to different degrees. Those most committed to the *Apathieaxiom*, like the Antiochenes, tended to make impassibility paramount. The pre-eminence of the attribute of impassibility is severely challenged, however, by the portrayal of Christ in the Gospels, especially the account of his crucifixion. It is precisely the theopaschite question in the sixth century, according to Elert, which broke the Greek containers which held the Christological dogma up to that point. The affirmation that God suffered represents for Elert the victory of the Scriptural portrayal of Christ over the necessities of a philosophically-driven doctrinal system.

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[31]W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972; reprint, Cambridge University Press, 1979), 236 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

[32]Werner Elert, *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie: eine Untersuchung über Theodor von Pharan und seine Zeit als Einführung in die alte Dogmengeschichte* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957).

Elert's study spans about eight centuries. Therefore, his discussion of the Scythian monks is rather brief. In keeping with the overall theme of his book, he frames the Scythian controversy in terms of divine impassibility. The opponents of the Scythian monks felt that the theopaschite formula overthrows divine impassibility, and for that reason they vigorously opposed the Scythian monks.

The present study accepts Elert's assertion of the centrality of impassibility in the Scythian controversy and seeks to build on it. First, its more limited scope allows for a more detailed discussion of the Scythian monks' Christology than Elert provides. Second, since Elert does not discuss the Scythian monks' doctrine of grace, the links between Christology and grace drawn in this dissertation extend further the implications of Elert's work.

Aloys Grillmeier's classic *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2 is another work of large scope which includes a discussion of the Scythian monks.[33] Grillmeier focuses on the Christological side of the controversy. He evaluates the Scythian monks positively, listing three contributions they made to post-Chalcedonian Christology: they distinguished between abstract and concrete terms, they sharpened the definition of "person" by saying that one component of the definition is that a person "remains in itself or in its own subsistence," and they spoke of the union in Christ as a *compositio*.[34] These observations indicate the importance of the Scythian controversy for the history of theology because the developments Grillmeier notes have enduring significance. The implications of

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[33]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2.

[34]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:333-6.

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Grillmeier's comments will be discussed in more detail in chapters 4 and 8. Grillmeier does not, however, discuss the role of the doctrine of grace in the controversy.

Two further works focus specifically on the Scythian controversy. The most extended modern treatment of the Scythian controversy is Viktor Schurr's 1935 work, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der "skythischen Kontroverse."* Schurr demonstrates that Boethius's *Tractate 5* originated from the beginning of the Scythian controversy and that *Tractates 1* and *2* were occasioned by the end of the same controversy. The theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh" raised questions about both the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology. Schurr focuses on the Trinitarian questions. He notes that the phrase *unus ex Trinitate* provoked questions about whether one may ascribe number to the Trinity. Does *Trinitas* in this phrase refer to the persons or the substance of God? This question provided the catalyst, Schurr argues, for Boethius's reflections on the referent of the word *Trinitas* in *Tractate 1* and the role of the category of relation in the doctrine of the Trinity in *Tractate 2*. Because Schurr is interested in connections between the Scythian controversy and Boethius's Trinitarian theology, he does not engage the questions of Christology and the doctrine of grace which are the subject of the present study.

The work which focuses most narrowly on the Scythian controversy itself is an article by John McGuckin, written in 1984.[35] In this article, McGuckin provides an English translation of the Scythian monks' letter to Fulgentius (*Epistula ad episcopos*).

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[35]J.A. McGuckin, "The 'Theopaschite Confession' (Text and Historical Context): a Study in the Re-interpretation of Chalcedon," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (April, 1984): 239-55.

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No other text by the Scythian monks has yet been translated into English. McGuckin prefaces his translation with a discussion of the historical context of the controversy. He is concerned most of all to understand the role of this controversy in light of the church-political struggles between Rome and Constantinople. During the Acacian schism, the pope made plain that re-union with Rome could be achieved on one condition only: submission to the Chalcedonian definition and Leo's *Tome*. McGuckin argues that by proposing a Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon which was more amenable to the East than Rome's strict dyophysite view, the Scythian monks offered a way for the East to re-unite with Rome without implicitly acknowledging the papacy's claim of absolute primacy. Furthermore, McGuckin maintains, the Scythian monks' proposal could perhaps have provided a way for Eastern Chalcedonians to reach out to the Monophysites, who would be more likely to accept Chalcedon if it were interpreted in a Cyrillian way.

McGuckin's observations about the political situation in the early sixth century are valuable. There is no doubt that the political forces at work influenced the outcome of the Scythian controversy. There is no doubt that Justinian tried to use the Scythian proposal in the way that McGuckin describes. What is not so clear, however, is that the Scythian monks themselves were motivated primarily by church-political concerns.[36] The controversy first erupted because of a dispute the Scythian monks had with their bishop in Tomi. Since that province was already in communion with Rome and since the Scythian

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[36]McGuckin asserts that the Scythian monks "hoped to effect a reconciling position between the orthodox (Cyrilline) easterners and the Monophysites, while at the same time achieving a reconciliation with the Roman see under Hormisdas (514-523) with its more markedly Dyophysite conception of Chalcedonian orthodoxy" ("Theopaschite Confession," 243).

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monks said that they were always in communion with Rome, it seems unlikely that in its origins, the Scythian controversy was a proposal for re-union with Rome. Furthermore, the writings of the Scythian monks are concerned exclusively with doctrinal matters. That is not to say that there could not be church-political motivations influencing their doctrinal positions, but the documents themselves indicate that the Scythian monks' zeal was for orthodox theology, not for a solution to the Acacian schism.

McGuckin's description of the controversy in terms of political factors does not lose sight of its theological facet, however, because for the most part he does not deny that legitimate theological motives can coexist with political motives. The only place where McGuckin's political focus serves to suppress the theological concerns is in his passing reference to the role of the doctrine of grace in the Scythian controversy. He suggests that the Scythian monks included an Augustinian doctrine of grace and predestination in their letter to Fulgentius merely as a tactical maneuver to gain his support for their Christology.[37] It will be argued below that grace was part and parcel of the Scythian controversy. Thus, the discussion of grace in the Scythian monks' letter to Fulgentius should be viewed as more than a political maneuver, tactically astute though it may be.

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[37]McGuckin, "Theopaschite Confession," 245.

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1.2.2 Studies Concerning the Term "Neo-Chalcedonianism"

Another area of scholarship which touches on the Scythian controversy is the discussion of what has been called "Neo-Chalcedonianism." Joseph Lebon, in his work on Severus of Antioch, was the first to use the term "Neo-Chalcedonianism" to describe those who wanted to defend Chalcedon by interpreting it in agreement with Cyril of Alexandria.[38]

The point relevant to the present study is the evaluation implicit in term "Neo-Chalcedonian" at least in some authors. Charles Moeller, who gives more precision to Lebon's term, views Neo-Chalcedonianism as a departure from Chalcedon. In particular, he argues that the Neo-Chalcedonians lost sight of the humanity of Christ because of their rejection of the Antiochene tradition.[39]

For Moeller, the Scythian monks were prime examples of flawed Neo-Chalcedonianism.[40] As such he sketches an excessively negative characterization of them. They were extreme. They used the ambiguous term *unio naturalis*. They lacked nuance

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[38]Joseph Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien. Étude histrique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite au concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1909).

[39]Charles Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VIᵉ siècle," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart. Band 1, Der Glaube von Chalkedon*, ed., Aloys Grillmeier, S.J. and Heirich Bacht, S.J (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1951), 695, 719-20. For a similar view, see also Marcel Richard, "Le Néo-chalcédonisme," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 3 (1946): 158-9.

[40]Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme," 676, 719.

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in their use of "Mother of God."[41] It will be argued below that these characterizations are

simply inaccurate. Here, however, it is sufficient to note that the negative portrayal of the

Scythian monks arises in the context of an attempt to rehabilitate the Antiochene

Christological tradition.[42] This observation by itself does not invalidate Moeller's

arguments, but the pro-Antiochene point of view of the early researchers of "Neo-

Chalcedonianism" does help account for the consistency with which they cast the Scythian

monks in a negative light.

Aloys Grillmeier also employs the term Neo-Chalcedonianism. For him, however,

Neo-Chalcedonianism is not a departure from Chalcedon. The "new" element in Neo-

Chalcedonianism is primarily terminological. It is a synthesis of Chalcedonian and pre-

Chalcedonian Christological formulas.[43] Grillmeier finds this terminological synthesis to

be infelicitous because the retention of Cyril's "one nature" formula obscures the

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[41]Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme," 678.

[42]Moeller is part of a general trend in scholarship starting in the 1940's to promote appreciation for the Antiochene tradition. Other examples include Marcel Richard, "Le Néo-chalcédonisme;" Robert Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Studi e testi 141 (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948); R. A. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian* (London: Faith Press, 1961); M. Anastos, "Nestorius Was Orthodox." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 117-140; R. A. Norris, Jr., *Manhood and Christ: A Study of the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963).

[43]Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., "Vorbereitung des Mittelalters: Eine Studie über das Verhältnis von Chalkedonismus und Neu-Chalkedonismus in der lateinischen Theologie von Boethius bis zu Gregor dem Großen," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart 2*, eds., Aloys Grillmeier, S.J. and Heinrich Bacht, S.J (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), 792, n.1. Also, Grillmeier, *Mit ihm und in ihm: Christologische Forschungen und Perspektiven* (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 382-3.

distinction between nature and person which constitutes the great advance of Chalcedon.[44] However, this does not mean that Neo-Chalcedonianism is a departure from Chalcedon.

Grillmeier advances the work of Lebon, Moeller, and Richard, by investigating the effect of Neo-Chalcedonianism on the West. He details three avenues by which Neo-Chalcedonian Christology was brought to the West: the *Epistola Orientalium* to Pope Symmachus (512), the Theopaschite controversy (519), and the Three Chapters controversy.[45] Of particular note in his discussion of the Theopaschite controversy is Grillmeier's observation that the Scythian monks effected a change in Fulgentius's Christology, moving him away from Antiochene-sounding phrases like "assumed man" to more Alexandrian-sounding formulations.[46] This is the thesis of Bernhard Nisters's work, discussed below, and is important for the present study as well. Grillmeier concludes that, at the time, the West did not make the Neo-Chalcedonian synthesis its own, but Eastern writings on Christology would once more exercise influence in the West through the work of Thomas Aquinas.[47]

The most detailed treatment of the history of the term Neo-Chalcedonianism is Siegfried Helmer's dissertation.[48] Helmer traces the development of the term from its

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[44]Grillmeier, *Mit ihm und in ihm*, 384-5.

[45]Grillmeier, "Vorbereitung des Mittelalters," 792 ff., 797 ff., 806 ff.

[46]Grillmeier, "Vorbereitung des Mittelalters," 803.

[47]Grillmeier, "Vorbereitung des Mittelalters," 838-9.

[48]Siegfried Helmer, "Der Neuchalkedonismus: Geschichte, Berechtigung und Bedeutung eines dogmengeschichtlichen Begriffes," (PhD. diss., Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, 1962).

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coining by Lebon to the time of his own dissertation. He points out that the term was originally used by Roman Catholics to identify a theological phenomenon in contrast to the view of the liberal Protestant historians of dogma Harnack and Loofs who tended to see sixth-century theological developments as expressions of political ambition. Helmer welcomes the view that theological concerns themselves can motivate doctrinal discussion without merely being masks for politics, but he is critical of the Roman Catholic use of the term because scholars like Moeller and Richard approach the question with the agenda of defending "strict Chalcedonian" Christology.[49] Helmer does not accept the negative evaluation implicit in the term "Neo-Chalcedonianism." Nevertheless, he thinks the term can be used to describe the sixth-century theological movement which, in his view, is a legitimate expression of the Chalcedonian Christology.[50]

Patrick Gray also rejects the negative connotations of the term "Neo-Chalcedonianism." Gray challenges Moeller's assumption that "Chalcedon was a victory for Roman-Antiochene christology" and that Neo-Chalcedonianism is a re-interpretation of Chalcedon which brings it more in line with Cyril of Alexandria contrary to the intent of the Chalcedonian fathers.[51] Gray argues instead that "Chalcedon was essentially a Cyrillian council, though it used characteristically Roman and Antiochene language to

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[49]Helmer, "Der Neuchalkedonismus," 64-5.

[50]Helmer, "Der Neuchalkedonismus," 85.

[51]Patrick T.R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-553)*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 20, ed., Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 2.

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exclude Eutychianism."[52] Therefore, like Helmer, Gray contends that Neo-Chalcedonianism is a legitimate expression of the intent of the council of Chalcedon. It is a defense rather than a re-interpretation of Chalcedon.

The present study proceeds along the lines of Helmer and Gray. The Scythian monks, classified by all as Neo-Chalcedonians, claimed to be defending Chalcedon. The writings of the Scythian monks, especially John Maxentius's *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, lend credibility to their claim by spelling out how Chalcedon can be interpreted in a Nestorianizing way and why this must be resisted. The present study goes beyond the work of Helmer and Gray, however, in that it also seeks to explain the relationship which the Scythian monks assert between Christology and grace. In none of the discussions about Neo-Chalcedonianism in the secondary literature is the question of grace examined.

1.2.3 Studies Concerning Fulgentius of Ruspe

The more general works on Fulgentius of Ruspe do not concern themselves primarily with theological matters. G.-G. Lapeyre, for example, focuses on Fulgentius's biography and his literary activity.[53] Lapeyre's discussion of Fulgentius's literary activity gives a short summary of each work and a discussion of its date where this is possible. In addition, Lapeyre includes a helpful discussion of the peculiarities of Fulgentius's Latin.

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[52]Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-553)*: 5.

[53]G.-G. Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence de Ruspe: Un évêque catholique africain sous la domination vandale* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929).

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The work of Hans-Joachim Diesner is also primarily biographical.[54] His goal is to

highlight the importance of Fulgentius's influence as a bishop and a church-political leader.

Neither Lapeyre nor Diesner discuss Christology or grace in detail.

Bernhard Nisters has written the only major work on Fulgentius's Christology.[55]

Nisters argues that Fulgentius's early Christology flowed from an anti-Arian concern and

tended to have an Antiochene ring to it. For example, Fulgentius used the term *homo*

assumptus to refer to Christ's human nature. In this period, he showed little awareness of

the Nestorian or the Monophysite heresies. After his contact with the Scythian monks,

however, Fulgentius stopped using Antiochene-sounding terms like *homo assumptus*.

Furthermore, he identified the person of Christ as the Word and emphasized the

communicatio idiomatum much more than he had previously. According to Nisters,

Fulgentius's correspondence with the Scythian monks was the occasion which

transformed his Christology in an Alexandrian direction.

On the whole, the present study accepts Nisters's view and attempts to build on his

account of the development of Fulgentius's Christological thinking by exploring whether a

corresponding development in Fulgentius's doctrine of grace is detectable. Nisters does

not ask this question. The Christological development which Nisters describes, however,

makes Fulgentius an ideal test case for the thesis that sixth-century authors understood

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[54]Hans-Joachim Diesner, *Fulgentius von Ruspe als Theologe und Kirchenpolitiker* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1966).

[55]Bernhard Nisters, *Die Christologie des Hl. Fulgentius von Ruspe*, Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 16, eds., F. Diekamp and R. Stapper (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930).

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Christology and grace to be intimately connected. If this thesis is true, one would expect Fulgentius's Christological development to leave some kind of mark on his doctrine of grace.

Claudio Micaelli has challenged Nisters's view in some respects.[56] He shows that Fulgentius was more dependent on Augustine's Christology than Nisters recognizes. However, Micaelli grants that Fulgentius underwent a development in Christology of the sort that Nisters describes. In particular, Micaelli agrees with Nisters that Fulgentius came to identify the person of Christ as the Word and even came to teach that Christ's human nature was taken into the person of the Word.[57]

Because of Fulgentius's importance in the Semi-Pelagian controversy, more attention has been paid to his doctrine of grace than to his Christology. Friedrich Wörter provides an overview of Fulgentius's doctrine of grace which includes Fulgentius's views on creation, the fall, grace and free will, and predestination. His main point is that Fulgentius attributes salvation entirely to grace from beginning to end. Wörter's account of Fulgentius's doctrine of grace, which is part of a larger study of the Semi-Pelagian controversy, is a foundational study.[58] He does seem to over-systematize Fulgentius when it comes to the non-elect, however. Wörter clearly recognizes that Fulgentius claimed that

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[56]Claudio Micaelli, "Osservazioni sulla cristologia di Fulgenzio de Ruspe," *Augustinianum* 25 (1985): 343-60.

[57]Micaelli, "Osservazioni," 345-6.

[58]Friedrich Wörter, "Die Lehre des Fulgentius von Ruspe," pt. 3 of *Zur Dogmengeschichte des Semipelagianismus*, Kirchengeschichtliche Studien 5.2, eds. Knöpfler, Schrörs, & Sdralek (Münster: Heinrich Schöningh, 1899),107-55.

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those who are not elect were "predestined" to destruction only in the sense that God

foresaw their evil deeds and predetermined to punish those deeds. God did not predestine

the evil deeds themselves. However, Wörter suggests that Fulgentius wanted to base this

foreknowledge on a prior decision not to save these people. Wörter insists that

foreknowledge cannot be the basis of predestination.[59] Such an interpretation would lend

consistency to Fulgentius's theology, but it would in fact overturn the point Fulgentius

wanted to make when he stated explicitly that predestination to destruction is based on

God's foreknowledge of evil deeds but that God does not cause the evil deeds. It will be

argued below that there is an asymmetry in Fulgentius's theology and that predestination

of the elect functions differently from predestination of the non-elect.

Francesco Di Sciascio also finds fault with Wörter on this point.[60] Di Sciascio's

work carefully details the many facets of Fulgentius's doctrine of predestination and grace.

Di Sciascio is especially concerned to highlight the connections between Fulgentius and

Augustine. He also argues that the Jansenists and Protestants have misunderstood

Fulgentius. As part of this polemic, Di Sciascio constantly stresses the "splendida

armonia" between Fulgentius and other expressions of the Roman Catholic tradition like

the Council of Trent.[61]

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[59]Wörter, "Die Lehre des Fulgentius von Ruspe," 152.

[60]Francesco Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe: Un grande discepolo di Agostino contro le "Reliquiae Pelagianae pravitatis" nei suoi epigoni* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregorianae,1941).

[61]Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe*, 78, 164, 197, *et passim*.

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Di Sciascio tends to over-systematize Fulgentius in the opposite direction as Wörter. Di Sciascio attempts to find intimations of a belief in a divine antecedent will to save everyone in Fulgentius's theology.[62] He wants to suggest that Fulgentius's explicit statements that God does not will to save everyone must refer to a consequent will. In this way, Di Sciascio attempts to bring Fulgentius into line with later Roman Catholic orthodoxy. As Di Sciascio himself acknowledges, however, Fulgentius never explicitly distinguished between an antecedent and a consequent will of God.[63] Di Sciascio further admits that there is a lacuna in the antecedent universal saving will in the case of infants who die without baptism,[64] and he finally concludes that the antecedent universal saving will is deficient in Fulgentius.[65]

Given these qualifications on Di Sciascio's thesis, it would be better to refrain from positing that Fulgentius is operating with an implicit, though underdeveloped, understanding of an antecedent universal salvific will. Instead, one might suppose that Fulgentius had different ways of addressing different issues which are not always consistent with each other. Instead of striving to make a coherent system out of Fulgentius's theology, it would be better to attend to the positions he opposed and to understand his reasons for opposing them. This may leave asymmetries and perhaps even

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[62]Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe*, 130-6.

[63]Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe*, 136.

[64]Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe*, 147.

[65]Di Sciascio, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe*, 220.

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contradictions in Fulgentius's theology, but this is not surprising for a theologian struggling with opponents on multiple fronts.

Marianne Djuth offers the most convincing treatment of Fulgentius's doctrine of predestination and grace.[66] She addresses the problem from a philosophical point of view. Unlike Wörter and Di Sciascio, she is not concerned with the question of whether God wills to save everyone. Her interest lies in the meaning of "free will" in light of Fulgentius's doctrine of predestination. By carefully examining how Fulgentius defines possibility and necessity, she shows how Fulgentius's doctrine of predestination fits with his understanding of human freedom. For Fulgentius, the will is free not because it is independent from God but because its actions are spontaneous and not subject to external coercion.[67] This allows Fulgentius to assert that conversion is effected completely by grace, yet the human will remains free. The present study attempts to extend her remarks by pointing out certain Christological concerns which may relate to the role of free will in Fulgentius's doctrine of grace.

Wörter, Di Sciascio, and Djuth limit their studies to the issue of predestination and grace. They do not investigate Fulgentius's Christology. Furthermore, they make no attempt to trace a development in Fulgentius's doctrine of grace. These are the tasks of the present study.

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[66]M. Djuth, "Fulgentius of Ruspe: The 'Initium bonae voluntatis'," *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989).

[67]Djuth, "Fulgentius of Ruspe," 50.

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1.2.4 Conclusion

As a whole, the secondary literature tends to frame questions in terms of later dogmatic categories. Studies on Christology do not attend to the doctrine of grace, and studies on the doctrine of grace do not examine Christology. By examining Christology and grace together, this study seeks to gain a more holistic view of what the authors under consideration have to say about Christ using their own categories and terminology. Although the sixth-century authors do discuss Christ and grace in separate parts of the same documents, it should soon be clear that neither can be rightly understood without the other.

PART I. BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 2

CHRISTOLOGY AND GRACE IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

The connection between Christology and grace was not drawn for the first time in

the sixth century. Already by the fifth century, the connection had become a

commonplace. In order to set the sixth-century discussions in their theological context,

this chapter examines the association between Christology and grace that was recognized

by various fifth-century authors: Leporius, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius,

Prosper of Aquitaine, John Cassian, and Faustus of Riez. This investigation is intended to

show that Fulgentius and the Scythian monks had access to a range of theological reasons

for asserting a connection between Christology and grace. The link which they advocated

should therefore not be considered odd, accidental, or motivated by other than theological

considerations as much current scholarship assumes, but as a predictable and even self-

evident way for theologians of the sixth century to view the Christian faith.

Many, but not all, of the associations made between Christology and grace arose in

opposition to what Aloys Grillmeier calls *Bewährungschristologie*: the idea that Christ

was a mere man who was promoted to Godhood on the basis of his meritorious works.

This view was held already by the early adoptionists led by Theodotus the Elder (the

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tanner) and appears in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.[1] Echoes of the idea may also be found in Arius, Origen, and Aponius in the West.[2] The Antiochene tradition shows signs of this doctrine as well. Certain statements of both Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius reflect this idea, though, as Grillmeier points out, these are isolated statements which can only be understood as *Bewährungschristologie* if they are taken out of the context of Antiochene Christology.[3]

The majority of authors discussed in this chapter are concerned to oppose what they see as an erroneous connection between Christology and grace implied by this *Bewährungschristologie*. The fifth-century authors tend to focus on the parallel between the role of merit in Christology and the role of merit in conversion. Most of them reject *Bewährungschristologie* and Pelagianism for the same reason: both heresies posit human merit which is antecedent to God's saving action. However, not all of the fifth-century theologians make the argument in the same way. As we shall see, the factor which seems most to determine the form the argument takes in a given author is whether that author is writing primarily against a Christological heresy or an error in the doctrine of grace.

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[1] Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, 2nd ed., trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 78.

[2] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:242, 364, 386.

[3] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:436, 512-14.

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2.1 Leporius

Leporius was a monk in Gaul, a follower of Pelagius according to John Cassian.[4] Leporius did not want to say that God was born of a woman or was crucified, lest God be said to change or suffer.[5] Because of his views, he was excommunicated by the bishop of Marseilles. After this, he made his way to Africa where Augustine convinced him of the error of his ways and helped him out of his difficulties. Leporius then wrote a *Libellus emendationis* in which he recanted his errors and on the basis of which he was received back into fellowship. He composed the *Libellus* in 418 or early 419.[6]

In this document, Leporius describes his former Christological error. He informs the reader that he foolishly tried to protect God from seeming to do things which were beneath God. Leporius attempted to protect God from such indignities by attributing divine things to God alone and human things to the man alone, in effect introducing a fourth person into the Trinity.[7] Today we might summarize Leporius's view by saying that he denied the communication of attributes and posited two acting subjects in Christ.

In addition, he repudiates the notion, presumably once held by him, that Christ (the human subject) was promoted to Godhood. He states, "We do not believe that [Christ]

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[4]John Cassian *De incarnatione Domini* 1.4.

[5]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:465. Cf. Augustine *Ep. 229 ad Eppos. Galliae* (CSEL 57:431).

[6]Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Christology," in *Augustine Through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 166.

[7]Leporius *Libellus emendationis* 3.7-14.

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was in one state before the resurrection and another after the resurrection as if progressing to God through stages over time, but he always had the same fullness and power."[8]

Another feature of Leporius's erstwhile Christology is the notion that Christ's human nature gained merit and perfection through natural human powers without God's help. Merit cannot be ascribed to God. "For," Leporius explains, "where the fullness of the Deity is, there is neither standard nor measure. One who is infinite and does everything by power without boundaries cannot obtain the goal of merits by labor, devotion, faith, and merit."[9] Since Leporius erroneously separated "Christ" from "God," however, he did find room in his earlier Christology for ascribing merit to Christ. He states that formerly, he took the following position: "thinking that labor, devotion, merit and faith are appropriate to Christ, we judge them to be to that extent unfitting for the Son of God . . . ."[10] So separate, in fact, are Christ and God according to this view that Leporius held that Christ carried out everything "by the possibility of mortal nature, without any help from God."[11] Although he never explicitly discusses Pelagianism in his

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[8]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 5.12-14: "...nec quasi per gradus et tempora proficientem in Deum, alterius status ante resurrectionem, alterius post resurrectionem eum fuisse credamus, sed eiusdem semper plenitudinis atque virtutis."

[9]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 8.17-20: "Ubi enim plenitudo deitatis est, illic nec mensura nec modus est. Nescit labore, devotione, fide, merito finem apprehendere meritorum, qui infinitus et sine terminis agit omnia potestate."

[10]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 8.2-4: "...id est aptantes ad Christum laborem, devotionem, meritum, fidem, in tantum inconvenientia haec Dei Filio iudicamus...."

[11]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 9.7-8: "...possibilitate naturae mortalis, sine aliquo deitatis adiutorio...."

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Libellus, Leporius does in the above passages recant what is in effect a Pelagian estimation of human powers in the sphere of Christology.

From the statements which Leporius wants to recant, we gain a picture of his former Christology. He viewed the incarnation primarily as an exaltation of the man Christ, even a promotion to divinity, based on Christ's human merit. The fact that Leporius posited two acting subjects in Christ, human and divine, was crucial to this exaltation. The separate human subject provided the arena, as it were, for a Pelagian-style system of merits to operate within Christ himself. This separate human subject was necessary because, as he says above, he did not consider merit to be applicable to the Son of God.

When Leporius recants his view of two acting subjects in Christ, he consequently abandons all talk of merit related to the incarnation because he continues to hold that merit is not applicable to God. Since Christ and God are the same, he declares the ascription of merit to Christ to be execrable.[12] In his recantation, he is no longer willing to attribute actions to Christ the man which are not also attributed to God. Instead, he holds that God is the subject of all of Christ's actions. He states that God's assumption of the whole man (*totum hominem*) implies that "the man does not act by himself by a natural judgment, but God fulfills the divine plan of salvation through the man and in the man—himself made man for us—by his power and mystery."[13] The recognition of the one divine-human subject in

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[12]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 8.2: "...quodque nunc exsecrabile confitemur...."

[13]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 9.12-14: "...non per se solus homo ageret iudicio naturali, sed Deus per hominem atque in homine, ipse homo nobis factus, potestate et mysterio divinae dispensationis impleret."

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Christ eliminates the possibility of Christ accruing human merits because merits assume levels and gradations which, as we have seen, are not appropriate to God.

One point of clarification is in order. Leporius apparently means to excludes merit *in toto* from Christology. In this respect, his Christology and his doctrine of grace are not parallel. The characteristic which distinguishes Christ from the saints is his transcendence of measure.[14] Since merit, as we have seen, presupposes measure, it would seem that merit is appropriate to the saints, at least after conversion, even though it cannot be ascribed to Christ. Such a view is consonant with Augustine's mature theology in which merit arises from grace. As we shall see in chapter 7, Fulgentius also excludes merit from Christology but finds a place for it in his doctrine of grace.

The recognition of the one divine-human subject in Christ also highlights the uniqueness of Christ. Although Leporius grants some connection between Christ and the saints because "Christ is the head of his body, the church," he distinguishes Christ and the saints in that Christ has the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The stress that Leporius lays on Christ's uniqueness represents a shift from his former position which, as we have seen, viewed Christ as acting solely on the basis of natural human powers, presumably just like the saints.

Such a Christology, with a human Christ who acts independently from God, naturally tends to view the incarnation as an ascent from the human to the divine, an ascent that is, in fact, the goal of Christ's human merit. When Leporius eliminates the role

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[14]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 8.14-16: "...non tamen qui singularis est inter ceteros computandus est; nec illa ad ipsum referenda sunt quae possunt habere mensuram...."

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of merit in the incarnation and stresses the uniqueness of Christ, however, he also gains a new appreciation for the incarnation as God's descent for the sake of human salvation. Although, even after his recantation, he is willing to describe the incarnation as an ascent of the human to the divine,[15] Leporius's summary statement of his new and orthodox position lays the soteriological emphasis squarely on the descent of God:

> Our faith consists most of all in this: that we believe that the only Son of God–not adopted but his own, not illusory but true, not temporal but eternal–endured completely everything for us according to the flesh, and did not suffer for himself but for us, and that he mercifully came from on high to the depths, not because of himself but because of us, since we were laid low. For, as the Apostle says, "Although he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal to God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave," etc.[16]

This new emphasis, along the lines of Phil. 2, reflects the concern to make clear that God is the one who acts for human salvation. Christ is not a Pelagian saint who merits exaltation by human powers without divine help. He is the omnipotent God who has come down from heaven for human salvation.

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[15]Cf. Leporius *Libell. emend.* 4.12-13: "Caro igitur profecit in Verbum, non Verbum profecit in carnem. Et tamen verissime *Verbum caro factum est.*" *Libell. emend.* 6.9-12: "Sed quia Verbum Deus in hominem dignanter hominem suscipiendo <u>descendit</u> et per susceptionem Dei homo <u>ascendit</u> in Deum Verbum, totus Deus Verbum factus est totus homo" (underline added).

[16]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 6.33-41: "Quia in hoc maxime fides nostra consistit, ut credamus unicum Filium Dei, non adoptivum sed proprium, non phantasticum sed verum, non temporarium sed aeternum, pro nobis omnia secundum carnem fuisse perpessum, et non sibi agonizasse sed nobis; nec propter se sed propter nos, quia iacebamus, illum ab excelsis misericorditer ad ima venisse: quia, sicut Apostolus dicit, *cum in forma Dei esset non rapinam arbitratus est esse aequalis Deo, sed semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens,* et reliqua."

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From these considerations emerge three characteristics of Leporius's connection between Christology and grace which may be compared to the position of other authors considered in this chapter. First and foremost, the question of whether the man Christ accrues merit by natural human powers stands or falls on the question of whether there is an independent human subject in Christ. Leporius's insistence on the unity of Christ eliminates the possibility of viewing Christ as a paradigm of meriting salvation because talk of merit is nonsense when it is applied to a divine, omnipotent subject. Second, Leporius's rejection of the role of merit in the case of Christ brings with it a concern to maximize the distinction between Christ and the saints. Third, the recognition that God-made-man is the subject of all of Christ's actions shifts Leporius's view of the incarnation from primarily an ascent of the human to the divine to primarily the descent of God for the sake of human salvation. While this third characteristic is a shift of emphasis rather than a radical transformation, it does seem to represent a new-found concern for salvation as a divine act.

It is worth noting in conclusion that Augustine signed his name to Leporius's *Libellus emendationis*.[17] As we shall see, Augustine has a different set of concerns when he connects Christology and grace. Consequently, Augustine does not join them in precisely the same way Leporius does. However, his subscription to this document suggests that his approach does not exclude that of Leporius. To this issue we now turn.

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[17]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 12.11.

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2.2 Augustine

Augustine connects Christology and grace by viewing the assumption of the man

Christ Jesus by the Word as the premier example of grace. He first introduces grace into a

discussion of Christology in *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, written in 411.[18] In this

work Augustine, much like Leporius in 418, denies that the man who was joined to the

Word had any antecedent merit by which he deserved the union.[19] Similar references are

found scattered throughout Augustine's work from 411 on.[20] However, the most

developed and most influential exposition of the connection between Christology and

grace appears in Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* written in 428-9.

The discussion in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* appears in the context of an

argument that God's predestination and grace are given to us freely, not in response to our

merits. He opens the Christological section of the argument with the statement, "There is

another most illuminating example of predestination and grace, and that is the savior

himself, 'the mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'"[21] Augustine then goes on

to ask a series of rhetorical questions which show that the man Jesus had no antecedent

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[18]Joanne McWilliam Dewart, "The Christology of the Pelagian Controversy,"
Studia Patristica 17 (1982): 1231.

[19]Augustine *De pecc. mer.* 2.17.27.

[20]Cf. Augustine *Serm.* 174.2; *De civ. Dei* 21.15; *De Trin.* 15.46, *:aJoann. ev.*
74.3; *Ench.* 11.36,40; *De corr. et gr.* 30; *C. Jul. op. imp.* 4.84.

[21]Augustine *De praed. sanct.* 15.30 (PL 44:981D): "Est etiam praeclarissimum
lumen praedestinationis et gratiae, ipse Salvator, ipse Mediator Dei et hominum homo
Christus Jesus...." Translated by Mourant & Collinge.

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merits by which he deserved to be assumed by the Word. Indeed, such antecedent merits are impossible in the case of Jesus because there was no man Jesus prior to the grace of being assumed by the Word. Augustine states, "Was is not by the action of the Word assuming him that this man himself, from the time when he began to be, began to be the only Son of God?"[22]

Augustine then raises an objection against his position: if the man Christ can be Son of God by grace, why can't I also be the same?[23] He answers the objection by distinguishing Christ from believers: the fact that Christ is the head of the body means that he is the source of grace, while the members of the body are recipients of this grace. Nevertheless, the same grace which makes people Christians also made that one man Christ.[24] In his response to this objection, then, Augustine qualifies the degree to which the assumption by the Word may be seen as a paradigm of predestination. Christ is not like Christians in every respect. However, the point of comparison relevant to his argument is that grace operates the same way in the assumption as it does in conversion, i.e., without antecedent human merit. This move pushes the argument farther than Leporius did. While Leporius points out parallel errors in Christology and grace,

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[22]Augustine *De praed. sanct* 15.30 (PL 44:982A): "Nonne faciente ac suscipiente Verbo, ipse homo, ex quo esse coepit, Filius Dei unicus esse coepit?" Translated by Mourant & Collinge. Cf. also Augustine's *C. serm. Arian.* 6.8: "ipsa assumptione creatur."

[23]Augustine *De praed. sanct.* 15.30.

[24]Augustine *De praed. sanct.* 15.31.

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Augustine makes the stronger *positive* statement that the incarnation is a paradigm which describes how predestination and grace work for all Christians.

The image of head and body, though it affords some distinction between Christ and believers, is nevertheless the key to Augustine's association of Christology and grace, as Jean Plagnieux has noted. Plagnieux's account of Augustine's argument may be summarized as follows:

Major premise:	Christ has received the highest possible grace: to be "assumed" into the unity of the person of the Son of God without preceding merits.
Minor premise:	The grace given to the head also extends to the members.
Conclusion:	We are also predestined without antecedent merit.[25]

The organic unity of head and body is the warrant for Augustine's minor premise that what is said of the head applies also to the members.[26]

However, this connection is not without its problems. Commenting on the minor premise, Plagnieux remarks,

> One will acknowledge that if this is conceded, the argument holds. One may, however, ask oneself if the identification between the two graces, which would be complete enough to authorize such conclusions, is not pushed too far. Is not the grace of Christ, at least that which he deals with directly and in the first place, not the very particular charism of the *gratia*

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[25]Jean Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité entre erreurs nestorienne et pélagienne: d'Augustin à Cassien par Prosper d'Aquitaine?" *Revue des études Augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 394-5.

[26]Augustine also appeals to the consistency of the Holy Spirit's role in the incarnation and in conversion (*De praed. sanct.* 15.31).

unionis, and not that of the *gratia capitis* which alone can communicate to us of its fullness?[27]

With this objection, Plagnieux lays his finger on the main difficulty of this attempt of Augustine's to connect Christology and grace: his minor premise does not adequately account for the uniqueness of the hypostatic union. Augustine needs to maximize the similarity between Christ and Christians in order to justify applying the grace of the union to the body. In an anti-Nestorian context, this move would be problematic since the distinction between Christ and the saints is an important item to be asserted against the Nestorians.[28]

However, Augustine is not engaging a Nestorian argument when he writes *De praedestinatione sanctorum*. Indeed, Nestorius would not be condemned for another two or three years. In the Theopaschite controversy of the sixth century, however, the Nestorianizing interpretation of Chalcedon is the chief opposition. The anti-Nestorian parties, who are followers of Augustine, either omit Augustine's argument (in the case of the Scythian monks) or adapt it so it is better defended against the Nestorianizers (in the case of Fulgentius).

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[27]Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité," 395, n.15: "On avouera que cela concédé, l'argument tient. On peut cependant se demander si l'identification entre les deux grâces, qui serait assez absolue pour autoriser de telles conclusions, n'est pas poussée trop loin. La grâce du Christ, celle du moins dont il s'agit directement et en tout premier lieu, n'est-ce pas le charisme tout particulier de la *gratia unionis*, et non cette *gratia capitis* qui est seule à pouvoir nous communiquer des sa plénitude?"

[28]Cf. Dewart's discussion of the similarities between Augustine's Christology and the Antiochene tradition in "Christology of the Pelagian Controversy."

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Another element of Augustine's argument which will feel more pressure in the

sixth-century anti-Nestorian climate is his balanced view of the incarnation as both the

humble descent of God and the exaltation of human nature. He stresses both elements in

De praedestinatione sanctorum.[29] In an anti-Nestorian Christological context, the focus

tends to shift toward viewing the incarnation as the descent of God. For example,

Leporius, though he is able to describe the incarnation in both directions like Augustine,

highlights the descent in the summary statement of his position when he recants his former

"proto-Nestorian" Christology. The Scythian monks, as we shall see, focus exclusively on

the notion of descent.

The main difference between Augustine and Leporius is that Augustine wants to

view Christ as a paradigm of salvation, while Leporius does not go that far. Both connect

Christology and grace in that they both reject any role for human merit which precedes or

motivates God's action in the incarnation or in salvation. Augustine, however, takes the

argument one step further by stating it positively and making Christ the pattern of

predestination and grace. Consequently, he feels more comfortable than Leporius

focusing on the exaltation of Christ's human nature and stressing the similarity between

Christ and believers. Augustine's connection between Christology and grace remains

influential even in the sixth-century Theopaschite controversy, though the Christological

context of that controversy necessitates some modifications of the argument.

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[29]Augustine *De praed. sanct.* 15.31.

2.3 Cyril of Alexandria

Lars Koen has shown that Cyril of Alexandria's soteriology centers around two classic Christological texts: John 1:14 and Phil. 2:5-11.[30] That fact in itself indicates that Cyril understands soteriology to flow from Christology. Not surprisingly, then, Cyril often expresses salvation in terms of communication of attributes. In his late treatise, *On the Unity of Christ*, he puts it succinctly: "In short, he took what was ours to be his very own so that we might have all that was his."[31]

The particular attribute which is communicated in salvation varies in Cyril's description of salvation. A few examples must suffice to give some idea of the range of possibilities. In his comments on John 1:14, Cyril refers to the curse of Genesis 3:19, "Dust you are and to dust you will return." Though Adam's flesh was not originally imperishable by nature, the Spirit of life which God breathed into his nostrils gave Adam a participation in the divinity which made him incorruptible. After the fall, however, Adam lost the Spirit and, as indicated by the curse, his body became subject to corruption. The incarnation, on the other hand, rejoins humanity and divinity and so communicates to humanity once again the divine attribute of incorruptibility.[32]

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[30]Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Doctrinae Christianae Upsaliensia 31 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991), 132.

[31]Cyril of Alexandria *Quod unus sit Christus* 722A.b.6-7: "[μένωμεν ἐν αὐτῷ,] ἴδια λοιπὸν ἔχοντι τὰ ἡμῶν, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς τὰ αὐτοῦ." Translated by McGuckin. Koen makes a similar point throughout his book. Cf. *The Saving Passion*, 47.

[32]Cyril of Alexandria *In S. Ioannem* 1.9 (95A.a.1-c.1).

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More generally, Cyril also describes salvation as a communication of divine life and human death. Commenting on John 12:23, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," Cyril states, "He now desires to pass onward to the very crowning point of His hope, namely to the destruction of death: and this could not otherwise be brought to pass, unless the Life underwent death for the sake of all men, that so in Him we all may live."[33]

Finally, Cyril describes salvation as satisfaction for sin, a theme particularly emphasized in Koen's treatment of Cyril. Cyril states, "For in that He died according to the flesh, He offered up His won life as an equivalent for the life of all; and by rendering perfect satisfaction for all, He fulfilled in Himself to the uttermost the force of that ancient curse."[34]

These three examples all describe salvation as a kind of communication of attributes. Christ takes human corruption upon himself and bestows divine impassibility upon humanity. Christ takes human death and grants divine life. Christ takes the human curse and grants the benefits of his divine satisfaction. Examples like this could be multiplied. Salvation for Cyril, then, depends on the unity of divine and human in Christ because that unity makes possible the saving communication of divine and human

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[33]Cyril of Alexandria *In S. Ioannem* 8.23 (701A.c.7-10): "ἐπ' αὐτὸ λοιπὸν τῆς ἐλπίδος τὸ κεφάλαιον βαδίζειν θέλει, τὸ νεκρῶσαι τὸν θάνατον· ὅπερ οὐκ ἄλλως ἐγένετο ἄν, εἰ μὴ ἡ ζωὴ τὸν ὑπὲρ ἀπάντων ὑπέμεινε θάνατον, ἵνα οἱ πάντες ζήσωμεν ἐν αὐτῷ." Translated by Pusey.

[34]Cyril of Alexandria *In S. Ioannem* 9 (745A.c.13-16): τέθνηκε μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀπάντων ζωῆς ἀντίρροπον τὴν ἰδίαν ἀποδεικνύς, καὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐκείνης ἀποπληρῶν ἀρᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν δύναμιν ὁ πάντων ἀντάξιος ." Translated by Pusey.

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properties. That, in turn, is why the classic texts of Cyril's unitive Christology, John 1:14 and Phil. 2:5-11, are also foundational for his soteriology.

If Cyril follows the pattern of authors examined in this chapter, we might expect his unitive Christology to correlate with an opposition to the Pelagians. Cyril, however, is not directly involved in the Pelagian controversy, and, at least initially, he does not seem to oppose the Pelagians.[35] After Pope Zozimus condemned Pelagius in his *Epistula tractoria* in 418, a certain Eusebius wrote Cyril a letter complaining that the church of Alexandria received Pelagians into communion despite the fact that they had been condemned.[36]

Cyril first condemns Pelagianism, as Wickham notes, at the council of Ephesus (431).[37] He does so in a way which groups the Pelagians together with the Nestorians. In a statement to the synod, he condemns Apollinarius, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Sabellius, Photinus, Paul, the Manicheans, and every other heresy (καὶ ἐτέραν δὲ πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν). One might expect the blanket condemnation of every other heresy to signal the end of the list, but Cyril is not finished. "And in addition to these," he continues, "[we anathematize] Nestorius, the founder of new blasphemies, and those related to him and

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[35]For a more detailed account of Cyril's involvement in the Pelagian controversy, see Lionel Wickham, "Pelagianism in the East," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[36]CA 49.2.8-12.

[37]Wickham, "Pelagianism in the East," 201.

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who think like him and those who hold the [doctrines] of Celestius or Pelagius . . . ."[38]

Cyril does not say whether he links Nestorius with the Pelagians in the appendix at the end

of his list simply because they are contemporary or because he sees some deeper link

between them.

Photius, however, provides some evidence that Cyril recognized a substantive

connection between Nestorianism and Pelagianism. In the ninth century, Photius describes

a letter that Cyril wrote to the emperor Theodosius. Unfortunately, the letter is not

extant. Photius reports that a copy of some Western *acta* against Nestorianism says that

"the Nestorian and the Celestian heresy are the same." He reports further that

> It uses Cyril as a witness, writing to the emperor Theodosius that the
> Nestorian heresy is identical with the Celestian. Clearly, he says, for
> Celestians make bold to claim of the body or members of Christ (that is,
> the Church) that it is not God (that is, the Holy Ghost), who imparts to
> each individually their faith and all that pertains to life, true religion and
> salvation, as he wills, but that it is the subordinated nature of man, fallen
> from bliss, sundered from God by transgression and sin, committed to
> death, this nature it is that according to the merit of its choice invites or
> repels the Holy Ghost. Nestorians, on the other hand, have the same
> outrageous opinion about the body's head, Christ. They say that since
> Christ is of our nature, God wills that all men should be saved in the same
> way, should correct their fault by their own choice and make themselves
> worthy of him; and so it is not the Word which was born but the one born
> of Mary who through the merit of his natural choice had the Word
> accompanying him, sharing the condition of sonship only in dignity and in a
> common name with the Word.[39]

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[38]ACO 1.1.3, p. 22.11-13: "...καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τὸν τῶν νέων βλασφημιῶν εὑρετὴν Νεστόριον καὶ τοὺς τούτου κοινωνοὺς καὶ ὁμόφρονας καὶ τοὺς φρονοῦντος τὰ Κελεστίου ἤτοι Πελαγίου."

[39]Photius *Bibliotheca* 54.14a.37-14b.22: "Φέρει δὲ καὶ μάρτυρα Κύριλλον τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας γράφοντα πρὸς Θεοδόσιον τὸν βασιλέα ὡς ἡ αὐτή ἐστιν αἵρεσις ἡ Νεστοριανὴ τῇ Κελεστιανῇ. Δῆλον δέ, φησίν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ Κελεστιανοὶ περὶ τοῦ σώματος ἤτοι τῶν μελῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τουτέστι τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀποθρασύνονται ὅτι

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This account of the relation between the two heresies is very similar to the accounts given by Augustine and, as we shall see, Prosper of Aquitaine.

Thus, we may say that although Cyril does not initially oppose the Pelagians, by 431 he does condemn them. Furthermore, if the account of Photius is reliable, Cyril recognizes the same genetic relationship between Pelagianim and Nestorianism that other fifth-century authors do.

2.4 The Council of Ephesus and Nestorius

The council of Ephesus (431) at least intimates a connection between Christology and grace by condemning Nestorius and Celestius in the same breath. Unfortunately, however, the council does not spell out the connection. The synodical letter of the Alexandrian bishops at Ephesus declares, "If any clerics should apostasize and in private or public dare to hold the views of Nestorius or Celestius, it is thought right that such

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περ οὐχὶ ὁ θεός, τουτέστι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τήν τε πίστιν αὐτοῖς καὶ πάντα τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν καὶ σωτηρίαν διαιρεῖ ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ, καθὼς βούλεται, ἀλλ' ὅτι περ ἡ κατατεταγμένη τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσις, ἡ διὰ τὴν παράβασιν καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τῆς μὲν μακαριότητος ἐκπεσοῦσα καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ χωρισθεῖσα, τῷ δὲ θανάτῳ παραδοθεῖσα, αὕτη κατὰ τὴν τῆς προαιρέσεως ἀξίαν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καὶ προσκαλεῖται καὶ ἀπωθεῖται. Οἱ δὲ Νεστοριανοί, καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν τοῦ σώματος κεφαλήν, τὸν Χριστόν, τὴν αὐτὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τόλμαν ἕξουσι. Λέγουσι γὰρ ὅτι ἐπεὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας φύσεώς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁμοίως θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ οἰκείᾳ προαιρέσει ἕκαστον τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πταῖσμα ἐπανορθώσασθαι καὶ ἄξιον ἑαυτὸν αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαι, διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ λόγος ὁ τεχθείς, ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ Μαρίας διὰ τὴν τῆς φυσικῆς προαιρέσεως ἀξίαν εἶχεν ἑπόμενον τὸν λόγον μόνῃ τῇ ἀξίᾳ καὶ τῇ ὁμωνυμίᾳ κεκοινωνηκὼς τῷ λόγῳ τῆς υἱότητος." Translated by Wickham, "Pelagianism in the East," 212, n. 15).

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should stand deposed by the holy synod."[40] Presumably this is the same Celestius who

was the main advocate of Pelagius's views.

Nestorius (ca. 381-451) himself gives the impression in a number of ways that he is

sympathetic to the Pelagians. The documentary evidence for this sympathy is collected

and translated into Latin by Marius Mercator, a fifth-century North African opponent of

both Pelagianism and Nestorianism. While the precise nature of Nestorius's sympathy is

not clear, it seems possible that he agreed with the Pelagian estimation of the sufficiency

of natural human powers for attaining merit in the sight of God.

The first piece of evidence for his sympathy is that Nestorius receives Julian,

Florus, Orontius, and Fabius in Constantinople in 429.[41] Loofs identifies them as bishops

expelled from Italy for refusing to condemn Celestius.[42] Nestorius writes a letter to Pope

Celestine I on their behalf in which he pleads for a conversation leading to peace in the

matter[43] and stresses the intensity of their suffering and their perseverance. He relates that

they repeatedly presented their case to him, "filling everyone's ears with their tearful

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[40]Norman P. Tanner, S.J., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 64: "Εἰ δέ τινες ἀποστατήσαιεν τῶν κληρικῶν καὶ τολμήσαιεν ἢ κατ' ἰδίαν ἢ δημοσίᾳ τὰ Νεστορίου ἢ τὰ Κελεστίου φρονῆσαι, καὶ τούτους εἶναι καθῃρημένους ὑπὸ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου δεδικαίωται."

[41]Nestorius *Fraternas nobis invicem* (PL 48:174A).

[42]Friederich Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: University Press, 1914): 42, n. 5.

[43]Nestorius *Fraternas nobis invicem* (PL 48:174A).

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voices."[44] Then he tells Celestine that he has no knowledge of their case and asks him to

send him information.[45] In a second letter to Pope Celestine, he reiterates the point that

without guidance from Celestine, he cannot tell whether they are really heretics or just

suffering abuse.[46]

This reservation of judgment in the case of the Pelagians is somewhat striking in

that Nestorius normally shows no qualms taking action against those considered by him to

be heretics. He lost no time moving against the Arians when he was made bishop of

Constantinople, and he proceeded against the Novatians, Quartodecimans, and

Macedonians as well.[47] His delay of judgment may therefore indicate that he felt some

sympathy for the Pelagians. Marius Mercator goes so far as to say that Nestorius received

Julian of Eclanum as a friend.[48]

Perhaps one could interpret Nestorius's actions more charitably by assuming that

he delayed not because he was stalling for time, but only because he genuinely wanted

more information in order to be fair. Be that as it may, his sympathy for the Pelagians still

comes through in a letter he writes to Celestius offering him encouragement in the face of

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[44]Nestorius *Fraternas nobis invicem* (PL 48:175A): "...implentes aures omnium vocibus lacrymosis."

[45]Nestorius *Fraternas nobis invicem* (PL 48:175A-B).

[46]Nestorius *Saepe scripsi beatitudini tuae* (PL 48:179A).

[47]Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. 3, *A.D. 431 to A.D. 451* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883), 10.

[48]Marius Mercator *Tractatus Nestorii contra haeresim Pelagii seu Coelestii* (PL 48:185A =ACO 1.5.1 #30): "in amicitiam interim censuit suscipiendum."

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persecution. Nestorius compares Celestius to John the Baptist, Paul, and Peter, all of

whom endured temporal hardships for the sake of eternal truths.[49] Unfortunately, the

letter does not specify with which of Celestius's "eternal truths" Nestorius finds himself in

agreement. However, the letter does evince the friendly attitude towards the Pelagians

which Marius Mercator asserts he had.

Finally, it must be said that Nestorius did preach against the Pelagians when they

were in Constantinople. The main thrust of Nestorius's sermons is that Adam's sin

harmed the entire human race.[50] On that point he is in clear disagreement with the

Pelagians. However, Nestorius does not address the question of the extent of natural

human powers. In fact, he misses one good opportunity to distance himself from the

Pelagians on this point, if he so desires, when he describes the way Christ frees us from sin

and death. He states, "[Christ] raised our life from each death, namely by raising our soul

with his life-giving precepts and by recreating and restoring what is mortal in us by his

resurrection."[51] Nestorius's assertion the Christ saves the soul by "life-giving precepts" at

least raises the question of to what extent he opposes the Pelagian view of natural human

powers. Hefele sums up the matter as follows: "[Nestorius] seems to have regarded as

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[49]Nestorius *Honorabili et religiosissimo* (PL 48:181-2).

[50]Marius Mercator translates excerpts from three sermons, found in PL 48:183-214 (=ACO 1.5.1 #31-33).

[51]Nestorius's 3rd sermon, PL 48:203A (=ACO 1.5.1 #32, p. 62.33-35): "[Christus] ex utraque vitam nostram mortificatione levavit, animam videlicet praeceptis vivificantibus erigens, resurrectione vero id quod mortale est, recreans atque restituens."

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correct [the Pelagians'] doctrine of the sufficiency of man's free will for the accomplishment of what is good; but not their view on original sin."[52]

Nestorius was certainly not in lock-step agreement with the Pelagians as later authors such as Prosper of Aquitaine and John Cassian will suggest. However, it seems that he felt some sympathy for them, and it also possible that he agreed with them at least to some extent on their view of natural human powers. We have seen that the issue of natural human powers in the case of Christ and the case of believers is the linch-pin which unites Christology and grace in Leporius and Augustine. This is also the case in Prosper of Aquitaine and John Cassian.

2.5 Prosper of Aquitaine

Prosper of Aquitaine (ca. 390-after 455) was a defender of Augustine's doctrine of grace in Gaul. Though his primary target was the Semipelagianism of monks such as John Cassian, he also opposed the Nestorian heresy. In so doing, he asserted the relationship between the Pelagian and the Nestorian heresies by charging that both attributed too much to merit.

As Plagnieux notes, the evidence for Prosper's connection may be found in his *Chronicum*, his *Contra collatorem*, and especially his *Epitaphium Nestorianae et Pelagianae haereseon.*[53] Prosper asserts in *Contra collatorem* that Pelagianism and

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[52]Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, 3:11.

[53]Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité," 393.

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Nestorianism are "kin and comrades."[54] Likewise, in the description of the council of

Ephesus in his *Chronicum*, he calls the Nestorian teaching a *cognatum . . . dogma* with the

Pelagian error,[55] and elsewhere in the same work he attributes to Nestorius the position

that Christ was a mere man on whom divinity was conferred for merit. Prosper states,

"Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople, tried to introduce a new error into the churches,

preaching that Christ was born of Mary as a man only and not also as God, *and that*

divinity was conferred on him for merit."[56] Thus, in Prosper's mind, the idea of reward

for merit lies at the root of the Nestorian heresy right along with the denial of the

theotokos.

The most detailed exposition of the connection between the two heresies,

however, may be found in Prosper's *Epitaphium Nestorianae et Pelagianae haereseon.*

This work is a lament in dactylic hexameter in the person of the Nestorian heresy who, in

her grave, admits that she is both the mother and the daughter of the Pelagian heresy:

> I, the Nestorian pestilence, succeeded the Pelagian one
> Which was nevertheless born from my womb before me.
> Unhappy mother and daughter of a wretched offspring,
> I came forth from that shoot which I bore.[57]

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[54]Prosper *Contra collatorem* 21.2. Translated by De Letter.

[55]Prosper *Chronicum integrum* (PL 51.595A).

[56]Prosper *Chronicum integrum* (PL 51.594B): "Nestorius Constantinopolitanus episcopus novum Ecclesiis molitur errorem inducere, praedicans Christum ex Maria hominem tantum, non etiam Deum natum, *eique divinitatem collatam es⸱⸱ pro merito*"(italics added).

[57]Prosper *Epitaphium* (PL 51.153A): "Nestoriana lues successi Pelagianae, / Quae tamen est utero praegenerata meo. / Infelix miserae genitrix et filia natae, / Prodivi ex ipso germine quod peperit."

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Nestorianism succeeded Pelagianism historically, but for Prosper, Nestorianism holds conceptual priority over Pelagianism because its error touches the head rather than the body. For this reason, as Plagnieux points out, Prosper identifies Nestorianism as both daughter and mother.[58]

The root error of the two heresies is the same: a reliance on merit rather than on the gift of grace. Prosper brings this point out by juxtaposing the two heresies and their disastrous consequences:

> For wanting Christ to be God by the piety and reward of his works,
> We did not stand in the covenant of the head.
> And hoping for a crown that comes from the freedom of the mind,
> We lost that righteousness which grace gives.[59]

Since Prosper diagnoses both heresies with the same problem, he does not see much difference between them. The move from Nestorianism to Pelagianism is merely a move from head to body, as Prosper makes clear in the following lines: "For after I arose beforehand to establish a stronghold for proud merits, / I wanted to transfer the deed from the head to the body."[60] The logic of this connection is the same as that in Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. In fact, Plagnieux argues that Prosper gets the idea from this very passage of Augustine.[61] For Augustine, the unity of head and body implies

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[58]Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité," 393, n.7.

[59]Prosper *Epitaphium* (PL 51, 154A): "Nam Christum pietate operum et mercede volentes esse / Esse Deum, in capitis foedere non stetimus; / Sperantesque animi de libertate coronam, / Perdidimus quam dat gratia justitiam."

[60]Prosper *Epitaphium* (PL 51, 153A): "Nam fundare arcem meritis prior orsa superbis, / De capite ad corpus ducere opus volui."

[61]Cf. Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité," 393.

that if Christ was predestined without merit, believers must also be predestined in the same

way. For Prosper, the unity of head and body implies that an error regarding merit in the

head will likely spread to the body. However, Prosper does not go as far as Augustine

and state the connection positively. He does not assert that the assumption of human

nature by the Word is a paradigm of salvation by grace. Therefore, it is not entirely clear

whether Prosper is merely describing parallel manifestations of an error regarding merit or

whether he intends to make the stronger claim that the link between the two errors is

necessary.

Prosper's assertions about what Nestorianism taught and the circumstances of its

origin are not historically accurate, but they do show that Prosper considered Christology

and grace to be intertwined and that a theological foundation for such a connection had

already been laid by Augustine. Plagnieux is therefore justified in seeing Prosper's

evaluation of the two heresies as a positive contribution to theology in that Prosper thinks

through grace by reflecting on Jesus.[62]

2.6 John Cassian

John Cassian (ca. 365-ca. 433) was born in Scythia which is present-day Romania,

the same region from which the Scythian monks came. He eventually became a monk and

spiritual writer in Marseilles where he became involved in a debate over grace and free

will. Cassian and Prosper were on opposite sides of this debate. While Prosper defended

Augustine's position that the human will was incapable of choosing God by its own

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[62]Plagnieux, "Le grief de complicité," 402.

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power, Cassian, at least in some passages, wanted to hold out the possibility that the human will can make some movement towards God before receiving grace. Despite his opposition to Prosper, however, Cassian asserted the same relation between Nestorianism and Pelagianism that Prosper did. If anything, he was more insistent on the subject than Prosper.

When Pope Celestine I was called upon to render his judgment in the case of Nestorius in 430, the Roman Archdeacon Leo (who later become pope) asked John Cassian for assistance evaluating this eastern controversy. In reply, Cassian wrote *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*.[63] Modern scholars judge this work to be lacking in Christological clarity,[64] but it does represent the most sustained effort to find parallels between Christology and grace of all the authors we have considered so far.

This effort manifests Cassian's conviction, common in the early church, that there is a coherence to the faith such that one cannot deny one part without denying the others.[65] He compares all heresies to the hydra: when one head is cut off, another springs up to take its place.[66] He proceeds to attack Nestorianism on the grounds that it applies the Pelagian error to Christology.

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[63]Grillmeier 1:468.

[64]Grillmeier 1:468-9.

[65]Cassian *De incarnatione* 6.17.

[66]Cassian *De incarnatione* 1.1.

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In so doing, he draws on a number of sources for his account of what

Nestorianism teaches. Cassian does have access to some of Nestorius's writings.[67] In

book 7 of *De incarnatione*, for example, he cites several times Nestorius's *First Sermon*

Against the Theotokos. Like Prosper, however, he attributes to Nestorius a

Bewährungschristologie which is not found in the passages he cites from Nestorius. He

seems to rely more heavily on Leporius (whom he cites at length) as a representative of

the Nestorian heresy than on Nestorius himself.

Cassian's account of the Nestorian heresy highlights the role of merit in Leporius's

earlier Christology. After identifying Leporius as a one-time proponent of this

Christological error, he describes the teaching of the Nestorian heresy as follows:

> Indeed [this heresy] blasphemously taught that our Lord Jesus Christ was
> born as a mere man, and maintained that the fact that he afterwards
> obtained the glory and power of the Godhead resulted from His human
> worth and not from His Divine nature; and by this it taught that He had not
> always His Divinity by the right of His very own Divine nature which was
> united to Him, but that He obtained it afterwards as a reward for His
> labours and sufferings.[68]

He goes on to assert that the Pelagians believe the same thing as the Nestorians: that

Christ was a mere man without sin, that the Lord became Christ at his baptism and God at

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[67]For a more detailed discussion of the documents at Cassian's disposal, see
Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1:468, esp. n. 16.

[68]Cassian *De incarnatione* 1.2.5.5-10: "solitarium quippe hominem dominum
nostrum Iesum Christum natum esse blasphemans hoc, quod ad dei postea honorem
potestatemque pervenerit, humani meriti, non divinae asseruit fuisse naturae, ac per hoc
eum deitatem ipsam non ex proprietate unitae sibi divinitatis semper habuisse, sed postea
pro praemio laboris passionisque meruisse...." Translated by Alexander Roberts, slightly
altered.

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his resurrection by the merits of his passion.[69] The case for the connection between the heresies is further bolstered by the fact that Nestorius patronized the Pelagians.[70]

Cassian's critique of the two heresies is that they consistently overemphasize the importance of merit in both Christology and in salvation. He claims that these heresies want to "bring [Christ] down to the level of common men" in order to assert that "all men could by their good life and deeds secure whatever he had secured by his good life."[71]

Although Cassian does assume that an error in doctrine concerning the head relates to an error in doctrine concerning the body, he does not take the step of making Augustine's positive assertion that Christ is the paradigm of salvation by grace. Indeed, the anti-Nestorian thrust of his polemic leads him to be wary of making Christ too much like believers. For example, he criticizes Nestorius for making Christ "similar in all respects and equal to Adam."[72] This remark is unfair to Nestorius who, in the statement adduced by Cassian, makes the more limited point that Adam and Christ are alike in that both are without generation. Despite this inaccuracy, however, Cassian's statement indicates that he sees the maximization of similarity between Christ and other humans to be characteristic of the Nestorian position.

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[69]Cassian *De incarnatione* 1.3.

[70]Cassian *De incarnatione* 1.3.

[71]Cassian *De incarnatione* 5.1.1.7-10: "... in plebem omnium misso...id per bonorum actuum conversationem mereri omnes homines posse dicerent, quidquid bene vivendo ille meruisset...." Translated by Roberts.

[72]Cassian *On the Incarnation* 7.6.6.26: "similem in omnibus et parem Adae."

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What, then, would Cassian make of Augustine's argument in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30 which relies on maximum similarity between head and body to warrant making the head the paradigm of grace for the body? Cassian does not raise the issue. Perhaps Cassian stops short of Augustine's argument because he does not sympathize with his doctrine of grace. One suspects, however, that the direction Cassian goes with his argument has more to do with his anti-Nestorian context than with his disagreement with Augustine on grace.

The soteriological pay-off of Cassian's Christology lies not in viewing Christ as the paradigm of predestination and grace, but in the fact that God is the one active both in Christology and in salvation. At bottom, his critique of both Pelagianism and Nestorianism is that they make Christ a "mere man" (*solitarius homo*). In Christology, the idea that Christ is a "mere man" eliminates the fact that God humbled himself for us. If this is the case, then God has not acted for our salvation, but salvation is in the hands of mere humans who consequently owe nothing to God. Cassian makes this point in the last sentence of his treatise: ". . . and may we all rightly and wisely comprehend the blessings of His Sacred Compassion, so as to see that we owe the more to God, in proportion as for our sakes God humbled Himself yet lower."[73]

Cassian's repeated emphasis that God, not a "mere man," was active for our salvation fits one of the most striking aspects of his treatise: he feels perfectly comfortable using theopaschite language without qualification. Normally, patristic authors in the fifth

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[73]Cassian *De incarnatione* 7.31.7.15-18: "..ac beneficia sacrae misericordiae ita omnes pie ac sapienter intellegamus, ut tanto plus debere noverimus nos deo nostro, quanto humilior propter nos factus est a se deus." Translated by Roberts.

and sixth centuries do not simply say "God suffered" or "God died," but they add

qualifiers such as "in the flesh" or "according to the human nature" in order to preserve

the impassibility of God. Nor does Cassian want to ascribe passibility to God either, for

he holds that God is impassible and that we can speak of God dying "in the one Lord Jesus

Christ."[74] But Cassian is unique in that he does not feel the need to assert this point at

every reference to divine passion. He repeatedly ascribes suffering and death to God with

no qualification whatsoever.[75] In fact, he glories in such statements. Cassian says,

> But for my part I not only do not diminish this proclamation of the holy
> cross, this proclamation of the Lord's passion, but as far as my wishes and
> powers go I increase it. For I will proclaim that He who was crucified is
> not only the power and wisdom of God, than which there is nothing
> greater, but actually Lord of absolute Divinity and glory.[76]

Thus, for Cassian a theopaschite, anti-Nestorian Christology has soteriological

consequences, chief of which is that God is the one who acts for human salvation. He

may draw different conclusions than Prosper about how God's action plays out in

questions of grace and free will, but he shares Prosper's conviction that Christology and

grace are interconnected in that overemphasis of merit in one leads to overemphasis of

merit in the other.

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[74]Cassian *De incarnatione* 6.22.5.15: "in uno...domino Jesu Christo." Translated by Roberts.

[75]Cf. Cassian *De incarnatione* 2.3, 3.8, 3.10, 5.7, 6.9.

[76]Cassian *De incarnatione* 3.10.3.3-9: "sed ego praedicationem hanc sacrae crucis, praedicationem hanc dominicae passionis non solum non inminuo, sed, quantum in voto est ac substantia mea, augeo. hunc enim, qui crucifixus est, non solum virtutem ac sapientiam dei, qua nihil maius est, sed etiam totius divinitatis ac maiestatis dominum praedicabo...." Translated by Roberts, slightly altered.

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Cassian's version of this connection is not incompatible with Augustine's view of the incarnation as a paradigm of salvation, but it does not involve the maximal similarity between Christ and believers that Augustine's position does. This is perhaps due to the fact that Cassian's main opponent is a Nestorian Christology, while Augustine is engaging the Pelagians without feeling the pressure of such an explicitly Christological adversary.

2.7 Faustus of Riez

Faustus (d. ca. 490) became bishop of the province of Riez in about 458 and remained there until he was expelled from Gaul by the Arian Visigoth King Euric in 477. He wrote *De gratia* in 471 or 472 in response to a priest, Lucidus, who advocated a doctrine of grace and perseverance which Faustus believed endangered the role of works in salvation.[77]

Faustus's *De gratia* is characterized by what Thomas Smith calls a "rhetoric of the middle," that is, the position that orthodoxy is a *via media* between heresies.[78] The little explicitly Christological material in the treatise appears in the first chapter of the first book as a way of establishing Faustus's "royal road" between heresies. He draws an analogy between two extreme positions on the question of grace and two extreme positions in Christology. He says that some err by asserting "grace alone" (*solam gratiam*), while others err by asserting "effort alone" (*solum laborem*).[79] These two positions correspond

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[77]Smith, *De Gratia*, 56-7.

[78]Smith, *De Gratia*, 70-1.

[79]Faustus *De gratia* 1.1.7.8-12.

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to the Christological errors of those who claim that Christ is "only God" (*solum Deum*), and those who say he is "only man" (*solum hominem*).[80] In each case, Faustus contends, the truth is found in a middle position which combines the partial truth found in both extremes. Christ is God and man; grace and human works are to be joined.[81]

Faustus's analogy lays the emphasis on the similarity between Christ and Christians in that it appeals to Christ as a model to which the Christian corresponds. Christ is God and man. Grace and works are the divine and human elements, respectively, in believers. To the extent that Faustus highlights the similarity between Christ and believers, his connection between Christology and grace is superficially similar to Augustine's, the only other author under consideration with this emphasis.

Faustus's approach, however, is fundamentally different from all the other authors who have been examined, including Augustine. For the other authors, the central issue has been the role of merit in Christology and how that role plays out in the doctrine of grace. For Faustus, however, the central issue is that orthodoxy takes the middle position. He never brings up the role of merit in Christology.

Although this argument stands apart from the kinds of connections which other fifth-century authors made, it is nevertheless important for the sixth-century Theopaschite controversy. As we shall see, it is probably the argument which the North African bishop Possessor deployed against the Christology of the Scythian monks.

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[80]Faustus *De gratia* 1.1.8.4-7.

[81]Faustus *De gratia* 1.1.8.14-22.

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2.8 Conclusion

The authors which have been examined in this chapter demonstrate a variety of ways to connect Christology and grace. However, one may detect a broad consensus among them that the role of merit (or lack thereof) as the basis for grace in Christology is likely to be accompanied by a similar state of affairs in soteriology. In Augustine, the parallels are so strong that the incarnation may be viewed as a paradigm of predestination and grace.

When one examines more closely the nuances of the different approaches, one is struck by the fact that there is no correlation between the kinds of connections the different authors assert and the side those authors took on the major issues of their day. For example, John Cassian and Faustus of Riez are generally classified as Semipelagians, but on this question, Cassian has much more in common with Augustine and Prosper than he does with Faustus. Prosper and Cassian opposed each other on the doctrine of grace, yet in this case, they have more in common with each other than with Augustine because neither of them pushes the argument as far as Augustine did.

The only factor which seems to correlate with the variations noted in these authors is whether the author is writing primarily against a Christological position or a position on the doctrine of grace. Augustine and Faustus, both concerned primarily with grace, are the only ones whose argument entails maximizing the similarity between Christ and Christians. Leporius and Cassian are writing primarily against a Nestorian Christological error. Consequently both are wary of asserting too strong a similarity between Christ and

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Christians and prefer instead to stress the uniqueness of Christ. Prosper might be placed in the same category as Leporius and Cassian as well, though in his *Epitaphium* he is writing against both heresies equally.

Nestorius does not fit neatly into this classification since it is unclear whether or how he thought Christology and grace are related. The main evidence of a connection has more to do with his reception of the Pelagians than with his doctrinal pronouncements. However, there is a possibility, as we have seen, that he was sympathetic to their view of natural human capacities. If this is the case, it would at least partially vindicate the consensus view that one may expect to find parallels between the Christology and the doctrine of grace in a given theologian.

Taken together, these authors show that a theological connection between Christology and grace is a prominent feature of fifth-century theological polemics. At stake is whether God is the one who acts for human salvation. An intrusion of merit as a precondition for God's action in the realm of Christology or grace removes God from the picture and so threatens salvation. Given the wide-spread assertion of this connection in the fifth century, one is not surprised to find a similar connection made in the sixth century as well.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF THE THEOPASCHITE CONTROVERSY

The Theopaschite controversy is an episode in the larger debate about the reception and interpretation of Chalcedon. The Scythian monks appeared in Constantinople in 518 or early 519 insisting that the Chalcedonian definition must be interpreted in accordance with the statement, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh." They considered any other interpretation of Chalcedon to be Nestorian. Along with their theopaschite formula, the Scythian monks argued for an Augustinian doctrine of grace from the very beginning of the controversy. However, they failed to gain support for this proposal both in Constantinople and later in Rome.

Two controversies in the recent past played a decisive role in shaping the attitudes the monks encountered in those two cities: the Acacian schism and the Trisagion controversy. This chapter examines the aspects of these two disputes which are relevant to the Theopaschite controversy and then narrates the events of the Theopaschite controversy itself in light of these disputes.

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3.1 The Acacian Schism and the Trisagion Controversy

In January, 475, the usurper Basiliscus led a revolution which drove the emperor

Zeno from his throne. The new emperor Basiliscus, who sympathized with the

Monophysites, condemned the council of Chalcedon. However, Acacius, the patriarch of

Constantinople, used the influence of his office to turn to populace of Constantinople

against Basiliscus and eventually brought about his downfall.

When Zeno returned to the throne in August, 476, the empire was in disarray.

Zeno needed to reconcile the leading sees of the East, Constantinople and Alexandria.[1]

The Chalcedonian definition held sway in Constantinople, but the "Monophysites," who

were dominant in the church of Alexandria at the time, could not accept it primarily

because the council endorsed Leo's Tome. The Tome has a tendency to distinguish

Christ's human and divine activities, assigning each activity to the appropriate nature.[2]

The "Monophysites" rejected such a division as Nestorian.

Acacius therefore advised Zeno to side-step Chalcedon and draw up a new

document to form the basis of a united confession of faith for the empire. This document,

issued in 482 and known as the Henotikon, neither endorsed nor condemned Chalcedon,

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[1]Cf. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon*, 28.

[2]For example, Leo's Tome says, "For each nature performs what is proper to itself in communion with the other; the Word, that is, performing what is proper to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what is proper to the flesh. The one of these i. brilliant with miracles, the other succumbs to injuries" (*Agit enim utraque forma* [understood as *natura* in Leo's exegesis of Phil. 2:6-7] *cum alterius communione quod proprium est; Verbo scilicet operante quod Verbi est, et carne exsequente quod carnis est. Unum horum coruscat miraculis, aliud succumbit iniuriis*) (Tome of Leo 4. Translated by Thomas Bindley).

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but instead ignored it and tried to start anew, suggesting that if Chalcedon were found to be in contradiction to the faith of Nicea, Chalcedon could be rejected. The Henotikon condemned Nestorius and Eutyches and affirmed Cyril's twelve anathemas. Zeno hoped that by taking no position regarding Chalcedon, the Hentikon would allow a united Christological confession based on Cyril of Alexandria, who was widely accepted as orthodox, rather than on the controverted Chalcedonian definition.

Rome, however, found this solution unacceptable and demanded that Chalcedon be the basis for the empire's Christology. At stake for Rome was not only the Christology of Chalcedon, but also the authority of the Roman see. Since the opposition to Chalcedon was directed largely against Pope Leo's Tome, Rome saw the rejection of Chalcedon to be at bottom a rejection of the authority of Leo and Rome. On July 28, 484, a synod of 27 bishops in Rome excommunicated Acacius,[3] thereby initiating the Acacian schism. Rome never wavered in its insistence on Chalcedon, and the schism lasted until 519 when Constantinople finally agreed to Rome's demands. This was precisely the time when the Scythian monks made their way to Constantinople to settle a Christological dispute they were having with their bishop in Scythia.

The Acacian schism disrupted ecclesiastical life throughout the empire, including the home province of the Scythian monks. Scythia had a history of supporting the council of Chalcedon. Unlike Alexandria and Antioch, Scythia never found Monophysitism to be attractive. In fact, the fifth-century bishop of Scythia, John of Tomi (d. 449 at the latest),

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[3]The summary of the events in the Acacian schism is based on W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 169-83.

thought that Monophysitism was a worse error than Nestorianism.[4] However, Zeno's

Henotikon of 482 delivered a blow to Scythia's unwavering support of Chalcedon. At

that time, the Danubian churches were forced to choose between the emperor and the

pope.[5] Scythia and Lower Moesia were the two eastern-most provinces of the Balkan

peninsula. Although they were Latin-speaking regions, they initially sided with

Constantinople. The rest of the Danubian churches allied themselves with Rome.

However, Scythia and Lower Moesia returned to union with Rome by 515.[6] Thus, the

Scythian monks came from a province which historically supported Chalcedon but in the

recent past was in and out of fellowship with Rome.

During the Acacian schism, another controversy broke out in Constantinople

which had repercussions for the Scythian monks. This is the Trisagion controversy of

511. The Trisagion is the part of the Constantinopolitan liturgy which reads: "Holy God,

holy Mighty, holy Immortal, have mercy on us."[7] According to legend, angels revealed

the Trisagion to a boy in Constantinople during the episcopacy of Proclus (434-446) as a

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[4]Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, 358.

[5]Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, 363-4.

[6]Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, 377. This is reported in a letter from Pope
Hormisdas to Caesarius of Arles in 515 (Thiel, 758).

[7]Edward Schwartz, ed., *Publizistische Sammlungen zum Acacianischen Schisma*
(hereafter, *PS*), Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften:
Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, neue Folge, 10 (München: Verlag der Bayerischen
Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1934), 242: "ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος
ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς."

prayer to avert calamity.[8] The prayer became closely associated with the council of

Chalcedon by its use in the first session on Oct. 8, 451.[9] When Peter the Fuller became

bishop of Antioch, he added the phrase "who was crucified for us" in official Antiochene

liturgy so that the Trisagion read, "Holy God, holy Mighty, holy immortal, *who was

crucified for us*, have mercy on us."[10] Controversy broke out in Constantinople when

Palestinian and Antiochene monks began to sing the Trisagion with the addition there in

511.[11]

The controversy turned in part on a difference in the interpretation of the Trisagion

in Antioch and Constantinople. The Antiochene church traditionally understood the

Trisagion to be addressed to Christ. Therefore, the addition of the phrase, "who was

crucified for us," seemed unobjectionable to many. In Constantinople, however, the

church understood the Trisagion to be addressed to the Trinity. Therefore, Peter Fuller's

addition seemed to imply that the entire Trinity was crucified.[12]

The Sleepless monks, a group of pro-Chalcedonian monks in Constantinople, had

personal connections with Peter Fuller and took the lead in opposing him. He had been a

member of their monastery in Constantinople before he became bishop of Antioch.

Already while he was in their monastery, the Sleepless monks, who had always been

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[8]Cf. John of Damascus *De fide orthodoxa* 3.10.

[9]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:254.

[10]Cf. Schwartz, *PS*, 242 (emphasis added).

[11]Grillmeier dates this in 510. *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:256.

[12]Schwartz, *PS*, 242.

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strongly diphysite, accused him of Eutychianism. After he became a bishop and inserted "who was crucified for us" into the Antiochene Trisagion, the Sleepless monks opposed him further by forging a series of letters from various bishops accusing him of Patripassianism because of the addition.[13] Grillmeier suggests that these letters could have been composed in 510 or 511 in response to this controversy.[14] As we shall see, the Sleepless monks later opposed the Scythian monks, so the forged letters are helpful in determining the Christology of the Scythian monks' opponents in Constantinople.

The Trisagion controversy broke out again in 512 when the Monophysite Severus became the patriarch of Antioch. He arranged for a large group of people to sing the Trisagion with the theopaschite addition at the church of St. Timothy in Constantinople. Furthermore, Timothy, the Patriarch of Constantinople, ordered that the addition be included in the liturgy for all the churches in the capitol. Violence erupted as a result.[15] Through this controversy, the ascription of suffering to God came to be popularly viewed as the hallmark of the Monophysite heresy. In 518, on the Feast of Chalcedon, the theopaschite addition was removed from the Trisagion in Constantinople.

Shortly after the events of the Trisagion controversy, Constantinople began to move in the direction of Rome and the council of Chalcedon. This move was precipitated by the revolt of Vitalian, a Goth who, in 514, assembled an army of rebel soldiers,

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[13]For arguments concerning the inauthenticity of the letters, see Schwartz, *PS*, 291-2.

[14]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:257. For the history of the Trisagion controversy, see ibid., 252-262.

[15]Schwartz, *PS*, 247.

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colonists, and Bulgarians whom he enlisted. They defeated Hypatius, who held the

military rank of *magister militum per Thraciam*, and camped outside of Constantinople,

threatening the city. Vitalian had two goals. First, he wanted to remove Hypatius from

his position. In addition, he wanted to make Chalcedon the official confession of the

empire. Vitalian himself was a supporter of Chalcedon, but beyond that, he was the

Godfather of Flavian, the pro-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, who was deposed by the

Monophysite Severus. Vitalian's hatred of Severus gave him even more reason to impose

Chalcedon as the confession of the empire.[16] Vitalian's ascendancy had a direct bearing on

the Theopaschite controversy because he was a relative of Leontius, one of the Scythian

monks. Dioscorus, one of the papal legates to Constantinople, informed Pope Hormisdas

of this connection.[17]

Because of Vitalian's military power and his victories in Scythia, Moesia, and

Thrace, the emperor Anastasius had no choice but to make Vitalian the *magister militum*

per Thraciam and to promise him a council in Heraclea in Thrace at which the pope would

preside.[18] Such a council would doubtless be favorable to Chalcedon. Anastasius wrote

Pope Hormisdas on Dec. 28, 514, and Jan. 12, 515, inviting him to the council to discuss

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[16]Schwartz, *PS*, 249-50.

[17]CA 216.5.22-23: "...[monachi de Scythia] de domo magistri militum Vitaliani sunt...." CA 216.6.26-27: "isti monachi, inter quos est et Leontius, qui se dicit parentem esse magistri militum, Roman festinant...."

[18]Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 231; Schwartz, *PS*, 249-50.

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"contentions about the faith that had arisen in Scythia." The emperor did not frame the issue in terms of the general validity of Chalcedon, but in terms of a local dispute.[19]

The pope, however, did not treat the matter as a local dispute. He insisted that Chalcedon be recognized as the Christological confession of the empire and that the name of Acacius (who was now dead) be removed from the diptychs. The emperor Anastasius was willing to go so far as to grant that Chalcedon did not conflict with Nicea, but he was unwilling to make it the official confession of the empire. He was also unwilling to remove Acacius's name from the diptychs because the populace of Constantinople still held Acacius in high esteem.[20] The council at Heraclea therefore failed to restore unity between Rome and Constantinople.

Reunion with Rome became a real possibility only when Justin I came to power. Even before he became emperor, Justin made it clear that he supported Chalcedon. A constellation of pressures in Constantinople reinforced his personal convictions. The Henotikon had failed to unite Constantinople and Alexandria since Egypt never accepted the document. The monasteries in Constantinople were in favor of Chalcedon. Vitalian was pro-Chalcedon, and he had an army at his disposal.[21]

In January, 519, Pope Hormisdas sent a papal delegation to Constantinople to attempt to end the schism. Along with the delegation, he sent a *libellus* which contained Rome's conditions for re-establishing fellowship with Constantinople. These conditions

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[19]Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 231-2; the letters are CA 107 & 109.

[20]Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 232.

[21]Schwartz, *PS*, 259.

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included anathematizing Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus of Alexandria, Timothy Aelurus,

and Acacius; accepting Leo and the Roman constitutions; and promising not to recite the

names of any who disagree with Rome in the sacred mysteries.[22] On the way to

Constantinople, the papal legates stopped at a number of cities along the way whose

bishops signed Hormsidas's *libellus*. On Monday of Holy Week, they reached

Constantinople and were met ten miles outside the city by Vitalian, Pompeius, and

Justinian and entered the city in a procession. On March 28, Maundy Thursday, Patriarch

John of Constantinople accepted Rome's conditions, signed the *libellus* and thus brought

the schism to an end on the basis of an unconditional acceptance of the council of

Chalcedon.[23]

3.2 The Events of the Theopaschite Controversy[24]

The Scythian monks came from the region just south of where the Danube flows

into the Black Sea. Archeological evidence dating from the fourth through the seventh

centuries reveals not only the strong presence of Christianity in Scythia, but also a

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[22]A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 1 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1950), 167.

[23]CA 167 & 223.

[24]Summaries of the events of the Theopaschite controversy may be found in Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 244-7; Fr. Glorie, CCL 85A, xxiii-xl; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:315-43; J.A. McGuckin, "Theopaschite Confession," 239-55; Viktor Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius*, 136-67; A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 190-206.

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flourishing Greek and Latin culture.[25] This is the same cultural milieu which produced

John Cassian.

Despite the fact that they were from the East, the Scythian monks themselves were

more at home in Latin than in Greek. They wrote in Latin, and Dionysius Exiguus,

another monk from Scythia, translated certain letters of Cyril of Alexandria from Greek

into Latin for them. The Scythian monks read Latin Christian authors, especially

Augustine, who was otherwise unknown in the East.[26]

The Scythian monks who appeared at Constantinople in 518 or 519 belonged to a

group of Goths who were catholic.[27] The Goths originated from Northern Germany and

migrated to Scythia by the third century.[28] Most Goths throughout the empire were

evangelized by the Arians, but some of them in the region of Scythia and Constantinople

were evangelized by Nicene Christians. John Chrysostom, for example, took part in this

missionary effort. In 388 or 389, he even presided at a service held in the Gothic language

in Constantinople.[29]

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[25]Theodor Damian, "Some Critical Considerations and New Arguments Reviewing the Problem of St. John Cassian's Birthplace," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57 (1991): 263-4.

[26]Schwartz, ACO 4.2, vi.

[27]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian tradition*, 2.2:320, n.14.

[28]Ralph W. Mathisen, "Goths," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed., ed. Everett Ferguson (New York & London: Garland, 1998), 479.

[29]Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, 545.

When a group of Scythian monks became embroiled in an argument with their bishop Paternus in their home town of Tomi, they took their case to Constantinople. Why would they go to Constantinople? Historically, the bishop of Heraclea in Thrace had oversight over the bishop of Tomi, but ever since the council of Constantinople in 381, Constantinople assumed that prerogative.[30] Therefore, the ecclesiastical structure in the sixth century would have dictated that a controversy in Tomi be referred to the archbishop of Constantinople.

The only difficulty is that Scythia was not in communion with Constantinople at the time. Pope Hormisdas remarked in a letter in the year 515 that Scythia had returned to fellowship with Rome. Since the Acacian schism was still in effect, this implies that Scythia had denounced fellowship with Constantinople. Furthermore, the Scythian monks claimed that they themselves had always maintained fellowship with Rome and were never in communion with the East.[31] It would seem that they went to Constantinople to appeal to the emperor, not to the bishop of Constantinople.[32]

The Scythian monks arrived in Constantinople in 518 or early 519. The most complete account we have of the events of early 519 come from the papal legate Dioscorus who arrived in Constantinople during Holy Week of 519 to end the Acacian schism. Dioscorus reported in a letter to Pope Hormisdas that when the Roman

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[30]Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes*, 366-7.

[31]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 33.

[32]The emperor is the one who settled the controversy by bringing Paternus back into favor. See CA 217.

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delegation arrived in Constantinople in March, the Scythian monks were already engaged in controversy with the Constantinopolitan deacon Victor "about one of the Trinity being crucified, about Christ being composite, and about other theses (*capitulis*)."[33]

Dioscorus's description of the theses under debate suggests that in the first phase of the Theopaschite controversy in Constantinople, the Scythian monks were advocating the twelve *Capitula* written by John Maxentius against the Nestorians and the Pelagians.[34] Thesis 4 of this work concerns one of the Trinity crucified, and thesis 9 confesses Christ to be composite.[35] John Maxentius's twelve *Capitula*, therefore, seem to be the earliest of the writings of the Scythian monks, dating from March, 519, at the latest.

If this dating is correct, Christology and grace appeared together in the Scythian controversy from the very beginning because Maxentius's twelve chapters include both topics. They are directed against both the Nestorians and the Pelagians. The last three chapters concern original sin and condemn Pelagius and Caelestius. This means that the Scythian monks were promoting an Augustinian view of original sin and grace in Constantinople before the Roman delegation arrived. Perhaps this was even part of their argument with their home-bishop Paternus. Therefore, the Scythian monks' anti-Pelagian

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[33]CA 224.3.14-16: "...antequam nos Constantinopolim ingrederemur, habuerunt intentionem de uno de trinitate crucifixo et de Christo composito et de aliis capitulis." Dioscorus's letter is dated Oct. 15, 519.

[34]*Capitula Maxenti[i] Ioannis edita contra Nestorianos et Pelagianos ad satisfactionem fratrum.*

[35]Glorie also notes the similarity and says that Dioscorus "seems to be referring to the twelve chapters of Maxentius" (*Referri videtur ad CAPITULA XII Maxentii*) (CCL 85A, xxiv).

posture reflects something crucial to the Scythian monks' theological position and should not be viewed merely as a tactical maneuver to curry favor with the West.[36]

When the Scythian monks advocated their formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," they no doubt raised the specter of the Monophysite Trisagion addition of Peter Fuller in the minds of the strict Chalcedonians there. The issue would still have been very much alive since the theopaschite addition was only just removed on the Feast of Chalcedon in 518.[37] The Sleepless monks, who opposed the Scythian monks, tried to capitalize on this association. In the latest collection of their forged correspondence with Peter Fuller, found in the *Collectio Sabbaitica*, they added three letters addressed to Peter Fuller which actually deal with the issues raised by the Scythian monks.[38] By ascribing the Scythian monks' position to Peter Fuller, the Sleepless monks forged a connection between the Scythian monks and the Monophysites.

The papal legate Dioscorus's paraphrase of the Scythian position reveals that the Roman delegation also tried to associate the Scythian monks with the Monophysites. He said that they were arguing *de uno de trinitate crucifixo*. In fact, the Scythian formula was that one of the Trinity was crucified, or suffered, *in the flesh*.[39] The Scythian monks employed the qualifier "in the flesh" (*carne*) to distinguish themselves from the

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[36]*Pace* Smith, *De Gratia*, 3.

[37]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:258.

[38]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:254, n. 109. The 3 letters are found in ACO 3.18-25.

[39]Cf. Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 20.262-263: "...unus est Christus de trinitate, qui pro nobis passus est *carne*" (italics added).

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Monophysites, but Dioscorus consistently omitted this qualifier when he reported their position to Pope Hormisdas.[40] Thus, both the Sleepless monks and the papal legates tried to make the Scythian monks out to be Monophysites, taking full advantage of the association between theopaschite language and the Monophysite heresy which was widely published in the Trisagion controversy.

In the next step of the controversy, the Scythian monks presented a *libellus* against the Constantinopolitan deacon Victor both to the Roman delegation and to the archbishop of Constantinople. This must have occurred between March and June of 519.[41] This work, the *Libellus fidei* of John Maxentius, appears to be an explanation and expansion of the twelve *Capitula* of John Maxentius, including the chapters on original sin. Nearly all of the topics in the *Capitula* are treated in the *Libellus fidei*, though not in the same order. Only thesis 9 on Christ being composite receives no treatment in the latter work.

After the Scythian monks presented their *Libellus fidei*, a meeting was held in the archbishop of Constantinople's house so that the Roman delegation could learn what the controversy was about. In this meeting, John, the archbishop of Constantinople, read the decrees of Chalcedon and stated, "Let nothing else be said to me besides these things.

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[40]Cf. also CA 216.6.29: "...volunt dicere unum de trinitate crucifixum, quod est nec in sanctis synodis dictum...."; CA 217.8.20-22: "magnopere praedicti monachi ad Italiam venientes aliquanta capitula proponere habent, inter quae et 'unum de trinitate crucifixum' continentur...."

[41]The Roman delegates arrive in Constantinople in March, and on June 29, 519, the delegates report to Hormisdas that the Scythian monks are on their way to Rome. Cf. Glorie, CCL 85A, xxiv.

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Whoever follows these can be among the catholics."[42] Victor expressed the same

sentiment: "I likewise receive both the epistles of Pope Leo and the synodical epistles of

St. Cyril which are adduced in the Chalcedonian council . . . and if I am ever found

proclaiming anything else outside these things, I ask for no mercy for myself."[43] The

Scythian monks, on the other hand, cried out, "Let 'one of the Trinity' be added!"[44] to

which the papal legates responded, "What is not defined in the four councils nor in the

epistles of the blessed Pope Leo, we can neither say nor add."[45]

This exchange, reported by the papal legate Dioscorus, illustrates how the

circumstances of the Acacian schism made it very difficult for the Scythian monks to

persuade either Rome or Constantinople to embrace their Christological position.

Dioscorus clearly framed the controversy in terms of the status of Chalcedon. The

representatives of Rome and Constantinople had just brought the Acacian schism to an

end on the basis of an unconditional acceptance of the council of Chalcedon. Under these

circumstances, it is no surprise that John, Victor, and the Roman delegation were one in

their insistence that nothing be added to that council. By accusing the Scythian monks of

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[42]CA 224.4.21-23: "praeter ista nihil mihi aliud dicatur: qui sequitur ista, potest inter catholicos esse."

[43]CA 224.4.23-1: [Victor respondit]: "suscipio similiter et epistolas papae Leonis et sancti Cyrilli epistolas synodales, quae sunt in Calcedonensi concilio allegatae,...et si inventus fuero aliquando extra ista aliud praedicans, nullam circa me peto misericordiam."

[44]CA 224.4.2-3: "...addatur et unus de trinitate!"

[45]CA 224.4.3-5: "quod non est in quattuor conciliis definitum nec in epistolis beati papae Leonis, nos nec dicere possumus nec addere."

adding to Chalcedon, Dioscorus made them out to be a threat to the newly established peace between Constantinople and Rome.

He also saw them as a threat to the authority of Rome. Pope Hormisdas's *Libellus*, which lays out the conditions for fellowship with Rome, makes clear that Rome's central demand was the acceptance of the authority of the Roman see. In that document, Hormisdas asserted that "in the apostolic see, the catholic religion has always been preserved spotless."[46] In recognition of this fact, subscribers of the document declared, "We accept and approve the universal epistles of the blessed Pope Leo which he wrote concerning the Christian religion. Therefore (*unde*), just as we said above, following the apostolic see in all things and proclaiming all its decisions, I hope [to be worthy to be in communion with the apostolic see]."[47] This statement moves seamlessly from accepting Leo to following Rome in all matters of faith. It reflects the attitude that accepting Chalcedon means accepting Leo, and accepting Leo means the accepting the authority of Rome. This remained the Roman position in the Christological controversies throughout the sixth century.

Dioscorus made the same conflation of Chalcedon, Leo, and Roman authority in a more subtle way in his correspondence with Pope Hormisdas. In his account of the meeting with the Scythian monks cited above, Dioscorus reported the sentiment of the

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[46]CA 116b.1.4-5: "...in sede apostolica immaculata est semper ca`holica servata religio."

[47]CA 116b.4.22-25: "...suscipimus et probamus epistolas beati Leonis papae universas, quas de Christiana religione conscripsit. unde, sicut praediximus, sequentes in omnibus apostolicam sedem et praedicantes eius omnio constituta, spero...."

Constantinopolitan deacon Victor that nothing should be added to Chalcedon, Cyril, and Leo. However, when Disoscorus stated his own position, he focused everything on Leo. He refused to agree to anything "not defined in the four councils nor in the epistles of the blessed Pope Leo." Throughout the correspondence between the papal legates and Pope Hormisdas, the legates consistently referred to the council of Chalcedon by mentioning Chalcedon and Leo, never Cyril.[48] This pattern of speech reflects the Roman conviction that the authority of Chalcedon is linked to the authority of Leo and the Roman see. It also seems to indicate a growing reserve towards Cyril on the part of Rome despite the fact that Rome had supported Cyril in the early fifth century. By suggesting that Chalcedon was not sufficient against the Nestorian heresy, the Scythian monks posed a threat to the authority of Rome.

This threat played out in a very concrete way during the selection of a new bishop of Antioch. The previous bishop of Antioch, the influential Monophysite Severus, was deposed in 518. Pope Hormisdas was very concerned to place a supporter of Chalcedon in his place. In their letters of June 29, 519, the papal legates reported to Hormisdas that the emperor elected the Constantinopolitan presbyter Paul to be the new bishop of Antioch. This was good news for the Roman party since Paul was a supporter of

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[48]Cf. CA 216.6.29-2: "...volunt dicere unum de trinitate crucifixum, quod est nec in sanctis synodis dictum nec in epistolis sancti papae Leonis nec in conseutudine ecclesiastica." CA 216.8.16-19: they suggest that the pope reply to the Scythian monks, "sufficit sanctum Calcedonense concilium, in quo et aliae synodi continentur; sufficiunt epistolae papae Leonis, quas synodus confirmavit...." CA 217.9.26-29: "extra synodos quattuor, extra epistolas papae Leonis nec dicimus nec admittimus; quicquid non continetur in praedictis synodis aut quod non est scrptum a papa Leone, non suscipimus...."

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Chalcedon. However, the legates charged that the Scythian monks were disturbing the peace and delaying Paul's ordination in Antioch.[49] The legates did not say precisely how the Scythian monks were delaying the ordination, but it would not be out of character for them to have accused Paul of being Nestorian if he did not subscribe to their formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh."[50] There is no indication that they traveled to Antioch for this purpose. They could have stirred up trouble while remaining in Constantinople since Paul was a presbyter in that city. Thus, the Scythian monks' formula, which Dioscorus portrayed as an addition to Chalcedon, threatened not only the authority of Rome in the abstract, but also the concrete church-political interests of the Roman see at the time.

One should not conclude from Dioscorus's portrayal, however, that the Scythian monks literally wanted to amend the Chalcedonian definition. John Maxentius insisted that he merely intended to explain the council of Chalcedon to exclude interpretations contrary to the Fathers. He did not see himself as adding anything to it.[51] He believed that Chalcedon was originally intended to be interpreted in a Cyrillian direction. Though

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[49]CA 216 & 217.

[50]Devreesse suggests that the Scythian monks interfered with the Antiochene ordination by insisting that everyone who was in communion with Rome during the episcopacy of Severus of Antioch was a Nestorian (*Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, 177). This suggestion is untenable, however, because it is based on the exaggerated report of the Scythian monks' position given by the papal legate Dioscorus in CA 217, and it ignores the Scythian monks' claim that they themselves had always been in communion with Rome. Cf. Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 33.

[51]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 1-8. The extended discussion of this point at the beginning of the *Libell. fid.* indicates that the charge of adding to Chalcedon was felt by all sides to be weighty.

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the papal legates felt that the Scythian monks were undermining Chalcedon, they

nevertheless understood that the Scythian monks were claiming to oppose a particular

interpretation of Chalcedon, not Chalcedon itself. In a letter of June 29, 519, they

reported the Scythian monks' attitude towards Chalcedon to be: "We have accepted the

Chalcedonian synod. We hope that you will order us to explain it since it is not sufficient,

the way it is explained, against the Nestorian heresy."[52] Dioscorus was not far from the

mark, then, when he reported to Pope Hormisdas in his letter of Oct. 15, 519, that the

Scythian monks "say that 'the synod [Chalcedon] is not sufficient against Nestorius,' and

that the synod must be received in the way they themselves expound it."[53] More precisely,

the Scythian monks felt that Chalcedon has been shown to be vulnerable to a

Nestorianizing misinterpretation and that their theopaschite formula would exclude this

misinterpretation and preserve the original intent of the council. Dioscorus was simply

misrepresenting the Scythian monks when he concluded that the Scythian monks "say that

all who accept the Chalcedonian synod are Nestorians."[54]

The Scythian monks' efforts in Constantinople failed to produce the results for

which they hoped. The emperor publicly brought Paternus, the Scythian monks' home

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[52]CA 216.9.20-23: "nos synodum Calcedonensem suscepimus; hoc speramus, ut iubeatis nobis eam exponere, quia non sufficit sic, quomodo est exposita, contra haeresim Nestorianam."

[53]CA 224.7.14-16: "...dicentes 'non sufficit synodus contra Nestorium' et sic debere synodum suscipere, quomodo ipsi exposuerint."

[54]CA 224.7.13-14: "...omnes accipientes synodum Calcedonensem Nestorianos dicunt...."

bishop, back into favor (*reduxit ad gratiam*).[55] Rather than being reconciled with Paternus, according to the papal legates, the Scythian monks set out for Rome hoping to gain the support of Pope Hormisdas for their chapters, especially their theopaschite formula.[56] Their leader John Maxentius, however, seems to have remained in Constantinople.[57] Dioscorus wrote a letter to Pope Hormisdas in June, 519, informing him of the Scythian monks' departure.[58] They arrived in Rome in August.

On June 29, the emperor's nephew Justinian wrote a letter to Pope Hormisdas in which he accused the "so-called monks" (*nomine monachos*) of being more eager for discord than peace and in which he encouraged Hormisdas to "send them far away" (*a se longe pellere*).[59] However, Justinian quickly did an about-face and wrote a second letter at the beginning of July. He sent this letter by a special carrier who was to arrive in Rome before the first letter got there. In this letter, he called the Scythians "pious monks" (*religiosis monachis*) and asked Hormisdas to send them back to Constantinople before his letter of June 29 arrived at Rome.[60] Apparently, Justinian felt that he could not afford

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[55]CA 217.

[56]The legates report this in CA 217, mentioning especially the formula *unum de trinitate crucifixum* (omitting the *carne*). The Scythian monks themselves assert that they came to Rome for this very formula (One of the Trinity) (Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 19.246-248).

[57]The evidence for this is provided by Altaner, *Der griechische Theologe Leontius*, 380.

[58]CA 216.

[59]CA 187.

[60]CA 191.

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to offend their powerful relative, Vitalian.[61] He may have also realized that the Scythian monks' Christology had the potential to unify the empire by interpreting Chalcedon in a way that addressed the concerns of the Monophysites. From that time on, Justinian supported the Scythian monks.[62]

The Scythian monks did not want to return to Constantinople, however. Justinian's attitude was manifestly unpredictable, while they had been received warmly in Rome. Pope Hormisdas accepted their *Libellus fidei* and, according to John Maxentius, affirmed that "Christ, the Son of God, who suffered for us in the flesh, is one of the holy and indivisible Trinity."[63] Furthermore, the Scythian monks feared an ambush on their way back.[64] Hormisdas therefore allowed them to stay in Rome. He asked Justinian to send Victor, whom the Scythian monks had accused of heresy, to Rome so he could adjudicate the case.[65]

Meanwhile, the major players in Constantinople came to share Justinian's new appreciation for the Scythian monks. The emperor Justin, Justinian, and the patriarch John of Constantinople all wrote letters to Pope Hormisdas in January of 520 which were at least implicitly favorable towards their theopaschite formula and asked his opinion of it. Hormisdas, however, would not commit to it. In his response to Justinian's letter, he did

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[61]Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 193.

[62]Cf. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:323-4.

[63]*Libell. fid.*, *tit.*; *Resp. adv. ep.* 20.277-279.

[64]CA 190.

[65]CA 189.

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not charge that the Scythian formula was heretical, but he did reject it as a "novelty."[66]

Justinian responded with a letter written in July, 520, arguing that there is precedent in

Augustine for referring to Christ as "one of the Trinity."[67] He cited the same passages

from Augustine's *De Trinitate* and *Enchiridion* that John Maxentius had cited in his

Libellus fidei.[68] Justinian made their position his own.

Aside from their initial favorable reception by Pope Hormisdas, the Scythian

monks received no more good news from Rome. Their formula was rebuffed as a novelty

not only by the pope, but also by a presbyter Trifolius who was consulted by the Roman

senator Faustus concerning the formula. Trifolius claimed that the formula "One of the

Trinity crucified" comes from the fount of Arius and constitutes an illegitimate addition to

the four councils.[69]

The only positive response the Scythian monks received came from a group of

North African bishops exiled on the island of Sardinia by the Vandal king Thrasamund.

The Scythian monks sent these bishops a modified version of their *Libellus fidei*[70] to seek

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[66]CA 206 (dated Feb. or March, 520).

[67]CA 196.

[68]CA 196.6.17-19. Cf. Maxentius *Libell. fid.* 15-16. Justinian also attributes to Augustine the phrase *solus in trinitate corpus accepit* which Günther does not find in Augustine (CSEL 35.2, 656, n.18). Perhaps this is a loose paraphrase from a passage which John Maxentius cites from Augustine's *Enchiridion*: "Sed, cum illam creaturam, quam virgo concepit et peperit, quamvis ad solam filii personam pertinentem, tota trinitas fecerit...." (*Libell. fid.* 15.194-196). Cf. Glorie, CCL 85A, xxxv.

[69]*PS* #59, 115-117.

[70]This is the *Epistula ad episcopos*. In Fulgentius's corpus, it is labelled *Ep. 16*.

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their support. Fulgentius of Ruspe, the spokesman for the exiled bishops, wrote back supporting both the Christology and the doctrine of grace presented by the Scythian monks. These themes will be examined in more detail in chapters 6 and 7.

Hormisdas kept the Scythian monks in Rome almost fourteen months without giving them a clear answer. At one point, they tried to leave and Hormisdas detained them to keep them there.[71] Apparently, by that time Hormisdas was determined that he would be the one to decide the issue between the Scythian monks and his legates who were returning to Rome.

In the end, however, the Scythian monks left Rome before the legates arrived. The circumstances of their departure are uncertain, but they clearly left under compulsion. Pope Hormisdas claimed that they disturbed the peace, made an uproar around the statues of kings, and were driven out of Rome by the people.[72] John Maxentius, however, relying on the report of his fellow monks who had now returned to Constantinople, claimed that the Scythian monks were forced out of Rome by *defensores* of the church.[73] Vasiliev

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[71]CA 227 (dated Dec. 3, 519).

[72]Horm., *Ep. Pape Hormisdae ad Possessorem* 9.55-60: "...in publicum usque prodiere conventum, ad concussionem quietis circa regum etiam statuas inclamantes, et, nisi fidelis populi constantia restitisset, per diabolicae semina nefanda zizaniae apud illos dissipationem et discordiam commovissent, per quos adiutorio dei de regionibus eorum est pulsa dissensio."

[73]Altaner points out that John Maxentius seems to be relying on a report, not on first-hand experience (*Der griechische Theologe Leontius*, 380). Maxentius narrates the events in the third person, describing what happened to the "monks" in Rome, not what happened to "us."

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understands these to be papal officials.[74] Maxentius asserted that the pope did not want the

Scythian monks publicly to accuse Dioscorus and the other Roman legates of heresy when

they returned to Rome. To prevent this, Maxentius claimed, Hormisdas forced the

Scythian monks to leave. John Maxentius justified the public uproar as a witness to the

Roman people of the injustice they were suffering at the pope's hands.[75]

About the same time, the North African bishop Possessor,[76] who was in

Constantinople, wrote a letter to Pope Hormisdas which Hormisdas received on July 18,

520. In this letter, Possessor alluded to the storm of controversy which had engulfed

Constantinople. In particular, he wanted to ask the pope his opinion of Faustus, the fifth-

century bishop of Riez in Gaul. Apparently, the disputants in Constantinople were citing

Faustus against Augustine on the issue of grace and free will, and they asked Possessor

what he thought of Faustus.[77] Possessor did not clearly reveal his own position in this

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[74]Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 196.

[75]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 35-36.

[76]John Maxentius tells us that Possessor is an *Africanus episcopus* (*Resp. adv. ep.* 49.609-610). Possessor fled from North Africa to Constantinople to escape Vandal persecution. He lived in Constantinople from 517-520. He may be the same Possessor who was the bishop of Zabi in Mauretania (W. Enßlin, "Possessor," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft* 22.1, new edition begun by Georg Wissowa, ed. Konrat Ziegler [Stuttgart: Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953], 859-60). Cf. "Possessor" in *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, vol. 1, *Prosopographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne (303-533)*, ed. André Mandouze (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifiue, 1982), 889.

[77]Both John Maxentius (in *Resp. adv. ep.*) and Pope Hormisdas (in *Ep. Papae Hormisdae ad Possessorem*) frame the discussion in terms of Faustus vs. Augustine.

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letter. He merely asked for Pope Hormisdas's opinion of Faustus, and noted that especially Vitalian and Justinian wanted to know.[78]

Hormisdas immediately perceived that Possessor was talking about the controversy occasioned by Scythian monks. The pope, then, understood that grace was an important part of the Scythian controversy. In his response to Possessor, Hormisdas condemned the Scythian monks for thinking only their way is right.[79] However, he refused to endorse the authority of Faustus. He said that the Roman church's position on grace and free will is to be found in Augustine, especially Augustine's *ad Hilarium et Prosperum* (i.e., *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*).

Hormisdas's response to Possessor in which he condemns the Scythian monks probably reached Constantinople about the same time the Scythian monks returned there.[80] John Maxentius wasted no time responding to Hormisdas's charges. Hormisdas did not mention the Christological issues at stake in the argument in Constantinople, but John Maxentius led with the Christological question. He said that the Scythian monks came to Rome for the one sentence, "Christ is one of the holy and indivisible Trinity." He further claimed that anyone who denies this is a Nestorian and introduces a fourth person into the Trinity.[81]

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[78]CA 230.

[79]Hormisdas *Ep. Papae Hormisdae ad Possessorem* 1.8.

[80]Schwartz, ACO 4.2, x.

[81]*Resp. adv. ep.* 19.

After a discussion of the grave implications of denying that Christ is one of the Trinity and an explanation of their conduct in Rome, John Maxentius went on to address the question of Faustus's authority. He noted that Possessor was a defender of Faustus, and he also mentioned that Possessor opposed the statement that Christ who was crucified in the flesh is one of the Trinity. Maxentius then proceeded to compare various statements of Augustine with statements of Faustus in order to show that Faustus disagrees with Augustine and therefore, by Hormisdas's own statement, should not be viewed as orthodox.

This incident serves to reinforce the impression that Christology and grace were intertwined in the Scythian controversy. Even while the Scythian monks were in Rome, the argument continued in Constantinople. Possessor's letter cited above makes clear that the argument included the question of grace and free will and that this question was weighty enough to command the attention of Vitalian and Justinian. John Maxentius's response to Hormisdas reveals that Possessor opposed not only the Christology of the Scythian monks, but their doctrine of grace as well. Even if Possessor was responsible for first injecting the grace question into the Theopaschite controversy early in 519, the correspondence throughout the controversy shows that the link was long-lived and considered by all sides to be important.

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3.3 Conclusion

The Acacian schism and the Trisagion controversy predisposed both Rome and Constantinople to reject the Scythian monks' Christology. Their claim that Chalcedon is not sufficiently defended against Nestorianism threatened both the authority of Rome and the peace between Rome and Constantinople which was re-established while the Scythian monks were in Constantinople. Their formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," also evoked unfortunate associations with the Monophysite addition to the Trisagion. The Sleepless monks and the papal legates were quick to take advantage of these associations.

The Scythian monks, however, were not trying to destroy the peace of the church, overturn Roman authority, or promote a Monophysite agenda. They were trying to protect the Chalcedonian definition from what they saw as a Nestorian misinterpretation which failed to safeguard the unity of Christ. Along with this Christological concern, they advocated an Augustinian doctrine of grace which held that all people are held captive by sin and can be freed only by God's grace.

This historical investigation has shown that the themes of Christology and grace were both present at the beginning of the controversy, and they appeared together throughout the course of the debate. John Maxentius asserted them both in the initial argument over his twelve *Capitula* which took place before the papal legates arrived in Constantinople March, 519. He continued to assert both in the dispute over Faustus's authority which took place at the end of the controversy as the Scythian monks were

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returning to Constantinople. The following chapters are devoted to spelling out the theological connection which the Scythian monks drew between Christology and grace throughout the controversy.

PART II. THE SCYTHIAN MONKS

CHAPTER 4

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE SCYTHIAN MONKS

The Scythian monks adhere to a Christology which is characterized by a thorough-going insistence on the unity of Christ. They are concerned above all to confess clearly the *homo factus est* of the Nicene Creed (and John 1:14) with all its implications. Although they accept the Chalcedonian definition as an expression of the orthodox faith, they oppose what they see as a Nestorianizing interpretation of the council of Chalcedon, presumably held by their bishop Paternus and certainly defended by their opponents in Constantinople, which, in the view of the Scythian monks, overemphasizes the distinct operative natures and hesitates to ascribe suffering to the Word. Against this misinterpretation, they urge that the *homo factus est* implies that the Word is the subject of all Christ's actions.

The Scythian monks organize their Christology around certain theses or *capitula*. These theses function as shibboleths to unmask those who assent to the Chalcedonian definition but shrink back from the implications of the *homo factus est*. For example, the Scythian monks feel that anyone who cannot say, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," does not actually believe that God became a human being even if such a person

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professes adherence to Chalcedon. The theses are all intended to guarantee a full-blooded understanding of the incarnation.

All of the theses which comprise the Scythian monks' Christology may be found already in the twelve *Capitula* of John Maxentius which were under dispute when the papal legates arrived in Constantinople in March, 519. The other documents in the Scythian monks' corpus explain and expand upon these theses. The other Scythian writings do not usually refer to the twelve *Capitula* explicitly, but the concerns of the other documents cover the same territory as the *Capitula*.

The Scythian monks consistently arrange their theological discourse in such a way that they always treat Christology before discussing grace. Except for this general pattern, the theses appear in a different order in each document. In the following discussion of the Scythian monks' Christology, those topics pertaining to the theotokos will be grouped together, and then the issues that bear on the theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," will be discussed. This structure roughly follows Maxentius's *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, the longest and most developed work in the Scythian monks' corpus. In that work, the first book focuses on the theotokos and related issues, while the second book discusses mainly the theopaschite formula.

This grouping of the theses into two categories also corresponds to the way contemporaries of the Scythian monks perceive the main issues of the controversy. At the end of the controversy, sometime between 533 and 535, Pope John II gives his opinion to Justinian on the controverted issues. In so doing, he addresses three questions. The first two have to do with the theopaschite formula:

1. Whether Christ can be called *unus ex Trinitate*.

2. Whether Christ, God, suffered in the flesh.

The third concerns the title theotokos:

3. Whether Mary is truly and strictly speaking called the mother of God.[1]

His affirmative answer to these three questions signals his agreement with the position of the Scythian monks. The content of the three questions shows that both Pope John II and Justinian understood the title theotokos and the theopaschite formula to be the issues at the heart of the Scythian controversy.

4.1 Theotokos and Related Formulas

4.1.1 Theotokos

All sides of the Theopaschite controversy agree that Mary is theotokos. However, John Maxentius charges his opponents with interpreting the title in a Nestorian way. In the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, Maxentius advocates his own position through the character "Catholicus," and he represents the position of the papal legate Dioscorus through the interlocutor "Nestorianus."[2] Nestorianus affirms the theotokos in the following way: "Although I do not shrink from confessing the blessed virgin to be theotokos, I confess her to be theotokos not because she bore God, but because she bore

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[1]ACO 4.2, 206-210.

[2]Schwartz, ACO 4.2, xiii. The evidence for Schwartz's identification is that the Nestorianus character holds that Christ may be called "one person of the Trinity" but not "one of the Trinity" (*Dial. c. Nest.* 2.21.1005-1007). This is the same position Maxentius attributes to Dioscorus in *Resp. adv. ep.* 7.80-82, 27.350-352.

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a man united to God."[3] By virtue of the uniting (*unitione*), Nestorianus contends, this man deserved (*promeruit*) to have the same dignity and authority as God.[4]

Catholicus responds that this position makes Mary theotokos only in name, dignity, or honor. In order to reject these inadequate interpretations of theotokos, Maxentius insists that Mary is "truly and strictly speaking" (*vere et proprie*) theotokos. Otherwise Christ is not God, but merely a man who merited (*meruit*) being united with God.[5]

One can see that Maxentius suspects a Pelagian agenda behind the notion of unity of dignity or honor. He has Nestorianus say that the man deserved (*promeruit*) the dignity and authority of God by virtue of the uniting (*unitione*). This statement in itself may not be Pelagian since the *unitio* confers the merit. Nestorianus is making a statement about the effect of the incarnation on the human Jesus, not about Jesus deserving the incarnation. In Catholicus's response, however, Maxentius subtly changes the question as if Nestorianus were arguing not that the uniting confers merit but that the uniting itself is deserved. In the response cited above, Catholicus implies that a confession of the theotokos in terms of dignity or honor implies that the man Christ merited (*meruit*) to be

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[3]Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.2.71-73: "Quamvis theotocon beatam virginem confiteri nec ego refugiam, non tamen, quod deum, sed quia hominem genuerit deo unitum, idcirco eam confiteor theotocon."

[4]Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.2.80-82.

[5]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.2.83-87: "Appellatione ergo tantum et dignitate sive honore, non vere et proprie, beata virgo est–secundum vos–theotocos, quae non vere et proprie genuit secundum carnem deum verbum, sed hominem, cui praestitum est ab eo, cui uniri meruit, ut deus dicatur, quod non est."

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united with God, in effect turning the man Christ into a Pelagian saint who can merit union with God without God's help. Thus, the confession that Mary is "truly and strictly speaking theotokos" excludes antecedent merit from the relation between Christ's divine and human natures. The Scythian monks press this Christological title into service for the same kind of simultaneously anti-Nestorian and anti-Pelagian agenda we noted in many fifth-century authors in chapter 2.

Ultimately, the discussion of the theotokos in the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* arrives at the *homo factus est*. Nestorianus asserts, "You are offended, it seems to me, when you hear that Christ is God and man." Catholicus responds, "It does not offend me to hear that Christ is God and man, but it offends you. You do not believe that God was made man."[6] Maxentius is diagnosing a Nestorianizing interpretation of the theotokos as a symptom of the failure to believe the *homo factus est*. That failure is unmasked by Nestorianus's reluctance to ascribe the human experience of birth to the Word despite his purported affirmation of the title theotokos.

One final point should be addressed before moving on to the next formula. Charles Moeller accuses Maxentius of lack of nuance in his handling of the title theotokos. Moeller asserts that Maxentius is unclear in his use of abstract and concrete terms and "never specifies that the virgin is the mother of God 'according to the flesh.'"[7] Moeller is

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[6]Maxent. *Dial c. Nest.* 1.5.181-185: "NEST.: Offenderis, ut mihi videtur, cum Christum deum audis et hominem. CATH.: Non me offendit Christum deum audire et hominem, sed te offendit, qui Christum deum hominem factum non credis."

[7]Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme," 678: "...il ne précise jamais que la Vierge est Mère de Dieu 'selon la chair.'"

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concerned that Maxentius does not distinguish his true assertion that Mary is the mother of God from the false assertion that Mary is the mother of divinity.

This concern has no basis in the writings of Maxentius. Although Maxentius sometimes omits the qualifier "according to the flesh" when he speaks of the "mother of God," he is perfectly clear throughout the discussion in *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* 1.1-5 that she is the mother of God according to his flesh and not according to his divinity. For instance, at one point Maxentius summarizes his position as follows: "One and the same was born both from the Father according to his divinity and from his mother according to his humanity."[8] Furthermore, Maxentius specifies that she is the mother of God, not the mother of deity.[9] Far from being crude and unnuanced, the Scythian monks consistently employ abstract and concrete terms with precision. As we shall see, Fulgentius seems to have learned from them on this score.

4.1.2 Natural uniting

Another formula which safeguards the *homo factus est* is the affirmation of a uniting of natures, or "natural uniting" (*naturalis unitio*), as the Scythian monks put it. One treatise in the Scythian corpus, the *Brevissima adunationis ratio Verbi Dei ad*

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[8]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.5.185-186: "...unum eundemque genitum et ex patre secundum divinitatem, et ex matre secundum humanitatem...." Cf. similar passages: 1.2.85, 1.3.103-105.

[9]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.3.113-116: "Non est deitatis genetrix, sicut tu nos credere autumas, quamvis vere et proprie sit <dei> genetrix, quia non deitatem dei verbi, sed deum verbum ex se hominem factum, sicut superius dictum est, genuit."

propriam carnem, is devoted exclusively to the explication of the natural uniting. This short document begins with a long sentence that builds up to the *homo factus est*:

> The Son of God, the Word of the Father, One of the Trinity, consubstantial with the Father, born of him before the ages, subsisting as God in his own person, later in most recent times . . . uniting flesh to himself by virtue of his own power from the womb of the same virgin without male seed, remaining God in his own nature, was made man (*homo factus est*) . . . .[10]

The string of participles, born . . . subsisting . . . uniting . . . remaining, finally reach their culmination in the main clause and heart of the matter: *homo factus est*.

"For this reason (*Hac de causa*)," Maxentius continues, "it is most rightly called a natural, not a social unifying or uniting in Christ."[11] He then contrasts the natural uniting with a social uniting in order to exclude the position (which he attributes to Nestorius) that the Word was united with the person of some man who was already formed in Mary's womb before the union. The catholic faith, he says, is not that the person of the Word was united to the person of some formed human being, but to the nature of the flesh.[12] Thus, "natural uniting" is intended to stay true to the *homo factus est* by making clear that the Word was united to a human nature, not a human person.

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[10]John Maxentius *Brev. adun. rat.* 1.1-7: "Filius dei, verbum patris, unus ex trinitate, consubstantialis patri, natus de eo ante saecula, subsistens in propria persona deus: in novissimis temporibus mox...propria potentiae virtute ex visceribus eiusdem virginis sine semine viri carnem sibi coadunans, manens in propria natura deus, homo factus est...."

[11]John Maxentius *Brev. adun. rat.* 2.10-11: "Hac de causa naturalis, non socialis adunatio sive unitio in Christo rectissime dicitur...."

[12]John Maxentius *Brev. adun. rat.* 4.21-24: "Catholica autem fides: non personam verbi ad personam alicuius iam formati hominis, sed ad naturam carnis convenisse, credit et praedicat; et ideo non socialem, sed naturalem factam, docet esse unitionem."

"Natural uniting" plays the same role in the *Libellus fidei*. Maxentius introduces the term with a quote from (Ps.)-Athanasius's *De incarntione domini nostri Jesu Christi* (*contra Apollinarium*) which states: "God was made man (*homo factus est*) and is called flesh lest you pass over the name of flesh. Why therefore (*ergo*) is not the natural uniting (*naturalis unitio*) of the Word to his own flesh adequate for you, and the fact that God was made man?"[13] The *ergo* shows that "natural uniting" is a phrase that flows from the *homo factus est*. Maxentius then goes on to reject several inadequate accounts of the union.

Moeller finds Maxentius's use of *unio naturalis* to be ambiguous in diphysite Christology since hypostasis and nature are not synonymous as they can be in Cyril.[14] Moeller suspects Maxentius's insistence on the term *unio naturalis* might suggest there is only one nature in Christ. Moeller fails to notice, however, that the Scythian monks do not actually use the term *unio naturalis*. They almost always refer to an *unitio* or *adunatio naturalis*. When one investigates the difference between *unitio* and *unio*, one finds that *unitio naturalis* is a precise term that confesses two natures without ambiguity.

Pope Gelasius in the fifth century made a point of the difference between *unitio* and *unio*. He preferred *unitio* because it makes clear that the two natures remain after the union. In his *De duabus naturis*, Gelasius stated, "For it cannot be a uniting (*unitio*) unless it consists of two [natures]. Otherwise, if the duality is removed, it cannot be called

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[13]John Maxentius *Libell. fid.* 11.132-134: "deus homo factus est, et dicitur caro, ne praetereatis carnis nomen. Cur ergo non sufficit vobis naturalis unitio verbi ad propriam carnem, et quia deus homo factus est?"

[14]Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme," 678, 707.

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or be a uniting (*unitio*), but a union (*unio*)."[15] John Maxentius argues in a similar way that *adunatio* implies a duality. In the *Responsio contra Acefalos*, Maxentius's only treatise against the Monophysites, he considers their assertion that "after the uniting (*post adunationem*) there is one nature in Christ."[16] He counters that this assertion is nonsense because it violates the definition of *adunatio*: "If 'after the uniting there is one nature in Christ,' then no uniting with the flesh has occurred. . . . But if a uniting with the flesh has occurred, then there is not only a divine nature in Christ, but also the nature of the flesh . . . ."[17] The word *adunatio* denotes that the elements that are united remain after the union. Maxentius's terminology is more precise and clear than Moeller has recognized.

Whether these lexical considerations would have been obvious to all native Latin speakers in the fifth and sixth centuries is unclear. The Monophysites, for example, apparently did not think that *adunatio* implies that two elements remain after the uniting. Despite possible lexical objections, however, these considerations do illuminate the theological intention of the Scythian monks to confess two natures when they consistently prefer *unitio* and *adunatio* to *unio*.

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[15]*PS* 92.4-5: "nam nec dici potest unitio nisi duarum; alioquin dualitate submota non unitio potest vel dici vel esse, sed unio." In his own *De duabus naturis in Christo*, the sixteenth-century Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz notes Gelasius's preference for *unitio*. Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1971), 131. Nisters also notes Gelasius's distinction between the *unitio* and *unio* (*Christologie*, 70, n.104).

[16]Maxent. *Resp. c. Acef.* 1.5-6: "...unam, post adunationem, in Christo naturam...."

[17]Maxent. *Resp. c. Acef.* 2.9-13: "Si 'una, post adunationem, in Christo natura' est, ergo nec adunatio carnis facta est.... Si vero adunatio carnis facta est, iam non tantum divina, sed et carnis natura in Christo est...."

This linguistic convention actually gives the Scythian monks more clarity on this issue than Cyril of Alexandria. Maxentius finds precedent for the term "natural uniting" in Cyril's third anathema, which he cites as affirming an *unitatem naturalem*.[18] By consistently choosing the terms *unitio* and *adunatio* when he puts the matter in his own words, Maxentius specifies that he understands Cyril's term *unitas* to imply that both natures remain. "Natural uniting," then, serves to make two simultaneous points: the Word is united to a human nature, not a human person, and both natures remain after the uniting.

4.1.3 Two Natures *and* One Nature

John Maxentius affirms both the Chalcedonian formulation of one person in two natures and Cyril's formulation of one incarnate nature of God the Logos.[19] Moeller includes in his definition of "Neo-Chalcedonianism" the insistence on both the one nature and the two nature formulations as criteria for orthodoxy.[20] The Scythian monks do not quite fit Moeller's definition, however, since, as Grillmeier points out, they do not demand

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[18]Maxent. (citing Cyril) *Libell. fid.* 12.153-156: "Si quis in uno Christo dividit substantias post unitatem, sola eas societate conectens secundum dignitatem aut auctoritatem aut potentiam, et non magis conventu ad unitatem naturalem, anathema sit." The same argument is made, citing Cyril again in the *Ep. ad episc.* 5.72-76.

[19]Cf. *Cap.* 1; Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 13.166-168.

[20]Moeller, "Le chalcédonisme," 666.

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that both formulas be used. They insist only that when one is used it is not interpreted in such a way as to exclude the other.[21]

This position holds more ecumenical promise than Rome's insistence on Chalcedon alone since it attempts to interpret Chalcedon in accordance with Cyril of Alexandria. Such an interpretation of Chalcedon could perhaps have made Chalcedon palatable to the Cyrillian-minded anti-Chalcedonians in the East. This is precisely what Justinian attempted to do at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. By then, however, as McGuckin points out, it was too late.[22]

This ecumenical affirmation of both formulations, however, leads to a certain amount of flexibility in the definitions of nature and person throughout the writings of the Scythian monks. Maxentius provides the most succinct definition of nature and person in his *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. He states, "Therefore, person is distinguished from nature because person signifies one individual instance (*rem*) of a nature, while nature is understood to indicate the common material from which many persons can subsist."[23] By appealing to individuality as the distinguishing characteristic between nature and person,

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[21]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:330.

[22]McGuckin, "Theopaschite Confession," 245.

[23]*Dial. c. Nest.* 1.14.523-526: "Discernitur ergo a natura persona, quia persona unam rem individuam naturae significat; natura vero communem cognoscitur declarare materiam, ex qua plurimae possent personae subsistere." Cf. Boethius's definition of person in *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* 85: "the individual substance of a rational nature (*naturae rationabilis individua substantia*)."

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John Maxentius is operating within the Cappadocian definition of hypostasis which is distinguished from *ousia* by *idiomata*.[24]

The failure to distinguish nature and person lies at the root of both the Nestorian and the Monophysite heresies, according to John Maxentius. He charges that both heresies operate with the assumption that there cannot be a nature without a person.[25] The Nestorians rightly hold that there are two natures and erroneously conclude from this that there are two persons. The Monophysites rightly see that there is one person, but wrongly conclude that there is one nature. Maxentius's own definitions of nature and person, however, are not always consistent.

Against the Monophysites, Maxentius shows some flexibility in his definition of nature. That is because he is trying to hold Cyril's phrase "one incarnate nature of the word" together with Chalcedon's "two nature" formulation. Grillmeier asserts that the Scythian monks "do not get involved in the synonymous usage of *hypostasis* and *physis* present in Cyril . . . ."[26] Indeed, it is true that they never explicitly claim that nature and person are synonyms. However, the examples John Maxentius uses when he writes against the Monophysites suggest that he is willing to view "nature" in two senses: one concrete (synonymous with hypostasis) and one abstract. For example, the Monophysites argue that one cannot apply number to Christ after the *adunatio*. In his response to this

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[24]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:335.

[25]Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.14.482-483: "[Nestoriani] nullatenus credentes naturam esse posse sine per<sona>." Maxent. *Resp. c. Acef.* 1.7-8: "'quia' inquiunt [Acefali], 'non esse naturam sine persona.'"

[26]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:328.

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objection, John simply counters that there are some unities which can be numbered mentally like splendor and color, heat and sun.[27] Instead of tying the unity to person, this response attempts to show that a given nature can be one and two at the same time.

Maxentius makes a similar move in response to the Monophysite analogy of one human nature being composed of body and soul. He turns the argument against them by pointing out that in the case of the one human nature, the duality of body and soul remain. Human nature, he argues, subsists "from, or rather in two diverse natures."[28] Here again, he asserts that a nature can be one and two at the same time. Furthermore, by speaking of one nature subsisting "in two diverse natures," he links Cyril's "one nature" with Chalcedon's "one hypostasis" since in the Chalcedonian definition, it is the one hypostasis which subsists "in two natures." By recognizing different senses of "nature," John Maxentius seeks to harmonize Cyril and Chalcedon.

When he is writing against the Nestorians, however, it is the term "person" which admits of multiple definitions. We have already seen that Maxentius understands individuality to be the characteristic which distinguishes person from nature. At one point in the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, however, the Nestorian character pushes John Maxentius beyond this account of person. Nestorianus asks Catholicus why he believes there is one subsistence if God and man both subsist.[29] This argument challenges the

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[27]Maxentius *C. Acef.* 8.72-9.96.

[28]Maxent. *Resp. c. Nest.* 11.117-118: "ex duabus seu potius in duabus diversisque naturis...subsistere...."

[29]In the writings of the Scythian monks, *subsistentia* translates ὑπόστασις.

adequacy of relying on individuality as the factor which distinguishes person from nature.

Christ's human nature would seem to be individualized. How, then, is it not a person? In

his answer, Catholicus is forced to deepen his concept of person:

> Because I believe that God the Word is united not to a man already
> remaining in his own subsistence, or at least to flesh that is formed or
> animated through which a person of any man is understood, but the
> subsistence or person of God the Word took up human nature which never
> subsists as ordinary [human nature] apart from God the Word, but through
> [God the Word] himself, the nature arose and was taken up by him and
> made properly his own. And it does not remain in its own [subsistence],
> but in that [subsistence] by which it was taken up, that is, the subsistence
> or person of God the Word. And therefore, there are not two subsistences,
> but one subsistence or person of two natures, namely of the Word and of
> flesh.[30]

Here, the person of the Word is different from the human nature because the Word

remains in its own subsistence while the human nature does not. This notion of

"remaining in its own subsistence" as a distinguishing factor between nature and person is

an advance beyond relying on individuality as the distinguishing characteristic since it

allows one to account for the fact that Christ's human nature is full and individualized

without becoming a separate human person.[31] As Grillmeier notes, however, John

Maxentius does not follow through and consistently apply this definition. Just a few

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[30]*Dial. c. Nest.* 1.11.445-455: "Quia non homini, iam in propria manenti subsistentia, deum verbum credo unitum, aut saltem carni formatae vel animatae, per quam cuiuslibet hominis intellegitur esse persona: sed subsistentiam sive personam dei verbi, naturam suscepisse humanam, quae numquam velut communis praeter deum verbum subsistit, sed, per ipsum orta et ab ipso suscepta, ipsius proprie facta natura est, manetque non in sua, sed in ea, a qua suscepta est, hoc est dei verbi sub<si>stentia sive persona; et ideo non sunt duae subsistentiae: sed duarum naturarum—verbi videlicet et carnis—una subsistentia sive persona est."

[31]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:335.

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paragraphs later, he offers the definition of person, mentioned above, that relies on individuality.[32]

This inconsistency does not stem from weak-mindedness. Quite the contrary, Maxentius is one of the first Latin-speaking theologians to articulate a doctrine of "insubsistence."[33] The fact that he does not carry it through consistently in his writings is not surprising since he is wrestling with a problem for which he can find little help in the tradition.

What is at stake for John Maxentius in the definition of nature and person? Shortly after introducing his definitions of the terms in the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, he brings the discussion around to the center of his Christology: the *homo factus est*. He has the Nestorian character object to Catholicus's position on the grounds that it would entail that God became man and experienced a second birth. This position is loathsome to Nestorianus because, absent a distinction between nature and person, *homo factus est* must mean that the Word stopped being God and was changed into a human being.[34] Thus, the distinction between nature and person is crucial to the confession of the *homo factus est*.

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[32]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:335.

[33]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:334.

[34]Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.15.593-618.

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4.1.4 Formulas in Which the Word is the One Subject in Christ

Although no single thesis in John Maxentius's works states that the Word is the one subject in Christ, that statement is a fair summary of the main point of a number of Maxentius's theses. For example, Maxentius says that the Word experienced two nativities, one from the Father according to his divinity and one from Mary according to his humanity.[35] Another of his theses is that the boy whom Mary bore is "by nature God."[36] The claim that the boy is God by nature, not by grace, forces one to understand "boy" to refer to the Word. These two formulas are essentially variations of the theotokos. In each case, the human experience of birth is attributed to God the Word.

Because John Maxentius views the Word as the only acting subject in Christ, he attributes both divine and human characteristics to the Word. As the *Professio brevissima* makes clear, this kind of attribution is grounded on the *homo factus est*. The thrust of this short treatise may be summarized as follows: God was made man. Therefore (*Quamobrem*), God is the subject of Christ's human activities according to his humanity, and the Son of Man is the subject of Christ's divine activities according to his divinity.[37] This distinction between God and the Son of Man does not contradict Maxentius's position that the Word is the subject of all of Christ's actions because Maxentius makes

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[35]*Cap.* 8, *Libell. fid.* 24.304-307, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.5.185-186, *Ep. ad episc.* 11.174-177.

[36]*Cap.* 5, *Libell. fid.* 23.292-294, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.6.267-268, *Ep. ad episc.* 9.145-152.

[37]*Profess. brev.* 3-5.

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clear in the same treatise that "Son of Man" refers to the Word: "Just as the Word of God

is one of the Trinity even in the beginning, so also the same is perfect and true man from

us."[38] The point of all this is to prevent the Nestorianizing move of dividing up Christ's

miracles and suffering, assigning the miracles to God and the suffering to the man Jesus.

Instead, Maxentius works the predication in the opposite direction: God is the subject of

the human activities; the Son of Man is the subject of the divine activities.

The Scythian monks oppose the division of miracles and suffering throughout their

corpus.[39] This position is rather delicate, however, in view of Leo's Tome because Leo

divides the miracles and the sufferings between the Word and the flesh. Leo states, "For

each nature performs what is proper to itself in communion with the other; the Word, that

is, performing what is proper to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what is proper to the

flesh. The one of these is brilliant with miracles, the other succumbs to injuries."[40] Leo

views this division as a consequence of the distinction between natures, but the above

statement seems to make each nature into an acting subject.

Approximately forty years before the Scythian monks presented their *Libellus fidei*

in Constantinople, the Henotikon attempted to overcome this problem. Though it did not

explicitly reject Leo on this point, the Henotikon struck out in another direction by stating,

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[38]*Profess. brev.* 6.47-48: "...sicut unus de trinitate est et in principio verbum deus est, ita etiam idem ipse ex nobis est homo perfectus et verus."

[39]Cf. *Libell. fid.* 26.329-331, *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.11.503-504, *Ep. ad episc.* 11.177-180.

[40]Tome of Leo 4: "Agit enim utraque forma cum alterius communione quod proprium est; Verbo scilicet operante quod Verbi est, et carne exsequente quod carnis est. Unum horum coruscat miraculis, aliud succumbit iniuriis." Translated by Bindly.

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"We say that both the miracles and the passions which he endured willingly in the flesh belong to one [subject]."[41] Perhaps this statement was in fact meant to correct Leo without mentioning him by name.[42] For those who were inclined to see the Henotikon as a rejection of Chalcedon–both strict Chalcedonians and Monophysites–this statement could easily be heard as rejecting Leo.

John Maxentius, aware of this possibility, approaches the problem with more ecumenical sensitivity than did the Henotikon. Instead of ignoring Leo, he finds a citation in one of Leo's letters in which Leo ascribes passibility and death to the immortal God. Maxentius states,

> And therefore the miracles and sufferings are rightly believed to belong to one and the same, God the Word incarnate and made man, because God is not one and man another, but the same is God and man according to that statement of the blessed Pope Leo who says, "The impassible God did not spurn becoming a passible man, and the immortal [did not spurn] being subject to the laws of death."[43]

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[41]Text in Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.14.113.9-11: "' Ἑνὸς γὰρ εἶναί φαμεν τά τε θαύματα καὶ τὰ πάθη ἅπερ ἑκουσίως ὑπέμεινι σαρκί." The Henotikon also endorses Cyril's twelve anathemas, and Anathema 4 says much the same thing.

[42]Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 29.

[43]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 26.329-334: "Et ideo recte unius eiusdemque, dei verbi incarnati et hominis facti, creduntur esse mirabilia et passiones: quia non est alter deus, alter homo, sed idem deus, idem homo–secundem illam beati papae Leonis sententiam, dicentis quia: *Impassibilis deus non est dedignatus fieri homo passibilis, et immortalis mortis legibus subiacere*" (italics original). The citation is from Leo's *Ep.* 28.4.

In this passage, John Maxentius appeals to Leo himself in order to interpret a problematic passage in the Tome and to bring Leo more into line with Cyril.[44] In so doing, he avoids the impression that he is rejecting Leo.

If God was made man, then both divine and human characteristics may be ascribed to the one subject who is the Word, according to the Scythian monks. Their assertion that the Word experienced two nativities, that the boy whom Mary bore is by nature God, and their handling of predication in the *Professio brevissima* all serve to underscore this point.

4.1.5 God Was Made Christ, Christ Was Not Made God

The Scythian monks say that God was made Christ, Christ was not made God.[45] The Christological issue which this statement addresses is whether the human experience of being anointed may be ascribed to the Word. In the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, Nestorianus wants to avoid saying that God was anointed. Therefore, he asserts that Christ was made God, God was not made Christ. He supports this contention by appealing to Acts 4:27, "For Herod and Pontius Pilate truly came together in that city against your holy child (*puerum*) Jesus whom you anointed."[46] The point he wants from this passage is that Jesus is called "child" (*puer*), not God.

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[44]He links the Leo quotation with Cyril's 12th anathema.

[45]*Cap.* 7, *Libell. fid.* 25.319-320, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.300-301, Ep. *ad episc.* 11.168-169.

[46]Acts 4:27, cited by Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.303-305: "Convenerunt enim vere in civitate ista adversum sanctum puerum tuum Iesum, quem unxisti, Herodes et pontius Pilatus."

Catholicus responds by piling up passages in which God takes lowly human experiences upon himself: 2 Cor. 8:9 ("Though he was rich, he became poor that he might make us rich"), Phil. 2:7 ("Though he was in the form of God, he took on the form of a slave"), and John 1:14 ("The Word became flesh").[47] He argues that Nestorianus's position reverses these passages by turning the incarnation into an exaltation of a man rather than the descent of God to us.

Perhaps the most important passage Catholicus cites against Nestorianus's position is Ps. 45:8, "Your throne, O God, is forever; a rod of equity is the rod of your kingdom. You loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions."[48] This is, in fact, a passage which could work for the opposing position. For example, the Arians emphasized the "therefore" and argued that Christ was anointed and made God as a reward for loving righteousness and hating wickedness,[49] a position similar to that which Maxentius ascribes to his opponents. However, Maxentius finds two points in this passage which overthrow such an

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[47]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.311-316.

[48]Ps. 44(45):8, cited by Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.323-326: "Sedes tua, deus, in saeculum saeculi; virga aequitatis virga regni tui. Dilexisti iustitiam et odisti iniquitatem, propterea unxit te deus, deus tuus, oleo laetitiae prae participibus tuis."

[49]Cf. Athanasius *Orat.* 1.12.49, Hilary of Poitiers *De Trin.* 11.19.

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interpretation. First, the one who is anointed is called "God."[50] Second, God could only be anointed if he were first made man.[51]

Thus, Maxentius shares his opponents' sense that there is something improper about claiming that God was anointed. God overcomes this difficulty, however, in the incarnation. If God is a human being, he can be anointed. Therefore, the *homo factus est* serves as the explanation of how it can be that God undergoes lowly human experiences like birth, anointing, suffering, and death.

Of all of the Scythian monks' Christological slogans, the thesis that God became Christ, Christ did not become God has the most direct bearing on the doctrine of grace.[52] In both the *Libellus fidei* and the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the discussion of this thesis immediately precedes the transition to the doctrine of grace. By denying that Christ became God, John Maxentius is eliminating the notion of antecedent merit from the incarnation since, according to Maxentius, his opponents taught that the exaltation from Christ to God took place by promotion (*per provectum*) as a reward for good works.[53]

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[50]Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.326-327: Matrixing Ps. 45 with Acts 4:27, Maxentius states, "Hinc evidenter apparet, non alium esse unctum *puerum Iesum*, nisi deum..." (italics original).

[51]Maxentius draws this conclusion in a discussion of the same passage in *Libell. fid.* 25.328-329: "Quomodo autem deus ungi potuit aut habere consortes, nisi fieret homo?"

[52]This thesis will be discussed further in chapter 5.

[53]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 25.321-322: "...sicut dicunt sectatores Theodori Mopsuesteni magistri Nestorii, qui per profectum Christum deum factum credunt...." Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 11.169-171: "...sicut dicunt haeretici, qui per provectum non per naturam Christum deum audent asserere."

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When Maxentius rejects this Christological position, he is simultaneously rejecting the idea that a human being can merit union with God without God's help.

4.2 Theopaschite Formulas

4.2.1 One of the Trinity Was Crucified in the Flesh

The most important Christological formula of the Scythian monks is, "One of Trinity was crucified in the flesh." John Maxentius says that the Scythian monks went to Rome for one purpose: to show that Christ is one of the Trinity.[54] In what follows, each phrase of the formula will be discussed in turn.

4.2.1.1 One of the Trinity

The Scythian monks insist that Christ is "one of the Trinity" in order to clarify what they see as ambiguity in their opponents' Christology. The papal legate Dioscorus accepts the phrase "one person of the Trinity" as a designation for Christ, but he rejects "one of the Trinity."[55] Maxentius suspects him of concealing a Nestorianizing agenda behind this distinction. In the *Libellus fidei*, Maxentius charges that "certain people impiously believe that 'person' is assigned by the synod to the man, while 'subsistence' is

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[54]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 19.244-246.

[55]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 26.349-352: "...haeretici, ex quibus unus Dioscorus, unam personam Christum praedicantes ex trinitate, unum ex trinitate Christum confiteri nullatenus acquiescant."

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assigned to God the Word."[56] He apparently thinks that Dioscorus defines *persona* in the Nestorian sense of "mask" or "role." Thus, Christ is "one person of the Trinity" in the sense that Christ, a mere man, has the appearance of the Word because the Word indwells him.[57]

Maxentius cannot accept Dioscorus's formulation, "one person of the Trinity," because he thinks it affirms only an accidental union. If left to his own devices, Maxentius would identify *persona* and *subsistentia*, as does Chalcedon, and he would understand *persona* to indicate the metaphysical center of Christ, not just his external appearance.[58] In order to prevent the equivocation of his opponents, however, John Maxentius opposes the formula "one person of the Trinity" and instead insists that Christ should be called "one of three subsistences (=*hypostaseis*) of the one deity," "one subsistence of the entire Trinity," or simply "one of the Trinity."[59]

Grillmeier claims, without explanation, that Maxentius's characterization of Dioscorus's position "must be regarded as pure polemic."[60] It is difficult to tell from

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[56]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 14.177-179: "...impie quidam, personam quidem homini, subsistentiam vero deo verbo credunt a synodo deputatam...."

[57]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:325. The understanding of *persona* as "mask" also explains Maxentius's charge that Dioscorus believes that Christ "has" (*habeat*) one person of the Trinity, but Christ is not "one of the Trinity" (*Resp. adv. ep.* 1.26.359-365).

[58]Cf. Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 14.182-184: "nos autem, unum et idem sententies subsistentiam esse quod et personam, non dicimus trinitatem in Christo inhabitare...."

[59]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 14.187-188: "unum de tribus subsistentiis unius deitatis;" 20.251: "unam totius trinitatis subsistentiam;" 20.254: "unum ex trinitate."

[60]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:325.

Dioscorus's own writings whether Maxentius's charges have any basis. It does seems unlikely, however, that a papal legate, known for his unwavering insistence on Chalcedon alone, would depart from Chalcedon's interchangeable use of *persona* and *subsistentia*. Why, then, would Maxentius accuse Dioscorus of making a distinction between the two terms which, in fact, he did not make?

If we follow Grillmeier's assessment that Maxentius's portrayal of Dioscorus's position is not accurate, then it seems likely that Maxentius is attempting to reduce Dioscorus's position to absurdity. To this end, he draws conclusions from Dioscorus's arguments with which Dioscorus would probably disagree but which Maxentius feels are consistent with Dioscorus's position.

One example of this procedure occurs when Maxentius puts Dioscorus's position into the mouth of Nestorianus who asserts, on the basis of Col. 2:9 ("in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily") that the Trinity indwells Christ. Catholicus thinks that "fullness of the deity" refers to the Father, not to the entire Trinity. If the Trinity indwells Christ, Catholicus contends, then there is a quaternity, Christ plus the Trinity, not a Trinity.[61] This conclusion is meant to be an absurd consequence of Nestorianus's position, and Maxentius never portrays Nestorianus as agreeing with it.

In opposition to Nestorianus's position, which Maxentius feels leads to a quaternity even if Nestorianus will not admit it, Catholicus asserts that Christ is "one of the very Trinity,"[62] i.e., not a fourth person besides the Trinity. Nestorianus replies with a

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[61]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.16.

[62]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.18.846-847: "unus ex ipsa sit trinitate."

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numerical objection of his own: applying number to the Trinity divides the Trinity.[63]

Catholicus counters that number does not necessarily imply division. Since "one" is the

origin and *principium* of numbers, it is not really a number and is not divisible.

Furthermore, there are examples in nature of unities which are numbered mentally but are

not divisible. He adduces the splendor of the sun and its heat as one such unity.[64]

At the end of the discussion about number and the Trinity, Nestorianus asserts that

it would be better to say that Christ is "one person of the Trinity" than "one of the

Trinity." At this point Maxentius moves the discussion from his opponent's concerns to

his own. He shifts the argument from the question of division in the Trinity to the

question of whether God was crucified. Catholicus asserts that Nestorianus's Christology

renders "one person of the Trinity" ambiguous: "It is not hidden from catholics that by

certain people Christ is called one person in such a way that the one who was crucified for

us in the flesh is nevertheless not one person of the Trinity."[65]

Nestorianus's refusal to ascribe suffering to God, a major theme throughout the

second book of the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*, is ultimately the attitude which

Catholicus is trying to reduce to absurdity. He does so by the following logic: If

Nestorianus is going to say that "one person of the Trinity" was crucified in the flesh and

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[63]Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.19.

[64]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.19. He also uses the example of splendor and heat to show how the two natures in Christ are indivisible both in this section and in *Contra Acefalos*.

[65]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.21.1005-1007: "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."

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yet deny that the Word was crucified in the flesh, then "person" must refer to something other than the Word. Therefore, when Maxentius accuses Dioscorus of assigning "person" to the man and "subsistence" to the Word, he probably does not intend this portrayal to be a verbatim report of Dioscorus's own words. He means instead to draw the absurd conclusion which is the logical consequence of Dioscorus's rejection of theopaschite language. This absurdity functions the same way in Maxentius's argumentation as his charge that Dioscorus teaches a quaternity instead of a Trinity: it is not a position Dioscorus claims for himself, but it is implicit in Dioscorus's attempt to ascribe the suffering of Christ to a human subject other than the Word.

One must understand the nature of this polemical move in order to evaluate correctly Maxentius's insistence on "one of the Trinity" instead of "one person of the Trinity." Some scholars have seen in Fulgentius's affirmation of "one person of the Trinity" in *Epistula 17* a correction of Scythian monks' formula.[66] Justinian and Pope John II also employ the phrase, "one person of the Trinity." Although this formulation is more cautious than "one of the Trinity,"[67] it should not be seen as a contradiction or correction of the Scythian monks. As we have seen above, John Maxentius is not exclusively tied to the formula "one of the Trinity." He explicitly endorses the phrase "one subsistence of the Trinity." If it were clear that a given theologian were using person and subsistence interchangeably, he would doubtless have no problem with "one person of the

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[66]Schwartz, ACO 4.2, xi.; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:332.

[67]For a discussion of how "one person of the Trinity" is more cautious than "one of the Trinity," see below, pp. 196-7.

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Trinity."[68] Indeed, John Maxentius asserts that the catholic faith teaches that "one person of the Trinity" and "one of the Trinity" are synonymous.[69] The only reason he opposes Dioscorus's formulation, "one person of the Trinity," is that he suspects Dioscorus of equivocating, knowingly or unknowingly, on the definition of "person" in order to avoid saying that the Word was crucified.

4.2.1.2 Was Crucified

So far, we have seen that Maxentius employed the phrase "one of the Trinity" as a way to refer unambiguously to the Word. Once that point is made, however, the formula "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh" raises the further question of what it means to predicate crucifixion of the Word. Such a predication opens the Scythian monks to the charge of Monophysitism.

In order to defend himself against this charge, Maxentius turns to patristic authorities. The chief authority which he cites is Proclus, the fifth-century bishop of Constantinople. In his *Libellus fidei*, John Maxentius cites extensively from Proclus's *Tomus ad Armenios*, though the passages he cites are no longer extant apart from Maxentius's *Libellus fidei*. From Proclus, Maxentius wants to show that his formula is no novelty.[70]

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[68]Grillmeier recognizes this point also. Cf. *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.2:332-3.

[69]Cf. Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 27.

[70]Maxent. (quoting Proclus) *Libell. fid.* 17.217: "Unus ex trinitate, qui crucifixus est;" 17.238-240: "confitemur quia et unus est de trinitate, qui passus est, et trinitatis

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Maxentius chooses Proclus in order to tailor his argument for the people in

Constantinople where he is presenting his *Libellus fidei*. The Scythian monks do not cite

Proclus in their letter to the North Africans. Proclus has special force in Constantinople

for two reasons. First, as John Maxentius is careful to point out, Proclus was the bishop

of Constantinople (*huius urbis episcopus*) where the argument is taking place.[71] Second,

Proclus is the bishop under whom, according to legend, a boy in Constantinople received

the Trisagion by revelation. Thus, if he can be shown to support the Scythian monks, they

would be exonerated from the suspicion of a connection with Peter Fuller and the

Trisagion controversy which occurred in Constantinople a few years earlier. After all, if

anyone knows what the Trisagion means, Proclus does. In fact, the citation from Proclus

which John Maxentius adduces indirectly evokes the Trisagion. Proclus argues that the

one crucified is *unus ex Trinitate* because otherwise the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8) would

be a fourth person of the Trinity who would be "external to that glory by which the

seraphim glorify."[72] The reference to the seraphim glorifying God evokes the throne-room

scene in Is. 6 which is the basis for the Trisagion. By citing this text, Maxentius is

suggesting that far from undermining the Trisagion, the theopaschite formula is the only

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natura impassibilis mansit;" 17.245, "unus ergo de trinitate est crucifixus." M. Richard doubts that Proclus actually used the formula ("Proclus de Constantinople et le théopaschisme." *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 38 [1942]: 331).

[71]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 17.207-208.

[72]Maxent. (quoting Proclus) *Libell. fid.* 17.220-221: "...et ab illa glorificatione, qua seraphim glorificant, exsistit extraneus...."

way to preserve it. The opponents are the ones who undermine the Trisagion by excluding the crucified one from it.

Such an exclusion of the one crucified from the Trinity has disastrous soteriological implications for Proclus. He asks, "How did a fourth save those whom he did not create? Or how did one who does not have the power to forgive sins if he is not (according to you) God destroy the handwriting of sins on the cross?"[73] Proclus and Maxentius are committed to the idea that the salvation achieved on the cross is something only God can do. Therefore, if the one who died on the cross is not God, then the cross does not save. According to Proclus, the cross is the reason for the incarnation.[74] Even in Proclus, the soteriological issue, and thus a concern for grace, is closely intertwined with the Christological question.

John Maxentius develops these ideas further in the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. Nestorianus asks how life can be crucified and die. Catholicus responds, "If he who is life was not crucified and did not die, the dead in no way ought to hope for life."[75] Implicit in this statement is the understanding that salvation comes to human beings by way of a sort of communication of attributes. God takes our death and gives us his life. Thus, if God is not the one who experiences death, the exchange does not take place and there is no

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[73]Maxent. (quoting Proclus) *Libell. fid.* 17.223-225: "...quomodo quartus, quos non plasmavit, salvavit; aut chirographum peccatorum destruxit in cruce, qui non habet potestatem peccata dimittere si non est, secundum te, deus?"

[74]Maxent. (quoting Proclus) *Libell. fid.* 19.242-243: "...causa incarnationis est crux...."

[75]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.6.314-315: "Si is, qui vita est, non est crucifixus et mortuus, sperare vitam mortui nullatenus debent."

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salvation. Considerations such as these seem to be driving the Scythian support for the theopaschite formula. They are also reflected in one of the Scripture passages cited by Maxentius, 2 Cor. 8:9, "Though he was rich, he became poor to make us rich."[76]

The *homo factus est* is the key to the communication. When Nestorianus asks how it is that life can hang on a tree, Catholicus responds, "In that way in which God, who is true life, is believed to have become man."[77] Thus, the *homo factus est* serves as an interpretive key for John Maxentius. It explains how God can experience suffering and death which are contrary to his divine nature. That is why John Maxentius takes the position that those who cannot confess "one of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh" really do not believe that God became a human being.

Another way Maxentius speaks of the Word experiencing suffering, following Cyril, is by saying that the Word "made the sufferings his own." However, he is cautious of a possible Nestorianizing misunderstanding of this statement. In the *Dialogus*, Nestorianus asserts that God "made the passions proper to his own body." For him, this means that Christ's body "is called the body of God in the same way as a garment which belongs to some human being because he is clothed. When it is cut by someone, the injury is ascribed to the one who is clothed in it."[78]

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[76]Cited in *Libell. fid.* 25.323-324, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.312-313.

[77]Maxent. (Catholicus), *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.7.339-340: "Illo modo, quo deus, qui est vera vita, factus homo creditur."

[78]Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.13.604-606: "...dei ita dicitur corpus, ut alicuius hominis proprium, quod indutus est, vestimentum, quod, cum ab aliquo scissum fuerit, iniuria ad eum refertur, qui [in] ipso indutus est."

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Catholicus responds that this is an inadequate account of what it means for God to "make the sufferings his own" because, according to Nestorianus's view, God makes them his own "according to relation, not according to true and intimate property."[79] "Furthermore, what relevance," he continues, "can clothing have to the one who is clothed in it when it does not at all pertain to his substance? For, when we define what a human being is, we do not also include his clothing because it is certainly clear that it does not belong to his substance."[80]

Whether Maxentius speaks of one of the Trinity being crucified or making the flesh his own, the point of this language is to make the Word the subject of Christ's human experiences. He does not offer much explanation beyond this of what it means for the Word to be crucified. Maxentius is not concerned, for example, with giving a psychological description of the Word's experience of suffering. His concern is soteriological. Because salvation is accomplished by God taking human death upon himself and giving humanity life in return, the Christological point that Maxentius needs to make is simply that God himself underwent the human experience from which he delivered humanity.

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[79]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.13.609-610: "...secundum relationem, non secundum veram et intimam proprietatem...."

[80]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.13.613-617: "quam autem proprietatem potest habere vestimentum ad eum, qui ipso indutus est, cum nihil pertineat ad eius substantiam? Neque enim, cum definimus quid sit homo, etiam vestimentum eius complectimur, quod utique non eiusdem constat esse substantiae."

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4.2.1.3 In the Flesh

This theopaschite language does not imply, however, that the Scythian monks think that the divine substance suffered. John Maxentius repeatedly insists that he does not hold that the divine nature is passible. He does this by appending qualifiers such as *carne*, *secundum carnem*, etc., to assertions of divine suffering. He takes care, however, to prevent a Nestorian interpretation of these qualifications.

Nestorianus wants to say that "God did not suffer, but the flesh of God suffered."[81] Catholicus, on the other hand, asserts that "God suffered in the flesh." What then does this qualification mean, and how is it different than Nestorianus's statement that the flesh of God suffered? For Catholicus, "in the flesh" is intended to specify how God, who is impassible, can nevertheless suffer. In other words, "in the flesh" does not designate the true acting subject, but rather functions adverbially explaining how the Word, who remains the true acting subject, suffers.

One can see this adverbial function of the qualifier in a discussion of the theotokos in book 1 of the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos*. Catholicus states, "I confess that one and the same Christ is born from his father and mother." After this statement, the following exchange ensues:

> Nest.: Is he from his mother in one way (*modo*) and from his father in another, or is he from his father and mother in one and the same way (*modo*)?
> Cath.: No doubt he is from his father in one way (*modo*) and from his mother in another.

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[81]Maxent. (Nestorianus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.12.568-569: "...passus autem deus non est, sed caro dei."

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Nest.: According to which way (*secundum quem modum*) do you assert that he was born from his father or his mother?

Cath.: According to his divinity (*secundum divinitatem*), certainly, from his father, and the same one according to his humanity (*secundum humanitatem*) from his mother.[82]

This exchange makes clear that John Maxentius understands phrases such as "according to his humanity" to designate not an acting subject, but a way (*modus*). The phrase "according to his humanity" is adverbial. It specifies not *what* was truly born of Mary, but *how* God was born of Mary. He was born of Mary in a human way. The adverbial understanding of this phrase is the key to safeguarding it against the Nestorian tactic of substituting man for God.

It functions the same way in the theopaschite formula as well. One way to synthesize the issues is to imagine the theopaschite formula as a three-line conversation with the middle line unexpressed. The Scythian monks never explicitly present the formula this way, but it reflects the underlying reasoning. The claim that "One of the Trinity was crucified" is the first line of the conversation. It prompts a clarifying question. This question is the second line of the conversation. The key to the interpretation of the formula is which clarifying question one chooses. For a Nestorianizing position, the commitment to impassibility rules out the possibility "one of the Trinity" could truly be the acting subject. Therefore, the clarifying question (not expressed in the theopaschite formula) is, "What is the true acting subject?" "In the flesh," then, functions as the third

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[82]Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.5.152-158: "NEST.: Alio modo ex matre, alio ex patre? an uno eodemque modo ex patre et ex matre? CATH.: Alio, procul dubio, ex patre, alio ex matre. NEST.: Secundum quem modum ex patre, sive ex matre, eum asseris natum? CATH.: Secundum divinitatem quidem ex patre, eundem secundum humanitatem ex matre."

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line of the conversation and the answer to this question. Thus, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh" could be accepted if it is understood as a circumlocution for, "only the flesh of God was crucified."[83]

The position of Catholicus, on the other hand, imagines a different clarifying question. Catholicus too has a commitment to divine impassibility. He thinks that asserting the passibility of the divine nature would subject God to necessity, and it would leave him open to the arguments of the Arians that if the Word suffered, the Word cannot be God. But this commitment does not lead him to rule out the possibility that "one of the Trinity" is the true acting subject. Instead, it leads him to ask how one of the Trinity can undergo crucifixion. "In the flesh," then, functions adverbially answering the question "how?" Catholicus's position is that God cannot suffer as God, but the incarnation makes it possible for the Word to suffer nevertheless. Perhaps *carne* should be translated as an ablative of means: "One of the Trinity was crucified by means of the flesh." Thus, the implicit conversation which the theopaschite formula entails for each position runs as follows:

Nestorianus	Catholicus
1. One of the Trinity was crucified.	1. One of the Trinity was crucified.
[2. What is the true acting subject?]	[2. How was one of the Trinity crucified?]
3. In the flesh (= flesh is the subject).	3. In the flesh (= flesh is the means).

In summary, the theopaschite formula accomplishes three goals. First, "one of the Trinity" serves as a way to refer unambiguously to the Word so that the Word and not the flesh alone is the subject of the crucifixion. Second, "was crucified" ascribes human

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[83]Cf. *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.14.

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suffering and death to the Word which gives that death the saving power that drives the

Scythian monks' soteriology. Finally, "in the flesh" appeals to the incarnation to explain

how the impassible God can experience crucifixion: God can suffer and die because he

became man. Christ's human nature, then, does not operate independently from the

Word. It is not for that reason unimportant, however. In fact, it serves to make the

crucifixion possible.

4.2.2 Composite

Another term which the Scythian monks employ in conjunction with their

theopaschite language is that Christ is *compositus*. As in the case of the phrase "one of

the Trinity," the Scythian monk are eager to show that this term has a solid foundation in

the fathers. In their letter to the North African bishops, they list authorities for the term

"composite": Malchion, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus.[84]

This term provides a way for the Scythian monks to ascribe suffering to God

without denying the impassibility of the divine nature. In the *Dialogus*, everyone agrees

that whatever is composite is passible, and whatever is simple is impassible.[85] Nestorianus

wants to say that the assumed man is composite, but the Word remains incomposite.

Catholicus critiques this position by pointing out that if Christ (by which he means the

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[84]*Ep. ad episc.* 7.

[85]Maxent. *Dialogus c. Nest.* 2.2

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Word) is not composite, then he did not suffer for our salvation.[86] Nevertheless, the divine nature of the Word is not composite, according to John Maxentius.[87]

For Nestorianus, the notion that the Word is composite implies that he is in some sense imperfect. Catholicus counters this argument by linking imperfection to being subject to necessity. The Word can be composite and still perfect, he argues, because the Word does not need the body as if the Word were subject to some sort of necessity, but rather the Word freely takes on composition in order to perfect the body. The notion of necessity thus plays a role in preserving impassibility. As long as suffering, or in this case simply being a "part," is voluntary and not a result of necessity, it poses no threat to impassibility.

Overall, the term "composite" is for John Maxentius a way of describing the natural union that closely links it to the suffering of Christ. It guarantees the *homo factus est* by describing the Word in such a way that he can be the subject of Christ's human suffering.

4.3 Conclusion

All of the formulas we have examined are intended to confess the *homo factus est*. In particular, they make clear that human experiences, especially the crucifixion, may be

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[86]Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.2.198-201: "...et, quia res summe simplex et incomposita nullam omnino in se recipit passionem, sicut superius etiam ipse professes es, non est ergo–iuxta vos–Christus pro humana salute perpessus...."

[87]Maxent. (Catholicus) *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.2.204-206: "...si autem Christi divinitas impassibilis permanet–sicut et verum est–, restat ut natura simplex et incomposita non sit passibilis.... Cf. Maxent. *C. Acef.* 3.15-21.

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ascribed to the Word even though the Scythian monks remain committed to the impassibility of the divine nature. The soteriological impulse for these concerns is that God grants salvation by means of a communication of attributes between himself and humanity. God takes human sin and death and gives humanity his righteousness and life. Therefore, if the one crucified is not God, this saving exchange did not take place. This is the underlying motivation which leads the Scythian monks to insist that "one of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh." It also lays the foundations for the connections between Christology and grace which the Scythian monks draw.

CHAPTER 5

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE OF THE SCYTHIAN MONKS

Almost every treatment of the doctrine of grace in the Scythian monks' corpus

immediately follows a Christological discussion.[1] This pattern suggests that the Scythian

monks understood the doctrine of grace to be in some sense a consequence of

Christology. The contents of the works bear out this impression. The Scythian monks

employ the same categories and images in their treatment of both doctrines, and in a few

instances they expressly tie the two doctrines together. After giving an overview of their

doctrine of grace, the present chapter spells out the connections they draw between

Christology and grace in the structure of their works, in their diagnosis of the human

condition, and in the relation between the human and the divine which they find in both

doctrines.

5.1 Overview

The writings of the Scythian monks present an abbreviated but recognizably

Augustinian doctrine of grace drawn from Augustine's later writings, especially his *De*

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[1]See *Libell. fid.*, *Cap.*, *Ep. ad episc.* The exception is the *Resp. adv. ep.* which
follows the structure of Pope Hormisdas's letter to which the Scythian monks are
responding.

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praedestinatione sanctorum. Their discussion of grace turns around three major themes: original sin, the origin of faith, and to a lesser extent, perseverance. They believe that before the fall, Adam was neither mortal nor immortal, but he was capable of choosing evil or good, mortality or immortality.[2] After the fall, however, Adam lost this capacity. Adam's transgression brought not only death but also sin into the world.[3] This sin is not a nature, for that would imply that God created it.[4] The Scythian monks never discuss the manner in which original sin is transmitted, but they do hold that original sin enslaves all of humanity in such a way that natural human free choice can choose only between temporal goods. It can never choose things related to eternal life.[5]

In all of their discussion of grace, the Scythian monks frame the issue in terms of an antithesis between God and humanity. By affirming that faith comes by grace, they are attributing the origin of faith to God, not to the believer. For John Maxentius, faith is not to be identified with natural human powers which are gifts of creation.[6] Grace effects a re-creation.[7] This is a divine act beyond the capability of natural human powers. In fact,

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[2]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 30.367-369, Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 15.202-205.

[3]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 31.380-383.

[4]Maxent. *Cap.* 10.

[5]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 34.401-408.

[6]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 33.396-398: "...quapropter nullum ab Adam nunc usque per naturae vigorem credimus esse salvatum, nisi dono gratiae spiritus sancti in fide nominis Iesu...."

[7]For example, John Maxentius introduces his discussion of grace in the *Libell. fid.* by saying that he will discuss "not that grace by which we are created, but by which we are re-created." Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 9.98-99. "...non qua creamur, sed de ea qua

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Maxentius uses "grace" and "Holy Spirit" interchangeably. In one place he attributes

salvation to "the gift of grace from the Holy Spirit," and a little later he attributes salvation

simply to the inpouring of the Holy Spirit.[8]

The Scythian monks reject any formulation which would place natural human

powers on equal footing with the work of the Holy Spirit. For instance, they anathematize

all who say, "It is ours to will and God's to perfect."[9] They also reject the statement, "It is

mine to want to believe and it belongs to God's grace to help."[10] Instead, they assert that

a good will (i.e., faith) comes from God: "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Prov. 8:35,

LXX).[11]

The above considerations of original sin and the origin of faith comprise the bulk

of the Scythian monks' discussion of grace. On occasion, however, they do venture

beyond these issues to affirm also a perseverance by grace. In the *Epistula ad episcopos*,

for example, they assert that *every* good will comes from God, and in the *Responsio*

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recreamur...." Also 29.362-363. "...non qua creamur, sed de ea qua recreamur et renovamur...."

[8]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 33.397-398: "...dono gratiae spiritus sancti..."; 34.406-407: "...per infusionem et inoperationem intrinsecus spiritus sancti...."

[9]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 35.415-417: "...abominantes etiam eos, qui...audent dicere: 'Nostrum est velle, dei vero perficere,'...."

[10]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 19.253-254: "Frustra ergo garriunt qui dicunt: 'Meum est velle credere, dei autem gratia est adiuvare,'...."

[11]Cited in Scythian monks, *Ep. ad episc.* 24.305-306: "Praeparatur voluntas a domino."

adversus epistulam Hormisdae Maxentius explicitly states that perseverance in the faith comes only "by the aid of the crucified."[12]

These three themes of original sin, the origin of faith, and perseverance, are consistent with the concerns of the Semi-Pelagian controversy in which the Scythian monks took part. The remainder of this chapter, however, seeks to demonstrate that their opposition to the Semi-Pelagians cannot fully be understood by concentrating on the question of grace in isolation from Christology. Their discussions of the two doctrines contain similarities of imagery and thought patterns which suggest that their doctrine of grace and their Christology are cut from the same cloth. First, the structure of the writings assumes such a connection. Second, the Scythian monks appeal to Christology in their diagnosis of the human condition. Finally, the Scythian monks posit the same relation of the divine and human in both doctrines.

5.2 Structure

The structure of the writings of the Scythian monks immediately alerts the reader that they consider Christology and grace to be related. As noted above, the Scythian monks organize their thought in such a way that they consistently discuss Christology first and then grace. This pattern may be seen in the *Capitula*, the *Libellus fidei* and the *Epistula ad episcopos*. *Capitula* 1-9 are devoted to Christology, while 10-12 are devoted to original sin and grace. The *Libellus fidei* consists of a prologue (1-9), a section on Christology (10-28), and a section on grace (29-35). Similarly, the *Epistula ad episcopos*

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[12]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 1.16.200: "...auxilio crucifixi...."

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has a prologue (1-2), a discussion of the incarnation (3-13), a discussion of grace (14-27), and an epilogue (28). Furthermore, in the *Libellus fidei* and the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks connect the Christology and grace sections with transitions that indicate that the Christological section of each work lays the foundation for the discussion of grace.

In the *Libellus fidei*, the transition is, "Since these things are so . . . ."[13] This phrase actually occurs twice in the *Libellus fidei*. Maxentius opens the work by making a distinction between explaining the faith and adding to it. He is trying to deflect the charge of Dioscorus that the Scythian monks' theopaschite formula constitutes an addition to Chalcedon. After establishing this distinction by an appeal to Cyril of Alexandria and Leo, Maxentius moves on to the Christological section of the work with the words, "Since these things are so . . . ." By demonstrating the possibility of explaining the faith without adding to it, Maxentius provides the justification for offering his own explanation of Chalcedon in the Christological section of the *Libellus fidei*.

Likewise the results of the Christological discussion serve to justify Maxentius's position on the doctrine of grace. He employs the very same transition to link the Christological discussion to his treatment of grace:

> *Since these things are so*, most blessed sirs, we believed it right, as a necessary consequence (*necessario*) to make clear to your holinesses, by briefly explaining now what we hold concerning the grace of God, . . .

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[13]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 9.94, 29.361: "His ita se habentibus...."

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because on this point also the enemies of God's grace, that is the followers of Pelagius and Caelestius, seem to us to be excessively dangerous.[14]

This suggests that Maxentius understands Christology and grace to be two facets of a single issue. Given the widespread conviction in the fifth and sixth centuries that Nestorianism and Pelagianism are twin heresies, it is not surprising to find that Maxentius uses the outcome of a Christological discussion to mount an attack on the "enemies of God's grace."

In what sense, however, does Maxentius's Christology justify his doctrine of grace? Does this claim stem merely from an abstract commitment to the proposition that all articles of doctrine, or at least these two, are related, or does Maxentius have specific concrete connections in mind? The *Epistula ad episcopos* can give us more detail on this question.[15] After laying out their Christological position, the Scythian monks introduce the grace section with the sentence, "After all this it follows (*Post haec consequens est*) that we should also (*etiam*) now declare to your Beatitudes what tradition we have

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[14]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 29.361-366: "*His ita se habentibus*, beatissimi, nunc iam quid de gratia dei...sentiamus, breviter exponentes, sanctitati vestrae necessario credidimus facere manifestum, eo quod, etiam in hac parte, inimici gratiae dei–id est, Pelagii et Caelestii sectatores–nimium nobis infesti esse videntur" (italics added).

[15]This work may have been written by John Maxentius and sent with the Scythian monks to Rome (McGuckin, "Theopaschite Confession," 246), or as the superscription indicates, it may be written by Peter the Deacon, one of the Scythian monks. Schwartz argues that John Maxentius could not have written the *Ep. ad episc.* because it does not lay sufficient stress on the formula, *unus ex Trinitate passus* (ACO 4.2, x̄ ͵ ͺ That in itself may be a weak argument, but the greeting of the letter mentions John the Deacon and other Scythian monks, and Fulgentius's response is directed to John the Deacon. Because of these indications that Maxentius may not be the author and because the letter represents the theological position of the entire delegation of Scythian monks, I shall refer to the author of this document as the "Scythian monks" collectively.

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received to form our understanding of the grace of Christ by which He has plucked us from the power of Satan."[16] Although the *etiam*, indicates that they are beginning a new argument, the *consequens* signals that a logical consequence, or at least a consistent parallel case, is in view. This transition thus asserts that the correct doctrine of grace runs parallel to orthodox Christology and perhaps even follows logically from it. Such a conception is consistent with Maxentius's claim, in the above citation from his *Libellus fidei*, that he thinks it right, "as a necessary consequence" (*necessario*) of the Christological discussion, to clarify his doctrine of grace.

Therefore, the structure of the work prompts us to look for imagery and thought patterns in the Scythian monks' discussion of grace which are traceable to their Christology. If they hold that the doctrine of grace follows from Christology, we may expect to find certain tenets of their Christology which apply equally to their doctrine of grace.

5.3 Christological Diagnosis of the Human Condition

One such tenet may be found in the Scythian monks' diagnosis of the human condition on the basis of what Christ did to save humanity. In the *Libellus fidei*, for example, Maxentius employs two images to describe the human plight: death and weakness. His discussion of weakness is particularly relevant. He asserts, "Therefore, because the strength of nature is weakened by the evil of transgression, it is in no way

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[16]*Ep. ad episc.* 14.197-199: "Post haec consequens est etiam qualiter de Christi gratia sentiamus, qua nos eruit de potestate satanae, secundum quod nobis est traditum, vestrae beatitudini declarare...." Translation by McGuckin, slightly altered.

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strong enough of itself to rise from where it rushed through its own will . . . ."[17] He draws

support for this claim not from a passage of Scripture dealing with human weakness but

from a passage which asserts that Christ is the only savior. He turns to Acts 4:12, "There

is no other name under heaven given to human beings, in which they must be saved except

in the name of Jesus Christ."[18] This move establishes a connection between Christ's work

and the human condition in that it deduces the human condition from what Christ has done

and from the fact that only he could do it. If Christ is the only savior, then human beings

cannot save themselves.

By tying his diagnosis of the human condition to Christology, Maxentius is

following a Scriptural pattern which may be noted in the near context of some of the

passages he cites in his discussion of death in the *Libellus fidei*. In this discussion,

Maxentius opposes the Pelagian notion that Adam's sin subjected humanity to death but

not sin. Instead, Maxentius insists, Adam's transgression brought both death and sin into

the world. To support this contention, Maxentius appeals to 1 Cor. 15:56, which calls sin

the "sting of death" and Rom. 5:12, which states, "Through one man sin entered into the

world, and death through sin, and so death passed to all people in the one in whom all

sinned."[19]

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[17]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 33.393-396: "Infirmatus igitur naturae vigor per malum praevaricationis, nullatenus valuit per semetipsum inde assurgere, unde per propriam voluntatem incurrit...."

[18]Cited in Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 33.398-400: "Non est aliud nomen datum homini<bu>s sub caelo, in quo oporteat eos salvos fieri, nisi in nomine Iesu Christi."

[19]Cited in Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 31.385-387: "Per unum hominem peccatum intravit in mundum, et per peccatum mors, et ita in omnes homines mors pertansivit, in quo omnes

The Scriptural context of both passages is Christological. Rom. 5 introduces Adam into the discussion in order to contrast him with Christ. 1 Cor. 15:56 links death with sin in order to make the point that Christ conquered both. Maxentius does not explicitly draw on the Christological context of these two passages, but his pattern of thought in the *Libellus fidei* resonates with this context because of the links he makes between Christ and the human condition.

In their discussion of grace in the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks make a more explicit appeal to Christology when diagnosing the human condition than does Maxentius in the *Libellus fidei*. This document is patterned after the *Libellus fidei*, has the same basic structure, and makes many of the same points. However, the discussion of sin in the *Epistula ad episcopos* is controlled not by the image of death, but by the image of slavery. When Adam was created, he was "endowed with great freedom."[20] When he sinned, however, he "lost his personal freedom, [and] was completely bound in the slavery of sin."[21] Thereafter, all human beings are born into slavery, for "what else can be, or ever has been, born from a slave except a slave?"[22]

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peccaverunt."

[20]Scythian monks, *Ep. ad episc.* 15.203-204: "...magnaque praeditum libertate...." Translation by McGuckin.

[21]Scythian monks, *Ep. ad episc.* 15.213-214: "...amissa libertate propria, sub peccati servitio mancipatur." Translation by McGuckin.

[22]Scythian monks, *Ep. ad episc.* 16.218-219: "Quid enim aliud potuit aut potest nasci ex servo, nisi servus?" Translation by McGuckin.

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To be sure, slavery and death are not mutually exclusive. In the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks describe subjection to death as "slavery" (*servitus*).[23] The slavery image adds something to the discussion, however, because it provides another point of contact with Christology. The Scythian monks draw this image not from any of the passages they cite about sin and death, but from Phil. 2:7 which says that Christ took the form of a slave. After making the point, on the basis of Rom. 5:12, that Adam brought both sin and death into the world, the Scythian monks state, "And from this condemnation and death, therefore, no one at all is delivered except by the grace of the redeemer who although he was the Lord, very God, was made a slave (*factus est servus*), taking the form of a slave, so that He might free us from perpetual servitude and the devil's power, to lead us back to true liberty."[24] The fact that Christ took on the form of a slave implies that humanity is enslaved to sin.

Not only do the Scythian monks use Phil. 2:7 to diagnose the human condition, but they also combine it with their favorite Christological text, John 1:14: *Verbum caro factus est*. The combination of the two passages may be seen in their statement, cited above, that God was "made a slave" (*factus est servus*). As we saw in the last chapter, the Scythian monks frequently employ John 1:14 in their Christological discussions in order to make that point that God the Word is the sole acting subject in Christ. By combining John 1:14

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[23]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 17.232.

[24]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 17.230-234: "Ab hac igitur damnatione et morte nullus omnino liberatur, nisi gratia redemptoris; qui cum esset dominus utpote deus, ut nos a servitute perpetua et potestate diaboli liberaret, atque ad veram libertatem reduceret, factus est servus, *accipiens formam servi*." Translation by McGuckin (italics in original).

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with the slavery language of Phil. 2:7, then, the Scythian monks are making the point that the one who subjects himself to human slavery is not an assumed man, but God the Word himself.

The soteriological point of Christ becoming a slave is that he saves humanity by a kind of role reversal. In the discussion of grace in the *Epistula ad episcopos*, this reversal is expressed by the juxtaposition of Phil. 2:7 with John 8:36. After making the point that Christ was made a slave (Phil. 2:7), the Scythian monks add, "From this comes what He says to the Jews: 'If the Son sets you free then you shall indeed be free'" (John 8:36).[25] Christ takes the human condition of slavery on himself to liberate the human race. John Maxentius makes the same point elsewhere in a Christological context by citing 2 Cor. 8:9, "Although he was rich, he became poor in order to make us rich."[26] Such an affirmation would not be possible without the communication of attributes which the Scythian monks so ardently defend in their Christology.

The Christological and soteriological concerns come together on the cross. The ultimate point of slavery for Christ is his death on the cross. This is not only the focal point of the Christological controversy (cf., "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh"), it is also the point the Scythian monks adduce as the foundation of the faith in their discussion of grace. "[The] primary and principal foundation [of divine realities]," they contend, "the very basis and fount of all good, is to believe in 'the crucified Lord of

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[25]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 17.234-235: "Hinc est quod dicit ad Iudaeos: *Tunc vere liberi eritis, si vos filius liberaverit.*" Translation by McGuckin, slightly altered.

[26]Cf. Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 25.322-324, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.312-313.

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glory.'"[27] In the crucified Lord of glory, one sees at once the Lord, very God, and the ultimate slave. Thus, the Christology of the Scythian monks provides the evidence for their contention that humanity is enslaved to sin and death, and, by its affirmation of the communication of attributes, it paves the way for the saving role reversal they advocate in their discussion of grace.

5.4 Relation of Divine and Human

In both their Christology and their doctrine of grace, the Scythian monks unwaveringly insist that the divine is never to be subordinated to the human. They make this point in a number of ways. First, they make God the acting subject in both Christology and soteriology. Second, they reject an analogy between Christology and grace proposed by Faustus of Riez which would put the human and divine on equal footing. Finally, they exclude antecedent merit from the incarnation and salvation by defending the thesis that "God became Christ, Christ did not become God."

We have already seen how the Scythian monks make God the acting subject in Christology. They are convinced that anyone who truly believes that the Word became a man will not hesitate to ascribe Christ's human experiences to the Word. All of their Christological theses, including "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," are designed precisely to ascribe human experiences such as birth, anointing, and crucifixion to the Word.

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[27]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 18.244-246. "[desiderare divina], quorum primum est et praecipuum fundamentum, et crepido quodammodo, sive omnium bonorum origo, credere in dominum gloriae crucifixum...." Translation by McGuckin.

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The Scythian monks are just as concerned to affirm that God is the actor in salvation. To that end, they contrast natural human powers with the work of the Holy Spirit. In the *Libellus fidei*, for example, John Maxentius says that since human nature was weakened by the fall, it is not strong enough to rise "through itself" (*per semetipsum*) "except by the gift of the Holy Spirit's grace in faith in the name of Jesus."[28] He further contrasts "natural free choice" (*liberum . . . naturale arbitrium*) with the "infusion and interior operation of the Holy Spirit" (*infusionem et inoperationem intrinsecus spiritus sancti*), attributing only the ability to choose between temporal things to the former and attributing things pertaining to eternal life to the latter.[29] He states that faith comes "not at all through the gift of nature, but through the Holy Spirit."[30]

In the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks make similar statements. Faith is "not at all from freedom of natural choice," but rather the Father reveals and draws one to true liberty "by pouring in sweetness through the Holy Spirit."[31] They find support for

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[28]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 33.397-398: "...nisi dono gratiae spiritus sancti in fide nominis Iesu...."

[29]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 34.401-407.

[30]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 34.410-411: "non utique per donum naturae, sed per spiritum sanctum...."

[31]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 18.246-250: "...quod utique non est ex naturalis arbitrii libertate.... [Pater revelat attrahens] infundendo suavitatem per spiritum sanctum...."

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their position in Basil, Pope Celestine, and the council of Milevis. Except for Basil, the Scythian monks seem to have drawn these sources from a collection of decrees.[32]

They reject statements which put the divine and human on equal footing or subordinate the divine to the human. As we have seen, they reject the saying, "It is ours to will and God's to perfect."[33] They also reject the saying, "It is mine to want to believe, but it belongs to the grace of God to help."[34]

The Scythian monks do not mean, however, that the human will is destroyed by grace. They affirm that "our will is not lacking" even as they insist that grace always precedes the will.[35] God is the only acting subject, as it were, in the granting of faith, but since he works through the will, faith is also truly human. This point is important in view of a passage from Faustus, a Semi-Pelagian bishop of Riez in the fifth century, which was likely used to attack the Scythian monks.

Faustus's writings seem to have been injected into the Scythian controversy some time between the Scythian monks' arrival in Constantinople in 519 and Possessor's letter

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[32]One such collection was assembled by Prosper of Aquitaine (CPL 527). The same material may be found in a collection of decrees assembled by Dionysius Exiguus (CPL 652c) and in a letter from Pope Celestine to bishops in Gaul (CPL 1652).

[33]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 35.415-417: "...abominantes etiam eos, qui...audent dicere: 'Nostrum est velle, dei vero perficere,'...."

[34]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 19.253-254: "Frustra ergo garriunt qui dicunt: 'Meum est velle credere, dei autem gratia est adiuvare,'...."

[35]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 26.335-338 (citing a letter of Ps.-Caelestine to Zosimus): "Quotquot enim spiritu dei aguntur, hi filii sunt dei, ut nec nostrum deesse sentiamus arbitrium, et in bonis quibusque voluntatis humanae singulis motibus magis illius praevenire non dubitemus gratiam...."

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to Pope Hormisdas, which Hormisdas received on July 18, 520.[36] It is not clear who first appealed to Faustus. The first we hear of Faustus is from Possessor's letter to Pope Hormisdas saying that Justinian and Vitalian consulted Possessor about the authority of Faustus in the course of a debate about grace.[37]

Possessor agrees with Faustus's doctrine of grace, but he writes a letter to Pope Hormisdas asking his opinion about whether Faustus or Augustine is more authoritative. Hormisdas replies that Augustine is a church father and Faustus is not.[38] Furthermore, he tells Possessor that the Roman position on grace and free will may be found in Augustine's letter to Hilary and Prosper, i.e., the twin work *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*.[39]

So far the issue is grace, not Christology. We learn from Maxentius's response to Hormisdas's letter, however, that Possessor not only opposes the Scythian monks' doctrine of grace, he opposes their Christology as well. Possessor certainly appeals to Faustus against the Scythian monks' doctrine of grace. Does also he employ him against their Christology?

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[36]Possessor's letter is CA 230.

[37]CA 230.2.15-20, 230.4.7.

[38]This incident is significant in the history of the notion of "church father" since Hormisdas clearly delineates who is and is not to be accorded such authority. See É. Amann, "Pères de l'église," in *DTC* 21.1 (Paris: Letouzey, 1941), 1194.

[39]*Ep. Papae Hormisdae* 15.105-08: "De arbitrio tamen libero et gratia dei, quid Romana, hoc est catholica, sequatur et servet ecclesia, licet ex variis libris beati Augustini, et maxime ad Hilarium et Prosperum, abunde possit agnosci...."

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Loofs asserts that Possessor provoked the Scythian monks into arguing about

Faustus by citing Faustus against their theopaschite formula. Loofs suggests further that

Possessor may have cited a passage from Faustus's *Epistula 6* to the deacon Gratus which

reduces the Monophysite position to absurdity by attributing to it the claim that "the

divinity was crucified in the substance of his majesty."[40] The suggestion is certainly

plausible in light of the attempt of the Scythian monks' opponents to associate their

theopaschite formula with the Monophysite position.

Amann similarly thinks that the Scythian monks' attack on Faustus is defensive.

He asserts that it arises from a situation which he outlines as follows. The Scythian monks

are faced with a Christological passage from Faustus's writings which opposed them.

They read Faustus's *De gratia* to familiarize themselves with his theology. Finding him to

have sympathies with Pelagius, they attack his doctrine of grace in order to impugn his

authority for Christology.[41]

Unlike Loofs, however, Amann believes that the particular passage of Faustus

which was used against the Scythian monks was directed against the Nestorians.

According to Amann, it was taken from Faustus's letter to the deacon Gratus whom

Faustus was trying to rescue from the Nestorian error. Gennadius mentions this letter and

gives the following report of its contents: "In this letter, [Faustus] admonishes [Gratus] to

believe that the holy Virgin Mary bore not a mere man, who later received divinity, but

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[40]Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz*, 235, esp. n.*. Faustus's text reads, "Ergo in substantia maiestatis suae, divinitas crucifixa est...." (CSEL 21:203.1-2). Loofs refers to this letter as *Ep. 6*, but it is *Ep. 7* in CSEL 21.

[41]É. Amann, "Sémi-Pélagiens," in *DTC* 14.2 (Paris: Letouzey,1941), 1838.

true God in a true man."[42] There are two points in favor of Amann's suggestion. First,

this passage would be applicable in the discussion of the sense in which Mary is theotokos,

a theme which recurs throughout the Scythian monks' writings. Second, Faustus's

statement that the true God is "in" a true man runs directly counter to the Scythian monks'

Christological concerns.[43]

Although Loofs's and Amann's suggestions are certainly plausible, an argument

can be made that the crucial text is to be found in Faustus's *De gratia* itself. Maxentius

wages his polemic against Faustus primarily at the end of his *Responsio adversus*

epistulam Hormisdae where he assembles statements of Faustus and contrasts them with

statements of Augustine. Maxentius never mentions Faustus's letter to Gratus. All of the

statements from Faustus are drawn from the *De gratia*. Furthermore, Maxentius chides

Possessor for only reading the first eight chapters of the first book of Faustus's *De*

gratia.[44] These facts suggest that Faustus's *De gratia* itself is the issue. Time and time

again, Maxentius contrasts a passage from Faustus's *De gratia* with a passage from

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[42]Gennadius *De viris inlustribus* 85 (PL 58, col. 1110A): "In qua epistola admonet eum credere sanctam Mariam Virginem non hominem purum genuisse, qui postea divinitatem susceperit, sed Deum verum in homine vero." Faustus makes this point, though not in these precise words, in *Ep. 6* as well. Perhaps Gennadius is referring to Faustus's *Ep. 6*.

[43]The Scythian monks consistently oppose the use of "indwelling" (*inhabitatio*) to describe the union of Christ's two natures. Cf. Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 12.147-148, Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.16-17. They also reject the idea that God the word "worked in" (*inoperasse*) Christ as in one of the prophets. Cf. Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 5.61-63.

[44]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep. Horm.* 61.856-858: "...se idem Possessor ita solet callide excusare, quod non amplius nisi octo captitula libri primi legerit...."

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Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, the work which Pope Hormisdas himself declared to be the authoritative patristic treatment of grace and free will.

There is not much explicit Christology in Faustus's *De gratia*, but in book one, Faustus does draw an analogy between Christology and grace. When it comes to the doctrine of grace, Faustus opposes both those who assert grace alone (*sola gratia*) and those who assert works alone (*solus labor*). Both extreme positions, he says, "hiss with the spirit of one serpent."[45] He finds a convenient parallel case in the two extreme Christological positions. Faustus states, "Let us see to what impiety we can liken or compare this twin error. In the same way those who have presumed to assert that Christ the Lord is only God and those who have presumed to assert that he is only man both stumble at the rock of offense because they have lost the light of discernment."[46] Thus, Faustus identifies grace with the divine and works with the human and asserts that both the divine and the human are necessary in Christology and in grace. Echoing Leo's Tome, Faustus holds that in Christology, one should "ascribe to the parts their own properties," thus confessing Christ as God and man, and in the doctrine of grace, one should "join

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[45]Faustus *De gratia*. 1.1.7.11-12: "...sed spiritu unius serpentis insibilant."

[46]Faustus *De gratia* 1.1.8.3-7: "Videamus, cui impietati geminum hunc errorem adsimilare vel conferre possimus. pari modo in petram scandali offendunt vel ille, qui Christum dominum solum deum, vel illi qui solum hominem amissa discretionis luce asserere praesumpserunt."

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grace with labor."[47] Only in this way can one avoid the error of both extremes, according to Faustus.

It seems very likely that this is the passage the Scythian monks are ultimately trying to discredit. Given the historical setting of the Scythian controversy, just a few years after the Trisagion controversy, this argument would have hit the Scythian monks where they were most vulnerable. As we have seen, the main strategy of their opponents was to identify the Scythian monks with Peter Fuller and the Monophysites. This passage, like the one Loofs suggests, would fit very neatly into that agenda. The Scythian monks' Augustinian doctrine of grace which attributes the origin of faith to God, not to natural human powers, would have seemed consistent, according to Faustus's analogy, with a Monophysite Christology which viewed Christ as divine but not human.

Like the passages that Loofs and Amann suggest, this passage from Faustus's *De gratia* deals with concerns that are very relevant to the Christological arguments of the Scythian controversy. Unlike Loofs's and Amann's suggested passages, however, this passage is mentioned explicitly in the writings of the Scythian monks. In fact, it is in the very first pair of passages from Faustus which Maxentius attacks in the last section of his *Responsio adversus epistulam Hormisdae*. Maxentius states,

> And again in the first chapter of the first book [of Faustus's *De gratia*]: "If you ascribed to the parts their own properties," [Faustus] says, "and you believed and asserted that Christ is both God and man, it would be the

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[47]Faustus *De gratia* 1.1.8.16-19: "si ergo partibus proprietates suas reddas et Christum deum simul atque hominem credas et asseras, perinde est ac si gratiam cum labore coniungas et ab adiutorio dei conatum hominis non repellas...."

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same as if you joined grace with labor, and you did not exclude human effort from the assistance of God."[48]

Maxentius opposes this analogy with a passage from Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* in which Augustine discusses the origin of faith and criticizes those who would ascribe part of their faith to themselves and the other part to God "as if a human being is on equal footing with God."[49] Maxentius does not object to an analogy between Christology and grace *per se*. He simply thinks Faustus has drawn an erroneous comparison because he puts the divine and the human on the same level.

Faced with Faustus's analogy, the Scythian monks need to show that their position does not destroy the human element in Christology or soteriology. This point is particularly pressing for them because, as we have seen, their opponents' main strategy is to associate them with the Monophysites. Therefore, their assertion that the human will is not lacking in movements of the good will may be seen, at least in part, as an attempt to defend themselves against Faustus's analogy.

One might expect them to turn to Augustine's assertion of Christ as the exemplar of predestination in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. Since Maxentius cites extensively from this work, there can be no doubt that he is aware of Augustine's argument. Maxentius clearly has the entire work, not just a florilegium. When he cites

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[48]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 44.645-649: "Et iterum, in capitulo primo libri primi: *Si ergo partibus* inquit *proprietates suas reddas, et Christum deum et hominem credas et asseras, perinde est ac si gratia<m> cum labore coniungas, et ab adiutorio dei conatum hominis non repellas*" (italics in original).

[49]Maxent. (citing Augustine) *Resp. adv. ep.* 45.657: "...quasi componit homo cum deo...." From Aug. *De praed. sanct.* 2.6.

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from Augustine, he is able to specify where in the work the passage is in relation to other passages he cites.[50] The same holds true for his citation of Faustus's *De gratia*.

Although he never cites the passage in Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30 which links the incarnation and predestination, Maxentius argues along similar lines when he rejects antecedent human merit in conversion and, as will be discussed in more detail below, in Christology. The fact that Maxentius never appeals explicitly to Augustine's argument may be due to the anti-Nestorian focus of Maxentius's writings.

As we have seen, the general pattern in the fifth century was that authors who were opposing a Nestorian or proto-Nestorian Christological position tended to follow Augustine in his rejection of the role of antecedent human merit in both Christology and grace, but they were more cautious about Augustine's attempt to maximize the similarity between Christ and the saints, and they tended to be less comfortable than Augustine in stressing the exaltation of humanity in the incarnation. Both of these emphases became problematic under the pressure of "Nestorianism" because "Nestorianism," especially the version attacked by authors such as Prosper and John Cassian, posited a pre-existing human subject who was maximally similar to the saints and who was exalted. Augustine's position certainly does not correspond to the "Nestorianism" attacked by Prosper and John Cassian because Augustine explicitly rejects the notion of a pre-existent human Jesus.

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[50]E.g., *Resp. adv. ep. Horm.* 48.690-691: "denique mox, post illam sententiam, cuius superius fecimus mentionem sequitur et dicit..."; 50.715-716: "Econtra beatissimus Augustinus, inter initia antedicti primi libri sui..."; 54.789-790: "Et rursus idem beatissimus Augustinum, post aliquanta...."

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Nevertheless, Augustine's willingness to push the similarity between Christ and the saints into the foreground works at cross-purposes with the concerns of those who wish to emphasize the uniqueness of Christ against some form of Nestorian Christology.

The Scythian monks' concerns conform to the pattern we found in the fifth century. They emphasize the uniqueness of Christ, and even more than Leporius, Prosper, and Cassian, they actively oppose any language of human exaltation related to the incarnation. This may make the Scythian monks reticent to adopt Augustine's analogy *in toto* since, as we have seen, this analogy assumes that Christ is sufficiently similar to believers that what may be said of the head may also be said of the body.

The Scythian monks' opposition to the language of exaltation finds its clearest expression in the third way they relate Christology and grace: the thesis that God became Christ, Christ did not become God. This slogan comes near the end of the Christology section in both in the *Libellus fidei* and the *Epistula ad episcopos* just before the transition to the grace section. It also occurs in the *Capitula* and the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos.*[51] The purpose of the slogan is to exclude antecedent merit from the union of God and human nature in Christ.

The exegetical argument of this thesis centers on Ps. 45:6-7, which reads, "Your throne, O God, is forever. A rod of justice is the rod of your kingdom. You loved

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[51]*Libell. fid.* 25, *Ep. ad episc.* 11, *Cap.* 7, *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.8.

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righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil

of gladness before your companions."[52]

There is a tradition of exegesis of this passage which would be inimical to the

Scythian monks' concerns. The Arians interpreted the anointing of Christ in such a way as

to deny his full deity as well as to suggest that he was promoted to a godlike status on the

basis of his good works.[53] Athanasius tells us that the Arians key in on the word

"therefore," arguing that the phrase "therefore God, your God, has anointed you" refers to

a "reward for excellence or action."[54] Similarly, Hilary of Poitiers argues that the Arian

identification of Christ's birth with his anointing implies that Christ was "promoted"

(*provectus*) to be God and that this occurred *ex merito.*[55] Indeed, Robert Gregg and

Dennis Groh contend that a soteriology based on promotion to divine sonship in reward

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[52]Cited in Maxent. *Lib. fid.* 25.325-327: "Sedes tua, deus, in saeculum saeculi; virga aequitatis virga regni tui. Dilexisti iustitiam et odisti iniquitatem, propterea unxit te deus, deus tuus, oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis."

[53]A similar interpretation can be found even earlier in Origen who interprets the passage to mean that Christ's soul was united to the Logos as a reward for virtue (*De princ.* 2.6.4), though Origen does not suppose that this is contrary to the idea that Christ is God.

[54]Athanasius *Orat.* 1.12.49 (PG 26.113A): "...μισθὸν ἀρετῆς ἢ πράξεως."

[55]Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trin.* 11.19: "Si igitur nativitati unigeniti Dei unctionem deputabimus, quae unctio ob meritum dilectae iustitiae et perosae iniquitatis indulta sit, provectus potius per unctionem unigenitus Deus quam genitus intellegetur, iamque per incrementa et profectus Deus consummabitur, qui non natus Deus sit, sed in Deum sit unctus ex merito...."

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for good works was the primary theological tenet that the Arians were trying to protect

when they insisted that Christ, like Christians, was an adopted son.[56]

The Scythian monks do not refer to the Arians in relation to this passage, but they

do accuse their opponents of interpreting the passage to imply a promotion of Christ to

Godhood based on human merit. In the *Libellus fidei*, John Maxentius charges the

followers of Theodore of Mopsuestia with teaching that Christ was made God "by

advancement" (*per profectum*).[57] In the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks also

register the complaint, in connection with a discussion of Ps. 45, that the heretics "dare to

assert that Christ is God by promotion (*per provectum*) not by nature."[58] A similar

charge, though not related to Ps. 45, may be found early in the *Epistula ad episcopos*

where the Scythian monks cite a work entitled *Quod unus sit Christus*, written by (Ps.-)

Athanasius: "In this faithless manner of thinking these people have even conjectured an

indwelling instead of an incarnation, *human action* instead of unity and composition, and

two subsistences and two persons instead of the one substance of Our Lord Jesus

Christ."[59] As in their interpretation of Ps. 45, so here the Scythian monks frame the

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[56]Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 50.

[57]Maxent. *Libell. fid.* 25.318-322: "Secundum huius beati patris sententiam: deus factus Christus, non autem Christus deus factus, docetur–sicut dicunt sectatores Theodori Mopsuesteni magistri Nestorii, qui per profectum Christum deum factum credunt...."

[58]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 11.170-171: "...per provectum non per naturam Christum deum audent asserere." Translation by McGuckin, slightly altered.

[59]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 6.113-117: "Et qua sententia et perfidia etiam isti et inhabitationem pro incarnatione opinati sunt, et pro unitate et compositione *inoperationem humanam*, et pro una substantia domini nostri Iesu Christi duas

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question in terms of whether Christ's identity as God is to be attributed to God's action or to human action.

Against such a position, the Scythian monks offer their own interpretation of Ps. 45. They argue that anointing is proper to a human being, not God. However, the passage itself refers to the one anointed as God: "Your throne, O God, is from age to age . . . ." Therefore, the only way this passage makes sense, according to the Scythian monks, is if God became a man. Far from teaching that Christ was exalted to Godhood, then, Ps. 45 teaches the descent of God to the human condition so that he could be anointed. The Scythian monks seem to understand this anointing to refer to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan.[60] The *homo factus est* is the key to understanding the passage.

Because of their concern to confess the *homo factus est* and to exclude merit as a reason for the incarnation, they oppose language of exaltation or promotion (*provectus*) related to the incarnation. They go farther in this matter than Augustine and Leporius did. Augustine, as we have seen, described the incarnation as the humble descent of God and the exaltation of humanity. Leporius kept both elements but laid the emphasis on the descent of God. The Scythian monks, however, portray the incarnation exclusively in a downward direction.

The Scythian monks' doctrine of grace runs along similar lines. They do not explicitly draw a connection between the exclusion of merit from Christ's anointing by the Holy Spirit and the exclusion of merit from the reception of grace (i.e., th⌣ Holy Spirit

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subsistentias et duas personas..." (italics added). Translation by McGuckin.

[60]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 10.157-166.

poured into the heart) at conversion. However, they do frame the question of grace in terms of whether a good will (faith) is to be attributed to the gift of God or to the choice of human beings. They emphatically deny that natural human powers can produce faith. Only the Holy Spirit can do that.[61] They also say that the presence of the incarnation gives grace.[62] Thus, when it comes to the doctrine of grace, the Scythian monks show the same concern to give credit to God rather than to human action as they do in their Christology.

In so doing, they are following the general logic of Augustine's analogy between the incarnation and the grace of predestination in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. Just as merit does not motivate the Word to assume the human nature, so also merit does not motivate God to unite himself with a human being at conversion. The exclusion of antecedent merit, then, is a fundamental tenet of both the Christology and the doctrine of grace of the Scythian monks. By placing the thesis, "God became Christ, Christ did not become God," just before the transition to the discussion of grace in the *Libellus fidei* and the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks imply that the divine initiative and exclusion of antecedent human merit which that thesis is designed to accomplish is the main commonality linking the two doctrines.

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[61]Cf. *Lib. fid.* 34, *Ep. ad episc.* 16-19.

[62]Maxent. *Resp. adv. ep.* 42.625-626: "...gratia Christi, quam nobis incarnationis suae donavit praesentia...."

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5.5 Conclusion

The Scythian monks structure their documents in such a way that the discussion of grace flows from the discussion of Christology. With their transitions, they indicate that they conceive of this structure as a logical sequence. Furthermore, when they describe the fallen state of humanity, they do not rely solely on the doctrine of original sin. They come to an understanding of the human condition first of all by looking at what Christ did for human salvation. Since he took on the form of a slave, humanity must be enslaved to sin and death. Finally, the Scythian monks make God active and humanity passive both in their Christology and their understanding of conversion. They make God the acting subject in both areas. Although they insist, against the accusations of their opponents, that they preserve the human element in Christology and soteriology, they reject all language which would put the divine and human on equal footing. They exclude antecedent merit from the incarnation and from soteriology by defending the thesis, "God was made Christ, Christ was not made God."

Ultimately, the Scythian monks' Christology lays the foundation for their doctrine of grace because without it, no saving communication of attributes between God and humanity can take place. They believe that salvation involves God taking on human sin and death and granting to humanity his own righteousness and life. Those who hesitate to ascribe lowly human experiences to the Word are not able to confess that God took upon himself the punishment of sin: death by crucifixion. If Christ's death is merely a human death, then no communication of attributes between God and humanity takes place. The

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Scythian monks' theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh," is

intended to safeguard Chalcedon from any interpretation which would, by attributing

Christ's suffering to his human nature alone, undermine this saving communication.

PART III. FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE

CHAPTER 6

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE

Fulgentius's Christology developed over time. In his earlier writings, he tended to stress the distinction between the two natures. In his later writings, he laid more emphasis on the unity of Christ and, more importantly, he came to define the person of Christ as the Word. This development was most likely prompted by his correspondence with the Scythian monks. First, this chapter characterizes the general outline of Fulgentius's Christological development. Then, it compares the Scythian monks' *Epistula ad episcopos* with Fulgentius's response, *Epistula 17*, in order to identify those elements of the *Epistula ad episcopos* which may have contributed to changing Fulgentius's thought.

In order to lay the groundwork for this discussion, a few comments must be made concerning the chronology of Fulgentius's works. Fulgentius was born about the year 462. In 502, he became the bishop of Ruspe where his ecclesiastical office put him into conflict with the Arian Vandal King Thrasamund who ruled North Africa at the time. Thrasamund soon exiled Fulgentius and many other catholic bishops to Sardinia. Despite his exile, Fulgentius's fame spread, and Thrasamund recalled him to Carthage to take part in a theological debate about 510 or 515. Fulgentius's early works, most importantly his *Ad Trasamundum*, come from this period of debate with the Arians. After two years,

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Thrasamund sent Fulgentius back into exile to Sardinia where he remained until Thrasamund's death in 523. During this second exile in Sardinia, the Scythian monks sent their *Epistula ad episcopos* (*Epistula 16* in Fulgentius's corpus) to the exiled African bishops. Fulgentius, acting as the secretary of the bishops, drafted their response, which is numbered as *Ep. 17*. Fulgentius's latest writings are those he wrote after his return from exile until his death on January 1, 527.

On the basis of internal evidence most of Fulgentius's works can be placed in one of the three periods mentioned above: the first period is the time of his debate with King Thrasamund in North Africa; the second period comprises his second exile in Sardinia; the third period extends from his return from exile until his death.[1] We lack, however, the evidence to be much more specific than that. It is very difficult to order the works chronologically within each period. Therefore, any discussion of development in Fulgentius's thought must rely primarily on a comparison of works from different periods.

This limitation makes it somewhat difficult to show that *Ep. 17* is the first of Fulgentius's works to bear the marks of a development in his Christology. However, this difficulty is not insurmountable because very few of the works in the second period treat Christology in depth. *Ep. 17* is the most detailed treatment, and there is some material in *Ad Monimum*. The rest of the second-period writings do not contain enough Christology to be relevant to this discussion. Most of the material in *Ad Monimum* does not touch directly on the issues which undergo development. It makes little difference, then, whether *Ep. 17* was written early or late in the second period. Either way, it ushers in

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[1]Cf. Fraipont, CCL 91, vi-vii.

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something new. Therefore, I classify Fulgentius's "earlier works" as those written during the first period. His "later works" include *Ep. 17* along with the writings of the third period. I make no attempt to classify the other second-period works as early or late since there is not enough Christological data in them to make the determination.

6.1 Overview

In his earlier writings, Fulgentius opposes the Arian heresy, particularly the Arian arguments raised by King Thrasamund. Fulgentius does not engage the Nestorians or Monophysistes. In fact, his writings from this period show little awareness of these two heresies.[2]

The anti-Arian focus of his early works leads Fulgentius to some characteristically Antiochene formulations.[3] For example, he refers to Christ's human nature with terms such as *homo, homo assumptus,* or *homo susceptus,* all of which have an Antiochene ring.[4] This usage does not mean that he conceives of the *homo* as a second person in Christ. As,

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[2]Nisters, *Christologie*, 8.

[3]For a more complete list of the similarities between early Fulgentius and the Antiochene tradition, see Nisters, *Christologie*, 70-1.

[4]Nisters, *Christologie*, 8. Fulgentius uses *homo* to refer to Christ's human nature in *Resp.* 3.11.263-265, *Ad Tras.* 1.3.1.112-125, *Ad Tras.* 1.7.1.254, *Ad Tras.* 1.15.1.623, *Ad Tras.* 3.8.3.287-288, *Ad Tras.* 3.8.4.299, *Ad Tras.* 3.13.1.401, *Ad Tras.* 3.18.3.626-627, *Ad Tras.* 3.20.2.701, *De Trin.* 6.2.269. Fulgentius uses *homo assumptus* and related phrases in *Ad Tras.* 3.24.2.1360-1361, *De Trin.* 5.3.228, *De Trin.* 6.4.298. He uses *homo susceptus* and related phrases in *Resp.* 3.11.267, *Resp.* 3.12.289, *Ad Tras.* 1.7.2.287, *Ad Tras.* 3.12.3.395-396, *Ad Tras.* 3.27.2.1010-1011, *De Trin.* 9.3.397.

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Nisters points out, Fulgentius uses the term *homo* to refer to Christ's human nature.[5] In

his later writings, however, Fulgentius stops using such Antiochene-sounding language to

refer to Christ's human nature.[6]

Fulgentius's use of *homo assumptus* is but one instance of the interchangeable use

of abstract and concrete terms which appears in his early writings. Perhaps the clearest

case is his statement, "We say that the divinity (*divinitatem*) of Christ . . . suffered in the

flesh."[7] Despite the use of the abstract term *divinitas*, Fulgentius does not intend to

ascribe suffering to the divine *nature*. Instead, this statement is equivalent to "God (*Deus*)

suffered in the flesh."[8] Later, Fulgentius becomes more consistent in reserving concrete

terms like *homo* and *Deus* for the person of Christ, and he uses abstract terms like

humanitas, divinitas, humana natura, etc. to refer to the natures.

The key feature of Fulgentius's development, however, is his understanding of the

unity of Christ's person. To be sure, Fulgentius is committed to the unity of Christ's

person even in his earlier writings. He employs the words *unus* and *idem* to make this

point.[9] The question is what Fulgentius means by the one "person" of Christ. The answer

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[5]Nisters, *Christologie*, 69.

[6]Nisters, *Christologie*, 8.

[7]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.11.3.369-370: "...divinitatem Christi...passam fateamur in carne."

[8]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.11.3.372: "...Deus in carne passus est...."

[9]E.g, *Ad Tras.* 1.15.1.622-623: "...idem Deus...idem homo...." *Ad Tras.* 2.7.1.340-341: "...in homine Christo...in eodem Deo Christo...." *Ad Tras.* 2.17.2.900-901: "unus idemque secundum carnem de matre temporaliter natus, qui secundum divinitatem de Patre permanet sempiternus...." *Ad Tras.* 3.6.1.192: "Unus igitur idemque Christus Dei et

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to this question must be sought by observing general patterns in Fulgentius's language

about Christ because, although he frequently uses the term, Fulgentius never defines

persona.[10]

In his earlier writings, it is fairly clear that Fulgentius does not identify the one

person of Christ as the Word. Commenting on Fulgentius's earlier Christology, Nisters

observes, "It seems as though the *una persona* were the sum of both natures. Both

natures are placed next to each other as equivalent constituent parts of the one person."[11]

In this, Fulgentius is remaining within the Chalcedonian Definition which never explicitly

defines the one hypostasis.

Nisters notes further that the most common way Fulgentius, in his early writings,

refers to the unity in Christ is with the word *unitas*.[12] For example, Fulgentius refers to

the "inseparable unity (*unitas*) of person *in which* (*in qua*) the one Christ is God and

man."[13] Fulgentius argues that "because of the natural conjunction, the personal unity

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hominis Filius...." *Ad Tras.* 3.15.4.519-521: "Unus ergo atque idem Christus, qui infirmitate humana passionem pertulit et miracula beneficiorum omnipotentia virtutis divinae perfecit." *Ad Tras.* 3.28.3.1082-1084: "Unus ergo idemque Christus in humanitate quae humana sunt sensit, in divinitate autem impassibilis immortalisque permansit."

[10]Nisters, *Christologie*, 67.

[11]Nisters, *Christologie*, 67: "Es scheint, als wäre die una persona die Summe der beiden Naturen. Die beiden Naturen werden als gleichartige Bestandteile der einen Person nebeneinander gestellt."

[12]Nisters, *Christologie*, 69.

[13]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.8.3.287-288: "...personae inseparabilis unitas, *in qua* Deus et homo unus est Christus..." (italics added).

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(*unitas*) in Christ has the name God and man."[14] In these passages, it is the *unitas* who is God and man, not the Word.

According to this Christology, the unity of person is based more on the inseparable association of the two constituent natures than on God *becoming* a man.[15] The fact that God and man "remain" in each other is one common way Fulgentius expresses the unity of Christ's person. For example, Fulgentius says, "God wanted to have one person with the man so that, although it is not the case that Christ God is one and Christ the man is another, nevertheless the true God *remains* in the man and the true man *remains* in God."[16]

Fulgentius's early version of the communication of attributes is based on such considerations. He wants to ascribe human characteristics to God and divine characteristics to the man, and he does so on the grounds that God assumed the man,[17]

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[14]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.15.1.463-464: "...ex coniunctione naturali nomen Dei et hominis unitas personalis habet in Christo...."

[15]Nisters notes that the Athanasian *homo factus est* is not prevalent in Fulgentius's early writings (*Christologie*, 70).

[16]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.17.2.595-599: "...sic etiam voluit unam cum homine personam Deus habere, ut licet non alius esset Christus Deus et alius Christus homo, verus tamen Deus *permaneret* in homine et verus homo *permaneret* in Deo..." (italics added). Cf. also Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 1.15.1.622-623: "...idem Deus totam in se naturam suscepit hominis et idem homo totam in se habet substantiam deitatis."

[17]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.12.3.394-396: "Non solum vero Filius Dei, secundum id quod natus est de homine, dictus est Christus, verum etiam homo ille Deus dicitur, pro eo quod est a Deo susceptus...."

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that the man remains in God,[18] and finally that God and the man are inseparable.[19] He

does not, however, appeal to the *homo factus est* as a basis for the communication of

attributes.

In his later writings, Fulgentius identifies the person of Christ as the Word. This

move brings with it a number of shifts in language and emphasis. Fulgentius makes the

identification primarily by specifying that the Word assumed a human substance, not a

human person.[20] Claudio Micaelli notes that this position finds anticipations in Augustine.

For example, Augustine says that the Son of Man did not exist before he was assumed by

the Word, but was "created by the assumption itself" (*ipsa assumptione crearetur*).[21] The

difference between Augustine and Fulgentius, however, is that Augustine says that the

Word did not assume a pre-existing person, but Fulgentius goes further to say that even

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[18]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 1.18.3.778-782: "Huius inseparabilis veritas sacramenti, quo totum hominem *suscipere* dignatus est Deus et totus in Deo monstratur homo *manere* susceptus et id quod de homine naturaliter est Filium Dei et id quod de Deo Patre naturaliter est Filium fecit hominis appellari..." (italics added).

[19]Fulgentius *Ad Tras.* 3.27.2.1007-1011: "Et tamen pro unitate personae, non solum humanitatem Christi, sed Christum traditum tenet et confitetur Ecclesia, quoniam in illa traditione, salva proprietate utriusque naturae, nec homo susceptus *separari* potuit a Deo, nec Deus potuit ab homine *segregari* suscepto" (italics added). Cf. *Ad Tras.* 3.8.3.286-291: "Hoc igitur personae *inseparabilis* unitas, in qua Deus et homo unus est Christus, fecit ut et homo Christus per gratiam nasceretur ex Deo, salva veritate ac plenitudine humanae naturae, et idem Deus Christus voluntarie pateretur in carne, salva impassibili plenitudine divinae substantiae" (italics added).

[20]Fulgentius *Ep.* 17 10.264-265: "Accessit enim Deo humana substantia, non persona." *C. Fabianum fr.* 32 2.28-29: "...non personam accepit hominis, sed naturam."

[21]Augustine *Serm. Arian.* 8, cited in Micaelli, "Osservazioni," 346.

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after the assumption, the human nature is not a person.[22] Micaelli points to those passages

in which Fulgentius says that a human nature, not a person, was assumed *into the person*

of the Word.[23] At one point, Fulgentius goes so far as to say that the "flesh of the Word

received its personal beginning in the Word himself."[24] In these statements, Fulgentius has

moved away from his earlier understanding of the two natures as "equivalent constituent

parts," as Nisters puts it,[25] to a position which amounts to what would later be called the

enhypostasis of the human nature. He seems to have shifted from a notion of person,

perhaps best understood as "mask" or "role," which allows for two equivalent constituent

parts, to a more metaphysical account of the term meaning something like "acting

subject."

This development brings with it at least three changes from his earlier

Christological position. First, his emphasis on the *homo factus est* becomes much more

pronounced.[26] In fact, Fulgentius rejects any understanding of "taking on flesh" which is

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[22]Micaelli, "Osservazioni," 346.

[23]Cf. Fulg. *De incarn.* 12.309-310: "Ille [Unigenitus Deus] utique qui in personam propriam divinitatis suae non accepit personam hominis, sed naturam;" *De fide ad Petrum* 60.1133-1136: "Deus enim Verbum non accepit personam hominis, sed naturam; et in aeternam personam divinitatis accepit temporalem substantiam carnis;" *Ep. 14* 37.1499-1502: "Ut enim ipse Unigenitus, qui verus naturaliter Deus est, verus fieret et sacerdos, in persona divinitatis suae, non humanitatis nostrae personam dignatus est accipere, sed naturam."

[24]Fulgentius *Ep. 17* 18.463: "...caro...Verbi in ipso Deo Verbo personale sumpsit initium."

[25]Nisters, *Christologie*, 67 (cited above).

[26]Nisters, *Christologie*, 91.

not identical to "becoming flesh": "Moreover, God the Word did not take on flesh in such a way that he did not become flesh, since the evangelist says, 'The Word became flesh.'"[27] In his earlier writings, Fulgentius said that the Word assumed the man or was united to the man. In his later writings, he also says that the Word *is* a man.[28]

Second, in the writings of his third period, especially the influential *De fide ad Petrum*, Fulgentius finds a new way to make the distinction between Christ as God and Christ as man. Instead of relying on the terms *Verbum* and *homo*, as he does in his earlier writings, he employs the terms *Verbum* and *Verbum caro factum*.[29] This pattern of speech reflects the identification of the one person of Christ with the Word by unambiguously making *Verbum* the subject even of Christ's human experiences. This has implications for the theopaschite question which will be discussed below.

Third, in his discussions about Christ's human soul, Fulgentius makes the strong claim that Christ's human soul has full knowledge of his divinity because his human soul is God. In *Ep. 14* he states, "I do not therefore think that full knowledge of the divinity is lacking to that soul in anything. There is one person of [the soul] with the Word.

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[27]Fulgentius *Ep. 17* 11.268-270: "Non autem sic Deus Verbum carnem accepit, ut caro non fieret, cum evangelista dicat: *Verbum caro factum est*."

[28]Cf. Fulgentius *Ep. 17* 3.84-85: "...Deus homo esse naturaliter voluit...."

[29]Fulgentius *C. Fab. Fr. 4* 1.11-13: "...cum unus idemque sit Dei et hominis Filius, de Deo Patre Verbum Deus, et de virgine matre Verbum caro factum, id est Deus homo veraciter natus...." *De fide ad Petrum* 10.211-212: "...natus est enim de Patre Deus Verbum, natus est de matre Verbum caro factum."

Wisdom took on the soul in such a way that the very [soul] is Wisdom itself . . . ."[30]

Elsewhere, he says, "That soul with the Word is the one only-begotten God."[31] This is a

complete change from his position in the early work *Ad Trasamundum* where he states

that Christ's soul does not have full knowledge of his divinity. In that work, Fulgentius

understands Is. 7:12-16 to mean that as a child, Christ does not know good and evil. He

assigns this ignorance to Christ's human soul in order to avoid ascribing it to the Word.[32]

If Christ's soul is the locus of ignorance, then it cannot have full knowledge of the

divinity. In his later writings, he simply refuses to ascribe any ignorance whatsoever to

Christ.

Nisters finds the above passages from *Ep. 14* to be an "exaggeration" of the

communicatio idiomatum and evidence of a certain carelessness that characterizes that

epistle.[33] This may be true, but it does serve to underscore the fact that Fulgentius lays

great emphasis on the unity of Christ in his later writings and holds that the person of

Christ is the Word. There is no human subject in Christ besides the Word who was made

man.

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[30]Fulgentius *Ep. 14* 29.1217-1220: "Non ergo existimo illi animae in aliquo plenam divinitatis deesse notitiam, cuius una est persona cum Verbo; quam sic sapientia suscepit, ut eadem sapientia ipsa sit...."

[31]Fulg. *Ep. 14* 26.1065-1066: "...anima illa cum Verbo unus est Unigenitus Deus."

[32]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 1.8.2.307-309: "et si anima vel intellectus naturae in Christo defuisse credatur humanae, quid in infante bonum malumque dicitur ignorasse?" Cf. Nisters, *Christologie*, 102-7.

[33]Nisters, *Christologie*, 94.

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On the whole, then, Fulgentius's earlier Christology sounds Antiochene in its emphasis on the distinction between the two natures in order to avoid Arian assertions that the human experiences of Christ imply that the Word is not God. His later Christology adopts more of the emphases of Alexandria since he stresses the unity of Christ more and takes the decisive step of identifying the person of Christ with the Word. This development seems to have been occasioned by an indirect contact with the concerns of Cyril of Alexandria, mediated to Fulgentius by the Scythian monks.

6.2 Comparison with the Scythian monks

Nisters and Grillmeier both view the Scythian monks' *Epistula ad episcopos* as an important catalyst for Fulgentius's Christological development.[34] As discussed above, *Ep. 17* is the earliest of Fulgentius's works to bear the marks of Christological development. The remainder of this chapter examines *Ep. 17* in comparison with the Scythian monks' *Epistula ad episcopos*, to which *Ep. 17* is a response. It attempts to show to what extent Fulgentius agrees with the Scythian monks on the issues of the Theopaschite controversy and to bring to light the particular areas in which the Scythian monks may have influenced Fulgentius's Christology.

6.2.1 The Person of Christ

Fulgentius himself identifies the two components of the Scythian monks' Christology which he considers to be foundational to their position and with which he

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[34]Nisters, *Christologie*, 91; Grillmeier, "Vorbereitung des Mittelalters," 803.

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agrees: that the tradition of the fathers confesses Christ in one person and two natures and that Mary truly and strictly speaking bore the Word who is essentially or naturally (*essentialiter sive naturaliter*) united to the flesh. On these two points, he tells the Scythian monks, "hangs the rest of what the profession of your treatise includes about the incarnation of the Lord."[35]

As Nisters notes, however, Fulgentius approaches Christology primarily from an anti-Arian point of view, while the Scythian monks's concerns are clearly anti-Nestorian.[36] One consequence of this difference is that even though they agree that Mary is truly and strictly speaking the Mother of God, this datum plays different roles in their Christologies. Nisters, for example, observes that the Scythian monks find in the confession of the theotokos a guarantee of the unity of Christ, while Fulgentius uses it to rule out a heavenly origin of Christ's flesh and an interval of time between the conception and the arrival of the divine majesty.[37] These differences, however, do not constitute a substantive disagreement, but merely reflect different concerns.

On Christ's one person and two natures, there is also substantive agreement between Fulgentius and the Scythian monks. There is some difference in terminology, however. The Scythian monks use language from Cyril of Alexandria, especially from the

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[35]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 2.54-55: "Ex his enim pendent cetera quae de incarnatione Domini sermonis vestri professio comprehendit."

[36]Nisters, *Christologie*, 81.

[37]Nisters, *Christologie*, 84.

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twelve anathemas. Fulgentius does not adopt this language himself, but he does find ways to address the concerns of the Scythian monks which led them to adopt the language.

For example, the Scythian monks describe the union of two natures in Christ as a "natural" uniting. In doing so, they are drawing on Cyril's third anathema which affirms a ἕνωσιν φυσικήν.[38] Not only do the Scythian monks consistently speak of an *unitio naturalis*, they explicitly condemn those who would assert a *personalem, vel subsistentialem . . . unitionem*.[39] For the Scythian monks, a "personal uniting" would imply there are two persons. Fulgentius occasionally also speaks of a natural uniting. As we saw above, he approves the Scythian monks' statement that Mary bore God the Word who was "essentially or naturally united to the flesh" (*essentialiter sive naturaliter carni unitum*).[40] Fulgentius elsewhere says that God willed to be man *naturaliter*.[41]

Fulgentius also wants to affirm a *personalis unitas*, however. He does so in a way that addresses both his own concerns and those of the Scythian monks. He says that human nature goes into union (*unionem*) with the Word of God "not by natural confusion,

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[38]The Scythian monks cite the third anathema in *Ep. ad episc.* 5.72-76. In their Latin translation, produced by Dionysius Exiguus, Cyril affirms an *unitatem naturalem*. When the Scythian monks put the matter in their own words, however, they prefer the term *unitio naturalis* because it makes clear that the two natures remain after the union. See above, pp. 104-6.

[39]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 5.68-70. *Subsistentia* is the Latin equivalent of hypostasis.

[40]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 2.52-53.

[41]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 3.84-85.

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but only by personal unity (*unitatem*)."[42] In this statement, he is guarding against the danger he apparently senses that the Scythian monks' *naturalis unitio* may suggest that there is only one nature. At the same time, he gives assurances that when he uses the term *personalis unitas*, he does not mean to imply there are two persons. He says, "When we say that our Lord Christ is God and man, we are pointing out not a personal duality, but the truest union (*unionem*) of each nature effected without any confusion."[43] Thus, Fulgentius registers his agreement with the Christological position of the Scythian monks without necessarily adopting their terminology.

Two further examples of differences in terminology come to light because the Scythian monks say that Christ is "composite," and they also affirm Cyril's formula "one incarnate nature of God the Word."[44] As Nisters notes, Fulgentius passes over these claims in silence. Nisters suggests that Fulgentius may be following Gelasius in his discomfort with the "one nature" formula and that Fulgentius may refrain from endorsing the term "composite" because it has an Arian and Apollinarian background.[45] Despite Fulgentius' hesitation about these terms, it is unlikely that he considered them totally incompatible with his position. The Scythian monks, after all, explain the terms in such a

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[42]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 9.242-243: "...non naturali confusione, sed solum personali unitate...."

[43]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 10.258-260: "Cum...Dominum Christum Deum hominemque dicimus, non personalem dualitatem, sed utriusque naturae unionem verissimam sine ulla facta confusione monstramus."

[44]"Composite": *Cap.* 9, *Dial. c. Nest.* 2.2, *Ep. ad episc.* 6-7; "one nature": *Cap.* 1, *Libell. fid.* 13, *Ep. ad episc.* 3.

[45]Nisters, *Christologie*, 82, 86.

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way as to make clear their belief that the two natures remain. They assert, for example, both the two-nature formula of Chalcedon and the one-nature formula of Cyril, quoting from Cyril's *Ep. 46* to Succensus to show that the "incarnate" in "one incarnate nature of God the Word" indicates that the human nature remains as well as the divine nature.[46]

Nevertheless, Fulgentius does not adopt these characteristically Cyrillian formulations of the Scythian monks.[47] He prefers instead to stay with the "one person" and "two natures" of Chalcedon. Thus, the influence of the Scythian monks on Fulgentius is not to be found in their use of Cyrillian formulations. Instead, it is to be found in their concept of "person."

The Scythian monks do not define *persona* in their letter to Fulgentius, but their explanation of their theopaschite formula must have challenged Fulgentius's early tendency to think of the person of Christ as the sum of both natures. The Scythian monks say that God the Word, with his flesh, is *unus . . . ex Trinitate*.[48] Thus, the one person who has two natures is not simply an *unitas*, but is the Word himself. On this basis, the Scythian monks are able to say, in agreement with Cyril's twelfth anathema, that "God the Word suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh and was buried in the flesh . . . ."[49]

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[46]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 3.36-52.

[47]One exception would be that Fulgentius does affirm that Christ is *unus ex utraque atque in utraque, id est humana divinaque natura* (*Ep. 17* 17.436-437), combining Chalcedon's "in two natures" with Cyril's "from two natures."

[48]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 8.130.

[49]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 8.134-135: "...deum verbum passum carne et crucifixum carne et sepultum carne...."

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Because they understand the one who undergoes human experiences to be the Word, the Scythian monks also defend the statement that "the man Christ is the Word."[50] As support for this statement, they adduce 1 John 1:1 which reads, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched concerning the Word of Life . . . ."[51] They argue that there is no way the Word could have been touched with human hands if he had not become a man (*nisi fieret homo*).[52] Likewise, they argue that God could not have been anointed (Ps. 45) "if he had not become a man" (*nisi fieret homo*).[53] The almighty God is not simply *united* to the boy whom Mary bore, he *is* that boy.[54] Thus, for the Scythian monks, *homo* refers not to the human nature, but to the Word himself because the Word, who became a man, is the only person in Christ.

From these considerations, we may glean two important features of the Scythian monks' Christology. First, they identify the person of Christ as the Word. Second, they appeal to Christ's human nature to explain *how* the Word can undergo human experiences. These two features may also be noted in Fulgentius's *Ep. 17*.

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[50]Scythian monks, *Ep. ad episc.* 9.140: "Similiter etiam hominem Christum dicimus verbum...."

[51]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 9.141-143.

[52]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 9.143-145: "Neque enim verbum secundum deitatis suae naturam tractari potuit manibus humanis, nisi fieret homo."

[53]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 10.163-167.

[54]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 10.157-159: "Et idcirco acquiescendum illis nullatenus credimus, qui puero illi deum fortem *unitum* asserunt, nec deum fortem ipsum *esse* puerum credunt..." (italics added).

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We have already seen these two features in the outline of Fulgentius's Christological development above. In his early writings, Fulgentius commonly speaks of God being "united" to a man or "assuming" a man. In *Ep. 17*, however, he begins to say that God *is* a man.[55] He also tends, in his early writings, to treat the two natures as equivalent parts of the unity, but in *Ep. 17*, he upsets the parity by emphasizing that the person of the Word is eternal, while the human nature was not "personally conceived" (*personaliter concepta*) before the incarnation.[56] Instead, "the flesh of the Word received its personal beginning in God the Word himself."[57] "A human substance, not a human person, was joined to God."[58] Finally, Fulgentius adopts the Scythian monks' way of appealing to the incarnation as an explanation of how an impassible God could undergo human experiences. He says that God would not have been able to taste death "if the same had not become a true man" (*nisi idem verus homo fieret*).[59] All of these developments indicate that in *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius begins to define the person of Christ as the Word, and the parallels to the *Epistula ad episcopos* suggest that the Scythian monks prompted this development.

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[55]Cf. Fulg. *Ep. 17* 3.105-106: "Verbum...caro factum in veritate humana caro esse coepit...." 11.268-269: "Non autem sic Deus Verbum carnem accepit, ut caro non fieret...." 18.446-447: "Deus Verbum...Christus esse coepit...."

[56]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18.461.

[57]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18.463: "...caro...Verbi in ipso Deo Verbo personale sumpsit initium."

[58]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 10.264-265: "Accessit enim Deo humana substantia, non persona."

[59]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 16.374-376. Cf. 19.552-553: "Nisi enim idem verus Deus homo verus esset, tradi morique non posset...."

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6.2.2 Three Exegetical Developments

Further similarities to the Scythian monks may be observed in three exegetical developments which are related to the transformation of Fulgentius's Christology. Fulgentius's identification of the person of Christ as the Word changes the way he reads Ps. 45:6-7, Heb. 2:9, and 1 Pet. 4:1. These passages are singled out here because, as we shall see, Fulgentius in *Ep. 17* abandons his earlier exegesis and adopts the Scythian monks' reading of these texts.

6.2.2.1 Psalm 45:6-7

Ps. 45 states, "Your throne, O God, is forever. A rod of equity is the rod of your kingdom. You loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy above your companions." Fulgentius discusses this text in book 3 of *Ad Trasamundum*. There he is concerned to show that Jesus' crucifixion does not imply that he is less than God. Fulgentius argues that the Lord of Glory may be said to be crucified (1 Cor. 2:8) "because of the unity of person."[60] This unity, he continues, is brought about by God assuming the *homo*. On the basis of this assumption, the *homo* may be called God. In order to support this point, Fulgentius appeals to Ps. 45:

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[60]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.12.1.377-378: "Per hanc unitatem personae Dominus gloriae asseritur crucifixus...."

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That man is called God because of the fact that he is assumed by God, which the book of Psalms indisputably shows us in which it is said, "Your throne, O God, is forever. The rod of equity is the rod of your kingdom. You loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness before your companions."[61]

The logic of Fulgentius's argument runs as follows: the passage is addressed to "God" because it begins, "Your throne, O God . . . ." "God," however, here refers to the *homo* who may be called God because he has been anointed with the oil of gladness, i.e., he has been assumed by the Word. If the Psalms give the name "God" to the *homo*, we are likewise entitled to understand the "Lord of Glory" in 1 Cor. 2:8 to refer to the *homo*. This overthrows the Arian argument that the crucifixion proves that Jesus is less than God.

Fulgentius continues his discussion of Ps. 45 in *Ad Trasamundum* by citing more evidence that the anointing in Ps. 45 applies to the *homo*.[62] This is clear from Scripture, he argues, because Peter calls the one anointed by God "Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 10:38) which refers to the human nature, not to God.[63] Furthermore, David refers to the

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[61]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.12.3.395-400: "...homo ille Deus dicitur, pro eo quod est a Deo susceptus, quod nobis indubitanter psalmorum liber ostendit, in quo dicitur: *Thronus tuus, Deus, in saeculum saeculi, virga aequitatis, virga regni tui. Dilexisti iustitiam et odisti iniquitatem. Propterea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus oleo exsultationis prae participibus tuis.*"

[62]Fulgentius's entire discussion of Ps. 45 in *Ad Tras.* is remarkably similar to the discussion of the same passages in Hilary's *De Trinitate* 11.18-19.

[63]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.13.1.401-404: "Hanc autem unctionem ad hominem potius referendam, beatus Petrus ostendit dicens: *Iesum a Nazareth, quem unxit Deus Spiritu sancto et virtute.* Quae igitur a Nazareth, nisi humana in Christo natura potuit praedicari?"

companions (*participes*) of the anointed one. Since the divinity of the Son has no

companions, Ps. 45 must be speaking of the *homo*.[64]

Fulgentius does say a little later that "God was anointed in the flesh." However, in

light of the preceding, one should probably understand "God" to refer to the *homo*. Such

an interpretation makes sense in light of the soteriological point that Fulgentius draws

from the statement. For Fulgentius in *Ad Trasamundum*, the fact that "God" is anointed

in the flesh means that the *homo* receives the full grace of sanctification at his baptism

which allows the faithful to recognize that they receive grace in baptism as well.[65] The

importance of the exaltation of the *homo* in Fulgentius's early thought may also be seen in

a passage in the *Responsiones Fulgentii*, where he asks, "What is the 'first-born from the

dead' except the man (*homo*) Christ Jesus who was the first to be exalted to the Son of

God from human sinners?"[66]

From this discussion of Fulgentius's early exegesis of Ps. 45, two points emerge.

First, Fulgentius thinks the anointing refers to the *homo*, not to God. Second, Fulgentius

views the anointing as an exaltation of the man to Godhood. This exaltation is not

identical to *Bewährungschristologie* because Fulgentius nowhere states that the exaltation

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[64]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.14.4.448-452: "David enim dicit: *Unxit te Deus, Deus tuus oleo exsultationis prae participibus tuis,* et utique hominem significat, cum participes nominat; nam illa divinitas Filii Dei nullius creaturae habet participium, quia cum creatura non habet naturale consortium...."

[65]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.14.4.452: "Deus ergo in carne unctus est, ut in illo homine Christo,...plena divinae sanctificationis agnosceretur gratia, quae nomine Trinitatis esset fidelibus conferenda."

[66]Fulg. *Resp. Fulg.* 3.11.263-265: "Quid enim est *primogenitus ex mortuis*, nisi primus ex peccatoribus hominibus homo Christus Iesus in Dei Filium exaltatus?"

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is in response to Christ's human merits, nor does he posit a pre-existing human Christ. However, the notion of exaltation to Godhood is present in early Fulgentius. Therefore, Nisters is perhaps overstating his case when he claims that Fulgentius "has no trace of the *Bewährungslehre*."[67]

Both of these points change in his later exegesis of Ps. 45 after his contact with the Scythian monks. In their letter to Fulgentius, the Scythian monks adduce Ps. 45 to establish the point that "God became Christ, but Christ did not become God."[68] They steadfastly reject any mention of exaltation in connection with the incarnation. On the contrary, they maintain, Ps. 45 proves the condescension of the Word because the only way God could be anointed is if he became man.[69] For the Scythian monks, therefore, God is the one who undergoes the anointing. They never identify the event to which the anointing refers, but for them the anointing is not identical to the incarnation but rather presupposes it. They are probably thinking of Jesus' baptism as the time when he was anointed.

Fulgentius does not actually cite Ps. 45 in *Ep. 17*, but he does accept the Scythian monks' conclusions from it. He states that before the incarnation, the Word was not Christ, but only God. God the Word "began to be Christ" (*Christus esse coepit*) when he took on the form of a slave. Before the incarnation, the flesh of Christ not only was not

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[67]Nisters, *Christologie*, 72: "...von der Bewährungslehre hat er [Fulgentius] keine Spur...."

[68]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 10.163-11.169.

[69]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 10.166-167: "Quomodo autem ungi poterat deus, cuius thronus est in saeculum saeculi, nisi fieret homo?"

Christ, it was not conceived as a person.[70] Anointing, or becoming Christ, is therefore no longer something that happens to the *homo* as it is in *Ad Trasamundum*. It now refers to the condescension of the Word, though this happens *secundum humanitatem*.

In *Contra Fastidiosum*, written in Fulgentius's third period of literary activity, Fulgentius adopts the Scythian monks' argument that God became Christ in order to undergo human experiences. Commenting on Peter's statement in Acts 2:36 that God made Jesus, who was crucified, both Lord and Christ, Fulgentius says that the Only-begotten God who created the world was made Christ so that he could be crucified.[71] This argument is a key indication that Fulgentius now views the Word as the one experiencing anointing (becoming Christ) and the crucifixion. Instead of appealing to the incarnation as a way to avoid ascribing anointing to the Word, he now appeals to the incarnation to explain *how* it is that the Word can undergo this human experience.

This move away from the *homo* as the object of the anointing is reflected also in the *Contra Fabianum*, another work from Fulgentius's third period of literary activity. In fragment 14, Fulgentius wants to show that "Son of God" signifies not only Christ's deity but his humanity as well. In order to establish this, he appeals to Ps. 45: "To be sure, it is clear that the Son of God was anointed by the Holy Spirit not according to his divinity but according to his humanity. Nevertheless, the blessed David calls the one who was anointed 'God,' saying, 'God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your

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[70]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18.444-461.

[71]Fulg. *C. Fastid.* 8.4.372-376: "Digne utique dicit factum, quem praedicat crucifixum, Deus quippe Unigenitus, incomprehensibilis et immortalis,...suo dignatus est opere Christus fieri, ut Iudaeorum posset opere crucifigi...."

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companions.'"[72] Next, he points out that in Phil. 2, "Jesus Christ" is in the form of God. Thus, not only does "God" include the human nature as well as the divine, but "Jesus Christ" includes the divine nature as well as the human. In this fragment, Fulgentius refuses to limit the concrete terms "God" and "Jesus" to one or the other of the two natures.

In effect, Fulgentius is abandoning the argument he made in *Ad Trasamundum*. As we saw above, in *Ad Trasamundum* Fulgentius identified the anointed one in Ps. 45 as the *homo* because Peter calls the anointed one "Jesus of Nazareth," a term which for early Fulgentius refers only to the *homo*. On this basis, Fulgentius argued that "God" is Ps. 45 must refer to the *homo* and not to Word. By limiting the anointing to the *homo*, he hoped to side-step the Arian argument that if Christ was anointed, he cannot not be God. In *Contra Fabianum*, on the other hand, the "God" of Ps. 45 includes both natures.

In *Ep. 14*, also from the third period, Fulgentius reverts back to something that sounds like his exegesis in *Ad Trasamundum*. He says that the human soul of Christ has full knowledge of his deity because "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions" which he takes to mean that the soul of Christ is given the Holy Spirit without measure.[73] In this case, the soul of Christ receives the anointing

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[72]Fulg. *C. Fab.* fr. 14.1.9-13: "Claret quippe Filium Dei, non secundum divinitatem, sed secundum humanitatem, unctum esse Spiritu sancto; et tamen eum qui unctus est, Deum beatus David appellat, dicens: *Unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, oleo exsultationis prae participibus tuis*." Fulgentius seems to be taking the first *Deus* as a vocative, though the identification of the addressee in the Psalm as God could also be gleaned from the beginning of Ps. 45:6, "Your throne, O God, is forever."

[73]Fulg. *Ep. 14* 30.1224-1237.

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much like the *homo* is said to be anointed in *Ad Trasamundum*. However, he does not intend in *Ep. 14* to ascribe anointing to the *homo* in order to keep from ascribing it to God. Indeed, as we have seen, he says in *Ep. 14* that the soul is Wisdom itself. Thus, his ascription of anointing to Jesus' human soul is consistent with his later Christological position because it serves to emphasize the unity, not the duality, of Christ.

Another development in Fulgentius's exegesis of Ps. 45 is that he begins to focus on the Word's condescension. That is not to say that he stops speaking of human exaltation in connection with the incarnation. As noted just previously, he says in *Ep. 14* that Christ's human soul receives the Holy Spirit without measure. Furthermore, in *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius says that "God became Christ . . . so that the flesh could be called by the name of the Word, that is, God."[74] Thus, unlike the Scythian monks, he remains willing to speak of the exaltation of the human nature in the incarnation. However, when Fulgentius understands the Word to be the one who is anointed, the Word's humility becomes his central theme regarding the anointing even though the language of exaltation does not disappear.

The development described above is consistent with the overall development of Fulgentius's Christology, characterized by a move from seeing the one person of Christ as the sum of the two natures to identifying the one person of Christ as the Word. In his earlier exegesis of Ps. 45, Fulgentius tends to view the anointing as something that happens to the *homo* and exalts him to Godhood. The *homo* seems to fu...ction as a more

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[74]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18.449-452: "Deus ergo factus est Christus,...ut caro posset Verbi, hoc est Dei, nomine nuncupari."

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or less separate subject from the Word in this process. Once he defines the person as the Word, this independence disappears and the Word humbles himself to become the anointed one.

6.2.2.2 Hebrews 2:9

The change in Fulgentius's interpretation of Hebrews 2:9 is even more dramatic since it involves not only a change in his understanding of the text, but possibly a change in the text itself. In his early writings, Fulgentius cites the text as follows: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than angels, because of his suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, in order that without God (*sine Deo*) he might taste death for all."[75] *Sine Deo* is the Latin translation of χωρὶς θεοῦ, a variant reading which replaces χάριτι θεοῦ in some texts of Heb. 2:9. Fulgentius uses this passage to show that Christ has both a passible and an impassible nature. He says, "Therefore, that man tasted death without God insofar as it pertains to the condition of the flesh, but not without God, insofar as it pertains to the assumption by the deity."[76] His point is that although the Word assumed a man who suffered, nevertheless the Word remained impassible. Thus, the primary thrust of Heb. 2:9 for early Fulgentius is to insulate the divinity of Christ from the suffering in order to preserve divine impassibility.

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[75]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.20.1.695-698: "Eum autem, qui modico quam angeli minoratus est, videmus Iesum propter passionem mortis, gloria et honore coronatum, ut *sine Deo* pro omnibus gustaret mortem..." (italics added).

[76]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.20.2.701-704: "Sine Deo igitur homo ille gustavit mortem, quantum ad conditionem attinet carnis, non autem sine Deo, quantum ad susceptionem pertinet deitatis...."

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In his response to the Scythian monks, however, he takes a different view. Fulgentius states, "If the same [God] did not become true man, he would not be able to taste death, and the same man who tasted death, if he were not true God and eternal life, would not be able to conquer death."[77] This is not a direct quote from Heb. 2:9, but it certainly evokes the passage by using the phrase "tasted death." Here, however, Fulgentius wants to stress that God is the one who tasted death. Instead of invoking Christ's human nature to establish a sense in which Christ's death happened "without God," he appeals to the human nature in *Ep. 17* as that which makes God able (*posset*) to suffer. Just as in his exegesis of Ps. 45, one of the hallmarks of his development is that he begins to use the incarnation as an explanation of *how* God can undergo human experiences.

Fulgentius never actually cites Heb. 2:9 verbatim in a form which does not include the *sine Deo*. He simply speaks of God "tasting death" in his later writings. Since the phrase "tasting death" certainly evokes Heb. 2:9, Fulgentius may be aware of the other reading of the text. Origen, for example, knows both readings.[78]

There is, however, another possible text evoked by Fulgentius's talk of God "tasting death." In the *Epistula ad episcopos*, the Scythian monks cite Cyril of Alexandria's twelfth anathema, which reads, "If anyone does not confess that God the

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[77]Fulg. *Ep.17* 16.375-376: "...nisi idem [Deus] verus homo fieret, mortem gustare non posset; et idem homo qui mortem gustavit, si verus Deus et vita aeterna non esset, mortem vincere non valeret."

[78]Origen, *In Joan.* 1.35. Cf. James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952), 25-6.

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Word suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh (*mortem carne gustasse*) . . . , let him be anathema."[79] In *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius makes a statement which uses the same language: "Christ the Son of God tasted death for us in the flesh (*mortem carne gustasse*)."[80] Therefore, Fulgentius's later comments about God "tasting death" may be prompted by Cyril's twelfth anathema which he would have known from the Scythian monks who, in turn, relied upon the translation of Dionysius Exiguus.

The development of Fulgentius's handling of Jesus "tasting death" is consistent with his general Christological development. In his early period, when Fulgentius views the one person as the sum of both natures, he is able to allow the two natures to operate independently enough to stress that there is an important sense in which the man tasted death without God. However, in his later period, Fulgentius identifies the person of Christ with the Word, so the human nature cannot do anything without God. Instead, the human nature explains the means by which the Word tasted death. To be sure, Fulgentius continues to appeal to Christ's human nature to protect the impassibility of the divine nature, but he no longer makes the *homo*, or the human nature, the subject of Christ's suffering.

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[79]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 8.136-139: "Si quis non confitetur deum verbum passum carne, crucifixum carne, et mortem carne gustasse..., anathema sit."

[80]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18bis.496-497: "...Christum Filium Dei pro nobis mortem carne gustasse...."

A similar development may be traced in the way Fulgentius handles 1 Pet. 4:1, which states that Christ suffered "in the flesh," and in the way Fulgentius qualifies divine suffering in general. Throughout his career, Fulgentius is committed to confessing divine impassibility. Therefore, he does not make unqualified statements ascribing suffering to God. Instead he specifies that God suffered *in carne*, *carne*, *secundum humanitatem*, or other such phrases. In his early writings, however, Fulgentius has a way of preserving divine impassibility which he abandons in the second period of his literary activity. He says that God suffered "in the flesh" but not "with the flesh."[81]

At first glance, it may seem that the statement that God suffers "with" the flesh implies two acting subjects: God and the flesh. This, is not, however, Fulgentius's objection to it. In fact, far from introducing a Nestorian separation of the two natures, the formulation actually confuses the two natures according to Fulgentius. "God did not suffer with the man," Fulgentius maintains, "because in the one Christ the substance of God and man is not confused."[82]

The formulation would confuse the two natures because it would compromise the integrity of the divine nature by making it naturally susceptible to suffering, thereby eliminating a crucial difference between the human and divine natures. By denying that

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[81]E.g., Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.17.2.587-588: "...Deus passionem in carne sensit, cum carne non sensit."

[82]*Ad Tras.* 3.18.3.627-629. "...non est compassus Deus homini, quia in uno Christo non est confusa Dei hominisque substantia."

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God suffers "with" the flesh, Fulgentius is denying that God suffers *substantialiter*.[83]

Thus, Fulgentius rejects the "with" formulation from anti-Arian, not anti-Nestorian motivations.

Why, however, does Fulgentius latch onto the word "with" and load it with this baggage? There is at least some precedent for rejecting the idea that God suffers "with" the flesh. Augustine, for example, effectively rules out the "suffering with" formulation in his discussion of the sense in which God can show pity. Augustine states,

> With regard to pity, if you take away the compassion (*conpassionem*)
> which involved a sharing of misery with him whom you pity, so that there
> remains the peaceful goodness of helping and freeing from misery, some
> kind of knowledge of the divine pity is suggested.[84]

Although Augustine is not discussing Christ's crucifixion at this point, he does dismiss the idea of *conpassio* as inappropriate to God. In a different context, Plotinus expresses reserve towards the soul "suffering with" the body. He states, "[The soul] gets rid of pains or if it cannot, bears them quietly and makes them less by not suffering with the body (τῷ μὴ συμπάσχειν)."[85] Although Plotinus does not say the soul is incapable of suffering with the body, he does imply that such "suffering with" is not becoming to the soul's

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[83]Cf. *Ad Tras.* 3.1.4.37-40, where Fulgentius pairs *in carne* and *substantialiter* as opposite poles: "Pereunt in verbo crucis non solum qui putant Dei Filium quae humana sunt *in carne* pati non potuisse, verum etiam qui credunt divinitatem Filii Dei dolores vel passionem *subtantialiter* in cruce sensisse" (italics added).

[84]Augustine, *De div. quaest.* 2.2.3, CCL 44, 79. "Item de misericordia si auferas conpassionem cum eo quem misereris participatae miseriae et remaneat tranquilla bonitas subveniendi et a miseria liberandi, insinuatur misericordiae divinae qualiscumque cognitio." Cited in Joseph Hallman, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 121.

[85]Plotinus *Enn.* 1.2.5.10-12. Cited in Hallman, *Descent of God*, 17.

higher status. These two passages may not be the direct source of Fulgentius's assumptions about the implications of "suffering with," but they do show that Fulgentius was not alone in his conviction that "suffering with" the body is closely bound to the physical and therefore cannot be ascribed to God. Furthermore, as we saw above, Fulgentius's text of Heb. 2:9 says that Christ tasted death "without God." Perhaps Fulgentius sees this as a Scriptural mandate for assertions of divine suffering that avoid the word "with."

Fulgentius affirms that God suffered "in" the flesh. This statement has Scriptural support in 1 Peter 4:1. Fulgentius cites this passage as "Christo igitur in carne passo . . . ."[86] He makes much of the fact that Peter did not merely say, "Christ suffered," but added "in the flesh," and he goes on to assert that this qualifier indicates that Christ's divine substance remains impassible.[87]

The qualifier "in the flesh" is also consonant with Fulgentius's early Christology. As we have seen, one of the primary ways Fulgentius asserts the unity of Christ's person in his early writings is by saying that the Word and the *homo* remain in each other. It is not surprising, therefore, that Fulgentius bases the "in" formulation on the unity of person: "God suffered in the man because there is one person of God and the man."[88]

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[86]*Ad Tras.* 3.9.1.309. The Greek reads, Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί....

[87]*Ad Tras.* 3.9.2.309-316.

[88]*Ad Tras.* 3.18.3.626-627. "Passus est Deus in homine, quia una est Dei hominisque persona...."

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Despite its association with the unity of Christ's person, God's suffering "in" the flesh is sometimes expressed by Fulgentius in a way that seems to allow the flesh to be an acting subject independent from the Word. For example, Fulgentius says, "But although *only the flesh* died and was revived in Christ, on account of the unity of the person of God and man, the Son of God *is said* to have died."[89] Nisters sees such expressions as reducing divine suffering to mere metaphor.[90] That may be pushing the matter too far. Presumably, Fulgentius thinks we are justified in saying God suffered because it is in some sense true. However, it is fair to say that the primary purpose of Fulgentius's early qualifications of divine suffering is to stress that there is a sense in which it is *not* true to say that God suffered. These qualifications accomplish this purpose by assigning the suffering to the *homo*.

In his later writings, Fulgentius abandons the distinction between suffering "in" and suffering "with" the flesh. He never expressly repudiates it, but it disappears completely. Furthermore, he would not be able to say, as he does in *Ep. 17*, that God was born "with the flesh" (*cum . . . carne*)[91] if the ban on "with" were still operative. He does continue to use the qualification *in carne*, but he no longer contrasts it with *cum carne*.

One possible reason for this change is an Arian argument which Fulgentius faces in book 3 of *Ad Monimum*, a work of the second period of his literary activity. The Arian

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[89]*Ad Tras.* 3.22.1.1259-1262: "Verumtamen cum *sola caro* moreretur et resuscitaretur in Christo, propter unitatem personae Dei et hominis, Filius Dei *dicitur* mortuus" (italics added).

[90]Nisters, *Christologie*, 68.

[91]*Ep. 17* 8.230-231.

argument runs as follows: according to John 1, the Word is "with God" (*apud Deum*);

however, "with God" is not the same as "in God" because "with God" implies that the

Word is external to God, while "in God" would mean he is God. Fulgentius counters the

argument by adducing a list of passages in which *apud* and *in* are used interchangeably.

Fulgentius's own distinction between suffering "in" and suffering "with" does not

come up in *Ad Monimum*, book 3. However, it is possible that Fulgentius's rejection of

any distinction between *in* and *apud* in *Ad Monimum* may have caused him to reconsider

his own distinction between *in* and *cum* in *Ad Trasamundum*. The cases are not exactly

parallel because *apud* is not the same word as *cum*, but they are in the same semantic

domain, so perhaps Fulgentius felt the difficulty.

Another possible reason for the change is simply Fulgentius's Christological

development. After his contact with the Scythian monks when Fulgentius identifies the

one person as the Word, the independence of the human subject disappears. For example,

we have seen above that in *Ad Trasamundum*, Fulgentius says that "only the flesh" (*sola

caro*) dies. When he wants to make a similar point in *Ep. 17*, however, Fulgentius says

that God suffered "by means of only the flesh" (*sola carne*), moving the flesh from the

nominative into the ablative. In his later writings, the qualifications on divine suffering are

no longer intended to establish a sense in which God did *not* suffer, but rather to explain

how God suffered.

This is perhaps seen most clearly in the third-period work, *De fide ad Petrum*. In

this work, Fulgentius does not protect divine impassibility by distinguishing the Word

from the *homo* as he does in his early writings. He distinguishes instead between the

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Word and the Word made flesh. Fulgentius attributes human experiences not to the Word considered apart from the incarnation, but to the Word made flesh or the Word made man. He states, "The same God made man went out, and the same God made man hung on the cross, and the same God made man lay in the tomb, and the same God made man rose on the third day . . . ."[92] Fulgentius makes no attempt to sequester the Word from the suffering but inserts the qualification "made man" to indicate by what means the Word is able to undergo these human experiences.

The two major developments in Fulgentius's qualification of divine suffering, therefore, are consistent with his overall Christological development. First, by identifying the one person of Christ as the Word, Fulgentius eliminates language which may suggest that the flesh is an independent subject. This makes the Word clearly the subject of the suffering. Second, the flesh or the human nature then serves to answer the question *how* God can suffer.

Thus, the three exegetical developments bear the marks of the Scythian monks. Not only does Fulgentius identify the person of Christ as the Word as the Scythian monks do with their formula, *Unus ex Trinitate crucifixus est carne*, he also adopts their characteristic manner of appealing to the human nature of Christ in order to explain *how* the Word can undergo human experiences such as anointing and death.

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[92]*De fide ad Petrum* 11.220-223. "...idem Deus homo factus exivit, et in cruce idem Deus homo factus pependit, et in sepulcro idem Deus homo factus iacuit, et ab inferis idem Deus homo factus die tertio resurrexit...."

6.2.3 One of the Trinity

Fulgentius does make a slight modification of the Scythian monks' phrase *unus ex Trinitate*. He prefers to speak of *una ex Trinitate persona*.[93] Fulgentius never makes a point of this distinction, but some scholars find it significant. Nisters and Schäfer both see Fulgentius's correction as an indication of caution on his part.[94] The danger of *unus ex Trinitate*, on this view, would be that it might incorrectly be thought to refer to the divine nature rather than the person of the Word. To ascribe the crucifixion, then, to *unus ex Trinitate* would be to ascribe suffering to the divine nature, an error of which the Monophysites are frequently accused. Amann and Schwartz see Fulgentius's modification to constitute a refusal fully to endorse the Scythian monks' position.[95] Schwartz points out that John Maxentius had opposed the formulation "one person of the Trinity."[96]

As we saw in chapter 4, however, the reason Maxentius opposed this formulation is that he suspected that its proponents understood the "one person of the Trinity" to refer to the *homo* and not to the Word. Fulgentius clearly does not intend this. Therefore, it would be misleading to suggest that Fulgentius's modification represents a substantive disagreement with the Scythian monks.

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[93]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 18bis.481-482.

[94]Nisters, *Christologie*, 89-90; Schäfer, "Die Christologie des hl. Cyrillus von Alexandrien in der römischen Kirche. 432-534," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 77 (1895): 446.

[95]Amann, "Scythes (Moines)," in *DTC* (Paris: Letouzey, 1941), 1750; Schwartz, ACO 4.2, xi.

[96]Schwartz, ACO 4.2, xi.

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It is fair, however, to say that Fulgentius's modified formula is more cautious than that of the Scythian monks. We can get a sense of Fulgentius's concerns on this point from his student Ferrandus.[97] When Pope John II is considering his reaction to the Scythian monks' formula, *unus ex Trinitate*, the Roman deacon Anatolius writes Ferrandus a letter asking him what he thinks of it. Ferrandus unequivocally approves the formula. He does note, however, that some people suspect the formula of being Eutychian because they understand the *unus* to refer to the divine nature, not the person of the Word.[98] In response to this objection, Ferrandus allows what he considers a more cautious formulation: *una persona ex Trinitate*. Nevertheless, he insists that, strictly speaking, *unus* refers to the person; therefore, the more cautious formulation is really unnecessary.[99] If we may assume that Ferrandus's views on the matter reflect those of his teacher, then we may conclude that Fulgentius agrees with the substance of the Scythian monks phrase, *unus ex Trinitate*, but he adds the word *persona* to guard it against a Eutychian misinterpretation.

6.2.4 Grace

One final point of comparison between Fulgentius and the Scythian monks is the role of grace in the incarnation. The Scythian monks want to make clear that the union in

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[97]Schäfer calls attention to Ferrandus's letter ("Die Christologie des hl. Cyrillus," 446).

[98]Ferrandus *Ep. 3* 11 (PL 67, 900D).

[99]Ferrandus *Ep. 3* 15 (PL 67, 904A).

Christ is a natural uniting and not some other kind of inferior unity. They label as impious those who would say that the one whom Mary bore is God by grace and not by nature.[100] If he were God by grace, he would be no different from one of the prophets.[101] In order to avoid this impression, the Scythian monks steer clear of the term "grace" when they speak of the incarnation.

Fulgentius, on the other hand, has no hesitation about speaking of "grace" in the context of the incarnation. He does not intend by this language to suggest that God operates in Christ as in one of the prophets.[102] He means instead to point out that the incarnation is motivated and brought about by God's undeserved good will and is not a response to human merit. By retaining the term "grace" to describe the motivation for the incarnation, Fulgentius is able to make very clear parallels between the incarnation of the Word and the rebirth of humans. He says, for example, "What he was not by nature from his first nativity he was made by grace by the second nativity in order that what we were not by nature of our first nativity we might be by the grace of our second nativity."[103] This topic will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

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[100]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 4.54-55: "...[homo qui ex Maria natus est] quem gratia et non natura deum quidam impie praedicare non metuunt...."

[101]Scythian monks *Ep. ad episc.* 5.60-64.

[102]Fulgentius *Ep. 17* 11.270-272: "Neque naturam carnis ita Deus summus atque immensus assumpsit, ut tamquam in uno de patriarchis aut prophetis. In illo quidem homine Deus esset, sed idem Deus homo non esset."

[103]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 15.347-350: "Ille quod ex prima nativitate natura non fuit, secunda nativitate per gratiam factus est ut nos quod primae nativitatis natura non fuimus, gratia secundae nativitatis essemus."

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6.3 Conclusion

Although there are some differences in terminology, Fulgentius agrees with the substance of the Scythian monks' Christological position. The major influence the Scythian monks have on Fulgentius is that they prompt him to define the person of Christ as the Word rather than as the sum of two natures. They do this primarily through their discussion of the theopaschite formula, especially by referring to the subject of the crucifixion as *unus ex Trinitate*.

One shift in argumentation that marks Fulgentius's Christological development is that he stops appealing to the incarnation to establish a sense in which God does *not* undergo human experiences such as anointing or crucifixion. Instead, in his later writings, he appeals to the incarnation to explain *how* God *does* undergo human experiences. Like the Scythian monks, Fulgentius begins to argue that the Word became incarnate so that he could be anointed and so that he could die. Therefore, the soteriological purpose of the incarnation becomes more prominent in Fulgentius's later writings. That is the topic of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 7

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE OF FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE

The development of Fulgentius's Christology is characterized by the identification of the person of Christ with the Word. This, in turn, brings with it a more robust deployment of the communication of attributes as the Word becomes more clearly the subject of both divine and human actions. The present chapter attempts to correlate this Christological development with certain changes in the way Fulgentius describes grace. The new focus on the Christological communication of attributes in Fulgentius's later writings results in an increased use of parallelism in Fulgentius's descriptions of Christ's saving work as well as a more prominent role for Christ's flesh in Fulgentius's soteriology. In short, the communication of attributes provides the categories with which Fulgentius thinks through his soteriology in his later works.

First, an overview of Fulgentius's doctrine of grace will be sketched. Next, the way Fulgentius describes Christ's work of salvation will be traced chronologically. Finally, the role of free choice and merit in Fulgentius's soteriology will be discussed in light of some Christological concerns.

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7.1 Overview

Fulgentius's doctrine of grace does not develop as strikingly as his Christology does. Throughout his career, Fulgentius advocates an Augustinian doctrine of grace and maintains an anti-Pelagian orientation. In the present overview of Fulgentius's position, comments will be limited to those characteristics of his understanding of grace which do not seem not have undergone a development. In the chronological treatment which follows the overview, an exploration will be made of what may be said of the changes in his doctrine of grace.

Fulgentius's most extended discussions of Adam and the fall may be found in the early work *De Trinitate* and the late works *Epistle 17*, *De veritate praedestinationis*, and *De fide ad Petrum*. Already in *De Trinitate*, Fulgentius puts forward a recognizeably Augustinian understanding of the fall by emphasizing the human helplessness which the fall effects.

Fulgentius holds that God created Adam with the ability not to sin. This ability, however, did not inhere in Adam's natural human endowments. Fulgentius calls it grace.[1] He explicitly states that, even before the fall, Adam could not do anything good simply by his own effort.[2] Furthermore, he says that grace "ruled" Adam's will.[3] Nevertheless,

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[1]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 25.684-685: "Creatus ergo *primus homo de terra terrenus*, accepit quidem gratiam qua non posset peccare, si peccare nolit...."

[2]Fulg. *Ep. 4* 3.38-40: "...cum hoc nec in ipso primo homine potuerit solo implere conatu proprio, quando necdum fuit vitiata peccato."

[3]Fulg. *De Trin.* 9.2.386-388: "...quoniam habebat liberum arbitrium, ut posset bonus esse si vellet, non quidem sine gratia Dei qua ipsa *regebatur* voluntas, ut vellet..."

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Fulgentius insists that Adam and Eve were created "with free choice" (*cum libero arbitrio*).[4]

The assertions that Adam had free choice and that he could do nothing good without grace are compatible because, as Marianne Djuth has shown, Fulgentius understands free choice as spontaneity rather than openness to good or evil.[5] To say that Adam was created with free choice, then, is to say that Adam was created with a capacity to do good even though this capacity could not be realized without grace. The powerlessness of this capacity apart from grace negates neither the existence of the capacity nor the voluntary character of its operation. Whether Adam chose good or evil, he did so voluntarily since he was not subject to external coercion.

The fact that even before the fall Adam's will needed grace shows that for Fulgentius, grace is fundamental to God's originally intended relationship with humanity. Grace does not come into play only after the fall. This point is important because, as we shall see, Fulgentius wants to stress that God's grace to fallen humanity in no way circumvents or eliminates the humanity of the converted sinner.

This does not mean, however, that the grace given to Adam is identical to the grace given to fallen humanity. Although Adam had the grace to be able not to sin, he did

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(italics added).

[4]Fulg. *De fide ad Petrum* 68.1227 (rule 22).

[5]Djuth, "Fulgentius of Ruspe: The 'Initium bonae voluntatis,'" 50.

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not have the grace not to be able to want to sin.[6] He could desert grace.[7] In this,

Fulgentius finds a difference between the grace given to Adam and the grace given to

fallen human beings. Citing Augustine, Fulgentius notes that Adam had the grace to be

able not to sin if he so willed, but God gives to fallen human beings the grace which causes

them to will the good.[8] Thus, God gives Christians more powerful grace than he gave

Adam.

When Adam exercised his option to sin, he brought both sin and death into the

world. Fulgentius describes both sin and death in terms of separation. He states, "When

he sustained the death of the spirit, insofar as it is deserted by God, [Adam] also received

this in the flesh because, just as the life of the soul is to live blessedly, that is to enjoy God,

so for the body, to die is to be deserted by the soul."[9] In this passage, Fulgentius describes

the primary consequence of sin to be the soul's separation from God. This he calls the

death of the soul. As punishment for this death of the soul, humanity must suffer further

separation: the separation of the body from the soul. This latter separation, which is

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[6]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 25.685-687: "...nondum tamen tantam acceperat gratiam, qua nec peccare vellet omnino nec posset...."

[7]Fulg. *De Trin.* 9.2.388-389: "...et tamen in potestate eius erat ipsam gratiam deserere cum voluisset."

[8]Fulg. *De Trin.* 11.1.424-434 (citing Augustine's *De corrept. et grat.* 12.31).

[9]Fulg. *De Trin.* 9.2.379-382: "Excepta enim spiritus morte in id quod deseritur a Deo, hanc etiam accepit in carne; quia sicut vita est animae beate vivere, id est frui Deo, ita mori est corpore ab anima deseri."

physical death, results in the body decaying in the tomb while the soul suffers the torments of hell.[10]

As a result of separation from God, humanity has lost all capacity for thinking the things of God.[11] There can be no beginning of good will without grace.[12] This emphasis comes out more strongly in Fulgentius's later writings which are directed against the Semi-Pelagians than in his earlier writings directed against the Arians. This shift of emphasis does not represent a substantive change in Fulgentius's position. The issues of original sin and the origin of faith were not under debate with the Arians. In fact, Fastidiosus, an Arian opponent of Fulgentius, actually accepts the doctrine of original sin![13]

Fulgentius, like Augustine, continues to use the term *liberum arbitrium* to describe even the fallen human will. However, in the case of fallen human, the free will is free only

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[10]Fulg. *De verit. praed.* 1.4.73-75: "Voluntaria ergo animae mors poenalem corpori peperit mortem; et hominem primum quia possedit mors criminis etiam mors illico subsecuta est ultionis." Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.30.2.1146-1148: "Nam quia peccans homo meruit in seipso per supplicium dividi, quia maluit a Deo qui dividi non potest praevaricationis reatu disiungi, propterea factum est ut peccatoris mors carnem peccati ad sepulcrum corrumpendam perduceret, animam inferno torquendam protinus manciparet."

[11]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 26.706-707: "...etiam illa cogitandi quae ad Deum pertinent amisit protinus facultatem."

[12]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 26.709-711: "...sic iacuit oppressus ditione peccati, ut nullatenus aliquod bonae voluntatis initium habere potuisset, nisi hoc Deo gratis donante sumpsisset."

[13]*Sermo Fastidiosi* 6.105-107: "Quoniam sicut prima nativitas edendo infixit quod nascens non fecit, ita secunda nativitas abluto originali peccato, in sola positum imputat voluntate delictum."

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to choose evil.[14] Therefore, *liberum arbitrium* in Fulgentius's theology does not put salvation in reach of the natural faculties of the sinner. Its role is rather to confess the uncurtailed humanity of the sinner who is saved by grace against those who would charge that grace destroys the human will. This will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

So far we have considered Fulgentius's account of the fallen human condition. Now we turn to his account of human salvation. Fulgentius structures his thought around two different ways in which God deals with the world: justice and mercy. He employs this distinction to explain three different aspects of God's plan of salvation: predestination, God's saving presence, and the distinction between justification and glorification. The discussions of predestination and of justification and glorification appear only in Fulgentius's later writings, but they are included in the overview of his position because these two topics do not arise in sufficient detail in the early works for one to determine whether a development occurs.

In book 1 of *Ad Monimum*, Fulgentius responds to Monimus who wants to know what Augustine means by the phrase "predestined to destruction."[15] Fulgentius answers Monimus's concerns by pointing out an asymmetry in predestination to life and predestination to punishment based on an difference in the way God's mercy and justice operate. In the case of predestination to life, God's merciful will precedes and causes the

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[14]Fulg. *De Trin.* 10.2.411-414: "Nec hoc dicimus, quod liberum arbitrium perdiderit humanum genus. Habet enim, antequam liberetur gratia Salvatoris, ad malum, non ad bonum proclive."

[15]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.3.83: "...praedestinatum est ad interitum."

renewal of the person.[16] In the case of predestination to punishment, God predestines the punishment but not the sin.[17] Thus, Fulgentius affirms a predestination to punishment in which God foresees sins (but does not cause them) and determines to punish those sins. He affirms a predestination to life, on the other hand, which is not based on foreseen good works, but rather causes them.

This distinction between the two kinds of predestination is ultimately traceable to the distinction between justice and mercy. Justice is a response to human merit, while mercy is not. Fulgentius draws these connections most starkly when he considers the case of two infants: one born of faithful parents dies before being baptized and so is condemned, while the other born of unfaithful parents dies after being baptized against their will and so is saved. Both infants are bound by original sin and there is no difference in their merits. Fulgentius remarks, "Nevertheless, who is there who does not recognize here both the mercy of gracious goodness and the justice of divine severity?"[18] Fulgentius does not attempt to reconcile God's mercy and justice.[19]

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[16]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.7.2.202-205: In a description of predestination to life, Fulgentius says that God gives grace both to will and to act "ut praeveniente misericordia bonum velle incipiat, et subsequente misericordia bonum quod vult facere valeat."

[17]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.17.569-571: "An idcirco iniquos ad supplicium iuste praedestinaverit, quia eorum mala opera licet futura praesciret, non tamen ipse praedestinavit ut futura essent...."

[18]Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.27.655-657: "Quis tamen non hic et misericordiam gratuitae bonitatis et iustitiam divinae severitatis agnoscat?"

[19]Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.27.660-661: "...occultum vero nobis est cur non ambo fuerint absoluti."

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Fulgentius appeals to a similar distinction between grace and power to explain

difficult passages about God's presence and the incarnation. In the second book of *Ad*

Trasamundum, Fulgentius considers the apparent conflict between Prov. 15:3, which says

that God sees both good and evil, and Hab. 1:13, which says that God's eyes are pure so

that he does not see evil. Fulgentius is concerned that some might infer that God is

spatially located because he is said to "see." Fulgentius takes advantage of the

contradiction between these two passages to rule out a spatial notion of God's presence

and argues instead that the passages can only be harmonized by understanding God's

"seeing" to refer to God's purpose in dealing with the world. Fulgentius holds that God is

present everywhere *per potentiam*, but he is present *per gratiam* only in believers.[20] Thus,

when Habbakuk says that God does "not see" evil, that is the same as Proverbs saying that

he "sees" it in order to repay it.[21] Since God has two ways of dealing with the world,

power or mercy, there is no contradiction when some passages say God sees evil and

some say that he does not.

A little later in the same book of *Ad Trasamundum*, Fulgentius develops his

distinction between power and grace by correlating power with Christ's divine nature and

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[20]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 2.8.1.459-463: "...sed quia non omnibus aequaliter adest; ubique enim adest per potentiam, non ubique per gratiam; per potentiam, qua cuncta Deus implet et continet, per ipsam videt omnia; per gratiam vero illud videre dicitur quod ipse largitur, et quod in suis fidelibus operatur...."

[21]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 2.8.2.464-465: "Ac per hoc, et ubi quaedam non videt, ut tribuat, videt ut retribuat...." "Power" is a broader term than "justice" because it refers to God's entire activity of creating and preserving the world. In this passage, however, Fulgentius uses it as a term roughly synonymous with "justice" because the distinguishing characteristic of God's operation of power is that he "repays" (*retribuat*).

grace with his human nature. He does this in a discussion of John 1:10-11 which says that the Word came into the world. How can the Son, who is everywhere, come into the world? Fulgentius assigns this coming to grace, not to power. He says that the Son is everywhere *secundum divinitatem*, but he came into the world *secundum gratiam*.[22] The correlation of grace with Christ's human nature is further confirmed by Fulgentius's exegesis of John 1:14 where Fulgentius asserts that the words "full of grace" prove that Christ has a full human nature, while the phrase "full of truth" shows forth his divine nature.[23]

When Fulgentius says that the incarnation is *secundum gratiam*, he is not saying that the ontological relationship of Christ's two natures is one of grace or good will. Instead, he is saying that the purpose of the incarnation is to save. Fulgentius makes this clear by adducing John 3:17 to explain what he means by *secundum gratiam*: "God did not send his Son in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through

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[22]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 2.15.3.802-808: "Quomodo igitur et in mundo fuisse dicitur et in mundum venisse firmatur? an illud est <u>potentiae,</u> istud <u>gratiae</u> deputandum? Ita plane, <u>secundum divinitatem</u> namque suam nec caelo unquam defuit, nec inferno, nec mundo: *Omnia enim per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt et ipse est ante omnes et omnia in ipso constant*; <u>secundum gratiam</u> vero tunc in mundum venit..." (underline added).

[23]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.5.116-119: "Plenum igitur gratiae et veritatis evangelista cognovit, quem unum eumdemque verum hominem gratia verae incarnationis ostenderet et verum Deum unigenitum a Patre nativitatis aeternae veritas declararet." This association is also made in the late work *De incarn.* 5.99-101: "Solius itaque unigeniti Dei propria est utraque nativitas, una scilicet ex veritate naturae divinae, altera vero ex gratia humanitatis assumptae." *De incarn.* 18.483-485: "...Unigenitus, qui est in sinu Patris, secundum quod caro est, plenus est gratia, et secundum quod Verbum est, plenus est veritate...." Cf. also *Ep. 14* 32.1325-1334; *Ep. 17* 3.104-110; *De fide ad Petrum* 21.415-419; *C. Fab.* 34.15.215-220.

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him."[24] The ease with which Fulgentius describes the incarnation with the word "grace" marks a difference between him and the Scythian monks which will be described below.

So far we have seen Fulgentius employ a distinction between justice and mercy to explain predestination and God's presence in the world. Next we examine briefly how this distinction functions in Fulgentius's description of salvation itself. Fulgentius has an *ordo salutis* in which God first justifies the sinner and then glorifies the one he justified. Fulgentius understands justification to be the gift of a good life, while glorification is the gift of eternal life.[25] In justification, God acts mercifully. In glorification, God acts justly.

The precise definition of "grace" varies depending on whether God is acting according to mercy or justice. Concerning justification, Fulgentius says, "Grace, therefore, is a merciful remuneration (*retributio pia*) by which God in the present time gives good things to evil people, to those whom he justifies who were unholy that their faith might be considered as justice."[26] Concerning glorification, Fulgentius says, "Grace is also that just remuneration (*iusta retributio*) by which, giving better things to his good people, God is going to glorify the just."[27] In each case, justification and glorification,

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[24]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 2.15.3.809-811: "Non enim misit Deus Filium suum ut iudicet mundum, sed ut salvetur mundus per ipsum."

[25]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.10.3.291-294: "Cum vero Deus vitam aeternam donat, opus suum quod inchoavit iustificans impium, perficit glorificans iustum. Haec autem utraque gratia, id est et vita bona et vita aeterna, in Christo Iesu Domino nostro est."

[26]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.11.1.322-325: "Gratia est igitur retributio pia, qua Deus in praesenti tempore malis bona retribuit; illis videlicet quos iustificat impios, ut deputetur fides eorum ad iustistiam." Translation by Eno, slightly altered.

[27]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.11.2.326-328: "Gratia est et illa iusta retributio, qua bonis suis meliora retribuens, Deus glorificaturus est iustos." Translation by Eno.

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grace is a remuneration (*retributio*) received by those with whom God deals. The

difference is the attitude of God. He can be merciful (*pius*) or just (*iustus*).[28] When God

is merciful, his gifts are not in response to human merits. When he is just, they are. Thus,

human merit elicits a reward in glorification, but not in justification. The nature of merit's

role as well as that of free choice will be discussed below.

If glorification is characterized by justice, however, in what sense is it grace?

Fulgentius explains the matter by making two qualifications to the definition of justice

which is operative in glorification. He states, "Grace itself, therefore, is not unjustly so

named, because not only does God crown his gifts with his gifts but also because the grace

of divine reward so abounds there that it incomparably and ineffably exceeds all merit of

human will and work, however good and given by God."[29] The first qualification employs

the Augustinian notion that God crowns his own gifts. God's justice in glorification

rewards not works done by natural human powers but God's own works done through the

just. In the second qualification, Fulgentius goes further still. By stating that the rewards

"incomparably and ineffably" exceed the merits, Fulgentius denies any proportionality

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[28]Fulgentius uses the term *misericordia* more often than *pius* or *pietas* to describe God's attitude of mercy in justification. Cf. Fulgentius, *De verit. praedest.* 3.7.174-178: "Quibus sicut per misericordiam praeparabit gratuitum iustificationis donum, ita per iustitiam praeparavit aeternae iustificationis praemium. Opus itaque gratiae in omnibus praedestinatis gratuita misericordia inchoatur, et iusta reributione perficitur." Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.12.279-280: "Gratis quippe praeparavit misericorditer tribuenda merita munerum, quibus iuste retribuat munera meritorum."

[29]Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.10.4.300-305: "Gratia autem etiam ipsa ideo non iniuste dicitur, quia non solum donis suis Deus dona sua reddit, sed quia tantum etiam ibi gratia divinae retributionis exuberat, ut incomparabiliter atque ineffabiliter omne meritum, quamvis bonae et ex Deo datae humanae voluntatis atque operationis excedat." Translation by Eno, slightly altered.

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between merit and reward. His exegetical basis for this is Rom. 8:18, "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing (*non sunt condignae*) to the future glory which will be revealed in us."[30] Fulgentius also cites 2 Cor. 4:17, "For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison (*supra modum*)."[31]

God's *iustitia* towards believers operates very differently than his *iustitia* towards unbelievers. In the case of unbelievers, there is no doubt that they get what they deserve. However, in the case of the glorification of the justified, *iustitia* cannot mean that one gets what one deserves because there is no proportion between the work and the reward. In glorification, *iustitia* seems to have more the sense of "overflowing goodness."[32] Thus, the distinction between the mercy of justification and the justice of glorification is that mercy is not a response to anything good in the object of mercy, while justice does respond to the good that God has wrought in the justified. Nevertheless, that response bears no quantitative relation to the divinely given good, but in fact overflows it beyond all thought or imagination.

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[30]Cited in Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.10.4.312-313: "Non sunt condignae passiones huius temporis ad futuram gloriam quae revelabitur in nobis."

[31]Cited in Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.10.4.313-316: "Id enim quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostrae, supra modum in sublimitate aeternum gloriae pondus operatur in nobis."

[32]Cf. Fulg. *Ad Mon.* 1.11.1.318-322: "[Paulus] dicit gratiam permanere, et super nos, hoc est super omnia bona cuiuslibet hominis merita in Dei bonitate asserit abundare, dicens: *Ut ostendat in saeculis supervenientibus abundantes divitias gratiae suae, in bonitate super nos in Christo Iesu*" (Eph. 2:7).

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This overflowing goodness applies to those who persevere to the end. Perseverance is another topic which does not come up in Fulgentius's early writings. It appears for the first time in *Ep. 17* or *Ep. 3*, whichever is earlier. Every time it appears, Fulgentius affirms that perseverance is by grace.[33]

The distinction between justice and mercy introduces a certain asymmetry in Fulgentius's theology. Predestination does not mean the same thing for the saved as it does for the condemned. Justice does not mean that same thing for the saved as it does for the condemned. This asymmetry is attributable to the two different ways God deals with his creation. Since Fulgentius associates God's merciful presence with the incarnation, it is God's mercy which will concern us in the rest of the chapter as we consider how Fulgentius's Christological development interacts with his doctrine of grace.

7.2 Grace in the First Period

Grace is not the focus of controversy in Fulgentius's early writings. He is more concerned to defend the deity of the Son against the Arians who ruled North Africa at the time. In the course of his polemic against the Arians, however, Fulgentius does have some things to say about soteriology because he wants to show that human salvation is at stake in the question of the Son's deity.

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[33]Fulg. *Ep. 3* 35.645-647: "Gratia igitur Dei facit et ut humiles simus et ut humiles perseverare possimus. Qui enim potuit quod non habuimus dare, ipse potest quod accepimus custodire." Fulgentius also attributes perseverance to grace in *Ep. 4* 6.85-92; *Ep. 17* 46.1286-1288; *Ep 17* 67.1830-1838; *De verit. praed.* 1.12.276-279; *De verit. praed.* 2.26.578-581; *De verit. praed.* 2.30.710-712.

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As we have seen, Fulgentius describes death as the separation of body and soul

and, more importantly, the separation of the soul from God. Book 1 of *Ad Trasamundum*

is devoted to a discussion of Christ overcoming both separations in his office of mediator.

The thrust of the book is that Christ's role as mediator implies that he has a full divine

nature as well as a full human nature, complete with body and soul. Only in this way can

the separation be overcome and God be joined once again with humanity. Fulgentius

states,

> For because through sin, the human being was separated from God, indeed
> there ought to intervene between the angry God and the sinning human the
> person of such a Mediator who had in himself the full and true God born
> from God to propitiate (*ad propitiandum*) God to man, and who contained
> in himself the full and true man born from man to reconcile man with
> God.[34]

What Fulgentius here attributes to Christ's office of mediator, he elsewhere

attributes to grace. In the late writing *De veritate praedestinationis*, for example,

Fulgentius uses the term *propitius* to describe justification. He states, "For [mercy]

precedes us when the Lord becomes propitious (*propitius*) toward all our iniquities. It

follows us when the Lord heals all our sicknesses."[35]

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[34]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 1.15.2.624-629: "Nam quia per peccatum homo fuit separatus a Deo, inter Deum irascentem hominemque peccantem talis utique Mediatoris debuit intervenire persona, quae ad propitiandum Deum homini totum verumque in se Deum de Deo natum haberet et ad reconciliandum hominem Deo totum verumque in se de homine natum hominem contineret...." This passage also illustrates that Fulgentius had not yet identified the person of Christ as the Word because he says that the person "has" God in himself rather than the person "is" God.

[35]Fulgentius, *De verit. praedest.* 2.21.480-482: "Praevenit [*misericordia*] enim nos, dum propitius fit Dominus omnibus iniquitatibus nostris; subsequitur nos, dum sanat Dominus omnes languores nostros...."

Another example of attributing the same thing to both Christology and grace can be found in the early work *De Trinitate*. There, Fulgentius says that Christ took on the office of mediator "so that we, who were least of all able to turn back to God by free choice, might be able to turn back through God made man."[36] Ordinarily, Fulgentius contrasts free choice with grace, but in this passage he mentions the incarnation where one would expect grace.

The interchangeability of Christological and soteriological terminology is not surprising since, especially in *Ad Trasamundum*, Fulgentius is trying to show that salvation is at stake in a Christological question. He maintains that when the Word assumed the body and soul of the man Christ, he received the bodies and souls of all the faithful "through the unity of nature and the grace of justification."[37] Both the incarnation and grace are in effect two sides of the same coin because both overcome the separation of humanity from God.

This overcoming of separation saves because it brings human passions and death into contact with the divine nature of Christ which destroys them. Thus, Fulgentius lays great emphasis on the joining of the believer to Christ in death and resurrection. The following passage illustrates the pattern: "Just as, when he died for us, he made us all die with him, so also, when he destroyed the pains of hell, he freed all the faithful from these

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[36]Fulg. *De Trin.* 9.3.399-401: "...ut quia per liberum arbitrium reverti ad Deum minime poteramus, per Deum hominem factum reverti possimus."

[37]Fulgentius, *Ad Tras.* 1.10.3.420-424: "Quia vero naturae primitias suscipiens Dominus, sicut in suo corpore cunctorum fidelium corpus, sic in sua anima universorum fidelium animas per naturae unitatem et gratiam iustificationis accepit...."

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pains."[38] This statement is representative of a number of similar passages in book 3 of *Ad Trasamundum* which is devoted to the Lord's passion.[39] What they all have in common is that they describe what one might call salvation by association with Christ. More specifically, salvation occurs by association with Christ's divine nature which conquers passions, death, and hell.

Fulgentius does occasionally speak of Christ paying a debt that we owe. For instance, he notes that sinners deserve to have their bodies separated from their souls because they chose to separate themselves from God. This punishment had to be suffered so that it could be paid justly. Therefore the Son of God suffered it.[40] This account is rare

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[38]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.31.2.1215-1217: "...sicut mortuus pro nobis, omnes nos sibi commori fecit; sic solutis doloribus inferni, omnes fideles ab hisdem doloribus liberavit...."

[39]E.g., Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.16.1.531-534: "...quidquid fuit infirmitatis animae sine peccato et suscepit et pertulit, ut dum humanae animae passiones in anima quam accepit vinceret, nostras quoque animas ab infirmitatibus liberaret." Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.16.2.535-539: "Carnem quoque humanam accipiens, in eiusdem veritate carnis veritatem voluntariae habuit passionis; ut in carne mortuus, totam in se hominis occideret mortem et in aeternam vitam immortalis resurgens, aeternae vitae nobis gratiam condonaret." Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.21.1.715-720: "...voluntaria susceptione mortis in carne sua, mortem nostram cognoscitur occidisse, sic voluntaria susceptione tristitiae et timoris, ad hoc cognoscatur animam rationalem cum suis passionibus suscepisse, ut animas nostras ab omnibus dignaretur passionibus liberare."

[40]Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.30.2.1153-3.1161: "Haec fuit retributio peccatori reddenda, ut iuste peccati supplicium lueret, qui Deo iusto iniuste peccasset. Ut autem peccator fuisset gratuito munere liberatus, factum est ut mortem corporis, quam a Deo iusto peccator homo pertulerat iuste, Dei Filius a peccatore pateretur iniuste; et ad sepulcrum perveniret caro iusti, quousque fuerat devoluta caro peccati; et usque ad infernum descenderet anima Salvatoris, ubi peccati merito torquebatur anima peccatoris."

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in Fulgentius, however, and even in this passage he shifts back to the theme of conquering sin, not paying for it.[41]

Thus, in his early writings, Fulgentius links Christology and grace by maintaining that the union of divine and human by nature in Christ effects the union of divine and human by grace in salvation. Both unions save because they destroy human sin and death by bringing them into contact with the divine nature.

It is worth noting, however, one connection between Christology and grace which Fulgentius does *not* make. In his early writings, Fulgentius never appeals to the incarnation as the basis for an argument about the gratuity of grace. There is at least some evidence that this silence is due to more than merely the lack of Semi-Pelagian opponents in this period. One component of his early Christology may have prevented him from making such an argument. As we saw in the previous chapter, Fulgentius asserts that the man Christ was exalted to the position of God.[42] He explains the exaltation as follows:

> Moreover, [Christ] was born, not a sinner from sinners in the way he was a man from human beings, but the man was born, assumed by God without any sin, to reconcile sinful human beings with God, freed from all sin. *Indeed it was fitting for such a man to be assumed by God* through whom humans might be able to be joined to God by gracious justification.[43]

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[41]The passage continues (1161-1163): "Hoc autem ideo factum est, ut per morientem temporaliter carnem iusti donaretur vita aeterna carni et per descendentem ad infernum animam iusti, dolores solverentur inferni."

[42]Fulgentius, *Resp. Fulg.* 2.11.263-265: "Quid enim est *primogenitus ex mortuis*, nisi primus ex peccatoribus hominibus homo Christus Iesus in Dei Filium exaltatus?"

[43]Fulgentius, *Resp. Fulg.* 2.11.265-270: "Natus autem est, non sic ex peccatoribus peccator, sicut ex hominibus homo, sed natus est homo, susceptus a Deo sine ullo peccato, ut peccatores homines reconciliaret Deo, liberatos ab omni peccato. *Talem quippe hominem oportuit a Deo suscipi*, per quem possent homines Deo gratuita

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Fulgentius is not here asserting that the man Christ existed for some period of time before he was assumed by the Word. But he does see the assumption of the man as in some way explained by, if not actually prompted by, that man's (presumably foreseen) merit. Since Fulgentius does not want to say that the gift of grace to sinners is fitting because of some antecedent (or even foreseen) merit, it makes sense that he would not build an argument for the gratuity of grace on the incarnation. The pattern is simply not the same because the man Christ is a fit candidate to be assumed by the Word, while grace is given precisely to unfit candidates. After his contact with the Scythian monks, however, he finds himself in a position to make an argument which draws parallels between the incarnation and grace.

7.3 Grace in the Second and Third Periods

In the previous chapter, we saw how *Ep. 17* ushers in a development in Fulgentius's Christology. He begins to identify the person of Christ as the Word, and he begins to make greater use of the *communicatio idiomatum* in his Christology as he becomes more comfortable ascribing Christ's human experiences to the Word. In what follows, the point will be argued that the *communicatio idiomatum* plays a greater role in Fulgentius's doctrine of grace in *Ep. 17* and later.

Two different kinds of connections Fulgentius draws between Christology and grace will be explored. The first kind are arguments in which, on the basi⹁ of the incarnation, he asserts that grace is given freely, not in response to antecedent human

iustificatione coniungi" (italics added).

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merits. Such arguments imply that the incarnation serves as a positive paradigm, in a similar way that Augustine employed the incarnation as a paradigm, which can be used as evidence for the gratuitous character of grace. The second kind of connection covers those statements in which Fulgentius may or may not mention the incarnation explicitly, but the communication of attributes seems to provide the structure for what he has to say about salvation. Such descriptions are numerous in the second and third periods. Finally, the roles of free choice and merit in Fulgentius's doctrine of grace will be discussed briefly in light of some Christological concerns.

7.3.1 Arguments for Grace Based on the Incarnation

As we have seen, Augustine provides a precedent for arguing for the gratuity of grace based on the incarnation in his *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. In that work, he proceeds on the assumption that what goes for the head goes for the body. Therefore, since Christ was predestined without antecedent human merit, the same must be true for Christians. In order to make this claim, Augustine maximizes the similarity between Christ and believers.

In *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius makes two arguments for the gratuity of grace based on the incarnation which are similar to Augustine's argument, but not identical to it. In the first, Fulgentius draws parallels between the role of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation and the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion. He states,

> The Virgin would never have been able to conceive and bear that flesh if
> the Holy Spirit had not worked the emergence of the same flesh.
> *Therefore, in the same way* faith will not be able to be conceived or

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increased in the heart of a human being unless the Holy Spirit were to bring it forth and nourish it. For we are reborn by the same Spirit by which Christ was born. Therefore, Christ is formed according to faith (*secundum fidem*) in the heart of each believer by the same Spirit by whom he was formed according to the flesh (*secundum carnem*) in the womb of the Virgin.[44]

In the discussion of fifth-century authors in chapter 2, we noted that authors writing against Nestorian opponents tended to shy away from asserting maximal similarity between Christ and the saints because that would play into the hands of their opponents. This pattern holds for the Scythian monks in the sixth century who make no explicit appeal to Augustine's argument in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30, though they were surely aware of it. This pattern also manifests itself in the above passage.

Fulgentius's argument in this passage seems to be an adaptation of Augustine's argument in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. Like Augustine, Fulgentius argues that the similarity between the incarnation and conversion is such that they share the same foundational characteristic: they are accomplished by God's free action which is not a response to antecedent human merit. So similar, in fact, does Fulgentius see the incarnation and conversion that he suggests that the gift of faith is a kind of incarnation in that Christ is formed in the heart.

Unlike Augustine, however, Fulgentius in *Ep. 17* is responding to concerns about Nestorianism. This polemical context may account for certain differences between

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[44]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 40.1101-1108: "Carnem autem illam nec concipere Virgo posset aliquando, nec parere, nisi eiusdem carnis Spiritus sanctus operaretur exortum. *Sic ergo* in hominis corde nec concipi fides poterit, nec augeri, nisi eam Spiritus sanctus effundat et nutriat. Ex eodem namque Spiritu renati sumus, ex quo natus est Christus. Eodem igitur Spiritu Christus formatur secundum fidem in corde uniuscuiusque credentis, quo Spiritu secundum carnem formatus est in utero Virginis" (italics added).

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Augustine's argument and Fulgentius's version of it. First, Fulgentius finds the connection between Christ and the saints not in the image of head and body as Augustine does, but in the identity of the Spirit. The same Spirit forms Christ in the heart of believers who formed Christ in the womb of Mary. Thus, the connection between incarnation and conversion does not require Fulgentius in this passage to downplay the distinction between the divine-human union in Christ and the divine-human union in the hearts of believers. In fact, Fulgentius is careful to distinguish the two modes of union. The union in the case of Christ takes place *secundum carnem* in Mary's womb, while the union in the case of Christians takes place *secundum fidem* in the Christian's heart. In Augustine, the paradigm of grace is found in the interaction of the two natures of Christ, while in this passage of Fulgentius, the paradigm is found in the interaction between the Holy Spirit and Mary.

A second slightly different instance of this argument in *Ep. 17* is the statement, "But [Mary] deserved to conceive and bear God himself made man not because of human merits but because of the condescension of the highest God who was conceived and born of her."[45] If God had not done this, Fulgentius continues, spiritual birth would never have been given to us who are born carnally. Here even more clearly than in the above quotation, Fulgentius's point is to deny the role of antecedent human merit both in the incarnation and in conversion. This passage differs from Augustine's argument in the same way as the previously mentioned passage. Augustine points out the lack of

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[45]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 14.325-327: "Sed ipsum Deum hominem factum et concipere et parere, non humanis meritis sed concepti nascentisque ex ea summi Dei dignatione promeruit [Maria]."

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antecedent merit in Christ's human nature, while Fulgentius focuses on Mary's lack of antecedent merit. By finding the paradigm for the gratuity of grace in Mary, Fulgentius avoids the danger of blurring the distinction between Christ and Christians.

Fulgentius never explicitly says that is why he focuses on Mary. But when one compares this argument to a similar argument in Fulgentius's *De veritate praedestinationis*, one cannot help suspecting that pressure from the Nestorian front shapes the argument in *Ep. 17*. The polemical context of Fulgentius's *De veritate praedestinatione* is practically identical to that of Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum*. Both are written against Semi-Pelagians, and neither is directed against the Nestorians. As he does in *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius follows Augustine's lead by finding in the incarnation a pattern that applies to grace as well. In *De veritate praedestinationis*, Fulgentius argues, "Indeed Paul most certainly had both learned and taught divine predestination; and what he had recognized in the head, he did not deny in the body."[46] Against the argument that predestination subverts the apostolic mandate to do good works, Fulgentius appeals to the predestination of Christ: "How then do we destroy the apostolic mandates by asserting predestination when we know from apostolic preaching that not only those who are members of Christ, but also Christ himself was predestined?"[47]

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[46]Fulg. *De ver. praedest.* 3.11.269-271: "Certissime quippe divinam praedestinationem Paulus et didicerat et docebat; et quam noverat in capite, non denegabat in corpore."

[47]Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 3.11.257-260: "Quomodo autem assertione praedestinationis apostolica mandata solvimus, cum non solum eos qui membra Christi sunt, sed ipsum quoque Christum praedestinatum, apostolo praedicante, noverimus?" In support of this, Fulgentius cites Rom. 1:3-4, "predestined the Son of God in power," and 1 Cor. 2:6-7, "Wisdom of God, predestined before the ages."

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These arguments follow Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30 more closely than do the arguments in *Ep. 17*. The connection between Christ and Christians is secured by an appeal to the image of head and body, not to the role of the Holy Spirit or Mary. The argument implies a maximal similarity between Christ and the saints such that what goes for the head goes for the body as well. The two natures in Christ, not the Holy Spirit and Mary, are the location of the divine-human relation which is paradigmatic also for conversion.

From the above, we can see that Fulgentius shifts the way he employs the paradigm argument depending on whether he is writing against Nestorians or Pelagians. When he is writing against Pelagians, he maximizes the connection between Christ and the saints by appealing to the image of head and body as Augustine does. When he is writing against Nestorians, however, he finds the connection based on the pattern of the Holy Spirit's interaction with Mary. This practice is consistent with the evidence we found in the fifth century that the presence or absence of Nestorian opponents influences the way authors argue for the gratuity of grace.

Despite the different nuances of the argument in *Ep. 17* and *De veritate praedestinationis*, in both works we find Fulgentius making an explicit connection between Christology and grace. That in itself marks a development in comparison with Fulgentius's early writings. In those writings, as we have seen, Fulgentius never argues for the gratuity of grace based on the incarnation probably because at that point, he believes the incarnation is in some sense a response to Christ's foreseen human merit.

These few explicit assertions of connection are just the tip of the iceberg, however, when it comes to evaluating the importance of the link between Christology and grace in Fulgentius's thought. The idea that God's interaction with humanity at the incarnation provides the structure of his interaction with humanity in general is reflected throughout Fulgentius's mature writings by his tendency to describe Christ's saving work in terms which closely resemble the Christological *communicatio idiomatum*.

7.3.2 Descriptions of Grace Based on the Incarnation

As we have seen, in the writings of the first period, Fulgentius's main way of describing salvation is to say that Christ took on our death to destroy it with his divine nature. Salvation comes by way of association with Christ. In the writings of the second and third periods, however, Fulgentius begins to speak in ways which suggest that salvation is not so much by association with Christ, but by communication of attributes, or, one might say, by trading places with him.

This shift represents a change in the way Fulgentius expresses his soteriology rather than a substantive change in his doctrine of grace. To say that the sinner trades places with Christ does not contradict or exclude saying that the sinner is associated with Christ. After all, by being associated with Christ, the sinner takes Christ's place, in a sense, by receiving the victory which Christ won.

However, there are two important characteristics of Fulgentius's later descriptions of salvation which distinguish them from those in his early writings. The first is stylistic. In the writings of the second and third period, Fulgentius makes greater use of parallelism

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than he does in his early writings. Christ takes our death *and* gives us his life. Christ

takes our sin *and* gives us his righteousness. This stylistic difference is significant because

it suggests that the Christological communication of attributes provides the structure in

which Fulgentius thinks through his soteriology. As the communication of attributes

becomes a more pronounced feature of his Christology, the parallelism in his description

of salvation becomes more prominent. The second characteristic is theological. In the

later writings, Christ's flesh plays a more important role in salvation than it does in the

early writings. Again, this is due to the influence of the communication of attributes. No

longer does salvation consist primarily in the divine nature conquering sin and death. Now

Fulgentius also stresses more consistently the soteriological import of Christ's flesh

receiving life and righteousness from the divine nature.

Both of these characteristics may be seen in Fulgentius's frequent contention that

the incarnation effects a communication of two kinds of birth. Humans are bound by sin

from their birth in the flesh and stand in need of a spiritual birth to free them from sin. The

incarnation brings about this spiritual birth. Fulgentius encapsulates this communication of

births in the succinct formulation, "God was born of a human being that human beings

might be born of God."[48]

A little later in *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius offers a fuller explanation. This explanation

exhibits Fulgentius's interest in highlighting as much chiastic parallelism between the

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[48]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 14.336-337: "Deus natus est ex homine, ut ex Deo homines nascerentur."

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incarnation and salvation as possible. It also reflects a difference in the way Fulgentius

and the Scythian monks use the term "grace." Fulgentius states,

> Therefore, the first nativity of Christ the Son of God is of God, and the
> second is from man. But our first nativity is from man, and the second is
> from God. And because God who was going to be born accepted from the
> womb true flesh, he grants to us who have been reborn in baptism the
> Spirit of adoption. What he was not by nature from his first nativity he was
> made by grace (*per gratiam*) through the second nativity in order that what
> we were not by nature of our first nativity we might be by the grace of our
> second nativity. But God, in order to be born of man brought us grace,
> and we received grace freely in order to become sharers of the divine
> nature by the gift of God born from the flesh.[49]

The parallelism of this passage is based on the pattern of communication of attributes.

Both fallen human beings and Christ have a first birth which is by nature. The purpose of

the second birth by grace is to exchange the places which each received by nature. Christ

is born in the flesh by grace, and human beings are born in the Spirit by grace. Christ

takes our fleshly birth and gives us his birth from the Spirit. We are saved, then, by a sort

of communication of nativities.

Furthermore, Fulgentius takes special interest in the communication of the spiritual

birth to humanity. In doing so, he gives more prominence to Christ's flesh than he does in

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[49]Fulgentius, *Ep. 17* 15.343-352: "Christi ergo Filii Dei prima nativitas ex Deo,
secunda ex homine; nostra vero prima nativitas ex homine, secunda ex Deo. Et quia Deus
nasciturus ex utero veritatem carnis accepit, ideo nobis renatis in baptismo spiritum
adoptionis indulsit. Ille quod ex prima nativitate natura non fuit, secunda nativitate per
gratiam factus est ut nos quod primae nativitatis natura non fuimus, gratia secundae
nativitatis essemus. Sed Deus, ut ex homine nasceretur, gratiam nobis attulit, nos autem
gratiam gratis accepimus, ut divinae consortes naturae, Dei ex carne nascentis munere,
fieremus." Fulgentius makes the same point in *De incarn.* 12.338-342: "Ideo autem Deus
Unigenitus factus est homo, ut nobis per eum divina donaretur adoptio; ut quia ille homo
deus verus est naturali veritate divinitatis suae, nos quoque, in eo quod fratres eius
essemus, filii Dei, non nostro merito, sed eius gratia fieremus."

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his earlier writings. By taking on human flesh, Christ communicates to that flesh, and thus to the flesh of humans in general, the spiritual birth which he had by nature. In *Ad Trasamundum*, Fulgentius tends to view Christ's flesh as the conduit through which human sin and death are brought into contact with the divine nature and so are destroyed. In *Ep. 17* and later writings, Fulgentius does not abandon his earlier emphasis, but he also describes salvation as the flesh receiving something, in this case spiritual birth, from God. By heightening the parallelism, Fulgentius is rhetorically emphasizing the saving effect of the communication of attributes. Salvation involves God taking something from humanity and humanity receiving something from God.

The parallelism of this passage is so thorough that it actually obscures an equivocation in the term "by grace." In the previous chapter, we saw that Fulgentius rejects the Nestorian idea that the unity of Christ's person can be described as a unity of good will or grace. The Scythian monks, in order to make this point crystal clear, always avoid the term "grace" when describing the incarnation and insist instead that the boy is "by nature" God. Fulgentius agrees with them, but he nevertheless feels comfortable using the term "grace" to describe the incarnation.

That is because Fulgentius does not understand "grace" in a Christological context to imply the Nestorian view. As we saw above, Fulgentius can say that God is present *per gratiam* in order to describe the saving purpose of God's presence. Thus, when Fulgentius says in this passage that God was made man "by grace", we should understand "by grace" to describe not the manner of union of Christ's two natures, but rather God's merciful will to bestow grace which motivates the incarnation. On the other hand, when

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Fulgentius says that we are made "by grace" what he is "by nature," it would seem appropriate to understand "by grace" as describing the manner of our union with God (as well as the saving purpose of this union). This equivocation suggests that, unlike the Scythian monks, Fulgentius does not rely on the term "grace" to distinguish the union between God and believers from the hypostatic union in Christ. Fulgentius addresses this concern instead by equating our spiritual birth with an "adoption," thus distinguishing it from Christ's divine birth.

Another important saving communication takes place between life and death. As we have seen, this is also a theme in *Ad Trasamundum*. The difference is that in the later writings, Fulgentius tends to make the expressions more balanced, corresponding to both sides of the communication of attributes. For example, he states, "The death of the Son of God, which he took on only by the flesh, destroyed both deaths in us, namely, that of the soul and that of the flesh; and the resurrection of his flesh gave to us the grace of both spiritual and bodily resurrection."[50] In this passage, the Son of God is said to undergo a human experience (death) while the flesh of the Son of God is said to undergo an experience only God effect (resurrection). This communication of attributes in Christ also effects the saving death of sin and resurrection of body and soul in Christians as well. When applied to Christians, this saving communication is called "grace."

The above passage is also significant in its mention of Christ's flesh. Instead of merely bringing sin and death into contact with the divine nature for their destruction, here

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[50]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 16.384-388: "Mors autem Filii Dei, quam sola carne suscepit, utramque in nobis mortem, animae scilicet carnisque, destruxit; et resurrectio carnis eius gratiam nobis et spiritalis et corporalis resurrectionis attribuit...."

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the flesh of Christ communicates God's life to Christians. Fulgentius brings out this point even more strongly elsewhere in *Ep. 17* when he says that the flesh given for the life of the world is "the flesh of the righteous and immortal God. Through the reception of this flesh, righteousness and life is conferred on that flesh which is born with the punishment of death and the pollution of sin."[51] This passage not only emphasizes the salvific role of Christ's flesh but also shows that the attributes communicated to human flesh correspond to Fulgentius's diagnosis of the fallen human condition. The fall brings sin and death. The incarnation brings righteousness and life.

The communication of life to the flesh explains Fulgentius's continued willingness to speak of the exaltation of humanity in describing salvation. This exaltation is implied by the imparting of divine life to humanity described in the above two passages. Fulgentius makes it explicit when he speaks of the incarnation both as a descent and an ascent. In a sermon, Fulgentius says, "For the one who descends for us himself raises us. The one who was made the Son of Man for us gives the grace of adoption to human beings."[52] This is a theme which, as we have seen, the Scythian monks totally avoid, probably due to their highly polemical context.

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[51]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 27.758-760: "...caro utique iusti atque immortalis Dei, cuius acceptione iustitia atque vita confertur illi carni quae nascitur cum poena mortis et pollutione peccati." *Acceptione* may refer to the Word assuming a huma. nature at the incarnation, but in this context it seems to refer to the reception of Christ's flesh in the Eucharist.

[52]Fulg. *Sermo* 6.6.125-127: "Qui enim pro nobis descendit, ipse nos levat; qui pro nobis hominis filius factus est, ille gratiam adoptionis hominibus donat...."

When the categories are death and life, the cross becomes central in Fulgentius's soteriology. The cross is where Christ dies; that is where he takes on our death. Rather than seeing the incarnation itself as the saving event, as he tends to do when he describes the communication of nativities, for example, Fulgentius focuses more on the cross by viewing it as the reason for the incarnation. For example, Fulgentius says, "He himself, the same Son of God, was born in the nature of the flesh through grace for the dead *in order to die (ad mortem)*, that we might be reborn in the grace of the Spirit in order to live after the death of our first nativity which we have from the flesh."[53] Fulgentius's flexibility in tying the saving communication to the incarnation or to Christ's death and resurrection suggests that he does not want to locate Christ's saving work in any single act. By considering the cross to be the goal of the incarnation, however, Fulgentius anticipates the Western tendency to view the cross as the decisive saving event.

Another way Fulgentius formulates the saving communication of attributes is as an exchange of the punishment for sin that sinners deserve and the righteousness of Christ. Fulgentius states,

> Here in the human nature in which he became the mediator of God and human beings, he had righteousness from his Father and death from his mother in order that (*ut*) through him we might be freed from all sin, who

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[53]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 16.371-374: "Idem ipse Dei Filius in natura carnis per gratiam pro mortuis natus est *ad mortem*, ut nos post mortem primae nativitatis quam habemus ex carne, in gratia Spiritus renasceremur ad vitam" (italics added). Cf. Fulg. *De incarn.* 18.497: "Ideo ergo venerat ut occideretur pro nobis." Fulg. *Ep. 17* 9.236-240: "Verbum igitur Deus, id est Unigenitus Dei Filius, qui est in omnibus (sicut ipse testatur) *alpha et omega, initium et finis,* sic initialiter secundum humanam naturam concipi carne non abnuit, sicut eadem carne moriens Deus humanae naturae debitum finale persolvit." The Scythian monks also share this view. They cite Proclus of Constantinople: "...causa incarnationis est crux..." (*Libell. fid.* 19.242-243).

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did not contract sin either by being born or by living, and that from him we might receive righteousness, through which we are loosed from the bond of eternal death. [This is] so that through him we might be able to be both righteous in this life and immortal after this life.[54]

This passage evinces the same advances over his earlier writings that we have noted in other mature descriptions of salvation. Parallelism is a prominent feature as Fulgentius stresses both that Christ takes the punishment for sin and gives the sinner divine righteousness. The flesh of Christ is key to this communication because Fulgentius identifies the Christ's human nature as the place where he is the mediator. Divine righteousness is placed in his human nature and is thereby made accessible to humanity. Human death is placed in his human nature and is thereby made accessible to God. In his earlier writings, Fulgentius lays much greater emphasis on the latter point than the former.

The communication in Christ, then, effects the same communication between God and Christians. Christ has both death and righteousness in order to (*ut*) free us from sin and give us righteousness. The purpose clause suggests that Christology is the foundation of soteriology, and soteriology is the purpose of Christology. As we have seen, this relationship is also implied in the writings of the Scythian monks when they make a

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[54]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 27.742-748: "Hic in humana natura, in qua mediator Dei et hominum factus est, iustitiam habuit ex Patre, mortem ex matre; ut per ipsum liberaremur ab omni peccato, qui peccatum nec nascendo nec vivendo contraxit, et ab ipso acciperemus iustitiam, per quam mortis aeternae vinculo solveremur, ut per eum et in hac vita iusti, et post hanc vitam immortales esse possemus." Also, Fulg. *De fide ad Petrum* 12.232-239: "Idcirco autem mediator, quia idem Deus atque homo verus, habens cum Patre unam divinitatis naturam, et humanitatis unam cum matre substantiam; habens ex nobis usque ad mortem iniquitatis nostrae poenam; habens incommutabilem de Deo Patre iustitiam; propter nostram iniquitatem temporaliter mortuus, propter iustitiam suam et ipse semper vivus et immortalitatem mortalibus largiturus."

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transition from a Christological discussion to a discussion about grace with the words,

"Since these things are so," or "From these things it follows that . . . ."

In light of Fulgentius's distinction between mercy and justice, discussed above, it is

worth asking what Fulgentius means by the righteousness (*iustitia*) which Christ gives us

from the Father. First, despite Fulgentius's occasional mention of Christ's death paying a

debt, the righteousness which Christ gives to humanity is not the payment of that debt.

Neither is it the righteousness of Christ's sinless life. Fulgentius consistently says that the

righteousness which Christ gives humanity is either the righteousness of the Father (as

here) or the righteousness of the divine nature.[55] It would seem that Christ's own merits

are not part of Fulgentius's soteriology. Fulgentius does not explain why not. Perhaps it

is because he thinks of salvation principally as a communication of divine attributes.

Another possible reason is expressed by Leporius in the fifth century. Leporius holds that

merit is not applicable in the case of Christ because merit implies measure, and since Christ

is God, he is beyond measurement.[56] Perhaps Fulgentius has the same idea.[57]

Besides linking the communication of attributes to soteriology in a general way,

the above passage also evokes Fulgentius's distinction between justification and

glorification. As we have seen, Fulgentius understands justification to be the gift of a

good life, while he understands glorification to be the gift of eternal life. Thus, when

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[55]See above, n. 54.

[56]Leporius *Libell. emend.* 8.18-20.

[57]Thomas Aquinas deals with a similar objection when he considers the place of
Christ's merit in salvation. Cf. J. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: "Merit"
in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, 1995): 239.

Fulgentius in the above passage asserts that the communication which gives righteousness to humanity enables us "to be both righteous in this life and immortal after this life," he is identifying this gift of righteousness as the engine which drives both justification and glorification. Normally, Fulgentius attributes justification and glorification to grace, but in light of these considerations, we may conclude that the grace of justification is the communication of the divine attribute of righteousness to the sinner. This divine attribute gives the sinner a new will and the ability to do good works and finally results in glorification (eternal life) which is a reward for these divinely-bestowed good works.

Because Fulgentius implies that grace is the communication of a divine attribute to a human being, one may ask whether Fulgentius does not advocate something similar to divinization, which is often taken to be an Eastern doctrine. Although Fulgentius uses the communication of attributes as the framework of his soteriology, he is flexible in his description of what is exchanged. He does not speak of humans becoming God, but he does speak of an exchange of divine and human birth and sonship and an exchange of life and death. He can even, as in the above passages, cast the exchange in the categories of the Pelagian controversy: sin and righteousness. Therefore, it is fair to point out similarities between Fulgentius's doctrine of grace and divinization. However, it would be misleading to suggest that divinization is Fulgentius's main soteriological category. The communication of attributes is his main soteriological category. Divinization looks similar to Fulgentius's soteriology because it too works by communication of attributes.

Since Fulgentius sees salvation as a communication of divine attributes, especially life and righteousness, to humanity, he emphasizes divine action in salvation. In this he is

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quite at home in the Augustinian tradition. So great is this emphasis that Fulgentius does

on occasion describe conversion in such a way that it seems as though the human will

were circumvented. For instance, citing John 8:36, "If the Son sets you free, then you will

be free indeed," Fulgentius comments, "Our liberation is in his choice, it is situated in his

will."[58]

Statements such as this leave him open to the charge that he is evacuating the

humanity from those who are being saved. As we have seen, Faustus of Riez likens the

Augustinian doctrine of grace to Monophysitism because it allegedly ascribes everything

to God and nothing to humanity. Fulgentius seems to be sensitive to that sort of

objection. He defends himself against it in two ways. First, he asserts that humans have

free choice. Second, he provides a role for human merit in his soteriology.

7.4 The Role of Will and Merit

In numerous places, Fulgentius clarifies his position to show that he does not

believe that God's grace circumvents the will. He says, "It is not therefore the case that a

human being cannot believe naturally just because God gives him his faith. Indeed, in this

a human being is recognized most especially to be created to have faith: because through

faith human nature is renewed from its oldness."[59] Thus, the will's inability to choose

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[58]Fulg. *De Trin.* 10.1.407-409: "...Dominus ait: *Si vos Filius liberaverit, tunc vere liberi eritis.* Liberatio nostra in eius arbitrio, in eius sita est voluntate."

[59]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 45.1258-1261: "Non ergo propterea non potest homo naturaliter credere, quia divinitus ei donatur ut credat; immo in hoc maxime ad habendam fidem homo creatus agnoscitur, quia per fidem humana natura ex vetustate renovatur."

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good from its own powers does not mean that the will ceases to be a human will. Human beings are not automatons whose will is irrelevant in conversion. Instead, Fulgentius maintains, "By this grace the human is not done away with but healed, not taken away but corrected, not removed but illumined . . . ."[60]

Fulgentius finds in Paul an apt example of this relation between grace and will. He states, "Therefore, the will was not lacking for the one laboring. The grace which had given the will did not cease to help it. And that Paul may not be lacking in labor, grace substituted for strength for the one willing."[61] When Fulgentius asserts that grace substituted for strength, he means to deny that Paul had any human faculty which worked independently from God on its own power. The will and power which accomplished Paul's good works were given by God. Since God's grace engaged Paul's will, however, and worked through it, Paul's will was certainly active.

This correlation of divine grace and human will bears some similarity to the way Fulgentius relates the divine and human in his mature Christology. When Fulgentius identifies the person of Christ as the Word, he denies the existence of a human person who acts independently from God. Nevertheless, because the Word became a man, the Word's actions are fully human and Christ's human body and soul are both fully engaged.

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[60]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 41.1163-1164: "Qua gratia humanum non aufertur, sed sanatur; non adimitur, sed corrigitur; non removetur, sed illuminatur...." Cf. Fulg. *Ad Tras.* 3.7.1.233-235: "Non autem humana natura poterat in reparatione consumi, cuius pars damnata non consumetur aeternitate supplicii."

[61]Fulg. *De verit. praedest.* 2.27.615-617: "Laboranti ergo voluntas non deerat, quam gratia non cessabat adiuvare, quae dederat; et ut Paulus non deficeret in labore, virtutem volenti gratia subrogabat."

The analogy between the divine/human relation in Christology and in soteriology is even more suggestively evoked when Fulgentius resorts to the analogy of body and soul. This is ordinarily a Christological analogy to describe the relation between the two natures of Christ, but Fulgentius appeals to it in *Ep. 17* to explain the relation between divine grace and human will. He states,

> Moreover, just as the flesh needs the soul alone to live, so also a human being needs grace alone to believe. And just as the flesh can do nothing if the soul ceases to vivify it, thus a human being can have no good will if the help of grace departs from him. Therefore, in order for the flesh to be able to live and to function, it is supported by the vivification of the soul which is present. A human being too, in order to will or do the good is helped continuously by the support of vivifying grace.[62]

Thus, free choice for Fulgentius functions in the same way the flesh of Christ does in his later Christology: as a guarantee of the full humanity of God's actions. The fact that divine attributes are communicated to Christ's flesh does not destroy the flesh. Similarly, the fact that grace vivifies the will does not destroy the will. In both cases, the presence and action of God perfects the human.

One consequence of the fact that the human will is engaged in salvation is that merit also plays a role. In order to understand this role, it is necessary first to note that justification for Fulgentius has two moments along the lines of Phil. 2:13: God works in us to will, and God works in us to do. Fulgentius correlates faith with God working in us to

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[62]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 49.1308-1314: "Sicut etiam ut caro vivat, solius opus est animae, ita quoque ut homo credat, solius opus est gratiae. Et sicut caro nihil operari potest, si eam vivificare anima desinat, sic homo nihil bene velle potest, si ab eo gratiae iuvamen abscedat. Ut ergo caro et vivere possit et operari, praesentis animae vivificatione fulcitur; homo quoque ut bonum velit aut faciat, gratiae vivificantis subsidio iugiter adiuvatur."

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will by defining faith as the "beginning of the good will" (*bonae voluntatis initium*).[63] As

faith is the beginning of a good will, so love is its completion.[64] Thus, faith and love

correspond to God working to will and to do, respectively.

Ordinarily, "justification" in Fulgentius refers to both the will and the work which

God accomplishes in the person. For example, Fulgentius asserts that Jacob was not

chosen on the basis of foreseen good works, "but before the ages, [God] prepared for him

the grace of justification through which he would bestow on him not only the beginning of

a good will but also the effect of good action."[65] At times, however, Fulgentius restricts

the term justification to the first moment of the bestowal of a new will. He distinguishes

"justification" from the works that follow, for example, when he says that "whoever is

justified freely through faith also receives the aid of subsequent grace to do well."[66]

A passage in *De veritate praedestinationis* lays out nicely the distinction between

the first and second moments of justification. Fulgentius states,

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[63]Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.36.848-850: "Huius bonae voluntatis initium in fide consistere, liber Cantici Canticorum ostendit, ubi Christus dicit Ecclesiae: *Venies et pertansies ab initio fidei.*"

[64]Fulgentius, *De ver. praedest.* 2.17.371-372: "...voluntas autem bona non nisi fide inchoatur et caritate perficitur."

[65]Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.11.257-260: "...sed ei ante saecula iustificationis gratiam [Deus] praeparavit, per quam illi non solum bonae voluntatis initium, sed etiam bonae operationis largiretur effectum." Cf. Fulg. *De ver. praed.* 1.14.326-329: "[Deus] quique merita et opera in omnibus hominibus numquam invenit bona, pro quibus eos salvet; sed ipse in eis et voluntates et opera mutat, quando eos gratuita miseratione iustificat."

[66]Fulg. *Ep. 17* 48.1328-1330: "...quique gratis per fidem iustificati, etiam ad bene operandum auxilium gratiae subsequentis accipiunt...."

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For [mercy] precedes us when the Lord becomes propitious to all our iniquities. It follows us when the Lord heals all our sicknesses. For mercy precedes the free choice of the human being when in one who does not yet have a good will, it alone works the beginning of a good will. Then it follows us when it gives aid to the one who has good will so that by doing the good [the person] may arrive at the effect of the good will.[57]

In this passage, the first effect of mercy is that God is propitiated and creates faith where there was no faith before. Since mercy precedes the will, there can be no role for human cooperation. The second effect of mercy is the healing and the aid (*auxilium*) which leads to good works.

In a discussion of original sin in *Ep. 17*, Fulgentius concerns himself with what I have called the first moment of justification, which is more or less equivalent to conversion. In order to attribute conversion completely to God, Fulgentius says that "faith alone" rescues from original sin. He states, "From this sin which our carnal birth originally carries, natural capacity rescues no one, the letter of the law rescues no one, but faith alone (*sola fides*) in Jesus Christ the Son of God who comes 'to seek and to save that which was lost' [rescues]."[68] Faith, as we have seen, is the gift of a good will which God gives to those who have an evil will. To attribute conversion to faith alone, then, is to rule out human cooperation, even graced human cooperation.

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[57]Fulgentius, *De verit. praedest.* 2.21.480-486: "Praevenit [misericordia] enim nos, dum propitius fit Dominus omnibus iniquitatibus nostris; subsequitur nos, dum sanat Dominus omnes languores nostros; praevenit enim misericordia liberum hominis arbitrium, dum in nondum benevolente sola operatur exordium bonae voluntatis; subsequitur autem dum bene volenti subministrat auxilium, ut bene operando perveniat ad bonae voluntatis effectum."

[68]Fulgentius, *Epistle 17* 33.892-895: "Ab hoc peccato quod originaliter carnalis nativitas trahit, neminem facultas naturalis, neminem littera sanctae legis eripit, sed sola fides Iesu Christi Filii Dei, qui venit *quaerere et salvum facere quod perierat.*"

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There is human cooperation, however, in the second moment of justification. In a letter to Fulgentius, the Scythian monks John and Venerius report that they hold that salvation is only by the mercy of God, while their opponents hold that the human will must cooperate in salvation.[69] Fulgentius answers that both statements are correct as long as their proper order is maintained. He states, "Each [position] is held worthily if the right order of divine mercy and human will is maintained so that the former precedes and the latter follows. The mercy of God alone confers the beginning of salvation. Thereafter, the human will emerges as a cooperator with it for its own salvation . . . ."[70] In contexts where Fulgentius is discussing post-conversion behavior, he stresses the necessity of both faith and works. Humility, for example, "does not consist in faith alone, but in faith and works at the same time."[71]

The next question John and Venerius ask is whether God effects the will and the work or whether he requires that from us. Fulgentius responds that God both requires

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[69] Fulgentius refers to their statement in *Ep. 15* 11.182-184: "Quod autem vos dicitis, sola Dei misericordia salvari hominem, illi autem dicunt, nisi quis voluntate propria cucurrerit et elaboraverit, salvus esse non poterit...."

[70] Fulg. *Ep 15* 11.184-188: "...digne utrumque tenetur, si rectus servetur ordo divinae misericordiae et voluntatis humanae, ut illa praeveniat, ista sequatur; sola Dei misericordia initium salutis conferat; cui deinde voluntas hominis cooperatrix suae salutis existat...." Cf. Fulgentius, *De verit. praedest.* 2.22.487-489: "Misericordia igitur praeveniens cooperaturam sibi hominis voluntatem sola praeparat; subsequens autem cooperantem sibi voluntatem iuvat."

[71] Fulg. *Ep. 3* 27.489: "[Humilitas] non in sola consistit fide, sed in fide simul et opere." He also denies that the faith of heretics profits them anything because they have no love (*De Trin.* 11.3.457-460). In this case, however, he seems to be defining faith as intellectual knowledge rather than the good will of Phil. 2:13.

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these things and does them in us.[72] Thus, the first and second moments of justification are similar in that God does them both. They are different, however, in that God gives the beginning of a good will (faith) without human cooperation, while he brings that good will to its fulfillment in good works with human cooperation. When Fulgentius ascribes something to "faith" or to "faith alone" he intends to exclude all human cooperation.[73] When he rejects the "faith alone" formulation, he intends to leave room for graced human cooperation.

By speaking of "cooperation," Fulgentius is not trying to carve out a sphere of human independence from God such that the human does part and God does part. The point of cooperation for Fulgentius is not human independence, but human engagement. Just as choice is "free" because it retains its voluntary character, not because it is equally open to good or bad, so also the will "cooperates" because the good works it does are voluntary in character, not because it makes an independent contribution to God's work in the believer to will and to do.[74]

The voluntary character of good works is key to their being meritorious. Fulgentius states, "Moreover, faith and love are gifts of divine goodness which, unless a

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[72]Fulg. *Ep. 15* 223-224: "Iubet enim Deus homini ut velit, sed Deus in homine operatur et velle; iubet ut faciat, sed Deus in eo operatur et facere."

[73]This is also the function of the *sola fide* formula in the Reformation, though the reformers attributed more to faith alone than Fulgentius does.

[74]In this understanding of cooperation, Fulgentius anticipates the Formula of Concord which affirms that those renewed by word and sacrament "cooperate" with God (FC 2.65) in the sense that "God rules, leads, and guides them with his Holy Spirit" (FC 2.66), but this does not mean the converted person "cooperates alongside the Holy Spirit, in the way two horses draw a wagon together" (FC 2.66).

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human being received the gifts for himself voluntarily, would neither be in the person nor profit him . . . ."[75] Because faith and love are gifts of mercy, Fulgentius can say that one is saved *sola Dei misericordia*,[76] and because faith and love are voluntary, he can also account for the statement of Paul in 1 Cor. 9:24, "Each one will receive his own reward according to his labor."[77] Thus, both free choice and merit serve to highlight the fact that God's grace does not circumvent or remove human faculties but engages them and works through them. Free choice and merit, however, leave no room for an autonomous human agent in Fulgentius's soteriology.

7.5 Conclusion

Fulgentius makes an explicit connection between Christology and grace when, following Augustine, he argues for the gratuity of grace on the basis of the incarnation. When he is writing against only Semi-pelagians, he locates the paradigm for soteriology in the relation between Christ's divine and human natures. When he is also concerned about Nestorianizers, he takes more care to distinguish the union of Christ's two natures from the union of God and believers. Correspondingly, he locates the soteriological paradigm in the relation between the Holy Spirit and Mary. Regardless of variations in the precise

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[75]Fulg. *De verit. praed.* 2.17.372-374: "Fides autem et caritas divinae sunt munera bonitatis, quae nisi voluntarie homo sibi donata susciperet, nec inessent homini, nec prodessent...."

[76]Fulg. *De verit. praed.* 2.17.377: "...sola Dei misericordia salvari hominem..."

[77]Fulg. *De verit. praed.* 2.17.381-382 (citing 1 Cor. 9:24): "Unusquisque propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem...."

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formulation of these arguments, the point is the same: because the incarnation was an act of God's mercy, not a response to antecedent human merit, conversion also must be seen as God's free act, not a response to merit.

Throughout Fulgentius's mature writings, he uses the communication of attributes in Christ as the pattern by which he describes salvation. Christ takes on our physical birth and gives us his spiritual birth. Christ takes our death and gives us his life. Christ takes the punishment of our sin and gives us his divine righteousness. This pattern of thought results in more parallelism as well as an increased emphasis on Christ's flesh as compared to Fulgentius's earlier writings.

Finally, Fulgentius uses the language of free choice and merit to defend himself against the accusation that he is removing all human elements in salvation. The purpose of this terminology is not to assert that the human will is independent from God, but rather that God fully engages the human will which makes the will fully active and involved. Even before the fall, Adam's will was "ruled" by grace.

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 The Scythian Monks and Fulgentius

Even though Augustine died a century before the Theopaschite controversy, his doctrine of grace is the flip-side, so to speak, of theopaschite Christology because both articles of doctrine share the same understanding of the relation between God and humanity. This relation is characterized by two points. First, human actions originate in God both in the case of Christ and in the case of Christians. Except in the case of sin, humanity never acts independently from God. Second, God's role as subject does not evacuate humanity from Christology or soteriology, but humanity finds its fulfillment precisely because God acts through human experiences, human actions, and even human decisions. This view stands in contrast to the assumption of Pelagianism and Nestorianism that in order to confess a full and undiminished humanity, one must assert at least some degree of human independence from God.[1] Both the Scythian monks and Fulgentius of

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[1]John O'Keefe ("Impassible Suffering?") has shown that the autonomy of Christ's human nature was not the main concern of the Nestorians. They were more concerned about protecting God's impassibility. It is fair to say, however, that they made use of the notion of human independence from God in their defense of divine impassibility.

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Ruspe reject Nestorianism and Pelagianism in favor of theopaschite Christology and an Augustinian doctrine of grace.

In their Christology, the Scythian monks confess God to be the sole originator, indeed the ultimate subject, of all Christ's actions by identifying the person of Christ as the Word, following Cyril of Alexandria. They do this most especially in their theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh." This formula is intended to prevent any Nestorianizing misinterpretation of Chalcedon which would assign the crucifixion only to Christ's human nature. One of the Trinity, i.e., the Word himself, is the subject of the crucifixion. There is no place in their Christology for an independently operating human subject.

Their position does not, however, destroy the human nature of Christ as their opponents would claim. That is because the Scythian monks do not understand independence from God to be a criterion for evaluating whether Christ has a full human nature. Christ's human nature appears in the ablative case in the theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified in the flesh (*carne*)." Since John Maxentius states in the *Dialogus contra Nestorianos* that he understands qualifiers such as *carne* to specify the way (*modus*) in which God undergoes human experiences, we should perhaps translate the theopaschite formula, "One of the Trinity was crucified by means of the flesh." For the Scythian monks, the human nature of Christ is fully operative precisely when it serves as the means by which the Word accomplishes his purposes.

Fulgentius expresses the same ideas in his mature Christology. Under the influence of the Scythian monks, Fulgentius too comes to identify the person of Christ as the Word.

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He abandons his earlier tendency to leave the impression that there are two acting subjects in Christ. As his Christology becomes more unitive, he emphasizes that the Word is the acting subject. In his earlier writings, Fulgentius appeals to Christ's human nature to explain the sense in which the Word did *not* suffer. Implicit in his explanation is the idea that the human nature of Christ is sufficiently sequestered from the Word, so that the Word is insulated from the suffering of the human nature. After his contact with the Scythian monks, however, Fulgentius finds it more important to explain how the Word *did* suffer. Behind this development is a sharpening of Fulgentius's understanding of predication. In his mature writings, when he predicates an action or experience of the Word, Fulgentius no longer backs off from that predication by suggesting that the Word is not really the subject of the action or experience. Like the Scythian monks, Fulgentius understands Christ's humanity to be the means by which the Logos underwent the human experience of suffering.

The same relationship between God and humanity finds expression in the Augustinian doctrine of grace expounded by the Scythian monks in the course of the Semi-Pelagian controversy. The point at issue in this controversy is whether faith comes from natural human powers or from God. The Scythian monks hold that God is the sole originator of human salvation. They therefore deny that faith arises from natural human powers or that God gives faith in response to any antecedent human merits. They hold instead that good works flow from God's gift of grace. Salvation, according to the Scythian monks, is a kind of communication of attributes by which God takes human sin

and death and communicates to humanity divine righteousness and life. This communication of attributes produces good works, and not the other way around.

To argue that God is the sole originator of human salvation, however, opens the Scythian monks to the charge that they are evacuating humanity from their account of salvation. Faustus of Riez makes just such an argument against his Augustinian opponents in the fifth century, and the North African bishop Possessor likely levels the same charge at the Scythian monks. The Scythian monks respond by saying that the human will is involved in salvation. God gives a new will, and that new will then wants to do good works. Thus, the Scythian monks assert the full engagement of the human will in salvation without making the human will a second acting subject which operates independently from God's grace. This position reflects the Scythian monks' conviction that the will is most fully free and human when it is moved by God and serves as the means by which God works his saving will.

Likewise, Fulgentius views God as the sole originator of human salvation. In the context of the Semi-Pelagian controversy Fulgentius, like the Scythian monks, expresses this conviction by denying that conversion is prompted by antecedent human merits. Instead, conversion is entirely the work of God. As Fulgentius's Christology makes more use of the communication of attributes, he begins to describe God's saving action more in terms of communication of attributes as well. God the Word takes human sin and death upon himself and gives humanity divine righteousness and life. As in his nature Christology, so in his doctrine of grace, the Word alone accomplishes salvation.

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That does not mean, however, that humanity plays no role in its own salvation. For Fulgentius, humanity is fully engaged in salvation precisely when God works through it. The paradigmatic Scripture text which Fulgentius constantly adduces to describe justification is Phil. 2:13, "God works in you both to will and to do." Fulgentius understands this passage to mean that purely because of his mercy, God changes the human will so that it wills the good. Then God further supports the will and gives it the power to accomplish the good that it now wills. Thus, the will is active, but it makes no independent contribution to salvation. Instead, its very movement toward the good is a gift from God.

In the same way, Fulgentius speaks of God granting eternal life as a reward for merit. A reward is appropriate only because the human will is fully involved in doing good works. Thus, the concept of reward in Fulgentius's theology serves to underscore the fact that grace does not circumvent or destroy human nature. This kind of "reward," however, does not imply that there is some portion of salvation for which human beings are responsible on their own, as if God worked part of salvation and human beings merited the other part. Fulgentius's qualifications of the notions of reward and merit rule out such a simplistic coordination of divine and human action in salvation. Fulgentius insists first that good works arise not from natural human powers but are themselves gifts from God. Like Augustine, Fulgentius understands rewards to be nothing more than God crowning his own gifts. Fulgentius adds a second qualification by asserting that there is no proportionality between the reward of eternal life and the worth of the divinely-given works. Thus, Fulgentius's understanding of merit and reward serves to defend him against

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the charge that his doctrine of grace operates without reference to human nature. He uses merit to confess the full engagement of human nature in salvation, but he qualifies the definition of merit to make clear that God remains the only source of both merit and reward.

Both the Christological and soteriological versions of this conviction about God and the world come together in the view that Christ is the exemplar of predestination. Augustine lays the foundation for this view in *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30. He argues that just as Christ's human nature did nothing to merit being assumed by the Word (because Christ had no human nature before the conception), so also Christians do nothing to merit being united to the Word in conversion and in the whole life of grace. Christ is the premier example of predestination because neither in Christ nor in the rest of humanity does the human will initiate union with God.

This argument from Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* exercises a profound influence on the Scythian controversy. The Scythian monks do not make use of this argument, probably because they are concerned about emphasizing the distinction between Christ and the saints against their Nestorianizing opponents. Nevertheless, they do assert that their doctrine of grace is a consequence of their Christology, and they fault their opponents for teaching an exaltation based on antecedent merit both in Christology and in the doctrine of grace. Fulgentius uses Augustine's argument, though he modifies it to distinguish more clearly between Christ and the saints. Instead of using the relation between the Word and Christ's human nature as the paradigm of the relation between divine and human in salvation, he focuses on the interaction between the Holy Spirit and

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Mary. The Holy Spirit brought about the incarnation, and Mary did nothing to deserve it. Thus, even though the anti-Nestorian context of the Scythian controversy necessitates some modifications of Augustine's argument, Augustine's basic conviction that the incarnation and grace operate according to the same pattern turns out to be fundamental to the Scythian controversy as well.

This wedding of Cyrillian Christology with an Augustinian doctrine of grace challenges common stereotypes about the differences between East and West. The Scythian monks were from the East, but they knew Latin better than they knew Greek, and they were well acquainted with the writings of Augustine. Their introduction of Cyrillian Christology into the West found acceptance in the person of Fulgentius of Ruspe, and, as Nisters has shown, transformed his Christology. The reason that Cyril and Augustine could be joined in this fashion is that both share the view that God is the only savior and that he acts through human means.

Far from being an isolated event, the combination of Cyril and Augustine has been a powerful force in Western theology at a number of important times. In order to demonstrate the lasting importance of this combination, both the immediate influence and the longer-range echoes of the Scythian controversy will be discussed briefly. The Scythian controversy exercised immediate influence on the Second Council of Orange and the Second Council of Constantinople. Echoes of the issues of the Scythian Controversy may be seen in such figures as Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard. Space does not permit a detailed analysis of these later theological developments which have resonances with the Scythian controversy. A cursory treatment

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is worth-while, however, because it shows that the issues raised by the Scythian controversy are enduring questions in the history of theology.

8.2 The Second Council of Orange (529)

The influence of the Scythian monks on the Second Council of Orange (529) is mediated through the *Capitula sancti Augustini*. D. Cappuyns has demonstrated that this anti-Pelagian florilegium of passages from Augustine was assembled by John Maxentius. Cappuyns shows that these *capitula* have the same literary form, doctrinal nuances, and even the roughly the same order of contents as other works of Maxentius.[2] The *capitula* were sent to Rome sometime in the 520's. When Caesarius of Arles asked the advice of Pope Felix IV against the Semi-Pelagians in 528 or 529, Felix IV put together a dossier of relevant citations from church fathers from documents he had in the Roman archives. He began the collection with theses 3-10 of the *Capitula sancti Augustini* and added various theses from Prosper of Aquitaine. Felix presumably omitted the first two of the *Capitula sancti Augustini* because they concern the condition of Adam before the fall and were therefore not relevant to the question at hand. Felix then sent the newly-assembled florilegium to Caesarius. At the dedication of the basilica in Orange in 529, Caesarius had thirteen other bishops and eight illustrious laymen subscribe to this document. These canons were later approved by Pope Boniface II.[3] Eventually, the document came to be

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[2]D.M. Cappuyns, "L'origine des 'Capitula' d'Orange 529," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 6 (1934): 140.

[3]Cappuyns, "L'origine des 'Capitula' d'Orange 529," 140-2.

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treated as the canons of a council, though it is not clear that they were originally understood that way. In this way, theses 3-10 of John Maxentius's *Capitula sancti Augustini* became canons 1-8 of the Second Council of Orange.[4]

Accordingly, the Second Council of Orange reflects the Scythian monks' basic theological convictions. For instance, the first eight canons of the council insist that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit and is in no way a response to anything in the human will.[5] God does not circumvent or ignore the human will, however, but works through it. The Spirit works is us so that we believe (*ut credamus*).[6]

If we move beyond those canons probably originating from John Maxentius, we find the same understanding of the divine-human relation reflected in the rest of the canons

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[4]Glorie takes issue with Cappuyns's assertion that John Maxentius is the compiler of the *Capitula s. Augustini*. He notes that in 520, Pope Hormisdas asserts in his response to Possessor, that the Roman church has *expressa capitula* on the doctrine of grace in its archives. Glorie asserts that *capitula* cannot refer to a work of Prosper, but clearly (*perspicue*) refer to the *Capitula s. Augustini* (Glorie, CCL 85A, 245). Thus, John Maxentius could not have been the compiler of this collection since they were already in the Roman archives in 520. Glorie's argument is not convincing, however. He gives no reason why *capitula* could not refer to Prosper's *Liber sententiarum...sancti Augustini*, as Cappuyns claims ("L'origine des 'Capitula' d'Orange 529," 141). Prosper's *Liber sententiarum* is, after all, collection of statements. *Capitula* would be an apt description of the work. Furthermore, Glorie passes over in silence the similarities in order, doctrine, and literary form between the *Capitula s. Augustini* and the other works of John Maxentius which Cappuyns adduces.

[5]Can. 4 says that cleansing from sin takes place *per sancti Spirtus infusione* [sic] *et operationem in nos* and that God does not look for *volumtatem* [sic] *nostram*. Can. 5 ascribes the beginning of faith to the gift of grace, and denies that the beginning of faith *naturaliter nobis inesse*. Can. 7 denies that we can will anything good pertaining to salvation *per naturae vigorem* apart from the *inluminatione et inspiratione Spiritus sancti*.

[6]Can. 6.

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of Orange. Human actions are ascribed to God working in us.[7] Canon 20 recognizes a

distinction between things God does without us and things God does in us. It states, "A

human being can do no good without God. God does many good things in a human which

the human does not do, but a human does no good things which God does not provide

that the human may do."[8] This is similar to the distinction Fulgentius makes between the

two moments of justification. God effects conversion independently of the will. There is

no cooperation. God does good works, however, through the will. In these works there

is cooperation. The notion of rewards is similar to that found in Fulgentius as well.

Canon 18 states that rewards are given to works, but those works are brought about by

grace which is not a response to works.

Thus, the Second Council of Orange is directly influenced by John Maxentius

through the *Capitula sancti Augustini*. The canons of this council are not explicitly

Christological, but they do manifest the same concerns which pervade both the

Christology and the soteriology of the Scythian monks and Fulgentius: to confess that

God is the sole originator of salvation and that he works through humanity.

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[7]Can. 9: "...quotiens enim bona agimus, Deus in nobis adque [*sic*] nobiscum, ut operemur, operatur." Cf. Can. 23: "Suam volumtatem [*sic*] homines faciunt, non Dei, quando id agunt, quod Deo displacit [*sic*]; quando autem ita faciunt, quod volunt, ut divinae serviant volumtati [*sic*], quamvis volentes agant, quod agunt, illius tamen volumtas [*sic*] est, a quo et praeparatur et iubetur, quod volunt."

[8]Can. 20: "Nihil boni hominem posse sine Deo. Multa Deus facit in homine bona, quae non facit homo; nulla vero facit homo bona, quae non Deus praestat, ut faciat homo."

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8.3 The Second Council of Constantinople (553)

The Second Council of Constantinople (553) makes a major contribution to the clarification of Christological terminology by canonizing a Cyrillian interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon. Chalcedon did not specify whether the one hypostasis in Christ is the Word himself or the sum of the two natures. The recitation of the Nicene creed in the Chalcedonian Definition does suggest that the hypostasis is the Word since the same one who is begotten from the Father from eternity is the subject of the incarnation, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and return. This implicit identification of the hypostasis as the Word is obscured, however, by two factors. First, the identification is never made explicit. The Chalcedonian definition of faith states that there is one hypostasis but it does not define its precise identity. Second, Leo's Tome, with its statement that "each form [i.e., nature] does what is proper to it," opens the door for an interpretation of Chalcedon in which Christ's human nature can act somewhat independently from his divine nature. This is what made Chalcedon unacceptable to the Monophysites and also filled Cyrillian-minded Chalcedonians like the Scythian monks with an urgency to safeguard the correct interpretation of Chalcedon.

The mark of Constantinople II's Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon is that it does specify that the one hypostasis is the Word. This point comes through clearly in Canon 10 which endorses the Scythian monks' theopaschite formula. Canon 10 states, "If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true

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God and the Lord of Glory and one of the Holy Trinity: let him be anathema."[9] Thus,

Constantinople II excludes a Nestorianizing interpretation of Chalcedon by making clear

that "One of the Trinity," i.e. the Word, is the only subject of Christ's human experiences,

even crucifixion.

The extent of the Scythian monks' influence on Constantinople II may be seen

from the correspondence of Justinian between the time of the Scythian controversy up to

the council. Justinian initially opposes the Scythian monks and urges the pope to send

them far away.[10] He quickly changes his mind, however, and sends the pope a second

letter, sent by special courier to arrive in Rome before the first one.[11] This second letter

insists that the Scythian monks are vital to the peace of the church.[12] As Grillmeier notes,

from that time on Justinian supports the Scythian monks.[13] He writes a number of letters

to Pope Hormisdas concerning their theopaschite formula. Initially, he asks for the pope's

opinion of it.[14] The pope does not respond, however, and soon Justinian begins to play

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[9]Norman P. Tanner, S.J., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 118: Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον σαρκὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν εἶναι θεὸν ἀληθινὸν καὶ κύριον τῆς δόξης καὶ ἕνα τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος, ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀνάθεμα ἔστω (translated by Henry Percival, NPNF ser. 2, vol. 14, 314).

[10] CA 187, June 29, 519.

[11]CA 191, beginning of July 519.

[12]CA 191.25-27: "nisi enim precibus et diligentia vestra ista quaestio soluta fuerit, veremur, ne non possit pax sanctarum ecclesiarum provenire."

[13]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2:323.

[14]CA 188, Oct. 15, 519.

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the role of advocate, asserting the orthodoxy of the formula and defending it with citations

from Augustine.[15] After Justinian becomes the sole monarch in 527, he asserts the

theopaschite formula with even more tenacity. Grillmeier notes that after that date. it

appears in every Christological document of Justinian.[16]

The influence of the Scythian monks on Justinian, and thus on Constantinople II,

extends beyond the theopaschite formula. Justinian adopts other language and concerns

from them as well. Justinian produces a Confession of faith in 527, issues an Edict on

March 15, 533, and writes a letter to Epiphanius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, on

March 26, 533. In each document, Justinian asserts not only the theopaschite formula, but

also the Scythian monks' formulation that Mary is *vere et proprie theotokos.*[17]

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[15]Justinian, along with Justin I and John of Constantinople, writes Pope Hormisdas a letter defending the theopaschite formula in January of 520. Justinian's letter is lost, but its advocacy of the theopaschite formula may be deduced from Hormisdas's reply (CA 206, Feb. or March, 520). In CA 196 (July 9, 520), Justinian cites passages from Augustine in support of the formula. He probably was made aware of these passages by John Maxentius's *Libellus fidei.* Cf. *Libell. fid.* 14.189-16.206. He repeats his assertion that the formula is orthodox in CA 235 (Sept. 9, 520).

[16]Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2:338. Grillmeier adds that one may detect the influence of the empress Theodora in this. According to Victor of Tunnuna, she went so far as to insist that the theopaschite formula be confessed without the addition of the qualifier "in the flesh" (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica: auctorum antiquissimorum* 11.2, 197).

[17]Confession of Faith, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.5.3 (Paul Krueger, ed., *Corpus Iuris Civilis,* vol. 2, *Codex Iustinianus,* 13th ed. [Berlin: Weidmanns, 1963], 6): Nestorius denies that "proprie et vere sanctam gloriosam semper virginem Mariam dei genetricem esse...." Edict of March 13, 533, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.6.7 (Krueger, 8): the Nestorians deny that "proprie et re vera sanctam gloriosam semper virginem Mariam deiparam...." Letter to Epiphanius, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.7.9 (Krueger, 9): "...sanctam gloriosam semper virginem Mariam proprie et vere matrem dei dicimus...." The terms *proprie et vere* come from the Scythian monks. The *semper,* however, comes from Justinian himself.

Furthermore, Justinian echoes the Scythian monks' characterization of the Nestorian position when he charges the Nestorians with teaching that there are two Sons, one from the Father and one from Mary. He also accuses the Nestorians of teaching that the union between the two sons is a union of grace and that the son of Mary became God.[18] The Scythian monks vociferously accused their opponents of teaching all of these things during the course of the Theopaschite controversy. Justinian seems to have made this polemic his own. He even employs a rhetorical strategy which the Scythian monks also used. Just as John Maxentius did in his *Libellus fidei*, Justinian makes sure to cite Proclus of Constantinople in support of the theopaschite formula when he is writing to a Constantinopolitan audience.[19]

The only place where Justinian departs from the position of the Scythian monks is in the question of their acceptance of "one nature" and "two natures." Justinian avoids any talk of natures, one or two, in these documents.[20] When he wants to assert what we call two natures, instead of using the number two or the word nature, he simply appeals to the double-homoousion of the Chalcedonian definition.

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[18]Confession of Faith, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.5.3 (Krueger, 6-7): "...alium dicit [Nestorius] deum verbum ex patre esse, alium qui ex sancta semper virgine Maria natus est, hunc autem gratia et necessitudine, quae ei cum deo verbo est, deum factum esse...." Also, Edict of 533, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.6.7 (Krueger, 8): "...duos filios dicunt alterum ex patre deum verbum, alterum ex sancta semper virgine et dei genetrice Maria, gratia et nexu et necessitudine quae ei cum deo verbo est, et ipsum deum factum esse...." *Necessitudo*, in this context, should probably be understood as "bond" or "connection."

[19]Letter to Epiphanius, *Codex Justinianus* 1.1.7.17 (Krueger, 10). Cf. Maxent., *Libell. fid.* 17-19.

[20]Cf. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2: 346.

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He also tends to avoid the term hypostasis in the economy, although he does

employ the language of three hypostases to describe the Trinity. In his Edict of March,

533, he accepts τὴν . . . καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσιν.[21] However, the Latin version has *re*

vera . . . unitatem, suggesting that he understands "hypostatic union" to mean simply "real

union." Perhaps this interpretation of "hypostatic union" comes from a sensitivity to

concerns, such as those expressed by the Scythian monks, that the term "hypostatic

uniting" implies that two hypostases remain after the union.[22] In later documents,

however, he does not hesitate to use hypostasis in the context of the economy, nor do the

canons of Constantinople II.[23]

The resolution of the Theopaschite controversy comes in 534 when Justinian

writes Pope John II, asking for his view on the matter.[24] Justinian asks 3 questions:

1. Whether Christ can be called *unus ex trinitate*.
2. Whether Christ, God, suffered in the flesh.
3. Whether Mary is called *proprie et veraciter* the mother of God.

Pope John II answers yes to all 3, thus bringing Rome into line with Justinian's support of

the Scythian monks which began in July, 519.

Even after the resolution of the Theopaschite controversy, however, Justinian

continues to use language reminiscent of the Scythian monks. In 551, he publishes an

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[21]Edict of March 15, 533, *Codex Iustinianus* 1.1.6.6 (Krueger, 7).

[22]Cf. Maxent. *Cap.* 3.

[23]Can. 4, for example, confesses the ἕνωσιν...καθ' ὑπόστασιν, and can. 5 confesses the μίαν ὑπόστασιν.

[24]CA 84. Also ACO 4.2.

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edict against the Three Chapters entitled, "Edict on the True Faith." In that document he speaks of Christ as "composite."[25] He denies that the human nature of Christ has its own hypostasis, but rather Christ's flesh and soul were fashioned "in [the Logos's] own hypostasis."[26] He speaks of two births of the Logos.[27] He argues that introducing the number 2 in Christology does not divide Christ because the division is maintained in thought alone.[28] All of these are emphases of the Scythian monks.

The Scythian monks, then, exercise influence on the Second Council of Constantinople primarily because Justinian adopts their Christological position. The influence is seen most clearly in Canon 10 which explicitly endorses their theopaschite formula. As Justinian's correspondence indicates, however, their Christology as a whole forms the basic theological point of view from which Justinian conducts the council and promotes a Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon.

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[25]"Edict on the True Faith" (in Kenneth Paul Wesche, tr., *On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian* [New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991], 165. The original text may be found in Eduard Schwartz, *Drei dogmatischen Schriften Iustinians*, Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, neue Folge, 18 [Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1939], 74). Cf. Maxent, *Cap.* 9.

[26]"Edict on the True Faith" (Wesche, 166). Cf. Maxent. *Dial. c. Nest.* 1.11.445-455.

[27]"Edict on the True Faith" (Wesche, 167). Cf. Maxent. *Cap.* 8.

[28]"Edict on the True Faith" (Wesche, 174). Cf. Maxent. *C. Acef.* 8.72-9.96.

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8.4 Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224-1274)

Cyril of Alexandria influences the West again in the thirteenth century. N. Haring

notes that after the Carolingian renaissance, "St. Cyril's influence declined . . . and

remained at a low ebb until St. Thomas turned his attention to the Greek Fathers."[29]

Thomas Aquinas rediscovers Cyril and a number of conciliar documents in the library of

Monte Casino. This discovery transforms his Christology. In his earlier writings, he

views the "two-supposit" theory, which posits one person but two "supposits" (*supposita*)

i.e., acting subjects, in Christ, as within the pale of Christological orthodoxy. After his

discovery of the documents of Cyril, however, he identifies the person of Christ as the

Word and begins to view the two-supposit theory as Nestorian.

One of the corollaries of the identification of the person of Christ as the Logos for

Thomas is that Christ's human nature has no independence from the Logos. Indeed,

Christ's human nature has no hypostasis of its own other than the hypostasis of the Logos.

Thomas draws on John of Damascus and says that Christ's human nature is an

"instrument" of his divine nature.[30] In his discussion of the unity of Christ's operations in

ST III.19.1c, Thomas explains what he means by "instrument" by adducing the example of

an ax. He identifies two kinds of motions which apply to a thing. One is appropriate to its

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[29]N.M. Haring, "The Character and Range of the Influence of St. Cyril of Alexandria on Latin Theology (430-1260)," *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950): 15.

[30]*ST* III.7.1.ad 3, III.8.1.ad1, III.18.1.ad 2, III.19.1c. All citations from Thomas Aquinas are taken from *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: R. & T. Washbourne, Ltd., 1913).

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nature. In the case of an ax, its natural operation is to cut. The other is appropriate to the

principal agent. In the case of an ax, the principal agent is the craftsman, and the motion

of the ax, insofar as it is employed by the craftsman, is making benches.

From this example, it is clear that Thomas's assertion that Christ's human nature is

the instrument of his divine nature is not intended to diminish the humanity of Christ.

When an instrument is used by a principal agent, its natural capacities are fully used. The

craftsman does not circumvent the properties of the ax, but rather he fully employs those

properties and works through them to make benches. Likewise, the Logos fully employs

Christ's human nature, including his human will.[31]

Thomas' instrumental understanding of Christ's human nature extends to other

human beings as well. Thomas bases the application to other humans on Phil. 2:13, a

passage which, as we have seen, is fundamental to Fulgentius's account of salvation.

Thomas states,

> Whatever was in the human nature of Christ was moved at the bidding of
> the Divine will; yet it does not follow that in Christ there was no movement
> of the will proper to human nature, for the good wills of other saints are
> moved by God's will, *Who worketh* in them *both to will and to accomplish*,
> as is written in Phil. 2:13.[32]

The notion that the wills of the saints are instruments of God plays out in a number

of important feature of Thomas's account of cooperative grace and merit.[33] Habitual

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[31]*ST* III.18, III.19.

[32]*ST* III.18.1.ad 1.

[33]For a more comprehensive account of Aquinas on merit, see Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action.* Many of the considerations on the following pages flow from Wawrykow's book.

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grace requires preparation by the free will of the person to receive it.[34] However, Thomas

does not conceive of that preparation as a human act which takes place independently

from God. On the contrary, God himself works the preparation, and he does so through

the will: ". . . every preparation in man must be by the help of God moving the soul to

good. And thus even the good movement of the free-will, whereby anyone is prepared for

receiving the gift of grace is an act of the free-will moved by God."[35] Thomas makes the

same point about the way in which the free will is moved in his discussion of the

justification of the ungodly in the next question.[36] Thus, when Thomas lists two causes for

merit in *ST* I-II.114.4.c: divine ordination and free will, we should understand free will to

operate in the sense that Thomas outlines in the previous two questions. God moves the

free will to will the good. Since merit, for Thomas, arises from cooperative grace, his

view that human cooperation is a gift from God which God gives through human faculties

results in a concept of merit which, as Joseph Wawrykow notes, preserves the gratuity of

salvation.[37]

The function of merit in Thomas's theology, then, is similar to what we have seen

in Fulgentius. Thomas carefully rules out the idea that the movement of the free will

which accrues merit takes place as an independent human contribution. The free will itself

is first moved by God's *auxilium*. Instead, merit functions in Thomas as in Fulgentius to

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[34]*ST* I-II.112.2c.

[35]*ST* I-II.112.2c.

[36]*ST* I-II.113.3c.

[37]Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 284.

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guarantee the full engagement of human powers by God in salvation. This full engagement takes place not by the human will acting independently from God but by being acted upon by God and acting as an instrument of God.

A further point of similarity between Thomas and Fulgentius is that both authors wish to affirm some aspects of God's gracious dealing with humanity that happen without any human cooperation whatsoever. In Thomas's case, he affirms that both conversion (initial grace) and perseverance take place not by cooperating grace, but by operating grace which is *auxilium*.[38] In other words, whereas cooperating grace includes the cooperation of the will and results in merit, conversion and perseverance do not involve the cooperation of the will but instead underlie the operation of the will. Fulgentius also makes a similar affirmation, at least in the case of conversion, when he asserts that "faith alone" (*sola fides*) rescues humanity from sin. What Fulgentius affirms with the formula *sola fides* is the same as what Thomas affirms with the term "operating *auxilium*": a gracious act of God which takes place without human cooperation.

Both in Christology and the doctrine of grace, Thomas shares the fundamental vision of the Scythian monks and Fulgentius of Ruspe that God is the sole originator of salvation and that he acts through humanity as through an instrument. The connection between Christology and grace is further strengthened in Thomas by his appeal to Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30, the passage in which Augustine puts forth the incarnation as a paradigm of predestination.

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[38]*ST* I-II.114.5, 9.

As we have seen, this very passage exercised considerable influence on the Scythian controversy. In the middle ages, however, Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* seems to have dropped out of circulation. Only small passages of it continued to be available through florilegia. Passages from chapter 15, in which Augustine makes the connection between predestination and conversion, may be found, for example, in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[39] Henri Bouillard has noted that excerpts from chapter 15 appear in the *Glossa ordinaria* as well.[40] These excerpts, however, are too small to give a sense for Augustine's overall argument. Most importantly, they do not give Augustine's account of how Christ is the same and different from Christians. Thus, the connection Augustine asserts in the preserved fragments between the incarnation and predestination could easily be mitigated by stressing the difference between Christ and the saints more emphatically than Augustine does in chapter 15.

Thomas in the *Summa* is unique among his contemporaries, as Bouillard has shown, in that he has the entire text of Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*.[41] According to Bouillard, this fact allows Thomas to relate preparation for grace with predestination and so to abandon his earlier more Semi-

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[39]Cf. *Sent.* III.6.2.6, III.7.2.2.

[40]Henri Bouillard, *Conversion et grace chez S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Éditions Montaigne Quai Conti, 1944), 111. Cf. gloss on Rom. 1:4 in *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/1* (Turnhout: Brepols: 1992), 4:274.

[41]Bouillard, 113-14.

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Pelagian view of the origin of faith.[42] One may note also that it allows Thomas to appreciate more fully the connection between the incarnation and predestination which Augustine asserts in that chapter.

Given Thomas's anti-Nestorian orientation by the time of the *Summa*, we would expect that Augustine's argument would present certain problems for Thomas, as it did for the Scythian monks and Fulgentius, since Augustine maximizes the similarity between Christ and the saints. This is indeed the case. In his discussion of whether the incarnation is by grace, Thomas adduces the following passage from *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30 in the *sed contra* as the authority which establishes that the incarnation is by grace: "By the same grace every man is made a Christian, from the beginning of his faith, as this man from his beginning was made Christ."[43] In the third objection in this article, however, Thomas raises the concern that the position he is advocating does not distinguish between Christ and the saints. The tension between objection 3 and the *sed contra* is precisely the tension which, as we have seen, led the Scythian monks to abandon Augustine's argument and led Fulgentius to modify it.

Thomas relieves the tension by specifying the senses in which one may say that the incarnation is "by grace." Grace can mean simply "the will of God gratuitously bestowing

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[42]Bouillard, 114.

[43]*ST* III.2.10.sed c. This sentence appears in Peter Lombard's *Sent.* III.6.2.6 as well. In that work, however, it is employed not to draw a connection between predestination and conversion, but to provide evidence for the assertion that God became something he was not before. Thomas's use of this passage is much more in keeping with the original context than is Peter Lombard's.

something."[44] In that case asserting that the incarnation occurred "by grace" poses no problem since "grace" describes not the manner of union but the will of God which brought about the union of his own mercy, not as a response to antecedent human merits. Grace can also refer to the "free gift of God,"[45] locating "grace" not in the will of God but in the recipient. In this sense it would be problematic to assert that the incarnation occurred "by grace" because "grace" would refer to the gift of union with God. Since the saints are also united to God in a manner of union which is described as "grace," there would be no distinction between Christ and the saints. Thomas, however, allows that the incarnation is "by grace" even in the second sense of grace as long as the caveat is added that habitual grace, by which all Christians are united to God, is different from Christ's unique grace of being united to God in his person. The point of comparison between Christ and the saints, then, is not the mode of union, but the fact that the union takes place without antecedent merits.[46] As long as the point of comparison is clear, Thomas allows that the incarnation occurs "by grace" in either sense of "grace."[47]

After the discussion of whether the incarnation is by grace, Thomas then raises the question of whether merits preceded the incarnation. From what we have already seen in *ST* III.2.10, we are not surprised when Thomas answers in the negative. Here again, Thomas adduces Augustine's *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15.30, as the authority for

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[44]*ST* III.2.10.c.

[45]*ST* III.2.10.c.

[46]*ST* III.2.10.c.

[47]Cf. *ST* III.2.10.ad 3, *ST* III.7.13.ad 1.

his position: "Whoever can find merits preceding the singular generation of our Head, may also find merits preceding the repeated regeneration of us His members."[48]

As we have seen, the Scythian monks rejected antecedent merit as the cause of the incarnation because they felt the danger of both Nestorianism and Pelagianism. The human Christ would be an independently acting subject who merited promotion to Godhood. Thomas feels the same danger. He states,

> With regard to Christ Himself, it is clear from the above (A. 10) that no merits of His could have preceded the union. For we do not hold that He was first of all a mere man, and that afterwards by the merits of a good life it was granted Him to become the Son of God, as Photinus held; but we hold that from the beginning of His conception this man was truly the Son of God, seeing that He had no other hypostasis but that of the Son of God . . . .[49]

This passage has all the same ingredients that formed the basis of the Scythian monks' theological position. Augustine's denial of antecedent merit as a motive for the incarnation is buttressed by the Cyrillian identification of the Logos as the person of Christ. The result is the exclusion of a Pelagian notion of merits in the case of Christ on the basis of a Christological argument: The man Christ could not have merited union with God because there is no man Christ other than the Logos.[50] Because neither the incarnation nor the conversion of Christians is preceded by human merit, Thomas follows

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[48]*ST* III.2.11.sed c.

[49]*ST* III.2.11.c.

[50]Also, in *ST* III.23.4.obj.2 & c., Thomas appeals to the anhypostasis of Christ's human nature to rule out the position that Christ is an adopted Son of God.

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Augustine in recognizing that the incarnation is an exemplar of the predestination of Christians.[51]

Thomas, like the sixth-century authors we have investigated, understands human nature to have the ability to be an instrument of God. This understanding plays out both in his Christology and his doctrine of grace. It correlates with a unitive Christology that identifies the person of Christ as the Word and denies that Christ's human nature has a hypostasis other than that of the Word. The full humanity of Christ is preserved, however, by the assertion that the divine acts for human salvation do not take place apart from Christ's human nature, but rather through it. This instrumental understanding also correlates with a doctrine of grace in which God is the sole originating actor for human salvation, but he acts through human activities to accomplish it. The affirmation of free will and merit function to make the latter point clear.

8.5 Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Almost one thousand years after the Scythian monks arrived in Constantinople, Martin Luther wrote the 95 theses. Like Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, the reformers of the sixteenth century once again drew on Augustine and Cyril of Alexandria together. The two most often-cited patristic sources in the Lutheran Confessions, for example, are Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine.[52] Points of contact with sixth-century

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[51]*ST* III.24.3.

[52]According to the index of *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 32 passages of Cyril are cited (4 of which are allusions) and 27 passages of Augustine are cited (2 of which are allusions).

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Christology may be seen especially in the Catalogue of Testimonies, a collection of patristic citations appended to the Book of Concord which is designed to support Lutheran Christology. As Siegfied Helmer points out, the Catalogue of Testimonies begins by citing from Cyril's 12 anathemas, the Chalcedonian Definition, and Leo's Tome, the very same constellation of sources which formed the basis of the Neo-Chalcedonian agenda in the sixth century.[53]

Parallels to sixth-century Christology may be seen in Luther himself. Luther often describes salvation as a "blessed exchange" between Christ and the believer in which Christ takes the believer's sin and gives the believer his righteousness. This exchange, which takes place between Christ and the believer, operates according to the pattern of the communication of attributes in Christology.[54] In the *Freedom of a Christian* (1520), Luther employs the image of a bride and groom to describe this sharing and exchange. Christ shares in the sin, death, and pains of hell which belong to the bride because of sin.

These figures include the Catalogue of Testimonies where the majority of the citations from Cyril are found.

[53]Helmer, "Der Neuchalkedonismus," 247.

[54]Johann Steiger argues that the communication of attributes is foundational to Luther's theology, and manifests itself in many facets of his thought ("Die communicatio idiomatum als Achse und Motor der Theologie Luthers: Der "fröhliche Wechsel" als hermeneutischer Schlüssel zu Abendmahlslehre, Anthropologie, Seelsorge, Naturtheologie, Rhetorik und Humor," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 38 [1996]: 5, 7, 11, 15, 16, 23, *et passim*). Most relevant to the current discussion is Steiger's claim, "Die communicatio idiomatum hat ihren Ort bei Luther nicht nur in der Christologie, sondern auch–und das nun ist genuin Luthersch und neu–in der Soteriologie" (ibid., 5). Steiger shows convincingly that Luther describes salvation according to the pattern of communication of attributes, but the above chapters on the Scythian monks and Fulgentius should make clear that this is hardly new. The only thing new is the precise way in which the pattern plays out in Luther.

He conquers them because his righteousness, life, and salvation is greater than sin and death, and hell. "Thus the believing soul by means of the pledge of its faith is free in Christ, its bridegroom, free from all sins, secure against death and hell, and is endowed with the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of Christ its bridegroom."[55] In these passages, Luther is thinking through the doctrine of grace in Christological terms, applying the communication of attributes to sotoriology much as the Scythian monks and Fulgentius do.

The blessed exchange, however, is not the only way that Christology influences Luther's doctrine of grace. Another important point of contact may be seen in Luther's repeated assertion that those who deny justification by faith alone are in effect Arians. This charge has its roots in Luther's understanding of what it means to have a God. Luther gives classic expression to his view in the explanation of the First Commandment in his *Large Catechism*. "A 'god,'" says Luther, "is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. . . . Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God."[56] For Luther, to deny justification by faith alone is to direct one's trust somewhere other than Christ. In the case of his Roman Catholic opponents, he charges that they direct trust towards good works, hoping

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[55]Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, in *Career of the Reformer: I*, Luther's Works (hereafter, LW) 31, eds. Harold Grimm and Helmut Lehmann, trans. W.A. Lambert and Harold Grimm (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957), 352.

[56]Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism* 1.2-3, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kob and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 386

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to earn everything from God rather than to receive everything as a gift.[57] By failing to

trust Christ for all good things, Luther argues, his opponents are failing to confess him as

God. That is the basis for his accusation that they are Arians.

Luther applies his understanding of the First Commandment to the Arian heresy in

his 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*. He notes that Paul ascribes to Christ the divine power to

grant "grace, peace of conscience, the forgiveness of sins, life, and victory over sin, death,

the devil, and hell."[58] He further charges that the Arians, by denying Christ's deity, also

deny that Christ performs these divine activities.[59] Later in the work, Luther reiterates

that when Arius denied the divinity of Christ, "it was necessary also for him to deny the

doctrine of redemption."[60] Because of the connection between justification and the

divinity of Christ, Luther asserts that justification is the chief doctrine of the Christian faith

which includes all other doctrines. "Therefore, when we teach that men are justified

through Christ and that Christ is the Victor over sin, death, and the eternal curse, we are

testifying at the same time that He is God by nature."[61]

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[57]Luther, *Large Catechism* 1.22 (Kolb-Wengert, 389).

[58]Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535*, LW 26, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter Hansen, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 31.

[59]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.31-2).

[60]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.282).

[61]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.283).

Not surprisingly, then, when Luther's opponents deny the doctrine of justification, he charges them with denying the divinity of Christ.[62] Luther asserts that those who want to earn eternal life by their works rather than accept it as a free gift of God "simply want to rob [God] of the glory of his deity."[63] Of such people, he says, "They do not actually say with their mouths: 'I am God; I am Christ.' Yet in fact they arrogate to themselves the divinity of Christ and His function."[64] Throughout the 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther attacks his opponents for blaspheming Christ and for denying that Christ is the Mediator and Propitiator all because his opponents would have Christians direct their faith to good works as the source of justification.

In the case of Fulgentius as well as Thomas Aquinas, however, we have seen that the concern which underlies their account of good works and merit is not to direct faith away from Christ towards good works, but rather to confess the full engagement of human faculties in salvation. Luther too shares this concern, but he does not rely on the notion of merit to make the point. In *On the Bondage of the Will*, for example, Luther asserts that we can do nothing of ourselves and that "whatever we do, God works it in us."[65] At the same time, however, he stresses that when Christians do good works, their

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[62]Cf. Ian Siggins, *Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 212.

[63]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.127).

[64]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.258).

[65]Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition, eds. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson, trans. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 209.

will does not labor under compulsion, but the voluntary character of its operation is maintained. "If God works in us," Luther declares, "the will is changed, and being gently breathed upon by the Spirit of God, it again wills and acts from pure willingness and inclination of its own accord, not from compulsion . . . ."[66] These passages demonstrate that Luther shares the view of Fulgentius and Thomas that humanity stands in an instrumental relationship to God. This relationship is characterized by the dual assertion that human good works are accomplished by God and that when God accomplishes good works through human beings he does so by means of the human will in such a way that human faculties are fully employed.

Luther does not consider merit to be an appropriate way of confessing full human engagement, however, for two reasons. First, the notion of merit would militate against God's freedom as the potter to make what he wants of the clay since it would impose a law of reward on God.[67] Second, Luther holds that the attempt to merit eternal life presupposes a mercenary attitude in which people merely attempt to "seek their own in God," and he contends that the children of God would do good even if there were no reward of eternal life.[68] Thus, Luther excludes merit from eternal life not to eliminate human engagement in salvation but because merit, as he understands it, conflicts with the freedom of God and the nature of faith.

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[66]Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will* (Rupp & Watson, 140).

[67]Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will* (Rupp & Watson, 258).

[68]Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will* (Rupp & Watson, 212).

In his 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther provides another example of a

connection between Christology and grace when he mounts a Christological argument for

excluding works from the article of justification. He is writing against the claim that those

Scriptural texts which promise rewards to works provide proof that works justify the

sinner. Luther distinguishes two ways the Scriptures speak about faith. He says that

Scripture speaks "sometimes, if I may speak this way, about an abstract or an absolute

faith and sometimes about a concrete, composite, or incarnate faith."[69] Statements dealing

with an abstract or absolute faith are to be compared with those statements of the

Scriptures which speak of Christ simply as God or simply as man. This absolute language

about faith is what one finds in Romans and Galatians, according to Luther, where Paul

says that faith justifies. However, Scripture also speaks of Christ as "composite and

incarnate."[70] Likewise, Scripture is speaking of faith which is "compound, concrete, or

incarnate" when it speaks of rewards and works.[71] His opponents, Luther would argue,

are looking merely at the outward appearance of good works and fail to recognize that

good works, upon closer analysis, are instances of incarnate faith.

Next, Luther turns to a traditional Christological statement to bring to light the

implications of Christology for justification by faith. He adduces the statement, "The

Infant lying in the lap of His mother created heaven and earth and is the Lord of the

angels." Luther notes that the statement is about a "man," but "man" here refers to the

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[69]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.264).

[70]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.264).

[71]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.264).

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Word.[72] Only the divinity creates, Luther contends. "Nevertheless, it is said correctly that 'the man created,' because the divinity, which alone creates, is incarnate with the humanity, and therefore the humanity participates in the attributes of both predicates . . . ."[73]

The application to faith soon follows. "Thus justification belongs to faith alone, just as creation belongs to the divinity; nevertheless, just as it is true to say about Christ the man that He created all things, so justification is attributed to incarnate faith or to faithful 'doing.'"[74] Here Luther is pressing the importance of the fact that the Word is the only acting subject in Christology. This fact correlates with the *sola* of *sola fide*. Faith is "the divinity of works," Luther says.[75] Thus, in abstract language, faith alone justifies just as the Word alone creates. When Scripture attributes justification to works, however, it is speaking concretely and incarnationally. Justification is attributed to works but only because works are incarnations of faith just as creation is attributed to a man but only because he is the incarnate Word.

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[72]Luther's exact words are, "I am indeed speaking about a man here. But 'man' in this proposition is obviously a new word and, as the sophists themselves say, stands for the divinity; that is, this God who became man created all things" (LW 26.265).

[73]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.265). Luther uses the abstract term "divinity," but he seems to be referring to the Word. For an example of Luther using the abstract term "divinity" in a context which clearly indicates that he is referring to the person of Christ, see his discussion of Christ's death in the *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (LW 37.210).

[74]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.266).

[75]Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* (LW 26.266).

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Luther, then, shares with the Scythian monks and Fulgentius a concern to make clear that God alone is the savior. His description of the blessed exchange, like the soteriology of Fulgentius, operates according to the pattern of the communication of attributes. His charge that his opponents are Arians because they deny justification by faith alone indicates that he understands salvation to be something only God can do. To place trust in anything for salvation is to make that thing a god. Finally, Luther's comparison of creation with justification serves to underscore further his insistence that God is the only actor in Christology and soteriology.

Luther's stress on this point, however, does not mean that he believes salvation is accomplished apart from humanity because he maintains that when Christology and soteriology are considered concretely, humanity shares in God's action. To be sure, Luther rejects any role for merit as a way of ensuring human engagement in salvation. Thus, he would not agree with Fulgentius's account of merit and reward. He does share, however, the underlying intention of Fulgentius's account of merit which is that the operation of the will retains its voluntary character in the performance of good works. In the same way, it may be said that Fulgentius shares Luther's concern that works not displace Christ. As we have seen, Fulgentius offers two important qualifications on merit: that works themselves are God's gifts and that there is no proportion between the merit of works and the reward of eternal life. These qualifications seem to be aimed at excluding the idea that merit implies that there is part of salvation which God does not accomplish.

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8.6 Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586)

In his magisterial work, *The Two Natures in Christ*, Martin Chemnitz has at his disposal a much wider array of patristic sources than Luther does. Of particular interest to the present study is that he cites Fulgentius throughout the work, and twice he cites John Maxentius.[76] He also draws heavily on Cyril of Alexandria. Chemnitz explicitly affirms that the person of Christ is the Logos and that the human nature of Christ has no hypostasis of its own.[77] As evidence for this he cites Proclus of Constantinople and John Maxentius, among others.[78]

Chemnitz shares Maxentius's view that Christology is the foundation of the doctrine of grace. Chemnitz is especially concerned throughout the work to point out the comfort to be derived from the very technical discussion of Christology which he presents. He generally finds this comfort in the fact that whatever happens to Christ's human nature is communicated to the human nature of Christians. For example, the incarnation effects the redemption and restoration of fallen humanity in Christ's person.[79] The session of Christ at the right hand of the Father is the pledge of our own salvation and glorification.[80]

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[76]Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971), 40, 405. Both times he cites Maxentius for the phrase *unus de Trinitate*, which Preus translates "one person of the Trinity."

[77]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 404).

[78]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 404-5).

[79]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 60, 313).

[80]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 64).

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The union of divinity and humanity in Christ overcomes our alienation from God and so

bestows grace, truth, life, and salvation on us.[81] Chemnitz further points out that the word

"communion" (κοινωνία) is a word that the Scriptures use to describe both God's

relationship to the Christian (2 Cor. 13:13, 2 Pet. 1:4) as well as the incarnation, as Heb.

2:14 states, "As the children partake (κεκοινώνηκεν) of flesh and blood, He Himself also is

likewise made a partaker of the same."[82]

Examples of this sort could be multiplied, but one in particular should be

mentioned because, it appeals specifically to the anhypostasis of Christ's human nature.

Chemnitz states,

> Gerson, *De Consolatione Theologiae*, Bk. 1, uses this beautiful
> comparison: "Just as the human nature in Christ . . . does not subsist in
> itself, but has lost its own subsistence and leans upon the hypostasis of the
> Son of God" in which it is so sustained that it would be reduced to nothing
> "if it were not thus borne up by the Son of God," so there is only one
> salvation for the human race, if we do not deny it to ourselves and if we
> lean wholly on the engrafted Christ, that we may be found in Him, having
> that righteousness which God gives to faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9); that we
> may be made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21); and become
> branches of the Vine (John 15:5); that we may be able to say, I live, yet not
> I, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20). And the best way of explaining the
> mystery of the incarnation is to apply it to our faith.[83]

In a move similar to that of Luther in the 1535 *Lectures on Galatians*, Chemnitz is here

correlating the anhypostasis of Christ's human nature with the *sola* of *sola fide*. Just as

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[81]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 97).

[82]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 160).

[83]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 102). Chemnitz is paraphrasing a passage from
Jean Gerson's *De Consolatione Theologiae* which may be found in Jean Gerson, *Oeuvres
Complètes*, vol. 9 (Paris: Desclées & Cie, 1973), 200.

the human nature of Christ depends entirely on the hypostasis of the Logos for its existence, so also Christians depend entirely on the righteousness which comes from Christ and is given to faith for their salvation. To direct one's faith anywhere but the righteousness of Christ would constitute an attempt to exist independently from God, a condition which obtains neither in Christology nor in soteriology.

Instead of admitting a human nature in Christ which has its own hypostasis, Chemnitz appeals to the notion of instrument to describe the relation between the Logos and his human nature. Chemnitz approves of the scholastic distinction between principal agent and instrument. He states, "For there is a rule in the schools which says, 'When two agents have one purpose (ἀποτέλεσμα), one is the principal and the other is the secondary, organic, or instrumental agent; for the action or ἀποτέλεσμα is rightly attributed not only to the principal agent but also to the secondary or organic agent.'"[84] Correspondingly, Chemnitz affirms that the human actions of Christ are ultimately the actions of the Logos since Christ's human nature "does not subsist in or by itself but in the person of the Logos through the hypostatic union as the instrument of the divine Logos."[85] At the same time, he insists that Christ's human will "desired, sought, willed, and approved that which Christ did by His divine power in His work, and thus His soul cooperated with conscious mind and conforming will."[86]

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[84]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 290). Cf. 334, "The divine nature of the Logos acts as the principal agent in these functions in common with the assumed nature as with an immediate organ which cooperates as its own and in unity with it...."

[85]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 254).

[86]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 220-1).

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Chemnitz recognizes the same instrumental relationship between God and Christians. In order to make the point that Christ's human nature receives not only finite created gifts from the hypostatic union, but also the fullness of the deity, Chemnitz makes an argument from lesser to greater. If God manifests his divine works through the saints "as instruments of His power and goodness," how much more will the human nature of Christ, assumed into the very person of the Logos, receive divine prerogatives?[87] In the case of both Christ and Christians, the instrumental relationship of the humanity to the deity implies that the works carried out through the humanity are divine works.[88] Christ is distinct from the saints, however, in that his human nature receives the fullness of divine power.[89]

Thus, Chemnitz is very much at home with sixth-century Christology. Not only does he draw on sixth-century sources; he also shares the basic presuppositions which have been identified in the Scythian monks and Fulgentius that Christology and grace are related and that humanity stands in an instrumental relationship to God, who is the sole

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[87]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 253).

[88]Cf. Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 252), where Chemnitz says that the humanity of Christ receives supernatural gifts in order to prepare it for serving as the instrument of the Logos.

[89]This is the so-called *genus maiestaticum* to which half of Chemnitz's work is devoted. He appeals to the language of deification used by the Eastern fathers to support the *genus maiestaticum*. He does not, however, wish to re-instate that language because he feels that the Eutychian controversy and, more recently, the "ravings of Schwenkfeld" make "deification" vulnerable to the misinterpretation that it entails a "conversion and equation of natures" (*Two Natures* [Preus, 396]). Chemnitz does not, as far as I can see, use the term "deification" in soteriology, but he does say that by his human nature, Christ "leads us to communion and fellowship with the divine nature" (*Two Natures* [Preus, 472]).

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principal actor. Furthermore, Chemnitz shares a common vocabulary with the sixth-century authors. We have already seen that he identifies the person of Christ as the Word. In addition, he employs terms and slogans familiar to us from the Scythian monks: "composite person;" Christ subsists "in two natures" and "of two united natures;" God was made man, man was not made God; there is a difference between *unio* and *unitio*.[90] With the exception of the phrase "One of the Trinity," for which Chemnitz cites Maxentius, he is not directly dependent on them for his terminology. However, he speaks the same language they do.

8.7 Johann Gerhard (1582-1637)

Johann Gerhard is an important figure in Post-Reformation Lutheran orthodoxy. Some deem him to be the third most important theologian of Lutheranism after Luther and Chemnitz.[91] He is notable also as the first person to apply Aristotelian categories, especially Aristotle's schema of causes, to Lutheran theology. The work for which he is best known is his nine-volume *Loci theologici*. It provides a good starting point for investigating Gerhard's understanding of Christology and grace.

At first glance, the *loci* format does not seem to lend itself to making a clear connection between Christology and grace. The idea behind this genre of writing is to identify certain topics, or *loci*, which are prominent in the Scriptures and to gather

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[90]Chemnitz, *Two Natures* (Preus, 78; 79, 173, 175; 101; 131).

[91]Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, vol. 1, *A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 52.

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together what the Scriptures say about each topic under its own heading. In this way, the reader is provided with an outline or index which serves as an aid in the reading of Scripture.[92] As a result, however, the articles of doctrine can be atomized. Indeed, in the first volume of Gerhard's *Loci*, where he discusses Christology and justification in separate *loci*, he makes no explicit connection between the two. In this respect, Gerhard is similar to modern scholars who fit the history of theology into a structure provided by dogmatic categories.

A supplemental tenth volume of Gerhard's *Loci*, however, presents a different picture. This volume returns to some of the topics of the first volume and provides a more detailed explication. Gerhard gives this volume the title *Exegesis sive uberior explicatio de Scriptura sacra, de Deo & persona Christi . . . .* In this *ubererior explicatio* of the person of Christ, Gerhard draws explicit connections between Christology on the one hand and justification and good works on the other.

In this volume, each chapter of locus 4, *De persona et officio Christi*, ends with a paragraph discussing the *usus practicus* of the Christological point under discussion. In this way, Gerhard seeks to show how every facet of Christological dogma is comforting and useful to the Christian. This question of "practical use" yields a rich account of the connection between Christology and grace because Gerhard finds the comfort and benefits of Christology precisely in its soteriological application.

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[92]Cf. Philip Melanchthon's discussion of the genre in his own *Loci communes theologici* in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 19.

The most extensive list of practical benefits of Christology in locus 4 of the *Exegesis* occurs at the end of chapter 4, *De duabus Christi naturis in genere*. Gerhard lists eight reasons why it is comforting and necessary for the savior to be God and ten reasons why it is comforting and necessary for the savior to be man. In these lists, Gerhard subscribes to a modified form of Anselm's satisfaction theory.[93]

Gerhard, however, does not tie himself exclusively to this satisfaction theory. His list of the benefits of the savior being man also exhibit the notion, familiar to us from the sixth century, that what happens to Christ's human nature happens to Christians as well. For instance, Gerhard says that the assumption of Christ's human nature "conquers death and raises the wretched human nature once again to heavenly glory."[94] He further states that "Christ . . . united human nature personally to himself so that in it and through it he might lead us back to communion with God."[95] This emphasis on the union of the believer with Christ coincides with an increasing reception of mysticism by seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy. As Johann Steiger points out, however, this reception of mysticism happens within the framework of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is

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[93]Richard Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie und die aristotelische Metaphysik*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 67, ed. Johannes Wallmann (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), 201.

[94]Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, vol. 10, *Exegesis* (Frankfurt & Hamburg: Zachariae Hertelii, 1657), 413A: "...mortem superare & miseram Naturam humanam ad coelestem gloriam iterum evehere."

[95]Johann Gerhard, *Exegesis*, 413A-B: "Christus...humanam Naturam sibi personaliter univit, ut in ea ac per eam reduceret nos ad communionem cum Deo."

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not a departure from Luther, but a development within Lutheran orthodoxy that finds

roots in Luther himself.[96]

For Gerhard, the exaltation of Christ's human nature has saving significance

because Christians partake of that exaltation through faith. He states, "Christ wanted to

place, so to speak, all his good things and the fullness of his native treasures into his

assumed human nature, according to which he is our brother and kinsman, so that through

it, they might be channeled to us and from the divine nature through the human nature he

might come down to us."[97] In this passage, Gerhard asserts that salvation includes a

communication of divine attributes (Christ's native treasures) to Christians via Christ's

human nature. These attributes are received by faith. That Gerhard is thinking of a

communication of divine attributes to faith is made clear in his discussion of the kinds

(*genera*) of communication of attributes, discussed below.

The idea that salvation involves humanity receiving divine blessings from the divine

nature appears not only in Gerhard's *Loci*, but in his sermons and meditations as well. In

a Christmas sermon, Gerhard says that we can only be redeemed from our sinful birth by

Christ's holy birth, and this happens through faith. "That's why God has placed all the

treasures that Christ brought along with His birth into faith, for through faith we fruitfully

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[96]Johann Anselm Steiger, *Johann Gerhard (1582-1637): Studien zu Theologie und Frömmigkeit des Kirchenvaters der lutherischen Orthodoxie*, Doctrina et Pietas 1.1 (Stuttgert-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1997), 92-3. See also Steiger's discussion of Gerhard's use of the *communicatio idiomatum*, ibid., 94-122.

[97]Johann Gerhard, *Exegesis*, 413B: "Voluit Christus omnia sua bona & partorum thesaurorum plenitudinem in humanam naturam assumtam quasi deponere, juxta quam est frater & cognatus noster, ut per eam ad nos deriventur & à divina Natura per humanam ad nos deveniat."

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partake of the flesh of Christ . . . . And, the human nature of Christ thus becomes for us a door to deity, just as faith is a door for us to Christ's humanity."[98] In his *Andacht 14*, Gerhard writes, "Gott ward Mensch / dz der Mensch hinfur / Bekem göttlich Gnad und Natur."[99] Similary, in his *Meditatio de Incarnatione*, Gerhard writes that the Son of God came down from heaven to make us adopted sons of God. He then continues, "God became man that man might become a participant of divine grace and nature."[100]

As in the case of Fulgentius, so with Gerhard, one should be careful to distinguish this description of salvation from divinization. Gerhard does not speak in terms of "becoming gods" in these passages, even though he is comfortable speaking of participating in the divine nature and saying, "The Son of God wanted to become the Son of Man so that through him, we who are human beings might be made sons of God."[101] Gerhard's description of salvation can at times resemble divinization because divinization

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[98]Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons (1613): Scripturally-Saturated Sermons Celebrating the Birth of Christ*, ed. David O. Berger, trans. Elmer M. Hohle (Decatur, IL: Johann Gerhard Institute, 1996), 24-5.

[99]Johann Gerhard, *Ein und fünfftzig gottselige, christliche evangelische Andachten oder geistreiche Betrachtungen: Poetisch bearbeitet von Burcard Großmann (1608)*, Doctrina et Pietas 1.4, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (Suttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2001), 133.

[100]Johann Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae (1603/4) mit einem Faksimile des Autographs*, Doctrina et Pietas 1.2, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1998), 147: "Deus homo fit, ut homo divinae gratiae & Naturae particeps fieret."

[101]Johann Gerhard, *Exegesis*, 413B: "...Filius Dei fieri voluit hominis Filius, ut per ipsum nos homines redderemur Dei filii."

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also works by communication of attributes. Richard Schröder notes this resemblance but maintains that Gerhard's goal is not the same as that of the theology of divinization.[102]

Gerhard further resembles Fulgentius in that the Christological communication of attributes provides him a structure in which to think through justification and sanctification. The application to justification occurs in chapter 12 of locus 4, concerning the second *genus* of the communication of attributes. This is the so-called *genus maiestaticum* in which divine attributes are predicated of the human nature.

The question here is why such great powers as conquering the devil, justifying, regenerating, and saving are ascribed to faith. These are the saving divine attributes which Gerhard identifies as communicated to humanity. Gerhard argues that just as the personal union of Christ produces a personal change (μεταποιία), so also between Christ and the church there arises a spiritual change (μεταποιία) on account of which divine works are predicated of faith and of Christians.[103] Thus, the second *genus* of communication of attributes provides a Christological precedent for the claims Gerhard makes for faith. Christ's divine attributes are communicated to his human nature. In a similar way, his divine attributes are a communicated to the faith of Christians, in effect making "faith" and "Christ" interchangeable terms, one might say.[104] Justification by faith alone assumes this communication of attributes.

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[102]Richard Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie und die aristotelische Metaphysik*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 67, ed. Jonannes Wallmann (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), 203.

[103]Johann Gerhard, *Exegesis*, 521A.

[104]Cf. Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie*, 72.

Gerhard goes on to correlate sanctification with the third *genus* of communication of attributes. This is the so-called *genus apotelesmaticum* which states that both natures are involved in every action of Christ. Just as Christ's personal union produces a personal common working (κοινοποία), Gerhard argues, so there arises a spiritual common working (κοινοποία) between God and the faithful soul or the church. Therefore, God and the believer both concur in producing the end product (ἀποτέλεσμα) of every good work. That is the reason, according to Gerhard, that believers are called σύνεργοι in 1 Cor. 3:9. Thus, the *genus apotelesmaticum* provides a pattern by which Gerhard is able to discuss the sense in which God and the believer work together in the performance of good works.

This relationship is further spelled out in Gerhard's *ex professo* discussion of good works in vol. 4, locus 20 of the *Loci*. There he parses out the performance of good works into Aristotelian causes. The efficient cause of good works is the Holy Spirit. The instrumental cause is the word of God. In addition to these causes, Gerhard identifies an αἴτιον σύνεργον of good works which is the human mind or will renewed by the Holy Spirit. He says that the Holy Spirit "efficaciously changes the mind and will" and that the new will is not idle but cooperates with the Holy Spirit. This cooperation, however, requires the continual aid of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, Gerhard, like Fulgentius and the Scythian monks, views the action of God as primary. The human will to do good works and the human cooperation in good works does not constitute an independent contribution to the work of God but is itself given and supported by God. Gerhard does not appeal to the "enhypostasis" of Christ's human

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nature at this point, but one could imagine using this doctrine to underscore further the primacy of God's action in the performance of good works. Such an argument might run as follows: just as Christ's human nature does not subsist on its own but rather finds its subsistence in the hypostasis of the Word, so also in the performance of good works, the human will does not make an independent contribution to divine action but rather arises from and is supported by divine action.[105]

A final example from Gerhard illustrates the homiletical resources Gerhard finds in the connection between the incarnation and salvation. In one of his Christmas sermons, he makes an extended comparison between Christ's birth in Mary's body and his spiritual birth in the hearts of Christians. Fulgentius, as we have seen makes a similar move in order to exclude antecedent human merit from conversion. Gerhard would no doubt be sympathetic to that move, but in this sermon, he wants to extol the work of the Holy Spirit which the Spirit accomplishes through preaching. Gerhard points out a number of points of comparison: both births are worked by the Holy Spirit, both are effected by the word of God (the angel's announcement in Mary's case, preaching in the case of Christians), Mary is given faith to believe the words of the angel and thereby conceives just as through faith Christ is born in the hearts of Christians, and the list goes on.[106] The extent of this comparison between Christ's physical conception in Mary's womb and Christ's spiritual conception in the hearts of believers illustrates the fruitfulness Gerhard finds in the connection between Christology and grace.

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[105]Cf. Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie*, 161.

[106]Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas sermons*, 90-5.

Gerhard, then, both in his academic works and his popular works, finds a parallel between the incarnation and soteriology. He understands both justification and sanctification to operate by communication of attributes. Gerhard, along with Luther and Chemnitz, differs from the Scythian monks and Fulgentius on the issues of justification and the role of merit, but the sixteenth-century reformers are at one with the sixth-century advocates of theopaschite Christology in that they all find in the incarnation the paradigm by which God relates to humanity in salvation.

8.8 Conclusion

The Scythian controversy raises enduring questions. How can one say that Christ is divine and human in such a way as to do justice to both? Many have thought that the only way to ensure the fullness of Christ's humanity is to carve out a sphere of independence from God so that Christ's human experiences and activities are not those of the Logos. How can one say that salvation comes by grace in such a way as to preserve the humanity of the people being saved? Many have thought that the only way to do so is to carve out an arena of human contribution to salvation which may be added to what God does. In each case, the fear is that a confession of the fullness of the divine threatens to eclipse the fullness of the human.

The Scythian monks and Fulgentius, however, reject this mindset. They hold that the fullness of the divine in Christology and soteriology is of paramount importance. This does not diminish the human, however, as if the divine and human were dividing up a pie so that if the divine got too much, the human would get too little. On the contrary, our

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sixth-century authors hold that humanity is full and engaged precisely when God works through human nature. Thus, the Word is the subject of Christ's human experiences, and salvation comes by grace which works through the human will. This understanding of the relation between the divine and human is the outlook which theopaschite Christology and an Augustinian doctrine of grace share in common.

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