

Josias Simler and the Fathers

The »Scripta veterum latina« (1571)

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On 3 September 1571, the rector of the Chur Latin school, Johannes Pontisella, wrote to congratulate Josias Simler on the publication of his *Scripta veterum latina*, a collection of patristic texts generated by the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies.¹ Pontisella places Simler in a chain of anti-heretical writers raised up to defend »the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of the Son of God« against Satan's attempts to subvert it. The tradition was initiated, he claims, by the apostle John, whose gospel provided the church

¹ Josias *Simler*, *Scripta veterum latina, de una persona et duabus naturis Domini et Servatoris nostri Iesu Christi, adversus Nestorium, Eutychen et Acephalos olim aedita [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1571 (Manfred *Vischer*, *Bibliographie der Zürcher Druckschriften des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Baden-Baden 1991 [BZD], no C 838f.). Simler was born on 6 November 1530. After studying at Basel and Strasbourg, he was appointed professor of New Testament at the Zurich academy (1551); he also served as pastor in Zollikon (1551–1557) and deacon at the city church of St Peter (1557–1560). In 1563 he succeeded Peter Martyr Vermigli as Zurich professor of Old Testament. He died on 2 July 1576. For an overview of Simler's career, see Hans Ulrich *Bächtold*, *Simler, Josias*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 15, Herzberg 1999, 1298–1303 (with accompanying bibliography); Hans Ulrich *Bächtold*, *Josias Simler: Vielseitiger Humanist, Theologe und Historiker*, in: *Schola Tigurina: Die Zürcher Hohe Schule und ihre Gelehrten um 1550. Katalog zur Ausstellung vom 25. Mai bis 10. Juli 1999 in der Zentralbibliothek Zürich*, Zurich 1999, 32f.; Georg von Wÿss, *Josias Simler: Professor der Theologie in Zürich, 1530–1576*, Zurich 1855 (Neujahrsblatt zum Besten des Waisenhauses in Zürich 18), 1–24. The contemporary biography by Johann Wilhelm *Stucki*, *Vita clarissimi viri d. Iosiae Simleri Tigurini*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1577 (BZD C 925) is still useful.

with a »most reliable shield« against the errors of »Ebion« and Cerinthus. In subsequent generations, it was continued first by John's disciples Ignatius and Polycarp, then by their student Irenaeus, and finally by the theologians whose works are assembled in the *Scripta veterum*. By publishing these texts in a single volume, Simler has forged a powerful weapon to »stop up the mouth« of blasphemers – a true »hammer of heretics«.²

Like most of Simler's works, the *Scripta veterum* has received scant attention from historians, yet it tells us a great deal about the nature and purpose of patristic scholarship in Zurich (and other Reformed centres of learning) during this period. The volume is ambitious in scope, bringing together Latin texts by nine fifth and sixth-century authors, some familiar, others relatively obscure. All but one of the works is accompanied by *Annotationes*, consisting of a bio-bibliographical introduction and textual commentary. In addition, the *Scripta veterum* incorporates a detailed history of early church Christological disputes, entitled *Narratio veterum et recentium controversiarum de una persona et duabus naturis Iesu Christi Servatoris nostri*. This section of the volume is of particular interest, as it demonstrates the interconnectedness of historiography and theological polemic in the late sixteenth century. For Simler and his contemporaries, the history of the early church was not just a record of distant events, but an essential point of reference in the controversies of their own day.

1. The polemical background

1.1 The Zurich reformers' use of church history

The study of ecclesiastical history and the Fathers was an important aspect of the intellectual culture of Reformed Zurich. Twenty-one patristic works, among them texts by Augustine, Jerome, Lactantius, Tertullian and even Proclus of Constantinople, have been identified in Heinrich Bullinger's library.³ His magnum opus, the

² See Appendix.

³ Urs B. Leu and Sandra Weidmann, *Heinrich Bullingers Privatbibliothek*, Zurich 2004 (*Heinrich Bullinger Werke* 1/3), 43. On Bullinger's reception of the Fathers, see

Decades (1549–1551), includes more than 500 citations from the Fathers,⁴ while the two-volume manuscript compilation of commonplaces on which he drew throughout his career is richly stocked with patristic sources.⁵ Although the Zurich reformers are better known for their chorographies and works of secular history – not least Simler’s own *De republica Helvetiorum*, which went through around 25 editions in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – there was a lively tradition of ecclesiastical historiography in the city. Bullinger himself owned copies of the 1549 and 1554 Basel editions of Eusebius and his continuators, to which he alludes frequently in his works.⁶

Like other sixteenth-century Protestants, Bullinger saw in church history a means of legitimising the Reformation, by challenging Rome’s claim to exclusive ownership of the Christian past, and discrediting theological opponents. In the early works *Vergleichung der uralten und unserer Zeiten Ketzereien* (1526) and *De origine erroris* (1539), he charts the emergence of key Catholic doctrines so as to demonstrate their unscriptural character.⁷ The same combination of church history and polemic is to be found in his *Assertio orthodoxa* (1534), a defence of orthodox Christology

Silke-Petra *Bergjan*, Bullinger und die griechischen Kirchenväter in der konfessionellen Auseinandersetzung, in Heinrich Bullinger und seine Zeit: Eine Vorlesungsreihe, ed. Emidio Campi, Zurich 2004 (*Zwingliana* 31), 133–160; Alfred *Schindler*, Bullinger und die lateinischen Kirchenväter, in: *ibid.*, 161–177; and David *Wright*, Heinrich Bullinger and the Early Church Fathers, in: Emidio Campi, Peter Opitz (eds), Heinrich Bullinger: Life – Thought – Influence, 2 vols, Zurich 2007 (*Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte* 24), vol. 1, 357–378.

⁴ *Leu/Weidmann*, Heinrich Bullingers Privatbibliothek, 50.

⁵ Urs B. *Leu*, Die Loci-Methode als enzyklopädisches Ordnungssystem, in: *Allgemeinwissen und Gesellschaft: Akten des internationalen Kongresses über Wissenstransfer und enzyklopädische Ordnungssysteme von 18. bis 21. September in Prangins*, ed. Paul Michel and Madeleine Herren, Aachen 2007, 340–342.

⁶ *Leu/Weidmann*, Heinrich Bullingers Privatbibliothek, 49f.; *Bergjan*, Bullinger, 143. For details of these editions, see Martin *Wallraff*, Die Rezeption der spätantiken Kirchengeschichtswerke im 16. Jahrhundert, in: *Auctoritas Patrum II: Neue Beiträge zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane et al., Mainz 1998, 223–260.

⁷ Christian *Moser*, Heinrich Bullinger’s Efforts to Document the Zurich Reformation: History as Legacy, in: Bruce *Gordon* and Emidio Campi (eds), *Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575*, Grand Rapids 2004 (*Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*), 201f.

against the antitrinitarian Claude d'Aliod,⁸ and in the *Decades*, which opens with a brief discourse on the councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon.⁹ The latter theme is developed in book I of *De conciliis*, where Bullinger rehearses the history of the six ecumenical councils recognised by the Reformed.¹⁰ In emphasising the Zurich church's acceptance of the trinitarian and Christological formulas hammered out at these councils, Bullinger was responding to persistent Lutheran and Catholic attempts to link the Reformed to more radical dissenting groups. *De summa trinitate et fide catholica* (1555), by Bullinger's colleague Theodor Bibliander, provides a further example of the Zurichers' apologetic use of church history. Through a detailed analysis of the anti-heresy legislation in the Justinianic Code, Bibliander seeks to demonstrate the »catholicity« of Reformed Christians and their consequent exemption from the Roman law penalties for heresy.¹¹

The Zurich reformers did not see their reliance on the Fathers and other early church sources as at all inconsistent with the scripture principle. In *De conciliis*, Bullinger distinguishes clearly between the inherent authority of the Bible and the decrees of church councils, which are to be rejected »unless the things that they say are to be believed or done or avoided can be supported from scripture«. ¹² However, the scripture principle as understood by Bullin-

⁸ See Mark Taplin, Bullinger on the Trinity: »Religionis nostrae caput et fundamentum«, in: *Gordon/Campi*, *Architect of Reformation*, 78–81.

⁹ Heinrich Bullinger Schriften, ed. Emidio Campi et al., 7 vols, Zurich 2004–2007 [HBS], vol. 3, 37–56.

¹⁰ Heinrich Bullinger, *De conciliis. Quomodo apostoli Christi Domini in primitiva ecclesia suum illud Hierosolymis concilium celebraverint, et quanto cum fructu quantaque pace, quomodo item Romani pontifices in extrema mundi senecta, a quingentis et amplius annis, sua illa concilia celebraverint [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1561 (Heinrich Bullinger: Bibliographie, vol. 1, ed. Joachim Staedtke, Zurich 1972 [HBBibl I], no. 402f.), 86r–110v.

¹¹ Theodor Bibliander, *De summa trinitate et fide catholica*, Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1555 (Christian Moser, Theodor Bibliander [1505–1564]: *Annotierte Bibliographie der gedruckten Werke*, Zurich 2009 [Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 27], no. B–24).

¹² Bullinger, *De conciliis*, 103r–v: »Quamvis autem definitionibus de fide propositis nobis, per ista 4. Concilia oecumenica nihil prorsus velim derogatum, utpote qui illas citra omnem contradictionem recipiam, et venerer religiosissime, potiorem tamen auctoritatem sanctis scripturis tribuo, quam ullis Conciliis. Illis enim sine alio testimonio, propter semetipsis, credo. Conciliorum vero definitionibus non credo, nisi ea quae vel

ger demands not strict adherence to the *verbum* of the Bible, but acceptance of the doctrine contained therein (*res*).¹³ When seeking to establish the meaning of scripture, the Reformed exegete may be guided by extra-biblical writers and formulations, which serve as valuable witnesses to the church's historic understanding of biblical teaching and hence acquire a certain subsidiary authority, especially when the aim is to combat heresy. Bullinger gives the example of the term *homoousios* in the Nicene creed, which was introduced not as a »new dogma or article of faith« but »to provide greater clarity« at a time when Arianism was threatening to overwhelm the church.¹⁴ Although the ancient councils and Fathers are by no means infallible – Bullinger finds examples of error even in the canons of the much-venerated Council of Nicaea¹⁵ – their rulings on the fundamental doctrines of God and Christ are to be accepted without reservation, as the genuine teaching of scripture. Simler follows him closely on this point, plotting a middle course between unqualified acceptance of church tradition and the biblical literalism favoured by many religious radicals.

1.2 Christological controversies

The Zurichers' engagement with early church history took place against a backdrop of hardening confessional divisions. This is especially true of the *Scripta veterum*, which had its genesis in several distinct but interlocking disputes. Perhaps the most significant of these was the exchange between the Zurich church and the Württemberg Lutherans, led by Johannes Brenz (1499–1570).

credenda vel facienda aut omittenda proponent, per scripturas sanctas approbare possint.«

¹³ On this point, see Mark *Taplin*, *The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church*, c. 1540–1620, Aldershot 2003 (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History), 208; *Taplin*, *Bullinger on the Trinity*, 92–97.

¹⁴ *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 91v: »Sciendum est autem Patres synodi [of Nicaea] in hac causa fidei, nihil prorsus suo permisisse ingenio aut suo indulsisse arbitrio, sed omnia sequutos esse scripturam. Neque enim novum dogma, aut novum fidei articulum (quod nulli licet Concilio) condiderunt, quin potius quod semper orthodoxi in ecclesia dei crediderunt, Arii vero impietas iam corruperat, repararunt, adeoque quod vetustum ac verum et confessum erat, scripturis illustrarunt muniveruntque contra Arium et contra omnes alios qui paria cum Ario sentiebant et unquam docturi erant.«

¹⁵ *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 22r, 92r.

Relations between the two churches had begun to deteriorate in the late 1550s, following the collapse of attempts by Theodore Beza and Guillaume Farel to organise a German-Swiss synod, and the imposition on the Württemberg pastorate of Brenz's confession on the Lord's Supper.¹⁶ Although the dispute grew out of the long-running Eucharistic schism, it quickly came to focus on Brenz's distinctive Christology. Both sides insisted on their fidelity to the Chalcedonian definition of Christ as one hypostasis in two natures, human and divine, but they differed radically in their understanding of this formula. According to Zwingli and all subsequent Zurich theologians, Christ's two natures remain distinct ontologically both throughout his earthly mission and following his glorification. Although it is orthodox (and scriptural) to say that God suffered, was crucified and redeemed the world by his blood, such expressions are to be taken as a »forma loquendi«, the attribution to one nature of language that is properly applicable only to the other – what Zwingli and Bullinger term *alloiosis*.¹⁷ For Brenz, by contrast, the unity of Christ's person necessitates a real, as opposed to merely verbal, *communicatio idiomatum* between his divinity and humanity: specifically, the transmission of the attribute of ubiquity to Christ's human nature by virtue of its union with the Word.¹⁸ From the Reformed perspective, Brenz's conception of the incarnation entailed an unacceptable blurring of the boundary between the creator and the creaturely that threatened to turn Christ into a *tertium quid*, neither fully human nor truly divine.

¹⁶ Amy Nelson *Burnett*, Heinrich Bullinger and the Problem of Eucharistic Concord, in: *CampilOpitz*, Bullinger, vol. 1, 233–250.

¹⁷ William Peter *Stephens*, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, Oxford 1986, 113–117; Peter *Opitz*, *Heinrich Bullinger als Theologe: Eine Studie zu den »Dekaden«*, Zurich 2004, 189–191.

¹⁸ Hans Christian *Brandy*, *Die späte Christologie des Johannes Brenz*, Tübingen 1991 (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 80), 175–178. The following passage illustrates the point: »Nos autem intelligimus in hac materia per »idiomata« non tantum vocabulorum, sed etiam rerum proprietates: ut cum per communicationem idiomatum de Christo dicimus Deum esse passum et mortuum, non sit sententia, quod Deus verbum dicatur tantum sermone vocabuli pati et mori, res autem ipsa nihil prorsus ad Deum pertineat: sed quod Deus, etsi natura sua nec patitur nec moritur, tamen passionem et mortem Christi ita sibi communem facit, ut propter hypostaticam unionem passioni et morti personaliter adsit, et non aliter, ut si dicam, afficiatur, quam si ipse pateretur et moreretur.« Theodor *Mahlmann* (ed.), *Johannes Brenz: Die christologischen Schriften*, Tübingen 1981, 32–34.

The appearance of Brenz's *De personali unione* in early 1561, which exposed the extent of these differences, was the trigger for a protracted and increasingly bad-tempered polemical exchange between Zurich and Tübingen.¹⁹ Between 1561 and 1564, Bullinger published four works on the Christological issue: the *Tractatio verborum Domini, in domo patris mei mansiones multae sunt*; the *Responsio, qua ostenditur sententiam de coelo et dextera Dei libello Bullingeri non esse eversam, sed firmam perstare adhuc*; the *Fundamentum firmum*; and the *Repetitio et dilucidior explicatio consensus veteris ecclesiae in doctrina de inconfusis proprietatibus naturarum Christi Domini*.²⁰ The controversy overshadowed the final months of Peter Martyr Vermigli, who at the time of his death (November 1562) was planning a second work against Brenz,²¹ to add to his *Dialogus in utraque Christi natura* (1561).²² After a lull of several years, it was reignited by the publication of Brenz's theological testament, which subjected the Zurich church to scathing criticism. During the first half of the 1570s, Reformed Christology came under further sustained attack from Jakob Andreae (1528–1590), the chancellor of Tübingen university.

Simler's close ties to Bullinger and Vermigli ensured his involvement in the Zurich church's campaign against »ubiquitarianism« from an early stage. In fact, he was personally acquainted with Brenz, having visited Tübingen on Bullinger's instructions in sum-

¹⁹ Brandy, Brenz, 45–68.

²⁰ Heinrich Bullinger, *Tractatio verborum Domini, in domo patris mei mansiones multae sunt*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1561 (HBBibI I 416); Heinrich Bullinger, *Responsio, qua ostenditur sententiam de coelo et dextera Dei libello Bullingeri non esse eversam, sed firmam perstare adhuc*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1562 (HBBibI I 422f.); Heinrich Bullinger, *Fundamentum firmum, cui tuto fidelis quivis inniti potest, hoc praesertim difficili seculo, quo dissidiis doctorumque adversariis scriptis omnia conturbata sunt, positum ad institutionem et consolationem simplicium [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1563 (HBBibI I 425); Heinrich Bullinger, *Repetitio et dilucidior explicatio consensus veteris orthodoxae catholicaeque Christi Ecclesiae in doctrina prophetica et apostolica, de inconfusis proprietatibus naturarum Christi Domini, in una indivisa persona permanentibus [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1564 (HBBibI I 427).

²¹ Erland Herkenrath, Peter Martyr Vermigli's Vorarbeit zu einer zweiten christologischen Schrift gegen Johannes Brenz, in: *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte* 75 (1975), 23–31.

²² Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Dialogus de utraque in Christo natura*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1561 (BZD C 599f.).

mer 1553, when relations between Zurich and Württemberg were still on a relatively friendly footing.²³ Much later, in his funeral oration for Vermigli, Simler recorded the latter's deathbed condemnation of Brenz's theology.²⁴ Among the many works by Bullinger that Simler translated into Latin was the Zurich church's official response to Brenz's testament, which appeared only a few months before the *Scripta veterum*.²⁵ At Bullinger's request, he also produced, for the benefit of Theodore Beza, a Latin translation of the section of the testament dealing with the Lord's Supper.²⁶ The *Scripta veterum* was conceived of, in part, as a contribution to the on-going Christological exchange between Lutherans and Reformed, which had already spawned numerous editions of patristic florilegia,²⁷ and to which Simler was to return later in his career.²⁸ The addition of a historical section, the *Narratio*, to Simler's anthology reflects the terms of debate in the controversy, in which each side strove to associate its opponents with one or more ancient heresies. Thus while Brenz painted the Reformed as latter-day Arians and Nestorians, who reduced Christ to the rank of a mere saint,²⁹ he himself was charged with reviving the error of Eutyches and other monophysites. Bullinger alludes to these ancient debates frequently in his Christological writings. In the *Fundamentum firmitum*, he reviews the history of the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies, while the *Repetitio et dilucidior explicatio* includes a short account of disputes concerning the incarnation from Con-

²³ Andreas Mübling, Heinrich Bullingers europäische Kirchenpolitik, Bern et al. 2001 (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationgeschichte 19), 51.

²⁴ Josias Simler, Oratio de vita et obitu viri optimi [...] Petri Martyris Vermigli [...], Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1563 (BZD C 733), 27r: »Alio item die cum Bullingerus inter alia consolationis causa e Paulo dixisset, nostram politiam in coelo esse, agnosco inquit ille, sed non in coelo Brentii, quod nusquam est.«

²⁵ Ad Testamentum D. Ioannis Brentii, nuper contra Zvinglianos publicatum, responsio brevis [...], Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1571 (HBBibI 1569).

²⁶ Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze, ed. Fernand Aubert et al., Geneva 1960ff. [CTB], vol. 12, 29 (no. 818).

²⁷ See Paul Strawn, Cyril of Alexandria as a Source for Martin Chemnitz, in: Die Patristik in der Bibalexegese des 16. Jahrhunderts, ed. David C. Steinmetz, Wiesbaden 1999 (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 85), 225–227.

²⁸ Cf. Josias Simler, De vera Iesu Christi, domini et servatoris nostri, secundum humanam naturam in his terris praesentia, orthodoxa et brevis expositio [...], Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1574 (BZD C 877).

²⁹ Mahlmann, Die christologischen Schriften, 212, 228, 296, 324.

stantine to Heraclius.³⁰ Much of the same material is recycled in the *Narratio*, although Simler's work testifies to a much more intensive engagement with the ancient sources.

Just as the ubiquitarian controversy was getting underway, the Zurich church found itself confronted by another challenge to Reformed Christology, this time from eastern Europe. The dispute was sparked off by Francesco Stancaro (1501–1574), an Italian religious exile who had previously been instrumental in establishing the Polish Reformed church. After several years in Hungary, Stancaro returned to Poland in 1559, where his views on the mediatorial office of Christ became the subject of heated debate.³¹ Like Zwingli and Bullinger, Stancaro was anxious to preserve the distinction of natures within Christ's person, but from this doctrine he drew the unacceptably »Nestorian« conclusion that Christ must have acted as mediator in his human nature alone. Stancaro regarded the suggestion that Christ's divinity co-operated with his manhood in the atonement as tantamount to Arianism, on the basis that it turned the Word into a supplicant and, consequently, subordinated him to the Father. However, the majority of Protestants in Poland-Lithuania found Stancaro's opinions abhorrent, and in June 1559 he was excommunicated by the commonwealth's Reformed synod. At their Polish correspondents' request, the Zurich divines penned two open letters denouncing Stancaro's views, which were published in March 1561.³² The following year, Stancaro responded with his work *De Trinitate et mediatore Domino nostro Iesu Christo*, in which he lambasted Bullinger, Vermigli and Calvin for introducing inequality within the Trinity and confusing the two natures of Christ. Accustomed to being labelled Nestorians by the likes of Brenz and Andreae, the Zurichers now found themselves accused for the first time of heresies from the other end of the Christological spectrum, such as Eutychianism and monotheletism.

³⁰ Bullinger, *Fundamentum firmum*, 117v–121r; Bullinger, *Repetitio*, 28r–30v.

³¹ Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 171–181.

³² *Epistolae duae, ad ecclesias polonicas, Iesu Christi Evangelium amplexas [...] de negotio Stancariano, et mediatore Dei et hominum Iesu Christo, an hic secundum humanam naturam duntaxat, an secundum utranque mediator sit*, Zurich: Christoph Fro-schauer the Elder, 1561 (HBBibI I 421).

The task of rebutting these charges fell to Simler, who had just been appointed professor of Old Testament at the Zurich academy in succession to Vermigli. In his *Responsio ad maledicum Francisci Stancari Mantuani librum* (1563), Simler denied that the Reformed understanding of the atonement compromised God's unity and that assigning a mediatorial function to Christ's godhead involved a confusion of the two natures. Against the »hyper-Zwinglian« Stancaro, Simler was able to develop the Zurich church's understanding of the unity of Christ's person more fully than was possible in dialogue with the »Eutychians« of Württemberg. While continuing to resist any suggestion of a real communication of properties between the two natures, as proposed by Brenz, he maintained that Christ's divinity plays a full and necessary part in his salvific mission. Although impassible, the Logos is not a bystander in the atonement, but the guarantor of its efficacy, as only one who is both human and divine can truly reconcile God with mankind.³³ Like the ubiquitarian controversy, the conflict between the Zurichers and Stancaro was fought out on the terrain of early church history; indeed, the *Responsio* provides the first evidence of Simler's interest in the ancient Christological debates that he was to explore more fully in the *Scripta veterum*. In the final part of the work, a range of Latin and Greek authors are invoked in support of the Zurich position.³⁴ Because Stancaro had accused the Zurichers of favouring positions anathematised by the Third Council of Constantinople (680–681), Simler is also at pains to demonstrate the compatibility of Reformed teaching with that council's pronouncements.³⁵

By the time of the *Responsio*'s publication, the focus of theological debate in Poland had shifted from Stancaro to another Italian exile, Giorgio Biandrata (c. 1515–1588). At this stage in his career, Biandrata was an advocate of the form of the antitrinitarianism dubbed »tritheism« by the orthodox: embracing what Stancaro insisted were the logical consequences of the Reformed doctrine of

³³ Josias *Simler*, *Responsio ad maledicum Francisci Stancari Mantuani librum adversus Tigurinae ecclesiae ministros, de Trinitate et mediatore Domino nostro Iesu Christo [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1563 (BZD C 636), 7r–v.

³⁴ *Simler*, *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, 33v–44v.

³⁵ *Simler*, *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, 10r, 29v–30r.

the mediator, he reconceptualised the Trinity as a hierarchy of three distinct beings, united in will rather than substance.³⁶ To the Zurichers' consternation, Biandrata found a ready audience among the Polish Reformed, many of whom had grown uncomfortable with the »sophistic« and non-scriptural language that they associated with the received doctrine of the Trinity. By the end of 1562, the Polish Reformed synod had splintered into orthodox and tritheist factions, led by Stanisław Sarnicki and Grzegorz Paweł respectively.

Simler spearheaded the Zurich church's intervention in the Polish schism. In the preface to his *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, he answered the tritheist arguments set out in Paweł's *Tabula de Trinitate*;³⁷ it is likely that he also had a hand in the detailed rebuttal of Paweł's text issued by the Zurichers in spring 1563.³⁸ Simler's status as the acknowledged Reformed authority on triadological matters was cemented by the publication in August 1568 of his massive *De aeterno Dei filio*, written at the behest of the Polish »major« or orthodox Reformed church.³⁹ In *De aeterno*, Simler highlighted the emergence of a new and more subversive form of antitrinitarianism – labelled »Samosatenianism«, after the third-century heretic Paul of Samosata, by the orthodox – which denied not only the consubstantiality and co-equality of the three divine persons, but even the pre-existence of Christ. For information, Simler drew on wide variety of sources, including works by the tritheists Valentino Gentile, Matteo Gribaldi and Jan Kazanowski, Lelio Sozzini's commentary on the Johannine prologue, the *Dialogi XXX* of Bernardino Ochino and the *Sylvae* of Andrzej Frycz

³⁶ *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 182–184.

³⁷ *Simler*, *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, *3v–6v.

³⁸ *Responsio ministrorum Tigurinae ecclesiae ad argumenta Antitrinitariorum Italopolonorum* (Zurich State Archive, E II 371, 931–935). On this work, see *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 190f.; *Taplin*, Bullinger on the Trinity, 88. Sarnicki published the »Responsio« in a volume entitled »Iudicium et censura ecclesiarum piarum de dogmate [...] contra adorandam Trinitatem per quosdam turbulentos noviter sparso« (Cracow 1563). For details, see Alodia *Kawecka-Gryczowa*, *Polonia typographica saeculi sedecimi*, XI: Maciej Wirzbięta, Wrocław 1975, 5, 27.

³⁹ Josias *Simler*, *De aeterno Dei filio domino et servatore nostro Iesu Christo, et de Spiritu sancto, adversus veteres et novos Antitrinitarios, id est Arianos, Tritheitas, Samosatenianos, et Pneumatomachos, libri quatuor* [...], Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1568 (BZD C 798).

Modrzewski.⁴⁰ Many of these works were dispatched by Reformed contacts in Poland and Transylvania, who continued to supply him with new heretical publications well into the 1570s.⁴¹ Although in *De aeterno* Simler's focus was on the doctrine of God, his defence of trinitarian orthodoxy necessarily involved some consideration of Christological issues. Significantly, he relied on the Chalcedonian Definition to counter many »Arian« objections to the full divinity of the Son, on the basis that it allowed those scriptural texts that appeared to suggest Christ's inferiority to the Father to be referred, as was proper, to his human nature.⁴²

De aeterno formed part of a co-ordinated Reformed campaign against antitrinitarianism, other contributions to which included the collection *Valentini Gentilis impietatum et triplicis perfidiae ac periurii brevis explicatio* (1567), edited by Beza, and Girolamo Zanchi's *De tribus Elohim* (1572).⁴³ The controversy acted as a stimulus to renewed engagement with the Fathers, whose refutations of Arianism provided the Reformed with both an inspiring model for their own efforts and a treasure trove of arguments to be redeployed against contemporary »heretics«. In August 1570, Beza published an anthology of patristic texts in defence of the Trinity, with a dedication to the Polish Reformed.⁴⁴ The pages of *De ae-*

⁴⁰ Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 199 f.

⁴¹ Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 200, n. 115. See also Theodor Wotschke (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel der Schweizer mit den Polen*, Leipzig 1908, 187, 206, 240 f., 286, 345, 375 f.

⁴² Simler, *De aeterno*, 278v–82r. Simler noted that the antitrinitarianism of Gentile and other tritheists was coupled with a monophysite Christology. See *ibid.*, 110r, 152r–156v.

⁴³ Beza's correspondence witnesses to his close co-operation with Simler in this matter. Prior to the publication of *De aeterno*, he encouraged Simler to write against Modrzewski and other antitrinitarians (CTB 8, 135, 148 [nos 560, 564]; CTB 9, 53 f. [no. 600]). After receiving a copy of the completed work from Simler (CTB 9, 121, 128, 132 [nos 625, 627, 629]), which he praised as a »librum vere aureum«, Beza abandoned his own plans for a refutation of »omnes adversus ipsam Christi personam excitatas haereses«, on the grounds that Simler had dealt satisfactorily with all such errors (CTB 9, 141 [no. 631]; CTB 10, 226 [no. 716]; CTB 11, 190 [no. 782]). However, the two theologians continued to exchange antitrinitarian texts forwarded to them by their eastern European correspondents. For Simler's contacts with Zanchi, see Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 226.

⁴⁴ Athanasii Dialogi V de sancta Trinitate, Basilii libri IIII adversus impium Eunomium, Athanasii et Cyrili Compendiaria fidei explicatio [...] Foebadi sive Foebadii liber contra Arianos, [Geneva]: Henri Estienne II, 1570. For Beza's introduction, see CTB 9,

terno itself are replete with citations from the Fathers, especially Hilary, Ambrose, the Cappadocians, Cyril and Augustine. When defending the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Simler also makes use of other extra-biblical texts, such as ancient hymns in which the third person of the Trinity is invoked.⁴⁵ For Simler, as for Bullinger, such statements are to be valued as witnesses to the correct, »catholic« understanding of the Bible. The same applies to the technical terms (»Trinity«, »person«, »essence« and so on) that the church has adopted to express its understanding of the God, which do not add to but merely encapsulate scriptural teaching.⁴⁶

Although Simler cut his teeth as a polemicist in conflict with opponents based primarily in eastern Europe, the publication of the *Scripta veterum* was hastened by events closer to home. For decades, the Zurich church had been the chief provider of advice, theological leadership and practical support to the Reformed communities of the Rhaetian Freestate (Graubünden). Cases of Anabaptism had been reported in the Freestate's largest town, Chur, ever since the early years of the Reformation, but the issue became particularly acute in the late 1560s, following the return to Graubünden of Georg Frell, a former employee of the Zurich printer Froschauer. Tobias Egli, the senior Reformed minister in Chur, complained in letters to Bullinger that Frell was disseminating Schwenckfeldian works, absenting himself from church services and refusing to have his newborn child baptised.⁴⁷ Eventually the town authorities lost patience, expelled Frell from Chur and ordered the confiscation of his books. Of equal concern to Egli were the activities of religious dissidents, especially antitrinitarians, in the Reformed churches of the Rhaetian »subject lands«: the Italian-speaking territories of Chiavenna, the Valtellina and Bormio.

319–330. Most of the works included in the collection were of dubious authenticity, but because of their theological significance Beza was inclined to overlook these problems. See the discussion in Irena Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378–1615)*, Leiden 2003 (*Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 94), 173–183.

⁴⁵ *Simler*, *De aeterno*, 329r–v.

⁴⁶ *Simler*, *De aeterno*, 159v–61r, 248v–51r.

⁴⁷ Simon *Rageth* and Oskar *Vasella*, *Die Autobiographie des Täuflers Georg Frell von Chur*, in: *Zwingliana* 7/7 (1942), 444–469; Nicole *Peduzzi*, *Der Gantnerhandel im Licht des Verfolungsberichts des Bündner Buchbinders Georg Frell*, in: *Zwingliana* 34 (2007), 61–94.

In Chiavenna, the newly appointed minister Scipione Lentolo took steps to discipline the radicals,⁴⁸ but other local clergy were less than supportive; Girolamo Turriani, the pastor in nearby Piuro, went so far as to receive excommunicated former members of Lentolo's congregation into his church. To overcome such opposition, Lentolo and his supporters appealed above Turriani's head to the Reformed church leadership in Chur, arguing that decisive magisterial intervention was required to rid Graubünden of heresy.⁴⁹

Lentolo's reports of antitrinitarian activity in the subject lands, together with his own recent experience of dealing with Frell, convinced Egli of the need for action. In June 1570, the Rhaetian Diet issued an edict requiring all inhabitants to adhere to one of the Freestate's two recognised faiths, Catholicism and Reformed Protestantism as defined by the Rhaetic and Second Helvetic Confessions. The measure encountered resistance both in the subject lands and in Chur, where Egli's fellow minister, Johannes Gantner, was dismissed after advocating religious toleration from the pulpit.⁵⁰ Gantner's sentiments were echoed by the Cremonese exile Bartolomeo Silvio, minister in Lentolo's old parish of Monte di Sondrio. In September 1570, Silvio sent Bullinger a copy of a short tract that he had written against the edict, in which the imposition of subscription was condemned as a return to the »tyrannical« practices of the papacy.⁵¹ Moreover, Silvio claimed that it would harm the cause of Protestantism in the subject lands, where the Reformed were a tiny minority, by driving the »weak in faith« back into the arms of the Catholic church.

Any hopes that Silvio may have nursed of securing a sympathetic hearing for his arguments were quickly dashed; if anything, his intervention seems to have prompted the Zurichers to redouble their efforts in support of Egli's anti-heretical campaign. In November 1570, Bullinger sent his Bündner counterpart a copy of

⁴⁸ Emanuele *Fiume*, Scipione Lentolo (1525–1599): »Quotidie laborans in evangelii causa«, Turin 2003, 138–142; *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 227–232.

⁴⁹ *Fiume*, Lentolo, 143; *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 233.

⁵⁰ Erich *Wenneker*, Heinrich Bullinger und der Gantnerhandel in Chur (1570–1574), in: *Zwingliana* 24 (1997), 95–115.

⁵¹ Zurich Zentralbibliothek [ZB], Ms. F 61, 343r–348r. For a fuller analysis of the work, see *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 235–237.

Beza's *De haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis libellus* (1554) for use against Gantner; over subsequent months, he offered Egli detailed advice on how to proceed against the radicals at the forthcoming Reformed synod, where their case was due to be heard.⁵² Public endorsement of the Rhaetian Diet's actions was offered by Bullinger's deputy Rudolf Gwalther, whose *Six Sermons on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, published in early 1571, were dedicated to Stefan Willi, Bürgermeister of Chur. In his preface to the work, Gwalther upheld the magistrate's duty to maintain »unity in doctrine and in faith« (»einigkeit in der leer und im glauben«), brushing aside arguments for toleration.⁵³ With the *Scripta veterum*, Simler sought to give a further boost to the Rhaetian church leadership, whose attempts to impose doctrinal uniformity continued to be opposed both by a recalcitrant minority within the synod and by notables sympathetic to Gantner and Turriani. In a letter dated 28 May 1571, Egli recalled discussing the projected work with Simler in Zurich and suggested that his correspondent dedicate it to the three Rhaetian Leagues, so as to encourage more rigorous implementation of the edict.⁵⁴ The timing of the volume's publication was calculated to be of maximum benefit to Egli and his supporters: it followed hard on the heels of the synodical meeting of June 1571, at which Silvio, Turriani and Gantner's close ally Johannes Möhr were suspended from the ministry, and thereby served to give the Zurich church's official imprimatur to those punishments.⁵⁵

1.3 Prefaces

In his main preface to the *Scripta veterum* – addressed, as Egli had suggested, to the Rhaetian Leagues – and in a second, shorter dedication to the Christian reader, Simler responds directly to the crisis facing the Bündner church.⁵⁶ While praising the Rhaetians

⁵² *Wenneker*, Gantnerhandel, 109–111; *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 245.

⁵³ Rudolf *Gwalther*, Die Menschwerdung deß waarenn, ewigen und eingebornen suns Gottes unsers Herren Jesu Christi erklärt und ußgelegt in sechs predigen, diser zyt allerley secten nützlich züläsen [...], Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1571 (BZD C 835), 6v–7v. For details, see *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, 242–244.

⁵⁴ ZB Ms. F 59, 410r.

⁵⁵ *Taplin*, Italian Reformers, pp. 245–6.

for their devotion to liberty and support for learning, he warns that the Freestate's geographical location makes it uniquely vulnerable to the »contagion« of heresy. From Germany it is assailed by Anabaptists and Schwenckfeldians – a clear reference to Frell and his supporters – while from south of the Alps arises the equally grave threat of antitrinitarianism, now transplanted to Rhaetian soil by Italian exiles in the churches of Piuro, Chiavenna and the Valtellina. In these movements, Simler claims to see not a new phenomenon but rather the recrudescence of two distinct ancient heresies: Eutychianism, which calls into question Christ's true humanity; and the teachings of Paul of Samosata, which rob him of his divinity.⁵⁷ The comment helps explain not just how Simler viewed the radical challenge, but his choice of a patristic edition as the vehicle for his response. By making the situation of the Rhaetian Reformed analogous to that of the writers featured in the *Scripta veterum*, Simler aimed to demonstrate the transferability of their arguments to the theological debates of his own day, just as Beza had done in his edition of patristic writings on the Trinity. Although this approach exposed the Fathers to anachronistic misreadings, by wrenching them out of their historical and intellectual context, it added a powerful polemical dimension to Simler's scholarship. The establishment of a typological connection between ancient and contemporary controversies authorised users of the *Scripta veterum* to comb through its contents in search of material that, taken in isolation, could be made to validate the Reformed position on a host of contested topics.

Having identified the specific doctrinal positions that his work is intended to combat, Simler turns his attention to the broader issues at stake in the Rhaetian dispute. Like Gwalther, he justifies the

⁵⁶ On Simler's prefaces, see Massimo Firpo, *Antitrinitari nell'Europa orientale del '500: Nuovi testi di Szymon Budny, Niccolò Paruta e Iacopo Paleologo*, Florence 1977, 1–8; Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 195 f., 247–249.

⁵⁷ *Simler, Scripta veterum*, * 2v: »Nam Eutychea dogmata nostra aetate tuentur cum Anabaptistae tum Schwenckfeldiani, quorum audio non exiguum numerum delitescere in Vindelicia et Rhetia secunda, ut hac quidem in parte periculum vobis immineat, ne ex Germania mali contagio ad vos serpat. Caeterum non minus etiam periculi imminet vobis ab altero latere Italiam versus, nam illic ante annos aliquot impius ille Servetus, pestifera sua dogmata similia Samosathenicis furoribus, clam sparsit, ea multi foveant, ornant et excolunt, qui cum alibi locum nullum habere possint, cavendum vobis est ne ficta sanctimonia sese commendare et apud vos sibi refugium aliquod parare conentur.«

Bündner Diet's suppression of heresy on the basis of the magistrate's *cura religionis*, finding historical precedents for the edict in the actions of the Israelite kings and early Christian emperors.⁵⁸ Objections to magisterial interference in religious affairs, on the grounds that faith is »free« and cannot be coerced, are dismissed as baseless, for the intention of the secular power is not to force consciences but to prevent blasphemy and maintain »the external discipline of doctrine and manners«, lest the *corpus christianum* be exposed to corruption.⁵⁹ Although the Mosaic penalties for false prophesy and witchcraft derive from judicial laws issued specifically to the people of Israel under the old covenant, they are of universally applicability »as far as their substance is concerned«. ⁶⁰ If a ruler is obliged to protect his subjects from crimes against the body, it follows that he must guard against threats to the welfare of their souls.⁶¹ Toleration even of those who refrain from open profession of heresy is hazardous, as such persons may continue to disseminate their errors in secret.⁶² Following Augustine, Simler suggests that the imposition of external conformity may actually be of benefit to those affected, helping them, in the fullness of time, to embrace the orthodox faith with genuine conviction.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, *3r, [*5v].

⁵⁹ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, *3r-v: »Sed cum magistratus haeticum punit, non id praecipue facit, ut vi eum rectius credere cogat. Si enim hic finis magistratui propositus esset, in nullum quantumvis sceleratum capite animadvertere liceret, sed id in puniendo spectat, ut iniuriam seu blasphemiam maiestati Dei procaciter factam ulciscatur, ut doctrinae et morum externam politiam conservet. Nisi vero contumaces perturbatores sanae doctrinae coerceantur, et exemplo in unum edito reliqui contineantur in officio, ut etsi non idem ex verbo Dei cum caeteris sentiant, saltem hoc ab ipsis extorquebitur, ut vel alio se conferant, vel intra se contineant suas pravas opiniones, et non modico fermento totam massam corrumpant.«

⁶⁰ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, *4v: »Leges quas iam recitavimus, iudiciales quidem sunt, sed tamen quantum ad ipsam substantiam earum spectat, morales sunt, ideoque omnium temporum communes, atque ut leges Mosaicae quae depositum reddi et furem puniri iubent, politicae sunt, et hactenus solos Israelitas obligant, quia tamen naturalem aequitatem sequuntur, et perpetuum illud Decalogi praeceptum, ne fureris, explicant, hactenus morales sunt, et omnes et illas praestandas tenemus, eadem ratio est praesentium legum.« Cf. *Gwalther*, Menschwerdung, 6v.

⁶¹ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, [*5r], [*6v].

⁶² *Simler*, Scripta veterum, [*6v].

⁶³ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, *3v. Cf. *Augustine*, De correctione Donatistarum (Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum [CSEL], vol. 57, Vienna 1911, 1-44; Pa-

Simler attacks the edict's opponents as »Academici«, thereby associating them with Sebastian Castellio and other critics of Servetus's execution, to whom the label had first been applied. According to Simler, their ultimate aim is to uproot true Christianity, with its doctrines of God, Christ and salvation, and replace it with a watered-down »philosophical« religion grounded on upright living, rather than faith. The »Academici« accuse their Reformed opponents of imposing a narrow dogmatism, but all that is demanded is adherence to the core tenets of the Gospel.⁶⁴ Their own approach, which places in doubt even the most basic doctrinal propositions, is the diametrical opposite of Christianity; if tolerated, it will lead to a proliferation of sects and, eventually, a drift towards impiety and Epicureanism.⁶⁵

Although Simler avoids mentioning Silvio by name, it is clear from the contents of his second preface, in particular, that he was familiar with the latter's treatise, which may have been passed on to him by Bullinger.⁶⁶ Thus he is sceptical of Silvio's claim that the Rhaetian authorities' actions will force waverers to return to Catholicism, noting that Mass attendance is required only of those who refuse to subscribe to the Reformed confessions. Silvio's appeal to his fellow ministers to imitate the example of Paul, who in Romans 14 advised that the »weakness« of Jewish converts be accommodated, is also given short shrift; as Simler points out, the same writer condemns those »pseudo-apostles« who made justification dependent on observance of the Law. The distinction that Silvio posits between »infant« and »adult« Christians is rejected on the authority of Irenaeus, who insists against the Gnostics on the common faith of all believers.⁶⁷

trologiae cursus completus [Series Latina], ed. Jacques Paul Migne, 217 vols, Paris 1844–1855 [PL], vol. 33, 792–815) 2,7.

⁶⁴ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, *3v.

⁶⁵ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, [*6v].

⁶⁶ Simler also possessed a copy of Lentolo's refutation of the work, the »Responsio orthodoxa« (*Fiume*, Lentolo, 171f.). In a letter to the Bürgermeisters of Chur, Ambrosius Marti and Stefan Willi, he describes the »Scripta veterum« as his riposte to complaints received »muntlich und schriftlich« about the edict and the »große tyranny« of subscription (Zurich Zentralbibliothek, Ms F 46, 348–351). See Taplin, *Italian Reformers*, 248, n. 144.

⁶⁷ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, [*6r]: »Errant autem qui haec dicunt in eo quod fir-
morum et infirmorum, lactentium et adultorum discrimen circa dogmata fidei statuunt,

Silvio's final objection to subscription – that it detracts from the authority of scripture – is the most serious. For Silvio, the entire substance of Christian doctrine is encapsulated in the Apostles' Creed; more elaborate confessions, he suggests, have a tendency to elevate human teachings over revelation, the chief error of the papacy. In response, Simler argues that profession of the Apostles' Creed, or even a general adherence to scripture, would be sufficient »if cunning men did not seek by fraudulent means to twist the simplicity of the faith set out in them«. ⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the church has found itself compelled to devise more precise credal statements, of which the Rhaetic Confession is one, to exclude such perverse interpretations. To illustrate how scripture may be abused, Simler cites the example of the Servetians, who, while claiming to accept the biblical teaching that Christ is the son of both God and man and himself truly divine, preach a Christ who is none of those things. ⁶⁹ The refusal on principle of the edict's opponents to

cum aliter se habeat: nam Paulus qui tolleravit Iudaeos ceremonias legis servantes, pseudoapostolos minime tolleravit qui iustificationem in his ipsis reponabant, imo pronuntiat Christum talibus nihil prodesse: an vero credendum est eum cum infirmis factus est infirmus, quicquam circa dogmata vel immutasse vel dissimulasse? Sed ne meam sententiam afferam, Irenaei vetustissimi scriptoris verba adscribam, quibus eandem fidem omnium qui in ecclesia sunt firmorum et infirmorum, discipulorum et magistrorum asserit. »Quemadmodum, inquit, »Sol creatura Dei unus et idem est in universo mundo, ita et praedicatio veritatis: ubique lucet, et illuminat omnes homines qui ad notionem veritatis venire volunt. Nec sane qui inter praefectos ecclesiae praepollet facundia ab his diversa dicturus est (nemo enim est supra magistrum) nec is qui minus valet dicendo, traditionem hanc imminuet. Nam cum una sit eademque fides, nec is, qui multum de ea dicere potest, superfluit, nec qui parum imminuit. Plus autem aut minus quosdam nosse secundum intelligentiam quam acceperunt, non efficitur mutatione hypothesis, aut excogitatione alterius Dei praetor Demiurgum et factorem et nutritorem universi, etc.« Cf. *Irenaeus of Lyon, Adversus haereses* (ed. W. Wigan Harvey, 2 vols, Cambridge 1857; PG 7, 433–1225), 1,10,1. For the passage to which Simler is responding, see ZB Ms. F 61, 345r–v, cited in *Taplin, Italian Reformers*, 236, n. 89.

⁶⁸ *Simler, Scripta veterum*, [**6r]: »Satis quidem esset simplex professio fidei apostolicae, aut generalis subscriptio sacrarum literarum, nisi simplicitatem fidei in his propositam homines vafri fraudulentis artibus in alienum sensum detorquerent, id quod etiam de sui temporis haereticis Hilarius conqueritur.«

⁶⁹ *Simler, Scripta veterum*, [**6r–v]: »Tradunt nobis scripturae Christum servatorem nostrum unum et eundem esse filium Dei et filium hominis, verum Deum et vitam aeternam, hoc Servetani secundum scripturas se credere profitentur. Sed eum Christum nobis proponunt, qui neque vere Dei neque etiam hominis filius sit, natus quidem ex virgine, sed substantiam habens ex tribus nescio quibus increatis elementis iuxta Servetum, qui sit aeternus praedestinationis non existentiae ratione, quique sit Deus verus

countenance »man-made« confessions is fundamentally misconceived; for their opposition to the Rhaetic confession to be justified, they must be able to demonstrate not merely that it contains extra-biblical terminology but that it contradicts scripture.⁷⁰ Simler sees their position as foreshadowed in the attitude of earlier »heretics«, specifically the Arians, who opposed the introduction of the clarifying term *homoousios* in order that they might »more easily impose their errors on the simple«, and the Eutychians, who for similar reasons refused to countenance Chalcedon's additions to the Nicene Creed.⁷¹ Conversely, there are numerous early church precedents for the practice of subscription, which is endorsed by no less a writer than Hilary of Poitiers.⁷² Simler's appropriation here of patristic authority in support of the orthodox Reformed position sets the tone for the remainder of his work, the central purpose of which is to align Zwinglian Christology with the teaching of the Fathers.

postquam scilicet Deificatus est, et nomine ac potestate Dei donatus post resurrectionem a mortuis.«

⁷⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, [*6v]: »si nolunt subscriptione suam fidem hominum verbis astringere, ostendant nobis ubi a scripturis haec confessio dissentiat, confutent eam, et contrariam sententiam scripturis confirmet, nemo tam iniquus est, qui illos audire nolet scripturis pugnantes: id si non audent, an non suam perveraciam produunt, qui ea damnant et reiiciunt quae tamen confutare non possunt?«

⁷¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, [*6v]: »Porro ut olim Ariani oppugnabant τὸ ὁμοούσιον a Nicaena Synodo usurpatum, ut e medio sublato hoc vocabulo, quo res maximae explicabantur, facilius imponere possent simplicioribus: et ut postea Eutychiani ad tegendam suam impietatem iactabant se Nicaenam fidem sequi, Chalcedonense autem decretum quo detegebatur eorum improbitas oppugnabant: ita hodie multi piarum ecclesiarum confessiones orthodoxas non alio consilio oppugnant, quam ut liberius spargere possint sua prophana figmenta.«

⁷² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, [*6v]: »Neque debet molestum videri piis quod scripto testari debeant suam fidem, cum huc adigant ecclesiam versutiae et fraudulentae sophisticaeque cavillationes multorum, neque me movet quod dicunt veterem ecclesiam oris confessione contentam fuisse, cum liceat contraria ex historiis exempla proferre: et Hilarius, »Ubique«, inquit, »scandala, ubique perfidiae sunt: hinc illud est, ut ad professionem subscribendae fidei, aliqui eorum qui antea aliud scripserant cogerebant.« The quoted passage is from *Hilary of Poitiers*, *De synodis* (PL 10, 479–546) 63.

2. Texts and sources

2.1 Texts

The earliest of the works published in the *Scripta veterum* is *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium libri VII*, by John Cassian (c. 360–432). Although Cassian spent his final years in Gaul, as a »Scythian« from the Dobrudja he was equally at home in Latin and Greek; this bilingualism, together with his extensive knowledge of monastic communities in Palestine and Egypt, equipped him to play an important role in the transmission of eastern ascetic traditions to the West. *De incarnatione* can be dated quite precisely to the summer of 430, as it formed the basis for the condemnation of Nestorius by Pope Celestine I in August that year.⁷³ Simler's text is based on the first printed edition of the work, by the antiquarian Johannes Sichardus, which was published by Andreas Cratander in Basel.⁷⁴

In the preface to *De incarnatione*, Cassian indicates that the work was written at the request of the Roman archdeacon Leo, later Pope Leo I (440–461). The *Scripta veterum* features two of Leo's own writings: his letter to Flavian of Constantinople, usually known as the Tome,⁷⁵ and a subsequent letter on Christology to the Emperor Leo I.⁷⁶ Simler had access to the Cologne edition of Leo's works, first published by Peter Canisius in 1546⁷⁷ and reissued, with revisions by Laurentius Surius, in 1561 and 1569.⁷⁸ As

⁷³ John A. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*, Leiden 1994 (Supplements to *Vigiliae christianae* 23), 37, 42.

⁷⁴ Ioannis Cassiani viri disertissimi de incarnatione Domini libri VII. iam recens aediti [...], Basel: Andreas Cratander, 1534 (Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts, Stuttgart 1983–2000 [VD 16], no. J 391). See Josias Simler, *Bibliotheca instituta et collecta primum a Conrado Gesnero [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1574 (BZD C 873), 353.

⁷⁵ *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, ed. Eduard Schwartz et al., Berlin 1927–1971 [ACO¹], vol. 2.2, 24–33; *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo et al., Bologna 1973, 77–82; PL 54, 755–782.

⁷⁶ ACO¹ 2.4, 113–131; PL 54, 1155–1190.

⁷⁷ *D. Leonis papae huius nominis primi opera, quae quidem extant omnia*, Cologne: Melchior von Neuß, 1546 (VD 16 L 1201).

⁷⁸ *D. Leonis eius nominis I. Romani pontificis opera, quae quidem haberi potuerunt*,

perhaps the definitive statement of the Christology of the western church, the Tome was reprinted several times during the sixteenth century – for example, in Basilius Heroldt's *Orthodoxographa*, Johann Jakob Grynaeus's *Monumenta* and Peter Crabbe's edition of *acta* of church councils.⁷⁹ The *Scripta veterum* includes another short work by a fifth-century pope, the *Tractatus de duabus naturis in Christo adversus Eutychem et Nestorium* of Gelasius I (492–496), whose pontificate fell during the so-called Acacian schism between Rome and Constantinople. The *Tractatus*, an uncompromising defence of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo against monophysitism, was published first in the *Antidotum* of Johannes Sichardus and again in Heroldt's *Haeresiologia*.⁸⁰ Simler was not the first Zurich theologian to make use of the work: it is cited by Bullinger, in *De origine erroris*,⁸¹ and by Peter Martyr Vermigli, who challenges Brenz's use of Gelasius as an authority for the Lutheran view of the hypostatic union.⁸²

Simler's collection incorporates two texts of north African provenance: the *Libri tres ad Trasimundum Vandalorum regem* by Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe (468–533); and the *Libri quinque contra Eutychem* by Vigilus, bishop of Thapsus (late fifth century). Fulgentius's treatise was written around 515, as an apology for the orthodox faith against the Arian ruler Thrasamund. It was first published in 1520, together with Fulgentius's other surviving works, by Johannes Cochlaeus and Willibald Pirckheimer, and

omnia, Cologne: Johann Birckmann, 1561 (VD 16 L 1202); Cologne: Johann Birckmann, 1569 (VD 16 L 1203). – Cf. *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 81r.

⁷⁹ *Orthodoxographa theologiae sacrosanctae ac syncerioris fidei doctores numero lxxvi* [...], Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1555 (VD 16 H 2550), 654–658; *Monumenta s. patrum orthodoxographa, hoc est theologiae sacrosanctae ac syncerioris fidei doctores, numero circiter LXXXV* [...], 3 vols, Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1569 (VD 16 G 3788), vol. 1, 41–45; *Concilia omnia, tam generalia, quam particularia, ab apostolorum temporibus in hunc usque diem a sanctissimis patribus celebrata* [...], 2 vols, Cologne: Peter Quentel, 1538 (VD 16 C 5643), vol. 1, 347v–349v. The letter to Emperor Leo appears in *Concilia*, vol. 1, 388v–392v.

⁸⁰ *Antidotum contra diversas omnium fere seculorum haereses* [...], Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1528 (VD 16 S 6283), 230v–237v; *Haeresiologia, hoc est, opus veterum tam Graecorum quam Latinorum theologorum, per quos omnes, quae per catholicam Christi ecclesiam grassatae sunt, haereses confutantur* [...], Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1556 (VD 16 H 2544), 683–697. The Sichardus edition is mentioned in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 221.

⁸¹ See *Bergjan*, Bullinger, 134, n. 10.

⁸² *Vermigli*, *Dialogus*, 12v–15v. Cf. *Mahlmann*, *Die christologischen Schriften*, 20.

again in Heroldt's *Haeresiologia*;⁸³ Simler mentions both editions in his introduction to the text.⁸⁴ Fulgentius was highly regarded by the Zurichers because of his emphasis on the impassibility of the divine nature and apparent support for their contention, against Brenz, that Christ's humanity continues to be circumscribed physically after his glorification; he is cited on these points by Bullinger in the *Decades*, the *Tractatio* and the *Fundamentum firmum*, and by Vermigli in his *Dialogus*.⁸⁵ Vigilius's *Contra Eutychem* enjoyed similar popularity with Reformed writers. In May 1539, Gwalther procured a copy of the *editio princeps*, by Caspar Churrerius, for Bullinger, who republished it soon afterwards;⁸⁶ the work was also included in Heroldt's *Haeresiologia*.⁸⁷ The value that Bullinger attached to *Contra Eutychem*, as a patristic witness against the allegedly monophysite Christologies of Kaspar Schwenckfeld and the ubiquitarians, is evident from the frequency with which he refers to it in his own writings. Particularly noteworthy is his citation in the *Decades* (4,6) of a lengthy passage from the work where Vigilius argues against the omnipresence of Christ's flesh.⁸⁸ Besides the editions mentioned above, Simler con-

⁸³ Opera B. Fulgentii Aphri, Episcopi Ruspensis, theologi antiqui. Nuper in vetustissimo codice apud Germanos inventa, obsoletis et Langobardicis literis conscripta. Antea nunquam impressa [...], Hagenau: Thomas Anshelm, 1520 (VD 16 F 3355), xxxv-lxxvii; *Haeresiologia*, 48–94. The Cochlaeus-Pirckheimer text was based on a manuscript from the library of Johannes Trithemius. A second edition appeared in Cologne in 1526.

⁸⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 139r. See also the entry for Fulgentius in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 211f.

⁸⁵ HBS 3, 126; *Bullinger*, *Tractatio*, 28r–v; *Bullinger*, *Fundamentum firmum*, 129v, 138r–v; *Vermigli*, *Dialogus*, 37v–38r, 16r–17r. Bullinger's use of Fulgentius is highlighted by *Opitz*, *Heinrich Bullinger als Theologe*, 190.

⁸⁶ *Orthodoxa et erudita D. Ioachimi Vadiani viri clarissimi epistola, qua hanc explicat quaestionem, an corpus Christi propter coniunctionem cum verbo inseparabilem alienas a corpore conditiones sibi sumat nostro saeculo perquam utilis et necessaria. Accesserunt huic D. Vigili Martyris et Episcopi Tridentini libri v pii et elegantes*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Elder, 1539 (HBBibl I 113). This is Bullinger's only patristic edition.

⁸⁷ *Haeresiologia*, 761–[796].

⁸⁸ HBS 4, 534f. Cf. *Vigilius*, *Libri quinque contra Eutychem* (PL 62, 95–154) [Vigil. Thap. c. Eutychem.] 4,14. For other examples of Bullinger's use of Vigilius, see HBS 3, 44, 176f.; *De conciliis*, 99r–100r; *Tractatio*, 25v–26r, 28r; *Responsio qua ostenditur sententiam de coelo et dextera Dei*, 67v, 71r, 72r, 79v; *Ad Testamentum*, 26r, 29r–v. The work is also cited extensively in Vermigli's »*Dialogus*«; see 12v, 33r–v, 42r–43v,

sulted Georg Cassander's volume of *Opera* of Vigilius, published in 1555.⁸⁹ Like previous editors of *Contra Eutychetem*, he mistakenly assumed its author to be identical with Bishop Vigilius of Trent (c. 353–405). Ironically, this error may have served to enhance the work's status, by associating it with a well-known martyr of the church rather than an obscure African cleric.

One of the shorter texts in the *Scripta veterum* is *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi adversus Eutychen et Nestorium*, by Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c. 475–526), the celebrated Aristotelian commentator and author of *De consolatione philosophiae*. *De duabus naturis*, with its influential definition of a person as »an individual substance of rational nature«, was included in the first edition of Boethius's collected works, printed in Venice (1491/92), and in the volume of the same writer's *Opera* edited by Heinrich Loriti (Glarean) and published by Petri in Basel.⁹⁰ Roughly contemporaneous with Boethius was John Maxentius, the leader of a delegation of monks from Tomi, in present-day Romania, to Constantinople and Rome in 519–520. These »Scythian« monks were advocates of the so-called theopaschite formula, which proclaimed that »one of the Trinity was crucified«. Although the formula was initially rejected by Pope Hormisdas, in the course of the sixth century it became accepted as orthodox.⁹¹ The *Scripta vete-*

68v–69r, 104v–106r. Andreae, by contrast, mocks Vigilius as »Dormilius« (CTB 12, 82 [no. 13]). For Simler's response, see *Scripta veterum*, 111r: »mirum igitur est nostra aetate quondam suo iudicio theologorum coryphaeum, optimum hunc patrem et doctissimum, ignominiose mutato nomine Dormilium appellare: qui dum hac ratione illum perstringere se putat, suam interim impudentem temeritatem et arrogantiam modestis hominibus ridendam seu potius miserandam prodat.«

⁸⁹ B. Vigilius martyr et episcopi Tridentini opera [...], Cologne: Arnold Birckmann the Elder, 1555 (VD 16 V 1184). The work is discussed in *Backus*, *Historical Method*, 183–194. See Simler's comments in *Bibliotheca*, 678.

⁹⁰ Both editions are mentioned in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 43. For Loriti's text of »De duabus naturis«, see Anitii Manlii Severini Boethi in omnibus philosophiae partibus inter Latinos et Graecos autores principis opera, quae extant omnia [...], Basel: Heinrich Petri, 1546 (VD 16 B 6402), 948–957. A second Basel edition appeared in 1570 (VD 16 B 6403).

⁹¹ John *Meyendorff*, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: the Church 450–680 A.D.*, New York 1989, 218–220; Aloys *Grillmeier*, *Christ in Christian Tradition. Volume Two: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*. Part Two: *The Church of Constantinople in the sixth century*, trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen, London 1995, 320–338.

rum includes several »opuscula« attributed to Maxentius: the *Libellus fidei*; the *Capitula contra Nestorianos et Pelagianos*; the *Professio brevissima catholicae fidei*; the *Brevissima adunationis ratio verbi Dei, ad propriam carnem*; the *Responsio ad Acephalos*; the *Dialogi duo contra Nestorianos*; and the *Responsio ad epistolam, quae dicitur esse Papae Hormisdæ*.⁹² The same collection of works had been published several times previously: as an appendix to the 1520 and 1526 editions of Fulgentius, in Heroldt's *Orthodoxographa* and in Grynaeus's *Monumenta*.⁹³

Maxentius's views are representative of the theological tendency known as neo-Chalcedonianism, which married acceptance of Chalcedon with intense reverence for the works of Cyril of Alexandria (c. 378–444), from whom the monophysites also drew their inspiration.⁹⁴ One of the most sophisticated neo-Chalcedonian works, Justinian's *Edictum rectae fidei*,⁹⁵ is given pride of place in the *Scripta veterum*. The edict, which was promulgated in 551, formed part of Justinian's campaign to outlaw the Antiochene Christology associated with the so-called Three Chapters: Theodore of Mopsuestia, the works of Theodoret of Cyrillus against Cyril, and the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris the Persian. Prior to appearing in the *Scripta veterum*, it had been published in Crabbe's edition of conciliar *acta*.⁹⁶ The final work in Simler's anthology, the *Disputatio contra Acephalos* by Rusticus the Deacon, a nephew of Pope Vigilius (537–555), dates from the same period but is the product of a quite different Christological tradition.⁹⁷

⁹² Corpus christianorum: Series Latina, Turnhout 1954 ff. [CCSL], vol. 85A, 3–153; ACO¹ 4.2, 3–62; Patrologiae cursus completus (Series Graeca), ed. Jacques Paul Migne, 162 vols, Paris 1857–1866 [PG], vol. 86(1), 75–113.

⁹³ Opera B. Fulgentii, 1r–xxvr (the works of Fulgentius and Maxentius are paginated separately); *Orthodoxographa*, 673–720; *Monumenta*, vol. 1, 47–61; vol. 3, 2028–2063.

⁹⁴ Patrick T.R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451–553)*, Leiden 1979 (Studies in the History of Christian Thought 20); *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller, 36 vols, Berlin 1977–2004, vol. 24, 289–296.

⁹⁵ *Drei dogmatische Schriften Justinians*, ed. Eduard Schwartz, Milan ²1973, 129–169; PG 86(1), 993–1035; English translation in: *On the Person of Christ: The Christology of Emperor Justinian*, ed. Kenneth P. Wesche, New York 1991, 163–198. The work is discussed in Gray, *Defense of Chalcedon*, 154–164; *Grillmeier*, *Church of Constantinople*, 425–438.

⁹⁶ *Concilia omnia*, vol. 1, dlxxiv–dlxxvii r.

⁹⁷ PL 67, 1167–1254. On this work, see Uwe Michael Lang, *Christological Themes*

Like other western churchmen, Rusticus opposed the condemnation of the Three Chapters at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), in which his uncle had acquiesced under pressure from Justinian. His *Disputatio* had appeared previously in both Srichardus's *Antidotum* and the *Haeresiologia*.⁹⁸

Although Simler was the first to assemble these works in a single volume, many of them had featured in earlier patristic anthologies, as we have seen. It would appear that, together, they had begun to be regarded by the Reformed as constituting a »canon« of texts in which the Christological teaching of the ancient church was conveniently summarised. In the preface to his Vigilius edition, Bullinger commends the Tome, Gelasius's *Tractatus*, Fulgentius's *Ad Trasimundum* and the *Dialogi duo* of Maxentius as works in which the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches are conclusively refuted, while Vigilius, Rusticus and Leo are among the writers cited in Simler's *Responsio ad Stancari librum*.⁹⁹ In reality, of course, the texts published in the *Scripta veterum* represent a variety of Christological perspectives. Whereas works such as Leo's epistles and Rusticus's *Disputatio* exemplify the strongly dyophysite approach of the western church, derived ultimately from Augustine, Justinian's edict and the works of Maxentius are in the Alexandrian, anti-Nestorian tradition of Cyril. One of the principal challenges that Simler faced was to fashion from this diverse material a unified *consensus patrum* supportive of his own theological position.

2.2 Sources

In the *Annotationes* that accompany his chosen texts and, more particularly, in the *Narratio*, which supplies the wider historical context within which they are set, Simler has recourse to a variety of sources. The work on which he draws most heavily is the *Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum* by Liberatus of

in Rusticus Diaconus' »Contra Acephalos Disputatio«, in: *Studia Patristica* 38 (2001), 429–434.

⁹⁸ *Antidota*, 246r–274v; *Haeresiologia*, 707–761. See the entry in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 615.

⁹⁹ Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel, ed. Ulrich Gäbler et al., Zurich 1973 ff. [HBBW], vol. 9, 167f. (no. 1283); *Simler*, *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, 5v, 11r, 20v, 44r.

Carthage, written shortly after the death of Pope Vigilius in June 555. Liberatus, while rejecting Nestorianism, shared the reluctance of other western writers to condemn the wider Antiochene school from which it was derived; like Rusticus, he was strongly critical of the anathematisation of the Three Chapters. The *Breviarium* supplies the basic framework for Simler's history between the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy (428) and Constantinople II. Large sections of the work – for example, Liberatus's description of the mission of Paul of Emesa to Alexandria, which ended the schism between Cyril and the oriental bishops following the Council of Ephesus, and his account of the affair of Ibas of Edessa in the late 440s – are absorbed into the *Narratio* more or less verbatim.¹⁰⁰

Simler's other major source, complementing Liberatus's western perspective, is the works of the Greek ecclesiastical historians (Eusebius, Socrates, Theodoret, Sozomen and Evagrius), which were available in Wolfgang Musculus's Latin edition (1549).¹⁰¹ For the period with which Simler is concerned, by far the most important of these writers was Evagrius, although the *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates, which terminates in 439, includes material relevant to the Nestorian controversy. Evagrius's work, written in the late 590s, opens with the election of Nestorius as bishop of Constantinople and concludes in 593/94, following the death of Bishop Gregory of Antioch. As an adviser to Gregory, Evagrius had privileged access to the diocesan archives of Antioch, which included copies of the *acta* of the ecumenical councils and other synods.¹⁰² Important documents such as the *Encyclical* and *Counter-Encyclical* of Basiliscus (475–476), Zeno's *Henotikon* (482) and the religious edict of Justin II (571) are reproduced in his history in their entirety, while a substantial epitome of the *acta* of Chalcedon is appended to book 2. A moderate Chalcedonian himself, Evag-

¹⁰⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 176v, 179v. Cf. Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychianorum* (ACO¹ 2.5, 98–141; PL, 68, 969–1050) [Liberat.] 8, 10.

¹⁰¹ The volume was reprinted in 1554, 1557 and 1562. For details, see Wallraff, *Kirchengeschichtswerke*, 231 f., 258. The Greek text of the histories had been published previously by Robert Estienne. Musculus's work incorporated his own translations of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen and Evagrius, together with Joachim Camerarius's earlier translation of Theodoret.

¹⁰² Pauline Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the church historian*, Louvain 1981, 6.

rius also consulted rival monophysite works, along with various secular histories and chronicles.¹⁰³

Evagrius was a key source for the unfinished *Ecclesiastical History* of Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos (fourteenth century), a Latin translation of which was published by Johann Lange in 1553.¹⁰⁴ Like other sixteenth-century church historians, including the authors of the Magdeburg Centuries, Simler makes extensive use of this late text in conjunction with Evagrius. Despite the largely derivative character of Nicephorus's history, it provided Simler with some important information omitted by Evagrius – for example, on the career of Peter the Fuller, a fifth-century monophysite bishop of Antioch, which Evagrius was inclined to gloss over for patriotic reasons.¹⁰⁵ The *Narratio's* categorisation of the various monophysite splinter groups that emerged during the sixth century is based on Nicephorus's account, which was itself taken from the *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei* of Nicetas Choniates.¹⁰⁶ Simler also makes use of two earlier Byzantine works, the *Compendium historiarum* of George Cedrenus (eleventh century) and the *Epitome historiarum* of John Zonaras (early twelfth century), bilingual editions of which had been published in Basel.¹⁰⁷ They are especially important for his treatment of the monothelete controversy, as Nicephorus's history terminates in 610, shortly before its outbreak.

¹⁰³ The *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius Scholasticus, trans. Michael *Whitby*, Liverpool 2000, xxii–xxxii.

¹⁰⁴ Nicephori Callisti Xanthopuli, scriptoris vere Catholici, Ecclesiasticae historiae libri decem et octo [...], Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1553 (VD 16 N 1436). See the reference in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 513. Excerpts from the history had been published by Beatus Rhenanus in 1535. Lange's translation was based on a Viennese manuscript formerly held in the library of Matthias Corvinus; see Günter *Gentz*, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus und ihre Quellen: Nachgelassene Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1966, 3, 207; *Wallraff*, *Kirchengeschichtswerke*, 224f., n. 10. Further editions appeared in Basel in 1555, 1560 and 1561.

¹⁰⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 197v–198r; *Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos*, *Historia ecclesiastica* (PG 145, 549–1333; 146; 147, 9–448) [Niceph. h.e.] 15,28. See the comments of *Allen*, *Evagrius*, 123, and *Whitby*, *Ecclesiastical History*, 137, n. 15.

¹⁰⁶ *Gentz*, *Nicephorus*, 179–181.

¹⁰⁷ *Georgii Cedreni Annales* [...] *Guilielmo Xylandro Augustano interprete*, Basel: Johannes Oporin, Nikolaus Episcopus the Younger and Eusebius Episcopus, 1566 (VD 16 G 1351); *Ioannis Zonarae Monachi* [...] *compendium Historiarum* [...], Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1557 (VD 16 J 811).

Besides these second-hand accounts, Simler had at his disposal some key primary documents, the *acta* of the early church councils. The first collection of *acta*, by Jacques Merlin (Paris 1524), was quickly superseded by Peter Crabbe's impressive Cologne edition, published by Quentel in 1538. This formed the basis for two subsequent revisions, by Crabbe (1551) and Laurentius Surius (1567) respectively.¹⁰⁸ It is likely that Simler used the original Crabbe edition, as this is the only one mentioned in his *Bibliotheca* of 1574.¹⁰⁹ The collection included Liberatus's *Breviarium*, together with material from the ecumenical councils of Chalcedon (451), Constantinople II (553) and Constantinople III (680–681), and from two important regional councils, the synods of Constantinople (536) and the Lateran (649). Simler alludes to conciliar material on a number of occasions in the *Narratio* – for example, to support his view of monothelism as merely a modified form of Eutychianism, rather than a synthesis of orthodox and anti-Chalcedonian Christologies.¹¹⁰ Generally, however, his accounts of conciliar proceedings are rather terse, conveying little of the drama and immediacy of the stenographic records. The most colourful incident to which he refers – the condemnation of the monothelite monk Polychronius at Constantinople III, after failing to deliver on his claim to be able to revive the dead – has an obvious polemical function, furnishing evidence of the innate deceitfulness of heretics.¹¹¹

Simler also draws heavily on the writings of Cyril. The *Narratio* includes references to the Alexandrian's correspondence with Nestorius, Pope Celestine and others, and to the synodical letters of the Council of Ephesus, which were appended to the standard Latin edition of Cyril's works.¹¹² When discussing the Twelve Ana-

¹⁰⁸ James V. Mehl, *The First Printed Editions of the History of Church Councils*, in: *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 18 (1986), 128–143; Benjamin De Troeyer, *Bio-Bibliographia Franciscana Neerlandica Saeculi XVI*, 2 vols, Nieuwkoop 1969, vol. 1, 163–167; vol. 2, 63–68.

¹⁰⁹ *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 556.

¹¹⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 208r.

¹¹¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 206v. Cf. *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, series secunda, ed. Rudolf Riedinger et al., Berlin 1984 ff. [ACO²], vol. 2.2, 675–683.

¹¹² *Operum divi Cyrilli Alexandrini episcopi tomi quatuor, quorum postremus nunc recens accedit, ex graecis manuscriptis exemplaribus fideliter latinitate donatus*, 4 vols,

thematisms, a key Cyrilline text whose orthodoxy was much contested during the Nestorian controversy, Simler quotes extensively from Cyril's apologies *Against the Orientals* and *Against Theodoret*.¹¹³ For the subsequent dispute with Eutyches, he has recourse to the correspondence of Pope Leo, especially Leo's letters to Emperors Theodosius II and Leo I and to Theodosius's sister Pulcheria.

Some of the texts published in the main body of the *Scripta veterum* are utilised again in the *Narratio*, as sources for the teachings of Nestorius (Vigilius, Cassian), later Nestorianism (Maxentius) and Eutyches (Leo, Vigilius). Other patristic works cited include Proclus's *Tome to the Armenians*, Augustine's *De haeresibus*, Basil's *Contra Eunomium*, the dialogues of Ps. Athanasius, Theodoret's *Eranistes* and John Damascene's *De haeresibus* (the last two in relation to Eutychianism). Simler also makes occasional use of the *Corpus iuris civilis* for imperial anti-heresy legislation. In the short biography that he appends to Cassian's *De incarnatione*, he cites the ecclesiastical histories of Sozomen and Rufinus, Prosper of Aquitaine's *De gratia dei et libero arbitrio*, the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus, *De viris illustribus* by Gennadius of Marseille, the *Chronicon* of Ado of Vienne, the *Chronicon sive Chronographia* of Sigebert of Gembloux, and Raffaele Maffei's *Commentariorum urbanorum libri XXXVIII*; elsewhere there are references to the *Liber pontificalis*, the *Suda*, the *Libri historiarum* of Gregory of Tours, the *Historia Romana* of Paul the Deacon and John Bale's *Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorium catalogus*. The Magdeburg Centuries is cited infrequently but, given the tendency of sixteenth-century writers to acknowledge works by their contemporaries only to a limited extent, Simler may well have drawn on it more heavily than is apparent at first glance.

Basel: Johannes Herwagen the Elder, 1546 (VD 16 C 6568), vol. 4, 1–89, 276–297. The full contents of the edition are listed in *Simler*, *Bibliotheca*, 153.

¹¹³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 179v–186v. For these works, see *Operum divi Cyrilli*, vol. 4, 142–219.

2.3 Interpretation

Despite its polemical motivation, the *Scripta veterum* is a work of serious scholarship, in the traditions of upper Rhine humanism. Two texts, Justinian's *Edictum* and Vigilius's *Contra Eutychetem*, are presented in improved redactions, based on manuscripts that Simler had procured from the brothers Pierre and François Pithou.¹¹⁴ Variant readings and emendations to earlier editions are listed in the *Annotationes*, which, in the case of Justinian's work, also highlight textual parallels with the canons of Constantinople II and Justin II's religious edict of 571.¹¹⁵ Like Liberatus and the Greek church historians, Simler incorporates into his account the full text of important documents such as the Chalcedonian Definition, the *Henotikon* of Zeno, and the conciliar decree of Constantinople III, as well as a previously unpublished anti-monothelete confession translated into Latin by »a certain friend of ours« (»amicus quidam noster«).¹¹⁶ He also takes care to correct common errors such as the designation of the Constantinople synod of 536 as the Fifth Ecumenical Council and Crabbe's placing of the Lateran synod of 649 in the reign of Constantine III, rather than his heretical son Constans II.¹¹⁷ Although the *Scripta veterum* contains nothing comparable to the Magdeburg Centuriators' attack on previous ecclesiastical historiography,¹¹⁸ Simler's generally re-

¹¹⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 8v, 112r. Simler received the Vigilius manuscript from François Pithou in August 1570 (ZB Ms. F 60, 572, 585). The following month, his correspondent promised to send a copy of Justinian's edict »quod ex veteribus membranis descripsi« (ZB Ms. F 60, 573). On 23 March 1571, Simler wrote to thank Pithou for these texts, announcing his intention to publish them with »quaedam alia Latinorum scripta de duabus in Christo naturis, una cum annotationibus« (ZB Ms. F 46, 360). On the Pithou brothers, see Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance*, New York 1970, 241–270.

¹¹⁵ On the use of annotations as a critical tool by early modern editors, see John F. D'Amico, *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism: Beatus Rhenanus Between Conjecture and History*, Berkeley, CA 1988, 21.

¹¹⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 195r–196r, 199r–v, 205v–206r, 208v. Simler attributes the confession to Anastasius of Antioch (sixth century), whom elsewhere he confuses with Anastasius the Sinaite (seventh-eighth centuries) (*Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 205r).

¹¹⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 203r, 205r. In *De conciliis* (fo. 106r), Bullinger appears to conflate the synod of 536 with Constantinople II, but Bibliander correctly distinguishes between the two. See *Bibliander*, *De summa trinitate*, 38.

spectful attitude to tradition does not preclude him from acknowledging discrepancies in his sources, weighing up the merits of rival accounts and, where necessary, rejecting the judgments of previous writers. For example, he is unconvinced by Evagrius's claim that the contrasting theological positions of Justinian and his wife Theodora were part of a pragmatic strategy for managing religious tensions within the empire, preferring to regard their differences as genuine.¹¹⁹ When Nicephorus suggests Arian or Eunomian influences as the source for the doctrine that Christ is ignorant of some things according to his human nature – an error associated with the monophysite group known as the *Agnoetae* – Simler is again sceptical, noting with characteristic doctrinal precision that the Arians denied the omniscience not of Christ's humanity but of the divine Word himself. The report is further discredited for him by Nicephorus's confusion of the sect's purported founder, an Alexandrian deacon called Themistius, with the pagan philosopher of the same name.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Ecclesiastica historia, integram ecclesiae Christi ideam, quantum ad locum, propagationem, persecutionem, tranquillitatem, doctrinam, haereses, ceremonias, gubernationem, schismata, synodos, personas, miracula, martyria, religiones extra ecclesiam et statum imperii politicum attinet, secundum singulas centurias perspicuo ordine complectens*, Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1559–1574 (VD 16 E 218–232, 234–238), vol. 1, α4v–α5r; *Die Anfänge der reformatorischen Geschichtsschreibung: Melanchthon, Sleidan, Flacius und die Magdeburger Zenturien*, ed. Heinz Scheible, Gütersloh 1966, 59–61. See the comments of Enrico Norelli, *The Authority attributed to the Early Church in the Centuries of Magdeburg and the Ecclesiastical Annals of Caesar Baronius*, in: *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, 2 vols, Leiden 1997, vol. 2, 745–774 (748).

¹¹⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 8r. Cf. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius, with the Scholia*, ed. Joseph Bidez and Léon Parmentier, London 1898; PG 86, 2415–2885 [Evag. h.e.] 4,10.

¹²⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 207v–208r: »Caeterum quod Agnoetas ignorantiam quarundam rerum humanae in Christo naturae tribuisse ait, in eo ipsorum sententiam non videtur recte assecutus, cum Ariani a quibus haec Monophysitae acceperunt ipsi Verbo ignorantiam tribuerint, et ipsi Monophysitae non potuerunt humanae naturae Christi ignorantiam tribuere qui unam tantum in Christo naturam agnoscebant, eamque Dei Verbi incarnatam. Et certe si sic tantum uti scribit docuissent hoc nomine non essent reprehendendi. Porro cur Themistium philosophum huius sectae defensorem faciat, non video, cum ille homo gentilis fuerit, qui proculdubio de eo non quaesivit quid nosset aut ignoraret Christus. Liberatus sectae huius auctorem facit Themistium Alexandrinae ecclesiae diaconum, cuius mentio fit in Romana et Constantinopolitana VI Synodo contra Monothelitas.« Cf. *Niceph. h.e.* 18,50; *Liberat.* 19.

In the *Annotationes*, Simler testifies to his interest in contemporary debates on the dating and authenticity of patristic works by rehearsing and, at times, challenging the accepted wisdom on these questions. Thus he rejects the suggestion by Giulio Marziano Rota of an early date for Boethius's *De duabus naturis*, arguing on the basis of internal textual evidence that it is more likely to have been written towards the end of the pontificate of Symmachus (498–514) or during that of Hormisdas (514–523).¹²¹ On this occasion, modern scholarship is in agreement with Simler,¹²² but often the *Annotationes* betray the extent to which he is influenced by confessional bias. In his comments on the *Edictum*, for instance, he rejects Justinian's correspondence with Pope John II, with which the work had been linked by Crabbe, as spurious on doctrinal grounds.¹²³ Simler's summary dismissal of this material may be contrasted with his defence of the by-now traditional attribution of *Contra Eutychetem* to Vigilius of Trent, despite the difficulty of crediting the latter – who, as he himself acknowledges, is reported to have lived during the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius (395–408/423) – with authorship of a text that clearly postdates Chalcedon.¹²⁴ The question is of more than academic importance: Simler's conservative conclusion allows him to stress the particular relevance to his Rhaetian readers of *Contra Eutychetem*, as the work of a writer from an adjacent region.¹²⁵

The theological imperative that drives Simler's work is frequently in tension with the humanist scholarly ideals to which he professes to adhere. Like Bullinger, Simler does not regard the Fathers as beyond reproach. Maxentius is described as writing in a defective style, although his opinions are termed excellent.¹²⁶ The same criticism is directed at Cassian, whom Simler also chides for setting

¹²¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 15v. For Rota's position, see Boethi in omnibus philosophiae partibus opera, a5r.

¹²² Boethius: The Theological Tractates, ed. Hugh Fraser Stewart and Edward Kennard Rand, London 1918 (The Loeb Classical Library 74) [LCL 74], 72f.

¹²³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 8v. On this point, Simler is following Bibliander; see *Bibliander*, *De summa trinitate*, 113–130.

¹²⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 111v. Cf. Cassander's treatment of the issue in *Vigilii opera*, [+*7r]–[+*8r].

¹²⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, *2v.

¹²⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 71v.

too much store by »monastic study, human traditions and monastic exercises«,¹²⁷ and for relying on a faulty Latin translation of scripture, which leads him to misinterpret Mal 3,8 (Vulgate: »Si affiget homo Deum, quia vos affigitis me?«) as a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion.¹²⁸ But Simler takes care to ensure that the Fathers' occasional lapses are not allowed to detract from their authority; errors such as Cassian's, he adds quickly, may be put down to the ancients' zeal in defence of the true faith and ignorance of Hebrew, and are therefore forgivable.¹²⁹ Similarly, he excuses the paucity of citations from the Bible and earlier Fathers in the *Disputatio contra Acephalos* on the grounds that Rusticus was dealing with opponents »who buried the simplicity and purity of Christian teaching beneath sharp and complex disputations, and, when they could not defend their opinions from scripture, took refuge in the authority of human reason«. He even makes a virtue of Rusticus's »scholastic« approach, by stressing its relevance to current Christological disputes, in which many of the same abstruse arguments are rehearsed.¹³⁰

On specific doctrinal issues, Simler is anxious to iron out any apparent discrepancies between patristic and Reformed teaching.

¹²⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 46v: »Interea tamen satis apparet eum nimio monasticis studio, humanis traditionibus et monachorum exercitiis plus quam oportet tribuisse, atque adeo cordis puritatem et vitam aeternam horum meritis adscripsisse.«

¹²⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 48v. Cf. John Cassian, *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium libri VII* (CSEL 17, 233–391; PL, 50, 9–272) [Cassian. c. Nest.] 2,3. Simler points out that the original Hebrew verb, קָבַע, denotes robbery, not crucifixion, and refers the reader to *Zec* 12,10, which can be applied with more confidence to Christ's sufferings.

¹²⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 48v: »condonandum autem hoc est veteribus, qui studio defendendae verae religionis testimonia congerentes saepe ea magis numerarunt quam ponderarunt, et in his nonnunquam ignorantia Hebraeae linguae aberrarunt.«

¹³⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 168r–v: »Porro quod ad rem ipsarum tractationem spectat ea diversa est a superioris seculi scriptoribus, illi enim tantummodo testimoniis sacrae scripturae et veterum patrum adversus haereticos pugnant: at in hoc libro paucissima scripturarum testimonia proferuntur, patrum vero non nulla, plurimum autem rationibus acute excogitis disceptatur. Caeterum hoc non Rustico nostro vitio verti debet, sed potius Acephalis, qui simplicitatem et puritatem Christianae doctrinae, acutis et perplexis disputationibus obruerunt, et quum scripturis sua tueri non possent, ad haec humanae rationis praesidia confugerunt. Laudanda autem est diligentia Rustici nostri qui eorum argumenta studiose observavit, et collegit, et eadem erudite ac solide confutavit. Multa etiam quae nostra aetate disceptatur circa unionem personalem, non inerudite in hoc dialogo explicantur.«

This concern manifests itself with particular force in his remarks on Cassian, whose alleged semi-Pelagianism had made him suspect in the eyes of some Protestants.¹³¹ Simler is aware that Cassian was attacked by Prosper for his stance on the relationship between grace and works, and that other authorities urge caution when reading what he has to say on the subject. However, he insists that such criticisms are restricted to the monastic *Collationes* and, within that work, to the discussion of free will. No orthodox writer has raised objections to *De incarnatione*, which expounds pure doctrine, supported by testimonies from scripture and the Fathers, and responds to the novel and unbiblical teachings of Nestorius with »solid and clear« arguments.¹³² From the work's explicit condemnation of Pelagius, it can reasonably be deduced that by the time of its composition Cassian had returned to a sound understanding of grace. Even in the *Collationes*, where he seems more sympathetic to the Pelagians, he does not sanction »all of their impious and crass opinions concerning the powers of the human will«;¹³³ the most that Simler will concede is that Cassian appears to attach too much importance to free will in one passage of *De incarnatione*, which he duly notes.¹³⁴ Beza, who otherwise welcomed the publication of the *Scripta veterum*, felt that Simler had been too lenient in his treatment of Cassian and should have done

¹³¹ See, for example, *Ecclesiastica historia*, vol. 5, 1332: »Doctrinam de libero arbitrio corruptit, et Pelagii sententiam amplexus est, ac propagavit.«

¹³² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 47v: »Repraehenduntur autem non omnia illius scripta, sed Collationum libri, et in his duntaxat disputatio de libero arbitrio: caeterum libri de Sanctissimo et ineffabili mysterio dominicae incarnationis, a nullo unquam orthodoxorum repraehensi sunt, puram enim in his doctrinam de Incarnatione proponit, et eam scripturarum plurimis testimoniis, et Patrum quoque autoritate diligenter et accurate confirmat: ac Nestorii doctrinam novam et scripturis sanctis dissentaneam esse ostendit, eiusque rationes solide et perspicue confutat.«

¹³³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 47v: »Damnat etiam his libris [De incarnatione] nominatim et graviter Pelagianam haeresim, et Leporium sua opera ad fidem catholicam a Pelagianismo conversum esse ostendit, quod tamen alii Augustino, alii Germano Antisiodorensi tribuunt: cum autem hi libri ab ipso in extrema senecta scripti sint, verisimile sit eum forte Augustini et aliorum scriptis edoctum respicuisse, et sese prorsus a Pelagianis seunxisse, ad quos in collationibus inclinare videbatur, quanquam ne in his quidem omnes earum impias et crassas opiniones de humani arbitrii viribus approbet.«

¹³⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 49v. Cf. Cassian. c. Nest. 5,4.

more to highlight the latter's shortcomings as an exegete, to preserve his readers from similar errors.¹³⁵

Simler's interpretation of the texts collated in the *Scripta veterum* is shaped, above all, by the notion of the *consensus patrum*.¹³⁶ Although he acknowledges some variability in the patristic tradition, and the superiority of some writers to others on particular points,¹³⁷ for the most part he depicts the Fathers as speaking with one voice. Simler's approach, like that of most other sixteenth-century patristic scholars, is fundamentally unhistorical: the works in his anthology are presented as witnesses to timeless doctrinal truths, rather than as products of localised and evolving theological traditions. One of the functions of the *Annotationes* is to sustain this impression of continuity, by reconciling any seemingly aberrant statements by the Fathers with the settled Christological formulas of a later period. For example, when Fulgentius speaks of the Word assuming a man, instead of using the preferred term »a human nature«, by this he means »not a separately subsisting hypostasis of a man but a nature of human flesh and soul taken up by the Word«. Simler notes that the same language is to be found in other ancient writers, »especially those who lived before Nestorius«, the obvious implication being that it has become suspect only because of its subsequent misuse by the heresiarch.¹³⁸ Although he is slightly embarrassed by one passage in Cassian's *De incarnatione* that appears to anticipate Eutyches (and Schwenckfeld) by preaching the transformation of Christ's flesh into a »spiritual substance«, he is sure that it can be interpreted on orthodox lines, as

¹³⁵ Beza to Simler, 19 September 1571 (CTB 12, 186 [no. 861]).

¹³⁶ On the importance of this concept for the Reformed, see Irene Dingel, *Das Streben nach einem »consensus orthodoxus« mit den Vätern in der Abendmahlsdiskussion des späten 16. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Steinmetz, Patristik*, 181–204.

¹³⁷ See, for example, *Simler, Scripta veterum*, 71v: »Argumentum Nestorianum quod hic [John Maxentius, *Dialogi duo contra Nestorianos* (CCSL 85A, 49–110; ACO¹ 4.2, 14–44; PG 86(1), 115–158) 1,3] tractatur, Mariam non geniisse Deum, quia quod nascitur eiusdem substantiae sit cum eo ex quo nascitur, tractatur etiam a Cassiano lib. 7 cap. 2 sed paulo aliter: is enim negat propositionem hanc, natiuitas debet esse hominiosius parienti: mihi videtur accuratius haec quaestio tractari a Maxentio.«

¹³⁸ *Simler, Scripta veterum*, 139v: »Fulgentius noster saepe hominem susceptum dicit libro tertio: nomine hoc non separatim subsistentem hominis hypostasim intelligens, sed naturam humanae carnis atque animae a verbo susceptam. Usi sunt multi veterum hac phrasi, praesertim qui ante Nestorium vixere.«

referring to the assumption of a human nature by the Word. Similarly, when Cassian attributes one power and substance to Christ, it is necessary to understand *substantia* as a synonym for *persona*, rather than *natura*, »as elsewhere among the ancients«, if Cassian is to be harmonised with other writers of the time and saved from condemnation by Chalcedon, Constantinople II and Constantinople III – for Simler, an unthinkable conclusion.¹³⁹ The idea of a doctrinally uniform patristic corpus, set in clear and unequivocal opposition to those designated as heretics in ecclesiastical tradition, is carried over from the *Annotationes* into the *Narratio*, where it underpins Simler’s account of the Nestorian and monophysite schisms.

3. The »Narratio« I: the Nestorian controversy

3.1 Overview

The *Narratio* is prefaced by a brief account of the heresies that afflicted the church during the first four centuries of its existence. Simler assigns these early dissidents to several distinct camps. The first group, represented by Carpocrates, Cerinthus and »Ebion«,¹⁴⁰ was made up of those who denied both Christ’s divinity and the virgin birth. A second faction – the two Theodoti, Paul of Samo-

¹³⁹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 49r–v: »Porro quod dicit naturam carnis in spiritualem translata esse substantiam non de natura carnis abolita intelligendum est, aut eius proprietatibus sublati, sed de assumptione carnis a Verbo, illam enim abolitionem et Chalcedonia synodus et veteres omnes quibus Cassianus consentit aperte damnant. Sic cum nomen humanitatis negat esse in Christo non aufert illi substantiam carnis nostrae, cum aperte dicat veram Incarnationem confitentem contra Martionem: sed ut ita explicat sese, infirmitatem omnem corpoream assumptam docet in persona Christi, itaque cum gloria coelesti exornata sit caro Christi, eam in illo praecipue respiciendam. Cum autem unam virtutem et unam substantiam Christo tribuit, nisi hoc dicamus non de natura accipiendum, sed substantiae nomen pro personae nomine positum esse, ut alibi apud veteres, non poterimus Cassianum conciliare cum aliis sui temporis scriptoribus, et a damnatione Chalcedoniae quintae et sextae synodi eximere.« Cf. Cassian. c. Nest. 3,3.

¹⁴⁰ Tertullian (*De praescriptione haereticorum* [CCSL 1, 187–224; PL, 2, 9–74] 33), supported by Jerome, Epiphanius and others, identifies Ebion as the eponymous founder of the Jewish-Christian sect known as the Ebionites, which probably derived its name from the Hebrew for »poor« (עֲבִיּוֹן).

sata and Photinus – accepted the doctrine of the virgin birth, while continuing to reject Jesus’s godhead. The third group comprised the Docetists and Gnostics such as Basilides, Valentinus, Cerdon, Marcian and Mani, who denied the true humanity of Christ. Fourth, there were the Patripassians Praxeas, Victorinus, Sabellius and Noetus, who erased the personal distinction between the Father and the Son within the Godhead. They were followed by Arius, who transformed Christ into a »created god«, and finally, by Arianism’s later offshoots, the Homoiousians, Anomoeans and Macedonians. Under the orthodox Emperor Theodosius I (379–395), peace was at last restored to the church, but the protracted Arian controversy had already prepared the ground for further dissension. This manifested itself as the heresies of Pelagius in the west and Nestorius and Eutyches in the east, where numerous monophysite factions arose to plague the empire in the centuries preceding the rise of Islam.¹⁴¹

Having thus set the scene, Simler turns his attention to the first of the major fifth-century Christological heresies, Nestorianism. Chapter 1 describes Nestorius’s appointment as bishop of Constantinople and the opening phase of the Nestorian controversy, the catalyst for which was the refusal of Nestorius and his fellow-Syrian Anastasius to recognise the Virgin as *theotokos* (»God-bearer«). Chapter 2 charts the escalating conflict between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria, from their initial exchange of letters through to Nestorius’s condemnation at the Council of Ephesus (22 June 431), prior to the arrival of the Syrian delegation led by John of Antioch. In chapter 3, Simler describes John’s hostile reaction to the council’s decision, his establishment of a rival »conciliabulum« of eastern bishops, which anathematised Cyril, and the eventual resolution of the schism between Antioch and Alexandria in the so-called Formula of Reunion (433). Chapter 4 gives an account of Nestorius’s miserable death in exile and examines the continuing tensions between supporters and opponents of Cyril, especially in Syria. Simler concludes his discussion of Nestorianism with three doctrinal chapters: an exposition of Cyril’s *Twelve Anathematisms*, which he views as pivotal to the controversy;

¹⁴¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 169r–v.

an analysis of Nestorius's teachings, set against the true doctrine of the incarnation preached by Cyril and other Fathers; and a chapter on the alleged revival of Nestorianism in his own day.

3.2 Nestorius

Nestorianism was something of a raw nerve for the Zurichers, who, from Zwingli's time onwards, had been charged by their Lutheran opponents with breathing new life into this ancient error.¹⁴² In *De conciliis* and his works against Brenz, Bullinger rejected any suggestion of a link between the Zurich church and Nestorius, whom he condemned in the strongest possible terms. The *antistes* contrasted Nestorius's teaching that the Word is present in the man Christ by »partnership [...] or association« (»assistentiam [...] seu societatem«) with the orthodox doctrine of the hypostatic union. Nestorianism, he argued, amounts to a denial of Christ's true divinity, as it erases the distinction between Christ and other holy men in whom God's presence was manifested.¹⁴³ Bullinger's view of Nestorius as an adoptionist, in the tradition of Paul of Samosata and Photinus, was shared by most other Reformed writers. Beza, for example, describes Nestorius as emerging from the same »pit of hell« as Arius to deprive the incarnate Christ of his divinity and replace the man-God with a divinised man.¹⁴⁴

In the *Narratio*, Simler provides a much more detailed and multifaceted account of Nestorianism, which nonetheless serves to reinforce the traditional characterisation of Nestorius as a »Samosatenian«. Following the Greek church historians, he denounces Nestorius as a »frivolous, arrogant and vainglorious man« (»homo [...] levis et arrogans vanae gloriae appetens«) – a populist preacher who carried favour with the multitude by feigning an ascetic lifestyle.¹⁴⁵ However, he is concerned less about the heresiarch's

¹⁴² For examples, see *Bergjan*, Bullinger, 144, n. 47.

¹⁴³ *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 96v; *Responsio*, 58r–v.

¹⁴⁴ CTB 8, 236.

¹⁴⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 170r: »Cum autem illi munus docendi populum commissum fuisset, mox ostendit qualis postea tota vita futurus esset, neque enim secutus est generosum dicendi genus, quo homines ad salutem utiliter erudire posset, sed omnia sua ad populi delectationem direxit, inanes plausus captando: neque dicendo tantum, sed vita et habitu ad fictam sanctimoniam composito, ingens sui desiderium et admi-

personal shortcomings than about the damaging effects of his doctrine. Simler is aware that the ancients differ in their assessment of Nestorius's heresy. Despite his anti-monophysite orientation, Liberatus takes a strongly negative view of Nestorius, whom he condemns as a follower of Paul of Samosata; this judgment is supported by Cassian, who traces Nestorius's error back to the Ebionites. Socrates and Vigilius, by contrast, reject the labelling of Nestorius as an adoptionist, preferring to attribute his errors to ignorance of the Fathers.¹⁴⁶ Simler does not dismiss this alternative view out of hand. As an authority on antitrinitarianism, he knows that the teachings of Nestorius, who confessed the Trinity and recognised the distinct personality of the Logos, cannot simply be conflated with the adoptionist monarchianism of Paul of Samosata, and he is even aware of a statement by Nestorius condemning Paul. Instead, he proposes a more subtle connection between the two heresies: namely, that they both tend towards the same end, abolition of »the true knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ«. Although Nestorius may not have meant to cast doubt on Christ's divinity, that was clearly Satan's intention in allowing his error to take root.¹⁴⁷

rationem apud vulgus excitare studebat, indutus veste fusca, tristis incedens, strepitus forensis declinans, corporis pallore ut continens videretur aucupans, libris domi ut plurimum intendens, et in ocio et quiete secum versans et habitans. Hoc habitu, et hac simulatione multos inescans, magnam aetatis suae partem peregit, ut Christianus videatur magis quam ut esset persequens, et Christi gloriae suam praeferens.« Cf. *Socrates*, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. Günther Christian Hansen, Berlin, 1995; PG 67, 30–842 [Socr. h. e.] 7,29; Niceph. h. e. 14,31.

¹⁴⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 170v–171r. Cf. *Liberat.* 2–4; *Cassian. c. Nest.* 1,2; *Socr. h. e.* 7,32; *Vigil. Thap. c. Eutychn.* 5,18.

¹⁴⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171r: »Utrique [Socrates and Vigilius] in eo quod inter Samosateno et Nestorii doctrinam distinguit libenter assentior: Photinus enim et Samosateno cum Sabellio ut naturam Deitatis ita personam quoque unam professi sunt, et negarunt verbum seu filium Dei ab aeterno suam habuisse subsistentiam et personam, Christum quidem ex virgine natum, filium Deum propter conceptum e sacro spiritu fatebantur, sed in eo non nisi humanam naturam agnoscebant, eumque parem caeteris hominibus, tantum amplitudine donorum et gratiae illis antecellere: ab his ergo Nestorius in eo differt quod Trinitatem cum orthodoxis confitetur, et λόγον agnoscit ὑφιστάμενον: sed si reliqua eius dogmata spectemus prorsus in eundem finem cum Samosateno tendunt, qui si non ipsi Nestorio, Satanae tamen proculdubio in his haeresibus spargendis fuit propositus, ut aboleatur vera agnitio Servatoris nostri Iesu Christi.«

The initial focus of the dispute between Nestorius and Cyril was the term *theotokos*, long established in popular piety as a honorific for the Virgin but rejected by Nestorius, who proposed *christotokos* in its stead. Yet Simler insists that it would be wrong to dismiss the controversy as merely a »quarrel about words«. The fact that Nestorius was not received back into the church even after dropping his opposition to the *theotokos* title shows that far more important issues were at stake: whether Jesus Christ is truly God, or whether the Word is united to him only by association; how Christ is to be worshipped and invoked in prayer; in what way he acts as our high priest and mediator; and how we were saved by his passion and death.¹⁴⁸ Although in his surviving writings Nestorius appears to affirm that Christ is God and man in one person, it is clear that he postulated the existence of two individuals (»alius et alius«, rather than »aliud et aliud«) in Christ: the divine Word, and the man Jesus, in whom the Word dwells »as in a temple« (»tanquam templo«).¹⁴⁹ In Nestorius's theology, there is no »special union of the Word with the flesh« (»peculiarem unionem Verbi cum carne«); Jesus is not the true God but »a God-bearing man« (»Deiferum hominem«), resembling the prophets. He is termed God and the Son of God only by association with the Word, just as Moses was designated God to Pharaoh, and his worship is comparable to the honour paid to a statue of the emperor, on account of the one whom it represents.¹⁵⁰ Nestorius's total rejection of

¹⁴⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171r: »Neque enim tantum λογομαχία fuit de nomine Dei genitricis, an beata virgo dici debeat Deipara, aut potius Christipara, quamvis haec fuerit occasio, et forte initio (ut dixi) non tam rebus quam verbis inter se dissenserint, controversia fuit de maximis rebus et mysteriis ad salutem nostram pertinentibus, an Iesus Christus conceptus ex spiritu sancto et natus ex virgine sit Deus, an vero Deus Verbum tantum per assistentiam et societatem illi adsit, ut Prophetis et Apostolis, an sint duo filii Deus Verbum et Iesus ex virgine natus: an sit adoratione una adorandus, et quomodo sit invocandus: Quomodo sit pontifex et mediator noster: quomodo passione et morte sua nos redemerit.«

¹⁴⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171r, 186v. To support this claim, Simler quotes extensively from the collection of statements from Nestorius's sermons submitted to the Council of Ephesus by Cyril (*ibid.*, 172v–173r). On these excerpts, see Friedrich *Loofs*, *Nestoriana: Die Fragmente des Nestorius*, Halle 1905, 8. They were published in Crabbe's edition of conciliar »acta« (*Concilia omnia, tam generalia, quam particularia*, ccccxliiir–cccxcliv; see *Loofs*, *Nestoriana*, 13) and in the Basel Latin edition of Cyril's works (*Operum divi Cyrilli*, 4, 298–303).

¹⁵⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 186v–187r.

»theopaschite« language and the *communicatio idiomatum* confirms his departure from orthodoxy. If he had acknowledged the existence of a single subject in Christ truly, rather than »in words«, he would have had no difficulty accepting that birth, suffering and death can be predicated of the Word, by virtue of his assumption of a human nature.¹⁵¹ Instead, he reduced Christ's humanity to the status of a »garment« (»vestimentum«) donned by the second person of the Trinity.¹⁵²

3.3 Theodore of Mopsuestia

Simler's harsh verdict on Nestorius may be contrasted with his treatment of the wider Antiochene theological tradition, which he was anxious to reclaim for orthodoxy. Whereas Nestorius is judged (and found wanting) against the exacting Christological standards established at Chalcedon and subsequent ecumenical councils, his predecessor Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428) is dealt with in a much more lenient fashion. Many ancient writers denounced Theodore as »Nestorius's teacher«; in this connection, Simler points to the comments of Maxentius and Justinian and, especially, to the *acta* of Constantinople II, which cite Cyril, Proclus and Hesychius of Jerusalem in opposition to the Cilician bish-

¹⁵¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171v–172r: »Cum tamen scripturae doceant filium Dei Deum Verbum natum passum et mortuum carne, non quod divinitas ex homine nascatur, patiatur aut moriatur, sed quod haec persona quae ex virgine nata, et passa, et mortua est; Iesus inquam Nazareus, non sit homo merus, sed verus et natura Deus, cui non ita est associata divinitas ut sanctis hominibus qui templum Dei sunt, sed Deus Verbum ita carnem assumpsit, ut sit unum individuum Verbum et caro: sustentante Verbo carnem, ut absque Verbo unita nunquam fuerit, aut futura sit caro haec: itaque et quae Verbi et quae carnis sunt, de hoc individuo dicuntur, Christus enim est unus et idem Deus et homo, Dei filius et hominis filius: aeternus, et definito tempore Bethlehemi natus: attamen scripturae docent nos ea quae ita praedicantur discernere, ut naturae cuique tribuamus quod suum est, quamvis in concreto id personae tribuatur: Christus natus est ex semine David: haec persona cum sit Deus recte dicitur Deum natum esse ex semine David secundum carnem. Nestorius vero iudicans idem esse dicere Deum et natum et mortuum, et divinitatem natam et mortuam, has locutiones repudiavit, et tribuit carni haec quae secundum carnem de Christo dicuntur, non in una persona naturas et actiones earum distinguens, sed prorsus naturas separans et cuique suam separatim tribuens hypostasim, eas rursus nomine et dignitate coniungebat, et ita quamvis videri nollet duos Christos et filios faciebat.«

¹⁵² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 187r.

op.¹⁵³ However, the issue of Theodore's orthodoxy is rendered more problematic by the many contrasting testimonies (in Theodore's *Ecclesiastical History*, in Liberatus and in the correspondence of John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus) to Theodore's wisdom and piety, and by the fact that his orthodoxy was upheld at Chalcedon.¹⁵⁴ Simler accepts that, if Theodore wrote the things attributed to him at Constantinople II, his theology is rightly to be condemned, but he is prepared to give credence to Liberatus's report that statements in Theodore's works were »exaggerated« either by monophysites seeking to discredit him or by Nestorians who wished to enlist him among their supporters.¹⁵⁵ In the end, Simler delivers a mixed verdict on Theodore, as »a man of great learning and wisdom who was at fault here and there in his writings and sowed the seeds for Nestorianism«. In combating the errors of those who failed to recognise the distinction of natures in Christ, Theodore »separated [the two natures], or at least appeared to separate them and to preach two Christs instead of one«; his status is comparable to that of another orthodox writer, Dionysius of Alexandria (third century), whose pointed formulations against Sabellianism subsequently helped pave the way for Arius.¹⁵⁶ Simler rejects the labelling of Theodore as a sectarian because, unlike Nestorius, he did not defend his errors obstinately and showed a genuine willingness to accept correction. Although Simler shies away from repudiating the Fifth Ecumenical Council's con-

¹⁵³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171r–v.

¹⁵⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 9v, 171v.

¹⁵⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 9v.

¹⁵⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171v: »Quod si mihi licet meas coniecturas in medium proferre, iudico Theodorum hunc excellenti doctrina et sapientia virum fuisse, eum tamen alicubi in scriptis suis aberasse et semina Nestorianae doctrinae sparsisse, libenter Patribus quintae synodi credo: de hoc autem eius errore idem iudico quod Basilius de Dionysio Alexandrino cuius scripta, seminarium Arianismi quidam fuisse censebant [...] Ex his igitur laudibus quas illi tribuunt qui eodem cum ipso tempore vixerunt, iudico virum bonum fuisse, ideoque non destinata animi malitia hos errores sparsisse: sed nimio studio contradicendi Apollinari et aliis qui veritatem humanae naturae non integram in Christo servabant, et unam duntaxat in eo naturam agnoscebant, dum naturas in Christo distinguendas esse urget, easdem quoque separavit, vel saltem separare visus est, et duos Christos pro uno praedicare.« In the Polish trinitarian controversy, the example of Dionysius was used by Simler and other Zurich divines to show how overzealous defence of one aspect of true doctrine can itself give rise to heresy. See *Taplin*, *Italian Reformers*, 196f.

demnation of Theodore, he is clearly ill at ease with it. In the *Annotationes* on Justinian's *Edictum*, which defends the practice of anathematising individuals after their deaths, he observes that this opinion was not universal among Justinian's contemporaries and commends the Council of Nicaea on condemning not Arius himself, but only his teachings.¹⁵⁷ While acknowledging Theodore's flaws, Simler goes to considerable lengths to retain him within the ranks of the Fathers, partly out of a genuine irenicism that he is keen to see imitated in his own day, and partly because he wishes to minimise the points of difference between the Antiochene Christology represented by Theodore and the rival Alexandrian school of Cyril. Theodore's errors come to be seen not as evidence of heresy, but as unfortunate by-products of his eagerness to defend dyophysite orthodoxy. A comparison may be drawn between Simler's judgment on Theodore, who was condemned posthumously on the basis of statements that did not reflect the full range of his thought, and his subsequent comments regarding Cyril, whose Christology he sees as likewise prone to manipulation by both opponents and supporters.

3.4 Theodoret, Cyril and the »consensus patrum«

To some extent, Simler's generous assessment of Theodore represents a departure from the Zurich church's previous line; in *De conciliis*, Bullinger endorses the received view of the bishop of Mopsuestia as a Nestorian with adoptionist views.¹⁵⁸ However, in the same work he commends other Antiochene churchmen – Acacius of Beroea, Paul of Emesa and even Ibas of Edessa, whose letter to Maris was proscribed at Constantinople II – for their »piety and learning« (»pietate et doctrina«).¹⁵⁹ The most influential Antiochene theologian of the fifth century, Theodoret of Cyrillus (393-c. 460), was held in particularly high regard by the Zurichers on

¹⁵⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 10r. Cf. Joachim *Camerarius*, *Chronologia secundum Graecorum rationem temporibus expositis*, autore Nicephoro archiepiscopo Constantinopolis [...] Addita est Narratio [...] de Synodo Nicaena, nunc denuo edita[...], Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1561 (VD 16 N 1446), 106.

¹⁵⁸ *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 105v–106r.

¹⁵⁹ *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 97v.

account of his strong dyophysitism. Bullinger owned a copy of the 1549 Basel edition of Theodoret's *Eranistes*, which he cites in the *Decades* against ubiquitarianism and on the proper understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*;¹⁶⁰ the Reformed protagonist in Vermigli's *Dialogus*, Orothetes, also refers repeatedly to the same work.¹⁶¹ Against Brenz and other Lutherans, who tended to be suspicious of Theodoret, the Zurichers emphasised the value of his works.¹⁶² Simler praises Theodoret for his »piety, learning and eloquence«, describing him as well versed in scripture and the Fathers, and unsurpassed among the Greeks as a heresiologist.¹⁶³ In the *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, he vigorously defends Theodoret against his detractors, pointing out that he both refuted Nestorianism in his works and anathematised Nestorius personally at Chalcedon, where he was restored to the see of which he had been unjustly deprived at the Second Council of Ephesus.¹⁶⁴

The fact that this defence was necessary is indicative of Theodoret's precarious status within the patristic canon. As Simler was aware, Theodoret had been prominent within the opposition to Cyril at Ephesus and had penned a refutation of the *Twelve Anathematisms*, which had been condemned as heretical at Constantinople II. In defending Theodoret, he had no wish to cast aspersions on Cyril, traditionally regarded as the champion of the orthodox faith against Nestorianism; on the contrary, the *Narratio* forms part of a wider Reformed campaign to recapture Cyril from Lutheran writers such as Brenz and Martin Chemnitz, who regarded him as the chief patristic authority for their view of Christ. Simler's task was to account for the schism between Cyril's Alex-

¹⁶⁰ *Leu/Weidmann*, Heinrich Bullingers Privatbibliothek, 154; HBS 4, 527f., 537f.

¹⁶¹ *Vermigli*, *Dialogus*, 5r-v, 8r-9r, 32r, 36v-7r, 40r, 41r-v.

¹⁶² See *Bullinger*, *Fundamentum firmum*, 80r-83v. For the contrasting Lutheran view, see *Mahlmann*, *Die christologischen Schriften*, 392, 434-446, and *Brandy*, *Brenz*, 140.

¹⁶³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 176r: »scripta illius ostendunt, vir fuit magnus pietate, doctrina, eloquentia, ut merito in Theologia et rebus sacris inter primos locum obtineat: quando vix alius est, e Graecis praesertim Theologis, qui rationibus et scripturarum testimoniis fortius haereticos impugnet et prosternat: nullus vero illo totius antiquitatis cognitione instructor, et qui sua omnia tot Patrum et veteris ecclesiae testimoniis confirmet, id quod legenti dialogos ipsius adversus Eutychianos [the »Eranistes«], et Haeticorum fabularum compendium, aliaque eius scripta manifestum est.«

¹⁶⁴ *Simler*, *Responsio ad Stancari librum*, 39v.

andrian faction, and Theodoret and his fellow orientals, in a way that allowed him to vindicate the orthodoxy of both sides and, in so doing, to preserve intact the notion of a *consensus patrum* on Christological issues.

In his works dealing with the subject, Bullinger puts the quarrel between Cyril and the Antiochenes down to a misunderstanding – Theodoret’s belief that, in the *Twelve Anathematisms*, Cyril was seeking to blur the boundaries between the two natures of Christ.¹⁶⁵ Because the dispute related to words, not substance, it was quickly resolved once Cyril had had the opportunity to explain the difference between his assertion that God suffered »in the flesh« and the views of the fourth-century heretic Apollinaris of Laodicea, who made Christ’s divinity the direct subject of the passion. Bullinger portrays the Ephesian schism as little more than a temporary local difficulty; Theodoret and Cyril are said to have been at odds for only »for a short time«, with Cyril’s clarification of his teaching effecting a full and lasting reconciliation between them.¹⁶⁶ Due to his more extensive knowledge of the sources, Simler is unable to dismiss the conflict quite so easily. In the *Narratio*, he acknowledges that the church was split for three years and chronicles in detail the mutual anathemas and political manoeuvrings of the rival parties both at Ephesus and following the council, as they strove to win imperial backing for their position.¹⁶⁷ Ultimately, however, his explanation of the causes of the schism is identical to Bullinger’s. Simler accepts that the controversy centred on doctrinal issues, rather than just the question of Nestorius’s dismissal, but he maintains that personal animosity between those involved clouded their judgment, making it impossible for them to deal fairly with their opponents.¹⁶⁸ This led the Syrian bishops to charge Cyril with Apollinarianism and Arianism, only to be accused in turn of preaching two Christs. Simler sees in the heated

¹⁶⁵ Bullinger, *De conciliis*, 98r; *Bergjan*, Bullinger, 152–154.

¹⁶⁶ Bullinger, *Fundamentum firmum*, 81v.

¹⁶⁷ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 175v. Cf. *Liberat.* 6; *Niceph. h.e.* 14,35.

¹⁶⁸ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 175v–176r: »Ac tum quantum iudico scriptis illis certatum est, quorum aliqua hodie quoque extant: etenim non tantum inter eos controversia fuit de depositione Nestorii, sed de ipsis quoque dogmatibus disceptarunt: quamvis animorum alienatio et offensae aliunde ortae posterioris controversiae causae fuisse videantur, quod minus dextre exacerbatis animis invicem sua dicta interpretarentur.«

exchanges between the two factions an example of the Fathers' tendency to allow their emotions to get the better of them; his praise for Cyril, in particular, is tempered by a recognition of the Alexandrian's personal flaws, evidenced by his involvement earlier in his career in unsavoury episodes such as the murder of the Platonic philosopher Hypatia.¹⁶⁹ But while deploring the polemical tone of the controversy, Simler finds reasons to justify the stances adopted by both sides, on the basis of their respective theological concerns. The robust, even provocative, way in which Cyril asserts the unity of Christ's person is understandable, given that he was opposing the grave errors of Nestorius. By the same token, Theodoret and the other eastern bishops can be excused for taking offence at some of the more »exaggerated« formulations in the *Twelve Anathematisms*, as »they were not yet clear about Cyril's meaning« and feared – rightly – that his phraseology was susceptible to abuse by followers of Apollinaris, who were well represented in Syria.¹⁷⁰

In chapter 5 of the *Narratio*, Simler argues that the specific criticisms directed against the Anathematisms stemmed from a misreading of Cyril; essentially, he argues, Theodoret and his colleagues were tilting at windmills, attributing to the Alexandrian views that he did not in fact hold. For example, they understood the statement in Cyril's first anathematism that the Word was »born or made in the flesh« to be equivalent to saying, with Apollinaris, that the Word was »converted« into flesh, yet Cyril explicitly rules

¹⁶⁹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 176r–v: »Ut autem libere quod sentiam in medium proferam, humani aliquid in hac causa boni illi Patres passi sunt, et affectibus aliquatenus superati sunt, ac arbitror mihi assensuros omnes qui paulo attentius totam huius schismatis historiam expenderit: et ea quoque consideraverint quae de Cyrillo memoriae mandata sunt ab ecclesiasticae historiae scriptoribus, de eius ad episcopatum electione, et rebus adversus Iudaeos, Orestem urbis praefectum, et Hypatiam philosopham gestis. Sed cum plurima ipsius Cyrilli et Theodoreti scripta extant, docta et laboriosa, et certe ecclesiae admodum utilia, multum nos illis debere ingenue confitendum est, de actis tamen eorum et de hoc dissidio, homines eos nobis iudicare liceat«. Cf. *Camerarius*, *Chronologia*, 144.

¹⁷⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 176r: »Quia enim illi certamen erat cum Nestorio diserpente naturas, vehementior forte fuit in quibusdam locutionibus exaggerandis: quare non mirum est Theodoretum, cum aliis plurimis qui mentem Cyrilli nondum perspectam habebant, his offensum fuisse.« Cf. HBBW 11, 266f. (no. 1550); Vermigli, *Dialogus*, 34r–36r.

out this interpretation.¹⁷¹ Theodoret's opposition to the term hypostatic union (ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν), which Cyril uses to describe the bond between Christ's divinity and humanity, is also misconceived: for Theodoret, the term signifies »something mixed or composite«, but Cyril's intention is merely to underline the closeness of the union between the Word and the human nature that he has assumed, »without any conversion and confusion«, in the incarnation.¹⁷² Similarly, when in his third anathematism Cyril speaks of a »natural union« (ἔνωσις κατὰ φύσιν) between the Word and flesh in Christ, he means only that they constitute a »true« union, like the union of body and soul in man, in which each nature retains its distinct qualities, as opposed to the affective or associational union proposed by Nestorius.¹⁷³ The orientals are right to stress the importance of distinguishing between scriptural passages that apply to Christ's divinity and others that relate to his human nature – failure to do so properly could open the door to Arianism – but this »dispensatio« is not questioned by Cyril, as they maintain. Cyril's aim is merely to make clear that all such »voces« relate to the single person of the incarnate Word; once again, the difference between the two sides vanishes on closer scrutiny.¹⁷⁴ Cyril is also at one with Theodoret on the question of

¹⁷¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 180r: »Theodoreto respondit eum frustra laborare in eo probando Verbum esse immutabile ideoque non conversum in carnem, quoniam non asserat mutationem verbi, neque hoc pugnare cum suo Anathematismo, debuisse eum si vellet impugnare suum anathematismo aperte negare Emanuelem esse verum Deum, et sanctam Virginem esse Dei genitricem.« Cf. *Cyril of Alexandria*, *Apologeticus contra Theodoretum pro duodecim capitibus* (PG 76, 385–452) [Cyr. apol. Thdt.] c. 394–398.

¹⁷² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 180v: »Porro Theodoreto nomen Unionis secundum subsistentiam improbatum tanquam novum, et extraneum a scripturis divinis, et patribus qui has interpretati sunt. Deinde videtur temperaturam aut misturam quondam significare, quam sequitur confusio quae naturarum proprietates abolet. Verum Cyrillus respondet se nomine unionis καθ' ὑπόστασιν usum ad destruendam haeresim Nestorii nativitatem Verbi secundum carnem negantis, ac nihil aliud hoc nomine significare voluisse, quam Verbi naturam, hoc est subsistentiam, quae est ipsum Verbum, humanae naturae vere unitum esse citra ullam conversionem et confusionem, ut unus intelligatur et sit Christus, idem Deus et homo.« Cf. *Cyr. apol. Thdt.* c. 399–402.

¹⁷³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 181r–v: »Cum autem naturale idem hic sit quod vere, nulla statuitur confusio, sed duarum dissimilium rerum Deitatis et humanitatis vera unio, in unum Christum.« Cf. *Cyril of Alexandria*, *Apologeticus pro duodecim capitibus adversus orientales episcopos* (PG 76, 315–386) [Cyr. apol. orient.] c. 327–332; *Cyr. apol. Thdt.* c. 403–410. See also *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 187v.

¹⁷⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 182r: »Quod autem adversarii Cyrillo sua verba obiiciunt

God's impassibility. His »theopaschitism«, as expressed in the twelfth anathematism, differs profoundly from that of later monophysites, for Cyril makes clear that the Word suffered »in the flesh«, rather than in his divinity, and that the passion is attributed to him »by dispensational appropriation«. ¹⁷⁵ In the same way, the superficial similarities between Theodoret's language – for example, his use of the term *theophoros* for Jesus – and that of Nestorius mask his underlying agreement with Cyril on the issue of Christ's unity. Whereas Nestorius proposes a twofold worship of Christ, first as God and secondly as his visible image in the man Jesus, both Cyril and Theodoret teach that Christ is to be adored singly, as the one incarnate Word. ¹⁷⁶

In modern patristic scholarship, it is usual to assign Cyril and Theodoret to distinct and, in some respects, opposing Christological traditions: the »schools« of Alexandria and Antioch. Both Theodoret and Nestorius were products of the Antiochene school, which originally posited »two subjects« in Christ; although Theodoret modified his terminology after Ephesus to bring it more into line with Cyril's language, it has recently been argued that he remained a crypto-Nestorian until the end of his life. ¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Cyril owed more to Apollinaris – including the concept of »natural« union and the formula »one incarnate nature of God the Word« (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη) – than he cared to admit. ¹⁷⁸ For Simler, however, there is no Alexandrian or Antiochene tradition, only the time-honoured orthodoxy of the church

quasi sibi contradicat, his ipsis confirmant anathematismum, nam illis affirmat summam unionem servandam, quod ipsi quoque dicunt, unio autem summa non admittit dualitatem aut sectionem: quod autem addit secundum unitarum naturarum virtutem uni filio accommodanda quae dicuntur, et quod adversarii dicunt unamquamque vocem de Christo dictam exponendam esse, recte dictum est, et anathematismo non repugnat.« Cf. Cyr. apol. orient. c. 331–342.

¹⁷⁵ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 186r: »Quando igitur Verbum dicitur carne pati, non ipsum in propria natura intelligitur pati, sed quia proprium eius est sanctum corpus, ideo eius dicuntur carnis passiones secundum dispensativam appropriationem.« Cf. Cyr. apol. orient. c. 379–382.

¹⁷⁶ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 183v–184r.

¹⁷⁷ Paul B. Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, Oxford 2007, 285.

¹⁷⁸ István Pásztori-Kupaň, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, Abingdon 2006, 10; John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1977, 319.

and heretical divergences from it. The Fathers may use different terms – *conversio*, *coniunctio*, *commixtio* or *compositio* – to describe the ability of God’s substance to assume an extraneous nature without itself being altered, but all relate to the same process.¹⁷⁹ The quarrel between Alexandria and Antioch was a dispute about terminology, not substance, aggravated by personal rivalries. Once the channels of communication between Cyril and John of Antioch had been reopened, their schism was swiftly brought to an end, for it became apparent to both patriarchs that, fundamentally, they professed the same faith.¹⁸⁰ As their reconciliation showed, the true dividing line ran not between Antioch and Alexandria, but between the orthodox, both Syrian and Egyptian, and Nestorius, who asserted the unity of Christ’s person »in words« but denied its reality.

In fact, the Formula of Reunion was successful only in papering over the cracks between the Cyrilline and Antiochene factions in the eastern church, which remained at loggerheads throughout the 430s and 440s.¹⁸¹ In the *Narratio*, however, this conflict is subtly reconfigured as a struggle between the orthodox mainstream and certain »quarrelsome and restless men« who, dismayed by the restoration of ecclesiastical concord, strove once again to divide the episcopate.¹⁸² Following his agreement with John, Cyril was criticised in some quarters for conceding too much to the Antiochenes, while Nestorius’s allies began to circulate forged letters from pro-

¹⁷⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 187v. Simler attributes most apparent disagreements between the Fathers to differences in their use of technical vocabulary. He illustrates the point with reference to the term »substantia«, which in Latin writers may denote either ὑπόστασις (as in Boethius) or οὐσία. See *ibid.*, 16r: »Duo autem ex his nominibus cum non eodem modo ab omnibus accipiantur hypostasis et substantia, factum est ut saepe inter se dissentire videantur qui re ipsa consentiunt. Boetho enim et multis aliis Individuum tantum substantia nominatur, ideo illae sunt tres in Deo substantiae: aliis substantia est οὐσία et hi unam in Deo substantiam profitentur, et tres subsistantias, ita enim hypostases interpretantur«. Cf. Anicius Manlius Severinus *Boethius*, *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi adversus Eutychem et Nestorium* (PL 64, 1337–54; LCL 74, 72–129) [Boeth. c. Eutychem.] 2–3.

¹⁸⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 176v–177r.

¹⁸¹ R. V. *Sellers*, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*, London 1953, 20–56.

¹⁸² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 178r: »Omnino autem homines turbulenti et inquieti quibus dolebat pacem in ecclesia factum esse, hoc sategabant ut episcopi denuo inter se committerentur.«

minent churchmen demanding his rehabilitation. But Cyril did not resile from the doctrinal consensus that had been reached; instead, in letters to Acacius of Melitene and Eulogius, presbyter of Constantinople, he endorsed the dyophysite language favoured by the eastern bishops.¹⁸³ Simler is careful to downplay Cyril's role in the campaign by Acacius and another Syrian bishop, Rabbula of Edessa, to suppress the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus, which were being disseminated and translated by followers of Nestorius in order to give his innovations a veneer of respectability; instead, he portrays the triumvirate of Cyril, John of Antioch and Proclus of Constantinople as forming a united front against both Nestorians and the extreme wing of Cyril's own party. Proclus's Tome, which denounced propositions drawn anonymously from the works of Theodore, is described as a work against Nestorianism, rather than against Theodore per se; Simler notes that the Tome was endorsed by John of Antioch, who continued vocally to defend Theodore, and that Proclus resisted attempts to induce him to condemn Theodore openly. Following Liberatus, he also casts doubt on the authenticity of the three books that Cyril is said to have written against Theodore and Diodore of Tarsus.¹⁸⁴ Although Cyril's letters provide clear evidence of both his contempt for Theodore's theology and the continuing strains in his relationship with Theodoret, who remained unwilling to anathematise Nestorius, none of this is reflected in the *Narratio*. Instead, Simler emphasises the unity of the orthodox episcopate, using his history to undergird the notion of the *consensus patrum*. The collapse of the Ephesian settlement at the end of the 440s is attributed not to its inherent instability or to the still unresolved divisions between Antioch and Alexandria, but to the appearance of a new heresy, based on a distorted reading of Cyril's works.

¹⁸³ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 178r. On this »concession«, see McGuckin, Cyril 227f.

¹⁸⁴ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 178v. Cf. Liberat. 10.

4. The »Narratio« II: monophysitism, monotheletism and the origins of Islam

4.1 Overview

Whereas the first half of the *Narratio* concentrates on events within a relatively short time span and is dominated by a few outstanding personalities (Cyril, Nestorius, Theodoret, John of Antioch), the remainder of the work is much more diffuse. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the Eutychian controversy proper: the dispute between Eutyches and Bishop Flavian of Constantinople; Eutyches' condemnation by the »Home Synod« in 448; the Second Council of Ephesus (August 449), which exonerated Eutyches and deposed Flavian, Theodoret, Domnus of Antioch and Ibas of Edessa; and the ultimate triumph of orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon, which anathematised Eutyches and his ally Dioscorus of Alexandria, rehabilitated the Antiochenes and established a cast-iron, explicitly dyophysite Christological standard against which all subsequent doctrine was to be measured. The following three chapters discuss the state of the church, now bitterly divided between supporters and opponents of Chalcedon, under the Emperors Marcian (450–457) and Leo I (457–474), Zeno (474–491) and Basiliscus (475–476), and Anastasius I (491–518). Next Simler considers the reigns of Justin I (518–527) and Justinian I (527–565), which saw the entrenchment of the Chalcedonian settlement in its refined, neo-Chalcedonian form at Constantinople II. Finally, he traces the development of the principal seventh-century heresy, monotheletism, from its emergence under the Emperor Heraclius (610–641) through to its condemnation at Constantinople III. The *Narratio* concludes with two further thematic chapters – on the monophysite sects of antiquity, and on incidences of Eutychianism in more recent times.

4.2 Eutyches, Dioscorus and the Second Council of Ephesus

Simler's account of the Eutychian controversy follows a similar pattern to his history of the dispute with Nestorius. Although Eutyches' Christology was in some senses the polar opposite of Nes-

torianism, Simler regards the similarities between Nestorius and Eutyches as more significant than their differences. Both displayed arrogance and a lack of learning, »which make many men especially bold and audacious«. ¹⁸⁵ Each had powerful political backers – Count Candidianus, the imperial commissioner at Ephesus, and the eunuch Chrysaphius respectively – and was opposed in the first instance by Eusebius, bishop of Dorylaeum. ¹⁸⁶ Above all, their heresies were born out of the same fundamental error: the failure to distinguish properly between the concepts of »person« and »nature« as they relate to Christ. Nestorius's two-nature, two-person Christology may seem far removed from the monophysitism of Eutyches, but both positions are predicated on the mistaken assumption that there must be an equal number of natures (*physeis*) and hypostases in Christ. ¹⁸⁷

Just as Nestorius's errors were opposed by Cyril, so the innovations of Eutyches were resisted by a subsequent generation of orthodox churchmen, led by Flavian of Constantinople and Pope Leo. However, the situation was complicated by the intervention of Dioscorus, Cyril's successor as bishop of Alexandria, who saw in Eutyches' case an opportunity to rid the church of Antiochene influence once and for all. Eutyches and Dioscorus sought to portray themselves as the theological heirs of Cyril, but Simler charges them with imposing a monophysite interpretation on Cyril's words, »even though Cyril himself never took that view«. ¹⁸⁸ In-

¹⁸⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 171v: »Causae autem erroris [Nestorii] huic fuerunt, ut constat ex his quae expositae sunt, ambitio, studium contendendi, seu ingens quaedam φιλονεικία, et postremo ignorantia, quae plerumque homines temerarios et audaces facit«. Eutyches is described as a »monachus imperitus et imprudens« (ibid., 192r).

¹⁸⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 172v, 192v. Cf. *Liberat.* 11; *Evag.* h.e. 1,9; *Niceph.* h.e. 14,32,47.

¹⁸⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 192r: »Error eius ex eodem quo Nestorii fonte prolabitur, ut Boetius asserit, nam sicut Nestorius cum arbitraretur numerum naturarum et personarum sibi mutuo respondere, et unamquamque naturam suam habere hypostasim, ac videret duas esse in Christo naturas, duplicem quoque credit esse personam: sic Eutyches cum eadem sentiret, parem esse naturarum et personarum numerum, in assumptione huius rationis a Nestorio dissensit, et quia videbat unum Christum unamque eius personam in scripturis proponi, et idem etiam nuper publica concilii Ephesii sententia confirmatum esse, unam tantum in Christo naturam esse asseruit.« Cf. *Boeth.* c. *Eutych.* 5.

¹⁸⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 179v: »mox post Cyrilli obitum Eutyches et Dioscorus contrariam Nestorianae haeresim confinixere, et se, male tamen, Cyrilli auctoritate de-

deed, when Eutyches appealed to Cyril and Athanasius in support of his opinions, Flavian was able to quote back to him passages from Cyril in which the existence of two natures in Christ was clearly affirmed. Eutyches' errors have their origin not with Cyril but, as Flavian suggests, with Apollinaris and the Gnostic Valentinus, who denied that Christ was truly human.¹⁸⁹

Having failed to match the sound theological argumentation of their orthodox opponents, the Eutychians fell back on violence and fraud in an effort to impose their views on the church. Simler describes how, in the run-up to Ephesus II, Chrysaphius and Dioscorus together conspired to block prominent eastern bishops such as Theodoret and Ibas from attending. At the council itself, Dioscorus muzzled the representatives of Pope Leo (who withdrew in protest), refused to allow the testimony of Eusebius of Dorylaeum to be heard, and prevented proper investigation of Eutyches' views. Supported by imperial troops and vast numbers of monks, Dioscorus was able to intimidate dissenting bishops into signing a blank piece of paper, on which the »decisions« of the synod were subsequently inscribed. Where necessary, Dioscorus was prepared to use physical force to silence his opponents; on the basis of reports in Evagrius and Nicephorus, Simler attributes Flavian's death three days after the council to injuries sustained at the hands of Dioscorus and his acolytes.¹⁹⁰ It is instructive to compare Simler's narrative of events at Ephesus II, which presents Dioscorus as acting in flagrant contravention of all canonical standards, with his treatment of the First Council of Ephesus. Although Cyril, like Dioscorus, made strategic use of the mob to secure the compliance of his fellow-bishops, there is no hint of this in the *Narratio*. The legitimacy of Cyril's decision to open the council in the absence of the Syrian bishops was questionable, to say the least, but Simler defends it on the grounds that John of Antioch had instructed Cyril to proceed if his arrival was delayed. Whereas modern scholars are

fendere conati sunt, ea quae ab illo bene dicta erant depravantes. Ut non omnino inanis fuerit Orientalium metus, qui verebantur ne his anathematismis statueretur naturarum Christi confusio, et divinitati passibilitas tribueretur: quamvis enim Cyrillus ipse nequaquam sic senserit, alii tamen postea eius verbis hunc sensum obtrudere conati sunt.«

¹⁸⁹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 192v.

¹⁹⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 193v. Cf. Evag. h.e. 2,2; Niceph. h.e. 14,47; Bullinger, *De conciliis*, 101r; Camerarius, *Chronologia*, 114.

inclined to point to similarities between the two Councils of Ephesus, which took place in equally chaotic and politicised circumstances,¹⁹¹ no such comparison is possible within the theological framework of the *Narratio*. Instead, Simler affirms the traditional view of Ephesus I as an authentic ecumenical council, despite its partiality and the initial refusal of the Antiochenes to recognise its decisions. Ephesus II, by contrast, is characterised as a pseudo-council, presided over by an »anti-Cyril« in the person of Dioscorus.

4.3 The Council of Chalcedon

Dioscorus's treatment of Flavian and the Antiochenes outraged the bishops of Syria, Pontus and Asia, who retaliated by breaking off relations with Alexandria. However, the foremost spokesman of the dyophysite party was Pope Leo, who denounced Ephesus II as a »robber synod« (»latrocinium«). Simler, like his (western) source Liberatus, emphasises the leadership shown by Leo at this time of crisis and the effectiveness of his attempts to pressurise the emperor into reversing the outcome of Ephesus II.¹⁹² These bore fruit following the death of Theodosius II and the accession of Marcian, who bowed to Leo's demands for a new council, to be held at Chalcedon. Simler sees the Council of Chalcedon as systematically righting the wrongs of Ephesus II: first by absolving Flavian of any wrongdoing, then by condemning Dioscorus and producing a new Christological Definition, and finally by restoring Theodoret, Ibas and the other disgraced Antiochenes to their sees. Although instances of conflict – the shouts and interventions that punctuated the public reading of the *acta* of Ephesus II during the first session, the initial reluctance of the Illyrian bishops to subscribe to Leo's Tome, and the persistent obduracy of the Egyptians – are noted, Simler presents proceedings at the council as generally harmonious and well ordered, and hence very different from the chaos of Ephesus II. He also uses this section of the *Narratio* to reinforce the notion of the *consensus patrum*, by emphasising the endorsement

¹⁹¹ Ramsay MacMullen, *Voting About God in Early Church Councils*, New Haven 2006, 88 f.

¹⁹² Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 193v–194r. Cf. Liberat. 12.

by those present of the works of both Cyril and Leo. Of particular interest in this regard is his reporting of a moment during the second session, when Archdeacon Aetius of Constantinople and, ironically, Cyril's old adversary Theodoret intervened to argue for the compatibility of the Tome's dyophysite language with Cyril's words.¹⁹³ The effect of the incident is to demonstrate the underlying unity of the main Christological traditions in the fifth-century church, which may explain why Simler gives it such prominence.

In his account of events at Chalcedon, Simler accords a significant role to the Emperor Marcian, who is seen as embodying the qualities of the ideal Christian magistrate. Like the Greek church historians, Simler emphasises Marcian's piety and love of justice. Significantly, he reproduces the comparison drawn by Nicephorus between Marcian and the archetypal Christian monarch, Constantine, whom Marcian sought consciously to emulate by participating in conciliar debates.¹⁹⁴ In the *Narratio*, Marcian both sets the terms for the bishops' deliberations at Chalcedon and gives legal force to their decisions; Simler notes the emperor's personal endorsement of the Definition at the council's sixth session and his later promulgation of an edict confirming its decisions and condemning Eutyches and Dioscorus.¹⁹⁵ In highlighting Marcian's contribution, the *Narratio* follows Bullinger's *De conciliis*, which gives him much of the credit for Chalcedon's successful outcome.¹⁹⁶ What is more, Simler portrays the emperor as an authoritative interpreter of Chalcedon, citing with approval a letter to the monks of Jerusalem in which Marcian defends the phrase »in two natures« as an expression of the church's unchanging faith in Christ.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 194v. Cf. Liberat. 13; Evag. h.e. 2,18; Niceph. h.e. 15,30.

¹⁹⁴ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 194r. Cf. Niceph. h.e. 15,1–2. Simler highlights Marcian's decision to convene the council on the Bosphorus so that he might contribute directly to its discussions, as Constantine had done at Nicaea. A further symbolic link between the two assemblies is established by the fact that Chalcedon was attended by exactly twice as many bishops – 636 – as its illustrious predecessor (*ibid.*, 194v).

¹⁹⁵ For the edict, see Codex Justinianus, ed. Paul Krueger, Berlin 1954, p. 6 (1.1.4). It is reproduced in *Bibliander*, *De summa trinitate*, 32–34.

¹⁹⁶ Bullinger, *De conciliis*, 102r: »Congregatis autem his in templo, medium se inter ipsos collocavit Martianus Imperator, ut disputationes vehementiores et assertiones Episcoporum quorundam ferventiores modareretur atque compesceret.«

4.4. Zeno and Anastasius

However, Marcian bequeathed a divided church and empire to his successors, as the majority of the population of Egypt and Syria remained steadfastly opposed to the Chalcedonian settlement. In the second half of the fifth century, imperial religious policy fluctuated between defence of Chalcedon (Leo), attempts at reconciliation with the monophysites (Zeno, Anastasius), and open Eutychianism (Basiliscus).¹⁹⁸ Simler sees the eastern church as split into three factions: orthodox Chalcedonians, neutrals and monophysites. The approach of the »middle« party was encapsulated in Zeno's *Henotikon*, which sought to reunite the eastern patriarchates by sidelining Chalcedon, though without explicitly abrogating its conclusions. In *De summa trinitate*, Bibliander praises the *Henotikon* for its championing of the Nicene creed as the basis for church unity,¹⁹⁹ but Simler is much less enthusiastic. Like his neo-Chalcedonian source Evagrius, he detects an element of *logomachia* in the dispute between supporters and opponents of Chalcedon, and regards the preferred Christological formulations of the orthodox and monophysite parties – respectively, »in two natures« and »from two natures« – not as conflicting, but as potentially complementary.²⁰⁰ However, because the anti-Chalcedonian party included some who rejected the doctrine of two natures »not in words but in substance« (»non verbis sed re ipsa«), Zeno's attempts to devise a doctrinal settlement acceptable to all sides were

¹⁹⁷ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 196v–197r: »Extant literae Martiani Imperatoris ad Archimandritas monachos et reliquos habitatores Aeliae (ita enim Hiersolyma tum nominabatur) in quibus graviter monachos incusat, qui quum deberent quieti vacare, et esse sub sacerdotibus eorumque doctrinis obedire, doctorum munus sibi sumpserint, et praeterea tot malorum auctores urbi et regioni fuerint. Ignoscit tamen illis clementissimus Imperator, et in fide eos instruit, docens Chalcedone nihil in fide innovatum esse, neque duos filios Synodum praedicasse, sed potius damnasse eos qui sic sentiant: nomine autem naturae usos ut ostenderent Christum esse verum Deum et verum hominem, ita ut natura significet veritatem, sicut et apud Apostolum, falsos Deos nuncupantem eos qui natura non sint dii.« For the emperor's letter, see ACO¹ 2.5, p. 4–7.

¹⁹⁸ See Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, 187–206; Sellers, *Chalcedon*, 254–301; William H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, Cambridge 1972, 143–220.

¹⁹⁹ Bibliander, *De summa trinitate*, 7–12.

²⁰⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 197r. Cf. Evag. h.e. 2,5; Niceph. h.e. 15,9.

bound to come to grief. Instead of ending the controversy, the ambiguous language of the *Henotikon* played into the hands of the monophysites, who interpreted it as condemning Chalcedon.²⁰¹ The restoration of communion between Acacius of Constantinople and the monophysite-dominated see of Alexandria also had the effect of provoking a new split (the Acacian schism) between East and West, for the papacy rejected any concessions to Eutychianism.²⁰² Even in the East, the achievement of unity was shortlived, with the *Henotikon* failing to satisfy the demands of more extreme monophysites such as Severus of Antioch for an explicit repudiation of Chalcedon and the Tome.²⁰³ Under Anastasius, the drift towards monophysitism accelerated; although in the *Narratio* he is described as adopting a neutral position, his hostility towards outspoken Chalcedonians and the increasing assertiveness of the monophysites during his reign are highlighted.²⁰⁴ For Simler, these developments are the inevitable result of a religious policy predicated on covering up of differences, rather than clear articulation of the church's beliefs. The fate of the *Henotikon* offers a general lesson with contemporary resonance: »ambiguous doctrinal formulas« are a recipe not for unity but for »bigger conflicts« in the future.²⁰⁵ Simler may well have had in mind the situation of the Rhaetian magistrates to whom his work is dedicated, who were themselves under pressure to accommodate religious dissidents by making precisely such concessions.

4.5 Justinian and the Second Council of Constantinople

The replacement of Anastasius by the strongly Chalcedonian Justin I brought the period of monophysite ascendancy to an end. This

²⁰¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 200v.

²⁰² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 200r.

²⁰³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 200v.

²⁰⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 200v–201f.

²⁰⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 200v: »Quare si controversiae de religione existent, frustra conciliatio tentatur ambiguis formulis doctrinae in medium propositis, sed ut verus et constans sit ecclesiarum consensus, oportet ut sententiae de controversis quaestionibus dicantur et proponantur perspicue absque ulla ambiguitate et sophistica, id ni fiat consensiones fucatae tandem in maiora dissidia abeunt: idque non modo Zenonii edicti exemplum, sed nostrae quoque aetatis non obscura exempla satis probant.«

change of policy did not preclude continuing attempts to pursue dialogue with the »Eutychians«, especially under Justin's nephew Justinian, whose own neo-Chalcedonian theology was designed to facilitate their return to the fold.²⁰⁶ Generally, however, Reformed writers depict Justinian as a hero of orthodoxy, the Christian emperor par excellence. Bibliander describes his accession in providential terms: at a time of great peril for Rome, with the Jews and Samaritans in revolt in Palestine, the empire under attack from the Arabs and Persians, orthodox believers in the West suffering persecution by the Arian Goths and Vandals, Eutychianism rampant in the East, and the papacy everywhere beginning to flex its muscles, God armed the church with a »sword of Gideon« in the form of Justinian's anti-heresy legislation.²⁰⁷ Simler's tone is more measured, but he, too, emphasises the pro-Chalcedonian elements of Justinian's religious policy, such as his support for the condemnation of the Syrian monophysites Severus, Peter of Apamea and Zooras at the synod of Constantinople, which reaffirmed the authority of Chalcedon and the Tome.²⁰⁸ On the other hand, he is unable to overlook entirely aspects of Justinian's rule that conflicted with this orthodox image, notably the monophysite sympathies of his wife Theodora and Justinian's own support for the apthartodocetite heresy (which proclaimed the incorruptibility of Christ's human nature) towards the end of his reign. Unlike Bibliander, who glosses over the episode,²⁰⁹ Simler faithfully reproduces the Greek church historians' account of Justinian's attempts to impose apthartodocetism on the empire.²¹⁰ Even the central religious event of Justinian's reign – the Fifth Ecumenical Council – poses some difficulties for him. As we have seen, Simler was uncomfortable with Constantinople II's anathematisation of the Three Chapters, which was hard to square with his belief in the compatibility of the Antiochene and Cyrilline traditions. While ac-

²⁰⁶ Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, 207–250.

²⁰⁷ Bibliander, *De summa trinitate*, 22 f.

²⁰⁸ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 203r. See the »Constitutio sacra Iustiniani imperatoris contra Anthimum, Severum, Petrum et Zoarem« in: *Justinian*, Novellae, ed. Rudolf Schoell and Wilhelm Kroll, Berlin 1954, 263–269 (no. 42). This edict is reproduced in Bibliander, *De summa trinitate*, 39–47.

²⁰⁹ Bibliander, *De summa trinitate*, 51.

²¹⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 8v, 205r. Cf. Evag. h.e. 4,38–40; Niceph. h.e. 17,29–31.

cepting the council's conclusions, as set out in its 14 articles of faith, he devotes remarkably little space to its deliberations on the Three Chapters, focusing instead on its pronouncements against Origenism. The sense that Simler's endorsement of Constantinople II is lukewarm, at best, is reinforced by his account of the background to its convocation. This is taken almost verbatim from Liberatus, a source hostile to the council, who blames the Origenist bishop Theodore Askidas for initiating the campaign against the Three Chapters as a means of diverting attention from his own errors.²¹¹ Like the Nestorian controversy, the sixth century confronts Simler with evidence of competing theological currents within orthodoxy – neo-Chalcedonianism and the more pronounced dyophysitism of western writers such as Liberatus – that sits awkwardly with the notion of a *consensus patrum*. In the case of Constantinople II, he leaves this tension substantially unresolved.

4.6 The monothelete controversy

Simler has little to say about the reigns of the late sixth-century emperors Justin II (565–578), Tiberius (578–582) and Maurice (582–602), all of whom he considers strong supporters of Chalcedon. In fact, both Justin and Tiberius pursued a policy of conciliation with the monophysites – with some success – but these developments were not recorded in Evagrius, Simler's main source for the period.²¹² The narrative is resumed in the early seventh century, with the promotion by the Emperor Heraclius (610–641) and the Constantinopolitan patriarch Sergius of monotheletism – the doctrine that Christ possesses a single will – as a means of reconciling Chalcedonians and monophysites. For Simler, monotheletism represents not so much an independent heresy as a disguised form of Eutychianism. Like the earlier disputes outlined in the *Narratio*, the monothelete controversy is presented in binary terms, as a conflict between clearly defined orthodox and heretical camps. To Heraclius and his monothelete grandson Constans II (641–668), Simler opposes a new set of orthodox stalwarts: So-

²¹¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 204r. Cf. Liberat. 24.

²¹² Allen, Evagrius, 19f. On the religious policies of Justinian's successors, see Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, 258–265; Frend, *Monophysite Movement*, 317–335.

phronius of Jerusalem, Maximus Confessor and the popes John IV (640–642) and Martin I (649–655). Once again, he emphasises the need for terminological clarity when tackling complicated doctrinal questions. The failure of imperial attempts to resolve the controversy by imposing silence on the issues in dispute is contrasted with the success of Constantinople III – an unambiguously dyothelete council, convened by an orthodox emperor in the person of Constantine IV (668–685) – in restoring religious unity to Byzantium.²¹³

4.7. Simler's view of monophysitism

Recent studies of Christology in the period after Chalcedon tend to downplay the differences between mainstream monophysites and their Chalcedonian opponents. It has been pointed out, for instance, that the influential monophysite bishop of Alexandria, Timothy Aelurus, affirmed the doctrine of the double consubstantiality of Christ and wrote against Eutyches;²¹⁴ even Severus, who rejected both Chalcedon and the *Henotikon*, was prepared to speak of two natures in respect of Christ, if only ἐν θεωρίᾳ.²¹⁵ Both monophysites and non-Antiochene Chalcedonians took their inspiration from Cyril, disagreeing only on the extent to which his language could be reconciled with Chalcedon. But in the *Narratio* the differences between the two sides are presented in much starker terms. Lacking direct access to the works of monophysite theologians, Simler bases his assessment of their doctrines entirely on Chalcedonian sources, which focus on the more »extreme« aspects of monophysite teaching, associated with Eutyches himself and disavowed by many later anti-Chalcedonians, such as denial of the double consubstantiality of Christ and support for the doctrine of

²¹³ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 205v. In his »Ekthesis« (638), which enshrined monotheletism as official doctrine in the East, Heraclius forbade further discussion of the number of energies in Christ. The »Typos« of Constans II (648) extended this prohibition to the question of the number of wills in Christ. See John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990, 301, 309.

²¹⁴ Iain R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite*, Norwich 1988, 9.

²¹⁵ Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon*, 16; Sellers, *Chalcedon*, 262; Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity*, 251f.

Christ's »heavenly flesh«. ²¹⁶ This emphasis suits Simler's polemical purpose, as it appears to substantiate his claims of a link between the monophysites and Reformation-era »heretics« who professed similar doctrines.

As we have seen, in his account of Ephesus II Simler highlights the aggressive and underhand means by which Dioscorus sought to gain control of the church. The readiness of the »Eutychian« leadership to deploy violence in pursuit of its ends – even where that involved challenging imperial authority – is a recurrent theme in the *Narratio*, serving to underline monophysitism's seditious and anarchic character. Thus Simler records that, following the replacement of Dioscorus as bishop of Alexandria by the orthodox Proterius, local magistrates and imperial troops were burnt alive by a monophysite mob stirred up by Timothy Aelurus. Timothy also conspired in the subsequent murder – for Simler and his Chalcedonian sources, it has the character of a martyrdom – of Proterius in the baptistery of his cathedral at Easter 457. ²¹⁷ Such disturbances were not confined to Egypt. In Antioch, the orthodox bishop Stephen was killed by supporters of his monophysite rival Peter the Fuller, ²¹⁸ while in Palestine, monks opposed to Chalcedon replaced Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem with the Eutychian Theodosius, who launched a savage persecution in which the orthodox deacon Athanasius was tortured to death and bishop Severianus of Scythopolis assassinated. ²¹⁹ Even the imperial capital was not spared such violence. Under Zeno, monks from the convent of the Akometai, a dyophysite stronghold, were attacked and killed by supporters of Patriarch Acacius after publishing Pope Felix III's sentence of excommunication against him. ²²⁰

To account for the repeated failure of imperial attempts to broker an agreement with the monophysites, Simler falls back on a Reformed commonplace – the perfidiousness of heretics. Peter Mongus, who succeeded Timothy Aelurus as bishop of Alexandria, is called a »slippery and inconstant man, blowing hot and

²¹⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 207r–v.

²¹⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 196v–197r.

²¹⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 198r.

²¹⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 196v.

²²⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 199v–200r.

cold from the same mouth«. ²²¹ In letters to Acacius of Constantinople and Pope Simplicius, he protested his loyalty to Chalcedon, but at home he condemned the council and Leo's Tome, anathematising all who refused to receive the writings of Dioscorus and Timothy. ²²² Severus, the most important monophysite theologian of the early sixth century, is depicted in even more sinister terms. Simler reports that he was rumoured to be an insincere convert to Christianity and that he continued to sacrifice to demons even after his baptism. When lobbying for the position of bishop of Antioch, Severus promised Emperor Anastasius that he would not denounce Chalcedon if appointed, but he went back on his word as soon as he was in post. ²²³ The untrustworthiness of »Eutychians« is highlighted again in chapter 15 of the *Narratio*, on monotheletism. Simler assigns a key role in the genesis of this heresy to the Jacobite (monophysite) bishop of Antioch, who feigned acceptance of Chalcedon in order that he might lead the orthodox church astray. ²²⁴ In the same way, monotheletes at Constantinople III used forged, interpolated or abridged texts of the Fathers to garner support for their arguments. ²²⁵

Another key feature of monophysitism, as portrayed in the *Narratio*, is its labile and polymorphous nature, which places it in direct opposition to the unchanging, univocal teaching of the Fathers. Simler terms Eutychianism a »Lernaean hydra«, producing new heads whenever one was cut off. ²²⁶ The heresy is shown to have evolved over time: whereas Eutyches taught that the Word was literally converted into flesh at the incarnation, his later followers embraced a form of docetism, to counter the perception

²²¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 199v: »fuit enim homo lubricus et inconstans qui ex eodem ore calidum et frigidum efflaret.«

²²² Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 200v.

²²³ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 201r.

²²⁴ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 205r. Cf. George *Cedrenus*, *Compendium historiarum* (PG 121, 23–1166; 122, 9–368) [Cedren. c.h.] 121, c. 806; John *Zonaras*, *Epitome historiarum* (PG 134, 39–1414; 135, 9–388) 14,17; *Camerarius*, *Chronologia*, 119f.

²²⁵ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 206v: »Est vero notatu digna Macarii et aliorum Monothelitarum fraus in hoc Synodo detecta, qui plurima patrum testimonia congesserunt ad suum dogma comprobandum, quorum aliqua falso suis auctoribus inscripta fuerunt, ut epistola Mennae ad Vigilium PP. alia vero corrupta aut truncata, id quod collatione authenticum codicum deprehensum est.« Cf. ACO² 2, 532f.

²²⁶ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 169v.

that they preached a passible God.²²⁷ United only by their belief in the single nature of the Word made flesh, the monophysites quickly began to fall out among themselves, splitting into numerous competing sects. Based on information from Nicephorus and, to a lesser extent, John Damascene, Simler identifies eight distinct monophysite factions: the Eutychians proper; the *Acephali* or Egyptians; the theopaschites, followers of Peter the Fuller; the *Agnoetae*, also known as *Severitae* or *Themistiani*; the *Aphthartodocitae*; the *Tritheitae*, who were themselves divided into two groups, designated the *Petritae* and the *Cononitae* after their respective founders; the *Theodosiani*, also known as the *Angelitae* or *Damianistae*; and the monotheletes.²²⁸ This heresiological scheme is designed to illustrate a more fundamental point, applicable not just to the history of the early church but to theological disputes generally. Elsewhere Simler ascribes to heresy an in-built propensity to change, degenerate and spawn new errors,²²⁹ a thesis for which he finds ample support in the history of monophysitism after Chalcedon. Peter the Fuller may be best known for his addition of the phrase »who was crucified for us« to the *Trisagion*, but he also introduced the practice of invoking the Virgin in prayer; in this manner, the Eutychian controversy fostered the emergence of »new forms of worship and prayers to the dead«.²³⁰ In the late sixth century, disputes between the various monophysite groupings spilled over into disagreements concerning the Trinity, with one

²²⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 207r. Simler acknowledges that his sources differ on the precise nature of Eutyches' error. For example, Evagrius and Nicephorus attribute to Eutyches the opinion that Christ became incarnate only »apparently«, whereas Cedrenus accuses him of making the divine nature passible. Cf. Evag. h.e. 1,9; Niceph. h.e. 14,47; Cedren. c.h. 121, c. 658.

²²⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 201v–202r, 207v–208r. Cf. Niceph. h.e. 18,49–53; *John Damascene*, *De haeresibus* (PG 94, 677–780) [Jo. D. haer.] 82–5, 99. See also the descriptions of monophysite and monothelete sects in *Ecclesiastica historia*, vol. 5, 615–620; vol. 6, 303–307, 311f.; vol. 7, 122–131.

²²⁹ *Simler*, *De aeterno, er*; Josias *Simler*, *Assertio orthodoxae doctrinae de duabus naturis Christi servatoris nostri, opposita blasphemis et sophismatibus Simonis Budnaei nuper ab ipso in Lituania evulgatis [...]*, Zurich: Christoph Froschauer the Younger, 1575 (BZD C 897), 4v–5r. See *Taplin*, *Italian Reformers*, 202f.

²³⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 198r: »Cnapheo huic tribuunt historiae quod sancierit ut in precatone omni Dei genitrix nominaretur, et divinum eius nomen invoceretur. Ita scilicet paulatim haec dissidia ad confirmandos novos cultus, et mortuorum invocationem declinarunt.« Cf. *Ecclesiastica historia*, vol. 5, 989.

group (the *Theodosiani*) being accused of Sabellianism or teaching a quaternity, while others, led by the grammarian John Philoponus, espoused forms of tritheism.²³¹

4.8 Islam

By the time of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, a large portion of Byzantine territory had been ceded to Islam, whose rise Simler considers the most important long-term consequence of the Eutychian controversy. Unlike the authors of the Magdeburg Centuries, who classify Islam as a »religio externa«, cobbled together from elements of paganism, Judaism and Christianity,²³² Simler follows John Damascene and subsequent medieval tradition in viewing »the Mohammedan impiety« as the last and most pernicious of the heresies of Christian antiquity.²³³ In the *Narratio*, the whirlwind Islamic conquest of Syria and Egypt is blamed on the presence within those provinces of significant numbers of Nestorians and monophysites, who accepted Muslim rule more easily because of the resemblance between their own errors and the »madness« of the Qur'an.²³⁴ To substantiate the link that he posits between earlier heresies and Islam, Simler recounts the well-known legend of Sergius, which identified a fugitive Nestorian monk as the source for Mohammed's errors.²³⁵ He explains Mohammed's purely

²³¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 208r. On these schisms, see *Meyendorff*, *Imperial Unity*, 254–258; *Frend*, *Monophysite Movement*, 289–291, 341f.

²³² *Ecclesiastica historia*, vol. 7, 595–653.

²³³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 169v.

²³⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 206v: »haec autem Monothelitica secta postrema est earum quae impia temeritate personam et naturas Christi impugnarunt, dum enim hoc certamen fervet Sarraceni Aegyptum et Syriam occuparunt, in quibus regionibus Eutychica impietas prorsus regnabat, et iidem mox Oriente potiti sunt, in quo Nestoriani non pauci numero erant, et simul quoque Monophysitae seu Eutychiani: atque ut utriusque sectae impietas in Alcoranici delirii sentinam confluit, ita regiones quoque ipsae quae protulerunt aluerunt et foverunt haec monstra sub Sarracenum et Turcarum potestatem et tyrannidem redactae sunt.«

²³⁵ According to Muslim tradition, Mohammed's prophethood was recognised while he was still a child by a Christian monk named Bahira. Middle Eastern Christians developed a negative version of the tale, which attributed authorship of the Qur'an to Bahira, rather than to the illiterate Mohammed; see Barbara *Roggema*, *A Christian Reading of the Qur'an: the Legend of Sergius-Bahira and its Use of Qur'an and Sira*, in: *Syrian Christians under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas, Leiden

humanitarian Christology by adding a subtle twist to the traditional story: although Nestorius himself affirmed the divinity and personality of the Logos, later Nestorians such as Sergius may have radicalised the sect's teachings – »as is usually the case« with heretics – so that they conformed more closely to the doctrines of Paul of Samosata. Simler finds support for this claim in the writings of Maxentius, who, long before the time of Mohammed, encountered Nestorians who attributed to Christ a pre-eminence based solely on his virgin birth and his possession of grace in full measure.²³⁶

Simler's discussion of the origins of Islam in the *Narratio* was motivated, in part, by apologetic concerns. In spring 1570, several leading Reformed churchmen in the Palatinate had been exposed as antitrinitarians; two of them, Johannes Sylvan and Adam Neuser, had even been caught attempting to make contact with the Ottoman sultan, Selim II.²³⁷ The episode was acutely embarrassing for the Zurichers, as Sylvan was associated with the antidisciplinarian, »Zwinglian«, party in Heidelberg; unsurprisingly, it was seized on by their theological opponents as evidence of an islami-

2001, 57–73. In Damascene's »De haeresibus«, the monk is described as an Arian (Jo. D. haer. 100; Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The »Heresy of the Ishmaelites«*, Leiden 1972, 73 f.), but the »Apology« of Ps. Al-Kindi, in which he is first given the name Sergius, labels him a Nestorian. Other writers suggest that Mohammed was assisted by two different monks, identifying the former as a Nestorian and the latter as variously an Arian or a Jacobite. The legend became widely known in western Europe from the twelfth century, when Peter the Venerable commissioned a Latin translation of the Qur'an and other texts relating to Islam, including the »Apology«. This »Corpus Toletanum« formed the basis for Theodor Bibliander's Qur'an edition, in which the Sergius story is cited as evidence of Nestorian influence on Mohammed. See Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina ipseque Alcoran [...], Basel: Johannes Oporin, 1543 (*Moser*, Bibliander, no. B–9.1), βr, β2r–v. For Simler's previous use of the legend, see *Simler*, *De aeterno*, 283r–v.

²³⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 179r: »Mentio etiam fit apud veteres Sergii monachi Nestoriani qui Machometi praceptor fuerit. Videntur autem posterioris Nestoriani erroris magistri sui, ut plerumque fit, auxisse, et ad Samosatani et Photini sententiam inclinasse. Nam Maxentius obiicit Nestorianis sui temporis, qui tamen Machometi tempora multum praecessit, quod Christum eo tantum excellentiorem factis faciant, quod non naturae lege, sed novo modo ex spiritu sancto conceptus et ex virgine sit natus, et quod non particularem gratiam acceperit, sed plenus sit gratia. Hos ergo Samosatenicos furores cum Nestorianis deliriis permixtos a Sergio monacho accepit Machometus, et eorum partem suo Alcorano inseruit, ubi Christo magnas quidem laudes tribuit, sed tamen merum hominem esse ubique praedicat.«

²³⁷ For details, see Christopher *Burchill*, *The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians*, Baden-Baden 1989 (Bibliotheca bibliographica Aureliana 120; Bibliotheca dissidentium 11).

sing dimension to Reformed teaching. In the *Scripta veterum*, Simler seeks not only to limit the fallout from the affair, but to turn it to the advantage of his orthodox Reformed allies in Graubünden. In his main preface to the work, he condemns »the deceptions of the new Samosatensians, and their secret conspiracies with the Turks« (»novorum Samosatensiorum fraudes, et clancularias cum Turcis conspirationes«), while elsewhere he cites the activities of the Heidelberg antitrinitarians to illustrate the dangers of allowing Christological heresy to flourish within a state.²³⁸ This point is developed in the *Narratio*, where he attributes Islam's triumphant progress to the failure of the Byzantine authorities to eradicate monophysitism and its associated heresies, which left the eastern empire divided and, consequently, vulnerable to Saracen incursions.²³⁹ Simler feared a repetition of these events in his own day, given the spread of antitrinitarianism in eastern Europe and the theological affinities that he perceived between its »Samosatenian« variant, in particular, and Islam.²⁴⁰ In the *Scripta veterum*, the parallel is extended to critics of the Rhaetian anti-heresy edict, who, Simler claims, would leave the church with only »a certain general knowledge of Christ, shared with Mohammedanism«. Just as Mohammed extended freedom of worship to all monotheists, so the »Academici« promise salvation to all Christians who acknowledge Christ as the Son of God and judge of the world, »regardless of what they think about the remaining doctrines of the faith.«²⁴¹ By

²³⁸ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, * 5r; ZB Ms. F 46, 350, cited in *Taplin*, *Italian Reformers*, 249, n. 146.

²³⁹ See the passage cited in n. 234 above. Cf. *Bullinger*, *De conciliis*, 107r: »Horret sane animus, quoties recogito, quam funestos luctus, quam acerba iurgia, et quam pestifera schismata, et quanta scandala et vulnera ecclesiae Christi inflixerint Nestoriana (ut iam de Arianis nihil dicam) Eutythiana ac Monotheitica monstra. Infecti fuerunt hac peste aliquot Graeci Imperatores qui Episcopos nunc deiecerunt, mox evererunt, atque ita turbarunt prope Orientem, ut miser populus quo se verteret aut quid crederet propemodum ignoraret. Debemus sectis illis irreconciliabilique dissidio Machometanam illam pestem, et quod totus propemodum Oriens a Christo ad Machometum defecit.«

²⁴⁰ Simler, *De aeterno*, ε3r-v, 283v.

²⁴¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, * 3v: »O Sathanam vafrum artificium, qui cum tot annis laborarit in oppugnanda Christi religione, novis subinde erroribus per haereticos in publicum prolatis, nunc persuadere conatur, haec omnia adiaphora esse, de quibus absque iactura salutis liceat opinari quicquid cuique lubitum fuerit: interim pro Christianorum fide obtrudit generalem quandam Christi notitiam, cum Machometanismo

associating the dissidents within the Bündner Reformed church with Christendom's most persistent foe, Simler places them in opposition to legitimate magisterial authority and highlights the subversive consequences of the »liberty« that they advocate. In the process, he is able to distance himself and his colleagues from the recent scandal in the Palatinate and to re-emphasise the compatibility of Reformed Protestantism with established political and social structures.

5. Old wine in new wineskins? The »Scripta veterum« as polemic

5.1 Approach

Simler's comparison of the Rhaetian »Academici« to Mohammed is an example of the dual perspective that informs the *Scripta veterum*. Like other early modern controversialists, Simler sees the disputes generated by the Reformation not as unique products of the age, but as merely the latest episodes in an on-going struggle between truth and error, Christ and Satan, for ascendancy within the church. In this context, the history of ancient Christianity becomes a crucial resource, providing Simler and his contemporaries with a ready-made heresiological vocabulary and interpretative framework that can be applied to the deviant teaching of their own day. Such an approach has the advantage of both delegitimising opponents, by attaching them to sects and individuals condemned by the early church, and vindicating the position of the writer, who is automatically cast in the role of defender of the orthodox faith. However, it is more than a rhetorical strategy, for underpinning it is a view of Christian history as »a static entity with substantially the same events being re-enacted by different characters«.²⁴² Thus

communem. Atque ut Mahumetes inquit, legem sive fidem omnium unam esse, ritus autem, diversus, singulos autem in suo ritu servari asserit, modo unum Deum mundi creatorem agnoscant, ita isti in Christiano tantum requirunt, ut etiam non intellecto Christi statu et officio Christum filium Dei et mundi iudicem agnoscat, ac salutem pollicentur hoc credenti, quicquid de reliquis dogmatibus fidei nostrae sentiat.«

²⁴² *Backus*, Historical Method, 338.

Melanchthon declares that all sixteenth-century doctrinal disputes were prefigured in the sub-apostolic age,²⁴³ while the Magdeburg Centuriators note the repeated use of the same »tricks« by heretics to seduce the faithful.²⁴⁴ The parallels between ancient and modern heresy are also emphasised by Beza, who in the preface to his Gentile collection describes how, having failed once again to destroy church through persecution, Satan has reverted to his »old tactics« of corrupting it from within. The heretics whom he has raised up in response to the Reformation are linked to some of the Fathers' most fearsome opponents: in Schwenckfeld, Beza sees a new Eutyches, in Menno Simons, a reborn »Ebion«, and in Servetus, an amalgam of Paul of Samosata, Arius and Eutyches.²⁴⁵ He returns to the point in his edition of patristic works in defence of the Trinity, which he commends to the churches »not just on account of their sound doctrine and erudition, but especially because of the antiquity and dignity of their authors, so that all may see that nothing propounded by these damned souls [contemporary antitrinitarians] has not been refuted and condemned a thousand times by the whole pure and ancient church«.²⁴⁶

For Simler, too, the ancient Christological controversies are important primarily for the light that they shed on contemporary disputes. Although he is aware that various Nestorian and monophysite churches survived the Islamic conquest, his knowledge of the doctrines and practices of groups such as the Syrian Jacobites, Armenians and Assyrians is decidedly sketchy.²⁴⁷ Unlike his Zurich colleague Bibliander, Simler displays little interest in these faraway sects, preferring to seek the modern-day exponents of Nestorianism and Eutychianism closer to home. Detailed consideration of such parallels is reserved for chapters 7 and 17 of the *Narratio*, but

²⁴³ Peter *Fraenkel*, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon*, Geneva 1961 (*Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 46), 284.

²⁴⁴ *Ecclesiastica Historia*, vol. 1, *av*; *Scheible*, *Anfänge*, 64f.

²⁴⁵ CTB 8, 240. In Georg Cassander's »*Commentarius de duabus in Christo naturis*«, which was appended to his *Vigilius* edition, Simons and another Dutch Anabaptist, Adam Pastor, are compared to Eutyches and Paul of Samosata respectively (fo. 2r).

²⁴⁶ CTB 11, 781.

²⁴⁷ For example, he wrongly associates the Maronites of Lebanon with Nestorianism; see *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 179r. Most of his information on the non-Chalcedonian churches is taken from Nicephorus.

the interconnectedness of ancient and contemporary doctrinal disputes is highlighted even in the more strictly historical sections of the work. Simler's use of the *Henotikon* episode as a warning against theological obfuscation, including in his own day, has been mentioned. In the same way, he detects a structural similarity between Nestorianism, Arianism and Eutychianism – all of which originated as responses to earlier heresies – and the more recent errors of »the Anabaptists, Servetians and new Samosatensians, who have changed many things, causing great offence to many and with no little harm to the church, solely on the basis that everything that is taught under the papacy is to be shunned and rejected.«²⁴⁸ Because of his involvement in contemporary Christological debates, Simler tends to view the disputes chronicled in the *Scripta veterum* through the prism of sixteenth-century theological concerns. Although the main point at issue in the Zurich church's exchange with the Württembergers – the location of Christ's glorified body – played a peripheral role in the Eutychian controversy, Simler portrays the questions at stake in the two disputes as substantially the same. In particular, he insists that Eutyches was condemned not merely for confusing the two natures of Christ on an »essential« level but for eroding the distinction between the properties associated with those natures – precisely the error that the Zurichers attributed to Brenz.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 178r: »Videmus autem omnibus seculis nimio contradicendi studio dum dogmata controversa quidam propugnant, in alteram partem aberatum esse, sic multi Sabellium fugientes in Arianismum inciderunt, sic Nestorius studio evitandi haeresim Apollinaris novae et contrariae auctor factus, et idem circa Nestorium accidit Eutycheti: et hodie in ecclesiis Anabaptistae, Servetani et novi Samosatensiani plurima immutarunt magna multorum offensione, et damno non levi ecclesiae, hoc uno titulo quod omnia quae doceantur in papatu fugienda et recusanda sint.«

²⁴⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 207r: »Postremo si de sententia Eutychetis ex Synodi Chalcedoniae decreto statuendum est, cum illic asseratur unum et eundem esse Iesum Christum in duabus naturis ἄσπυγύτος, ἀτρέπτος, hoc est inconfuse et inconvertibiliter, efficitur Eutychianos docuisse mutationem et confusionem naturarum: neque tantum essentialium sed multo maxime proprietatum, unde eodem decreto traditur naturarum differentiam non esse propter unitatem sublatam, sed magis utraque naturam suam proprietatem servare. Itaque Vigilius et caeteri qui contra Eutychiam haeresim scripserunt, id maxime elaborarunt ut utrunque naturae proprietatem salvam in Christo ostenderent, credo enim forte illos a plerisque earum obtinere potuisse ut naturam humanam absque suis proprietatibus in Christo faterentur, primam ut ita dicam essentiam, nam Eutyches ipse agnoscebat in Christo humanum corpus, et omnes Christum

5.2 Modern-day »Nestorians«: the Samosatensians and Stancaro

In the *Scripta veterum*, Simler confronts opponents from across the confessional spectrum. Some targets were familiar from his earlier polemical writings. Although the arguments of the eastern European antitrinitarian groups are not addressed in detail in the work, having already been rebutted in *De aeterno Dei filio*, Simler identifies a number of points of similarity between Nestorianism and contemporary »Samosatenianism«. The Samosatensians follow Nestorius in asserting that Christ, like Moses, is designated God in scripture solely in respect of his office, while their insistence that they alone possess the true knowledge of God is foreshadowed in Nestorius's criticism of his flock for their ignorance of apostolic doctrine.²⁵⁰ Simler contrasts the arrogance and elitism of the radicals, who reject point blank all extra-biblical authorities and lay exclusive claim to the name of the true church, with the Reformed attitude towards tradition, which balances informed criticism with the respect due to antiquity.²⁵¹

He detects even stronger echoes of Nestorianism in the distinctive Christology of Francesco Stancaro. Simler's emphasis in the *Narratio* on the soteriological implications of Nestorius's views is testament to the extent to which his understanding of the Nestorian controversy was influenced by his earlier polemical exchange with Stancaro. Thus he argues that the principal bone of contention in the Zurichers' dispute with Stancaro – the involvement of Christ's divinity in his mediatorial office – was also central to the quarrel between Cyril and Nestorius. In support of this claim, he cites Cyril's tenth anathematism, which proclaimed the incarnate Word »high priest and apostle« in the work of salvation. Accord-

Deum hominemque fatebantur, consubstantiali patri et nobis quoque consubstantiali, verum potissima controversia fuit de perfecta natura habente suas proprietates.«

²⁵⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 72r: »Verba haec Nestorii libentius annoto quod nostra aetate eodem fere modo argumentari soleant Blandrata Franciscus Davidis et alii qui filium Deum suo honore et vera Deitate spoliare conantur. Atque etiam ut Nestorius asserebat, populum propter ignorantiam dogmatis de cognitione Dei in errorem prolapsam, ita hi sibi soli ac suis cognitionem Dei vendicant, eamque omnibus fere veteribus et recentioribus orthodoxis adimunt.« Simler is probably alluding to the title of the important antitrinitarian anthology »De vera et falsa unius Dei Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti cognitione« (Alba Iulia 1568).

²⁵¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, * 2v; *Taplin*, *Italian Reformers*, 212f.

ding to Simler, the question put to Cyril by the oriental bishops was identical to that posed by Stancaró: if the Word acts as high priest on behalf of humanity, to which God does he minister? Cyril's response, like that of the Reformed, was that the Word is designated high priest not because he sacrifices to a greater God but on account of the expiation that he performs to bring believers to faith in himself and the Father.²⁵² Although Stancaró pays lip service to orthodox Christology and claims to repudiate Nestorius's errors, by excluding Christ's humanity from the office of mediator he, too, violates the unity of the saviour's person.²⁵³ The intellectual kinship between Nestorius and Stancaró is confirmed by the fact that both see Christ's work of mediation as comparable to that of Moses.²⁵⁴

5.3 Modern-day »Eutyrians«: the Anabaptists and Schwenckfeld

While denouncing Stancaró as a Nestorian, Simler associates other dissenting groups with the opposing heresy of Eutyches. The »fanatical« German Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman (d. 1543) is identified as the first to revive Eutyrianism in modern times, on the basis of his claim that the divine Word did not »assume« a human nature from Mary – the orthodox position – but was instead literally »made flesh«.²⁵⁵ Simler bases his knowledge of Hoffman's views on statements made by the latter at the synod of Strasbourg in June 1533, following which Hoffman was condemned to lifelong imprisonment;²⁵⁶ he adds that Melchiorite Christology was subsequently taken up and disseminated by another leading Anabaptist, Menno Simons.²⁵⁷ Simler finds further proof of the con-

²⁵² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 191r. Cf. *Cyr. apol. orient.* c. 367f.

²⁵³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 191r.

²⁵⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 191v.

²⁵⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 209v. In Bullinger's history of Anabaptism, which Simler translated into Latin, Hoffman is ranked second only to Servetus among the »abominable« Anabaptists. For Hoffman's Christology, see Klaus *Depperman*, *Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of Reformation*, Edinburgh 1987, 223–229; George Huntston *Williams*, *The Radical Reformation*, Kirksville, MO³ 1992, 493–495.

²⁵⁶ *Deppermann*, Hoffman, 290–296.

²⁵⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 209r–v. On Menno's Christology, see *Williams*, *Radical Reformation*, 596–598.

nection between Anabaptism and Eutychianism in Nicephorus. In light of the Byzantine historian's report that some monophysite sects rejected infant baptism, it is »hardly surprising that their teachings have been renewed and defended in our day by the Anabaptists, in particular«. ²⁵⁸

Of more immediate concern for Simler in the *Scripta veterum* were the teachings of Kaspar Schwenckfeld, which had been promoted by Georg Frell in Chur and against which he warns in the first of his two prefaces to the work. Schwenckfeld was a long-standing opponent of the Zurichers. The threat posed by his doctrines, especially his unconventional Christology, is a recurrent theme in Bullinger's correspondence with the south German reformers Ambrosius Blarer, Johannes Zwick and Martin Frecht during the 1530s. Both the *antistes'* commentary on John's Gospel (1543) and his Vigilius edition, which was published alongside the anti-Schwenckfeldian *Orthodoxa et erudita epistola* of Joachim Vadian, were directed in the main against Schwenckfeld. ²⁵⁹ Like Bullinger, Simler was convinced of the »Eutychian« character of Schwenckfeld's Christology. In his *Annotationes* for Vigilius's *Contra Eutychem*, he accuses the Schwenckfeldians of wilfully misusing anti-Arian statements by the Fathers to support their own, heretical, denial of the creatureliness of Christ's flesh, just as earlier monophysites had done. ²⁶⁰ Schwenckfeld's labelling of the Reformed as Nestorians, on the basis that they attribute different properties to Christ's two natures, is another familiar Eutychian refrain; in the early church, the same charge was levelled against

²⁵⁸ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 202r: »hoc tamen praeterire non possum, Monophysitas illas veteres suos quoque habere anabaptismos, ut minus mirum sit eorum dogmata nostra aetate ab Anabaptistis potissimum renovari et defendi.« See also *ibid.*, 209v: »ut sicut primi fere Anabaptismos Eutychei usurparunt, ita vicissim eorum haeresim Anabaptistae renovarunt.« Cf. Niceph. h.e. 17,9.

²⁵⁹ Mark *Taplin*, Bullinger und die Dissidenten, in: *Der Nachfolger: Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575)*. Katalog zur Ausstellung im Grossmünster Zürich 2004, ed. Emidio Campi et al., Zurich 2004, 13–17. On Schwenckfeld's Christology, see Paul L. *Maier*, *Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ: A Study of Schwenckfeldian Theology at its Core*, Assen 1959; *Williams*, *Radical Reformation*, pp. 495–9.

²⁶⁰ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 113r: »Imitantur Eutychanos nostra aetate Schwenckfeldiani qui Patrum dicta contra Arrianos, quibus asserunt Filium Dei non esse creaturam, detorquent ad suam opinionem comprobendam, quasi senserint carnem Christi non esse creaturam.«

the orthodox by the monophysites, who – like Schwenckfeld – appealed to Cyril’s fourth anathematism in support of their position.²⁶¹ In his *Confession*, Schwenckfeld seeks to distance himself from Eutyches,²⁶² but he does so on the basis that Eutyches’ error was to deny the *communicatio idiomatum*, a claim unsupported by the ancient sources. Even those theologians who agree with Schwenckfeld on some points (presumably, Simler means the ubiquitarians) are united in condemning him as a Eutychian. Like the ancient monophysites, he denies that Christ’s two natures may be considered »distincte« and makes Christ’s whole person and both natures subject to the passion. In rejecting the creatureliness of Christ’s flesh, he comes close to the teachings of Apollinaris, as set out in the fifth dialogue of Ps. Athanasius. Moreover, to exonerate himself from the charge of monotheletism, he deliberately misinterprets the Sixth Ecumenical Council’s condemnation of this error so as to limit it to the preaching of a single will in Christ before his glorification.²⁶³

5.4 Catholicism

Previous Zurich Reformed writers had made frequent use of church history to challenge the religious claims of the papacy and Roman Catholicism more generally. However, the dedication of the *Scripta veterum* to the Rhaetian Leagues, which were made up of both Catholic and Reformed communities, placed severe constraints on Simler’s ability to attack Catholic doctrine in the work. Tobias Egli, who looked on Graubünden’s Catholics as key allies in his campaign to purge the territory of religious radicals, was keen that Simler should moderate his criticisms even of ubiquitarianism, lest Catholic opinion be offended,²⁶⁴ and Simler himself emphasises the common interest of Reformed and Catholic Rha-

²⁶¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 190r.

²⁶² *Maier*, *Schwenckfeld*, 63.

²⁶³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 210v: »Postremo negat duas esse voluntates Christi in gloria, tempore quidem exinanitionis duas in Christo fuisse voluntates et monotheletas ideo damnatos esse quod ante glorificationem Servatoris unam tantum in eo voluntatem asserverint quod tamen falsum esse omnes norunt, qui vel obiter Acta Synodi inspexerunt.« On this point, see *Maier*, *Schwenckfeld*, 79.

²⁶⁴ Egli to Simler, 20 August 1571 (ZB Ms. F 59, 413r): »Minus autem moleste

etians in standing up to »heresy«. ²⁶⁵ His stance was influenced by theological as well as political considerations. In their exchanges with antitrinitarians and other radicals, the Zurich divines had sought to exempt the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ from the general corruption of apostolic doctrine under the papacy. The inclusion of texts by two popes, Leo and Gelasius, in the *Scripta veterum* was consistent with this position, and had the beneficial side-effect of making the work more palatable to Rhaetian Catholics. Simler's friendships with Catholic scholars such as Aegidius Tschudi, with whom he collaborated on a new history of the Swiss Confederation, and his favourable citation of Cassander – a reformist Catholic – in the *Scripta veterum* itself, provide further evidence of his relatively irenic attitude towards Catholicism. It is striking that Catholics are the only major non-Reformed group not to be charged directly with either Nestorianism or Eutychianism in the work.

Nonetheless, the *Scripta veterum* contains a significant amount of covert polemic against Catholicism. In the preface addressed to the Rhaetian Leagues, for example, Simler describes Leo and Gelasius as representating »the ancient discipline of the church, which had not yet been corrupted to such a great extent« (»illa veteri et nondum adeo corrupta Ecclesiae disciplina«), thereby establishing a clear distinction between these theologically trustworthy popes and their contemporary successors in Rome. ²⁶⁶ Specific Catholic doctrinal positions are also targeted in the volume. In the *Annotationes* for *Ad Trasimundum*, Simler casts doubt on the authority of the Vulgate, contrasting Fulgentius's use of alternative Latin versions of scripture with the »superstitious« attachment of »some today« to Jerome's translation. ²⁶⁷ In the *Narratio*, he uses the al-

ferimus, quod in Ubiquitatis monstro depingendo brevior te morbus iniquus fecit: sic enim Papistis nostris minori offensionis futurum speramus.«

²⁶⁵ ZB Ms. F 46, 349f.: »Und wiewol ettlich gemeinden und gerichten der Roemischen oder wie sy sich nemmend der Catholischen religion sind hoff ich doch sy söllind dise min arbeit nitt für übel uffnehmen, dann dise secten gleich wol inen alß auch unß widerig sind / so mag auch zü gmeiner frid und einigkeit nitt erhalten werden«. Cited in *Taplin*, *Italian Reformers*, 249, n. 146.

²⁶⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, * 2r.

²⁶⁷ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 140r: »Apparet autem hinc Fulgentium non ita se superstitiose astrinxisse translationi vulgatae, ut hodie quidam faciunt.« Cf. *Fulgentius of*

leged heretical leanings of two early popes, Vigilius and Honorius I (625–638) to challenge the notion of papal infallibility. Simler reproduces evidence from Liberatus of Vigilius's close and corrupt relationship with the monophysite empress Theodora,²⁶⁸ while from Honorius's condemnation as a monothelete by the Sixth Ecumenical Council he concludes that »at that time popes were not yet exempt from all judgment and scrutiny by synods«. ²⁶⁹ Elsewhere he highlights the failure of the papal legates at Chalcedon to overturn the council's twenty-eighth canon, which accorded the see of Constantinople second place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy after Rome and was to become an important bone of contention between the western and eastern churches.²⁷⁰

Other passages are suggestive of a link between Catholicism and Christological heresy. As we have seen, Simler identifies the monophysite bishop Peter the Fuller as the originator of the (Catholic) practice of addressing prayers to the Virgin. Catholics and Eutychians are also said to resemble one another in their understanding of the Eucharist, with the latter comparing the divinisation of Christ's humanity in the incarnation to the transubstantiation of the sacramental bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. The Reformed position on the sacrament, by contrast, is aligned with the uncorrupted doctrine of the primitive Roman church, as expounded by Pope Gelasius, who opposed any suggestion of a hypostatic union between the Eucharistic elements and Christ's divinity.²⁷¹ In addition, Simler hints at an important indirect connec-

Ruspe, Libri tres ad Trasimundum Vandalorum regem (CCSL 91, 95–195; PL 65, 223–304) 2,15. The same point is made in the »Annotationes« for Maxentius; see *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 72r.

²⁶⁸ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 203r–204v. Cf. Liberat. 22. Simler defends the reliability of Liberatus's report, which others had dismissed as an interpolation.

²⁶⁹ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 206v: »Maxime tamen omnium memorabile est quod Honorius P.P. haereseos damnatus est, et ab ipsa Synodo et ab Imperatore et a Leone II. PP. adeo tum nondum erant Papae ab omni iudicio et cognitione Synodorum exempti.« Cf. *Ecclesiastica Historia*, vol. 7, 553 f., where Honorius is classified as a monothelete. See also Georg *Kreuzer*, *Die Honoriusfrage im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart 1975 (Päpste und Papsttum 8), 185–190.

²⁷⁰ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 196r.

²⁷¹ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 88r: »Porro in nostri Gelasii verbis quaeritur, quomodo sacramenta seu symbola transeant in divinam substantiam: ac primum ex ipsius verbis constat, illa non transsubstantiari, ut substantia panis esse desinat: inquit enim ea manere in suae proprietate naturae: neque forma aut figura illorum mutatur, quod nemo

tion between Catholicism and Nestorianism. Cyril had won Rome's support for his campaign against Nestorius in part because the latter was perceived as sympathetic to Pelagianism. This association was reinforced by Cassian, whose *De incarnatione* includes the recantation of the former Pelagian Leporius.²⁷² In his *Annotationes* on the text, Simler endorses Cassian's position, despite the absence of corroborating testimony from Augustine.²⁷³ He returns to the issue in the *Narratio*, noting the condemnation at Ephesus of Pelagius and his follower Caelestius, who is said by Cyril to have spoken out in support of Nestorius.²⁷⁴ Although the Pelagian and Nestorian heresies were superficially very different, one relating to Christ's office, the other to his being, Simler perceives a natural affinity between the two: Nestorius's doctrine of two Christs, God the Word and the divinised man Jesus, linked only »by partnership and dignity« (»societate et dignitate«), fits seamlessly with the Pelagian doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature.²⁷⁵ Given that »Pelagianism« was the heresy most frequently associated with the papacy by Reformed writers, the anti-Catholic significance of Simler's comments is unmistakable. He goes on to make the point that, whereas in the East Nestorianism was largely rooted out, in the western church its Pelagian sister heresy gained the upper hand to the extent that »for several centuries the memory of the benefits of Christ was completely extinguished«, despite the best efforts of Jerome, Augustine and Prosper of Aquitaine.²⁷⁶

unquam dixit, multo minus iunguntur divinitati hypostatice: transeunt ergo in divinam substantiam, quod per significationem cum divina substantia coniunguntur, cum antea fuerint res prophanæ, divino autem instituto opera Spiritus sancti asciscuntur ad usum sacramenti. Ita autem mutationem accipere veteres in symbolis sacris, multis testimoniis ostendi potest«. Cf. Pope *Gelasius I*, *Tractatus de duabus naturis in Christo adversus Eutychem et Nestorium* (PL Supplementum 3, 763–787) 14.

²⁷² Cassian. c. Nest. 1,5.

²⁷³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 48r.

²⁷⁴ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 170v, 174v.

²⁷⁵ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 169v.

²⁷⁶ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 169v: »Opposuerunt se Pelagiano furori celeberrimi eius tempestatis Latinae ecclesiae doctores Hieronymus, Augustine, Prosper et alii, damnata est eius doctrina aliquot synodis, in Palaestina et Africa, et in celeberrimo illo quoque Ephesino conventu quo Nestorius damnatus est, nihilominus reliquiae huius haereseos victoriam obtinuerunt, nam ex his seminibus pullularunt illa encomia humanorum meritum, quibus memoria beneficiorum Christi aliquot seculis pene extincta fuit.«

5.5 The »ubiquitarians«

In his prefaces to the *Scripta veterum*, Simler emphasises the threat posed by the Samosatensians and other radicals, but in the *Narratio* and *Annotationes* he expands the focus of his attacks to take in the »ubiquitarian« Christology of the Württemberg Lutherans. Simler drew a clear distinction between the Lutherans and those »heretics« against whom his previous polemical works had been directed. He acknowledged that the German churches included many pious and orthodox Christians within their ranks, and was optimistic that, with good will on both sides, the differences between Lutherans and Reformed could be overcome or at least mitigated. In his preface to Bullinger's *Adhortatio ad omnes verbi ministros, ut contentiones mutuas deponant*, he holds up the Polish Consensus of Sandomierz (1570), which united Lutherans, Reformed and Bohemian Brethren against antitrinitarianism, as an example of what could be achieved;²⁷⁷ elsewhere, he commends the Gnesio-Lutheran theologian Johannes Wigand on his efforts in defence of Nicene orthodoxy.²⁷⁸ However, this irenic attitude did not extend to the Württembergers, whom Simler blamed for aggravating the schism between the German and Swiss churches. When, in the *Narratio*, he warns against the danger of allowing theological disputes to become poisoned by personal animus and invective, it is likely that he has Brenz and his disciples in mind.²⁷⁹ In his later work *De vera praesentia*, he attempts to drive a wedge between the »Brentiani« and »lovers of peace« in Germany by demonstrating the conformity of Reformed teaching with the doctrines of the ancient church and the Augsburg Confession (aside from the article on the Eucharist).²⁸⁰ This strategy is foreshadowed in the *Scripta veterum*, where Simler emphasises the »Nestorian« and »Eutychian« character of the ubiquitous position, distinguishing it from the supposedly more orthodox Christology of Luther himself. Although keen to take the heat out of the Eucharistic controversy,

²⁷⁷ Cited in *Wotschke*, *Briefwechsel*, 348, n. 1.

²⁷⁸ *Simler*, *De aeterno*, 250r. The second book of Wigand's »De Deo, contra arianos novos in Polonia exortos« (1566) was included in Beza's *Gentile* anthology.

²⁷⁹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 175v–176r.

²⁸⁰ *Simler*, *De vera praesentia*, 3r, 5v, 7r.

which had done such profound damage to the cause of Protestant unity, Simler seems to have viewed ubiquitarianism in a quite different light. At stake in this debate was not just the understanding of the sacrament, an issue on which it might be possible to agree to differ, but the fundamental »catholic« doctrines of God and Christ, which Simler saw as fatally undermined by Brenz's insistence on a real communication of attributes between the human and divine natures of Christ. For that reason, he tends to bracket the Württembergers not with the Protestant mainstream but with more clearly »heretical« thinkers such as Schwenckfeld.

Simler's first task was to rebut the charge of Nestorianism traditionally levelled against the Zurichers by their opponents. Once again, he finds a clear precedent for this scenario in the history of the early church, which furnishes numerous examples of orthodox churchmen (Ibas of Edessa, Macedonius of Constantinople, Flavian of Antioch) who were denounced as Nestorians and persecuted for upholding the faith of Chalcedon; from the works of Leo and Vigilius, it would seem that this was a common calumny of the Eutychians, who repeatedly accused the orthodox church of subscribing to Nestorius's heresy.²⁸¹ Simler denies that Reformed Christology serves to undermine the hypostatic union. Although Christ's glorified flesh is »locally« present only in heaven, his divinity fills creation »not as the Word apart from the flesh but as the Word united to the flesh«. When the Reformed deny that Christ's body is present substantially in the elements of the Lord's Supper, they »do not separate Christ's divinity from his humanity, but the substance of his human nature from the bread«. Wherever the divine Word is at work, it is as Emmanuel, the Word made flesh, in union with his »conjoined humanity«. It is impossible for Christ's humanity to be omnipresent or infinitely extensible, as the ubiquitarians contend, since »a body that retains its nature cannot be present except locally and in a corporeal manner.«²⁸² At the

²⁸¹ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 179v.

²⁸² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 190r: »cum igitur dicimus Christi corpus non esse ita realiter et substantialiter praesens in Coena, ut cum pane a ministro porrigatur, et oraliter a piis atque impiis sumatur, hoc enim multi asserunt, non Christi divinitatem ab humanitate separamus, sed humanae naturae substantiam a pane separamus: et a terris et pane ac vino Coenae, nequaquam vero a divinitate corpus Christi tantum distare dicimus, quantum supremum coelum a terra distat. Dicimus igitur ubicunque est divi-

Colloquy of Maulbronn (1564), Andreae himself accepted that Christ's humanity was restricted to one place during his earthly mission, so how can he now argue that the Reformed position entails a sundering of the two natures?²⁸³ Although the location of Christ's glorified flesh was a marginal issue for the Fathers, Simler is able nonetheless to assemble evidence of patristic support for the Zurich position from Theodoret, Vigilius, Fulgentius and, crucially, Cyril, who teaches that Christ is present on earth following the ascension not carnally, but spiritually and through his divinity.²⁸⁴

Like previous Zurich writers against Lutheranism, Simler is at pains to demonstrate Zwingli's orthodoxy, a cause that had become inextricably bound up with the honour of the Zurich church. In particular, he defends Zwingli's much-criticised application of the term *alloiosis* to the hypostatic union. Employing the characteristic Bullingerian distinction between the *verbum* and *res* of theological discourse, Simler argues that *alloiosis* in Zwingli is equivalent to what Cassian calls *synecdoche* and John Damascene *antidosis*: all of these terms connote an exchange of properties, on a verbal level, between two intimately connected realities. The Lutherans do Zwingli a great injustice when they accuse him of reducing Christ to a mere man, divine in name only. His teachings can in no way be compared to the position of Nestorius, who showed his rejection of the *communicatio idiomatum* by advoca-

nitatis sive in coelo sive in terra, sive in actione Coenae sive extra illam suis adest, ibi habet coniunctam humanitatem, agit enim omnia non ut nudum absque carne Verbum, sed ut Immanuel sive Verbum incarnatum, si autem inde efficeretur humanam Christi naturam realiter et substantialiter illic praesentem esse, omnino statuere oporteret extensionem humanae naturae in infinitum, ut loco omni adsit, corpus enim suam naturam servans non nisi localiter et corporaliter praesens esse potest.«

²⁸³ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 190r: »Porro quod Iacobus Andreae in Mulbrunnensi colloquio respondet humanitatem Christi ab ipsa conceptione habuisse potestatem et possessionem Maiestatis qua posset ubique praesens esse, verum illa non esse usum, sed in uno loco fuisse localiter, id ad nostram defensionem nobis sufficit, quod scilicet naturae non separentur etiamsi humana Christi natura in uno solo loco sit, divina nihilominus ubique: ac recte inde Heidelbergenses argumentati sunt.« Cf. Protocollum hoc est, Acta Colloquii inter Palatinos et Wirtebergicos Theologos, de Ubiquitate sive Omnipraesentia corporis Christi [...], Heidelberg: Michael Schirat, 1566 (VD 16 B 7854f.), 28, 86–94, 102, 133f., 136.

²⁸⁴ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 189v.

ting a twofold worship of Christ, as both the divine Word and the man Jesus indwelt by divinity.²⁸⁵

Simler goes further, seeking to turn the accusation of Nestorianism back on to the ubiquitarians themselves. The posturing of Brenz and his followers, »who cast themselves as the sole defenders of the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ«, is compared to the arrogance of Nestorius, who boasted of having recovered the true doctrine of Christ.²⁸⁶ The writings of the Fathers against monophysitism provide Simler with further ammunition. Justinian, Vigilius, Gelasius and Maxentius accuse those who speak of two natures before, though not after, the union of imitating Nestorius, as their position implies the existence of a separate human hypostasis of Christ prior to the incarnation. Taking his cue from these writers, Simler highlights Nestorian-sounding passages in Brenz's works in which the latter speaks of the son of Mary as filled with the Son of God or of the Son of God as assuming the son of Mary.²⁸⁷ In the same way, Andreae is criticised for teaching that the man Jesus is called God »not because he is God in himself, but because in taking on his flesh [God] gave this man all power in heaven and on earth, and endowed him with all knowledge, and communicated to him every gift of the holy spirit«. ²⁸⁸ In Simler's view, this is to posit two persons in Christ, subject, as in Nestorius, to a twofold worship.²⁸⁹ Worse still, by asserting the deification of Christ's humanity through its assumption of divine properties, the ubiquitarians give succour to the Samosatenians of Transylvania,

²⁸⁵ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 188r.

²⁸⁶ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 173v: »Ac [Nestorius] se magnifice iactat, quemadmodum nostra quidem aetate quidam se solos Maiestatis Domini nostri Iesu Christi vindices esse asserunt«.

²⁸⁷ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 190r. Cf. Johannes *Brenz*, *Recognitio propheticae et apostolicae de vera maiestate Domini nostri Iesu Christi [...]*, Tübingen: Ulrich Morhart the Elder, 1564 (VD 16 B 7785), 40f. Beza cites the same passages, to make a similar point, in his preface to Christoph Hardsheim's »Refutatio dogmatis de fictitia carnis Christi omnipraesentia« (CTB 12, 66f. [no. 828]).

²⁸⁸ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 190v: »Iacobus Andreae non tantum eadem cum suo Brentio asserit, sed docet etiam Christum hominem dici Deum non quia sit Deus in ipso, sed quia in assumptione carnis dedit huic homini omnem potestatem in coelo et in terra, et ornavit eum omni scientia, et communicavit ei omnia dona spiritus sancti.«

²⁸⁹ *Simler*, Scripta veterum, 190v. The point is reiterated in *Simler*, *De vera praesentia*, 88r, 96r–97r, 98r.

who ascribe to Christ a derivative divinity on account of his miraculous conception and the power and spiritual gifts bestowed on him by God.²⁹⁰ Andreae's attempts to make the hypostatic union dependent on the transfusion of divine attributes to the man Jesus threaten either to undermine the distinction of persons within the Trinity or to turn Christ into »a deified man, adorned with divine gifts, which comes close to the impiety of the Samosatensians.«²⁹¹

There is an element of polemical point-scoring in Simler's claim to have detected a Nestorianising strand in the Christology of the ubiquitarians, but he is on surer ground when seeking evidence of monophysitism in their works. In the final chapter of the *Narratio*, the doctrine of ubiquity is assimilated to the teachings of the »fanatic« Schwenckfeld and his followers, already identified as the prime representatives of contemporary Eutychianism. Simler is not blind to the differences between the two groups. He accepts that, unlike Schwenckfeld, Brenz and Andreae acknowledge the creatureliness of Christ's flesh, and credits them with greater subtlety than the Silesian reformer. For example, they accept that the *communicatio idiomatum* is to be understood »personaliter«, rather

²⁹⁰ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 191r: »Velim autem hunc ubiuitatis episcopum [Andreae], quem a Samosatensicis furoribus quos Blandrata et Franciscus Davidis in Hungaria spargunt, alienum esse arbitror, bene secum expendere, quantam eorum causae roboris et firmamenti suppeditet: si enim creata natura in sese donari potest ea gloria et maiestate divina, ut exaequetur creatori et sit in sese adoranda, habent illi magnam ianuam apertam ad sua dogmata stabilienda. Docent autem Christum unius tantum esse naturae, hominem conceptum ex spiritu sancto et natum ex Maria virgine, esse autem hunc hominem Deum, tum propter conceptum e spiritu sancto, tum propter dona spiritus sancti sine mensura, et potestatem a Deo concessam.«

²⁹¹ Simler, *Scripta veterum*, 191r-v: »Urgeant autem quantum velint communicationem proprietatum et essentialium perfectionem non aliam unionem statuere hinc poterunt quam quae hominem Christum personam aliam a Verbo faciat, et Deum non natura sed ex gratia, proprietates enim illae essentialis tribus personis Trinitatis ex aequo communes sunt, et earum communicatio est opus totius Trinitatis, opera enim Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa: etsi igitur filius haec habet aeterna generatione, et ita sapiens est genita sapientia, tamen cum communicantur hae proprietates creaturae non communicantur eo modo quo filius habet, quo differt non re sed modo habendi (ut in rebus divinis habendi verbo improprie utamur) sed realiter ut adversarii dicuntur transfunduntur, cum autem re ipsa eadem sit patris et filii et spiritus sancti sapientia et potentia, et communicatio quoque opus ad extra commune sit tribus personis, non potest unio personalis in hac communione aut transfusione constitui, nisi dicamus Trinitati unitum esse hominem Christum, vel statuamus eum esse hominem divinis donis ornatum et Deificatum quod accedit ad Samosatensianorum impietatem.«

than »essentialiter et naturaliter«, a position compatible with Chalcedon. Yet their central argument – that the divine attributes, especially ubiquity, are assumed by the man Jesus – can only lead to a »Eutychian« confusion of Christ’s two natures. The Württembergers may pay lip service to orthodoxy but, like Schwenckfeld and Eutyches, who made similar claims, they must be judged on their writings. Simler highlights statements in which the »Brentiani« appear to teach both the passibility of Christ’s divine nature and the incorporation of his humanity into the Godhead. On Christ’s ascension, the location of his glorified body in heaven and his second coming, ubiquitarian teaching is clearly refuted by the Fathers, whose writings offer the correct perspective on contemporary Christological debates. Moreover, in attempting to reconcile their peculiar dogmas with formal adherence to Chalcedonian orthodoxy, the ubiquitarians have arrived at a position that is hopelessly incoherent and self-contradictory. Thus they concede that Christ’s humanity must be circumscribed »in itself«, but seek to rescue the doctrine of ubiquity by claiming that the Saviour’s glorified body is made omnipresent in a hitherto unheard-of manner, the *modum maiestatis*.²⁹² Simler’s trump card is the former Lutheran hero Philip Melanchthon, now posthumously appropriated for the Reformed cause, »who states clearly that this physical communication of idioms is nothing other than a confusion of natures«. ²⁹³

6. Conclusion

In the *Scripta veterum*, the full range of Simler’s intellectual interests is on display, from theology and textual commentary through to history, biography and bibliography. The volume recapitulates

²⁹² *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 211V–212r.

²⁹³ *Simler*, *Scripta veterum*, 210v: »Philippus Melanchthon, cuius sanctis laboribus multum debet universa Germania, diserte testatur hanc Physicam communionem Idiomatum, nihil aliud esse quam naturarum confusionem.« Cf. *Bullinger*, *Responsio*, 69v. For Melanchthon’s opposition to ubiquitarian Christology, see Irene *Dingel*, *Melanchthon und die Normierung des Bekenntnisses*, in: *Der Theologe Melanchthon*, ed. Günter Frank, Stuttgart 2000 (*Melanchthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten* 5), 195–211 (209–211).

themes from his earlier controversial writings, targeted primarily against antitrinitarianism, and anticipates his subsequent detailed refutation of the Lutheran doctrine of Christ, *De vera praesentia*, in which he made considerable use of the texts anthologised in the *Scripta veterum*. The tension between scholarly and polemical concerns that manifests itself in the work is reflective of the hybrid nature of Simler's role, as both a humanist-trained academic and a public representative of the Zurich church, tasked with defending Zwinglian doctrine against its enemies. Throughout his career, Simler's scholarship was interwoven with polemic against the Catholic, Lutheran, antitrinitarian, Schwenckfeldian and Anabaptist alternatives to Reformed Protestantism. In the *Scripta veterum*, his aim is at once to demonstrate the unanimity of the Fathers, as witnesses to the Christological teaching of the early church, and to establish the Reformed as their legitimate successors. Evidence of apparent disagreement – between Cyril and the Antiochenes, or between the eastern and western theological traditions – is smoothed over or explained away, in order to preserve intact the illusion of a *consensus patrum* consistent with Reformed orthodoxy. The volume testifies to the deep attachment of the Zurich reformers to what they regarded as authentic Christian tradition (as distinct from the subsequent »innovations« of the papacy) and their rejection of the apostolic primitivism favoured by some radicals. Whereas the positions of the Zurich church's opponents are discredited by association with the Nestorian and monophysite heresies, the Reformed are placed in a clear line of descent from the Fathers, whose efforts in defence of the orthodox faith provide the inspiration for Simler's own anti-heretical campaign.

Appendix

Johannes Pontisella to Josias Simler

Chur, 3 September 1571

Zurich ZB Ms. F 61, 7

[Address:] Clarissimo viro Domino Iosiae Simlero, Tiguri Sacrarum literarum professori celeberrimo, Domino suo honorando, perpetuaque fide colendo.

S.P.D. Ego quidem facile ad credendum inducor (vir Clarissime) Ebionis, Cerinthi, et aliorum haereticorum rabiem, furiarumque in impiis dogmatibus ululatum, primitivae illi Ecclesiae, triste admodum, et luctuosum fuisse spectaculum, cum videlicet illi, qui Apostolos ipsos doctores habuissent, coacti fuerint videre, et auribus percipere, simplicem de Dei filio doctrinam, foede corrumpi, misereque dilacerari. At procul dubio, divina providentia ita ordinante, satanica illa organa, eo potissimum tempore, rabiem et virus suum evomere, quo adhuc superstes esset is, qui impuris istis hominibus os execratum et blasphemum obdurare, et Domini nostri Iesu Christi divinitatem assere [sic] posset, videlicet S. Iohannes Evangelista et Apostolus: qui aliquando in filii Dei pectore recubuerat, et Spiritum eius largiter hauserat: ita ut miseros homines in errorem inductos, facile in viam rectam reducere, et in pura fide confirmare, retinereque posset. Opus insuper praestantissimum, Evangelium videlicet Sacrosanctum ab ipso Iohanne posteris relictum, quo ipso tanquam validissimo scuto, ad venenata spicula, à Satana, in Iesu Christi divinitatem emissa, excipere valent. Certe Ignatius et Polycarpus, S. Iohannis discipuli, et horum auditor Irenaeus, hunc clypeum arripuit, adversus haereticos ex Satanae castris prodeuntes, et Christi Domini naturam appetentes, pugnaturus. Insequentibus deinde temporibus cum Satan, pro suo ingenio, alias atque alias machinas, ad Iesu Christi naturas oppugnandas pararet, Optimi, Maximique Dei beneficio, extiterunt et complures alii, qui modo dictorum vestigiis insistentes acriter puram et synceram de Dei filio doctrinam sunt tutati, quos tu in hoc tuo opere (vir Clarissime) producis ac commemoras. At quam dulce, quamque iucundum est, eiusmodi praecellentium virorum, in purioris

fidei defensione, consensum videre? Equidem ego hunc tuum conatum et laborem, quo maxime strenuos haeresium oppugnatores, unico opere coniunxisti, omnibus quibus modo animus nulla malevolentia fuerit suffusus, facile probatum iri speraverim. Ex hoc enim opere cuius facile erit, solida et perspicua desumere argumenta, quibus blasphemorum ora ita obstruat, ut ne mutire quidem amplius valeant. Haud igitur immerito opus hoc tuum haereticorum malleus dici poterit. Mihi quidem hoc donum gratissimum extitit, tibi que (Vir Clarissime) pro hoc munere gratias maximas et ago, et habeo, habiturusque sum perpetuo. Et Amplissimus vir D. Stephanus Willius, Cons. dignissimus, gratias ingentes suo nomine tibi agere iussit, se relaturum quoque, sicubi occasio sese obtulerit, pollicetur. Christum Dominum aeterni Dei filium rogamus, ut is te Ecclesiae suae quam diutissimum salvum et incolumem servare dignetur. Amplissimus D. Cons. salutem plurimam suo nomine adscribere iussit. Meo quoque nomine Clarissimos viros D.D. Bullingerum, Gualtherum, Lavatherum et alios notos salutare digneris. Bene valeas, vir Clarissime, meque in tuorum numero habere digneris.

Curiae Rhaetorum 3 Non. Septemb. Anno 71.

Iohannes Pontisella Senior tui observantissimus.

Mark Taplin, PhD, Edinburgh

Abstract: During the 1560s and early 1570s, Josias Simler established himself as one of Zurich's foremost theologians and intellectuals. Simler was known to contemporaries not just as an erudite defender of orthodox Reformed teaching, especially against anti-trinitarianism and other forms of religious radicalism, but as an accomplished humanist scholar. Both aspects of his activity are on display in the *Scripta veterum latina*, a volume of patristic texts published in August 1571. In this work, which includes a detailed account of Christological disputes during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, Simler follows the practice of Heinrich Bullinger and other Zurich writers in using church history to demonstrate the orthodoxy and catholicity of Reformed doctrine and to discredit the teachings of its Lutheran, Catholic and radical opponents. While acknowledging differences in emphasis in the works of the church Fathers, he argues for an overall *consensus patrum* on Christological matters that is in harmony with the position of the Zurich church.

Keywords: Josias Simler, Heinrich Bullinger, patristics, church history, Christology, Johannes Brenz, Francesco Stancaro, Nestorianism, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, monophysitism, Kaspar Schwenckfeld