



Documenter les défis de l'Église miophysite tardo-antique

17-18 MARS 2022
CHÂTEAU D'ANGERS

colloque-documenter-miaphysisme.net

Presentation

Documenter les défis de l'Église miaphysite tardo-antique Entre 536 et 588 (date probable de la mort de Jean d'Éphèse), un événement historique frappant et inattendu se produit à l'échelle de l'Empire romain chrétien d'Orient : la restructuration d'une importante Église institutionnelle (principalement en Syrie, en Mésopotamie et en Egypte) et à ses frontières (voire même au-delà, jusqu'au Soudan moderne). Basée sur une affirmation miaphysite (une seule nature incarnée de Dieu le Verbe) résolument distinguée du dogme officiel, cette communauté doit justifier son existence (sur les plans théologique, canonique et historique) et développer sa dynamique. En effet, il devient alors de plus en plus clair que l'empereur continuera à promouvoir la communauté chalcédonienne comme l'Église officielle. Sans soutien du souverain et même parfois persécutée, la communauté miaphysite entend néanmoins continuer à perpétuer son action. Ce processus offre donc la rare opportunité d'observer les modalités d'une "reconstruction de l'Église", qui cherche toujours à maintenir un lien fort avec son passé et ses traditions. Ainsi donc un important effort est alors consenti pour doter les Églises miaphysites d'une armature doctrinale et canonique, au moment où elles sont confrontées à des défis vitaux. Il convient donc d'examiner cette entreprise en profondeur. Car elle a pour caractéristique de viser à faire mémoire d'un passé récent encore, à l'exploiter aussi, pour définir une identité collective. Aussi notre réunion aura-t-elle vocation à considérer l'ampleur et la variété de ce corpus ainsi que ses caractéristiques. Ou pour le dire autrement, elle cherchera à répondre aux questions suivantes : comment se constituent les fonds, quelle en sont les dimensions, comment sont-ils rendus accessibles (langue et part des traductions), qui prend l'initiative de les réunir ou d'y puiser ? Selon quel agenda ? Selon quels critères ? Dans quel but ? S'agit-il seulement de produire les documents en misant sur une démonstration implicite servie par le choix et la mise en ordre du compilateur ? Ou bien faut-il insérer les pièces dans un récit explicatif, quitte à les découper ou les abrégé ? Jusqu'à quel point ? Selon quels modèles ? Quelles relations ces collections et narrations entretiennent-elles les unes par rapport aux autres (interaction, complément, contradiction, réfutation, substitution...) ? Pourquoi sont-elles préservées à leur tour ? Et quel usage peut encore en être fait lorsque certains des manuscrits sont recopiés dans le contexte de la domination arabo-musulmane, au VIIIe et IXe s. ?

Comité d'organisation

- P. Blaudeau (*Université d'Angers/IUF/TEMOS*),
- C. Fauchon-Claudon (*ENS Lyon/HISOMA*)
- E. Nechaeva (*Université de Lille/HALMA*)

Comité scientifique

- P. Blaudeau (*Université d'Angers/IUF/TEMOS*)
- A. Camplani (*Università La Sapienza, Rome*)
- P. Van Nuffelen (*Ghent University*)
- E. Watts (*University of California San Diego*)

Presentation

Documenting the Challenges of the Late Antique Miaphysite Church Between 536 and 588 (the probable date of the death of John of Ephesus), a striking and unexpected historical event occurred on the scale of the Eastern Christian Roman Empire : the restructuring of an important institutional Church (mainly in Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt) and on its borders (even beyond, as far as modern Sudan). Based on a miaphysite affirmation (one incarnate nature of God the Word) resolutely distinguished from the official dogma, this community had to justify its existence (theologically, canonically and historically) and develop its dynamics. Indeed, it becomes increasingly clear that the emperor will continue to promote the Chalcedonian community as the official church. Without the support of the sovereign and even sometimes persecuted, the Miaphysite community nevertheless intends to continue its action. This process thus offers the rare opportunity to observe the modalities of a "reconstruction of the Church", which always seeks to maintain a strong link with its past and its traditions. Thus, an important effort is made to provide the Miaphysite Churches with a doctrinal and canonical framework at a time when they were facing vital challenges. It is therefore appropriate to examine this undertaking in depth. For it is characteristically aimed at remembering a still recent past, and also at exploiting it, in order to define a collective identity. Our meeting will therefore consider the extent and variety of this corpus as well as its characteristics. Or to put it another way, it will seek to answer the following questions : how are the collections constituted, what are their dimensions, how are they made accessible (language and share of translations), who takes the initiative to gather them or to draw from them? According to what agenda? According to what criteria? With what purpose? Is it only a matter of producing the documents by relying on an implicit demonstration served by the compiler's choice and arrangement? Or should the pieces be inserted into an explanatory narrative, even if it means cutting them up or shortening them? To what extent? According to which models? How do these collections and narratives relate to each other (interaction, complement, contradiction, refutation, substitution...)? Why are they preserved in turn? And what use can be made of them when some of the manuscripts are copied in the context of Arab-Muslim domination, in the 8th and 9th centuries?

Organisational Comitee

- P. Blaudeau (*Université d'Angers/IUF/TEMOS*),
- C. Fauchon-Claudon (*ENS Lyon/HISOMA*)
- E. Nechaeva (*Université de Lille/HALMA*)

Scientific Comitee

- P. Blaudeau (*Université d'Angers/IUF/TEMOS*)
- A. Camplani (*Università La Sapienza, Rome*)
- P. Van Nuffelen (*Ghent University*)
- E. Watts (*University of California San Diego*)

1 SESSION A

Définir une identité, revendiquer des figures d'autorité

Présidence : *Alberto Camplani*

9h30-10h - Volker Menze, *Central European University, Vienna*

The “Last Pharaoh’s” Afterlife : Patriarch Dioscorus’ Sanctification in the non-Chalcedonian Tradition

Dioscorus of Alexandria (444-451) was not the first bishop of Alexandria whom opponents called “pharaoh” because of the powerful position of Alexandrian bishops within Mediterranean Christianity. However, Dioscorus was the last “pharaoh” because the Council of Chalcedon in 451 not only deposed him but also supplanted Alexandria’s pole position in the eastern Mediterranean with Constantinople. Dioscorus was sent into exile in Asia Minor where he died September 4, 454. For the opponents of the Council of Chalcedon, Dioscorus became an obvious protagonist for commemoration as confessor against a Council that divided eastern Christianity. Despite his crucial role and premier position, however, Dioscorus was a difficult hero to commemorate and sanctify. This was less because he did not compose theological treatises that were worth trading down but rather the procedure of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 for which Dioscorus as its president was blamed. The Second Council of Ephesus became remembered in western Church History as “Robber-Council” but surprisingly also in the non-Chalcedonian tradition it is not regarded as the Third Ecumenical Council – although Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) had declared it ecumenical. Instead, also the non-Chalcedonian tradition established the Chalcedonian conciliar history of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431) – only leaving out Chalcedon (451). The non-Chalcedonians to some extent also accepted the Chalcedonian narrative of Patriarch Dioscorus as responsible for the uncanonical procedure and physical violence at the Second Council of Ephesus. This complicated Dioscorus’ sanctification, and I will discuss in my paper how the non-Chalcedonians commemorated their last pharaoh.

10h-10h30 - Edward Watts, *University of California San Diego*

Timothy Aelurus : The Orthodox and Loyal Bishop in a Post-Chalcedonian Roman World

This paper examines the so-called “Book of Timothy [Aelurus]” that makes up the first 91 folios of the 137-folio long manuscript BL Add 12,156. It argues that this is a carefully planned and deliberately structured editorial project that has a coherent narrative and thematic progression. Using current scholarship on the malleability of the raw materials in late antique letter collections, the paper shows how the editor of this Syriac work created a unified “Book” as he blended together, contracted, and reorganized significant elements of Timothy Aelurus’s existing corpus of Greek letters, treatises, prayers, and confessions of faith. The result is a mid-sixth century Syriac literary product that traces how the Council of Chalcedon diverged from existing theology, caused the empire to degenerate into persecution, forced Timothy into exile, and allowed Timothy to chart a path toward the repentance of Chalcedonians and their reintegration into an orthodox, anti-Chalcedonian communion. The personality of Timothy then forms the glue around which this sophisticated progression develops.

11h-11h30 - Philip M. Forness, *Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt*

An Early Miaphysite Letter Collection and Its Circulation in the Sixth Century. The Hypomnestikon of Severus of Antioch and the Noblewoman Caesaria

Severus of Antioch enjoyed pride of place among miaphysite theologians from the early sixth century. He wrote exclusively in Greek, but his works underwent translation at an early date and also circulated in the Syriac and Coptic traditions. Miaphysite communities organized his extensive correspondence – written before, during, and after his patriarchate in Antioch – into several distinct collections. More than thirty excerpts of his letters to a noblewoman named Caesaria from the time of his exile in Egypt survive. The titles to six of these excerpts specify that they came from a work entitled the Hypomnestikon, which must have been a gathering of their correspondence formed in the early sixth century. The letters in the Hypomnestikon were later incorporated into several miaphysite works from the late sixth century : Peter of Callinicum’s writings against Damian and two miaphysite florilegia : Mss. London, British Library, Add. 12155 and 14533. This presentation aims to bring together all evidence for the formation and circulation of the Hypomnestikon in order to shed light on how Severus of Antioch’s works were being integrated into the internal miaphysite debates at the end of the sixth century.

11h30-12h - Muriel Debié, EPHE, Paris/IUF

A Miaphysite "synodicon" sent to al-Ḥīra : The letter of Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) to the phylarch Abū Yaʿfur

This fascinating letter addressed by a Miaphysite figure to the phylarch of the Lakhmids in the service of the Sasanians throws an interesting light on the rivalry between the Church of the East and the Miaphysite Church at the frontier of empires and at an Arab court. It shows the type of dogmatic documents discussed in Arab milieu before Islam. This letter was edited from single manuscripts and poses a number of philological issues, in particular the presence of a passage dealing with the Turks that has been considered as a later interpolation. We will address these issues in order to assess the implications of this letter for our understanding of the ecclesiastical diplomacy and diffusion of the dogmatic decisions of the Miaphysite hierarchy.

12h-12h30 - Valentina Grasso, ISAW – New York University

On the Jafnid al-Ḥārith, from the Jafnid al-Ḥārith : Syriac Miaphysite Letters from the 6th Century CE

In a place lacking a shared cultural identity like sixth-century North Arabia, single individuals and dynasties gained prominence and power through shrewd exploitation of faith. The astute choice to adhere to Miaphysite rather than Chalcedonian Christianity provided the Arabian Jafnids with the casus for keeping one foot in and one foot out of Roman sphere and control. In their role as patrons of the Miaphysites, the Jafnids placed themselves on an equal footing (to some extent) with the Romans who were patrons of the other powerful Christian faction, the Chalcedonians. Drawing a cleverly fine line between differentiating themselves from and being like their powerful allies, the Jafnids gained consensus among the Arabian elites, clerics and the rural classes who acknowledged them as their political leaders and perceived them to have greater significance than the Roman emperors in their local milieu. The Jafnids' support of the Miaphysite faction is attested in a group of forty-five Miaphysite documents, mostly letters, contained in a manuscript dated around the sixth/seventh centuries and today kept in the British Library. In the corpus we find a short letter written by the Jafnid leader al-Ḥārith to Jacob Burd'oyo after he left Constantinople in 563, as well as two letters written by the bishops of Constantinople and the East addressed to the Miaphysite Church, and that of Arabia. My paper will examine the history of the Arabian Jafnids and the leading figures of the sixth century Miaphysite episcopal networks. In doing so, I will provide the first English translation of some of the leaves of BL ADD. 14.602, also known as *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas*, a neglected late antique literary source whose study is still in its infancy.

2 SESSION B

Définir une identité, susciter des discours apologétiques et polémiques

Présidence : *Peter Van Nuffelen*

14h15-14h45 - *Costanza Bianchi, FSCIRE, Bologna*

Contra concilium Chalcedonense : elaborazione e sistematizzazione della polemica anti-calcedonese nella chiesa copta

Nel campo degli studi riguardanti il cristianesimo copto un testo che fino ad ora non ha ricevuto sufficiente attenzione da parte dei ricercatori consiste nell'omelia (o forse un breve trattato) conosciuta con il nome di *Contra concilium Chalcedonense* e identificata all'interno della *Clavis Coptica* con il numero cc0966. L'opera è presente in due unità codicologiche ricostruite, ovvero il MONB.CV e il MONB.EF. Dunque, il testo compare in due dei 'manoscritti' che contengono e presentano la letteratura canonica conservata in lingua copta. In particolare, in MONB.EF l'opera in questione viene inserita, non casualmente all'interno del cosiddetto *Corpus Agathoniceum*, un insieme di testi vari che è stato trasmesso sotto il nome fittizio del vescovo Agatonico di Tarso. Le diverse opere presenti all'interno di questo dossier hanno suscitato a più riprese un interesse profondo negli studiosi perché è possibile osservare attraverso questi testi le diverse fasi di redazione ed aggiornamento che dipendevano non solo dal singolo copista, ma dal contesto religioso e culturale in cui questo lavoro veniva svolto. Lo scopo di questo studio si prefigge di analizzare il testo *Contra concilium Chalcedonense* attraverso le questioni e le domande che sono state proposte in occasione dell'incontro «Documenter les défis de l'Église miaphysite tardo-antique» : come si è costituita tale raccolta che vede al suo interno una parte della letteratura canonica in lingua copta unita al dossier di Agatonico a cui è stato aggiunto un testo altrimenti non conosciuto? Chi è o chi sono gli ideatori di un tale progetto letterario? Quali sono le intenzioni del redattore del testo contro il concilio di Calcedonia? E in che modo tale opera viene integrata in un corpus come quello di Agatonico? Quest'opera può essere stata aggiunta per le affinità con il materiale canonico presente all'interno di questa unità codicologica? In che modo, infine, il testo preso in esame ha influito sulla costruzione dell'identità ecclesiale miaphysita? E a quali esigenze ecclesiali rispondeva quest'opera? Nel corso dell'intervento al Colloque internationale sul *Contra concilium Chalcedonense*, queste domande ci guideranno nella disamina e nella comprensione di un testo ancora rimasto sostanzialmente inesplorato.

14h45-15h15 - Mischa Meier, *Universität Tübingen*

Der Apathartodoketismus und Justinian : Quellenprobleme und historische Kontexte

Der Vortrag greift die Frage nach dem 'aphthartodoketischen Edikt' Justinians noch einmal auf und bemüht sich um eine historische Einordnung. Während im ersten Teil des Vortrags auf die komplizierte Frage nach den Quellen eingegangen werden soll, soll im zweiten Teil die Frage nach den historischen Kontexten des Edikts und den möglichen Intentionen des Kaisers thematisiert werden.

The Incurable Wound. The Controversy around Probus as a Permanent Disquiet in Miaphysite History

At the end of the 6th century, the Miaphysite Church went through a last Christological controversy – more technical in character than the one that had risen around Julian of Halicarnassus, but, perhaps, even more insidious as it resulted in the passage to the Chalcedonian party of some of the people involved. Around 581-582, the theologian-philosopher Probus and his teacher, the abbot John Barbur, two collaborators of the Miaphysite patriarch of Antioch Peter of Callinicum, were seduced by a *reductio ad absurdum* of Miaphysite Christology devised by the Chalcedonian philosopher Stephen of Alexandria. After an initial period of resistance and wavering, Probus and John Barbur espoused Stephen's theses; a decade of polemical exchanges, mostly recorded in writing, between Probus, John, and various Miaphysite intellectuals ensued. The two men eventually converted to Chalcedonianism. The actual contour and the details of this controversy, however, remain relatively unclear as the sources for its study (mainly preserved in Syriac) are almost entirely unpublished. The Venice-based ERC project "FLOS – Florilegia Syriaca" is currently realizing a complete edition of the Probus dossier. The present paper will attempt to give a more precise outline of the debates through an introduction to the unedited sources, and it will also touch on the tremendously important role this controversy played in the subsequent definition of Syriac Miaphysite Christology throughout the centuries and as late as the end of the first millennium.

3 SESSION C

Définir une identité, réunir un corpus documentaire ou narrer une histoire

Présidence : *Philippe Blaudeau*

8h30-9h - Philip Wood, *Aga Khan University, London*

Recognising rhetoric : Using the Syriac dossiers to re-read John of Ephesus

Modern historians have often turned to the works of John of Ephesus to reconstruct the history of the Miaphysite movement. But the dossiers of Syriac letters that survive from the mid-sixth century provide an important contrast to John. Firstly, their interest in establishing precedent, in terms of dogma and canonical practice, illustrate the fragmentation of Miaphysite authority in the period, when John was trying hard to represent it as an undivided whole. And secondly, the correspondence illustrates the great importance of Alexandria and its prestigious history, which forms an important counterpoint to John's focus on Constantinople and Mesopotamia.

9h-9h30 - Giorgia Nicosia, *Ghent University*

Defending Orthodoxy : the historiographical excerpts of ms. BL Add. 12,154'

The British Library Manuscript Add. 12,154 is a big miscellaneous codex composed probably at end of the 8th c. or the beginning of the 9th. Despite the variety of content, the file rouge of the manuscript appears to be the defense of orthodoxy, i.e. Miaphysite faith. Not only are the first two treatises explicit defenses of Miaphysite doctrines, but also the rest of the manuscript, made of excerpts from different authorities, revolves around similar themes. Amongst quotations from the Fathers, the manuscript displays four historiographical excerpts, taken from the 'Ecclesiastical Histories' of Eusebius, Zacharia Rhetor, and John of Asia, plus a small biography of Alexander the Great. Some of these excerpts have been published in modern editions, though they never underwent a thorough and comprehensive study or analysis. This paper will focus in particular on these historiographical excerpts. It will examine whether these sections were used to support doctrinal views, how they were connected to the other excerpts of the manuscript, and whether they were inserted into a specific narrative. It will also inspect whether these historiographical excerpts had the same authority as the ones taken from the Fathers, and if they aimed at fostering a sense of Miaphysite identity. In order to so do, I will perform comparisons with other manuscripts coming from Miaphysite milieu and containing historiographical excerpts (e.g. ms. Deir al-Surian Syr. 28A or BL Add. 12,155). In particular, I will analyze the ways excerpts were selected and readapted to fit the new context and aim. Finally, the paper will address the question of the reception and use of this manuscript, likely copied in the years of the Arab-Muslim domination.

10h-10h30 - Claire Fauchon-Claudon, *ENS Lyon*

Construire une Église : consécration et ordinations dans l'œuvre de Jean d'Éphèse

De nombreux travaux ont été consacrés à l'œuvre de Jean d'Éphèse (507-586). Cette enquête vise à mieux comprendre comment l'auteur, à la fois proche du pouvoir chalcédonien et résolument miaphysite, présente les ordinations et les consécration effectuées du côté des miaphysites. Selon une démarche prosopographique, nous reviendrons sur le profil des protagonistes qui effectuent des ordinations et sur celui de ceux qui sont ordonnés. Nous chercherons à mettre en lumière les raisons de ces ordinations, en les replaçant dans leur contexte historique et régional. En comparant les Vies de Saints orientaux et l'Histoire ecclésiastique avec d'autres textes syriaques contemporains d'obédience miaphysite, nous analyserons enfin l'éventuelle spécificité du discours produit par Jean d'Éphèse en matière de consécration et d'ordination.

10h30-11h - Frédéric Alpi, *IFPO, Beyrouth*

Les traducteurs syriaques de Sévère d'Antioche (Paul de Callinique, Jacques d'Édesse, Athanase de Nisibe et autres anonymes) : méthodes et objectifs

Frappée d'interdit par sa condamnation en 536, l'œuvre de Sévère d'Antioche commence alors à disparaître dans sa version grecque originelle, non sans que des fragments ne nous soient parvenus par diverses voies (testimonia haeretici consignés dans des actes synodaux, chaînes exégétiques ou florilèges). Une part importante de sa production théologique et disciplinaire fut toutefois très tôt traduite en syriaque, après sa déposition et la dissolution de la hiérarchie sévérienne en Orient, et peut-être même avant, dans les années de son patriarcat effectif (512-518). Les procédés de traduction du grec vers le syriaque, à fins administratives et pastorales, nous sont aujourd'hui mieux connus en effet. Paul de Callinique, évêque d'Osrhoène démis en 519, représente la première génération de ces traducteurs, contemporaine de Sévère, et les choix opérés alors parmi les œuvres du patriarche s'inscrivent dans les polémiques en cours au sein même du parti anti-chalcédonien. Au début de l'époque omeyyade, le travail systématique de Jacques de Nisibe (ou de Paul d'Édesse) correspond, pour sa part, une phase de stabilisation de l'Église jacobite qui, une fois victorieuse de ses rivaux julianistes, enrichit son corpus théologique de référence. Reconnue par le pouvoir musulman et désormais investie de prérogatives juridictionnelles étendues, elle doit ensuite disposer de références en matière disciplinaire et c'est à cette nécessité que répondra le travail d'Athanase de Nisibe, expressément diligenté par l'épiscopat syriaque.

11h-11h30 - Peter Van Nuffelen, *Ghent University*

The documents of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre

Building on the planned edition of fragments of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (M. Mazzola, A. Hilken, P. Van Nuffelen), this paper studies the use of documents in the history of this ninth-century historian, whose work underpins the accounts of later chroniclers such as Michael the Great and the Chronicle of 1234. Most documents cited are unique (that is, not attested in any other history or collection) and, in relation to the period the conference is interested in, relate mainly to the schism with Alexandria. The paper seeks to determine the role played by the documents in the narrative and to see if we can determine their origin. It will also look at the historiography produced by miaphysite church historians in the seventh and eighth century to see if we can discover traces of their narratives in Dionysius.
