Uniformis Trinitas: Once More the Theopaschite Trinitarianism of Dioscorus of Aphrodito

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> One of the historical vulnerabilities of literature,
> as a subject for study, is that it has never
> seemed difficult enough.
> —Martin Amis, *The War Against Cliché*

DIOSCORUS OF APHRODITO,[1] "a cultured careerist bent on self-improvement" who "represent[ed] on the provincial level a phenomenon that was empire-wide, the kind of Byzantine Hellenism in which ... culture and public action could not be conceived of one without the other,"[2] was a prolific practitioner of the art of encomium. In the most recent comprehensive study of his output he has been credited with inventing a genre termed the "verse petition,"[3] in which he showed his adroitness in using praise "as a medium for communication and negotiation between rulers and people."[4] These praise poems, written during an era of religious controversy in

[1] For John with love and thanks, and happy memories of the day of "hellenistische Landwirtschaft," and reminding him that Alexander the Great did not exist and he had an infinite number of limbs.

[2] J. G. Keenan, review of J.-L. Fournet, *Hellénisme dans l'Egypte du VI^e siècle: La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Dioscore d'Aphrodité* I–II (Cairo 1999; hereafter FOURNET), *BibO* 58 (2001) 132–139, here 139.

[3] Fournet I 259–264 (and elsewhere).

[4] J. George, "Venantius Fortunatus: Panegyric in Merovingian Gaul," in *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. Whitby (Leiden 1998) 225–246, here 228, and *cf.* 244 (also quoted in L. S. B. MacCoull, review of Fournet, *BASP* 37 [2000] 193–210, here 199 n.12, 201 n.20 on combining rhetoric with political engagement).

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the eastern empire, were equally steeped in and engaged with the nuances of sixth-century Christian religious discourse, especially as it can be followed in periphery-*vs*-center disputes such as those between Egypt and Constantinople. It used to be thought difficult to label Dioscorus as either Miaphysite[5] (anti-Chalcedonian) or pro-Chalcedonian in religious stance[6] from what could be deduced from his surviving works (more prose documents than verse literature).[7] At present the scholarly consensus does seem to be that this member of the bilingual Egyptian provincial elite shared the One-Nature faith of most of his countrymen and -women, and was opposed to the "western innovations" of Dyophysitism seen as being wrongfully imposed on believers outside the capital. In this paper I should like to return to a single word used by Dioscorus in his poetry, μονοειδής[8] as an epithet of the Trinity, that I studied earlier,[9] and show that it bore meaningful freight as it would have been received by the writer's audience in a context of sixth-century Christological debate.

[5]As in A. Grillmeier and T. Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition* [hereafter *CCT*] II.2: *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century* (London 1995) 511 and elsewhere: avoiding the term "Monophysite."

[6]Thankfully, the old dichotomies of Coptic/rural/ill-educated/poor/"Monophysite" *vs* Greek/urban/well-educated/affluent/Chalcedonian are no longer used.

[7]I myself simply opted for "Cyrillian" in *Dioscorus of Aphrodito: His Work and his World* (Berkeley 1988) 151 (but see below). C. Kuehn, *Channels of Imperishable Fire: The Beginnings of Christian Mystical Poetry and Dioscorus of Aphrodito* (New York 1995) 69, 128, 135, 154, leaned toward anti-Chalcedonian but on quite erroneous grounds (anti-Chalcedonians were not iconoclasts: far from it). Fournet (II 572) opts for anti-Chalcedonian on the basis of a penetrating analysis of Dioscorus's poem on Justin II, and this sensible "default position" has mostly convinced me. The present study is an attempt further to engage with another point in Fournet's commentaries. On Dioscorus's Christology see also T. Hainthaler, "Dioscorus of Aphrodito," in *CCT* II.4: *The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451* (London 1996) 100 (in a section titled "The Christology of the Scholars").

[8]I am grateful to Kent Rigsby for helping with TLG searches.

[9]L. S. B. MacCoull, "A Trinitarian Formula in Dioscorus of Aphrodito," *BSAC* 24 (1979–82) 103–110, and "Μονοειδής in Dioscorus of Aphrodito: An Addendum," 25 (1983) 61–64. These papers were reprinted in MacCoull, *Coptic Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London 1993) as nos. IV and V.

1. The expression

In 551 Dioscorus was in Constantinople (for the second time in his life) on a business trip to present to the imperial authorities a petition complaining of how he had been robbed of four *litrai* of gold pieces by a certain Theodore, bishop of the Pentapolis.[10] Knowing, thanks to his classical-rhetorical education, just what was the best way to catch the attention of a high imperial official so as to obtain a favorable response, Dioscorus wrote on the spot a poem of praise to such an official (the name is not preserved) to accompany his suit.[11] The poem is no. 5 in Fournet's edition, headed "*Enkômion* de pétition."[12] In completely formulaic fashion, Dioscorus opens by praising the laudandus's noble ancestry, of benefit-dispensing forefathers who overcame violence with *eusebeia* and *dikaiosynê* (lines 1–6). This personage of the imperial court whom our poet is addressing resembles those ancestors, he says, in every way (8): πίσ[τι]ν ἀερτάζων Τριάδος μ[ον]οειδέος ὀρθήν, "lifting up/exalting the right faith of the one-beinged ["single in essence"] Trinity" (Fournet: "[*sc.* tu] doué de la foi orthodoxe en la Trinité consubstantielle").[13] This means to say that both the imperial official and his forebears for at least two generations (*cf.* προπάτωρ, 4; *i.e.*, since the reign of Anastasius) have, besides their breeding and generosity, been distinguished in the religious sphere by defending the "correct" or "upright" form of Trinitarian belief.

Seventeen years later, in the spring of 568 while resident in the nome capital Antinoopolis,[14] Dioscorus composed an even

[10]Fournet I 318–321.

[11]*Cf.* MacCoull (*supra* n.4) 200–201.

[12]Text and French translation: Fournet I 381–383; commentary: II 487–495.

[13]The poet goes on to say that his laudandus surpasses the classical heroes Achilles, Ajax, and Diomedes, and that the noble's *aretê* is more than the number of the stars and the waves of the sea. He then describes the hardships of his sea journey and the wrong he has suffered, and asks the laudandus for help for himself and his children: all as expected in the genre.

[14]Fournet I 321–324.

longer and more elaborate "*enkômion* de pétition"[15] addressed to Joannes, dux of the Thebaid,[16] occasioned by the poet's troubles in the "Menas affair," the illegal exploitations of a greedy pagarch. This poem[17] is composed in the full-dress form of the time, a 26-line iambic prologue introducing 65 lines of hexameters.[18] In it the laudandus is compared to Noah, saving humanity by piloting aright the ship, or ark, of state (line 8): a telling metaphor to use three years into the new reign of Justin II whose representative the dux is (*cf.* line 32).[19] This nobly-born (line 1) dux is called the bringer of justice, the dispenser of justice, the embodiment of justice (1–16), the "new Solon" (12);[20] as the son of "golden-crowned, wise Justice" (30) he is to administer *themis*, Right (35), as both the emperor's representative (32, 33,[21] 36) and the one who has risen upon Egypt like a new sun ("new Phaethon," 37) to crown an already illustrious imperial career (comprising posts in other provinces)[22] by setting all to rights. Then Dioscorus reuses a line (here line 39) he already used in the Constantinopolitan poem (5.9), a line he mostly borrowed from Nonnus's *Paraphrasis of the Gospel of John*,[23] to praise the dux's nobility of descent once again, and to

[15] "Le meilleur exemple du genre de l'*enkômion* de pétition dont Dioscore se fait une spécialité": Fournet II 524.

[16] For his career see Fournet I 331–336, correcting my earlier attempts.

[17] No. 11 in Fournet's edition: I 394–399, commentary II 524–549.

[18] See Fournet I 278–288, and his "Un nouvel épithalame de Dioscore d'Aphrodité adressé à un gouverneur civil de Thébaïde," *AntTard* 6 (1998) 65–82, here 73 on matching meter to addressee.

[19] *Cf.* Fournet I 339 on assimilation of the dux to the emperor.

[20] *Cf.* MacCoull (*supra* n.7) 140: the subject is justice.

[21] παμβασιλεύς flickers back and forth between meaning "the emperor" and meaning "God": see Fournet's discussion (II 493–494); and *contra cf.* Kuehn (*supra* n.7) 185–188, 207, who thinks (mistakenly, I hold) that it never means "emperor" in Dioscorus.

[22] So Fournet II 533.

[23] "Never, never was there anyone like you...": Fournet II 489: bk. 9 of the *Paraphrasis* is a versification of the story of the healing of the man born blind, a healing accomplished by one like whom there is no other. See now Alan Cameron, "The Poet, the Bishop, and the Harlot," *GRBS* 41 (2000) 175–188, for Nonnus.

introduce mention of his third characteristic besides pedigree and justice:

ἐν χθονὶ παμβασιλῆος ἀεὶ μεθέπουσαν ἀρωγήν
ἀχράντου Τριάδος μονοειδ[έ]ος ἔ[λ]λαχε⟨ς⟩ δῶρον.

"in the realm of the Emperor, you have brought as a gift the ever-present help of the undefiled Trinity, single in essence" (MacCoull [*supra* n.7] 140); "In the land of the All-Sovereign, as an ever present help / he received the gift of the simple, unmixed Trinity" (Kuehn [*supra* n.7] 182; he understands the first three words [n.97] as "in the spiritual realm of God or Christ"; "unmixed" is a misleadingly erroneous rendering of ἄχραντος[24] [see below]); "L'aide de l'immaculée Trinité consubstantielle, qui toujours t'accompagne sur la terre du roi de l'univers, tu l'as reçue en don" (Fournet I 399). Here the imperial official has not the *faith* of the Trinity but the helping *gift* of the Trinity, a Trinity that has, besides μονοειδής, an additional epithet, ἄχραντος. He has unconquerable help at hand to aid him in his just task.

Over twenty years ago I was struck by the unusual Trinitarian epithet μονοειδής and wondered what it meant:[25] applied to the Trinity it clearly meant something special, something no one at the time would have missed. In 551 and again in 568 Dioscorus worshipped a Trinity that had ἓν εἶδος, one "essence" or "form" or "kind." He invoked this divine being at times of great personal need, seeing it as deeply involved with the well-being of the empire.[26] He applied this epithet to the divine being for a reason.

[24] This error is repeated in J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford 2001) 230 (in ch. 7, "Transformation of Greek Literary Culture under the Influence of Christianity").

[25] *Supra* n.9.

[26] *Cf. Cod.Just.* 1.1.5.2, the importance of which will be seen below.

2. The background

In his commentary on Dioscorus 11.41 Fournet looks, as always in his illuminating method of interconnecting the literary and the documentary, to an oath-clause in a sixth-century Herakleopolite papyrus document, to conclude that "μονοειδής est ici [in Dioscorus] synonyme du banal ὁμοούσιος."[27] Unfortunately, he immediately then cites the extremely suspect and variously dated pro-Chalcedonian tractate *De Sectis* (*CPG* 6823)[28] to defend the statement that εἶδος and οὐσία were "quasi-homonyms." This I fear cannot be defended, and especially the use of a strict-Chalcedonian text from considerably later.[29] The quotation from *De Sectis* given by Fournet (II 534) is from what the tractate's author specifically designates as a "memorandum on heresies," and its polemic succeeds only in

[27] Fournet II 534, citing *CPR* I 30, which, like Dioscorus's line here, also calls the Trinity ἄχραντος, an epithet found both in documentary invocations (reign of Maurice and after) and in ecclesiastical literature. (It goes back to the fourth century as an epithet for God, as in the poem "Address to the Just," line 59 [a poem that, like Dioscorus's work, combines epic and recent diction]: see *P.Bodm.* XXX–XXXVII *"Codex des Visions," Poèmes divers*, ed. A. Hurst and J. Rudhardt [Munich 1999] 62.) It might be noted with regard to the citation of Theodoret of Cyrrhus that Fournet gives (*In Ps.* 57:6 [*PG* 80.1297C–1300B]), Theodoret, a staunch anti-Cyrillian, is attacking the "Macedonians" as the "charmers, charm they never so wisely," who perform a pseudo-baptism procedure using a twisted Trinitarian formula and "cutting up (διατέμνοντες) the divinity of the ἄχραντος Trinity which is in one *ousia*, one *basileia*, one *kyriotês*, one *theotês*, one *dynamis*, one *dêmiourgia*." This sounds just like Miaphysite accusation of the Dyophysites, "cutting up" the one Christ. For Theodoret's heresiological procedure, not genealogical but conceptual and influenced by his own experiences in the fifth-century controversies, see H. Sillett, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Theodoret of Cyrus' *Compendium of Heresies*," in *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire*, edd. S. Elm *et al.* (Rome 2000) 261–273.

[28] Ably elucidated by Hainthaler, "The Chalcedonian writing *De Sectis*," in *CCT* II.2 493–502. The doctoral thesis of M. Waegeman providing a critical edition is listed in *CPG Suppl.* (Turnhout 1998) 393.

[29] M. Waegeman, "The Text Tradition of the Treatise *De Sectis* (Ps.-Leontius Byzantinus)," *AntCl* 45 (1976) 190–196, and "The Old Testament Canon in the Treatise *De Sectis*," 50 (1981) 813–818. I thank Irfan Shahîd for sending me the data on Cod.Vindob.theol.gr. 190, a late witness. M. van Esbroeck however dated the *De Sectis* to between 543 and 551: "La date et l'auteur du *De Sectis* attribué à Léonce de Byzance," in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert van Roey*, ed. C. Laga *et al.* (Leuven 1985) 415–424.

confusing matters.[30] Sixth-century disputes raged over just this kind of terminological accuracy in theological discourse in several eastern Christian languages (misunderstanding among which did not help matters).[31] It is neither "vain overinterpretation" nor "pedantry"[32] to look carefully at this nuanced poetic expression[33] and try to hear just what Dioscorus's sixth-century audience would have understood.[34] I gave up too easily in 2000 in acquiescing to Fournet's "synonyme du plus neutre ὁμοούσιος" (II 534).[35]

Where did Dioscorus get the word μονοειδής? From Cyril,

[30] *PG* 86.1193A: "The first thing needed in writing a memorandum on heresies is to understand four items in the Fathers' [*sc.* Chalcedonian Fathers'] usage: *ousia, physis, hypostasis, prosôpon*. We must know that in them *ousia* and *physis* are the same thing; and again, *hypostasis* and *prosôpon* are the same thing. *Ousia* or *physis* is in them what philosophers term *eidos*. And *eidos* is what is asserted of many things that differ by number. And they [*sc.* Fathers] call *hypostasis* or *prosôpon* what philosophers term 'indivisible *ousia*': and we have rightly added 'indivisible *ousia*', for ecclesiastical writers do not call what in accidental things is indivisible either *prosôpon* or *hypostasis*." If anything, what Chalcedonians accuse "Monophysites" of doing is using *physis* and *hypostasis*, a different pairing, as interchangeable synonyms. For John Philoponus's refutation of this in his *Diaitêtês* (before A.D. 553), that *qenoma (hypostasis)* and *parsopa (prosôpon)* are what Dyophysites use interchangeably, see *Ioannis Philoponi Opuscula Monophysitica*, ed. A. Šanda (Beirut 1930) 20–21 (Syriac text), 55–56 (Latin translation).

[31] εἶδος in Coptic is ϹⲘⲞⲦ, and it is carefully distinguished from ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ, ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ/ⲙⲓⲛⲉ, ⲩⲡⲟⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ, etc.

[32] So Fournet II 534.

[33] Fournet (II 534) thinks Dioscorus borrowed the word from some theological treatise now lost.

[34] A note on meter and word choice: Dioscorus, in composing epic hexameters in sixth-century Greek, innovated to great effect in using words from the everyday world in poetry, where they were metrically usable, and finding workable metrical substitutes where they were not (Fournet I 313; MacCoull [*supra* n.4] 200–201). This is not exactly what happened here. In both cases (5.8 and 11.41) μονοείδεος is in the genitive modifying a genitive Τριάδος which it immediately follows. The sequence ⏑⏑–⏑⏑–⏑⏑ spans either the third to fifth feet or the second to fourth feet of the line. Admittedly ὁμοουσίου could not be made to work. However, other choices expressing those meanings of "one rule, one lordship, one power," and the like would have been possible. Theological considerations *were*, I believe, at work in the selection of μονοειδής of all epithets. On finding synonyms for the unutilized *homoousios* that would work in hexameter verse see Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *CCT* II.4 96–97 ("The christological statement of Nonnus's paraphrase of John").

[35] MacCoull (*supra* n.4) 205.

certainly, and from John Philoponus (whether or not the Alexandrian polymath had ever been his teacher, at whatever remove).[36] But it goes much further back in time,[37] following a trajectory straight along a high road of late antique thought, to a source Dioscorus would have known. The word goes back to Plato's *Symposium*,[38] to Diotima's speech, to that vision of the One Beauty that captivates all human souls (210E–212A, at 211E): αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλήν ... μονοειδὲς κατιδεῖν.[39] It was this vision in its patristic dress that helped lead Dioscorus to his choice of words.[40]

In *Against the Macedonians on the Holy Spirit* (*CPG* 3142), the Cappadocian Gregory of Nyssa asserts that the Trinitarian Three differ only in what can be said καθ' ὑπόστασιν, and bases all he says upon Scripture. As far as the divine φύσις is concerned, he continues, it is thus believed to be ἁπλῆ καὶ μονοειδὴς καὶ ἀσύνετος (*PG* 45.1304; III.1 89–91 J.), and we intuit this in our soul. This is clearly taken from *Phaedo* 80B as mentioned above; and it is used to characterize the entire Trinity. Again, in *Homily 5 on the Song of Songs* (*CPG* 3158),[41] the Platonist Gregory is commenting on "Arise, my love, my fair one (καλή μου), and come away" (2:10), and suddenly makes it into a *Symposium*-style hymn on "the blessed φύσις that passes all understanding" and is circumscribed by no nameable quality. In us things may go this way or that, but ἡ δὲ ἁπλῆ καὶ καθαρὰ καὶ μονοειδὴς καὶ ἄτρεπτος[42] καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος φύσις is always the same and has no truck with evil; it attracts the human soul to be with it (44.873D f.; VI 158 J.). This is to lead right into Ps.-Dionysius's characterization (via Proclus) of the Beautiful/Good[43] in *The Divine Names.*

We come thus to the Ps.-Dionysian *Divine Names*, probably Dioscorus's proximate source. Our word μονοειδής is found eleven times in this treatise[44] (and nowhere else in the Ps.-Dionysian corpus).[45] Most especially, in *DN* 4.7 the author draws directly on *Symposium* 211E to describe how the One True Beauty does not vary (just as Gregory of Nyssa at *PG* 44.873) but is ὡς αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὂν καλόν.[46] This too is the beauty that calls all things to itself[47]

[36] See Hainthaler, "John Philoponus, Philosopher and Theologian in Alexandria," in *CCT* II.4 107–146, and again (for Dioscorus) 100; *contra*, Fournet, review of MacCoull, *Coptic Perspectives*, in *AntTard* 5 (1997) 368–372, here 370.

[37] *Cf.* Fournet II 534: "ce vocable à forte connotation philosophique et théologique."

[38] Also to *Phaedo* 80B, "used to characterize ideal being which, having a *single form* [emphasis added], is ever constant and abiding": C. Steel, *The Changing Self* (Brussels 1978) 57 n.17. Priscian states that this uni-formity cannot be predicated of the soul (*ibid.*; also 139 n.86), a point we shall see repeated in pro-Chalcedonian texts such as Pamphilus's *Solutio*. The *Phaedo* was known in Byzantine Egypt partly via a Coptic translation of Gregory of Nyssa's *Macrinia*, the "Christian *Phaedo*"; and Philoponus wrote a (lost) commentary on it. For a view of how *Phaedo* 80B was being understood in sixth-century Alexandria, see L. G. Westerink, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo* (Amsterdam 1976–77) I 170–171 (Olympiodorus), II 178–179, 188–189 (Damascius). For what the Ps.-Dionysius (see below) depended on, see Proclus, *Théologie platonicienne* 1.26–27, ed. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink I–VI (Paris 1968–97: I 113, 118), *cf.* 1.18 (I 82–88) (including the invariability theme that will be picked up by Gregory of Nyssa).

[39] Mediated partly through Proclus, *Théol.Plat.* 5.33 (V 122 S./W.), discussing an ἄχραντος τριάς, and then to Ps.-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 4.7 (see below).

[40] Amphilochius of Iconium used the word to say what paradise is not, in his *Contra Haereticos* 3.109 (ed. C. Datema [Leuven 1978] 187); but in his fr. IV (*PG* 39.101A–B) commenting on Proverbs 8:22, the first phrase is authentic (Datema 232) but the Trinitarian rest is an addition from John Damascene.

[41] This work seemingly once existed in a Coptic version (*CPG* II p.215).

[42] As is well known, ἀτρέπτως comes to be one of the four Chalcedonian Christological adverbs.

[43] *Cf.* W. Beierwaltes, "Dionysios Areopagites: ein christlicher Proklos?" in *Platon in der abendländischen Geistesgeschichte: Neue Forschungen zum Platonismus*, edd. Th. Kobusch and B. Mojsisch (Darmstadt 1997) 71–100, esp. 84–90.

[44] Kuehn (*supra* n.7) 185 n.109 says "at least ten times."

[45] *Thesaurus Pseudo-Dionysii Areopagitae* (CETEDOC), ed. M. Nasta (Turnhout 1995) 66b and fiche 0028; *cf. Corpus Dionysiacum* II, ed. G. Heil and A. M. Ritter (PTS 36 [Berlin/New York 1991]) 289 (index). (See also Ph. Chevallier, *Dionysiaca* [Bruges 1937] I 177, 182; II 358, 466.)

[46] *Corpus Dionysiacum* I *De Divinis Nominibus*, ed. B. R. Suchla (PTS 33 [Berlin/New York 1990]) 151.15–16.

[47] As in Plato, *Cratylus* 416C; and again Proclus, *Theol.Plat.* 1.18 (I 87 S./W.), and *In Alc.* 1.328, ed. L. G. Westerink (Amsterdam 1954) 153, transl. W. O'Neill (The Hague 1965) 215; and John Philoponus, *De Opificio Mundi* (*ca* A.D. 547–560) 7.6, ed. C. Scholten (Fontes Christianae 23.1–3 [Freiburg 1997]) III

and has no truck with evil, *DN* 4.18–34 (Suchla 162–179), and especially 4.20 (166.3, μονοειδής used of participation in the Good/Beautiful).[48] Here, I believe, is the background for Dioscorus's word choice. It turns out that this is a choice he made in circumstances deeply engaged with his own times.

3. An echo from the capital (and its aftermath)

To the root of the matter at last: "One of the Trinity was crucified"[49] (or "...suffered"). This phrase, once labeled the "Theopaschite formula,"[50] had reverberated in the eastern empire for over three decades before Dioscorus came to Constantinople. In the controversy over this phrase[51] Justinian himself intervened more than once.[52] "One of the Trinity" was a formula deeply implicated with Christology,[53] and the entire phrase was supported by Empress Theodora, Aphrodito's patroness.[54] In 527 Justinian had inserted the phrase into the

612–613. *Cf.* L. Fladerer, *Johannes Philoponos, De Opificio Mundi: Spätantikes Sprachdenken und christliche Exegese* (Beitr.z.Alt. 135 [Stuttgart 1999]) 388–389.

[48] In *DN* 13.1 this adverb is rendered "in a unitary manner" by S. Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena* (Leiden 1978) 182. Yet again this comes partly through Proclus, *Theol.Plat.* 1.181 (I 82–88 S./W.).

[49] The section title for the admirably clear exposition of the whole phenomenon in Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *CCT* II.2 317–343, with extensive literature. See also P. T. R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451–553)* (Leiden 1979) 48–58, and C. Sotinel, "Le rôle des expertises dans les débats théologiques du VI^e siècle," in *Studia Patristica* 34, edd. M. F. Wiles *et al.* (Leuven 2001) 234–249.

[50] Here I differentiate this matter from the so-called "Monophysite addition ['who was crucified for us'] to the Trishagion" problem: for that see Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *CCT* II.2 253–262.

[51] For the early part of the controversy the non-Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria was Timothy III, on whose Christology see Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *CCT* II.4 42–45.

[52] *CCT* II.2 322–324, 338–341.

[53] *CCT* II.2 327–333; *cf.* II.4 87: "The *unus ex Trinitate* is a constituent part of anti-Chalcedonian theology"; also 256 (in a section entitled "On Christology in the Liturgical Prayer of the Coptic Church").

[54] *CCT* 2.2, 338 with n.96; *P.Cair.Masp.* II 67283 (with MacCoull [*supra* n.7] 21–22). Note that in both poems in which Dioscorus uses the Trinitarian epithet μονοειδής he also uses the image of the patron's stretching out his or her helping hand, an image he first used in the prose petition to Theodora from A.D.

very text of Roman law (*Cod.Iust.* 1.1.5.2), and in 533 he included it in a confession sent to (among other cities) Alexandria. Above all, εἷς ὢν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος is a line from the famous Christ troparion Ὁ μονογενὴς Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ that Justinian had put in place in the liturgies of the capital's churches as early as 535/6 and in the rebuilt Hagia Sophia as of 537/8.[55] The troparion is recited to this day in the Coptic church on Good Friday.[56] Dioscorus would have heard it in Constantinople in 551. This gave him his clue to how to build a bridge between One-Nature Egyptian believers on the one hand and imperial officials answerable to the emperor on the other. The latter were representing an emperor who promoted the mystery that "one of the Trinity was crucified." So when Dioscorus addressed his laudandi in encomia of petition, he praised them for having and exalting the faith of the μονοειδής Trinity, a Trinity "unique in its species ['God']," "uni-form," one of Whom became human and died. The choice of words was not banal or pedantic: it was deeply expressive of late-antique Mediterranean reality, in particular an Egyptian reality. A century and a quarter earlier the archimandrite Shenoute, quite possibly another of Dioscorus's sources, had written, "...

547/8. In addition to A. Papathomas, "Zwischen juristischen Formeln und künstlerischer Schöpfung: Neutestamentliche Elemente in den Urkunden des spätantiken Dichters und Notars Flavius Dioskoros von Aphrodito," *Hermes* 128 (2000) 481–499, here 492, compare in the OT, and for the poetry, Ecclesiasticus 7:32, 29:1; also Kuehn (*supra* n.7) 225–227. See also J. H. F. Dijkstra, "A World Full of the Word: The Biblical Learning of Dioscorus," paper presented in Groningen, November 2001 (I thank Dr Dijkstra for sending me a copy).

[55] *CCT* II.2 339, 341.

[56] I. Borsai, "Le tropaire byzantin 'O Monogenés' dans le pratique du chant copte," *Studia Musicologia* 14 (1972) 329–352, esp. 331–338. The phrase "being one of the Holy Trinity" ends with a four-note descending phrase often repeated in the troparion as transmitted orally in the twentieth century, probably expressing a textual nuance as described by William T. Flynn, *Medieval Music as Medieval Exegesis* (Lanham 1999) 68–69, 80–90, 168 ("in a richer reading of the text than can be supplied by the words alone"), 245. (Flynn quotes an astonishing eleventh-century Burgundian Christmas Gloria trope that reads *Natus est nobis hodie Salvator in trinitate semper colendus.*)

we are naming the consubstantial Trinity when we say Jesus ... with the name Jesus the holy Trinity is named."[57]

For their part, mainstream Chalcedonians were not slow in appropriating the epithet for their own discourses, as can be seen from the late sixth- (or early seventh-) century treatise attributed to one Pamphilus and entitled *Solutio Difficultatum.*[58] The neo-Chalcedonian writer starts by asking for definitions of the usual suspect terms—*hypostasis, physis, ousia*—and eventually gets to the legitimacy of the "anthropological argument": In Christ's case is it possible to speak of a composite *ousia* as it is in the case of a human being, given that we also teach a composite *hypostasis*? (qu. 8). Answer: No creature is one in *physis, i.e.* simple and μονοειδής; "only the *ousia* of the holy and worshipped Trinity is simple and without form and without all doubleness. ... In the case of the holy and blessed *physis* of the holy Trinity, since the *ousia* is simple and μονοειδής as already said, this we cannot assert. ... God is one by *physis*, yet is *trishypostatos.*"[59] And on the big question of how Christ can be *in* two *physeis* (qu. 10), Pamphilus reiterates a Proclan-Ps.-Dionysian-Cappadocian truism that "the Divine (τὸ θεῖον) is simple and μονοειδές, being outside of all doubleness and compositeness,"[60] maintaining that the two natures are plain from patristic tradition and that it is useless to split hairs about what kind of genus-and-species classification the divine can be

[57] *Shenute Contra Origenistas*, ed. T. Orlandi (Rome 1985) §0803; see also Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *CCT* II.4 186. *Cf.* the contemporary Philoxenus of Mabbug, *Ep. ad Zenonem imp.* 123, to the effect that one of the Trinity was in the womb, in the river in baptism, and on the cross (*CCT* II.4 357).

[58] *Pamphili theologi diversorum capitum seu Difficultatum Solutio*, ed. J. Declerck, in *Diversorum Postchalcedonensium auctorum collectanea* I (CCSG 19 [Turnhout/Leuven 1989]) 127–261 (text); *cf.* 17–24 on dating of the treatise. A list of places where Pamphilus depends on the tractate *De Sectis* is given in Declerck's index, p.378.

[59] *Solutio* 179–180 Declerck, μονοειδής at 180.60–62. This would appear to predate Maximus the Confessor, cited by Fournet (II 534) as the first application of μονοειδής to the Trinity after Dioscorus.

[60] *Solutio* 199.100 Declerck.

caught in. Even a Chalcedonian does not have by this time to believe that all the words are just interchangeable synonyms.[61]

4. Conclusion

Dioscorus has come a long way since 1966: by now he even has his own entry (by C. Haas) in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*;[62] and in November 2001 the University of Groningen held a conference session devoted to him under the title "A Centre of Learning in a Christianising World: The Case of Dioscorus." We no longer suffer from talk of the "worst poet ever" of earlier decades.[63] As has recently been written about another late antique figure, Dioscorus was "*not* a towering intellect of timeless importance but an articulate human being fully engaged with his physical and emotional environment."[64] A legal functionary, writer, teacher, and Christian, Dioscorus combined the Homeric and the biblical learning that were his twin second natures to confront the issues of his time.[65] In describing the Christian Trinity as μονοειδής he used poetry to embody the Christological view of his province and his tradition, in a form the rulers could grasp. We have also been told that "in the late Roman atmosphere of developing theological principles and shifting Imperial legislation there was plenty of

[61] *Cf.* O. Kindiy, "An Excursus in the Byzantine Theological Terminology of Maximus the Confessor: *Hypostasis, Ousia*, and *Physis*," *XXVII BSC Abstracts* (Notre Dame 2001) 47.

[62] Edd. G. W. Bowersock, P. R. L. Brown, and O. Grabar (Cambridge [Mass.] 1999) 411.

[63] The "minor writer of the decadence, the writer who is incomplete but none the less individual, distils a balm more irritant, more sudorific, more acid than the author of the same period who is truly great and truly perfect": J.-K. Huysmans, *Against Nature [A Rebours]*, transl. R. Baldick (Harmondsworth 1959) 185.

[64] S. A. H. Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius: A Gentleman of the Church* (Ann Arbor 2000) 2.

[65] Making allowances for the differences between a fifth-century Latin-speaking ecclesiastic and a sixth-century Greek- and Coptic-speaking layman, the parallels with Ennodius are many: *cf.* Kennell (*supra* n.64) 64, "the peaceable cohabitation of Homer and the Bible inside [his] head"; 201, "his apparently traditional language, studded with references to the classical past, masks a fundamental change in sensibility"; also 50, 192.

scope for the traditional activities of wily advocates and able *iurisperiti.*"[66] *A fortiori* how much the more for an able *iurisperitus* who could, like Dioscorus, compose poetry in a cultural register that would reach an elite audience and effectively convey his theological message.[67]

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[66] C. Humfress, "Roman Law, Forensic Argument and the Formation of Christian Orthodoxy (III–VI Centuries)," in Elm (*supra* n.27) 125–147, here 128.

[67] Also as always in loving memory of Mirrit Boutros Ghali, whom John will remember ("You are all my visions": *A Beautiful Mind*).